

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

VOL. XVII. No. 36

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1953

TWO ANNAS

## ENGLISH TEACHING IN BOMBAY STATE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The Bombay Legislative Assembly in its last Poona Session passed an epoch-making resolution after long deliberations both in the Congress Legislature Party and outside in the Press as also the teaching world. As I said some months ago :

"The question of the place of English in secondary education is not new for the State, as its Government has by now already had its own policy decided on the matter. It has laid down that the study of English shall formally begin from the eighth year of a child's schooling and not earlier, i.e. it will begin at the truly secondary stage, the first seven years being entirely meant for the primary or basic stage. This bold policy of reorganization of secondary education in the State was revised last year to allow that the study of English in schools might be earlier by one year only, i.e. at the seventh year and that on a purely voluntary basis. Now it is abundantly clear that this step on the part of the Government was a tactical mistake if not worse and was a bad sort of appeasement of vested interests who were planning to pick a hole if they could, in the truly national principle and policy noted above. In the wake of that appeasement, the reaction in favour of going back upon that policy is gathering ground in some places and it seems they have succeeded in putting up their move on the official map of reorganization suggested in the D. E.'s circular. For it suggests whether English might be further allowed to be begun from standard sixth if not earlier as before from standard fifth. That this is very bad from various points of view has been discussed in these columns in various connections. It is enough to note here that this suggestion is wholly reactionary and must be negatived by all who care to see that a new system of national education in India is born and brought about on a firm democratic basis and in the true interests of our people as a whole and not in the vested interests of a few classes as it is today." (*Harijan*, 20-12-'52).

The move of reintroducing English in standards 5, 6, 7 therefore was really speaking a challenge both to the Government as also to all those who, for a few years last, were striving to see that teaching of English was shown its due and proper place, and was not allowed to continue to encroach, as it did under the British rule in India, upon other legitimate studies in our future national system of education. Shri L. M. Patel, M.L.A., Bombay, who moved the resolution in the Legislative Assembly deserves congratulations for meeting this challenge in a very successful way. The resolution that he moved and was passed by the overwhelming vote of the Assembly is as follows :

"In view of the acceptance of Basic Education as the pattern for the education of children of the age group 6-14 in recent years, this Assembly recommends to Government not to reintroduce the study of English language in the 5th and 6th standards and to discontinue forthwith the study of English as optional language for the 7th standard in the Primary Schools (as well as Secondary Schools) in the State."

The resolution is also a proper reply to the reactionary suggestion of the Report of the Mudaliar Commission, that English should be introduced earlier and the basic stage of 6 to 14 years should be split up as before into upper and lower stages. It is good to learn that the Chief Minister of Bombay said in the Assembly that his Government would accept and implement this resolution in its educational policy. Let us hope it is done from the next year, i.e. June 1954 and necessary instructions are issued to schools betimes. We hope this bold lead that is given to the whole of the country will be accepted all over India and the first 8 years of a child's schooling all over India will be free from the incubus of too early English teaching.

23-10-'53

## LIMITATIONS OF WORKING AN ALL-PARTY PROGRAMME

(By K. G. Mashruwala)

[While casually going through the last year's volume of the *Harijan*, I came across the following note "Socialist Support to Bhoodan", by late Shri K. G. M. which bears reproduction at present in connection with the situation consequent upon the Gujarat P. S. Party's agrarian agitation in Pardi. The note of Shri K. G. M. which is being reproduced below clearly notes the danger inherent in various political parties working together on a common programme and the requisite conditions or limitations for such an experiment to be made successful.

2-11-'53

M. P.]

In the course of a long resolution captioned "Redistribution of land", the Socialist Convention, which met at Panchmarhi (M.P.) last week says :

"14. This Convention notes with joy the noble effort of Acharya Vinoba Bhave to draw the attention of the nation to the urgency and justice of this problem by his unique method of Bhoodan. The Socialist Party further welcomes the move of the Sarvodaya Samaj in this direction and reciprocates its invitation for co-operation."

I welcome the Socialist appreciation of the Bhoodan movement and their desire to co-operate. I hope they will work for it with the same

love and fraternal spirit as Vinoba expects of the workers. There is no room in it for any class war propaganda or slogans of that nature, even as there is no room in it for the spirit of giving or begging alms. It is a preliminary step towards the reunion of something like families separated in estate, food and worship. While doing this work there should not also be indulgence in political propaganda in favour of Socialism or against Congress and other political parties. If we are serious in our service to the poor, let us realize that political labels are even worse than communal, regional or linguistic labels.

Wardha, 29-5-'52

*Harijan*, 7-6-'52

## ALUMINIUM : ITS INDUSTRY AND USE

(By *Maganbhai P. Desai*)

A Calcutta firm manufacturing Aluminium wares sent me a letter in protest to an article entitled "Aluminium—A Menace to Health" (*Harijan*, August 22, 1953), as also an article "Is Aluminium Harmful to Health? No, Definitely No," for publication in *Harijan*. The article reproduced long extracts of medical opinion in support of the use of Aluminium utensils.

Another correspondent has also written a letter to me. He too sent a copy of an article which he says he had written some twenty years ago when he was connected with a concern manufacturing aluminium vessels. He writes to me in his letter that the question of use of aluminium utensils on grounds of health is a highly controversial issue and asks why the *Harijan* papers should have taken up such a question. His article voices the protest as that of the Calcutta firm.

I do not think it necessary to publish these letters in the columns of *Harijan*. Shri Krishna Murthy Mir Mira in his article in *Harijan* (22-8-'53), has quoted medical opinion and tried to show that the use of Aluminium utensils is harmful. As is usual in such matters, here also the medical opinion seems to be keenly divided. This is unfortunate, as it confuses the mind of the layman. He does not know whether or not he should use these utensils. Recently we saw a similar thing on the question of Vanaspati or artificial ghee. We also know that persons having interest at stake in such matters try to distort the truth and raise a false agitation. In such circumstances, how should the layman behave? Naturally, he will not take risk and it will be wise for him to prefer to take another course if there is any and might be helpful to him.

But there is another important and conclusive point involved in this question. As Shri Krishna Murthy Mir Mira said in his article, the Aluminium industry has ruined the potter's industry in villages and made him unemployed. Both the correspondents are almost silent on this invasion on villages by industrialization. As

Aluminium can be put to other uses, why should it be used commercially in manufacturing utensils? Surely, it is no social good that is aimed that way.

From the view-point of the promotion of village industries, I can say that Aluminium should better not be used in manufacturing utensils. If this could be stopped, it will certainly help the national economy. It will also cast a favourable influence on the indigenous industry of the copper-smiths.

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

## THE EXECUTIVE vs. THE JUDICIARY

(By *Magabhai P. Desai*)

An interesting case was decided by an Allahabad judge the other day. It appears that two students of the Allahabad University submitted applications in a local munsif court praying for interim injunctions that the authorities of the Students Union and of the University be restrained from holding elections of some of the office-bearers of the Union or the University.

It was submitted against the applications that the subject-matter of the suits concerned the internal affairs of the University Union which was an integral part of the Allahabad University, a statutory and autonomous body; and as such there should not be any interference by the Court.

The learned judge upheld this objection and decided that "the University was an autonomous body and as such the Court should not interfere in its affairs without sufficient grounds; that the defendants were persons holding responsible positions who could reasonably be expected to have as much interest in the welfare of the students....; that there was no irreparable injury going to be caused to the plaintiff...." (*The Leader*, 7-10-'53).

The decision meets a fundamental issue, viz., whether the interference by Courts in the affairs of a statutory executive body through an interim injunction of the kind to be seen in the above case, is proper and legitimate. It is said that in a democracy there should be no interference by the executive in the affairs of the judiciary. Even the legislatures respect this and withhold their discussion in matters of which the courts might be seized at the moment. This is a healthy convention. Does not a similar obligation arise on the part of the judiciary that they in their discretion refrain from interfering, through interim injunction, with the legitimate performance of statutory duty by the executive? Not being a vakil, I only express here as layman's question. A vakil friend tells me that there is a statutory provision requiring courts not to meddle in the executive affairs of the State in this manner. That is for lawyers and jurists to go into. The layman's point of view is that the executive also is working under a due process of law laid down by the State. The courts are competent, in their normal course, to adjudge if they are so called upon to

examine whether it has been duly observed or not by the executive. However, to interfere in the executive of the State with interim injunction is another matter; and it is a question whether courts, though they might be formally empowered to issue even *ex parte* or unilateral orders in such applications, should exercise that power against statutory executive authorities functioning to perform their legitimate duties. The learned judge in the Allahabad case has wisely ruled that generally there should not be such interference. It is up to the judiciary to institute healthy conventions on this matter and refrain itself from interfering with the executive, as it is held true *vice versa* for the executive.

12-10-'53

### RIFLE CLUBS

(By Mankumar Sen)

Lately, Rifle Clubs are coming into being in different parts of the country. I am not well informed of other regions, but in my State of West Bengal this fashionable game of arms is gaining ground,—and, for obvious reasons under the patronage of high Government officials.

What after all is expected to be achieved by these clubs? Formerly, clubs were formed district-wise; of late, sub-divisional clubs also are raising their heads. This shows, either the Government representatives, under whose patronage these are prompted and run, or the influential individuals who are the 'inspiration' at the source, must have found this game gainful. We, on our part, do not only not find any use in such private training in arms but also notice therein a tendency which is definitely harmful and wasteful in ways more than one.

We are said to be wedded to the doctrine of non-violence; at least it is agreed by our national leaders that they do want peace to prevail and to this end pure and effective means alone is what they employ or seek to employ. One may at once denounce it by pointing out their finger to the large defence forces, police and constabulary of India; but, if our President Prasad's feelings indicate anything, they distinctly reveal the helplessness of the Government in this sphere amidst tremendous national and international troubles; more clearly, the army, navy and air force etc. are being maintained as a necessary evil. But is there any necessity, whatsoever, in the upbringing of a rifle-mindedness amongst our young boys and girls? I don't see any. This is playing with a fashionable menace, and that too with very little practical utility.

Generally, the members of such clubs are drawn from the 'high' families, i.e. the families of high officials or influential and/or moneyed persons. To my knowledge, no general education conducive to the widening of the trainees' outlook, to the deepening of their patriotism is

imparted by the clubs. And secondly, it is only rarely that the larger number of these trained men and women actually find any scope for using arms. Why then this deplorable sport with the machine of death?

If it is argued that such a trained personnel is usable for home defence, it may be respectfully replied that this is an impracticable and unfounded proposition to cover up a sinister design. Even if the Government had the desire, they have not the power to arm the people at large for self-defence. Again, there is the basic truth that such an arming venture, even if practicable, is bound to create complexities and to beget violence of which it is a symbol, and to increase internecine factitious quarrels.

With my close association with a number of schools, I know the agony and dissatisfaction of the students for acute want of sports goods. India has to her credit many games which, while conveying the genius of the nation, fully cover the aspect of physical and mental development which is the ultimate objective of sports and games. Besides, Western fashion with its 'crusading' spirit has not failed to infiltrate in the field of Indian sports too! There is, therefore, actually a decline in home games and men with means are taking more and more interest in 'aristocratic' and superficial games. The rifle club mentality is no doubt born of this fashionable outlook. This neither holds our prestige, nor furthers the cause of our sports and its indigenous variety. The defence of the country in war and peace alike depends not on the arming of a fashionable few, but on the physical fitness and mental alertness of the whole body of our youngsters.

[I reciprocate the sentiments expressed by the writer above. On one occasion when I learnt that the President of the Gandhi Memorial Trust was a president-patron or so of the All-India Rifle Association, I had remarked that it would not be proper for one associating his name with the Gandhi Memorial presidency to lend the prestige of his position and name to such an institution and its rifle-idea. If at all, a Charkha Club might well deserve that honour. Ultimately, it is in such ways that ideas and institutions get prestige and privilege of official patronage and become fashionable and activated. Therefore it becomes a matter for almost an ethical decision for persons in high places where to lend their weight of public prestige and position. This is true for Governors, ministers and others who generally would catch the public eye. If we wish to change the order given to us by our ex-rulers, it is such things also that require to be scrupulously gone into. It must be noted that things like the rifle club create or feed in us a superiority complex and a class mentality as also is a costly luxury.

13-10-'53

M. P.]

### MAHADEV DESAI'S EARLY LIFE

By N. D. Parikh

Pages, vii, 71 Price Re. 1 Postage etc. As. 5

NAVJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD-9

# HARIJAN

Nov. 7

1953

## PROHIBITION AND THE CONGRESS (By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The following is reproduced from *The Hindu*, October 7, 1953:

"Coorgaum, Oct. 5. The Mysore Pradesh Congress Committee concluded its deliberations last night. The important question whether prohibition had proved a success in the Kolar Gold Fields area or not was discussed, when the P. C. C. considered two resolutions, one tabled by Mr Harnahalli Ramaswami, urging that total prohibition should be introduced in the State and the other by Mr M. C. Perumal, that prohibition should be scrapped in the Kolar Gold Fields.

Mr M. C. Perumal, Vice-Chairman of the Reception Committee and President, Kolar Gold Fields Taluka Congress Committee, observed that illicit distillation was a cottage industry in the area and people did not co-operate in making prohibition a success. With the adjacent district of Bangalore not 'dry' it was easy for people from the Kolar district to get their liquor requirements from that area.

Mr Harnahalli Ramaswami pleaded for effective enforcement of prohibition and extending it to the other districts in the State. (At present, prohibition is in force in 6 out of the 10 districts in the State, including the Bellary district.)

Mr R. Chennanagtramlah, a former minister, said that prohibition had resulted in good to several families. In its actual working, some defects had been, however, noticed. Prohibition was a blessing to Harijans and to other addressees. He hoped the Government would take effective measures to make prohibition a success.

After some more members had spoken, Mr Kadidal Manjappa, Minister for Revenue, speaking on the resolution, said that much could be said on both sides. Whether the scheme of prohibition was a success or not was a controversial matter. People wanted extension of prohibition to the remaining districts also. The scheme of prohibition could succeed only if the public enthusiastically co-operated with the Government in its implementation. The Minister added, that he would consider the suggestion made for the constitution of a committee to review the working of the prohibition scheme in the State.

In the light of the remarks made by the Revenue Minister, the two resolutions were, with the leave of the House, withdrawn."

The above report, in a short compass, well illustrates how both Congressmen as well as their ministers in charge of Governments at present work and think vis-a-vis their duty and pledged word to the people regarding prohibition. It vividly brings out the following chief points:

1. There are still some people in the Congress who have a confused mind over the implementation of prohibition in the country. How otherwise could a minister of State say that he had still to set up an inquiry to review the working of the prohibition scheme in the State? What will the inquiry reveal at best? It would tell him, if he did not know it himself, how he failed to make prohibition a success; or it might say that the scheme had failed and should be

scrapped, as the Taluka Congress Chief so irresponsibly said. How or why is an inquiry necessary then?

2. To proceed with prohibition by instalments of gradual extension of dry areas is bad policy. It is queer that the minister does not note that point which was made by an ex-minister; nor does he note the defects in actual working that some speakers told him. But he seems to be careful to say that the success of prohibition was a controversial matter. He does not even care to note further that, he was bound under the Constitution to make it a success.

3. I do not know whether in Mysore prohibition is, in charge of a separate minister. It is significant that the minister for revenue replied to the debate. Is it a vivid indication that the question of prohibition is only a revenue matter in the eyes of the Mysore Government? It is so in all parts where it is not still introduced. It is so in the eyes of the Central Government and its planners. The worst part of it is that they do not even care to see that this is blatant violation of the Constitution of India; and the most serious and alarming thing is that the Centre is a direct party to this dismal state of affairs. Otherwise no State dare disregard the Constitution with impunity as seems to be almost the order of the day from the Centre.

4. The Congress which can be depended upon to see that prohibition is made a success in the whole of the country has proved to be a broken reed at the very hour of its trial. If matters do not improve and the nation succumbs to this tragic evasion of responsibility by powers that be, I am sure, the A. I. C. C., its Working Committee and its President will be named by history as really responsible for it. Can these bodies show to their score of resolution-making in the last post-independence years any resolution saying that prohibition should be expedited? Do Congressmen realize what a serious lapse from duty it shows? Why should not the open session of the Congress, when it meets next, impeach its office-bearers for this? It is admitted on all hands that prohibition benefits the poor mass of our people. Why then this unholy and almost debasing craving for the poor man's hard-earned money by tempting him to drink from a Government drink shop? For feeding or financing some fads of reconstruction, as a Central minister of State spoke out at an unguarded moment at Rajkot the other day?

Thank God there are a good number of people all over the land who still remember the old promise and are not led away by the lure of tainted drink money. They must mobilize and begin to assert themselves in the counsels of the Congress. The rot that has set in that body on this score of a very necessary and urgent popular reform must be stopped and those who are responsible for it should be pulled up. The fundamental error that has been allowed to creep in our public affairs is that consideration about

prohibition is tolerated as a matter of revenue. Shri Jawaharlalji who has today the double and joint responsibility of heading the Congress as well as the Government of India, should, sooner than later, tell all Governments forthright that prohibition is not a revenue consideration, but is a reform to achieve which we have pledged ourselves as a nation and it must be done within a specific period. Or the people must frankly tell the Government and make it realize its duty. If necessary, i.e., if the Congress fails the people, the people should set up an all-India Prohibition League for this specific work to draw the attention of our Governments to this their urgent task. Let us at least succeed in achieving one thing out of the many that we told ourselves to do when Swaraj came to us. Prohibition is the easiest and the surest, provided there is the will to do it. Let us mean business now.

30-10-'53

### REVOLUTION THROUGH SAMYA-YOGA \*

(By Vinoba)

This being a cultural and an educational centre, I propose to speak to you about the basic idea behind the Bhoodan Yajna. We call this idea Samya-yoga. It consists in accepting the belief that the Spirit is immanent equally in all beings. It is on the foundation of this principle that we want to build up the Sarvodaya society, that is, a society which provides for full and free development of one and all. The Sarvodaya society aims and works for the wellbeing not merely of the majority but of all.

You perhaps know that there are three main ideologies prevailing in the world at present. The oldest of them is Capitalism. It claims to promote efficiency in society. Then there is Democratic Socialism. The third is Communism. Communism professes to arrange for an equal distribution of all necessities of life to all.

#### Capitalism

Let us first take Capitalism. Capitalism advocates efficiency. It says that some are less efficient than others, they should therefore get less; while some are more efficient and should therefore get more. It seeks to promote efficiency in society by remunerating each for his labour according to his work and capacity. It has raised the standard of life of a tiny minority to a very high level. But at the same time it has also pulled down that of a vast majority into abysmal poverty. Capitalism has no remedy for this evil. Indeed it declares quite frankly that for those who are unfit there is no alternative except that they remain so. It is inevitable, it adds, that those who are able should take precedence over others in enjoying all the amenities of life in this world.

This is the root cause behind much of the misery of the present-day world and that is why Capitalism has very few supporters today. And though it still goes on in varying forms, it is doomed to die sooner or later.

\* From his speech at the Mandar Vidyapith in Bhagalpur, Bihar.

### Democratic Socialism

Democracy functions through the people exercising their right of vote. This results in the rule of the majority which helps and protects the majority but not the minority. Democratic Socialism makes the claim that it safeguards the interests not only of the majority but of all. But experience shows that it has no remedy for many of the ills which democracy leads to. So long as the interests of the minority are sought to be protected through the will of the majority, it is not possible to achieve full Socialism.

### Communism

Communism declares that equality can never be achieved unless the present upper class is totally abolished. Class war and the extermination of those who hold power offer the only way to this cherished goal. This much violence is inevitable and even obligatory for us.

It is obvious that such an outlook can never make for peace, because violence does produce counter-violence. Not only that, it also results in the depreciation of human virtues which are ultimately the only real foundation for any progress worth the name.

### Samya-yoga

Samya-yoga, on the other hand, holds that there indwells in every man the same Spirit. It therefore makes no distinction between man and man. It even goes further and recognizes no ultimate difference in the spirit of man and other animals.

This is the difference between Communism and Samya-yoga. Communism does not accept the oneness of the Spirit in all beings: Samya-yoga does and seeks to reform and rebuild the entire life of society on its foundation, with revolutionary results in every field, ethical, social, economic and political.

People have, up to the present, regarded themselves as owners of the wealth they might have. This has produced clash of interests between different groups. We want to replace this idea of the private ownership of wealth by that of the trusteeship of wealth in the interest of the society. Acceptance of the trusteeship ideal will transform our entire thinking in regard to wealth and the relationship between the individual and the society. All that we have is for the service of the society, and not for serving our narrow selfish ends. Indeed, if we would but think of it a little deeply, real self-interest lies in sacrificing it at the feet of the society. This moral upliftment of the people which Samya-yoga brings about, is its distinctive feature.

Let us now see how the application of Samya-yoga revolutionizes our economic life. According to Samya-yoga every man, who works for the society to the best of his ability, has a right to livelihood. A blind man, for example, has as much right to it as any other, if he exerts himself fully within his limits. His quantity of work may be less than that of others who have eyes to see, but that is no reason why he should get less

food to eat. Food and other physical needs are material things while service is a moral value which cannot be assessed in terms of material things. What the son gives to his mother; the pupil to his teacher, and the Kisan to the society cannot be measured in money.

Therefore all work which is an act of service to society must carry equal value. The prevailing practice is just the reverse of it. Intellectual work is regarded as superior to physical labour and paid more than the latter. This distinction between intellectual and physical labour is entirely baseless. Since Samya-yoga takes its stand upon the equality of the Spirit, it cannot accept any difference of value in the different forms of social work which are all equally necessary and equally useful for social welfare. There will be difference in the degree and the kind of service based on the differences between individuals and their capacities, but each individual will have to be equally cared for. The different fingers differ in usefulness, but they are all equally useful in that one cannot replace another. In the same way, there will be differences of kind in the service which individuals in society render to the whole, but there can be no difference in their economic values.

Every one must get full opportunity for development. The students will acquire training and knowledge according to their receptive capacity. But we cannot allow the present state of affairs which provides for the education of the son of a rich man but not for the son of a poor man. If we do not reward every form of service equally, then we not only deny scope for development to many but also misdirect their energies in so far as they are attracted because of the lure of money towards things for which they may not have the requisite propensity or capacity. Equal reward for all labour will check this tendency.

The implementation of this view in the economic sphere will help the building up of self-sufficiency in the villages. They will produce all their primary needs, such as, food and cloth, milk and ghee locally. God has made everyone of us self-sufficient; that is the beauty of His plan. Everyone has some intelligence and capacity for work. That is why everyone can work for his self-development. We want the same kind of decentralization in the economic sphere. Unless there is economic equality, domination and slavery and consequent distinctions of high and low are bound to continue.

Samya-yoga will produce equally revolutionary changes in the political sphere too. We want an order of society which will be free not only from exploitation but also from every form of governmental authority. The power of government will be decentralized and distributed among the villages. Every village will be a State in itself; the Centre will have only nominal authority over them. In this way, gradually we will reach a stage when authority in every form will

have become unnecessary and will therefore fade away giving rise to a perfectly free society.

In the social sphere also there will be no caste or any other variety of invidious distinctions. He who has the qualities of a Brahmana may be entrusted with work suited to his capacity, but that will not give him a superior status. In the same way sweepers, scavengers and cobblers also cannot be regarded as inferior to others, because they render to society a service which is not less valuable than that of the Brahmana.

Thus Samya-yoga will transform the entire life of society in every field. This is what we call revolution. It is wrong to associate revolution with violence as some people seem to do today. Revolution can be brought about only through a change of values. We claim that Samya-yoga brings about this change of values because it takes its stand upon a spiritual view of things.

The Bhoodan programme is, as they say, only the thin end of the wedge of all that we want to do. We want to make people free from all attachment to wealth and material things. The Bhoodan campaign is merely the beginning of this long and comprehensive plan. Our ultimate aim is to make land entirely free. There should be not only no individual ownership, but also no national ownership over land. We do not belong to this or that nation but to the world. Air, water, light and land are direct gifts of God and must belong to the entire humanity.

(From Hindi)

### Do Machines Make Jobs ?

"Q. Don't machines throw men out of work in America ?

A. No, on the contrary, machines have created thousands of new jobs, in both new and old industries."

This theory of machines making more jobs is evidently absurd. For machines are made to employ less hands and earn thereby more profits. If in spite of this, a large number of persons are employed in U.S.A., it is due to other reasons, such as machine-making industries, vast raw material production required for machine-making and manufacture by machines and a hoard of people employed to buy and sell the machines and goods besides a vast number of hands employed in parasitism, such as banking, insurance and advertising, all which add to the cost of the final products and require charging a high price. Finally those who are employed cannot buy up all the goods and they have to be dumped abroad. No country can earn all charges put upon the cost of productions — even with hand, with machines; the selling problem becomes day by day more difficult to solve, — whether conducted by Bolshevik State capitalist or by private capitalists. Only wasteful work which employs lots of people makes selling a little easier but cannot absorb all the goods, for the cost of wasteful work is added to the cost of production.

It is all chaos and lottery for which no plan or calculation is possible.

If foreign markets cannot buy, all industrial countries will have chaos.

M. P. T. ACHARYA

## AGRICULTURE FOR NEED

For many years now *Freedom* has been pointing to the disasters which derive from a world food production tied to market economy. Anarchists have urged in this country at all events, that it is in every way desirable that a population should raise its own food as locally as possible.

Several months ago we reviewed H. J. Masingham and Edward Hyam's striking book *Prophecy of Famine* in these columns. It is with some surprise, but much gratification, that we see many of our cherished beliefs, sedulously propagated over the years in a seeming wilderness, appearing in so respected and widely read a publication as the *Listener* (3-9-'53) as though they were the most natural and sensible in the world:

"The authors of *Prophecy of Famine* demand that we do no less, and explain, first, that a start is urgent, and secondly, how it can be gone—chiefly by the reclaiming of waste and marginal land, a very much more careful use of the soil to avoid its exhaustion, and the return of the peasant. The authors contend that Britain can be self-supporting, or very nearly so, provided that agricultural policy is one of mixed farming of small farms and that every available acre of usable land is properly used. This may be just possible, though, as the authors are well aware, such a revolution in our way of living would involve a complete change in our existing patterns of thought; something much more than mere physical change-over would be demanded. Co-operation with the land must be the aim, not that concept of an industrialized mechanistic civilization—the 'conquest of nature'. The authors point out that this means considering always not what is economically efficient, but what is socially efficient. Economic 'efficiency' in farming created the great dustbowls of the U. S. A. The excuse that a certain type of farming is economically inefficient, that 'we can't afford it', is invalid when it is a question of seeing that the nation has enough to eat. The plain fact is that as other countries become more industrialized they require less of our manufactured goods and more of the food they once exported to us. For Britain, it may be, presently, not 'export or die' but what is exportable and where."

Particularly interesting here is the recognition that the American dustbowls are directly due to the idea of producing as cheaply as possible in order successfully to capture the world market in grain.

That such ideas are beginning to be current in intellectual circles is encouraging. But politicians are still far behind as the Socialist dream of nationalizing agriculture under large "economic" farming units shows. Nor are property owners, business men, chemical firms likely to take too kindly to the humanly right attitude towards agriculture. Its achievement is likely to remain a revolutionary task.

(Reproduced from *Freedom*, September 19, 1953)

[The achievement of this revolutionary task is the real aim of Shri Vinoba's Bhoodan movement. It calls for a radical change in the orthodox economic values which our English educated classes that dominate the Indian picture today hold true in imitation of their Western gurus. But we have now the queer spectacle of seeing that while the

West begins to see the wrong in their centralized and imperialist order, we continue to worship at that undependable idol. The Bhoodan movement ultimately aims to change these values and usher in a new agro-industrial order of a self-sufficient and self-governing village economy.

23-10-'53

M. P. J

## A SELF-SUFFICIENT AND SELF-GOVERNING SOCIAL ORDER

(By Wilfred Wellock)

[Readers of the *Harijan* know Shri Wilfred Wellock very well by now through his *Orchard Lea Papers*. In his paper No. 7 "The Creative Society" he discusses modern centralized industrial and social order and gives his vision of a new order which shall be self-sufficient and self-governing and thus be free and spiritually alive enough to evolve a creative society.

In our own country we have the problem of solving how to rehabilitate our villages and rebuild their small-scale agro-industrial economy and on those foundations revive our ancient ideal of happy village republics living in peace and plenty, happiness and contentment, as free and independent village communities. In a way, therefore, we are not required to undo, as the urbanized West has to do, the evils of an Industrial Revolution, and then go forth for the decentralized, self-sufficient and self-governing order of small agro-industrial communities. But we have the question of having faith in the new ideal and not be imitating the West in industrialism. There are all fears that the powers that be in the present order of things believe in and pursue the Western way of an economic order, without caring to see that it has created many more problems for the Western world than has really solved.

The following, coming as it is from a Western observer, should provoke us to seriously question the belief in industrialism and turn to a new order that the Father of the Nation called us all to strive for and establish as a new experiment in the present warring and unhappy world.

20-10-'53

—M. P. J

Today, a civilization burdened with permanent war from which it can find no way of escape, with colossal military expenditures which increase its destructive power but destroy its vision, with ideological conflicts which its growing materialism cannot resolve, and with a mechanistic way of life that is gnawing the moral fibre of the people and transforming them into inert totalitarian masses, cries aloud for deliverance.

This civilization, born of the Industrial Revolution, is nearing its end; its enthusiasms and impulses are weakening, and as it wilts, despair grows, for there is no obvious alternative to it. Until recently no one dreamed that the new prosperity could require an alternative. It is now only too evident that events have moved too fast for reflection and rational action. Before a sane judgment could be passed on one invention, another had captured the public imagination and outplacced the prophets, whose warnings thus fell on deaf ears. In consequence, the Western colossus of a misguided science is heading for destruction.

The Industrial Revolution is often described as a great creative era, but it is true in a very limited sense only. Throughout its history, and never more so than today, the creative functions

of the Industrial Revolution have been performed by small groups of experts and technicians, the "back room boys," etc., while the great body of workers have been condemned to varying degrees of repetitive labour. The farther the "division of labour" principle was carried, the more completely repetitive became the labour of the masses. This is the antithesis of the creative society.

A second qualification of that claim arises from the fact that the primary aim of its creative achievements was maximum saleability and profitability of what was produced, and thus the capture of markets. In other words, the making of money and the creation of social and political power had precedence over all such spiritual aims as the making of a beautiful world, or country, a cultured, sensitive humanity, and a satisfying life.

In such a civilization the only reward of labour is money, whence the executive classes aspire to live in affluence, with top-grade education for their children, while the repetitive workers naturally organize themselves to secure maximum economic security, the assurances of the Welfare State, and some degree of luxury and excitement as a set-off against the dreary monotony of their work-a-day existence.

Our age must therefore devote itself to the task of evolving a creative society. It will be slow work because it involves supporting spiritual ideas and values with appropriate cultural, social, political and industrial forms, organizations and techniques.

The cultural basis of the new order would insure that the aim of all production was high quality. Each industry would be run by a co-operative group who would share the responsibility for the design and quality of whatever was produced, and decide the kind and amount of machinery they would use. As the level of taste in the community rose, techniques would change and new forms of skill be evolved.

All production would strictly conform to the demands of health, as in the production and preparation of food or in the making of such things as shoes, chairs, e. g., which should take account of the human anatomy and so enable people to perform their functions with ease and pleasure.

In due course these communities might achieve forty or fifty per cent of self-sufficiency. They would also think about limiting their growth, and of encouraging the development of similar communities in their areas.

Having found the reasonable size for a fully integrated, largely self-governing community, the next step would be to form a region consisting of some fifteen or twenty similar communities. In this area a much higher percentage of self-sufficiency would be achieved

by the dove-tailing of industries, etc. The formation of a Regional Council would greatly enrich the life of the entire area. The organization of the local economic life would constitute the core of community and regional politics, which consequently would be vital and absorbing.

Obviously a new system of local government would be called for. At first, *ad hoc* Committees would work in consultation with the existing local Councils, but later on quite new bodies would be needed, the functions of which would be determined by the need.

These changes, so simple in appearance, would constitute a revolution in the disposition of power. Both political and economic power would pass from the central government to the localities, that is, directly to the people, which is where it should be in a true democracy. Moreover, as in the new economy the tendency would be for the local communities and the regions to be as self-sufficient as was reasonably possible, centralized power would tend to decline. This would be all to the good, as it would restrict the volume of world trade and so reduce the tensions which lead to war.

These conditions would afford maximum political and economic responsibility and creative opportunity to every member of the community. They would thus make possible the creative society we seek, which would overflow with ideas, aspirations and enthusiasms. These it would naturally attempt to express in every form of production and in every art. Each Regional Council would found a cultural centre where various regional festivals would take place, and where special training would be available. Every village would also have its cultural centre. Boundless opportunities would thus exist for the fullest expression of the human spirit, while the religious and cultural institutions would expound the doctrine and the values of self-giving.

(To be continued)

## THE DIARY OF MAHADEV DESAI

Vol. I

Translated from the Gujarati and edited

By Valji Govindji Desai

Pages, viii, 335 Price Rs. 5 Postage etc. Re. 1-3

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD - 9

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Subscription Rates — Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 s. or \$ 2.

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.