

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

L. W. Ritch

Mr L. W. Ritch of Johannesburg, South Africa, whose death took place in June last at the age of 84, was one of the closest associates of Gandhiji from 1903 to 1914, and the first European to be articulated under him. In the thick of the Satyagraha struggle of South Africa in 1907, he had been sent to England, where he did very useful work keeping the public well informed of what was going on in Transvaal.

He was associated with the *Indian Opinion*, Gandhiji's paper in South Africa, from the beginning until his health finally broke down a few months ago, and contributed literary, moral and spiritual articles to it. He was also one of the trustees of the Phoenix Ashram until his death.

Originally a Jew, Mr Ritch was an ardent Theosophist and a student of the Bhagvad Gita. He derived solace from the Gita in the midst of hard physical sufferings he had to pass through, having become a cripple since several years last on account of the amputation of his legs. "Though for selfish reasons, his death must cause grief to all those who survive him—two sons and two daughters—and to us who equally share their grief one has really to be thankful to merciful God for having relieved him from agony and taken him unto Himself."

(Abridged from *Indian Opinion*)

Jamshed N. Mehta

If ever men of God walk on the surface of this earth, Jamshed N. Mehta who passed away last week at Karachi, was one of them. He ever endeavoured to practise the three great principles of Jathushtra (Zoroaster)—purity of thought, purity of speech and purity of action. And those who knew him personally testify that he almost personified in himself the great virtues of charity, humility, cheerfulness of spirit, the constant effort to make up with the adversary peacefully and in a friendly manner, and a largeness of heart, which refused to reckon any human being in difficulty as unworthy of his sympathy and help on the ground of differences of religion, community, nationality, or past mistakes. He knew no narrowness and egoism. Such gentle souls are rather incapable of being advocates of strong and radical measures and movements which appear

to them like cyclonic storms disturbing an even course of life. But this gentleness is not without its heroism. They know that, much as they might dislike storms, they cannot be prevented; and when they do appear these godly men are not among those who seek their own safety and flee from them, but move out in the storm to pick up those who have been placed in adversity.

He was one of the builders of Karachi, which owes much to him for its beauty and past cleanliness. (I do not know what its condition is now). For several years he was the Chairman of its Municipal Committee, and later its first Mayor. The partition did not terrify him and make him quit Sind. He decided to stay in the city which he had adopted and helped to prosper. It was a great help both to its emigrants and immigrants. Law is expected to be no respecter of persons, but often it fails to reach that ideal. But death and distress come impartially to all. They know not Hindu or Muslim, Sikh or Christian, white or coloured. Nor did this friend of the distressed recognize any distinctions.

Like L. W. Ritch Shri Jamshed Mehta was also an ardent Theosophist, and a deep student of philosophy.

Though he has been called back home by the Creator, it is souls like Jamshed Mehta that make humanity appear as the noblest creation of God. May their race multiply.

Wardha, 6-8-'52

K. G. M.

Bhoodan of U. P.

The following donations were announced at a Conference of U. P. Workers in Vinoba's Camp at Banaras on 20th July 1952, as having been collected by the workers:

Names of the District	Acres
Hamirpur	7,000
Banda	11,500
Sultanpur	9,000
Muradabad	2,500
Allahabad	2,500
Saharanpur	3,000
Total	35,500

Total bhoodan of U. P. up to 20th July 1952 : 3,02,000 acres.

(From Hindi)

D. M.

SHRI VINOBA'S UTTAR PRADESH TOUR — IX

Glorious Kanpur

After staying for two days at Lucknow, the seat of the U.P. Government, we proceeded to Unnau on our way to Kanpur. Unnau got only two days, the least that any District had. But the workers did not complain about it, and put even that quantum to the best account. They gave 2,034 acres, and went back to their work with redoubled energy for fulfilling the rest of the 10,000 acres quota.

From Unnau we entered into Kanpur. The Kanpur District had been working for the *yajna* ceaselessly for the past two months and everything had been so well planned and thoroughly organized that it was able to make a record contribution to the progress of the *yajna* and set an example to the whole of U. P. The Mathura Sammelan was attended among others, by some of the Kanpur friends also. But the work got going really after the Pawaya Sammelan, that is, after February 18. Shri Shivanarayan Tandon, the moving spirit of the *yajna* in Kanpur was present at the Pawaya Sammelan. He was overwhelmingly impressed by Vinoba and completely converted to the *Bhoodan-Yajna* idea. Back at Kanpur, he sought co-operation from every party and set about his work in right earnest. Workers were divided into batches, one for every *tahsil*. With songs and speeches and literature in support of *bhoodan* and most of all by personally approaching all the prospective donors, they mounted a perfect campaign and strode fast to success.

Some workers undertook walking tours also. The result was that the day Vinoba stepped into Kanpur, the workers presented him with the full quota of their land contribution. It was a nice precedent and the workers deserve all honour for it.

And Vinobaji had had a wonderful reception that day when he entered the city. People had walked about 5 miles to receive and then escort him to the city. At the point where we crossed the Ganga, there was on every side so far as the eye went an endless multitude of people. The procession which preceded him was a gala sight. The loving receptions, *artis*, (waving of lights), the *yarn*-garlands and the downpour of flowers which marked our passage through the city, were so numerous and so spontaneously enthusiastic that we felt very much like being carried away literally on the tidal crest of love.

Vinobaji remained in Kanpur for two days. The workers planned the programme so wisely and well that they were able to utilize every moment of his time, without his having to move from his place. Representatives of every section of public opinion were able to see and interview him both individually and in groups. They included the Zamindars, representatives of the landless, Congressmen, Socialists, K.M.P.P. workers, R.S.S. and Jan Sangh workers, labour leaders and even Government servants. The idea behind the interviews was to let Vinoba acquaint himself with the local conditions and inspire the people with his contact to lend their support to the *bhoodan* movement. And the purpose was well fulfilled. Every one pledged him sympathy for the work and promised full support.

He also performed foundation-stone-laying ceremony of the Harijan Colony proposed to be built by the District Board. Shri Harishankar Vidyarthi presenting the welcome address pointed out, "We have our differences of opinion but we do not let them mar our decisions. We discuss them quite frankly among ourselves but we take our decisions unanimously."

Vinoba congratulated the Board on having undertaken to build the Harijan Colony and said, "Your city will not be known by the number of palatial buildings in the city but by the hutments you build for the Harijan brethren. Those who have no power of their own have behind them the power of God and service to the dispossessed entitles us to His kindness. The efficiency of the body hinges

on the weakest part. The *bhanghi*, whom we treat with contempt is the heart of our society. If he falls, be sure the society will topple down. The strength of the chain lies in its weakest link; if the latter snaps, the chain will break, and come to naught."

Commending the principle of taking unanimous decisions, which the Board followed, Vinoba said, "This is what is sought to be expressed in our old maxim: What the five (i.e. the five elders composing the *panchayat*, the village council) say jointly signifies the Divine wish. This was true democracy. But nowadays we decide things by majority, an evil which we have imported from the West. This has given rise to numerous minority problems. Unless we go back to the whole ideal these problems will continue to plague us."

Vinoba touched this important topic again in the course of his post-prayer speech. He said, "The greatest need of the present-day politics is to unite the people and to direct their energy to some commonly agreed programme. Disunion has been the bane of our country throughout history. We are a big country, the unity of heart is therefore all the more necessary. Let me tell you what I consider to be the fundamental principle of social reconstruction. It is this that the governance of our villages which are 77 per cent of our entire population must be placed in the hands of the villagers themselves and it should be carried on the principle of 'the unanimity of all the five'. We must take care not to introduce disunity among the people. Under the circumstances of our country that alone deserves to be called politics which will bring together and unite our entire energy. Politics, rightly analyzed, implies the enhancement and consolidation of the energy of the people. To my mind he alone will have served the cause of politics who will pool together the peoples' power of thought and action and direct it fixedly only to the principal one of our vital problems. And I claim that *bhoodan* work is succeeding well in this all-important task."

Congratulating Kanpur on the ready compliance of its share of *yajna* work on the very first day Vinoba said, "these ten thousand acres will go to support two thousand families. I should like that Kanpur which has done so much will go a step further and also make available for distribution two thousand pairs of bullocks. Kanpur is one of our first seven cities and this should not be impossible for it."

A pair of bullocks costs 500 rupees, two thousand pairs means at the minimum a million rupees.

But to our joy and the glory of Kanpur Shri Shivanarayan Tandon announced at once: Maharaj, Kanpur accepts your demand. On behalf of Kanpur I assure you very humbly that we shall give two thousand pairs of bullocks.

And the assembly greeted the assurance with cheers and resounded with cries of victory to the *Bhoodan-Yajna* and its author Shri Vinoba.

Shri Shivanarayan Tandon gave a further assurance that they would also try for the construction of wells for the needy farmers.

But Kanpur had another surprising gift in store for us, a very pleasant function of the distribution of donated land to the landless at the hands of Vinoba at our last halt in Pukhrya. The account of this function has already appeared in the *Harijan* of June 7.

The title-deeds of the lands distributed were presented to the landless by Vinobaji in the prayer meeting held that evening. It was an unforgettable experience to see them go back, their eyes glistening with emotions of humble gratitude and proud self-respect.

At the end, Shri Shivanarayanji who rose to thank Vinobaji paid him a remarkable tribute full of sincere feeling and discerning insight. Shri Shivanarayanji said, "From what is happening in the way of *bhoodan* work, I have a feeling that once again something great and good is going to rise in our country. After Babu, we had not left with us a leader representing the *Gita* ideal of a

shritaprajna (a man of steady understanding). Now, however, we have such a leader in Vinoba. He is a leader and a seer rolled into one." He appealed to the audience to shed their attachment to the devious ways of our self-seeking mind and follow the guidance of Vinoba.

Vinobaji dwelt on the significance of the function, which was that the people had had in it the glimpse of the fundamental truth of our existence that it was the same *atma* working everywhere. This was the truth on which *bhoodan* work was based. He told the workers that having seen what they had accomplished he hoped they should be able to achieve still greater things. For a fuller report both of the speech and the function, the reader is referred to the account mentioned above.

Thus Kanpur more than fulfilled its share of the work. It not only fulfilled its quota but gave five thousand acres more, and in addition to that the assurance about the bullocks and wells. Some of the workers went even further and pledged to offer themselves for Vinoba's work. It goes without saying that by their work they have qualified themselves for lasting glory in the annals of *bhoodan* work. But what they received was no less, for they have won Vinoba to themselves for ever.

Vinoba had also agreed to visit the Narbal Ashram founded by the late Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. But the programme was ultimately cancelled for want of time with the concurrence of the workers themselves. It meant hard-sacrifice for them and though they had accepted it freely and willingly, it caused them considerable disappointment, particularly because the programme had been widely publicized in the neighbouring villages and workers had worked hard over it. There was an additional reason which gave to the disappointment a touch of poignancy. A similar visit planned by Gandhiji in earlier days was similarly abandoned. Shri Shyamal Parshad, a close friend of the late Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who has dedicated himself to the Ashram, wept bitterly over the decision. Finally he requested Vinobaji to accept, to guide the Ashram. Vinobaji readily agreed to this loving request. He said, "The workers had had to face many difficulties in the last thirty years, but your Ashram has successfully weathered them all. Clearly, something immortal has entered into its making. I will gladly give whatever help and guidance I can. I have been in your province for these many days and have come into contact with many workers and I myself would like to preserve these valuable contacts. How can I refuse your demand?" The *ashramites* were full of gratefulness at these words.

Almost all the workers of the district were present at this last halt. And the question was seen and discussed from various points of view; and this led to some important clarifications. A friend asked; "Our work will surely progress. This may also add to our hold and influence over the people. I fear the political parties may see in it the rise of parallel political organization." Vinoba said, "It will undoubtedly enhance your influence; but if it does not enhance your pride, there is no fear. For in that case you can depend on your conduct and company to dispel all misunderstanding about you."

The question of accepting Government help for constructive work was also discussed at some length. Vinoba explained; it is a people's Government and it will naturally offer help when we ask for it. But acceptance of monetary help from the Government will take away from our self-reliance and reduce us to wealkings dependent on outside help.

The question as to our next step after the five lakh target is reached was also raised. Vinoba said, "I have a programme ready in all its details for the reconstruction of villages, for village-swaraj. But you may ask for the next step only when you have finished the first. Settlement of a landless family per village is only the beginning. I will not be satisfied unless the entire village-land comes to be freely owned by the whole village as one family. The power and authority which is at present centred in Lucknow or Delhi should get distributed in the villages."

To the question whether Satyagraha could be resorted to, in case of need, for the success of the *bhoodan*-mission, Vinoba said, "They often raise the question of Satyagraha. All I have to say is that whatever I do I undertake as a Satyagrahi. *Bhoodan* work is a form of Satyagraha. To hold to truth, to work for it, and to suffer for it that others may be converted to it: this is the essence of Satyagraha. In a way it is not anything less than *parkaya-pravesh* i.e. the act of entering into the body and mind of another person. However, after all these efforts have been tried, if it still becomes necessary to resort to the external Satyagraha you have in view, I am sure God will inspire me and you to do it."

We were in Kanpur for 6 days. And it was a great joy to see the wonderful faith and devotion and perseverance of the workers of this place. They are full of love and loyalty to Babu and his teaching. There is quite a group of workers who had in them the urge of common objective and the will to work for it in a missionary spirit. At one end of the group there are old workers like Doctor Muralidhar Rohatgi, at the other, young workers like Shri Harishankar Vidyarthi. Then there is a long string of friends, Shris Ramnath Tandon, Braj Lal, Jangbahadur Singh, Munshiji, Shambhodiyaji, Parshadji, Dr. Hardikar, Azizbhai, Prahladji, all pledged to service. And then, there is our Shri Shivanarayanji Tandon whose is the chord of love which keeps these friends strung together.

But the common source from which all of them have drawn and still draw their inspiration was Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. The people of Kanpur can never forget him, and his great sacrifice. Vinoba called him *samarpan-yogi* i.e. one who successfully pursued the difficult path of surrender to a cause. The workers of Kanpur are an example of how a great sacrifice can and does inspire innumerable others with the will for similar work.

(Abridged from Hindi)

D. M.

Safeguarding Various Interests

"New Delhi, July 16.

"The Commerce and Industry Minister, Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, assured the House of the People today that the Government was doing its 'very best' to safeguard the interests of the consumer while meeting the claims of various other interests.

"While Mr. Sinhasan Singh (Congress—Uttar Pradesh), Mr. S. N. Das (Congress—Bihar) and Mr. Ramji Verma (Socialist—Uttar Pradesh), said that prices were too high for consumers, particularly the poorer sections, Mr. G. D. Somani (Independent Parliamentary Group—Rajasthan), said that the prices allowed by the Government did not fully take into account the increase in wages and manufacturing cost.

"Mr. Krishnamachari admitted that cloth prices which the Government had fixed were 'in all conscience very high'. The Government would like to reduce them, but 'we are torn between our desire to keep cloth cheap for the consumer and provide a reasonable return to the various interests.'—PTI

What are these various interests,—except of all those who live on interest, profits, rents and taxes? They are to be provided before the consumer's interests can be considered? This is the nature of the 'very best' attempt of safeguarding him.

Even the so-called Communism has no solution for this. Decommmercialized economy and self-government by the people themselves without a paid service can alone provide a solution or very near it.

Wardha, 22-7-52

K. G. M.

HARIJAN

Aug. 16

1952

A SHINING EXAMPLE

We shall soon be celebrating the Independence Day. On 15th August 1947 the British rule came to an end; we gained our political independence. It was made possible by the silent self-sacrifice, renunciation of innumerable soldiers of freedom who laid down their lives in the struggle for freedom. Most of these heroes were unknown to fame. We do not know their names even. There are some others whom we have known and loved but whom we are beginning to forget. One such who sacrificed his all on the altar of the Motherland was Mahadevbhai Desai.

He joined Bapu at the age of 25. Politics is considered a dirty game all the world over and India was no exception. But with the advent of Gandhiji, the Indian politics was metamorphosed. Truth and non-violence became its basis. Many who had shunned politics before were thereafter drawn towards it. They were the new leaders who talked a different language and inspired confidence and enthusiasm among idealists. Sardar Patel, Mahadevbhai Desai and many others came under this category. Mahadevbhai Desai was then in service at Ahmedabad. He and his friend Shri Naraharibhai Parikh used to visit Gandhiji off and on in his Ashram. They went there in no hero-worshipping mood to begin with, but in a spirit of curiosity mostly. But in the very first meeting they were won over by Gandhiji completely. They became frequent visitors. Mahadevbhai expressed a wish to stay with Gandhiji to serve him, but Gandhiji did not encourage people to leave their moorings unless he was convinced that the urge was irresistible and there was sincerity of purpose behind it. He advised Mahadevbhai to continue with his work and devote his spare time to voluntary service. Mahadevbhai's beautiful hand-writing, the regularity of his attendance and his natural humility and sweetness of temperament impressed Gandhiji deeply. One day Mahadevbhai received a post card from Gandhiji who was on tour saying: "I wish to annex you". Mahadevbhai was delighted. He joined Gandhiji and for the next 25 years was almost his constant companion. He had only one ambition and that was to relieve Bapu's burden to the extent he could and to interpret Bapu to the people at large. He rummaged through literature, devoured periodicals and newspapers, met people, and presented the result of his researches to Gandhiji in the form of articles for the *Harijan* Weeklies. He also looked round for the right type of workers, who could put Bapu's programme into operation. Thus, he was instrumental in bringing Rajaji to Bapu's

attention. He became an important link too between Bapu and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Mahadevbhai was an artist by temperament. He liked the good things of life but at Bapu's feet he learnt the lesson of renunciation. The artist in Mahadevbhai thereafter found expression chiefly in his writings, but more than that in his daily actions. Bapu sometimes talked in parables. Sometimes he made brief, pithy statements like a proposition of Euclid; Mahadevbhai provided the commentary. Bapu once called him his 'spare body'.

After Mahadevbhai's death Bapu once remarked, "Mahadev excelled all my other associates in that like Ba he had completely merged himself in me". Mahadevbhai was happy to serve Bapu in any capacity. Whether it was the domestic chors or representing him in a diplomatic mission, he did it with an equal joy and enthusiasm. Away from Bapu he felt forlorn. If ever a discussion arose as to what would happen to the Ashram or to some of Bapu's activities after he was gone, Mahadevbhai would suddenly get up and go away. He could not conceive life without Bapu.

On the 9th August 1942, Mahadevbhai was arrested along with Bapu at Bombay and taken to the improvised Aga Khan Palace Camp for detention. On the 15th August 1942—it was Saturday morning—he accompanied Bapu as usual on his morning walk. About half an hour later he was no more. He had been very worried at the possibility of Bapu going on a fast unto death in prison. The constant emotional strain had affected his heart so that it would stop beating momentarily from time to time. On this particular day it stopped, and stopped for good. When Bapu reached his bedside, the breathing was still there but the heart had stopped to beat. Bapu called out "Mahadev, Mahadev!", but Mahadev, who had never failed to respond to the call of the Master, for once refused to answer. "I feel if Mahadev would but open his eyes and look into mine, he would not die," remarked Bapu afterwards. But Mahadev did not open his eyes. We were all prisoners. The Government officials wanted to take the dead body outside to cremate it quietly. But Bapu refused to hand over the body of his son to strangers. He was willing to hand over the body to friends, but the Government were keeping the whereabouts of Gandhiji secret. The friends could not be called and the dead body could not be handed over to them. Perhaps the Government were afraid of the popular reactions that might follow. Ultimately, we cremated him in our own compound. There was sorrow and suffocation in the atmosphere, but Bapu put heart into us all. He sent a telegram to Mahadevbhai's wife saying that Mahadevbhai had had a patriot's death, and no sorrow was allowed. He explained to Ba: "Mahadev's death is the purest sacrifice on the altar of freedom. It must result in hastening the advent of freedom." Exactly five years after Mahadev's death,

on the 15th August, India gained her Independence. Simultaneously with the Independence, India was partitioned. Wounds were inflicted on her from which she has not yet completely recovered. To heal those wounds and to make Independence a reality so that there is freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom from ignorance. It is an arduous, uphill task. Many more sacrifices shall have to be made and many shall have to offer their all like Mahadevbbhai before that dream of Bapu can be fully realized. In this sacred striving Mahadev's example will serve as a beacon light for all for a long time to come.

5-8-'52

SUSHILA NAYAR

MEETING THE FOOD CRISIS

— POST-PRAYER SPEECH —

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I claim that in a well-ordered society there should be always pre-arranged methods of successful treatment of scarcity of water and food crops. This is, however, not the occasion for describing a well-ordered society and for showing how it would deal with the matter. Our concern, for the present, is to see whether we can, with fair hope of success, deal with the present food crisis.

Self-help

I think we can. The first lesson we must learn is of self-help and self-reliance. If we assimilate this lesson, we shall at once free ourselves from disastrous dependence upon foreign countries and ultimate bankruptcy. This is not said in arrogance but as a matter of fact. We are not a small place, dependent for its food supply upon outside help. We are a sub-continent, a nation of nearly 400 millions. We are a country of mighty rivers and a rich variety of agricultural land, with inexhaustible cattle-wealth. That our cattle give much less milk than we need is entirely our own fault. Our cattle wealth is any day capable of giving us all the milk we need. Our country, if it had not been neglected during the past few centuries, should today not only be providing herself with sufficient food, she would also be playing a useful role in supplying the outside world with much-needed foodstuffs of which the late war has unfortunately left practically the whole world in want. This does not exclude India. The distress is growing instead of showing signs of decreasing. My suggestion does not include ungrateful rejection of free supply that any foreign country may wish to offer us. All I say is that we must not go a-begging. It demoralizes. Add to this the difficulty of internal transport of foodstuffs from one place to another. We have not the requisite facility for rapid movement of grains and other foodstuffs from place to place. Further add not the remote possibility of delivery of uneatable stuff. We dare not lose sight of the fact that we have to deal with human nature. In no part of the world it is to be found perfect or even very nearly so.

Meaning of Foreign Aid

Next, let us see what possible foreign aid we can get. I am told, not more than three per cent of our present wants. If this information is correct and I have had it checked by several experts who confirm the figure, I am sure the case for reliance on outside help falls to the ground. The slightest dependence on outside help is likely to deflect us from trying to the fullest extent our immense internal possibilities in the shape of utilizing every inch of arable land for growing crops for daily food in the place of growing money crops. We must reclaim waste land which is capable of being placed under immediate cultivation.

Centralization or Decentralization?

Centralization of foodstuffs, I apprehend, is ruinous. Decentralization easily deals a blow to black-marketing, saves time and money in transport to and fro. Moreover, the villager who grows India's cereals and pulses knows how to save his crops against rodents. The movement of grain from station to station makes it liable to be eaten by rodents. This costs the country many millions and deprives it of tons of grain, every ounce of which we badly need. If every Indian were to realize the necessity of growing food wherever it can be grown, we should most probably forget that there was scarcity of foodstuffs in the land. I have by no means dealt fully with the fascinating and absorbing subject of growing more food, but I hope I have said enough to stimulate interest and turn the wise towards the thought of how every individual can help in the laudable enterprise.

How to deal with Shortage

Let me now show how to deal with the three per cent of grains we might possibly get from outside. Hindus observe a fast or a semi-fast every eleventh day per fortnight. Muslims and others are not prohibited from denying themselves especially when it is for the sake of the starving millions. If the whole nation realized the beauty of this partial self-denial, India would more than cover the deficit caused by the voluntary deprivation of foreign aid.

Personally I hold that rationing has very limited use if any. If the producers were left to themselves, they would bring their produce to the market and everyone would get good and eatable grain, which today is not easily obtainable.

President Truman's Advice

I shall close this hurried review of the food crisis by drawing attention to President Truman's reported advice to the American people that they should eat less bread, and thus save the much-needed grain for starving Europe... If America would deny herself for the sake of hungry Europe, should we fail to do this little act of self-denial for ourselves? If many must die of starvation, let us at least earn the credit of having done our best in the way of self-help, which ennobles a nation.

Harijan, 19-10-47

ILLITERATE BUT CULTURED

[Shri Ravishankar Maharaj in the course of his discourse on the occasions of the ninth annual function of the Madhi Girls Hostels narrated the following instructive story of an illiterate shepherdess.—K. G. M.]

The word 'backward' rings repellent in my ears when it is used for men and women, who though they have nothing to eat, desire to educate their children. Those who are keen, intelligent, proficient and noble-hearted cannot be designated backward. I see here that a girl has woven her experiences of her tour in a poem. I find that in a plot few feet square, the girls have raised 7 lb. of paddy. They can easily raise 700 lb. if a larger plot is available. They have raised their vegetables, and perform all their domestic occupations in an orderly manner. It is quite wrong to call such people backward.

These girls remind me of an illiterate shepherdess. At Bochasan a boy of the Baraiya community had joined the Nai Talim School. He learnt spinning and the Acharya of the School got his yarn woven into Khadi. The boy was extremely pleased to have his self-spun Khadi. I asked him what he would do with that Khadi. He said that he would present it to 'Maadhi Rabaran' (shepherdess), who was his foster-mother.

I felt inquisitive about the woman, who had kept a hold over this boy, long after his childhood was over. I once got a chance to go to her village and went to her cottage. She welcomed me and gave me a seat. Shortly after, a young handsome boy, about 8 years of age, came up to her and began to sit on her lap. The woman tried to push him away, but the more she did so, the more he clung to her. I asked her if it was her son. She said, "No, he is a *bania's* son. His mother having died while he was only a few days old, I brought him up. His father has now taken him away, and has directed him not to drink water from my jar, as I am a *rabarin* (shepherdess), and so he would lose caste. I have kept a separate jar for him, but the imp does not listen and insists on drinking water from my own jar. He does not miss seeing me for a single day."

I asked her if she charged anything for nursing the child.

"Charge for nursing a child!" Maadhi exclaimed with astonishment. "God has given me enough to eat and to enable to preserve a flower."

Then I asked her how she treated a child, when it fell ill. She answered by asking why should a child, which was looked after properly, fall ill? A mother should cut off her hands, if her child became ill. When I narrated this talk to a lady who had taken her M.A. degree, she asked me to get her into touch with that shepherdess as her child kept ill from end to end of the year. I ask you, friends, who is better educated between this shepherdess and the University graduate?

Modern education has brought into existence a middle class in which one earns and other members of the family only consume. Its feet are in poverty but its head pries into the houses of the rich. What I mean is that though they cannot afford to live like the rich, they always pine for and imitate the luxurious living of the rich and live beyond their means. I, therefore, advise these girls not to imbibe habits of the middle class. It is Nai Talim which will reform this middle class. For it teaches children to work with their hands.

Generally the opening ceremony of a building is made by the guest opening a silver lock with a silver key. These two are pocketed by the guest. It is sheer waste and an imitation of aristocracy. I am glad to find here that little girls are cooking nice *rotlas* (loaves) in the new rooms. They have already performed the opening ceremony in the right manner.

Let these girls develop the spirit of service, the virtue of hospitality, the care of the diseased and the dignity of physical labour.

Madhi,

(Translated and abridged from Gujarati) A. M.

Alcohol the Brutalizer

W. R. Hughes in his *Those Human Russians* (Victor Gollancz) quotes the following report made by a brave and able German Woman, describing her experiences at the time when the Red Army entered her home town:

.....In May 1945.....Russian Officers had a..... discussion with me about the attacks on women, which took place after the discovery of stores of alcohol in the shops and brought terrible distress to many wives and girls....The officers were much troubled by it, as we were....They thought with great uneasiness what it would mean if the soldiers returned home in such a state. At this time we could make a.....report to the Russian commander of every outrage committed as a result of these drinking orgies. There was a woman.....(whose) husband had been shot by a drunken officer as he was trying to protect his daughter from being taken off by this man.....(p. 110).

Later on in the same book (p. 127) Hughes adds the personal judgment of Russian soldiers written by a woman after she had lived with successive groups who occupied her village:

'I got to know hundreds of ordinary soldiers....They are the ordinary, garden Russian, and I never found one really bad person among them. I was to hear much of how they stole, looted and raped. They do that when they are drunk.....'

The italics are mine throughout.

V. G. D.

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RAJAJI ON PROHIBITION

Mr Rajagopalachari convincingly explained that a motion, such as the one suggested by Mr Viswanatham, if accepted would amount to the death of the movement for total abstinence in the country. If he agreed to the demand for an inquiry it would amount to his taking a suicidal step and sabotaging the scheme of prohibition itself. An inquiry into the usefulness of prohibition would bring about suspicion in the minds of people and kill prohibition not only in Madras but all over India. It would amount to killing the patient in order to diagnose the disease. He said such an inquiry would also sound the death-knell of Article 47 of the Constitution dealing with prohibition.

Mr Rajagopalachari reminded the House that the experience resulting from the success of prohibition in Madras during the Congress Ministry in 1937 was responsible for the Constituent Assembly making prohibition a directive part of the Constitution applicable to all States in India. He recalled how sitting till midnight the Madras Assembly in 1937 adopted the prohibition policy unanimously.

The Chief Minister referred to the success of untouchability, and asked: "Do we question untouchability? Do we want an inquiry about this on the basis of its enforcement?" Even as untouchability was difficult to enforce, they should not be disappointed with gradual progress while enforcing prohibition. He held that prohibition had been enforced to a better extent and would, therefore, succeed surely though slowly. Progress would necessarily be slow and two generations might have to pass before this evil was completely eliminated. It was his submission that the removal of alcohol was no less important than removal of untruth in law courts.

Warning those who spoke carelessly of removing prohibition, he said the day it was removed it would be a day of orgy all over the land and people would drink to death. It would bring to the country great destruction. He added: "If any one wants to ruin the poor people of this country utterly then they can bring this move. I cannot be a party to this kind of move."

Mr Rajagopalachari went on to say that opening liquor shops was worse than highway robbery because it removed the will and judgment from the mind of the addict and made him a slave. It was not a mere tax. To those who argued that it was necessary for many, he said no medical book in the world gave alcohol as the medicine for any disease except that which resulted on account of addiction to alcohol.

Saying that he would be a "bad robber," and "a wicked person" if he removed prohibition, he added it was not his way of helping the poor which the Opposition sought to follow. He warned them: "You will be ruining your own election chances by bringing such a motion." He recalled how Lenin ordered that barrels containing alco-

holic drinks shall be emptied into the rivers as soon as the revolution ended because he too believed drink was an enemy of wisdom.

Mr Rajagopalachari appealed to the members to remember that now that power had been transferred to the people it was not proper to seek to ruin them. The Opposition's move would ruin the people "today, tomorrow and for ever."

(From the speech in the Madras Legislative Assembly on 17-7-52 as reported in *The Hindustan Times* of 19-7-52).

THE CINEMA INDUSTRY IN INDIA

It is good news to hear responsible Ministers of State warning the cinema industry and the people against vulgarity, bad taste and pandering to base instincts that is to be generally found in our motion pictures as they are today.

While addressing a mass rally of the working class in Madras a few days ago, Shri Rajagopalachari said,

"Next to prohibition cinema producers were absorbing the hard-earned money of the poor and spoiling the character of the masses. He was not totally averse to motion pictures provided they were decent. But the producers knew human weakness and produced indecent pictures which stimulated base instincts of the people and the spirit for misadventure. If the workers avoided frequenting picture houses they would devote their time to making their families happy, he added." (*Hindustan Times*, 29-7-52).

A similar note of warning to the Industry was sounded by Shri B. V. Keskar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, the other day at Bombay, while addressing the cinema industry assembled at the All India Film Conference (7-7-52). He said,

"The unfortunate exotic attraction of this industry, I will go further and say, the romantic and erotic attraction, is most unsettling for its future. Producers in this line should have a certain background of culture, social sense and contact with the masses. Then alone they will produce something which is constructive, which is popular and which will establish them on a firm footing.

"At present, there is hardly any standard maintained by many of the productions that we see on the screen. Socially, they are poor, often crude. Nor is there any sense of a good story. They have not yet learnt the great art of producing a good story with simple material.

"I have received representations from various bodies that censorship should be abolished. Nobody would be happier than Government if it could do away with censorship. It is an unwilling and unpleasant task. If the industry exercised self-censorship, the Government's work would be done and I might assure you that you will receive its blessings. But since this is not done, it is not possible for Government to withdraw censorship in the interests of public order and morality.

"One can moralize about morality indefinitely. Moral standards and behaviour differ in every country or continent or region and it is not possible for an industry which claims to entertain the mass of the people to ignore moral conventions prevailing in a particular country or region.

"In this connection, it is really regrettable that Indian producers, because probably of want of original thinking have, consciously or unconsciously, been trying to copy Hollywood standard of morals. Now,

Hollywood is bold and unconventional even for American moral standards. If it is taken by the Indian yardstick it really belongs to another world.....

"Government is receiving increasing criticism against the present trend in production, from the public and the Press. I would like to give a friendly warning to the industry that it is not possible for the Government to continue this way unless it finds an immediate change in the standard of films..... I would strongly urge on the industry to exercise greater discretion in this matter. We cannot switch on the people of India with their present day moral code to a European one, let alone a Hollywood one, and any such effort can only have an unsettling and chaotic effect. It is possible that by producing unconventional things, you might attract a certain type of audience, but by doing that you are neither setting up a moral code nor contributing anything to the setting up of a new one. Eroticism will psychologically attract a large number of people, but that does not mean that they would dare approve of it as a moral behaviour. The industry should not try to exploit human passions or weaknesses....."

"The cinema is a social industry. It has for its purpose the entertainment of people which cannot be divorced from its social purpose. Such an industry cannot flourish or carry on without having due regard to the society and culture in which it lives. It cannot ignore the history, civilization and environment of a great country like ours. Even in a country like the U.S.A. where the cinema industry has probably the fullest freedom, we will not find many productions which will parody American culture, American civilization or the way of life of the American people. A cinema industry in India cannot grow and prosper by parodying and bringing into disrepute our history, our culture, our traditions or our society. Such an attitude can only bring disaster to the industry. It cannot prosper without the goodwill and support of the people. I hope that soon the industry will see the soundness of this advice and reorganize itself on a firm foundation."

31-7-52

M. P.

LAND FOR THE COW

(Mirabehn)

Land, cattle and forests are so closely connected with one another, that we cannot interfere with one without dislocating the other two.

The time is now rapidly approaching when, one way or another, the land in India is going to be redistributed. It is therefore imperative that all of us who are actively interested in the welfare of rural India (and thereby the whole of India) should put our heads together and try to agree on a definite common objective regarding this issue. And we must invite to our consultations experienced *kisans* and herdsmen. After all we are only amateurs; it is they who really know what's what; but they need organizational help which we should give them. In *Bapu Raj Patrika* (June) I have already asked for ideas and suggestions from the peasants themselves on this and other relative matters.

Suggestions

I give below some of the vital points which I feel we have to keep in mind when working out this problem.

1. Since there is not enough land to provide for all, we must make the rapid development of village industries an integral part of our scheme, and must never hold out the hope that everybody is going to get land.

2. The distribution of land for cultivation must be restricted, except in a few special cases, to lands already under the plough. The terms *waste lands* and *culturable waste* are entirely misleading, as practically all such lands are, in fact, grazing lands, and their extensive cultivation in the present "grow more food" drive is causing untold damage to the cattle of the peasantry.

3. A good deal of land ploughed up in this manner will have to be returned to the cattle and also land for forest blocks will have to be allotted, as, without cattle and without trees, India would, before long, become a desert, tractors and artificial manure accelerating the process.

4. The present-day propaganda that cattle should be stall-fed is an impossible proposition for the peasant. At the most he could stall-feed his working bullocks and cows in milk, but the young stock, dry cows and old cattle must have grazing lands. Besides, the economic difficulty involved, cattle kept tied up all the 24 hours become susceptible to disease and the cows are also liable to have trouble at the time of calving.

Nature's Law

5. If we wish to obtain permanently sound agricultural economy and maintain the true cycle of Nature's laws, we must not think in terms of tractors, artificial manure and the like but must stick to our bullocks for cultivation. Besides the fact that Nature responds best to this method, the economic question with which we should be faced by giving up bullocks for the plough, would be that we should either have to give up keeping cows altogether, or eat the bullocks, as they do in Western countries. Modern experts are, I think, mostly meat-eating, minded and my impression is that the present-day agricultural and animal husbandry officers would like to turn India into a beef-eating country, so as to suit their Western methods, regardless of their permanent value. We, therefore, have to think independently in these matters and make the *kisans* and herdsmen our advisers.

6. Unless there is complete readjustment of the government machinery, land distribution will be greatly hampered in its good effects. We, therefore, have to work for an all-round change.

(From The Hindustan Times, 11-7-52)

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