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TWO ANNAS

DIGNITY OF LABOUR*

(By Vinoba)

The whole world depends for its existence on the labour of its workers. The Puranas say that this earth rests on the head of Sheshanag — the Great Serpent. Who is this Sheshanag? Mythology apart, the figure would seem to stand for the toiling millions who wear themselves out, with hard labour, day in and day out and produce all that is necessary for the maintenance of man's life. It is the workers who keep the world going. That is why the Lord was called them Karma-yogis. But one cannot become a Karma-yogi merely by working long hours. Workers in India are employed in various occupations: they work in factories, on the fields, in the railways and so on. They earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. Now those who earn their bread honestly by the sweat of their brow must be *ipso facto* men of virtues. Sin cannot enter, at least it cannot get an easy entry, into a worker's life. He tires himself out in arduous work during the day and slips into sound sleep at night. One would expect that a life so fortified against sin should be a shining example of the life based on moral law.

But the actual experience that we have of our workers tells a different tale. It tells that while the life of the idlers is undoubtedly beset with sin, the life of the workers is also not free from it. They are prey to many vices including licentiousness. This shows that mere work by itself cannot make one a Karma-yogi. Of course, those who shun work are automatically debarred from rising to that noble status. They have time to waste and to have time to waste is to invite Satan. But why should there be any room for sin in the life of the workers? This is because they do not look on work as worship. They work not because they love work but because they have to, and would fain give it up if they could. A true Karma-yogi, however, would never act like this.

I will relate to you an experience from my jail-life to show how this attitude of aversion to work has spread even among those who ought to know better. We were political prisoners and were not required to do any labour. I explained

to them that this was not anything to be happy about. To eat without working was not good luck, it was dire misfortune in that it corrupted our souls. It was true that the government of the country was in the hands of the English, but what we ate belonged not to the English but to our own society. And it was sin not to make a corresponding return to the society. Happily the prisoners understood the point. They demanded work from the jailor and started doing it quite willingly. The whole atmosphere of the jail was transformed from that of an arduous jail-life to that of a joyous *ashram*-life.

Let us consider seriously where this love of idleness and hate of work is leading us. Nowadays villagers are also demanding that their boys and girls should be provided with education. Education for what? Not because they want them to grow into men of knowledge, or acquire the ability to read and understand good and ennobling books and mould their life in accordance with right thought but merely to get good lucrative job. They want that their boys and girls should not be required to spend themselves in tiring work like them. It shows how this feeling of hate towards work is seeping down and corrupting all the layers of our population.

Take another example: Parents want their daughter to be married in a good, that is, a well-to-do house. They want, as they say, that she should not have to draw water with her hands. How do they forget that where women are not required to draw water with their hands, they have to pay for the bills of the doctors? In the same way they want their boys to pay all their attention to their books. They may play when they are tired of books, but they are deliberately discouraged from engaging in work. It is usual for the mother to say to her son that he should not worry himself with work but devote all his energy to his studies. The work would be looked after either by herself or his sister. It is the same in the schools. The teacher teaches and the boys sit listening to him, the dusting and sweeping being done by the peons.

What does it all come to? The students and professors will not work. The traders and merchants will also not work. They will only read

* Speech at Jamalpur, Monghyr District.

and write or want to earn ten times more than they do. They will not however think of putting in ten times more work. They can only think of manipulating the accounts and putting an additional zero by the figure of their income. As for *jnanis* — men of knowledge, it is held very bad if they should have to work. They can only eat and confer blessings on their devotees. If someone takes to grinding corn as the first thing to do in the morning, he, it would be said, must be a mere labourer and not a *jnani*. The popular mind hugs the absurd belief that a *jnani* or a *yogi* should never work. The old are, of course, to be left out; as also the children, — it is cruelty to put them to work. This makes quite a big list of idlers: the old, the children, the *yogis* and *jnanis*, traders and merchants, students and teachers, and many others who are supposed to pursue learned professions. This could have been tolerated if all these would have abstained from eating too. But not only do they eat but they eat more than others. Now in a society where so many are allowed to live without work, it is but natural that the labourers too should tend to dislike work. A society such as this can never produce Karma-yogis, and must deteriorate not only economically but also morally.

We look down upon those who do manual labour in spite of the fact that they render very useful service to society. If scavengers do not work even for a day, the entire village would be stinking. So indispensable and so valuable is the service they give us. But we dare to treat them with contempt and keep them tied to poverty and ignominy. Not only that, we treat our women-folk, our mothers also with contempt. The scriptures say that a mother is a thousand times superior to father who is ten times superior to the teacher. Our scriptures hold woman in the highest esteem. But we treat her as an inferior being. We do not give the same wage to a woman-labourer as to a man. In fact, they are entitled to a higher wage because even while they work for the wage they do not disregard their usual work at home. They have to look after the children. But nobody cares to consider these facts and give womenfolk their due wages and due respect. They are even considered a burden. It is said against them that they do not do productive labour; they merely cook food. But is not cooking food productive labour? All that goes by the name of productive labour consists merely in changing some raw material into an article, which may be of good use to man. It is all change of form and not production in the sense of creating something entirely new which only God could do. And judged thus, cooking food is as good an example of productive labour as making a chair out of wood or a pair of shoes out of leather. But perhaps we would not consider anything productive labour until we have to pay for it. It would then seem that all that is required to

invest this loving service with the dignity of productive labour is for our mothers and sisters to demand adequate wages for their work.

All this is very tragic and needs to be remedied as early as possible. And what is the remedy? Firstly, everybody, whatever his station and calling in society, must do some body labour. To eat without doing body labour is to open one's life to sin. Secondly, every type of labour must get an equal reward. This is the only way to restore labour to its rightful place in the economy of life.

(Adapted from the original in Hindi)

THE FIELD OF SCIENCE

A century or so ago, the enthusiasts of science very nearly all agreed that the mysteries of life and nature would sooner or later be all cleared up by scientific progress. Philosophy, as the love of and search for truth, was disparaged as little more than fruitless speculation, while the experimental approach was hailed as the way to the promised land.

Today, disillusionment has set in. No longer do we find grandiloquent praise of science as the means by which the misery and unhappiness of mankind will be left behind by the triumphant march of discovery and invention. Further, very few scientists of today are willing to make any claims at all about the "knowledge" science makes possible. Instead the great majority of men engaged in research speak the positivist language of scepticism toward anything which is grandly termed "knowledge".

In illustration of this point of view, we have a letter from a reader who has this to say:

I do not think that it is the function of science to "understand the secrets of the universe or learn the ultimate structure of matter". Its function, as I see it, is to make valid predictions and, incidentally, to discover what classifications and generalizations are useful in making such predictions. Since models aid in thought, and since these classes are given names, this latter function leads to the illusion that the classes erected have necessarily some physical reality.

The question, "What causes two masses to attract each other?", is, to my mind, on a par with the question asked of a parent of my acquaintance: "What makes water wet?" He could, if asked by an adult, have answered that it was due to the dipole moment of water which causes it to be attracted to most substances. He would then have been asked for an explanation of the dipole moment, which could be answered by an explanation of the difference between hydrogen and oxygen atoms. As you can see, this can go on forever. I am led to the conclusion that such questions are unanswerable and hence meaningless in the scientific context.

I don't know if they are answerable in any context or whether "cause" really has any meaning when used in such a way. I believe I am paraphrasing Aristotle when I say that when a process is considered as a "thing", a mystery is erected which is beyond solution, and I personally find his "efficient cause" sufficient for my normal thinking.

This statement (by a practising scientist) discloses nothing to quarrel about — representing, rather, a helpful candour, — so long as we recognize that science, on this basis, is little more than an advanced form of technology. Perhaps this is all science, as usually conceived, should ever attempt to be; but there is no denying that, in the past, science has gained much prestige as a competitor of religion in the field of declaring what is knowledge and what is not.

We are far from sure what questions a representative body of scientists would agree upon as being capable of being answered in a "scientific context", but there should be no difficulty in establishing questions which science, as here defined, is incompetent to answer. For example, no scientist, as scientist, would discuss questions like the following: Is there any reason to think that a moral law of justice pervades the region of human experience? Would the hypothesis that a world of mind or intelligence lies back of the world or universe of matter and force be a reasonable one to entertain? Does the Socratic contention that man is a soul living in the body, which may very likely survive the destruction of the body, have any supporting evidence, or is this notion, held by countless others besides Socrates, a groundless speculation?

We doubt if anyone trained in the modern disciplines of science would say that a scientific context exists suitable for examining these questions.

Are they, then, "unimportant" questions? Are they, as some might say, "unanswerable"? We should like to maintain that such questions may not be answerable, and, further, that they are well worth inquiring into, although, at the same time, insisting that the claim that answers may be possible need not indicate pretensions to *knowing* the answers.

But how, after all, can it be "proved" that questions about the soul and its possible relationships with the universe are important questions to consider? This is unsure ground. One who undertakes this argument is in the same position as Plato's philosopher, in the allegory of the Cave. Having been out in the sunlight and accustomed his sight to the brilliance of the day's full glory, he returns to his fellows, still bondsmen to flickering shadows, wondering how he can convince them that a greater light shines outside. What shall he say? By some, no matter what he tells them, he will be taken for either a fool, a lunatic, or an imposter with a collection box up his sleeve, or an interest in the real estate of some fraudulent utopia beyond the cavern's walls. But he returns, taking his chances with the cynics, the pessimists, and those whose hearts are sour with the bitterness of lifetimes spent in semi-darkness.

Is it then vain to talk of these matters? It may be, although we suspect not, since those who have made the greatest mark upon history — the founders of religions and the shapers of cultures — have often spoken both brightly and darkly of such things. Further, there is an invincible tendency in human beings to strive after the unknown, to have a commerce with the infinite. It is as though human beings have always striven to break through some veil of self-deception, some *maya* of the senses, and to press into the outward field of vision the inchoate longings which rise in the heart. How vague, how impalpable! as Lao-tse would say; yet how irresistible is this movement of the mind toward secrets which seem to violate the very laws of thought and all our common certainties!

One may suspect, on looking back over these reflections, that there comes a time in a man's life when his deepest intuitions, his noblest convictions are somehow fused into a serene certainty — when he is as the Brahmanas say, "twice-born", or as the Greeks put it, "initiated" into the mysteries. Call it what you like, this transformation at least gives some explanation of the extraordinary lives of men like Buddha, Jesus, and several others. It is they, at any rate who help to keep alive the idea of *knowledge* — which amounts, in modern terms, to the functional harmony of a free intelligence working in its environment, even though that environment be made up of unimaginable complexity, of all shades of good and evil, totems and shams, and the wreckage of human hopes. It is an adaptable intelligence which roots almost anywhere and supports itself with whatever nourishment happens to be available — as Gandhi, for one, worked, leaving behind the legacy of a pair of spectacles, a loin cloth, and a revolutionary idea which changed the lives of millions and brightened the hopes of many millions more.

Perhaps, with religion stripped of its bland pretension that a "doctrine" is the same as knowledge, with science tempered by the humility of positivist criticism, we are ready to think anew about the larger meanings which religion misrepresented as "beliefs" and which science ignored as metaphysical nonsense.

This, at any rate, is what we should like to think, and have found no important reason, as yet, for not doing so.

(Adapted from *Manas*, August 5, '53)

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A SELFISH DEMAND

(By Moganbhai P. Desai)

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has replied to the Taxation Inquiry Commission's questionnaire. The reply takes the usual line that a capitalist body like it might be expected to do. It asks that the policy must make it possible for the private sector to play its role. The role it should play is described by it in the following altruistic manner. It says that it should be enabled to provide more employment and larger contribution to the national income, by emphasizing on increased production; though, frankly speaking, it is difficult to believe that this is the aim with which private enterprise is ever undertaken or organized.

However, reverting to the argument of the Federation, the reply further says that increased production requires that the private sector should be left with sufficient resources to perform its above-mentioned task, by revising the present tax-system accordingly. That is, according to the Federation, 'taxation must not be conceived of as a means of obtaining revenue only, but as a means to nurse and develop the levels of saving and investment and consumption in so far as they are compatible.' The Federation also desires that a sense of security from fears of nationalization, confiscation, high taxation etc. must be inspired by Government in the mind of the private sector and the investing public. And it is bold enough to claim parity of consideration for the private sector with the public one, and says the latter should not steal a march over the former by taxing the former too much and secure larger capital-formation thereby; and it pleads helpful economic doctrines from the capitalist book, and adds that, "as these taxes are concentrated, as in India today, on a relatively small section of the population, they result in a reduction of savings of these classes". The Federation also challenges the use of taxation as an instrument for reducing inequalities by saying that "it becomes more a sharing of scarcity rather than of plenty"; and therefore "in the first instance every attempt must be made to augment the distributable resources." And the way to do it, according to this body, is to allow the private sector to flourish still more with Government aids; which means the sector should be left free to amass more and more capital through increased production and reduced taxation on it, evidently to pile on more and more profits to be converted into further investment in the private sector. And it is reckless and in-

considerate enough to demand that the poor man's salt might also be taxed. Thank God, it is discreet enough not to overtly mention drink duty also. It also demands that rate of taxation on higher income slabs be lowered; that there might be preferential treatment for investments in approved undertakings by way of exemptions from income tax or estate duties etc.

The reader will get sufficient inkling into what the Federation means to say to the Commission and therethrough to the country from the above short summary. The ring of utter selfishness that is patent in all that is quite obvious. Do the Federation and those classes whom it represents realize that the private sector is to be as mindful of the general good as the public one? If industry and commerce are not to pay the taxes, who else in this country can or will do it? Is a cry for savings, when most of the Indian population cannot even foot the bill for bare livelihood, equitable, honourable, or even patriotic? Can a plea of equitable incidence of taxation ever warrant anyone call for the poll-tax of a salt duty? It is certain that these classes will gladly welcome drink-and-drug-duty also. When they do all this, do they not see that they ask to tax those who cannot bear it at all,—those to whom saving and investing are quite unknown, those who cannot find enough to pay for even a meagre standard of living? To ask for imposing burdens on them and for lessening from oneself is rank callousness born of class-mindedness that can be seen only in the history of the development of capitalism in the West. Does the Federation aim to develop itself and the country on those lines? Then they may take it they are running a losing game. As I said in a previous issue, the question that is before Indian capital and industry today is to institute a Bhoodan way in their affairs also and to see that commerce and industry in new India are not governed by predatory economic interests that the ex-British rule in India brought to life here, and that they do not propagate the credo of modern business and its allied cult of sales promotion through spurious advertisement. A doubting voice will say here, what if that way is not found? I admit, the doubt is there. But we need not despair; the democratic forces in India also can be relied upon to be effective enough to see that our structure of taxation and the new economic policy, the basis of which is the immediate national duty of removal of unemployment, will not be beguiled into wrong channels which the Federation asks the Taxation Commission to adopt.

4-12-'53

PS. I request the industrious reader to see the article 'Sarvodaya and Taxation' (*Harijan*, 1-8-'53) which is also on the same subject and about the question of tax policy in India.

BRITISH COLONIALISM STIFFENS*(By Maganbhai P. Desai)*

When our British ex-rulers introduced provincial autonomy by their 1935 Reforms Act, I think they had expected, thanks to their ingenuity in devising it, that the Indian National Congress would not come to power and that there will be smooth sailing for them in the Indian political waters for a few years more. But the election results were, as we know, a total surprise for them, and they were baffled in their political game to thwart the onward march of freedom in India. A similar thing seems to have happened to them in British Guiana.

This small British colony in South America is inhabited by about 4,37,000 people of whom 1,97,696 are Indians as against 1,53,940 Africans, 8,712 Portuguese and 3,865 other Europeans. Therefore, apart from our aversion and antipathy to colonialism, we are interested in a way in the future of this colony.

I learn that about 30 years ago the Government of India had sent an I. C. S. officer of theirs to the colony to report on the condition of the Indian community living there. He had said, "There is nothing to prevent the Indian community from controlling the political activities of the colony if they wish to do so." It is evident that the observation contained a truth which has materialized at present.

The colony under the leadership of its People's Progressive Party has availed of the first opportunity to seize power, whatever little it may be, that came to it by the Reforms Act a few months ago, and has, it seems, sprung a surprise, like the one we did in 1937, on its British rulers. And the latter have reacted to it in a similarly surprising way. After giving India freedom, it seems colonial or imperial opinion in England is too much hardened to allow a wise and liberal outlook in such matters. Otherwise the English would not have done what they did to meet the challenge of the people of British Guiana. It is surprising that the Labour Party also could not or would not do anything deserving its liberal outlook. It seems they wanted to take the time by the forelock so that they might stem the tide of the urge of freedom and independence of those people. Not heeding to their own saying that time and tide wait for nobody, they suspended the Constitution that brought the P. P. Party to power and set up the Governor's rule.

The leader of that Party, Dr. Cheddi Jagan is at present in India on a goodwill mission and the other day he addressed the members of our Parliament, wherein he said that they derived inspiration for their programme of action from the American and British ideals of democracy and freedom rather than from Communism and Soviet Russia; and the bogey of Communism that was raised against them was a part of the usual colonial policy. Even supposing that the charge against the P. P. Party is true, one is at a loss to understand why the Constitution should have been scrapped? Does it not expose the

British to the charge that they gave it a bad name to hang it? To cite a recent instance from our own history, did the British not say to Gandhiji and the Congress that they were pro-Japanese during the last World War?

As our Prime Minister remarked at the end of Dr. Jagan's address, colonialism was in retreat everywhere in Asia and Africa; but frantic efforts are made at present by the colonial powers of the West to cling to their hold. In Africa a doctrine of racial superiority, viz. Malanism, has been forged to give the diabolical effort a sort of decent or nice-looking support. In British East Africa we see that a reign of terror with aerial bombing etc. is being enacted under the cover of anti-Mau-Mau-ism; British Indian history seems to be repeating itself there. India is deadly against all this and has a moral horror of it. It is good to see that progressive world opinion agrees with it. The whole thing is against democracy and peace; and the sooner the British people realize it the better for them as well as world peace which is threatened not only by aggressive Communism but also by selfish and insolent colonialism and the primitive ideas of racial superiority.

2-12-'53

INVASION OF WESTERN CULTURE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

[Arnold Toynbee, the famous English historian, gave the B. B. C. Reith Lectures of 1952 which are published in book form,—*The World and the West*. He has summarized therein his thesis that he has dealt at length in his forthcoming Volume VIII of *Study of History*. His thesis is that the invasion of the Western world in modern times is through the weapons of its technology, which is only a thin end of the wedge of Western life and culture including Christianity. The invasion is still going on irresistibly, probably to the same end that the Greco-Roman world came to in its encounter with Christianity. At the time when we are now free to shape our own destiny, it is worth while giving our closest attention to what the noted historian has to say on this subject of clash of cultures through technology. All over the world, in Africa, Asia, Indonesia, we see this clash as racial and political; the weapons of the winning West are technological, given to it by science and rationalism. The larger and more profound question is, has the ailing world an answer to this atheistic and materialistic invasion, which is almost paganistic or barbaric in its ruthlessness with its atom bombs and germ warfare? Can India meet this challenge through the message of truth and non-violence which Gandhiji gave her?

It will interest the reader, in this first instalment from Toynbee's book, to see that this Christian historian of the West has still faith and belief that Western technology, aided by a new version of Christianity, may still succeed to win China and India where, he fears, Communism is at present having its innings. As he writes, "In China and also in India, in the 16th and 17th centuries, long before Communism was ever dreamt of, a different alternative was found and tried by the Jesuit Western Christian missionaries. It is true that this experiment came to grief, but it was wrecked, not by any intrinsic faults of its own, but by unfortunate rivalries and dissensions between the Jesuits and other Roman Catholic Christian missionary orders." (p. 63). The thesis of Mr Toynbee will be summarized in two instalments. The following is the first:

16-11-'53

M. P. J.

I

In the nineteenth century the Western civilization presented itself primarily as a strange

technology ; in the sixteenth century it had presented itself primarily as a strange religion. The difference in the aspect displayed by the intrusive Western civilization explains the difference in the reaction that it aroused in Far Eastern hearts and minds at its first and at its second coming ; for a strange technology is not so difficult to accept as a strange religion is.

Technology operates on the surface of life, and therefore it seems practicable to adopt a foreign technology without putting oneself in danger of ceasing to be able to call one's soul one's own. This notion that, in adopting a foreign technology, one is incurring only a limited liability may, of course, be a miscalculation. The truth seems to be that all the different elements in a culture-pattern have an inner connection with each other, so that, if one abandons one's own traditional technology and adopts a foreign technology instead, the effect of this change on the technological surface of life will not remain confined to the surface, but will gradually work its way down to the depths till the whole of one's traditional culture has been undermined and the whole of the foreign culture has been given entry, bit by bit, through the gap made in the outer ring of one's cultural defences by the foreign technology's entering wedge.

In China and Korea and Japan today, a century or more after the date at which our modern Western technology first began to penetrate these countries, we can see these revolutionary ulterior effects upon the whole of their culture taking place before our eyes. Time, however, is of the essence of this process ; and a revolutionary result that is so clearly manifest to all eyes today was not foreseen by Far Eastern statesmen a hundred years ago, when they were reluctantly taking their decision to admit this foreign technology within their walls.

An aggressive foreign religion will, in fact, manifestly be a more serious immediate menace than an aggressive foreign technology will be to a society that it is assailing ; and there is a deeper reason for this than the danger of the converts being used as 'a fifth column'. The deeper reason is that, while technology plays only upon the surface of life in the first instance, religion goes straight down to the roots ; and, though a foreign technology, too, may eventually have a deeply disintegrating effect on the spiritual life of a society in which it has once gained a footing, this effect will take some time to make itself apparent. For this reason, an aggressive civilization that presents itself as a religion is likely to arouse stronger and swifter opposition than one that presents itself as a technology ; and we can now see why in the Far East, as well as in Russia, our Western civilization was first rejected and was then accepted at the second time of asking. In Russia in the fifteenth century and in the Far East in the seventeenth century, the Western civilization was rejected when what it was demanding was conversion to the Western form of Christianity ; and it was no accident that its fortunes in the mission field should have veered right round from conspicuous failures to sensational successes as soon as its attitude towards its own ancestral religion had veered round from a warm devotion to a cool scepticism.

This great spiritual revolution overtook the Western world towards the close of the seventeenth century, when a hundred years' trial of waging savage and inconclusive civil wars under the colours of rival religious sects had at last disgusted the Western peoples, not only with wars of religion, but with religion itself. The Western world reacted to this disillusioning self-inflicted experience of the evils of religious fanaticism by withdrawing its treasure from religion and reinvesting it in technology ; and it is this utilitarian technological excerpt from the Bible of our Western civilization, with the fanatical religious page torn out, that has run like wildfire round the world during the last two and a half centuries, from the generation of Peter the Great to the generation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

In China and India the Jesuits did not make the mistake that they made in Japan, of letting their preaching of Christianity fall under suspicion of being conducted in the political interests of aggressive Western powers. . . . The Jesuits stripped Christianity of its accidental and irrelevant Western accessories, and offered the essence of it to China in a Chinese, and to India in a Hindu, intellectual and literary dress in which there was no incongruous Western embroidery to jar on Asian susceptibilities. This experiment miscarried at the first attempt through the fault of domestic feuds within the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church of the day, which had nothing to do with either Christianity or China or India ; but considering that India and China and Christianity are still on the map, we may expect — and hope — to see the experiment tried again. The recent victory of Communism in China over a Western civilization divorced from Christianity is no evidence that, in China, Christianity has no future in a coming chapter of history which today is still below our historical horizon.

(Abridged ; — to continue)

THE PHANTASY OF LEISURE

(By Wulfred Wellock)

(Abridged from his *Orchard Lea Papers* No. 10, 'Leisure Waste and Good Life').

I

Leisure is rapidly becoming the keystone of Western civilization, also the major gateway to life and the yardstick by which a person's luck or good fortune is measured.

This evaluation is easy to understand, since work, having lost its primary or creative function, has become so unsatisfying and distasteful that its victims turn elsewhere for relief. The concept that work is a form of culture, a means of physical, mental and spiritual growth and health, and a fundamental condition of the satisfactions which we call wellbeing, is out of harmony with the facts of life today. The chief function of work is now to earn money wherewith to buy leisure and pleasure, which are equated with life.

The modern idealization of leisure commenced in the eighties of last century with the rapid extension of repetitive industrialism. In that and the following decade lively discussions took place in the Fabian Society and in socialist circles generally on the issue of qualitative versus quantitative production in relation to a shorter working week. William Morris and his school favoured qualitative production, arguing that the values of creative labour far

outweighed the values of better wages with monotonous labour and more leisure. Sydney Webb and Bernard Shaw, on the other hand, argued that socialists should accept the mass-production system and develop it to the utmost so as to reduce the hours of labour and in an ample leisure provide the means for creative activity.

But something went wrong, for while mass-production leapt ahead, the four-hour day and the era of creative leisure failed to appear. Now no one expects either. Two world wars and permanent cold or hot war have prevented it, say the mass-producers. But these evils are the product of the mass-production-cum-leisure policy, with its rising demands for markets and supplies. True, there has emerged the five-day week, but already the miners have had to forego it, while much overtime is being worked and large numbers of married women have been drawn into the factories. In addition a considerable amount of foreign labour has been imported.

II

There were in fact many causes of this miscarriage of prophecy. The mass-production mechanism which had been installed at great cost in order to capture foreign markets, had to be kept going somehow to prevent social and financial disaster. Accordingly, when foreign markets failed, advertising stepped in to increase home spending.

Thus began the process of stimulating desires and appetites, cultivating new tastes and multiplying wants, which, as we now see, is never ending. That process tends to reduce life to two pursuits: acquiring and spending money. But more spending due to the multiplication of wants and the need to keep industry running at full speed indefinitely postponed the promised Arcadia of Leisure. Only on the condition that the consumption of goods and services remained fairly static could the speeding up of production result in increased leisure.

A comparison between the volume of goods which any cross-section of the community consumes today, with that of a similar cross-section in, say, 1880, is rather startling. How many hats, dresses and pairs of stockings does the average woman demand today compared with her great-grand-mother's requirements? Then the furniture with which the latter started her married life endured and remained satisfying to the end of her days. But how many sweeping changes must her grand-daughter make if she is to maintain or improve her social status? Moreover, the former had neither telephone nor motor car, whereas the latter, if she has got her foot on but the second rung of the social ladder would find life intolerable without them. And what about such things as vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, washing machines and all the other gadgets of the kitchen now available?

I am not here discussing the merit of these various changes and inventions. Some of them have great merit, but many have not. The point I am making is that they are eating up the promised leisure, and that too often the cause of this is the power of advertising, of fashion and social status. So powerful has fashion become, especially in the U.S.A., but here also, that few are able to resist the necessity of changing their habits (even their habit of walking at the expense of their anatomy, by reason of shoe fashions), their furniture, their domestic utensils, their window curtains and of course their clothing styles at fairly regular intervals, except, of course, in time of war and its aftermath.

III

But that is by no means the whole story. To shop by telephone involves delivery by shop assistants, or by special delivery men with the aid of a van. Such vans are now produced in their thousands. Then there is the craze to have everything wrapped up in good and highly decorated paper. Before the war this practice was carried to such absurd lengths that, together with advertising and the consequent enlarging of newspapers, large quantities of labour have been poured into paper making and afforestation.

Even so, the world is now confronted with a serious paper shortage.

All these tendencies have resulted in an enormous increase in non-productive labour, and have continued even while there were serious shortages of labour in the export industries. During the last few decades, the personnel engaged in such occupations as transport, packing, insurance, finance, commerce, office work, industrial supervising, advertising, the professions and entertainment has risen by leaps and bounds.

IV

We now perceive that industrial specialization in an age devoid of vital social ends and an inspirational culture leads to the multiplication of wants and rising levels of luxury and self-indulgence, to sustain which larger and larger reservoirs of labour are required. These results not only postpone the age of leisure, but foster the habits of pleasure-buying which kill the desire to use leisure creatively.

A reasonable amount of comfort and luxury is justifiable, but over-indulgence is personally and socially harmful. Man's first duty is to himself, to become a whole person and to achieve self-mastery.

Gadgets have their place, but they may become a mania, as they appear to have done in the U.S.A. Some years ago Arthur Webb, the Daily Herald's Washington correspondent, sent over the following entertaining paragraph:

"America is a land of gadgets. One hundred thousand housewives belong to a club that finds them a new one every month... it is possible to get rid of your maid and mechanize your home if you can write a cheque for £2,092 2s. 3d. That sum will get you an amazing number of push-button gadgets, but you are likely to need a full-time electrician (at three times a maid's wages) to keep them in order."

During a lecture tour in U.S.A. in 1949, I addressed many women's meetings. American women, by the way, take a keen and intelligent interest in public and world affairs. That interest encouraged me on several occasions to suggest certain lines of action American women might take. The answer always came: "But how are we to find the time?" My reply was a reference to their labour-saving gadgets. Back came the retort: "But they are to clean and keep in order!" "Is that a big job?" I asked. The innocence of my question was greeted with laughter and interesting comment. I thus made the consoling discovery that it was not all roses in gadgetland.

Then, too, it should be pointed out that the loss of many domestic skills is a great handicap, as the skilful use of one's hands, and of numerous tools so that one can do odd jobs about the house is a tremendous advantage. To be a helpless nincompoop is an indication of a defective education.

There is even the danger of physical and mental atrophy. It is now possible to live with so little exertion that one stands in danger of losing the power to use one's limbs or to exercise the least responsibility. There are thousands of people with motor cars who would be far healthier and happier without them. Ease and social status are relentless taskmasters. The motor car has many legitimate uses, but if it were freed from all considerations of ease and social status it would be in far less demand than it is today. The situation now is that to be able to afford a car and not to have one is unthinkable while not to run a car is an indication of a lack of ability. To walk is becoming plebeian if not slightly vulgar. But merely to have a car is not enough; one must have an expensive car, unless one is unusually courageous or something of an iconoclast! Cars like fur coats are now a matter of social status. When it is out of the question to walk a hundred yards for a newspaper the process of degeneration is well advanced. Too often, alas, a car is an invitation to old age!

(To continue)

BIGOTRY IN POLITICS

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The American Journal, *Life*, in its issue of November 2, 1953, has a cheap dig at Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in its editorial, "Should U. S. Policy be Moral?" It says,

"John Foster Dulles made one of the best speeches of his career in the present U.N. Assembly. But it was Jawaharlal Nehru, in a simultaneous complaint from New Delhi, who really put a spot-light on the essence of what Dulles believes. The Indian Prime Minister made it clear that the Secretary of State is trying to give U.S. foreign policy a moral basis worthy of the leadership of the free world."

But the following was really what the paper meant to say regarding Shri Jawaharlal. It is reproduced below from the same article a few lines below the above:

"While U. N. Delegates were enjoying... Nehru had just been describing U. S. policy as 'ferocious' and 'immature'. He deplored what he called the 'narrow approach to world affairs... that bigoted almost religious approach of either you are with us or against us'... 'Religion is all right when applied to ethics and morals,' said Nehru, 'but is not good mixed up with politics.'

"Here was an accusation that no foreign statesman, not even Vishinsky, has ventured to level at Dulles: that his policies have a religious motivation."

In a side-note to the above editorial remarks, the paper adds further, "Nehru's statement that religion and politics don't mix is not fair to Hinduism or to India."

And as evidence thereof it quotes C. R. from one of his recent speeches. It could as well have marshalled such evidence from Gandhiji's writings also. But that is all beside the point and irrelevant to the very true, though unpalatable, thing that Jawaharlal said regarding both Americanism and Communism. Christianity does not require to be reminded that very often religion was another name for doctrinal bigotry which argued in the strain, 'either you are with us or against us'. And that is how to the Indian mind Americanism appears to be functioning vis-a-vis Communism at present. It is no answer to this that so also is Communism. It is therefore that we might say, it could not occur to Vishinsky to accuse Dulles, as it occurred to a third and independent man like Nehru, who being out of it could see it. India does stand for moral values; we respect truth and do have regard for moral values, as Shri C. R. is quoted to have said. The point, however, is that such a religion eschews bigotry and makes us think and work for one world, and not for a bigoted duality, even though in a peculiarly hypermoral tone, it may be described by *Life* as 'freedom vs. communism,' which are really speaking American vs. Russian bigotry, both as irrevocable and rigid as creedal religions.

4-12-'53

In Memoriam

On the 15th of this month we will be remembering the great Sardar who departed from our midst that day three years ago. The years that roll away one after another bring such questions before us as continually remind us of him with a poignancy all its own. We keenly feel that he is no more with us at the very time when he was the most needed. The whole country had utter confidence in his capacity to deliver the goods in the surest manner. But I think it was difficult for him to continue here with us any longer after his Master went away. Gandhiji and he were one, though different in bodies, so far as the country's work went. Sardar executed what Gandhiji thought and said as good for us. If at all he continued to be alone for some time after Gandhiji, it was due to sheer force of his indomitable will to finish the job that he saw lay before the country and which he felt should be finished by him. Ultimately the flesh gave way and he died in harness. On this day of his anniversary let us remember him by bringing to bear on the questions before us his great virtues — his abundant patriotism, indefatigable capacity of work, unflinching practical sense etc.

5-12-'53

M. P.

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