

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

THE CHOICE BEFORE US

(By Gandhiji)

Prof. J. C. Kumarappa has a grouse against me that, although I am the author and guide of the A.I.V.F.A., I seem to treat it as a step-child. I have retorted that the grouse is due to superficial reasoning. He will not take a defeat lying down. He has returned to the charge again and again, and refuses to be satisfied till I proclaim to the world that the other village industries stand on the same footing with Khadi.

For me the proposition was so self-evident as not to need any enunciation. But Prof. Kumarappa is right so far as practical application is concerned. People are not governed by theory. Thus several people have recently complained to me that they know men who use Khadi but use no other village articles. They suggest that many Congressmen wear Khadi because it is required by the (Congress) constitution. But having no belief in it they never think of anything but their convenience so far as other articles of use are concerned. This I call fulfilling the letter and killing the spirit. And where the spirit is killed the letter is of as much use as a body from which life has ebbed away.

I have often said that Khadi is the central Sun round which the other village industries revolve like so many planets. They have no independent existence. Nor will Khadi exist without the other industries. They are absolutely interdependent. The fact is that we have to make a choice between India of the villages that are as ancient as herself and India of the cities which are a creation of foreign domination. Today the cities dominate and drain the villages so that they are crumbling to ruin. My Khadi mentality tells me that cities must subserve villages when that domination goes. Exploiting of villages is itself organized violence. If we want Swaraj to be built on non-violence, we shall have to give the villages their proper place. This we will never do unless we revive village industries by using the products thereof in place of things produced in city factories, foreign or indigenous.

Perhaps it is now clear why I identify Khadi with non-violence. Khadi is the chief village handicraft. Kill Khadi and you must kill the

villages and with them non-violence. I cannot prove this by statistics. The proof is before our eyes.

(Harijan, 20-1-40)

PROTECTION OF THE COW*

My mind is occupied at the moment with the thought of a friend — a man of religion, as he seems to me — who has been fasting here for the past many days in connection with cow-protection. And I think I should speak a few words to you about how I feel about this matter. Now I should say to you that the aim for which he has accepted to undergo this type of extreme suffering has my full sympathy. I hold that Indian culture does enjoin cow-protection in India. If we fail to achieve cow-protection in India, our Independence loses its meaning. I had placed this view quite frankly before the Planning Commission also. But looking to the situation which confronts us and having regard to the fact that all the State Governments are actively thinking about this matter I do not consider recourse to fast to be right.

During these five years after Gandhiji's death, there have been several cases of fasts, but there was hardly any which could fulfil the test of Satyagraha as I understand it. In some of these cases, I was able to persuade the persons concerned to break them, but there were many which continued. Now I should like to appeal to those who feel like taking to this extreme course for the redress of their real or supposed grievances to consult me about it before they enter on it, for I think I have reflected a great deal about this form of Satyagraha and know something about its science and application. People in India are, I know, dissatisfied over many things today. But we have to remember there is only one remedy for all these ills, — we must build up strong public opinion in favour of what we want and be patient. We have numerous questions to face and with the best will in the world nobody can attend to all of them simultaneously.

Some people are under serious misapprehension in regard to the secular character of our

* Shri Vinoba's speech at Hazaribag on 18-7-53.

State. They think there is some kind of incompatibility between cow-protection and a secular State. A secular State is all right; it is desirable. In fact it has been a characteristic of our civilization in the political sphere. The kings and their governments were always expected to give equal protection to all religions. Ashoka was a Buddhist. His people were divided into Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. But all the three religions were shown equal respect and accorded equal protection. That is why we honour his memory and have adopted his symbol for our State. There is no incompatibility between the secular character of our State and the protection of cow. No religion in India says that it is meritorious to kill a cow, and therefore there is no conflict among our different religions about the desirability of the protection of cow. The Government could have pleaded its inability to do anything about this matter only in case of such conflict. But there is no such conflict. I have studied the Koran and the Bible as deeply and sympathetically as the Vedas. I can, therefore, claim to speak as a representative of the Mussalmans and the Christians that these religions contain nothing which may be said to support the killing of the cow. They do speak of the sacrifice of animals—even Hinduism in some of its forms does that—but they do not insist on the killing of the cow. Besides, Islam enjoins respect for the feelings of one's neighbours. Therefore I say that there is nothing to prevent the secular State from striving to protect the cow, and our State must do it.

But there are people today who feel hesitant about calling themselves Hindus. This is wrong. I would say that every Hindu should try to be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, and a Christian a better Christian; and thus give rise to a grand symphony of religions in India. Let each follow his particular way of worshipping the Lord. God has infinite names and attributes. There are several approaches to a city, why should not then there be countless ways of reaching God? Let every one, therefore, follow his own way of reaching the Lord. This will enable us not only to be better Hindus, better Muslims and better Christians but also better men, and thus create a very rich social and national life in India based on love and perfect goodwill. Let not Hindus, therefore, feel ashamed of being Hindus but try to follow their religion with faith and sincerity.

I know that the Central Government has every sympathy with the desire of the people for the protection of the cow. But it says that this is the concern of the State Governments. In Madhya Pradesh from where I come they have already passed a bill for this purpose, though I have not seen it and cannot say how far it is adequate to meet our requirements. In Bihar also, the Government is thinking of introducing a bill in this regard. I have seen this bill and I

must say it has not satisfied me. It provides only for the protection of cows and calves. I was really surprised to see the difference being made between the cows and the bullocks. But I am told that the Article in our Constitution about the protection of the cow speaks only of prohibiting the slaughter of cows and calves. It does not say anything about extending similar protection to the bullock. I am not qualified to speak about what the Constitution means or does not mean; that must be left to the experts of Constitutional Law. But I do say that I do not agree with this view and I disapprove of it. The question is whether our State has accepted the responsibility from an economic point of view or from the point of the Indian culture. If the motive is purely economic, then they need not accept the responsibility of protecting even the cow because economics cannot support the protection of weak, old and disabled cows. Economics is one-eyed: it advocates killing of weak cows and bullocks as necessary for protecting the strong ones. And yet if the Government feel it its duty to protect all the cows the decision must be deemed to have been prompted by the demand of the Indian culture in this regard. Why then should it shrink from undertaking the responsibility of protecting the bullocks as well?

The Sanskrit word 'go' (गो) for the cow covers both the cows and bullocks. There is no difference between them. In the Vedas the cow has been called 'aghnyaa' (अघ्न्या) and the bullock 'aghnya' (अघ्न्य), that is, one which should not be killed. Thus it is clear that our culture has accepted to protect both the cows as well as the bullocks. I, therefore, request, my friends in the legislature to suitably amend the bill so as to extend the protection to the bullocks also. They must do it if they have due regard for our culture. Otherwise they must be bold enough to disown the responsibility of protecting even the cows.

Protection of the cow and the bullock is a characteristic of the Indian social philosophy. We are in this respect a step ahead of the Western socialism. Western socialism asks for full and equal protection being given to all men, but there it stops. We in India have gone a step further. We have included the cow as a member in the family. True, we have not followed this principle in practice fully. We merely pay respect to the cow but we do not look after it as well as they do in Western countries. Nevertheless we have deep regard for it and consider it worthy of our care and protection in the same way as the human members of the family. We do not drive out the latter when they grow old. In the same way, though we make full use of the cow and the bullock—take milk, get our fields ploughed, use the dung for manure, and use even their hides after they are dead—but we do not

kill them. This is a principle which Indian socialism adopted long ago and for which people cherish deep regard. But now we must link up this regard with a scientific attitude. Superstitious respect will not do. We must open good dairy-farms (गोसदन) and the rich amongst us should come forward to provide for the upkeep of decrepit cattle.

The Bhoodan work which we are doing includes cow protection also. But I prefer to concentrate on the root — on the most fundamental thing so that all others may improve automatically. The Bhoodan aims at revolutionizing the entire society; and this will naturally bring about the protection of the cows. People from other countries may ask us why we should specially choose the cow for protection. Why not protect other animals also? To this, I would say we have no desire to take the place of God who alone can provide protection to all the living beings. We have set a limit to our efforts consistent with our capacity. We make use of the services of cows and bullocks and therefore we have accepted the responsibility to protect them. I do not like the present craze for tractors being introduced in our agriculture. The use of tractors goes against the protection of the cow. We may use tractors for bringing under cultivation lands lying fallow but its use in normal agriculture will be in its effect as bad as the deliberate killing of the cows.

Our dear sister, Shri Mirabehn, has warned us that while we go about solving the problem of land we should not forget the trees, otherwise we will do harm. Her warning has given me great pleasure. I had not forgotten it, but I was glad to be reminded of it. Bhoodan Yajna aims at developing into an all-embracing movement fulfilling all that is necessary for our progress.

May God give us the will and the power to protect those animals to whose protection our culture has committed us.

(From Hindi)

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UNEMPLOYMENT AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT

[It is being alleged by some, as explanation for the present unemployment, that we have not enough capital to tackle with the problem.

There is another, rather fantastic, explanation that every year there are a million and more added to the number of the unemployed. Presumably it refers to the annual increase in our population. If so, is it suggested that the new-born are displacing their elders from employment?

All this only goes to prove that it is all begging the question. The simple truth of the matter is that we have some capital to spare and we have innumerable hands ready to be put to some useful work. A plan to be useful in such context and such a situation must find out something for the idle hands to do; capital can justifiably be used in that way only. But unfortunately Government schemes under the Five-Year Plan do not take this as their basis. This is very well brought out by the reality of the situation now, as *The Hindu* of July 10, '53, in its editorial on unemployment so aptly says. The following is reproduced from it.

17-7-53

— M. P.]

Difficulties in the way of increasing employment by stepping up the rate of investment do not imply that the total volume of employment cannot be increased by changing the character of investment of the available resources. It is possible, for instance, to invest a lakh of rupees in ways which would give employment to ten persons or to a hundred. It cannot be said that the choice of development schemes in the Five-Year Plan had any relevance to the amount of employment they could provide. The Plan has primarily sought to fit into a pattern and schedule various schemes of the Central and State Governments which had been adopted for different reasons. It is thus in a way something that has been imposed from above. And it needs to be corrected by drawing up plans which in small locality and area would seek to relate local needs to local resources in manpower and material. The scope for employment must be exploited, not only in national terms, but in terms of the most urgent needs of each village or town. When such local schemes are prepared—for building a road, or erecting a bund or raising a new school house or planting trees—on the basis of maximum utilization of local manpower and material, the external help that may be needed will be marginal. Central and State aid given for such schemes would bring in the maximum return in terms of employment. This applies also to the development of local small-scale industries. It is through the exercise of local initiative and mutual self-help, with the State affording encouragement by way of advice and marginal assistance, that the ubiquitous problem of unemployment can be tackled. There are no heroic short cuts to full employment and the Welfare State.

(From *The Hindu*, Madras)

HARIJAN

Aug. 29

1953

SAVINGS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The small middle class is no doubt an important link in our body politic as a whole. It is chiefly this class which constitutes what in socialist terminology is called the petty bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia. In the social and economic dynamics of the community it has a unique position—almost pivotal. In a capitalist order which we have today, a person of this class, by his petty savings, provides an important source for capital formation. And as such an order naturally depends upon capital first and even last to make itself a going concern, a sort of political importance also accrues to him. Again he gets his money not as profit from big business, but as savings from the income that he gets by serving the big business or government in petty jobs, clerical or managerial. In him, therefore, big business has its strongest ally and useful agent; he is almost indispensable to it. He not only serves it but also supplies it with necessary know-how, organizing ability and intelligence and also considerable capital through savings.

The Government also has a very good helping hand in this class. It is this class that mans most of the services of Government. And by helping big business, this class produces money which renders income to Government in various ways. Government depends for much of its income on big business. Thus there comes about a kind of tacit alliance between the middle class, big business, and the Government in a capitalist order, as if to the neglect of the masses if not in actual opposition to them.

There is another aspect of middle class savings which may well be noted in passing. By investing them as insurance premium or in shares and stock, the class has security capital to fall upon in times of need and difficulties. Thereby it secures to itself a kind of social security. Though this is called social, it is really a class or individual security only. It is a kind of family insurance against unforeseen calamities. There is thus a very great incentive to save and a strong cause to side with and work for that order.

All this is not objected to so far as it goes. However the question remains, what about the big rest—the toiling masses of our people? Unhappily for us, the upper few who constitute big business and the middle class are only a small percentage of the community. In the economic science that rules our minds today, their labour is rated second to capital and managerial skill and is considered really secondary also in

importance and emoluments. Capital takes a lion's share and feels secure with it; the masses live on marginal sustenance, if not in constant want and fear of unemployment; and thus they have no social security worth the name.

Is this just and proper, is the chief question. In the name of capital formation to remove unemployment (which is again chiefly of the middle classes) or what is called educated unemployment, both the Government as well as the industrial and commercial interests of the country cry hoarse to provide incentives for small savings. If these are possible on the basis of a poor and socially insecure proletariat or the labourer and the peasant of our country, can it be any way a right and justified incentive? In whose welfare will it be? Is it Sarvodaya?

Obviously it is not. And therefore to build our new economy in that way would be building not on foundations of rock but on the sliding sands of unhappy and socially insecure masses. It would be to deny them the essential needs of a free and happy people. It is therefore neither wise nor should it be held expedient as well to adopt that way, in blind imitation of the economy of industrialized and commercially imperializing West. We must find out our own new way on the lines of Sarvodaya, which is the new way shown to the world by Gandhiji; the basis of which is the revolutionary doctrine that the human being and his labour are the first and primary agent of a sound, human and non-exploiting economic world order, and all else follows them and is secondary and as aids to these two primary agents.

25-8-53

SYNTHETIC GHEE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The following is from a press correspondent's account of what the Government of India is doing about adulteration of Ghee with Vanaspati:

"The Government of India, it is learnt, has accepted the recommendations of the Ghee Adulteration Committee to enrich Vanaspati.

"The product is now to be vitaminized to a potency of 300 international units of synthetic vitamin A per ounce.

"Discussing this move, Mr S. H. Turner, Technical Director of the Hindustan Vanaspati Manufacturing Company Ltd., in a special interview with this correspondent, hoped that the new Vanaspati, which will be put on the market around October 1, will remove all rational objections to this important food. Vanaspati, added Mr Turner, will now be every bit as nutritious as buffalo Ghee and, of course, much cheaper....

"Vitamin A was obtained from whale, shark and cod liver oils that militated against the religious susceptibilities of a vast number of people in this country. On the other hand synthetic vitamin A, which has recently been developed on a commercial scale, is derived purely from vegetable materials.

"The Ghee Adulteration Committee considered among other things, the possibility of giving a distinct colour to Vanaspati so that the consumer would spot any

adulteration in Ghee. The suggestion was that a vegetable form of vitamin A called 'carotene', orange in colour, be added to the Vanaspati, since not only would this make adulteration of Ghee with Vanaspati evident, but at the same time would enhance the nutritive value of Vanaspati. Unfortunately the proposal proved impracticable, because the colour of carotene and its vitamin activity were unstable and readily destroyed.

"It was then decided to enrich Vanaspati with synthetic vitamin A and bring it on a par with buffalo Ghee.

"All the synthetic vitamin A required to enrich the 200,000 tons of Vanaspati now produced and consumed annually in India will have to be imported initially from Switzerland and the United States, for it is not considered economical to manufacture the synthetic in India right now.

"The cost of vitaminizing Vanaspati will be negligible. It will remain the same in colour and taste.

"An Indian chemist is about to return from a visit to the U.K. and Switzerland where he has been studying methods of assaying vitamin A in Vanaspati."

So the project of colouration of Vanaspati to safeguard Ghee from adulteration is given a silent goodbye and instead one of substitution of Ghee by vitaminized Vanaspati is being taken up. And a funny claim is made that vitaminized Vanaspati will be on a par with Ghee! And further, this vitaminization is to be done with a foreign synthetic product. This is like saying that robot — and a foreign one to boot — will be on a par with a living man!

The claim is also made that cost will not increase in spite of the additional processing. This only means that the price will not be immediately increased, so that the new product might have a safe and easy entry into the kitchens of the people.

All this is to ignore and sidetrack the fundamental objection of the common man against Vanaspati. Why is an article of daily need being unnecessarily processed, devitaminized and then is being commercialized and centralized into the hands of a few? Why is an adulterant for Ghee being manufactured at all? And what about adulteration in Vanaspati manufacture itself with good, bad or indifferent oils? The Vanaspati-wala cares for his profit and the Government for its income therefrom. There is no reason why the Government should otherwise be so solicitous about an industry that robs people of their good oil which must be rather sought to be made available by encouraging decentralized village industry of *ghani*, because this way will help removal of unemployment also. But all this carries no weight with the powers that be.

However, it must be clearly mentioned that such intrusion of centralized industrialism in the food of our people, that is blessed by the Government, is a very bad and dangerous thing and the Government is slowly being drawn into capitalist meshes thereby.

14-7-'53

A PROPHECY AND A WARNING

(By Wilfred Wellock)

[The following is adapted from the author's article 'Let Britain Take Warning!' appearing in the *Sower* of Spring 1953. It contains a lesson for us also, as it warns us what the alluring economic and industrial way of the West will have in store for us, if we mistake to take to it. More than that, it tells us to be forewarned that, in the process of that blind following, there is all danger of losing the Soul of Our People who have a culture of their own to live and justify and who inherit a civilization the vitality of which has survived the onslaughts of millenniums of world history. Gandhiji has been for us the prophet of this new age and its call. It is noteworthy that the author in his review of modern world trends hints at this our great responsibility.

21-7-'53

M. P.J

A new economy is now well under way, and more rapidly than is generally realized is changing the balance of the world's economic power. The primary producing countries are daily growing richer and more powerful and thus more independent, while the secondary producing countries, with the exception of the United States, are becoming poorer and less powerful and thus less independent.

A new tone has recently come into the voices of the statesmen of Canada, Australia, and the South America Republics, e.g., while more and more, India voices the judgements and the warnings of the wide expanses of the Far East, in which reside more than half the world's population. India, no less than Britain and the United States, intends to be the author and finisher of her institutions, her life, her civilization. Speaking for the entire Far East she has given notice to the Western Powers that the Sun of their Imperial Power in the Far East is now setting, and that the end of their domination, territorial, economic, financial, is at hand. Henceforward these Powers will co-operate with the nations of the East on equal terms and for the common good, or they will be given notice to quit, after which the East will quietly draw down the curtains of race, and erect an economy and a civilization of its own.

Broadly speaking it is a revolution of the primary producers against the economic and financial domination of a few Western Powers; but it is also a revolution of race and colour which ropes in Africa and even the Negro population of the United States, whence the cause of economic justice and independence is being linked with that of freedom from the discrimination of race and colour, in a great crusade for the vindication of the unity of the human race.

No country has more at stake in this revolution than Great Britain, although its ultimate repercussions on the Negro problem in the United States are immeasurable. But whereas the U.S.A. is economically self-supporting, or almost so, Britain has the most lop-sided economy of all the big industrial Powers, a fact which renders her exceedingly vulnerable at a time when the

world's economic contours are changing so rapidly.

The latest official economic forecasts indicate that Britain may be able to balance her imports and exports by 1953, when the Marshall aid terminates. But that is on the condition that there are no considerable adverse price changes, and no serious market collapses. Stable food prices depend largely upon favourable weather conditions, as the whole human race is today living from hand to mouth. It also depends upon a more conscientious attitude to the fundamentals of farming, or the curbing of profit-seeking by what amounts to a religious concern for the fertility of the soil. And who, these days, can count on that? Weather is out of our control, and conscience is at a discount!

In regard to markets, the one change which seems certain is that fairly soon there will be a falling off of world demand for a wide variety of consumer goods, arising out of the conditions I have described. It must also be borne in mind that any such tendency would be immediately followed by increased competition for such markets as remained, especially between Britain and the United States, although many European countries, including Germany, the British Dominions, especially Australia, India and Canada, and also Japan, are preparing to capture a goodly share of whatever markets there be.

It is probable that the world demand for capital goods, machinery of all kinds, will remain high for many years to come; but then every machine exported indicates a fall in the demand for consumer goods at a later date. Many economists argue that a rise in world prosperity as a result of industrial expansion will lead to a corresponding rise in world trade, but the history of the last fifty years has proved conclusively that once the stage has been reached in any new period, as after a major war, that the world's markets have been saturated, thereafter the world's problems, tensions, crises, wars and ideological conflicts grow in number and intensity with the growth of its productive power. Temporary improvements here and there may occur, but they cannot endure for two main reasons: First, that a nation which enters the industrial road never halts, but sets up one industry after another as rapidly as its savings and its spending power expand, and secondly, that as soon as the home production exceeds the home demand, the surplus is put on the world market. When that process begins to operate in ten or fifteen countries, as is likely to be the case during the next ten or fifteen years, it needs no prophet to forecast the consequences.

It is equally futile to rely on the argument that the superior machine skill of the West will always be able to command markets in quality productions. In India, China, and Japan, which

contain almost half the world's population, are large numbers of craftsmen of the very highest order, while Japan has proved that if need be, their skill can be diverted into mechanistic channels. Even the Negroes of Africa greatly astonished our war leaders by their aptitude in handling machinery.

To sum up, we must expect a falling away of markets from now on, slowly at first, but more rapidly later, at a time when new markets will be required to absorb the products of the machinery that is now being put down in every part of the world; when the American home market has been well supplied, and when the Marshall aid comes to an end in Europe. Then will come the post-war crisis of the Marxist analysis, out of which may arise new ideological conflicts and possibly the third world war. For such a situation Britain is wholly unprepared. Wishful thinking prevents her from facing its possibility. Politicians of all parties take refuge in phrases, in the claim that we are approaching an era of expanding world production, world trade, and world prosperity. They overlook the vital fact that in a world run on money values, an expansion of world productive power leads to a world slump and a world catastrophe proportionate to that expansion. In the next crisis Britain and the United States will be among the greatest sufferers.

In an interview reported in *The Observer* (9-1-'49) Paul Reynaud said:

"There is one other lesson that we have to learn. We are all of us... assuming as natural and right a system of world trade that may be, cannot be restored and certainly will not be restored in the old form. It was very nice for us all to be the workshop of the world, to take other people's raw materials and send them our manufactured goods instead. In my opinion that day is over."

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PERPETUATING WAR MENTALITY

[The National Service Act, 1948-1953, of England ends this year. It is a question before the English people at present whether the Act should be renewed or not. Peace-lovers of England are agitating to see that it is not renewed. We in India do not agree to conscription; we as a people choose to be active peace-makers and peace-lovers. War and conscription, therefore, we cannot and should not choose. I hope the following from the *Peace News* will therefore be read by us with sympathy and joyful understanding.]

23-7-53

M. P.]

An appeal for active measures to bring the evil of the call-up to an end has been made by British Quakers:

"We are called again to continue in faithful opposition to conscription, which the Government is seeking to extend for a further period of five years beyond the end of 1953. In our approach to our fellow-citizens let us reach out in the power of love, speaking in terms that will be understood.

"We must be positive in our witness, stressing opportunities for service in the community that will be for the good of mankind and will help towards removing the evils which lie behind conscription."

A Moral Issue

Quakers believe that military conscription is perhaps the worst facet of the whole evil of war-preparation and that the call-up perpetuates a war mentality and overrides conscience.

On this point Philip Seed writes:

"Surely it is wrong to *compel* young men to take part in war when they are not as a rule old enough to have considered this moral issue. A conscience clause, though a benefit, is no answer to this evil."

Philip Seed makes this formidable indictment of conscription on moral grounds:

1. It denies the right of the individual to choose his own form of service to the community;
2. It subordinates him to the State;
3. It represses individuality;
4. It calls for unquestioning obedience;
5. It teaches discipline only as a formal authoritarianism, and not as self-discipline;
6. It is based on power and force in physical and material terms.

Effect on Foreign Policy

Conscription, with its perpetuation of the war mentality, has an important corollary in foreign policy and Philip Seed writes:

"Because conscription teaches young men to accept training for war as natural and inevitable, the Government is encouraged to take advantage of this attitude, and eventually relies upon it.

"Today the conscript may be called upon to fight in Korea, Malaya, the Middle East or in Africa, in support of a 'normal' peacetime foreign policy which could not now do without him.

"Thus if conscription were to end, there would have to be a revolutionary change in foreign policy. A policy of negotiation would have to take the place of a policy of 'peace through strength'."

He concludes:

"The Government's proposals to extend military conscription for a further five years from the end of 1953 have yet to be passed into a new Conscription Act. . . Let us see to it that this does not come about—that public opinion is roused to reject this evil proposal."

(Adapted from the *Peace News*, June 5, '53)

MODERN BUSINESS

(By M. P. T. Acharya)

The Indian soap manufacturers complained that the foreign firms in their line compete severely with their products and so they asked Government to prevent it. Shri Karmarkar advised them to work their factories more efficiently to produce good soap at a cheap price.

Shri Karmarkar's advice can be given effect to only if the Indian soap manufacturers use as good and labour-saving machinery at great cost as the foreign manufacturers in India do and also press down the price of labour as they do. Of course, the Indian manufacturers may not also have such good sales organization as their foreign colleagues have; and also they may not be able to supply the shopkeepers as much as these want. Indian manufacturers do not invest so much capital per unit as the foreign manufacturers do to produce more soap in less time. Moreover the foreign firms are united among themselves, while the Indian firms are not united at all. Hence the only way, Indian manufacturers with less capital and organization can produce cheaper soap than at present or even than foreign soap, is to reduce the cost of labour.

Is this in the interests of Indian consumers and labour? If competition is the soul of business, manufacturers have no right to demand protection against foreign firms inland and abroad. It will be asking for monopoly to fleece labour and consumers. If the Indian handloom industry demands protection, the mill-owners complain against any protection that may be given to it; but when they face foreign competition inland and abroad they ask for protection! What is sauce for the goose must be sauce for the gander.

There are industries, however, in which all competition is eliminated. They work on the principle enunciated by Rockefeller, the father of the trusts in U.S.: No competition but union to plunder the consumer and labourer. One such example in India is the Vanaspati industry. It is organized in the Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association organized by the International Trust Lever Bros. and they do not want any outsiders. I have had experience when a certain Vanaspati factory with a capacity of 10 tons a day was opened, the factory got an ultimatum to come to terms with the Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association. Otherwise the Vanaspati Manufacturers would have undersold the factory's Vanaspati, so that it would have to close. Hurriedly the owner had to run to Bombay to make terms with the Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association and become its member and limit his market and sell at an agreed price. In fact he had to become one with the Vanaspati monopolists' association in order not to face ruin. That is modern business: The union is strength. The union of a few against the rest!

NOTES

A New Social Worry

A reader draws my attention to a note 'Shame!' appearing in *People's Voice*, Bombay, of July 1953. The note cites examples of male officers misbehaving with the lady staff of the Railway Offices and ends with remarking as follows:

"The ever rising cost of living has compelled the ladies of the middle class to come forward to supplement the family income. The wolves in certain offices — Government as well as private — must cease to abuse their position and misbehave towards the lady clerks. The ladies who have taken up courage and have come forward to take up responsibilities like men should exhibit a little courage and teach a lesson to such gentlemen — goondas. In this they would have the active support of every self-respecting person who has regard for his mother, sister and daughter."

The matter is really shameful. Modern conditions, coming upon us as they are these days, have given a further opportunity to the aggressive male to go wrong. There is often heard another complaint also that on account of the coming in of the tempting Eve in the office staff, there is much waste of time, less work and more negligence, though it should not be necessarily so. The female staff must muster courage and surely vindicate themselves, as the note quoted above suggests. But the question remains, should the social order be such as might require our womenfolk to leave their natural place, the home and the care of the family, in order to supplement the family income? Can we not have home handicrafts and industries that will contribute not only to the family coffers but also to the happiness of the family and better bringing up of children and minding their elementary education, which only the mother can do the best?

30-7-53

M. P.

Artificial Fertilizers

A South Indian reader, a few months ago, wrote to me pointing out that the Japanese method of paddy cultivation required the use of artificial fertilizers, and said that it was not a good thing from the point of view of soil fertility in the long run. He drew my attention to articles on this matter that had appeared in the *Harijan* before, obviously suggesting to me that I should go into the matter again in these columns. I sent this letter to an experimental paddy cultivation centre of the Japanese method in Bombay State. The reply that I got from it was no way helpful nor satisfactory in any way. Later, I casually came across the following news-item that was sent to me by another reader:

"Coimbatore, April 27

"The Japanese method of paddy cultivation is reported to have been not totally agreeable to Indian conditions. This was revealed to Dr. Ramaiah, Rice Consultant to the Food and Agricultural Organization

of the ECAFE, by the officials of the Agricultural Department, Madras, it is learnt.

"Dr. Ramaiah was asked by the Government of India to report as to how the Japanese method of paddy cultivation was progressing in the various rice-growing States in India.

"According to the officials, the Japanese method, which required use of large quantities of ammonium sulphate, was not actually suited to Indian conditions.

"The Japanese method was, therefore, being modified by using only certain percentage of ammonium sulphate or nitrogen with basal dressing of compost and green manure.

"The new method will be demonstrated in about 3,000 villages in the paddy-growing tracts of Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery deltas. A beginning will be made with early yielding varieties."

(From *The Times of India*)

Not being an expert I can say nothing on this particular matter. But I note one thing and it is about the use of artificial fertilizers in general. If the Japanese method requires them as a necessary part of it, then it is a serious drawback in the method, against which we must be careful betimes. Regarding the evil effects of artificial fertilizers there is now coming forth enough scientific opinion to show that it is not an unmixed good, and modern civilization is being warned against it by soil scientists.

2-7-53

M. P.

The Annals of the Poor

Here is one more tragedy reported by a news agency correspondent from Kerala:

"Rather than see his three-year-old son starve, an unemployed labourer in Cochin State is reported to have slit the boy's throat with a knife. His wife left the house after he had lost his job, leaving him to look after the child. The boy was reported to have been starving for sometime.

"The man has been arrested by the police."

But as some Sanskrit poet has said,

परदुःखेन दुःखिता बिरलाः ।

'Rare indeed are noblemen whose heart melts with pity at the distress of others.'

V. G. D.

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