

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1952

TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Everyone will rejoice at the election of Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the first President of the Indian Republic elected under the permanent provisions of the new Constitution. He enjoys universal respect and popularity and is pre-eminently qualified for that honour. May he live long and represent our nation in the assembly of World States.

Wardha, 8-5-'52

New Government

On 2-9-'46 the Congress first accepted office at the Centre, having agreed to join Lord Wavell's cabinet. Gandhiji was in New Delhi at the Bhangi Colony. On their way to Government House for swearing-in ceremony, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Shri Rajendra Prasad and Shri Jagjiwanram went to Bapuji to seek his blessings. They were received by Rajkumari Amritkaur who garlanded them with yarn-garlands, while Shri Abha Gandhi put saffron mark on their foreheads and distributed *gur* to celebrate the occasion. It being a Monday, Gandhiji was observing his usual silence. He, therefore, wrote out his blessings on a piece of paper:

"You have been in my thought since the prayer. Abolish Salt-Tax. Remember the Dandi March. Unite Hindus and Muslims. Remove untouchability. Take to Khadi."

Pyarelalji read out the note. Shri Manibehn Patel took possession of it and has preserved it till this day. This was followed by the singing of the *Vaishnava jan* hymn, after which the three ministers proceeded for the swearing-in ceremony.

The note may well be regarded as Bapu's "Instrument of Instructions". Let it be remembered that it includes Khadi.

Wardha, 8-5-'52
(From Hindi)

K. G. M.

AT THE CROSS ROADS

(By Pyarelal)

IV — The Problem of Defence

There is, however, a more serious reason that can be pressed against this system of economy. I concede it in advance. It will not enable us to build a mighty war potential. The nature of modern war is such that it cannot be successfully waged by any nation which does not possess a highly developed system of capital goods industry, supplemented by mass-producing consumers goods industry, capable of rapid conversion to war time needs in armaments and other war material. Again, it cannot be waged successfully except by nations that can mobilize their entire man power in military or industrial conscription. And the universal conscription of population as well as conscription of wealth in the form of heavy war-time taxation can most easily be enforced under a system, where large numbers of people are dependent for their subsistence upon large-scale private employers and corporations or the one, all embracing corporation — the State. I was once discussing this question with the Governor of one of our Provinces. "What you say is all right," he said at the end of the argument. "But what about the military expenditure? Cottage industries cannot finance our growing war machine." And today our Commander-in-Chief too is telling us, we must have rapid development of our 'home industry' if we want to be a 'great power in the modern world'.

We have therefore to make our choice. If we want armaments — a mighty war machine, let us go in for centralized mechanized system of mass production. We too then shall have our armament Kings and 'Merchants of death', our Schneiders and Skodas, that will not scruple to amass profits by selling armaments to potential enemies in peace time to keep their show running. And these will be used to slaughter us and our folk in the event of a war. If we want health, freedom, leisure, sunshine and life, food and clothing for the millions, we have to go the way that Gandhiji showed us.

"But then our neighbours will swallow us," people tell me. Friends, it is an unworthy fear. A people that could bring to its knees the mighty

British Empire in the short span of one generation cannot be so easily swallowed or digested by any neighbouring power if they have not discarded or forgotten the use of the weapon with which the Father of the Nation armed them and led them to victory.

Again, is there any guarantee that armaments will necessarily prove effective against aggression? Let us not be caught in the philosophy of the Maginot Line. That philosophy failed France in her hour of trial, just as its counterpart failed Hitlerite Germany later and spelt its utter ruin. And if armaments fail — as they inevitably do before superior armaments and sometimes even before inferior ones — what then? Shall there be no other alternative except abject surrender under such circumstances? Even the British power in India found itself reduced to a position when it had to declare that it would have to retire to a remote line of defence beyond Allahabad perhaps, abandoning the entire coastal belt and the densely populated areas behind it to the Japanese invasion. Usually, when we put our reliance on armaments, there is nothing but abject surrender left to us, once our armaments are overpowered or taken away from us. But there is a potent and unfailing means of vindication of their honour and self-respect still available to the people if they have been trained to wield the weapon of Satyagraha. That was the power revealed to us by Gandhiji at the time of the threatened Japanese invasion during the darkest period of the last world war. It enabled us to keep our heads high and our spirits braced. Extinction under Satyagraha is not annihilation. And if war unto death is an admissible solution of the problem posed by possible aggression by a powerful neighbour, why not non-violence unto death without surrender? I suggest it is the nobler and by far the more effective solution.

The Modern Menace to Freedom

Any way, there is not much meaning in jeopardizing even in peace time popular freedom for the fear that it might be lost in the event of a war. Let me explain. It has very aptly been observed that as a result of technological advances during the last century on many points nature has been conquered but man and his liberties have sustained a succession of defeats. Paradoxical as it may seem, progress in science and technology instead of widening the frontiers of individual freedom, has been a causative factor in the decline of liberty and concentration of power in the hands of the ruling oligarchies during the last century. As Aldous Huxley has pointed out, never were the political bosses armed with more efficient instruments of coercion than they are today. Not only has technological advance provided them with bigger and better instruments of coercion with which they can bend large masses of people to their will; it has also provided them with instruments of persuasion incomparably superior to any that the earlier rulers possess-

ed. A political party or an oligarchy controlling the Press, the telephone and the radio can hypnotize millions by its propaganda. The masses have no weapons comparable to those in the arsenals of the rulers of today. In a country, therefore, where the democratic machinery may be suppressed or where it may cease to function properly, people who feel oppressed are likely to find themselves without any effective mode of resisting the oppression unless they can offer resistance on a plane where technological superiority does not count. So far the only hopeful issue that has been discovered in this respect is Satyagraha. And one pre-condition for successful Satyagraha, apart from the cultivation of the basic disciplines among the people — particularly the leaders — is that a part of citizens should have easy access to natural resources and possess sufficient manual skill to be able to provide themselves with the elementary means of subsistence without depending upon big capitalists, big employers or the one, all-embracing employer — the State.

If we could bring about non-violent organization among the people — and the only known and tried way to do so is through the medium of constructive work — we could cure many of the ills like black markets, controls, corruption and so on, from which we are today suffering and which fills the hearts of the youth with frustration.

Function of Constructive Work

We are all familiar with the complaint that the Congress leaders in power do not take interest in the development of what Gandhiji called 'constructive work'. It is no surprise to me. The function of constructive work is to forge a non-violent sanction. Its use is to bring strength to the elbow of the Government in power, if they make it their own, or to put a brake upon it if they go wrong. The Congress leaders were keenly interested in the development of a non-violent sanction when they were out to give fight to the British power. But since they have come into power, they have a more handy sanction ready at hand, and one has the suspicion they do not very much care for — if they do not actually fight shy of non-violent strength. For, this weapon can prove double-edged, if the rulers are not very careful as to the path they choose to tread.

This reluctance or disinclination is fundamental. The first concern of the State will naturally be to strengthen the hands of the politicians or the group that is in power, not to arm the people with the power of resistance which the rulers no longer need for themselves and which is capable of being turned against them. And that applies to political parties in opposition too. Intrinsically they share the limitations of the present Government in power. As regards the personnel, when one finds that they do not scruple to steal each other's members, who become good if and as soon as they join them and are dubbed as blackguards if they don't or if they go over to the other side, the difference

between them is thus only that between half a dozen and six! They have all equally lost faith in non-violence as the weapon of choice. The tussle only is for a share in, or capture of, power. If they were installed in power tomorrow, they will be forced to follow the same patterns of conduct as the present Government by the logical necessities of the premises which they have adopted in common with the Government in power. Their denunciation of the present Government for neglect of the constructive programme and deviation from Gandhiji's ideologies no less than their pledges to do better in this regard, if they are put in power, therefore leave me unimpressed. I would like us to cease to depend upon the use of government machinery for the development of constructive programme or the implementation of Gandhiji's basic policies and apply ourselves to creating the non-violent sanction which is the only remedy for our present ills and ultimate guarantee of our liberties in peace time or in war. Put the destinies of the people in their own hands, therefore, I say. For that you have to work from outside and from below, occupy yourselves with little things and forget the big. You will then get big results.

And — one word more — do not despise the basic disciplines as outmoded vestiges of the pre-scientific era. The world needs them more than ever.

A young English friend, who came all the way over from England to meet Gandhiji at Sevagram to understand the problem of non-violence, in a letter once wrote to me: "The third world war has already begun under the table. There can be no world peace unless there is a return to spiritual disciplines and religious convictions." He is an Oxford don and a brilliant and successful play-wright. He doubted if the West would be able to achieve it. Let that privilege be yours, ours — India's.

(Concluded)

STUDENTS' TRAINING CAMP

(Under the auspices of the Sarva Seva Sangh)

At Maganvadi, Wardha (M.P.) June 1 to 22 (Inclusive)

Student workers from various parts of India, with a good experience of student work and genuine regard for truth, non-violence and the constructive programme will be selected for this training.

They will be knit together into a solid and coherent group of non-violent revolutionaries in the field of student work.

Two hours each morning will be given to a substantial work project such as the building of a road.

Our Training Theme will be:

"CREATIVE REVOLUTION UNDER GANDHI"

There will be Basic studies under the leadership of: Shri R. S. Dhotre, Shri G. Ramachandran, Shri G. Ravindra Varma and Shri R. R. Kethahn. General studies will be taken charge of by visiting friends and some others.

The following are being requested to aid us in these General Studies:

Shri Kaka Kalelkar	Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju
" Shankarrao Deo	" Shrinannarayan
" E. W. Aryanayakam	" Agarwal
" Jaiprakash Narain	" P. C. Ghosh
" S. A. Dange	" J. B. Kripalani
(Communist)	" J. C. Kumarappa, etc.

Arrangements will be made for lady students, if any. Food will be vegetarian.

APPLICATION FORM

Name (Print)

Address: (")

Age: Cultural background:

Educational qualifications:

College:

Detailed account of experience, especially in student work:

I herewith apply for admission to the Wardha Students' Training Camp, June 1 — 22.

I am sending Rs 2/- registration fee.

I shall pay the camp fee of Rs 35/- upon arrival.

I shall co-operate fully with all parts of the Training Programme and carry on student work as may be planned throughout the coming year.

I shall be present throughout the Camp.

Signed.....

Place:

Date:

If admitted I shall arrive at Wardha by the..... train on.....

N.B. All applications should reach the Organizer by the 22nd May. Students should start for Wardha only on receiving intimation that they have been admitted.

Please bring all personal needs, a spinning wheel or *takli*, note book and pencil, musical instrument, if any, plate and cup, and a lot of good humour.

For further information or admission please apply to:

R. R. KEITHAHN,

Ashram Fellowship,

P.O. KODAIKANAL (South India)

ALL-INDIA SAPHAI TRAINING CAMP

Under the auspices of the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, an All-India Saphai Training Camp will be conducted in Maganvadi, Wardha, for a period of three months commencing from the 1st of July, 1952. The object is to create the nucleus of a band of workers who will be fired with missionary zeal for *saphai* and possess adequate understanding of the theory and technique of sanitation work in villages and towns.

Only those who have already acquired genuine experience in Constructive Work and who have themselves realized the crying need for a nation-wide and intense campaign of *saphai* will be admitted. Candidates should be capable of hard manual work since the training will involve taking part in sanitation projects of cleaning drains and public lavatories and digging trenches etc. As instruction will be in both Hindi and English, a good working knowledge in these two languages will be necessary. General knowledge and specially scientific knowledge will be additional qualification. The age limit will be generally between 22 and 35.

In the case of those who need it, stipends would be available to cover expenses of boarding and lodging and in extreme cases of need, of travelling also. All applications should reach us by the 10th of June, 1952 at the latest. Applications should contain information about Constructive Work so far done and the other qualifications above mentioned. Every application should be accompanied by the recommendation of at least one well-known Constructive Worker.

Maganvadi, Wardha,
6-5-52

G. RAMACHANDRAN,

Secretary,

Gram Udyog Vibhag:

Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh

HARIJAN

May 17

1952

GRATITUDE

"We shall do everything we can for the people here, but we must tell you our bitter experience. Gratitude is not a characteristic of these people. No matter how much you may do for them, they will not hesitate to turn against you at the first opportunity." (*Our Next-Shore Neighbours*, Ch. VI—*Hindustan Times*).

Thus records Shri Kaka Kalelkar as the complaint made to him by some of our people when he visited East Africa last year.

I remember having read somewhere a similar experience recorded by Tolstoy in the reaction to his acts of generosity towards his tenants and servants. But Tolstoy was a deep investigator and found out the cause of this apparently unnatural conduct. He explains it by an example. I do not remember what exact example he has given, but it is somewhat of the following type:

Suppose you are a smoker going along a street. You want to smoke but find your match-box empty. Someone is passing by and is about to light his cigar. You ask him to allow your cigar to be lighted with his match, and he allows you to do so. No doubt, you will say, "Thank you". But what, after all, is the amount of gratitude you are going to bear towards him for this act of generosity? Do you think you are going to feel all your life how kind and generous he had been to you? In the same way, if a man like Tolstoy, who had plenty of money in his pocket, and to whom a rupee was not more worth than a match out of a smoker's match-box, gave it away to a servant or tenant or a beggar, why should the receiver feel grateful towards the donor for all time to come? The donor did not become any the poorer on account of his gift. He had not to give up any of his luxuries—not to say, necessities of life—for the purpose. Indeed, it was good and necessary for him to reduce his possessions, even as it is good and necessary for a corpulent man to reduce his fat. How happy, and even thankful, would too fatty people feel if science found some method of transferring their abundant fat to people who had none? It would be a mutually advantageous transaction, and no relationship of obli-gated-obliged be claimed on either side.

The case for gratefulness falls even further down, where the relationship of donor and donee is subjoined to a previous or concurrent relationship of exploiter and exploited. Whether the donor is a rich individual, or a trust, or a State like U. S. and the donee a beggar, or a social worker, or a nation in need, if the donation is given out of the donor's plenty without any loss in his own comforts, and with an eye to avoid

some fear or secure some gains, a lasting sense of gratitude is not likely to be generated. Indeed, there is the possibility of a feeling of jealousy and disrespect for the donor being developed, and an attempt made to get as much as possible out of him with even a threat to turn against him if the demand was not granted.

U. S. has been spending enormous amounts in Europe and Asia ever since the end of the War. The expected result should be that of love and gratitude towards the Americans. I understand, however, that this is not so in either of the continents. The money is accepted and even attempts are made to get more, but there is no feeling of any genuine "Thank you" in the hearts of the benefited people. There is a fear that the very help might make the recipients turn Communists—a result U. S. is so anxious to prevent.

It will be well to remember in this connection the parable of the Golden Mongoose from the *Mahabharat*:

King Yudhishtir initiated his great *Rajasuya Yajna* (Coronation Sacrifice). Handsome gifts and donations had been made, thousands of *brahmans* fed. The water of the washings of their hands ran like a muddy rivulet.

A mongoose appeared on the scene. Half of its body was golden, the other half like that of an ordinary mongoose. It rolled itself in the muddy water of the washings, and looked at the ordinary half of its body. Finding that it had remained unchanged, it turned to the King and told him that it had measured the value of his generosity and found it to be nil.

The King asked it to explain itself.

The mongoose said that originally its body was like that of a normal creature of its species. Once it chanced to have half its body made wet in the mud caused by the water used by a poor man's guest for washing his hands with after a meal. It found that the wet half immediately became golden. On enquiry it found that the poor host had been himself starving for several days. Upon his succeeding in getting some grain, he cooked it and was about to eat it, when suddenly a man turned up and asked for some food. The host would not refuse, though he himself was starving. The beggar ate it all, and then asked for water. The host gave even the jar of water, which he had secured with great difficulty. The beggar drank a part of it, and with the rest washed his hands. It was that little wash-water that had made half its body golden. Thereafter it had been in search of more such water in order to turn its other half golden, but had not succeeded. It had come to the *yajna* with great expectations, but was sorely disappointed to find that the King's charities had no value.

The receiver's heart is filled with lasting gratitude only when a gift is made out of a man's own wants.

This is not to justify the ingratitude even of a receiver of such a trivial thing as a match. Even a stray dog or a ferocious lion remembers

with gratitude the giver of a chance-piece of needed service as long as it is able to remember faces. Unfortunately man is often not so noble as a dog or a brute (as the lion is called), but that is in no way creditable to him. A person who has intelligence enough to reason about morals can never think of justifying ingratitude on his own part.

My article is more addressed to the donors as a friendly warning. Let them give something which they themselves badly need, and would have to go without at least for some time. Let them not give by way of charity their discarded rags, and spoilt food. Let them realize that according to the moral law, the rich, the intelligent, and the more advanced (individuals or nations) are but trustees of their gifts and in parting with their lands, moneys or skill for their poor and less advanced countrymen or sister nations, they do no more than perform their duty as good human beings. If they give from their surpluses, or even from their needs but with an eye to secure some advantage or avoid some fear, they should be prepared for disappointment. Since they have much they must give, and give, *in sooth*, without attaching any strings or expecting returns. That is the right way of generating a sense of respect in the donees or winning their love.

Wardha, 9-4-52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

U. S. MONEY

(By Shankarrao Deo)

Shri J. C. Kumarappa in his article "The Noose?" in the *Harijan* of March 8, 1952 warns us against the danger of basing our agriculture on American crude oil. There are also other important aspects of this matter which we must consider before we freely allow the flow of American money for our small and large development projects. In nature the subtle is more powerful than the gross. Nowadays the American Ambassador is much in the news, and the Press reported prominently that when Mrs. Roosevelt arrived at the Taj in Bombay thousands of Indians were waiting to greet and cheer her. In a city like Bombay crowds gather even out of curiosity and normally not much importance ought to be attached to that fact.

Powers that he vauntedly say that no political strings are attached to the American help. But that does not mean that U. S. does not calculate and build upon the silent effect of the help on politics. Though they are young in age compared to us, they know human nature perhaps better than we do and can rely on the secret and silent working of their dollar. When Bhishma was asked why he did not help the Pandavas, though he believed their cause to be just, he replied अयंस्व पुरुषो दासः। (Man is a slave of money)*. Can we of the present age

claim to be greater than Bhishma or Drona in moral character? If we accept American or any other foreign aid of this magnitude — strings or no strings, — we are bound to feel its influence in our international affairs.

They say India is poor and if she wants to keep away the wolf of Communism out of her door she must accept foreign aid and that can be at the present moment, only American. Is that really so? Indian masses are poor and so perhaps their Government also. But what about the Indian rich? Have they exhausted all their monetary resources to help their brethren? One can understand if we receive the technical or scientific help from the Americans or, for that matter, from anybody who is in a position and willing to give it. But as far as receiving money from foreigners is concerned, the law of Swadeshi demands, that before we have emptied our own coffers we have no moral right to present the begging bowl to others. परस्पर सादयन्तः श्रेयः परमवास्वयम्। "Thus fostering each other, you shall attain to the supreme good."

What is this law of Swadeshi? Gandhiji defines it as "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote." Swadeshi is the law of laws enjoined in the present age. Spiritual laws like the natural laws need no enacting. They are self-acting. But through ignorance or other causes man often neglects or disobeys them. But we must remember that infringement of natural as well as spiritual laws does not go without punishment. Will our rich men as also the Government take heed?

Hindi "Sarvodaya"

Readers of Hindi *Sarvodaya* are informed that its issue for May will be published on the 25th and will reach the readers before the end of this month. It will contain a full report of the proceedings of the Sevapuri Conference.

LAKSHMINARAYAN BHARATIYA

By Mahatma Gandhi

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* This is in accordance with the popular interpretation of the referred reference. I am aware that scholars interpret this as meaning that Bhishma was bound to be loyal to the Crown. — S. D.

VINOBAJI'S APPEAL TO THE NATION

My dear fellow countrymen,

I was touring Telangana during the summer of the last year. All the while I was thinking of the grave problem confronting the people there. At one place at the request of local Harijans to get some land for them, I asked the village people to donate sufficient land for them. The people acceded to my request and I received the first *bhoomidan* that day. This was on 18th of April 1951. This is how the idea of *Boomidan-Yajna* came to me, and I tried it during my Telangana tour. It gave encouraging results. Within a period of two months I received about twelve thousand acres of land. I believe that it was very helpful for easing the situation there. It had its effect on the whole of India and we find that Telangana is much quieter today.

I had been trying to find some field for experiments with non-violence since Gandhiji's death. I took part in the work of rehabilitating the Meo Muslims with this very idea. It was a good experience. It encouraged me to go to Telangana. I saw there the vision of Ahimsa in the form of *Bhoodan-Yajna*.

There was a background for the *bhoomidan* I received in Telangana. It was doubted whether the same experiment could be carried on in other parts of India, in the absence of that background. It was necessary to test it in other parts in order to clear that doubt. In the meanwhile I received an invitation from Pandit Nehru to place my views before the Planning Commission. It provided me with a reason for starting on this walking tour. In the course of two months which I took to reach Delhi, I received some eighteen thousand acres of land. I then realized that the masses were eager to welcome non-violence.

At the request of friends of Sarvodaya in U. P. I ventured on this experiment of *Bhoomidan-Yajna* in the larger field of U. P. There are more than one lakh villages in U. P. In order to settle at least one Sarvodaya family in each village, we decided to collect, at the rate of five acres for a family, five lakh acres of land. Notwithstanding that many of the workers were busy in the elections for about three months, the people gave good response. We have received more than one lakh acres by now. I see in this nothing but the hand of God. He wills and welcomes this activity. Some of my companions also feel like that. The result is that the workers who met in the Sarvodaya Sammelan at Sevapuri have resolved to collect at least twenty five lakh acres of land within the next two years.

I am aware that the problem of India's landless labourers cannot be solved by merely distributing 25 lakh acres among them. It will require at least five crore acres to solve this problem. But if we can collect 25 lakhs as a first step, and thereby convey the message of non-violence to India's five lakh villages, I believe, it

will create a favourable atmosphere for equitable distribution of land.

I have not only asked for land from big land-holders but have also requested small land-holders to contribute their quota to this *yajna* and I am very happy to say that these poor people of magnanimous hearts have responded to my prayers with great affection. The offerings of the poor people in this *yajna* remind me of the offering of berries by Shabari to Rama and of parched rice by Sudama to Krishna. I will ever remember the gifts of these devotees of God. This *yajna* inspired the poor to work for their own salvation and the rich for self-purification and relinquishment of ownership.

I have received land-gifts from people of all classes and denominations, Hindus, Muslims, and others. Even those who hardly have anything left with them as Harijans, and women, who do not have much right on immovable property, have given me land-gifts. The donors came from all political parties and all stages of life. I have asked all to regard *Daridranarayana* as a member of their families, and give him his share as a right, and not as a piece of charity, and people have given me with the same feelings.

We should not feel ill at ease with the word *dan* (gift) in the term *Bhoomidan-Yajna*. Shankaracharya has explained the word *dan* as equitable division. I use the word with that connotation. The receiver of the land will not get his bread for nothing. He will have to work upon the land, improve it, and wet it with his own sweat before he can get his bread from it. He has no reason to feel humiliated. So we are giving him his own share and not bestowing charity on him.

We approach people for land gifts with love and humility and reasoning. We have set before us three principles:

1. We do not mind it if one does not give land even after understanding. Because we believe that one who does not give today, will give tomorrow. The seed of thought sown in his heart is bound to bear fruit some day.

2. If one gives with understanding, we feel happy, because it creates deep and far-reaching goodwill.

3. If someone gives without grasping the idea behind it and under pressure, we do not feel happy because we do not want to grab land anyhow but to create the sentiment of *Sarvodaya* and *Samyayoga* in the world.

I believe that in *Bhoomidan-Yajna* we have found a programme wherein all parties can co-operate. They say that the Congress needs purification. As a matter of fact all parties need purification but the Congress is mentioned because it is the biggest organization. I believe that if the Congress and other parties accept this programme and work it in the spirit of truth and

non-violence, there will be a general purification of all. It will increase the strength of all and bring about unity.

Fellow countrymen, I appeal to you all to contribute your share in the *Praja-sooya-Yajna* and by making this mission successful, establish non-violence as the rule of society in the economic sphere. I make a claim of the correctness of this work for three reasons. It is in tune with the cultural traditions of India. It contains in it the seed of economic and social revolution. And, lastly, it can help in the establishment of peace in the world.

I know, I have no right to give a programme to the nation. I am not a leader to give a call to the nation. I am an humble devotee of God who regards the service of the poor as the way to the attainment of the highest goal of life. If Gandhiji were alive today, I would never have appeared before the public as I do today, but would have concentrated all my attention on scavenging village streets and on conducting my experiments of *kanchan-mukti* (elimination of money economy) through agriculture. Circumstances have compelled me to come out and be audacious enough to be an initiator of this great *yajna*. But whether it is impertinence or humility I dedicate it to God and request all my sisters and brothers to co-operate with me.

Akbarpur, 28-4-'52

(Translated from Hindi)

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५.१०/५२

VINOBA

PROHIBITION vs. EXCISE

(By P. Kodanda Rao)

I. Consumption

It has been claimed for Excise policy that, even apart from revenue considerations, the Excise tax was the most effective instrument that the State has for controlling consumption of intoxicants, while Prohibition would not reduce, much less eliminate, consumption, but would only replace licit by illicit consumption, and incidentally, divert moneys from the State to the bootlegger. On the other hand, it has been claimed for Prohibition that Excise taxation failed to reduce consumption, licit as well as illicit, and that therefore, the only effective Governmental action was Prohibition, particularly as revenue was no objective. On the issue of consumption under Prohibition the Madhya Pradesh Prohibition Enquiry Committee were divided. The Majority held that consumption of Country Spirit in the Dry half of the State was not materially reduced, if at all, and that, therefore, Prohibition must be pronounced a "dismal failure", while the Minority held that consumption of all intoxicants, including Country Spirit, was very considerably reduced in Dry area, while in the Wet area consumption of Country Spirit had gone up considerably, and that, from the point of view of reducing consumption, Prohibition was more effective than Excise.

Official information is available as to the quantity of licit consumption. In the nature of things there are no official figures, or even estimates, of the quantity of illicit consumption. The only official information available is the number of detected offences. The Minority held that the number of detected offences was no measure of the total number of offences committed, or the quantity of illicit consumption. The Majority of the Committee, however, held that the number was a "fair index" of illicit distillation and consumption.

Illicit consumption occurs not only in the Dry areas under Prohibition, but also in the Wet areas under Excise. Thus, in the Dry half there is only illicit consumption, but in the Wet half there is not only licit, but also illicit, consumption. If, as the Majority of the Committee would have it, the number of detected offences be a fair index of the consumption, the illicit consumption in the Dry and Wet halves would be roughly in proportion to the numbers of offences detected in each half. The Excise Reports do not classify offences as under the Prohibition Act and the Excise Act, but the Reports of Judicial Administration (Criminal) so classify them. In 1949 the number of offences under the Prohibition Act was 6,801, and under the Excise Act was 5,898. According to the Excise Report for 1949, the licit consumption of liquor was 628,260 proof gallons and of toddy 334,000 gallons. Broadly speaking, the over-all consumption in the Dry half was represented by 6,800 cases, while the over-all consumption in the Wet was represented by 5,900 cases, plus 628,260 proof gallons of licit liquor, and 334,000 gallons of toddy. Unless it is presumed that the excess of 900 offences in the Dry half represented a consumption of 628,260 proof gallons and 334,000 gallons of toddy, it would seem that the consumption in the Dry half was considerably less than in the Wet half.

According to another set of figures relied on by the Majority of the Committee, the illicit distillation offences were consistently more in the Wet areas than in the Dry areas! "There was, besides, licit consumption in the Wet areas. For instance, in 1949, the offences in the Dry areas numbered 2,600 and in the Wet areas 4,000, and the licit consumption of Country Spirit amounted to 628,260 proof gallons and of toddy 334,000 gallons. It would seem that consumption was very much more in the Wet than in the Dry areas.

The Majority held the view that over the years since Prohibition was introduced, there was no material reduction in consumption in the Dry areas. In the Wet areas the consumption of licit liquor, not to speak of illicit liquor, had increased phenomenally. From the point of view of consumption whether licit or illicit or both, it is obvious that, even according to the Majority of the Committee, Excise was far less effective in reducing consumption than Prohibition. As this view is shared by the Minority also, it may be said that it was the unanimous view of the whole Committee.

II. Government vs. Bootleggers

It has been suggested that the revenue which would lawfully accrue to Government under Excise was diverted unlawfully to the illicit trade under Prohibition, and that, therefore, Excise was better than Prohibition. But illicit consumption and consequent diversion of revenue was a problem common to both the Dry and Wet areas. And if the number of offences in each be any index, there was greater loss of revenue in the Wet than in the Dry areas of the State, according to one set of figures, and only slightly less according to the other set, quoted above. Government was perhaps losing as much revenue from illicit consumption in the Wet as in the Dry areas, if not more.

The only difference was that in the Dry half only the illicit trade was making money, but in the Wet half both the illicit trade and Government were making money. It is difficult to estimate with any accuracy the total bill of the consumers in either half. In the Wet areas, where the licit has to compete with the illicit, the price per unit of illicit consumption paid by the consumer was lower than the licit. But in the Dry areas where there was no such competition, the price of illicit unit was very much higher than the corresponding price in the Wet. Given the same quantity of illicit consumption, the illicit trade made more money in the Dry than in the Wet. It was likely that the illicit trade made somewhat more money from the Dry half than from the Wet half, even if the number of offences was somewhat greater in the Dry

than in the Wet half. In the Wet half the consumers paid to the Government also, and the revenue from Country Spirit and toddy in 1949 was 1.56 crores. It is probable that the over-all bill of the consumers for licit and illicit consumption in the Wet areas was more than for illicit consumption in the Dry areas.

Government will continue to lose some revenue to the illicit trade as long as the latter prevails not only in intoxicants but in gold and other commodities, as long as there are profits in it. Police action is not likely to exterminate the traffic, but economic action can do so if the licit prices can compete successfully with illicit prices. But that would entail loss, not only of unlawful profits to the illicit trade, but also lawful revenue to Government, unless licit consumption increases in inverse ratio to the fall in its licit price. But in the case of intoxicants increase in even licit consumption is not desired.

III. Offences

It has been suggested that offences had increased due to Prohibition. It is, therefore, necessary to compare offences under the Prohibition Act and under the Excise Act and other Acts to form a fair idea as to their relative contribution to crime.

According to the Reports of Judicial Administration (Criminal) quoted from the Majority Report, the number of offences was as under:

Offences under:	1947	1948	1949
Excise Act:	3920	4753	5898
Prohibition Act:	4881	5965	6801
Police Act:	7084	12022	12024
Local and Special Acts:	53898	65678	74647

The Prohibition offences were consistently more than Excise offences, though according to the figures of illicit distillation, relied on by the Majority, the offences in the Dry areas were fewer than in the Wet areas. As compared with 1947, the offences in 1949 rose by about 50 per cent under Excise, 40 per cent under Prohibition, 70 per cent under Police Act and 40 per cent under Local and Special Acts. It will be noted that the increase under Excise was greater than under Prohibition.

The Minority of the Committee held that Prohibition was not the worst offender against the law, particularly if allowance was made for the fact that licit liquor was available in the Wet half and its consumption was over 6 lakhs of proof gallons in 1949. The Majority of the Committee observed that disregard for law, engendered during the freedom struggle and aggravated since independence, was general; that liberty had degenerated into licence; and that Prohibition was not alone in contributing to it; that corruption was due largely to the several control measures adopted by Government during the war and since; and that Prohibition was also a control measure and contributed its share to corruption. And they, nevertheless, came to the conclusion that the breaches of the Prohibition law were universal. In the light of the figures quoted above, it would seem that Excise was a greater offender than Prohibition, and Police Act greater still.

Government's own Excise policy contributed not a little to offences and corruption. Increasing taxation of licit consumption stimulated illicit traffic, and the auction system had aggravated it. The Majority of the Committee found that the vicious element of speculation which underlay the auction system and which was an integral part of the Excise policy, was a prolific source of a variety of scandalous malpractices and was largely responsible for corrupting the Excise administration in the Wet districts. It was in order to control offences, as well as consumption, that the Majority recommended the abolition forthwith of the auction system, and the scaling down of the prices of licit consumption. With these recommendations the

Minority was in full agreement. From the point of view of offences against the law, Prohibition was not the worst; and Excise was worse than Prohibition.

It has been urged that Prohibition not only lost revenue to the State but also involved prohibitive cost to enforce it. It should be noted, however, that illicit distillation and smuggling are offences both under the Prohibition and Excise Acts. According to the figures relied on by the Majority of the Committee, the number of detected offences in the Wet areas was consistently more than in the Dry areas. Even if Prohibition were withdrawn, there is no reason to suppose that offences would materially decrease. Only they will all be under the Excise Act, instead of partly under the Prohibition Act. In any event, the Madhya Pradesh Government did not incur any extra expenditure on account of Prohibition in half the State; it only classified the Police expenditure under Prohibition and other for a time.

RISE IN "HARIJAN" CIRCULATION

Thanks to the efforts of friends. The rise in the number of subscribers is encouraging. I am constantly thinking how I should make the Weeklies deserve these efforts.

I am anxious that I should give as much of and as quickly as possible Vinobaji's precious thoughts and movement. Also so many matters of great importance arise week after week, on which readers expect to have considered opinion of *Harijan*. Indeed, there is in evidence a new awakening in the people, which deserves to be encouraged and well-guided.

I also receive from distinguished writers and colleagues precious articles, which I am anxious to find room for in *Harijan*, but am unable to do so. I feel cramped for want of space. I have been cutting down my own notes and articles, in order to accommodate important matter. Until the number of subscribers well exceeds the marginal line, it is not possible to give more pages very frequently. If the present rise continues and the total number of subscribers reaches a figure of say 8,000 subscribers for each of the editions it might be possible to give more matter. I hope it will happen so.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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