

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Food Decontrol in Madras

At long last by abolishing food-rationing and controls Madras has given a lead to the rest of the States where strict controls and rationing are still in vogue. There will now be free movement of food and open markets in Madras. I hope other States will follow suit. No doubt, States will have to keep food stocks in reserve partly to meet the exigencies of famines and partly to control profiteering. Rajaji has taken care to see to it so far as Madras is concerned. He has also divided Madras into six zones so that surplus districts are suitably linked with deficit ones.

Now, cultivators and merchants should also play their part honestly. Not only should they individually be unselfish and avoid trying to make money when people are in distress, but their associations should exert sufficient pressure upon the members of their class for this purpose. That this is possible has been shown by the Kisan Mandal of Bhal-Nalkantha (Ahmedabad), whose activity I hope to report in another issue. It is not sufficient if associations work for safeguarding the rights and interests only of their members, and neglect their duties to the people. I hope they will whole-heartedly respond to the following wise counsel and appeal of Rajaji:

"There was enough food in the land to go round if people were careful and avoided waste. He appealed to the people to exercise restraint and avoid greediness and to demonstrate that 'we can be honest and patriotic and god-fearing and prove ourselves worthy of the trust imposed on us. I am confident that my hopes will not be belied.'" (P.T.L.)
Wardha, 9-6-'52

Protest against Hindi

The action and attitude of those members of the House of People, who insisted on Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri's addressing them in English only or in English first and in Hindi afterwards in the House of People cannot be justified. It is a preposterous insistence on the part of the representatives of the Indian people that a minister of the State should use a foreign language instead of the official language of the people in the discharge of his duties. The demand and the subsequent walk-out become particularly irritating in

face of the offer to give a gist of the speech in English to meet the difficulties of those who cannot understand Hindi during a transitional period.

I hope Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri will continue the practice initiated by him, and he will be supported therein and followed by as many of his colleagues and members of Parliament as possible. A day must come, and as soon as possible, when all statements, reports, bills etc. will be drawn and initiated in Hindi. I would not mind even if that Hindi were in the beginning mixed in a ridiculous manner with English words and phrases as in the instances pointed out from the proceedings of the U.P. legislative Assembly, in a leaderette of the *Hindustan Times* (May 10, 1952), of which the following is an example:

"Ab sawal yah rah jata hai vah point ap refer karen through Bombay Government, ki pahile daryaft kiya jae vah news kis-ne di aur us-ke khilaf directly proceed karen."

Wardha, 11-6-'52

Sarvodaya

The English monthly *Khadi World* published by the A.I.S.A., Tamil Nad Branch, will appear under the altered name of *Sarvodaya* from 1st July '52, under the auspices of the Sarva Seva Sangh. Though the two names are essentially synonymous, perhaps the new name will be more acceptable and suggestive to the public. I hope it will receive a good welcome, and establish itself as one of the important magazines of India.

Everything depends upon the practical achievements of constructive workers, and the demonstration of truth, non-violence, mutual love, the spirit of sacrifice and other qualities of the head and the heart in their work and conduct.

Now that the close associates of Gandhiji are passing through a critical stage and there is an apprehension that they might speak in more voices than one, the Editor's task will be a difficult one. He will have to take utmost care to see that *Sarvodaya* creates clarity and not chaos in the realm of thought.

The magazine will continue to be edited by Shri N. Ramaswami from Sarvodaya Prachuralayam, Veerapandy, Tirupur, S.I., the annual subscription being Rs 3/- only.

Wardha, 10-6-'52

Civilization of Noises

"I would prefer any day to be a nomad in the hills than be a member of the stock exchanges or be made to sit there and listen to those frightfully ugly noises there", said Mr Nehru. 'Is that the civilization we want the tribal people to have? I hope not. I am quite sure that ultimately the civilization of the tribal folk, of song and dance, will last when the stock exchanges have ceased to exist in this country and other countries.'"—P.T.I. (Hitavada, June 8, 1952).

I would add to this the following from a letter of the a satirical correspondent from Masulipatam:

"Perhaps you are fortunate enough (it is not so, if that would console him), to live in a quiet corner, in the midst of calm surroundings, free from the din and dust incessantly raised by loud speakers, cinema advertisements, radios etc.—features of progressive modern civilization! Every stall and every hotel and every nook and corner is equipped with a radio or a loud speaker in this municipal town, in addition to the municipal loud speakers at every two furlongs. I wish I could run away to some remote village. But the thought that our provincial governments want to go ahead with their rural development programmes, with installation of radio-sets in villages and on roadside to 'modernize' the villager and refresh the weary traveller prevents me from seeking solitude in rural areas. Shall I go to the forests? But there again, one fine morning I may meet with the noisy devils; our ministers may install in every Forest Ranger's district loud speakers for the benefit of the souls and bodies of forest-dwellers! To go and live in an Ashram I am unfit. And, I don't know if even these Ashrams are free from radio-sets!

"I don't understand how our educated and cultured gentlemen tolerate the din and dust. The late G.B.S. has said somewhere, 'the cinema-going mind is the most catastrophic mind'. Cannot the UNESCO or our Prime Minister, the inheritor of a great heritage, do something to prevent the modern devils from enlarging into catastrophic proportions?"

I fully endorse my correspondent's irritation. There should be some regulations which will enable citizens to have a reasonable amount of quietude for sleep, study and meditation. In the meanwhile, so far as the correspondent himself is concerned, he should not hesitate to take up abode in some small village out of the roadside, or in a forest in the Godavari district. It will take some years for the noisy civilization to invade him there. Why should he not enjoy peace for at least that long?

Wardha, 8-6-'52

K. G. M.

Sites of Towns

In the leading article of *Harijan*, May 31, 1952, Shri Vinoba is reported as saying that "a day may come when every man, whatever his station or office. . . will work for an hour or two on agriculture and help to raise production of the country. I hold that such loyal dedication to labour will contribute to the welfare of the country and the removal of inequality. Maybe, that for this purpose, our present cities may have to be destroyed and rebuilt on a new plan."

We live in an age of planning; and in enlarging towns and villages, or building new ones, I suggest that care is needed to avoid using cultivable land for housing. This may not always be

possible when there is pressure of population and no non-cultivable land within miles; but where this is available, it should be preferred. Extra distances and interests of investors in housing being of less importance than the fundamental fact that already we have not the land required for growing our food, there should be no regrets if cities are built to plans giving first priority to protection of agricultural land.

Porbandar, 5-6-'52

A. P. PATTANI

[The suggestion of the ex-Divon of Bhavnagar is timely and sound.—K. G. M.]

Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati Shorthand Classes

Shorthand classes in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati will be conducted under the auspices of Govindram Seksaria College of Commerce, Wardha from the 16th July, 1952. Correspondence course will be finished within six months and Reporting course within ten months. Besides, students will be trained in Nagri Typewriting. All the students completing their course will be examined and Diplomas will be awarded by the College to the successful candidates. All those who are interested in the Courses should apply to the Principal, stating their age and qualifications before the 30th June, 1952. Printed application forms can be had from the College Office on sending stamps worth 9 pice.

The fees for Correspondence course will be Rs 60/- and for Reporting will be Rs 120/-.

Accommodation for a few students is available in the College hostels. Seats will have to be reserved by paying Rs 25/- in advance.

As the Government offices, private institutions and newspapers are badly in need of Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati stenotypists, it is hoped that students will take full advantage of these classes.

The system taught in the College is recognized by the Committee appointed by the Constituent Assembly of India. During the past four years students from various parts of India, like Assam, Bihar, U.P., Vindhya Pradesh and Saurashtra were admitted to these classes and have obtained the diploma *Shighralipi Pravin*.

THE NEO-MALTHUSIAN MYTH

In the issue of the *Harijan* dated 7-6-1952, in the article 'Food and Population' we saw how the theory of hunger that famine is a natural and incurable phenomenon is based on wrong data and hence has no validity in fact. "Another theory of hunger accuses nature of provoking this calamity by an indirect mechanism: endowing man with excessive powers of reproduction and thus inviting over-population of the earth. The so-called neo-Malthusians subscribe to this idea. They would like to revive the doctrines brought forth by the English economist, Thomas Robert Malthus, at the end of the 18th century."

De Castro, in his book *Geography of Hunger* examines this theory and puts down his conclusion as follows:

"Malthus's theory lacked a scientific basis. His first error was to consider the growth of population as an independent variable, isolated from other social phenomena; whereas in fact such increase is strictly dependent on political and economic factors. His notion of a natural law governing the growth of population was challenged by Marx, who pointed out that what really occur are historical tendencies or cycles which change from one period to another in accordance with changing social organizations. Further, history itself has completely disproved the predictions of Malthus. For a time after the publication of his

theories the growth of world population seemed to conform his predictions, but before the end of the last century the increase had lost its impetus. Fertility began to decline in various countries, and side by side with the spectre of over-population appeared that of under-population.

"The central doctrine of Malthus 'was thus completely contradicted by historical evolution,' says the well-known demographer, Imre Ferenczy. Dr. W. R. Aykroyd, Director of the Division on Nutrition of the F.A.O., wrote in 1937 that, 'now in western civilization the spectre raised by Malthus has been laid.' Yet his theory, long buried in the ruins of his frightening predictions, has lately been dug up and used to project new and still more terrifying forecasts, culminating in the prophecy of the end of a world depopulated by famine." (P. 23).

And he explains how this revival of a wrong doctrine became possible today. He says,

"The revival of Malthusian theory has been possible because our period of history generates receptiveness similar to that of Malthus's day. The English economist lived in a time of revolution when people were nervous and doubtful about the future, a state of mind recurring, on a large scale, in our social revolution. The present world situation involves such a radical transformation of social processes that it is quite impossible to foresee the future of the world. Julian Huxley has said that the present revolution, as among revolutions, is highly revolutionary.

"Our blind flight into the unknown tends to frighten prudent spirits, and fear leads them now, as it did when Malthus lived, to attribute social unrest to the sheer number of human beings. When the neo-Malthusians say that mankind is starving and condemned to perish in universal famine because of its inadequately controlled birth-rate, they are simply blaming the hungry for the fact that there is hunger. It seems to them that famished populations, raising the demographic pressure of the world by their delirium of reproduction, are criminals.

"These criminals are guilty of the crime of hunger, for in the final analysis the neo-Malthusian theory is one of the born starving, who starves because he is born to starve, just as the criminal, in the old Lombrosian theory, kills and robs because he is born to do so. Like born criminals, the starving deserve an exemplary punishment, and so they are condemned to extermination either by individual starvation or by controlling reproduction until the born-to-starve disappear from the face of the earth. They are guilty of the masochistic crime of inventing hunger and suffering it." (P. 24).

Having thus examined Malthus's theory, De Castro turns to its new followers and says about their position as follows :

"The neo-Malthusians have invented nothing; their theories rest on the same precarious base that supported Malthus. To give a colour of reality to their prophecies, they based their predictions on the average annual coefficient of population increase during the last two centuries, and calculated that in three hundred years the world would have 21 billion inhabitants. This calculation has as little value as those of Malthus which have already been disproved by history. The social changes of the next three hundred years may as likely bring a decrease as an increase in the present population. Since we have no information about society in the coming centuries, long range predictions of population changes are pure speculations and consequently of no practical value."

The neo-Malthusians raise another alarm as well, viz. 'that food production cannot be increased because we have reached the practical

limits of soil utilization as well as of human saturation.' As we saw in the previous article 'Food and Population', the facts belie this. 'Of the 50 per cent of the globe's soil which can be cultivated, only 10 per cent is being used; and second, that production per acre in most of the world could be greatly increased by rational agricultural practices. . . . The crop yield of wartime Britain demonstrates overwhelmingly that necessity can inspire an agricultural expansion far beyond the limits of normal expectation.'

And hence De Castro further observes,

"I do not entirely agree with Marx's statement that production can be increased indefinitely, but I do believe that we are still a very great distance from its maximum limits and consequently I am not alarmed by the ghost of Malthus, or, as I always have an impulse to put it, by the Malthusian scarecrow. . . . To the neo-Malthusians the peoples of the world are a calamity worse than a flock of hungry birds or a thick cloud of locusts threatening to devour all the harvest of their neat little orchard which, as we have seen, occupies only 10 per cent of the surface of the earth. Against this threat to the nutritional security and general living standard of the richer (Italics mine) populations, the neo-Malthusians hoist in the four corners of the world the scarecrows of their excess population theories—scarecrows that are both symbols and phantoms. A poet has called them 'sculptures of the fear of our people and our epoch'."

Along with the contention of the neo-Malthusians, he dismisses the point of those who draw lurid pictures of the dangers of soil erosion. While he admits that soil erosion is a serious factor in some parts of the world, he believes that there has been a great deal of exaggeration and sensationalism on the subject. As he says,

"If erosion were the devouring and insatiable monster some people have painted, much of the world would already be barren and devoid of life. . . . The truth is that soil erosion and world overpopulation can at most be regarded as capable of causing hunger in future epochs, but never in our era. It seems a contradiction, even a subterfuge, to make so much noise about these latent possibilities and at the same time to pass by in silence the deleterious factors that operate before our eyes, and that are responsible for the decadence of the world at present." (P. 27).

What these factors are according to De Castro, we shall see in the next issue. According to him, "much more serious than erosion of the soil's riches, a process taking place in slow motion, is the violent erosion of human wealth, the deterioration of human beings through hunger and mal-nutrition." It is factors bringing about such decadence of the world that demand an immediate remedy and an urgent cure. This we shall take up in the next issue.

16-5-52

M. P. DESAI

SELF-RESTRAINT v. SELF-INDULGENCE

By Mahatma Gandhi

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NAPALM AND BACTERIOLOGICAL BOMBS

The napalm bomb has been described as follows :

"The bomb weighs between 100 to 500 lbs and its chief component is jellied petrol. It can scorch half an acre of land with a heat 14 times hotter than boiling water. According to a report, napalm destroyed 16 square miles of Tokyo in a raid of 1945 while the atom bomb affected 4½ square miles. When a bomb hits a village, according to observations made in Korea, the people are caught and burned in just the postures in which they are found." (From *The Guardian*, May 22, 1952).

Gruesome pictures and descriptions of the effects of this bomb have appeared in some papers. Imagine all men, women, children, and animals of a big Indian town being instantly scorched with burning petrol, the whole skin getting parched, making them incapable of even changing their position, or expressing their grief, and then dying one by one. That is the napalm bomb.

It is now long since allegations appeared in the papers against U. N. forces operating in China and Korea that they had resorted to the use of napalm and bacteriological bombs in their mission for the liberation of the Koreans. For some time it did not appear clear to what extent the allegations were truthful. The allegation about bacteriological bombs is still denied by U.S. authorities though stoutly reaffirmed by the Chinese. The charge of having used napalm bombs may be taken as almost admitted. It is also not denied that U. S. does manufacture and possess bacteriological bombs, and even as it experiments upon atom-bombs it may be presumed to desire to experiment upon the other ones. Tests on atom bombs can be made even in sandy deserts, where no human life exists. I wonder if the present extra-ordinary dust storms have not something to do with these experiments. However, leaving this aside, desert experiments are not possible with bacteriological bombs. The passion for scientific research has not yet become Neronian enough with U. S. Government and scientists to impel them to test the action of the bombs on some town or city in U. S. itself. It cannot be confidently said that the passion for adventure will never develop to that extent some day. Killing of prisoners for purposes of medical studies and research has not been unknown in history. The desire to monkey with the destructive weapons might any day lead power-blind and passion-blind authorities to destroy their own people, if opportunities are not easily available to destroy distant ones.

Let it be granted that the Chinese charge of the U. N. forces having used bacteriological

bombs is groundless. What have they to say about napalm bombs? So long as such mode of warfare, and the manufacture and experimentation of such weapons is not held an act of treason against the entire creation, there is always the possibility of these cruelties being heartlessly perpetrated.

U. N.'s military intervention in the Korean affair was not looked upon without misgivings even when it commenced. Later events confirmed the misgivings showing that it was really a rivalry between U. S. (operating under the name of U. N.) and U. S. S. R., or China, each trying to establish its supremacy in Korea. So far as the ordinary people of Korea were concerned, they were like mere ants and plants which are mercilessly crushed when two elephants engage in a duel. Their liberation has been their virtual extinction, and a cruel and torturous one for that.

I confess I do not understand international politics, and like Gandhiji, put my faith in Shri Nehru's lead in the matter. But no international situation can be more important than the fundamental principles of humanity and ethics. And I cannot but feel that the United Nations Organization and the nations which gave their consent to the name of the U. N. being used in the Korean warfare, let down humanity in general and the people of Korea in particular.

Wardha, 27-5-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SHRI VINOBA'S UTTAR PRADESH TOUR — IV

Prasad for Land

At one place Vinoba started a new method of asking gifts. The people of a village lying on our way to the next halting station had arranged for our breakfast. They had brought some fruits and other eatables. Vinoba began by distributing them to the people by way of *prasad* (offering returned as grace), and asking each receiver to give him land. From that day on, receiving *prasad* and donating land became a daily practice. Along with the *prasad*, we began to receive 20 acres, where about an acre or two only had been promised, and 5 to 10 acres at least where nothing had been expected. This method had its disadvantage also. A good deal of time was taken up in the distribution, and it got very late and hot by the time we reached the place of destination for the day. But Vinoba's hunger for land did not mind all these inconveniences. Did not Bapu stretch his palm eagerly from his third class compartment and in meetings to receive pies and pice for Harijans?

Four-fold Programmes

Vinoba lays stress on four points in his speeches and talks. The eastern districts of U.P. have had rather dry years for some years past. Vinoba asks the people to earnestly take up the programme of boring tube-wells, and bringing out the hidden Saraswati that flows underground.* People have been doing so, but are seriously handicapped for want of cement and coal. Vinoba has

* The place of confluence of the Ganga and the Jamna, near Allahabad, is called *Triveni Sangam*, i.e. the meeting place of three rivers. Actually only two rivers meet there. But as the two rivers join together, in the middle of the current there is a partial mixture of the two waters with a shade of colour different from the colours of either the Ganga or the Jamna. This is poetically imagined as the water of a third hidden river named, Saraswati, which is thrown up by the confluence.

drawn the attention of the Government to expedite these supplies. After *bhoodan*, this is the second item. The third and the fourth items are respectively village industries and Khadi. Vinoba has been telling government servants also that they should be invariably clad in Khadi. In India, Khadi must be accepted as the only proper material of dress when making appearance in society and the public. They must feel proud to put on clothes made of cloth spun and woven by their own countrymen. Vinoba had spoken about this to the members of the Planning Commission also.

Village Industries

There is hardly a village industry that has survived in these districts—the sugar factories having destroyed the only one that was in a vigorously thriving condition until recently. There was a period when the district of Deoria alone exported *khandsari* (village-made sugar) worth a crore of rupees. Even the success of the *Bhoodan-Yajna* will not solve the entire problem of village uplift and prosperity. Agriculture must be associated with Khadi and village industries, and Vinoba stresses that point at every place. Our daily programme of congregational spinning becomes a very impressive exhibition and Vinoba takes that opportunity to explain to the people the importance of Khadi.

Pardah

I referred once to the *pardah* system prevailing in these parts. In East U.P., we saw even more painful results of this custom. Women are anxious to see Vinoba, but they are prevented from doing so during day time. Hence, they come at night (late in the evening). At Muhammadabad they walked a distance of one mile at night to meet us. The same thing happened at several other places. At Narehi they could not come even at night and arrived at 3 a.m. in the morning! They joined the prayers at 4 a.m., and returned. They came only to have his sight regarding that as sufficient for their salvation. Vinoba is unable to talk to them and enlighten their vision and broaden their thought. More than half the human talent of U.P. is thus left inactive and dormant. In Telangana, the Communist propaganda has penetrated deep even among women.

The Purificatory Influence of the Movement

Some of the experiences which we have had have shown how the movement has been exerting purificatory influence upon Government servants. We have received considerable co-operation from officers throughout the tour. But it has been voluntary in many cases. We came across Tahsildars who had toured through their *tahsil* to prepare the people for *bhoodan*. They could have charged travelling allowance for this, but some of them did not do so. A *kanungo* (village officer) in the Gazipur district gave away his six acres of land, saying that unless he began with his own contribution, how could he make an appeal to others? In Ballia District, a *patwari* (another village officer) observed a fast on the day on which we reached his village, so that his village might give as much land as possible. He gave an acre himself. It was followed by gifts of sixty acres by others.

Objection to Government Co-operation

Some Communist friends objected to Vinoba accepting co-operation of Government officers in *Bhoodan-Yajna*. It was possible, they said, that the officers exerted the pressure of their official position in obtaining the gifts. Vinoba's answer was that his mission required the co-operation of every one in the country, and he could not reject that of any. But he had given his assurance to every one that if it was brought to his notice that a gift had been made under pressure, he would tear up his gift-deed, even though legalized. But he had not till then come across any such instance. He asked the questioners to remember that they were no longer living under a foreign government. It was a national government even if it might not be one which subscribed to the ideology of the questioners or was not composed of the party to

which they belonged. A foreign government might probably not give him any co-operation. But no Swaraj government, that was not *satanic*, could now non-co-operate with him in this mission.

Communist Propaganda

We found that the Communist propaganda has gone deep into the villages of East U.P. Several causes natural as well as man-made have contributed to it. Parts of Ajamgarh and Ballia districts have been considerably influenced by Communist thought. Villagers have heard the names of Moscow, Stalingrad etc. There have been also many cases of arson, loot and murder. As the party is not banned in U.P., as it was in Telangana, we witnessed the red flag in almost all our meetings. We also met Communist workers. They put questions, to which Vinoba gave convincing replies. The result was that they began to look upon the movement with sympathy and to offer co-operation. At Ballia, they even presented an address to Vinoba.

When Vinoba noticed in many of his meetings in the Ballia district that they were attended by many respectable people, who made handsome donations also, but constructive workers were rarely to be seen, he remarked that he was not surprised to see Communism thriving there. They were the only workers, who cared to work among the people. If constructive workers would befriend and work among the poor, Communism would find no ground to thrive there.

In his discussions with and replies to Communists, Vinoba constantly explained the difference between *Samyavada* (Communism) and *Samyayoga* (practice of equality). It helped to make clear their thinking and that of the people present at the meeting.

Questions and Answers

Before I close let me report some important and interesting questions and answers between various questioners and Vinoba.

Q: There is wide-spread and deep discontent among the people against the present administration. What is the Congress plan for removing it?

A: It is true that there is some discontent among the people against the present administration. Nevertheless, the people have voted the Congress, and have done so after an examination of its career of the last 4 or 5 years. It is possible that they have done so on the consideration that no other party might have achieved or was likely to achieve even what the Congress had done, with the result that it would lead to greater discontent. All the same, let us hope that the Congress will attempt to remove the present discontent.

Q: Do you feel the need for *Samyavad* (Communism)?

A: I do not believe in *Samyavad*, I believe in *Samyayoga* (the practice of equality) and feel its need.

Q: If nobody can have, as you say, ownership over land, how can you ask for gift of land?

A: This is mere quibbling. The fact is that people have in their possession thousands of acres of land. They are now parting with their possessions for the poor and I am accepting these gifts. I have thus received over one lakh acres which means provision of the means of life for a very great number of persons. That should be a matter of delight to all. If this ethical virtue of sharing what one has with those who have it not grows and spreads, it will do good to the community. As for the right of ownership, I do not recognize it even in the case of my body. However, since the people possess land (as I possess the body), it can and should be given. Shankaracharya said that the world was an illusion. All the same, we have to live and act in it. Therefore we should all do our bit to help the movement grow.

Q: Do you think that this programme of collection of land through gifts will solve the problem of just distribution of land?

A: If land-gift becomes a normal feature of our social

life, it will. The legislation (about abolition of zamindaris) will not solve the problem of distribution. *Bhoo dan* is the only way of conferring land on the landless.

Asked about the question of compensation, Vinoba said that it bristled with numerous difficulties. The principle of compensation has been accepted by the Constitution. Apart from that, compensation would not bring land to the poor. At the most it will give relief to the land-occupying tillers. *Bhoo dan* alone solves the problem of land to the landless. But the zamindars may give up their right to compensation. I have secured in this way charters of about a *lakh* of rupees.

Q: Will *Bhoo dan-Yajna* solve the land-problem?

A: Yes. And in a much better manner than by any other method.

Q: Do you feel the need of the Congress continuing as a political party?

A: I do not feel the need even of the body, still I do not commit suicide. You know that Congress exists and people have voted it to power. How can you then raise the question of the need of a body which not only exists but also enjoys the confidence of the people?

Q: If you were asked to choose between the Communist Government of China and the Congress Government, which would you choose?

A: Each one loves his own mother most. The Chinese Government may be good for the Chinese, but the Indians will naturally like an Indian Government.

Q: Do you believe in the programme of R.S.S.?

A: I do not know their programme. But I know that there are some good persons in it. I do not recognize the Sangh, I recognize individuals only.

Q: You are distributing very small plots of land. It will reduce the yield.

A: I do not accept this. I discussed the question with the Planning Commission and they agreed with me. You may go to our Pavanar Ashram and see for yourself how they are working on a small plot of land. The report has been published in the March issue of *Sarvodaya*.

Q: The Socialists say that it will take five hundred years to solve the land problem by your method. What do you say to that?

A: Revolutions do not proceed according to the rule of three. Gandhiji promised Swaraj in the course of a year. If we had obeyed him to the full, if Government servants, lawyers and students all had given up their vocations jointly on the same day, we would have got Swaraj then. Even so, we did get it in 25 years. It took us 25 years because we did not follow his programme fully. It will take long if my co-workers and I have to do it ourselves and you just while away your time sitting and watching. This is not a programme based on a mechanical contrivance (*yajna*) or an orderly movement (*tantra*). It is the inspiration of an incantation (*mantra*). Once a *mantra* infects a society, it works with magical speed. In the beginning it takes a long time to discover a *mantra*. It took many years before man discovered the method of creating a light. But once a lamp was lit, it dispelled instantly not only the darkness of ages, it could lit thousands of other lamps. Similarly, the movement may well fulfil itself, not in 500 years, but even in the course of a single year. In fact, the work is done already. As Krishna said to Arjuna, "Be thou merely the outward agent, O Arjuna; the Kauravas are slain already". So I regard this work. The land has already slipped away from the possession of landowners to the landless. The zamindars are expected only to be the outward agents for completing a settled fact.

Q: Gandhiji had named his successor. Who is to be your successor for carrying out this work in future?

A: God is my successor, one better than even Mahatmaji. The land is going to remain where it is. So I need not worry about the land. But if it is necessary for some one to reorganize it, God will see to it.

(Abridged from Hindi)

D. M.

"BAPU RAJ"

Now that my articles regarding Bapu's ideals for Free India have begun appearing in *Harijan*, I would like to share with the readers my experiences during my treks on horse-back through the villages for contacting the peasantry on the subject, and explain how the movement is developing.

But how am I to proceed with my narrative? Kishorlalbhai does not like the term "Bapu Raj". I know what Kishorlalbhai means, and appreciate it, but I would appeal to him to have a little leniency for the peasantry and for me, who am by nature of the fields and forests.

The following passage from my opening speech on February 12th shows what I mean:

"Mahatma Gandhi is for us Bapuji, Father, most especially is he Father to the peasantry of India, for whose welfare he worked, and prayed throughout his life. We know that a good father can never wish ill of his children, and that, therefore, the path shown to us by Bapuji is the one path by which the villages of India, which mean the real and eternal India, can be brought back to happiness, strength and health."

Let us not deny the peasantry the marvellous value of being able to associate the precious name of Bapu with this form of Raj.

So, in anticipation of Kishorlalbhai's forgiveness, I proceed with my narrative.

On February 12th, in village Bharapur Bhorli (Saharanpur District) I launched the campaign before some 5,000 peasants who had gathered there for the yearly Mela. After that I set out on horse-back, and travelled over 200 miles through the villages of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Bijnor districts. I avoided all towns and practically all highroads. Day after day I rode between the fields, along the lanes, now and then through forests, and then again through fields and fields—India, the real India, and source of all our strength and greatness:

There were no pre-arrangements, the meetings being announced by beat of drums after our arrival in the village. In the day-time meetings, the attendance varied from 100 to 300 peasants, and in the evening meetings (9 p.m.) 200 to 500, and sometimes more. The villagers listened with remarkable attention and appreciation. After the meetings, or early the next morning, some of them would come to have a talk. In no place did they express any misgivings or disapproval. In a nutshell the meaning of their reaction was, "We are with you, go ahead, and that quickly."

Their discontent is rising day by day. Like a great raincloud it has gathered on the horizon, and is already pouncing into the sky. Before long the deluge of rain will come. If we do not hurry up and dig a channel to carry the water in the right direction, it will flood out chaotically all over the land, causing confusion and damage. The digging of this channel does not mean the lengthy preparation of the peasants' minds for accepting Bapu's kind of Raj. They are ready. It means simply showing them clearly Bapu's full programme, and then helping them to unite for its attainment. It is not the peasants who have no faith in Bapu, but the leaders and workers who have not had the conviction and courage to show to the peasantry the whole of what Bapu told us to give them.

Precious time is being lost in political and intellectual discussions and reasonings, whereas the hour to act boldly has come.

"There is a tide in the affair of men.

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

Omitted, all the voyage of their life

Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

On such a full sea are we now afloat;

And we must take the current when it serves,

Or lose our ventures."

(Shakespeare)

As a result of my riding through the villages a little monthly *Hindi Patrika* has come into existence, as it were of its own accord, for I had no idea this development would take place. In it I address myself directly and entirely to the peasantry, and it is the means by which I can keep in touch with a wide circle of villages.

The first number, which has just come from the Press, gives a report of my speech on February 12th, showing the line of action I am taking, and the other articles are: "Tractors or Bullocks", "Artificial Manure", and "Distribution of Zamindari Lands". A few copies are also being prepared in English. Anyone interested in the subject can get copies (Hindi or English) from the publisher Shri Dharampal, Pashulok, P.O. Rishikesh, District Dehra Dun, U.P. The price is three annas a copy or rupee one for six months, post free. I hope to be able to increase the size of the *Patrika* in the ensuing issue, without increasing the price. People wishing to write to me personally should address me at Gopal Ashram, P.O. Pilkhil, District Tehri-Garhwal, U.P. where I am now going, and where I intend to stay till after the rains, when I will again go riding through the villages of the plains. Meanwhile I shall devote myself to consolidation of the work through writing, at that very spot where the inspiration to start the movement first came to me.

Pashulok, 21-4-'52

MIRA

Note: — I regret I still feel that terms like "Bapu Raj", "Gandhi Raj" etc. should not be brought into use.

K. G. M.

THE DRINK CURSE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I ask you to accept my evidence that the country as a whole is sick of the drink curse. Those unfortunate men who have become slaves to the habit, require to be helped against themselves. Some of them even ask to be helped. I invite you to take advantage of the wave of feeling that has been roused against the drink traffic. The agitation arose spontaneously. Believe me, the deprivation to the Government of the drink revenue is of the least importance in the campaign. . . . You will not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion and that those who wish to drink must have facilities provided for them. The State does not cater for the vices of its people. We do not regulate or license houses of ill fame. We do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge their propensity for thieving. I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both? I ask you to join the country in sweeping out of existence the drink revenue and abolishing the liquor-shops.

Young India, 8-6-'21

The moral loss is even greater than the financial. Drinks and drugs degrade those who are addicted to them and those who traffic in them. The drunkard forgets the distinction between wife, mother and sister and indulges in crimes of which in his sober moments he will be ashamed. Any one who has anything to do with labour knows to what state the labourers are reduced when they are under the satanic influence of drink. Nor are the other classes better off.

Young India, 4-2-'26

SHRI PATIL'S APPREHENSIONS — IV Large Holdings

The burden of my argument last week was that 'convenient holding' and 'economic holding' should be considered apart from each other, and that whether a holding is large or small, our immediate attention should better be concentrated on intensive cultivation in order to make agriculture most advantageous.

The necessity of having continuous plots of larger size than those generally existing at present is not denied. But consolidation, combination and collectivization of holdings is a long-term programme. It is a controversial question and not easy of decision. Even after we have come to some clear decisions about the manner of doing it and enacted legislation about it, it will take long before the administrative machinery is able to implement it. The work can be carried on without disturbing the efforts for making every type of cultivation intensive. From every point of view it is the latter programme which requires our immediate attention and action. It means providing whatever facility that can be made available to every cultivator, be he the smallest one with less than a *bigha*, or a large one with an undivided plot of 500 acres, to improve his cultivation. The facilities to be provided might take a hundred forms. And in distributing these facilities, it is not the large cultivator who should be served first or preferred, but the smallest and the least resourceful one. The number of the latter is legion, and in the aggregate they cultivate a greater area and produce more crops than the large cultivators. It may be desirable that the small cultivators should be drawn together not only in their agricultural interests, but also in their agricultural operations. But their inability to do so should not be the reason for not making their cultivation as much successful as possible. The reason for their unwillingness to combine with others should also be studied. Even as a mother would feed the weakest child first, a Government pledged to the welfare of the people should attend first to the needs of the cultivator who is poor, backward, even unintelligent and foolishly obstinate, and then lead him to forms of co-operation, consolidation etc.

India's agriculture suffers because India's administration is not carried on on the principle of the service of the most backward and poor first. Besides the delays of red-tapism, it neglects the poor cultivator, and practically compels him to go to the moneylender or the selfish, the tyrants and the influential ones of his own class. Not on account of any deliberate callousness of heart or calculated policy, but instinctively our caste-conscious and class-minded officers attend to the needs of the influential classes and disregard those of the backward ones. The latter are suppressed at every step. Co-operative and village management are good ideas, but when they are brought about in order to make things easy for

the administration, and in a way which vests power into the hands of a small clique, they become tyrannical.

Vinoba has said repeatedly that this present distribution will not stand in the way of general agrarian reforms. As it is, we are a nation of small-holders, and our laws of inheritance and transfer may have to be suitably amended in order to prevent fragmentation and transfer of land on the one hand, into the hands of non-cultivators, and on the other into those of giant cultivators or combines. Some limit to the extent of a holding must be fixed. Vinoba does not ask exemption for his donees from the operation of such laws. They will apply to them also along with others. Rather, Vinoba has seen to it that there will be no transfer of land for ten years at least. It may be assumed that that period is sufficient for every State to pass such laws as may be necessary to put into operation its permanent agrarian policy.

As to what that policy should be, Vinoba has indicated that he wants the whole village to be organized as a single unit on the principle of the joint family. Whether within the village, the cultivated plots should be individually large or small, and how large and small, will depend upon various matters; but, subject to correction by him, I believe, he has no objection on principle to the plots being sufficiently large, if the villagers are agreeable, and if the principle of employment for every one and provision of necessities to every one is ensured. Though there is not much room in India for mechanized cultivation, if without harm to the principles of self-sufficiency, ensuring the largest amount of self-dependence possible, and providing employment to every one, mechanization can be used advantageously to any extent, there is no objection to consider it. At present it appears to be merely an academic question. If mechanization on any large scale is out of question in India, it is clear that the plots cannot be too large.

Joint large-scale cultivation can be brought about in various ways: The Planning Commission has suggested two: namely, that of registered farms and co-operative farming, leading to village management. Communists advocate collective farming. All the three reduce the actual cultivator to the position of a mere wage earner, and make agriculture a centrally directed activity, subservient to the industrial and commercial policy of the State. If the State policy is non-Communist it might order production of all jute, cotton, sugar-cane, tea, coffee, tobacco etc., and feed the country on imported food on the principle of cheapness. If it is Communist, it might feed the worker well, but relegate him virtually to the same position as his well-fed bullocks. Against the former, some day he might be able to protest by democratic methods, if there is no war for a

long period. Against the latter, he would be faced against a single-party's totalitarian dictatorship. An indentured labourer could obtain relief at the end of the term of his agreement. The Communist worker would be at best a well-fed slave of the State from birth to death.

None of these can satisfy the just and reasonable aspirations of man. We want a system which will give every man reasonable scope for free-will and action in the interest of himself as well as society. We want a system in which work a man must, but not for money, but for himself and society, and not out of fear, but out of his own love and the love which society shows to him.

It is difficult to say what should be the exact form of such a system. I realize, and it should be realized that we cannot evolve a system which can be altogether perfect. We are imperfect beings and have to evolve systems for imperfect beings. Hence none of our systems can be entirely free from fault, and none can be good for all times. While, therefore, we might point out where a system adds to our convenience and comfort or is harmful, we need not be too dogmatic, if the implementation is honest, done with the best of motives and in a non-violent manner. I suggested some ideas in this connection in 1950-1951 (*Vide Harijan*, 16th Sept. '50, 17th Feb. '51 and 17th March '51) while discussing Collective Co-operation in Agriculture. But the ideas have been advocated without a sense of dogmatism. I have an open mind on the subject. All that I can say is that the system proposed by the Planning Commission as also the one enforced in Communist countries does not satisfy me.

Two things more in conclusion. They have been often stressed before and may be done so again. Agriculture will never stand alone. It must be, as Wilfred Wellock puts it, married to handicrafts and industries. Secondly, a thing which has to be purchased by every one, including the producers (labourers), at a price higher than the cost even by a pie, can never reach every one, no matter however abundantly produced.

Wardha, 10-6-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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