

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

VOL. XVII. No. 37

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1953

TWO ANNAS

ASIA'S FUTURE ECONOMY

(By Khandubhai K. Desai)

[From the report of his speech at the I.L.O. Asian Regional Conference, Tokyo, September 16, 1953.]

It must be realized by us who represent the Asian masses that the pivot on which our future economy depends is land and agriculture, the main basis of our wealth. I am firmly convinced that unless agricultural production, of both food and industrial raw materials, is stepped up immediately there is no hope for economic prosperity in this region. Our region is, as I have already stated, essentially agricultural, and the prosperity of the large masses comprising no less than 75-80 per cent, of the whole population, depends upon production on the land.

Our rural population are also bulk consumers of manufactured and other goods, and I am therefore of opinion that unless very close attention is paid to the welfare and needs of our village communities during the next few years and considerable purchasing power created among them, thereby giving them incentives to raise their standard of living, any steps in the direction of concentrating large-scale industries are bound to prove suicidal.

I also believe that economic and industrial activities to be undertaken in most of the countries in the Asian region should all be such as would contribute to the welfare of our rural population.

The economic thinking to which we have all been accustomed during the last 200 years, which was a period, as far as we are concerned, of political and economic subjugation, was more or less of the traditional colonial type which brought industrial prosperity to the ruling nations through exploitation of the masses, in this region particularly. It is obvious that no country in Asia can re-enact the history of the last two centuries in order to build up an economic and social structure based on what we are witnessing in the West. It has, therefore, to be an economic structure somewhat different from that, and one which could fulfil the needs of our people.

During the last few years most of the countries of the Asian region have attained their independence and they are now in a position to

think and plan for their future economic prosperity according to their resources — both human and material. What we want is freedom to develop in our own way so as to raise the standard of living of all, the people inhabiting this large part of the world. It must be realized by all that prosperity and peace are indivisible and that the world cannot be happy and at peace unless at least the minimum requirements of food, clothing and shelter are made available to every human being.

We always welcome assistance and guidance from our wealthier sister-nations of the world. But it must be clear that any aid or guidance given to accelerate our economic progress should be consistent with our culture, solidarity and self-respect. It should not be such as to worsen the existing employment situation and retard the growth of initiative. We do not want any free gift from anybody. We know that the road to prosperity leading to a higher standard of living for millions of our people is an uphill one and the present generation has got to work very hard. But, at the same time, I would like to submit very emphatically that any undue privations inflicted upon the already half-starved millions of this region for the purpose of imposing standards suited to Western economic structure would be fraught with grave consequences.

As I stated earlier, the peasant cultivator is the basis on which the whole economic structure of this region should be built up. The peasant, though a hard-working man, remains unemployed for the greater part of the year and his labour is not utilized for any gainful economic activity, which is the essential need of every country in this region. It is a matter of gratification to note that the attention of the governments in all the countries recently liberated from the imperial or colonial yoke has been drawn definitely towards agrarian reform. Even though it may look a little medieval to the modern mind fed on the literature and dazzling prosperity of some of the industrially developed countries, I must in humility state that the question of poverty, unemployment and lack of purchasing power — which in ultimate analysis is the same thing — can only be solved in our region by building up an economic structure which would give importance

to the development of home and small village industries.

The Director-General has also very rightly pointed out that any future economic development of this region will have to rely more on labour-intensive production than on capital-intensive production. Such production, by its very nature, also eliminates to a considerable extent the problem of the distribution of wealth, as it does not allow the concentration of wealth in a few hands. As far as the Asian nations are concerned, in their own interest, they will have to abandon the beaten track of 19th century colonial economics and its violent reactions, witnessed during the last forty years. We have got to evolve an entirely new economic structure of society in which everybody is a co-worker for the common good of the community and nobody is permitted to concentrate the national wealth for the purpose of exploitation through either land or large industrial organizations. This, in my opinion, is the foundation upon which the structure of the democratic and peaceful progress of our countries can be built up.

During the course of our meetings here we will, of course, discuss the various questions on the agenda regarding wages, housing and the protection of young persons. While dealing with all these questions it would be worth our while not to forget the fundamentals which I have just placed before you. If we ignore our vast agricultural population our conclusions will be futile. We will be committing a great mistake if we blindly imitate the money standards of countries which have a different economic background and a different national economy.

Let us not forget our objective. All along I have been telling you that the producer of wealth should not be ignored when we undertake the task of distributing wealth. In other words, we do not want exploitation in any shape or form. We want everybody to have an equal opportunity to develop himself, and we want everybody, through his development, to contribute towards the progress and well-being of society. This can be achieved only if we have goodwill, understanding and love for each other. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Indian nation, taught us the way to overcome our enemies with the weapons of love and goodwill. I wish that all of us might learn to use these weapons. Let us hope that we may achieve this objective in the near future.

A RIGHTEOUS STRUGGLE

By Mahadev Desai

Pages vi+97 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As. 4

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD-9

U. N. AS A WORLD GOVERNMENT ?

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

"Proposals for the reform of the United Nations are to be presented to the greatest World Government Conference yet held when it meets in Copenhagen's Parliament House from August 22 to 29.

Prepared in anticipation of revision of the U.N. Charter, which falls due for renewal in two years time, the document urges that a reformed U.N. be granted power to:

1. Make and enforce United Nations law;
2. Supervise the process of disarmament and control the production of atomic energy;
3. Uphold basic human rights;
4. Supervise United Nations elections;
5. Be responsible for the administration of non-self-governing territories;
6. Promote food production and economic development;
7. Provide relief in outbreaks of famine, serious epidemics or natural disasters;
8. Administer world territory;
9. Raise revenue for all or any of these purposes.

The proposals were prepared by a Joint Commission on U.N. Charter reform established by Federal Union and the Crusade for World Government. They have been published in pamphlet form, price 6d. from 20 Buckingham St., London, W. C. 2.

The proposals virtually turn the United Nations into a World Government with its own Legislature consisting of two Houses of Parliament, Courts of Justice and police.

The U.N. police force would enforce the decisions of the U.N. courts and, in addition to other duties, act as an inspectorate to ensure that disarmament provisions were not violated.

It would have power to station its members who would owe exclusive allegiance to the United Nations, anywhere in the territory of member States.

The production of all weapons of mass-destruction, including atomic weapons, would be prohibited."

The above is from *Peace News*, London, August 14, 1953. We hope the aim will be to have the whole world government, and not a partial or divided one, as the U.N. is today. And before the U.N. aspires to be a world government, is it not more proper and wiser as well that it at least fulfils the smaller task that it has undertaken under the existing charter? That will be both its qualification as well as its earnest for undertaking the larger task of growing into a world government. The latter can come, if at all, only when all the peoples of the world — without any distinction of colour or creed, race or region, caste or culture, etc. — come to feel themselves as One World — one family. The working of the U.N. amply shows that such a thing is a far distant cry, perhaps, a mere slogan belied by the international life we are living today, — let apart the question of our quarrelsome intra-national life all over the world. Enough unto the day are the evils thereof.

15-10-53

TOOLS OR MARKETS?

(By Maurice Frydman)

I have before me a letter from a friend, who writes:

"He (a village industries research worker of long standing and great achievements) has no weakness for decentralizing the factory as such. He says: 'It is a good thing, but not good enough for me.' He is definitely of the view that arming artisans with modern technique places the backward artisan (of whom necessarily there are going to be more) at a disadvantage. For example, yarn from the Gupte type of spinning machine does not make Khadi but only a sort of ersatz mill stuff. Unless you ply the wheel, you do not make Khadi. He has simply no patience when we bring in the analogy of the Singer sewing machine. More curious than that: The Wardha *ghani* costs some Rs 400. The Japanese type bench baby expeller plied by hand costs Rs 350, is made in Delhi, and gives the same efficiency as the big expeller. He is sorry for the development! He says he is not interested in it and also that 'so many of the parts go out of order.'

"I do not blame him for his back to the wall fight.... He wants the greatest good of the greatest number and sincerely believes that Government have given him the power to protect the artisan with crude implements or no implements; e.g., that zones of influence will be demarcated for the village craftsmen and machine industries. But such a line of thought obviates the necessity for any research. He says very very accurately that the problem is not technological but one of providing a market,—presumably at all cost."

"That is an example of defeatism at its height! But I believe that people of such frame of mind fail to realize that far less drastic political action is called for in protecting a more developed community by providing cheap and easy credit for improved tools and working capital....

"I feel too young for such a defeatist compromise.... I would decentralize everything and start village (production) units and make villages self-sufficient.... So much political action is needed to organize things at the village front and guarantee security to every villager. But that is far easier than proping up a sinking man with coramine *ad nauseam*...."

This letter hardly needs comments. The problem is simple: Have the village industries a chance in the long run, if they have to depend from year to year on enormous State subsidies and artificially created, centrally managed and elaborately organized markets? In fact, while the current Government schemes encourage decentralized production, the marketing was made highly centralized.

As a temporary measure, just to set things going, it may be all right; but, unless freedom both in production and in marketing is restored to the village craftsman, he will be forever in danger of having his lifeline cut off. Surely an arrangement which does not set free, but rather enslaves, is not a lasting solution. To work forever for distant emporia is not an inviting perspective. To monopolize local markets through legislation will create so many internal frontiers with all the corruption and violence following.

And what about the consumer's interest in stretching his rupee to the utmost? Through

every pore he has to sweat out money for which he gets nothing. Sales taxes, cesses, closed markets, all contrive to rob him of his purchasing power.

Is there no way in which both the village producer and the consumer are served? In which State funds are not spent unproductively? The only way that we can think of leads through greater efficiency of the village craftsman. In the long run it is surely cheaper to train, equip and service the individual producer, than subsidize him indefinitely at the consumer's and taxpayer's expense.

The Indian villager is cultured, intelligent and skilful. As he mastered the bicycle and the sewing machine so can he understand, operate, maintain and repair any simple piece of machinery. The mechanical genius is undoubtedly there, but is not given a chance to manifest itself.

Once, when I was organizing a factory in South India, there was no skilled labour to fall back on. Villagers came in abundance and in no time became intelligent and skilled workers. The brain, the eye, and the hand go well together with our people, and there is no fear of any inherent incapacity to operate more complex tools and equipment. A little training, competent assistance in the initial stages, and a service station nearby, is all that is needed.

A question may be asked whether a craftsman, given cheap power and efficient tools, will be able to compete with factories in an open market? The reply is: Yes, if he can buy the raw materials and sell his finished products at the same rates as the factories do. Some co-operatives on the Danish lines will be necessary. But the State will be only indirectly concerned, concentrating primarily on education and on making available cheap industrial credit for the small producer.

Small but highly efficient tools need not be costly. Manufactured in single product factories on a mass scale, they can be made unbelievably cheap.

No doubt, it will take time to equip and develop village industries to the point where they can compete with factories on equal terms; in the meantime, subsidies and reservation of markets may be just the right thing. But it is not the final and therefore the permanent, the self-perpetuating solution. We must aim at an order which is self-balancing and self-restoring.

A Correction

Shri Lele of the A. I. Khadi and Village Industries Board, Bombay, writes to say that the reference to the Khadi Board on p. 266 of the *Harijan*, 24-10-'53, in Shri Vinoba's speech, 'Some Questions about Bhodan' that 'the Board has appointed 500 workers....' is not right; the Board has only 50 to 75 workers today.

5-11-'53

M. P.

HARIJAN

Nov. 14

1953

GOOD NEVER DIES

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I would like to share the following letter from New Delhi from a reader of the *Harijan* :

"I have read with interest 'Standard of Railway Administration' by Shri Majumdar in your *Harijan* of 3rd instant. In this connection, I would like to make the following observations :

There is a limit to everything, and, when that limit is crossed, even intolerable things begin to appear tolerable. Exactly that seems to have been the case in regard to corruption, nepotism, blackmarketing, untruth etc. in India these days. Here these have reached the stage when persons addicted to them feel proud of these evils instead of being ashamed.

The poor may have some reason for being dishonest but the rich certainly have none. Yet the vicious circle seems to start from them and the poor gets entangled into it merely due to forced circumstances. Before Independence our leaders thought Rs 500/- a month would be good enough for them but what did we find in actual practice ? Even ten times of that amount could not satisfy them. Ministers wanted fat salaries in addition to so many things free or at a nominal cost. How could the poor resist copying them ? They started blackmarketing stealthily what the rich did openly.

I am now 62 and have seen enough of life. It pains me to say that I don't recollect to have ever found the morale of our people at a lower level than what it is today. Dishonesty, cheating, falsehood and other evils, seem to be met everywhere. Honesty, truth, simple habits are being ridiculed. Formerly there used to be some fear of justice from somewhere at least. Now the lordship of the strong over the weak, in all spheres of life, is the rule of the day. What a pity that human beings should have been degraded to a state worse than brutes at a time when we have our own Government. The evil having reached its zenith ordinary remedies won't prove effective. Imposition of fines, none seems to care. The blackmarketeers know for certain that this can be more than compensated quickly by continuing their line of action, and prefer their own course to being poor by following straight path, for that lowers them in public estimation, wealth being the thing that really counts.

Facts are facts and have to be faced. A house on fire is sure to harm others in the vicinity, and that is actually happening. Is life worth living under such circumstances ? If so, how to carry on day to day work, when one has to struggle so hard for living straight life at every step ? These are some of the questions which need serious thinking. Persons who were expected to set good example are doing just the reverse. If strong action is not taken against the evils to set things right in time, Nature, of course, which is impartial, will."

I would only add to what the good friend says above that the gloom and moral darkness that seem to envelop us all around is no cause for dismay nor defeatism ; it is a challenge to each one of us in our individual and corporate life to meet with faith in the ultimate goodness and courage to live it in spite of baffling odds and alluring temptations.

A word regarding the question whether we have been worse today than ever before. Man, I believe, is what he is from the time he was on this planet ; his nature is an interesting mixture of good and evil, and the eternal combat between the two ever goes on. At times evil surely seems to us to be winning in a certain way and from a certain point of view ; but it is always a question whether that way and that point of view in life are truly helpful and beneficial to us in the ultimate analysis. It is in this connection that wise men in the past all over the world have said in simple but most telling words that only the good and the true helps and benefits ; those who are first shall be the last and vice versa.

It is said that we are in an atomic age and in an age of science and happiness that can be ours through plenty. That might be as it may. But surely we are in an age of fear, and all our boastings of science and plenty only deepen and spread the grip of fear all over the world and in diverse ways. The dishonesty, cheating, falsehood and such others are a deadening brood of that devastating demon of fear. Humanity must muster all its strength and vigour to demolish this fearful product of our ugly civilization. The State and such other authorities of social control and direction can help it only to an extent and none further. Ultimately the revolt against fear must take its birth from the heart of man which is ever sound. Let us one another therefore exchange a word of hope and cheer in this great opportunity to vindicate our real dignity as ones created in God's image.

18-10-'53

"THE WEAKER SECTIONS OF THE PEOPLE"

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The reader is requested to refer to two previous articles on this subject, viz. "Backward Classes and the Constitution" (*Harijan*, 22-8-'53) and "The Scheduled Castes and Tribes" (*Harijan*, 12-9-'53). I now wish to discuss one more point in the same connection.

The Constitution of India has taken special care to see that the interests of weaker and backward classes and sections of our people are safeguarded and specially looked after by the State. And it should be noted that the State here includes all the Governments and all the Legislatures and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or the control of the Government of India (Arts. 12, 36, Constitution of India).

And a special officer has been provided for in the Constitution whose duty it is to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for by the Constitution and he has to report to the President the working of these at intervals in the discretion of the President. (Art. 338).

As we know, the chief backward classes named by the Constitution are the Scheduled

Tribes and the Scheduled Castes. And it is laid down that the President will specify, by public notification, castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall be included in the Scheduled Castes; similarly he will also specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within them which shall be included in the Scheduled Tribes. (Arts. 341, 342 Constitution of India).

Thus, so far as the socially and educationally backward classes (Article 15, 16 of Constitution of India) among the Castes and Tribes are concerned, the Constitution has laid down the method and machinery for specifying who will be included in those Schedules.

There is a further point in the Constitution which requires to be clarified. It is given as a directive principle of State policy. Article 46 says that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the *weaker sections of the people*, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." Evidently the article points to further sections of the people other than and additional to the castes and tribes scheduled under the President's order under Article 341, 342. These castes and tribes are described in this Article 46 as *weaker sections*. The same are also described as "socially and educationally backward classes of citizens" in Article 15.

While Article 15 notes backwardness of a social and educational nature, article 46 notes the weakness of an economic and educational nature. The educational aspect is common to both; it is the *social* backwardness and *economic* weakness that are distinctive in the two articles.

Again, while the backwardness is noted in relation to *classes of citizens*, the weakness is in relation to *sections of the people*.

And further, there seems to be made no provision in the Constitution as to who will be considered 'weaker sections' and whether they will be scheduled in the same way as the castes and tribes, or if so, who will do it and on what principle. It is not clear whether the Backward Classes Commission that has been appointed by the President under article 340 will go into this question of 'the weaker sections of the people' and decide who they will be and how they will be named and scheduled for special care and protection.

It might be presumable that there is obvious *social* backwardness on account of untouchability and tribalness; it may consequently result, for the sections or classes of our people who suffer from these social disabilities, in economic and educational backwardness too; though there might be and are citizens of these castes and

tribes who are well-to-do and hence no way backward economically and educationally. The schedules for tribes and castes that stand at present do not indicate individuals but go by groups like castes and tribes, — which is objected to by some in the name of equality of all citizens, though the Constitution specifically provides for making such an exemption for the backward classes. (Article 15 of the Constitution of India).

But what about the educational and economic weakness of the sections of our people? What are these sections? What will be the norm of deciding who they will be? Such sections might be found in all castes and classes of our people; again they will be changing from time to time.

And, are these sections also provided for exceptional treatment under Article 15, as backward classes other than the scheduled tribes and classes?

Over and above these exceptions to the principle of equality of all, irrespective of class or creed, race, sex etc. which is a fundamental doctrine of our Constitution [Article 15 (1, 2)], there is a further exception in case of women and children [Article 15 (3)], which says that the State is not prevented from making any special provision for them. We may say that these are an instance of weaker sections of our people, as it would not be proper to describe them as backward classes; and therefore under Article 46 they are entitled to have special care and protection from social injustice and exploitation. Thus, for example, the State can give preferential treatment to women in education, employment etc. I may quote an instance which I have come across in my work as the Chairman of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation School Board.

Among numerous applicants for primary teachership there is found a good number of Hindu widows or such others who are almost widowed on account of desertion or second marriage by their husbands. They have to find out some gainful employment, if they should be economically independent or helpful to their family. Under the Primary Education Act there are certain rules according to which selection of candidates is made. The Backward Classes have for them a certain percentage of reserved places. They are preferred to others, provided they have a minimum standard of efficiency laid down by the rules. Similarly, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has always considered the cases of unfortunate women cited above and they also are preferred if they possess the minimum standard of efficiency under the rules: As a statutory authority under the State, it is permitted, I might say, it is required to have such consideration for these weaker sections of our people, under Article 46 of the Constitution of India. The Hindu women of certain castes who do not remarry or are deserted under a peculiar social system are a

weaker section of our people and they should be therefore protected in due manner.

It is hoped the Backward Classes Commission will clarify the meaning of Article 46 of the Constitution.

5-11-'53

THE JAPANESE METHOD AND CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Writing about the Japanese method of rice cultivation in the *Harijan* of 29-8-'53, I had remarked that if the use of chemical fertilizers was a necessary part of this method then it was its serious drawback.

In this connection, I have received letters from the Kora Centre, Bombay, which has successfully tried this method and a correspondent from Palgarh, an Agricultural graduate, who write to say that the use of fertilizers is not indispensably necessary; the cow-dung manure will serve the purpose quite as well.

The manager of the Kora Centre in his letter summarizes the salient points of this method as follows:

"There is a lot of misunderstanding regarding this improved method of rice cultivation. It is therefore necessary that people are correctly informed about its main points which are as follows:

1. Raised beds for preparing the seedlings.
2. Seedlings to be transplanted in a straight line, spaced at distance of 9 to 12 inches, and at the rate of two seedlings per hill.
3. Manuring in three instalments and inter-culturing three to four times.

These operations are an important part of the method and should be specially remembered."

He says further:

"There is no need of chemical fertilizers in the experiment as we carried it out at Kora. Moreover, there are no extra expenses involved in it. We recommend in our propaganda campaign the use of as much organic manure, green manure, and night-soil manure as may be available.

"All these operations which we have referred to above as an important part of this improved method are in use in different parts of the country severally. In this method they have been collected to form one whole and it is hoped that its adoption will lead at least to doubling our rice yield without any extra expenses. It will also result in addition in a saving of a maund of seeds per acre of land at the average."

The readers will appreciate that the saving in seeds, healthy seedlings prepared at the right time, weeding and interculturing, and dressing the soil through manuring and watering are all valuable improvements. Good Kisans in different parts of the country have always practised some or more of them. It is now necessary that they be adopted as the normal method of paddy cultivation throughout the country.

Nobody would think of opposing these improvements. But the use of chemical fertilizers is a different matter and in the article referred to above what I said was that this aspect of the Japanese method should be re-examined. If cow-

dung and compost manure of which we can get as much as we need from the abundantly available organic waste matter in our country—if that can serve our purpose, why was there any talk about the indispensability of the fertilizers? The new civilization that is making headway on the strength of modern industrialism and commerce is a veritable evil, which affects scientific thought even. See for example the case of Vanaspati, Aluminium utensils etc. I hope, there is no ground for similar fear in regard to the fertilizers factories, due to the Government Sindri Fertilizers Factory interests misguiding us.

If we want to preserve the health of our land and agriculture and of our people, and if we want to organize and use these our greatest resources for the common good of all, we should concentrate our attention on the organic manure and not the chemical fertilizers. These fertilizers which are manufactured in factories as business propositions will only strengthen the process of the destruction of our villagers, if they are allowed to get established; for then the villagers will continue to decay with dirt and disease as they are doing today.

(Translated from Hindi)

SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND LIVING STANDARDS

(By Wilfred Wellock)

[An agro-industrial and decentralized economy on the basis of maximum local self-sufficiency and self-government, compatible with the wellbeing and happiness of the whole,—such an economic basis of social organization only can be a sound one and tend to a creative and peaceful society: This was the thesis that we saw propounded in the previous instalment of Shri Wellock's article. This is evidently almost the same as our ideal of Sarvodaya, placed before us and the world by Gandhiji.]

In our own country and outside this is falsely equated with anti-machine-ism, drab puritanism, and is described as anti-progressive and what not by our modernists. There are some among them who believe and say that poverty will not be removed if self-sufficiency is the basis. They believe that industrialism will help increasing production and richness of the material life, but naively imagine, notwithstanding history saying otherwise, that all will be well thereby and social justice will be made more possible that way. While on one hand with industrialism they create and extenuate inequality, competition, jealousy, exploitation, on the other hand they smugly believe that with taxation etc. they will level up these inequalities. But they shut their eyes to the fact that a constant state of tensions intra- and inter-national becomes the order of the day for such a society. This is the chief thesis of Shri Wellock, which we saw in his first instalment (*Harijan*, 7-11-'53); in this concluding one he tries to answer the other point—viz. self-sufficiency is no way lowering of living standards.

1-11-'53

M. P.]

It will be asked: Would not the new economy result in lowering living standards? Possibly at first, but probably not, later, and when everything is taken into account. Considerable economies would be effected. The substitution of a local for a national economy would cut out one, two and in some cases even three middlemen's profits. Latterly such profits have risen beyond all reason.

Substantial savings could be effected by cutting out much long distance transport. Today many productions

are drawn from the localities to central depots, and then re-distributed, often to the very localities from which they came. By stopping this stupid policy two transport and one or two profit charges could be eliminated.

Another source of waste is the high cost of "over-heads" in large-scale industrialism. The larger the firm the greater are these costs per man employed. In self-controlled, small group industry, situated in villages where ground rents, and rates are low, overheads are exceedingly low. Moreover, responsibility and a powerful community consciousness stimulate one to do one's best, whence minimum overhead expenses would coincide with maximum production.

But perhaps the most important labour-saving factor would be that of substituting qualitative for quantitative production, as it would develop individual taste and judgment and so weaken the hold of fashion on the public mind. The cultivation of creative habits would stimulate handicrafts and handicrafts enormously, while this would gradually draw people from the habits and extravagances of the cash nexus, including the enslavements of fashion and the necessity of keeping up with the Jones'. These healthy tendencies would be stimulated by the aim of culture to encourage people to make their maximum contribution to the public good in the enrichment of the local life. Incidentally this economy would abolish the necessity of maintaining high levels of consumption in order to keep mass production factories running at full speed. The resultant savings in cash and labour would be immense.

The significance of a qualitative economy is worth careful study. It was brought vividly to my mind some years ago in a conversation I had with one of our finest furniture craftsmen, Edward Barnsley, of Froxfield, Petersfield. I had just been examining and admiring some of his magnificent productions, exquisite alike in design and execution, and then, in his unique home close by we discussed the economy of craftsmanship. Of course, the cost of a piece of furniture of this order is high, but it is a valid and not a profiteering cost. The economic perspective completely changed when Mr Barnsley told me that he made all his furniture in the hope that it would be in use for several centuries, as it should be if given reasonable care. It is all made for users, not dealers, for, like all craftsmen, he likes to maintain the personal contact between the user and producer of whatever is made, and to feel that it will be handed down to the next generation with greater pleasure and satisfaction than handing down the money that was paid for it. Moreover furniture of this order possesses qualities which no fashion can out-date; its lines and proportions possess a timeless beauty. In the long run, therefore, the ledgers of this economy show a favourable balance in time, labour, material, cash, and satisfaction. Thus the economy of fewer things but better is sound from every point of view.

In this limited space I cannot deal adequately with such questions as financing the new economy and the distribution of repetitive work. On the former issue I would say two things: First, that multi-purpose co-operatives offer a big opening for the development of small industries. They have wrought miracles of social transformation in Nova Scotia, in the Scandinavian countries, and in Finland, and are now beginning to do so in India; and Second, that the inevitable breakdown of the Western economy will cause much money to be transferred to the new economy.

In regard to repetitive labour its extent would be greatly reduced under the new economy, but it would still be considerable. However, small self-governing communities could easily organize a system of dual occupations, especially as a certain amount of repetitive work is good for one, and is a social necessity. The recognition of these facts would add dignity to jobs that a false sense of values has caused to be regarded as below one's dignity. Cleaning

a village road, like cleaning a house, is a skilled job if well done; and the way to get them well done is to recognize that fact, and for everyone to take on such jobs, part-time.

Another point to be emphasized is that the new development must be organic, must spring from the mind and heart of the communities themselves and not be imposed from the outside. While it may be the case that satellite towns like Stevenage cannot be avoided owing to the urgent necessity of depopulating many of our giant cities, everything must be done to avoid resort to blue-prints drawn up by experts, with parks, pubs, clubs, churches, community halls, cinemas, etc., all rounded off and complete like a doll's house—a robot's paradise erected by someone who was able to anticipate all one's wants and even the bounds of one's spiritual horizons. There is something frightening in these through tickets to El Dorado, with nothing omitted, nothing left to the imagination and nothing to hope for. We first fragment men's minds and then build an artificial world to suit their dehumanized condition.

Many people will regard this partial abandonment of quantitative production as putting the clock back, whereas in my view the people who have put the clock back are those who have robbed human beings of their finest rights and thus reduced them to a sub-human status.

What has America to say on this vital theme?

The United States stands at the apex of the mass-production countries. During the last six years I have spent eight months in that country on two extensive lecture tours, travelling from North to South and East to West and addressing every kind of audience. I was invited to lecture on the theme dealt with in these Papers. I accepted with some misgiving, and expected to be derided or even laughed down. The very opposite happened. To my surprise I found everywhere a profound fear of the future: of a world-shattering war, or a world-shaking revolution arising from a feverish struggle for higher living standards, which was heightened by the wealth-devouring armaments caused by that fear. Many agreed that it would be better to have fewer goods with peace and contentment than abundance with growing tensions and perpetual cold war. Others confessed that they were happier in their pioneering days than they are today. Indeed I discovered that one had not to rub the skin of the average American very hard to come at the pioneer and that an appreciable number of Americans had a piece of land tucked away somewhere; probably in the area of their American origins. After careful observation I gained the impression that the creative life of pioneering in the Great Trek West is probably the strongest of the underlying forces in American life today. Nor will it surprise me if ere long that submerged America embarks on a new trek to the spacious Middle West, there to build a creative civilization on the foundation of small agro-industrial communities.

The migration of population from the countryside to the city is nowhere more marked than in the U.S. On one occasion I travelled from the Gulf of Mexico to Chicago through Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Iowa, an area seven times greater than that of Britain, yet with a population no greater than that of the three cities of New York, Chicago and Philadelphia combined. This country-to-city migration causes spiritual starvation and decay at both ends, and if Western civilization is to survive, the process will have to be reversed, not only in America but in Britain and Europe also. Many Americans are beginning to realize this, and what a magnificent opportunity beckons them!

In any event, the supreme crisis of our age approaches. The civilization of the Industrial Revolution is fast running down. Either it will end in war or be superseded by a new creative era, the foundation of which will be the creative genius that is in every man.

THE FIRST BHOODAN

(As told by him who gave)

[Shri V. R. Reddy was the first in India to donate his land for the landless. He is a law graduate of the Bombay University and a prosperous landlord of Telangana. His act which became the torchbearer of the great Bhoodan movement is graphically described below, which is reproduced here from the *A. I. C. C. Economic Review* of November 1, 1953.]

"Two years ago, Acharya Vinoba Bhave came to our village, Pachampalle. We all knew him to be a great and saintly person, an illustrious disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Vinoba addressed a meeting of our villagers. He asked them about their life and about the difficulties they had to suffer. Then a group of Harijans said that they wanted land. Vinoba just said to the villagers: 'From where can I give you land?'

"For some time past I had been thinking of distributing a part of my land to the Harijans. Without a second thought, as if prompted by Providence, I rose. The words 'we want land' reverberated in me and I said: 'I will give you land; I will make a gift of 100 acres from my land.'

"Vinoba looked at me as if he had heard something strange and asked me to repeat what I had said. Slowly, but firmly, I said that I would give away 100 acres. And if people did not believe what I was saying, I was prepared to make a written declaration there and then.

"The meeting was over and Vinoba called me aside and asked me if what I had said was really true. I repeated what I had said twice.

"Vinoba went into his hut and retired for the night. Early in the morning he sent for me and asked me once again, and I produced a written declaration.

"Then the party went to the next village where Vinoba spoke about my land-gift and asked whether there was a landlord in that village who would also give away a part of his land. In that village also Vinoba received a land-gift. Then he went to a third village where he simply said he had come for Bhoodan and the movement was born.

"As I look back upon it and go over the sequence of events I feel that I could not have done otherwise. Nobody had compelled me, the gift had not been given in a fit of generosity, for I was thinking of giving away land to the Harijans even before I met Vinoba. But Vinoba made me feel the logic of the situation and made me realize what my moral duty was towards those who had no land.

"Some people say that the whole thing is done by working on emotions, but this is not true, at least in my case. Others say that moral pressure is brought to bear but I ask, what is wrong with it? Is it not better to realize your

moral duty and give land to the landless? And this response to the call of moral duty leaves no ill-will behind; the heart is cleaned and the mind is free; the weight of centuries is cast away."

Illusion Created by Words

The article on Wages and Bonus which appeared in the *Harijan*, (August 8, 1953, 'Bonus or Partnership?') shows that the trade unions are helping the employers to mulct consumers, including the workers who are consumers themselves. Thus the workers receive bonus on one hand to pay it back to the employers when they go as buyers. They gain nothing by the bonus — except an illusion. They cannot live with more earnings which are not real increases.

When the economists, trade unionists and politicians talk of workers, they mean only organized workers who are only a small percentage of all actual workers in any country. Most of the workers in all countries are not organized at all or are organized only in small unions which are ineffective against employers and Government. In India, there are supposed to be only 3 million workers in industry, while a vast majority of actual workers are not organized at all. Thus there are millions of unemployed who are not organized at all and lots of office employees also are unorganized. All these pay for the conspiracy of the employers and trade unionists when they go as buyers — in order to keep up the illusion that there is increased payment of wages. These unorganized and unemployed workers and employees are the most exploited and sweated, but they don't count as workers in trade union and Government meaning of the word, workers. And what about landless day-labourers who are legion? They don't count either for the Governments or trade unions.

M. P. T. ACHARYA

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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.