

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

THE WORLD PACIFIST CONFERENCE IN JAPAN

(By Bharatan Kumarappa)

After the end of the Second World War, there was a revival of Buddhism in Japan under the leadership of a very ardent Monk, Rev. Fujii. This group with hardly any money but with great faith sponsored the World Pacifist Conference alongside of its efforts to resuscitate Buddhism by erecting stupas over the Buddha relics brought over at the time from India. Accordingly membership of the Conference consisted of two distinct sets of people—those who were primarily interested in the Buddha relics and partook of the religious ceremonies connected with the receiving and preserving of the relics, and those who were interested primarily in world peace. Our programme accordingly, though devoted for the most part to problems of world peace, included also ceremonies connected with the relics of the Buddha.

There were delegates to the Conference from various parts of the world, such as India, Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Korea, Australia, Britain, U.S.A., Canada and Mexico. Outside Japan, India and Ceylon had the greatest number of delegates—the Ceylonese delegates being chiefly Buddhist Monks. There were about a dozen delegates from India, amongst whom were Kaka Saheb Kalelkar, Shri Sudhir Ghosh, Dr. Kalidas Nag and Shri Devpriya Valisingha. The two latter came with the Buddha relics. Those attending the Conference belonged to religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity. There were also one or two Muslim delegates from India.

The expenses of the Conference were met from voluntary contributions and donations raised in Japan. All our travel in Japan and hospitality during the Conference was met by the Conference. This was no mean achievement considering that the Buddhist Monks who sponsored the Conference were themselves practically penniless.

The Conference held its sessions in various parts of Japan, where there were also ceremonies connected with the Buddha relics. It started in Tokyo on the 31st March with some preliminary meetings to nominate Chairman for its meetings, members of the Steering Committee, Secretariat,

and Drafting Committee. The open session began on April 1, and continued in Tokyo till April 3, after which it moved to Fukuoka in South Japan, Kumomoti, Hiroshima. (where the atom bomb was dropped in 1945), Osaka, Nagoya and Sendai in the North. The final session was held in Tokyo. This method of holding the Conference in several towns had the advantage of many distant places taking part in the Conference, and of the delegates getting to know the mind of the people of different parts of the country. But it had its disadvantages, as much time was spent in travel, in receptions, introductions and greetings at each place and giving opportunities for the local people to discuss problems which had already been discussed in other sessions of the Conference. But on the whole, one feels that the method justified itself in that it stimulated interest and enthusiasm in many places of Japan for working for peace.

Of all the countries represented, India received the greatest attention, partly because the Buddha relics came from India and India was the land of the Buddha, and partly also because of the great teaching and work of Gandhiji for establishing non-violence and peace, and of the leadership today of Premier Nehru in following for the sake of peace a policy of non-alignment with either of the two power-blocs. The Japanese seemed to look wistfully to India for leadership in bringing peace to them and to the world.

Amongst the topics discussed at the Conference, the one which came up wherever in Japan we met, was the problem of atomic bombs. The atom bomb had sunk deep into the soul of the Japanese and they could hardly think of any other problem than how to make the world free from the horrors of this terrible weapon of destruction. In Hiroshima we saw the devastation caused to the city, and paintings by an eye-witness of conditions as he saw them soon after the explosion. What happened to the place and its inhabitants appears to have been beyond all human imagination. Most of the city has however been quickly reconstructed, but the roads are still to be properly built. The hotel in which we stayed was absolutely new having been erected after the devastation, and so also the building where we had our sessions in Hiroshima. Life

now goes on in the city as though nothing had happened, but in the inner recesses of the heart of the people of Japan, the sorrow and suffering caused in Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain embedded as a never-to-be-forgotten experience. We were made to realize vividly the problem as it faces the Japanese when at the very first day of the open session in Tokyo, before the Conference had hardly begun, an urgent motion was brought up that the Conference should consider the havoc caused to the fishing industry by the hydrogen bomb tests a few days previously off Bikini. At the next place we went to, viz. Fukuoka, we had a moving memorandum submitted by the fishermen of the locality and of Nagasaki depicting the loss suffered by them through hydrogen bomb tests. Everywhere people demanded that the manufacture and use of atomic weapons of destruction should be altogether prohibited. The Conference has appealed to the United Nations to this effect.

Another matter which came up for urgent consideration by the Conference at Tokyo was the situation in Korea and Indo-China. There were speakers from these two countries who spoke feelingly on the topic, and appealed that war in these countries should be ended and that the people should be left free by the Big Powers to manage their affairs themselves. The Conference appealed accordingly to the Far Eastern Peace Conference which was meeting in Geneva in the last week of April.

Besides these two matters which came up for action by the Conference at Tokyo, there were reports of Pacifist movements in various parts of the world. I spoke on Gandhiji's work, linking it up with India's age-long aspiration for non-violence, since the days of the Buddha. There was an illuminating lecture by an American pacifist regarding Pacifist teachings in the major religions of the world, such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

After this opening session in Tokyo, we moved, as already said, to the interior. The topics discussed there were 'Annihilating Scientific Warfare vs. Disarmament', 'How can unarmed Japan and Germany promote peace as between the two Power-Blocs', 'Ways of achieving World Brotherhood', 'How to work for Peace', 'What type of organizations are we to build up for working for Peace', 'Economic measures to be adopted for achieving World Peace', 'How to create public opinion in favour of Peace'. The Conference split up into small groups to discuss these problems and to plan out courses of action, and at open sessions submitted their findings for further discussion and adoption. In this way it has enumerated several practical ways of bringing about world peace.

There is no doubt that under the prevailing order of things, war is entered into by Governments, and the people function only as tools to carry out the orders of their Governments. The

Conference was fully aware of the helpless state of peace-loving peoples everywhere to avert war. Consequently it concentrated on suggesting practical ways in which people could strengthen themselves to resist war. This was the main task of the Conference at its various sessions and at its closing session in Tokyo on April 22, it summed up its recommendations under a single Declaration which it sent out to the peoples of the world, and which reads as follows:

"Whereas the World Pacifist Conference in Japan, concerned with the problems of peace, is deeply conscious of the untold physical and spiritual suffering caused by war, and

"Whereas the Conference is convinced that only the people's refusal to participate in war for any purpose whatsoever will save the nations,

"The Conference therefore appeals

"To the peoples of the world, through all organizations of youth, women, and labour, and through all religions, to demand with one voice that war be abolished;

"To the peoples of the world to move their Governments to resort exclusively to peaceful solutions for all international disputes;

"To all Governments, acting through the United Nations or other channels,

(a) to take effective steps to eradicate the political, economic and social causes of tension and conflict between nations, and in their place bring about world-wide co-operation, and

(b) to abolish the manufacture and use of atomic weapons as a first step to total disarmament.

Finally, the World Pacifist Conference urges the peoples of the world to become conscious of their power to reject war and total annihilation, and to affirm their right to life and peace, and to this end, urges pacifists the world over to organize active and direct non-violent resistance to war."

One does not expect Conference such as this to achieve anything sensational or to perform a miracle. All that can be claimed is that through this Conference, men and women interested in peace, from various countries, were enabled to sit and think together how they could more effectively strengthen the movement for peace in their own countries. It was felt throughout the Conference that humanity was sitting on an active volcano which might erupt any moment and swallow it up, if we, the peoples of the world, did not bestir ourselves and act quickly. Japan which had suffered the ravages of war and of atomic weapons provided just the background required to remind us of the seriousness and vital importance of our task. It is hoped that the message of the Conference will reach the four corners of the earth and rally the peoples of the world to offer non-violent resistance to war and to organize for free and peaceful co-operation between all men everywhere.

THE VILLAGE POTTER

(By Krishnamurthy Mir Mira)

One of the major problems that India is facing today is unemployment. Industrialists say, "Open new industries and solve the unemployment problem." But this sort of slogan will not solve our difficulties. The advancement of science and technology has been used for exploitation by a select few, whereas the rest who are in majority are denied even the right to live. Thus the majority of people are suffering in spite of their ability to do skilled work in various crafts.

One of the worst affected in this way is the village potter. There are about 15 lakhs of village potters in the country doing various kinds of work on clay. These potters are distributed in 5 lakhs of villages. They were once leading a contented life and held high social position in the village community. Today they are starving. As they are traditional craftsmen, they know their job well. The instruments and equipment used by them are all very simple and cost hardly anything. The raw materials used by them are the tank of river-bed clay and waste fuel from fields and jungle. It is an entertainment to see a potter working on the wheel and moulding the clay lump with his master fingers to the required shape. The beating process is remarkably fine by which the ware is made as thin as paper and such thin wares, once prepared in India, were called "Kagaji Barta" (Paper-ware). Even in the time of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, the wares of the pottery of our country were prepared, and glazed vessels prepared here were sent out to other countries as early as 1000 B. C. Unfortunately, such pottery once had high esteem, but is now disliked by many. It could not be developed to keep pace with the advance in ceramics on the factory scale.

The main reason for dislike is the absence of some of the qualities in earthen wares that are found in metal wares like the durability, imperviousness and shining lustre. People prefer to purchase metal wares even though it is a little costlier. So if pottery has to be pushed through, it should imbibe all the possible qualities that are present in metal wares. For this the quality of the present earthen utensils must be improved.

Many ceramists say that instead of improving the village earthen wares, why not take up the new technique of pottery by which white ware can be manufactured? A little consideration will show that this is not practicable. It is humanly impossible to employ many lakhs of potters properly in this narrow and limited field. The raw materials required for the white ware are not found in many parts and further these cannot be supplied everywhere at a reasonable cost. The equipment required for white ware manufacturing is beyond the capacity of

the potter. So the best thing is to develop the village pottery. In our opinion, the easily available raw materials of the locality should be made use of, the skill of potters who are in good number be utilized, and products be distributed to the large majority of our people. The whole plan of development will have to be run in decentralized way with maximum of independence to each potter.

We are importing about a few crores of rupees worth of goods every year. In order to stop this as well as to meet the demand of the country we have to arrange our production in such a way that our wealth in man-power and materials may be utilized in the best possible way. We have, on one hand, 15 lakhs of potters with abundant quantity of raw materials and yet starving; on the other hand, we have well established factories with limited available quantity of raw materials. By stopping import and utilizing the above wealth properly more employment may be offered. Therefore, for hard wares like electrical goods, stone wares, laboratory supplies and refractories, the well-established factories and raw materials available in limited quantity like China clay, Ball clay, Fire clay may be used. Common requirements of things like brick, tiles, toys and dolls, crockery etc. must be manufactured with local raw materials on village industries basis. Then only can lakhs of our village potters be employed and at the same time utility goods be produced to increase the standard of living of our people.

I venture to suggest how best it can be organized. There are many colonies of potters in almost all the parts of India. These potters are carrying on their trade with great difficulty. In a few selected places, with the help of a trained ceramist, an improved pottery centre should be opened. The aim of this centre should be to organize the group of potters so as to form a society through which training in new technique and help in equipment and raw materials might be organized. Of course, step by step this society should be owned by the potters themselves. Many pottery co-operative centres have been formed, but are not progressing towards their set goal. The man-in-charge of the centres should be given a good training in village pottery and its problems, village economy, culture and organization etc. Training centres on the above basis should be started. Side by side, research institutes should take up various problems of the village pottery and also devise ways and means to help village potters, keeping in mind their financial conditions. The ceramic society should take up the responsibility of propagating the good qualities of earthen ware.

Thus within a few years we can really help the problem of unemployment through pottery by utilizing the raw materials and man-power of the country.

HARIJAN

May 29

1954

BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I request the reader to study carefully the article on 'Centralization and Decentralization' by Borsodi reproduced elsewhere in this issue. It provokes serious thought on our part also. Not only America, but the whole Western world is facing the question today, viz.,

Are we happier with promoting 'bigness', as Borsodi puts it in his article, which, as is abundantly clear now, we can manage only by relegating man to a place secondary to the machine and the mechanism of modern organizational methods?

With the uncharted growth of this idea of 'bigness' in world's social, political and economic affairs, we have come to have new units in the social order, viz., the nation, the class, the political party, etc. However, the basic unit, the family, remains almost as fundamental as it ever was before, though it should be noted that it is being vitally affected and attacked by the craze for bigness and all that it means to society. India also is beginning to be enveloped in this state of world affairs.

One of these effects on the pivotal position of the family unit is the relationship between modern government and the small family and its life and work. For example, the family head may be a small businessman, or a small craftsman, or a small land-holding farmer. And, as we know, in India which mostly lives in her villages, these constitute the vast majority of our society. How is this small basic unit of our social order affected by modern big government? For, in the wake of 'bigness' has come about not only big business, but big industry, big government, and big and high finance, with their respective long and big arm of high power and influence to mould and direct and even order the life of the small family head. Therefore the question of attitudes of these big things with regard to the basic small family man becomes very relevant from the point of view of his freedom and happiness.

Again the idea of property in a small-scale order of things which was, comparatively speaking, a harmless matter assumes alarming dimensions under the big-scale order of things and affairs. The ideas of competition and acquisitiveness or desire for gain which, we may safely believe, are as much with human nature as the twin virtues of co-operation and charity or regard for others—these also become formidable agents of stresses and strains, tensions and

conflicts in a society driven to promoting bigness and thus tending to be centralized. The State, under such an order tends to plan, control and govern the life of the citizen more and more, in the name of the ideal of a Welfare State.

These, in short, are some of the chief tendencies that are overtaking world's humanity under the modern line of progress in bigness and centralization. On one side, while we cry hoarse for the sanctity of human freedom and dignity and its scrupulous protection and safeguarding, on the other hand, modern ideas of bigness achieved through technology and mechanical and managerial technique go out of bounds and assume unsurmountable dimensions for man to manage and control. A kind of expertocracy or managerial rule sets in, man remaining agape at the frankenstein created by his own curiosity and craze for bigness. The whole thing has resulted to create a picture wherein capitalism, either of the 'free enterprise' type or of the Bolshevik State type, rules supreme, and ruthless competition armed with equally deadly and big weapons and devouring avarice or desire for gain become the order of the day; friction and commotion become the normal nature of the day-to-day life of man; and tensions not only in individual lives but also in national and international lives too become so irritable that even a chance spark only can set them aflame.

In India we are beginning to follow the trail of this bigness of the West. It is time to reconsider our position before we are engulfed by its ever increasing momentum. Shall we stop ourselves to do it? Will our Governments do it? In this connection I may well reproduce at the end a very sound and ever useful advice that Gandhiji in his wisdom gave to us:

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test: Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?"

"Then you will find your doubt and your self melting away."

16-54

By Vinoba Bhave
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PARTING ADVICE TO THE WORKERS IN GAYA

(By Vinoba)

I entered the Gaya District on the 30th of January with a resolve in my mind and full of hope that it will be achieved. I am now leaving it after three months full of greater hope.

The Sarvodaya Sannelan this year has placed in our hands in *jeevan-dan* a programme of such great importance that the work of land collection as compared with it appears rather a small thing to do. Moreover, it makes the latter very easy of attainment. The announcement by Jayaprakashbabu of his resolve to dedicate his life to Bhoodan changed the entire atmosphere of the Sannelan. It opened up a new road and a new vista, as it were, leading up to our goal. It was a sight to see the people vying with one another for offering themselves to this great work by taking up the *jeevan-dan* vow. Those who saw it can never forget it. Names followed in ceaseless succession and within two or three hours we had more than five hundred names. The decision flashed across my mind then and there that this weapon will have to be made effective and a well-planned programme organized for its utilization. The Bhoodan Yajna went on continuously for three years and now it has brought forth this noble gift—the manifestation of this tremendous spiritual power. We read in the Puranas that a *yajna* performed with faith results in the deity of the *yajna* appearing out of it in visible form to satisfy the yearning of the devotee. Our present experience is in no way different.

We will need to organize a comprehensive plan covering the entire country so as to utilize properly this newly gained strength. The following plan is proposed for the Gaya district :

1. Jayaprakashbabu will start himself an *ashram* at Kauakol which will provide for the training of the workers. These workers will engage themselves in the Bhoodan Yajna and in village uplift work with Bhoodan as its foundation.

2. Kauakol Tahsil be made a centre for carrying out intensive work in regard to the building up of *gram-rajya*.

3. At Bodhgaya will be started a centre known as *Samanvaya Ashram*. It will seek to synthesize world culture. It will also provide for the training of workers.

4. Village uplift work in Bodhgaya will be carried on by a local committee under the guidance of the *Samanvaya Ashram*.

5. Efforts be made to lay down the foundation of *gram-rajya* under the guidance of Sarva Seva Sangh in all those villages where enough land for this purpose has been obtained and where people are ready to shoulder the responsibility for working out the village uplift programme.

6. Propagation of the Sarvodaya thought including as far as possible the reading of the *Bhoodan Yajna Vihar*, the weekly organ of our

work in Bihar, to the people in every village be carried on.

7-A. Since sufficient land for distribution has already been collected in Gaya, our attention must now be concentrated, in pursuance of the call of the Bodhgaya Sannelan, mainly on distribution work. Arrangements for it should be completed as early as possible in accordance with the rules we have laid down in this regard. Land which may be easily obtained in the course of the distribution drive should certainly be accepted.

7-B. This does not mean, however, that we give up our aim to collect three lakh acres of land and two lakh gift-deeds. But this objective should now be fulfilled in due course through distribution and other constructive work. Efforts should certainly continue to be made to approach those big landholders whom we have not been able to contact as yet.

8. While distributing land the workers should keep in view the objective that no cultivator in the village remains landless. In case the land collected falls short of the requirement, efforts should be made to procure more of it in the course of the distribution. This is the best and the most successful method of reaching our target.

At the time of entering Gaya, I had declared that my object in visiting this place was to find out the right method of organizing our work. From what I have seen of the workers and the people here, that object has been largely fulfilled. The programme detailed here is based on this experience. There is no need for haste in implementing it, it is something to be done with cool determination and constant effort. Since there is now no need for confining myself to this district I am now leaving for North Bihar.

I will give a warning to the workers of the Gaya District. So long as they do not give up the party strife and the party spirit, they cannot purify their hearts nor can they become the messengers of revolution, nor indeed can they evoke respect from the people. Those who think that they can serve either their individual or party interests by working for land collection or land distribution are labouring under an illusion. The people have realized that my object is to arouse and build *jana-shakti* or people's own power which has nothing to do with the parties. I will advise the workers who find it impossible to adopt the non-party approach to keep aloof from this movement. All those who desire to participate in it should do so out of a sense of duty and with the utmost purity of motive. If they do it in this spirit, they will feel that self-contentment which no other wealth in the world can rival.

I must now concentrate my energy mainly on creating a perfect brotherhood of those who have taken up the vow of *jeevan-dan*. May God make me worthy of the task.

(From Hindi)

CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

(By Ralph Borsodi)

Modern man has been taught to accept Progress — especially material Progress — as his ultimate goal in life. The method chosen by the businessmen and financiers, the statesmen and social reformers who have been the leaders of mankind and the teachers of teachers during the past two centuries to implement Progress, has been Centralization. The protagonists of modern Progress are usually centralizers.

They believe that the way to achieve the purpose to which life should be devoted is to promote "bigness"; to increase mass-production, distribution and consumption; to develop group-action and to institutionalize action in corporations, unions, co-operatives and government bureaux. They discount the possibilities of personal action. They believe that to decentralize institutions and enterprises would be reactionary. They claim it involves repudiating science, power and machinery; that it means "turning the clock back". They believe that they are justified in using law and coercion to attain their objectives.

Centralization may therefore be defined as that method of operating in which control of the activities of individuals, or groups, or of the people as a whole (without regard to the nature of their activities, whether industrial, financial, social, educational, religious or political) is concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer individuals.

Decentralization is the exact opposite of this. But it is not merely the negation of Centralization, it is positive process. Decentralization is that method of implementing ideas and organizing human operations in which individuals are enabled to satisfy their wants and to realize their aspirations as far as possible through personal action, in which power is therefore diffused and distributed multilaterally among people generally.

Decentralization is not so much a single method of organizing operations as it is a tendency to use methods which give the greatest possible freedom and responsibility to individual human beings. It aims at encouraging independence and discouraging both subordination and domination. Above all, it holds that combination and collectivization, particularly when there is any element of compulsion involved, should be reduced to the utmost extent.

If the basic methods among which mankind chooses in dealing with its operational problems are arranged in the order in which they reflect Decentralization, then the Educational method, which relies on persuasion for its efficiency, would rank first. The Fraternal method, which relies upon competition for its efficiency, second. The Co-ordinal method which relies upon federation, third; the Functional method, which

relies upon co-operation, fourth; and the Authoritarian method, which relies upon domination and subordination, fifth. Decentralization recognizes no right to the Authoritarian method except when no alternative method of dealing with a problem can be found.

Centralization of industry, for example, is impossible without acquisition or seizure, by those who are to control the centralized enterprises, of the power to enforce unilateral relationships between themselves and the workers; with those who provide the raw materials; those who consume the products and those who furnish the capital.

Decentralization of industry would involve shifting to local and small-scale production and manufacture; to methods of operating which necessarily create multilateral relations between producers and consumers, in which each is equally free and independent. Decentralization would involve the decombination and deconcentration of not only our over-centralized industries but also of all institutions, activities, and patterns of living which we have over-centralized during the past century.

(Reproduced from *The Interpreter*, March, 1954.)

WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSIONS?

(By J. Gordon Roberts)

It may surprise you, as it did me, to learn that, between the first depression in 1819 and the last sharp recession in 1937, the U.S. economy has been in a declining or subnormal state approximately one year out of every three.

History appears to demonstrate that depressions in our country result from one of two immediate causes:

(1) Attempt on the part of one segment — or more — of society to enrich itself through speculation or other means without offering value-received in return for such enrichment; or
(2) The unwitting failure of society to supply one or more of its vital segments with adequate compensation for services rendered.

If this theory is valid even to a degree, if history will support it by showing how our economic progress has been repeatedly stopped by variations of the two foregoing factors, two aims will have been accomplished:

(1) To caution against similar pitfalls in the future, and

(2) To reaffirm faith in a free system that has demonstrated its ability to survive and out-grow unnecessary mistakes.

In the past, speculation has brought about depressions through channelling too much of the national wealth outside of productive use. There is danger that we reach the same end through government spending.

Both competition and desire for gain are as natural as gravity.

Channelled into balancing dependencies they may be tremendously creative. Channelled into denying dependencies they may be tremendously destructive.

When society denies any dependency upon the creative individual, the force of "competition" becomes a belittling destructive force. When the individual denies any dependency upon society, his competition becomes directed toward the belittling of others and becomes destructive.

Failure to recognize the difference between these two entirely different kinds of competition has caused serious dislocations under the Capitalist system, and has been instrumental in bringing about a trend toward eliminating Capitalism entirely.

(Adapted from *The Interpreter*, March, 1954.)

NOTES

Bhoo dan Figures

(Up to 30-4-'54)

S. N.	State	Total Collection (Acres)	Total Distribution (Acres)
1.	Assam	1,608	
2.	Andhra	13,964	
3.	Uttar Pradesh	5,03,602	42,929
4.	Orissa	92,305	
5.	Karnatak	1,809	239
6.	Kerala	17,000	
7.	Gujarat	33,324	
8.	Tamilnad	21,697	256
9.	Delhi	9,245	4
10.	Panjab	5,780	
11.	Bengal	2,120	
12.	Bihar	20,13,000	
13.	Madhya Pradesh	65,703	1,020
14.	Madhya Bharat	62,412	
15.	Maharashtra	15,480	
16.	Mysore	3,414	
17.	Rajasthan	3,17,898	2,077
18.	Vindhya Pradesh	4,978	126
19.	Saurashtra	26,500	
20.	Himachal Pradesh	1,900	
21.	Hyderabad	92,114	10,505
Total		33,05,853	57,156

KRISHNARAJ MEHTA,
Office Secretary,
A. I. Sarva Seva Sangha.

Excise Tax vs. Poll Tax

It is common ground that the consumers of intoxicants in India form a very small percentage of the population but contribute a large share of the provincial revenues because of the high incidence of the tax. The Andhra Prohibition Enquiry Committee said that the consumers were not fewer under Prohibition than before, but consumed illicit liquor instead of licit. If Prohibition was withdrawn, they would consume licit liquor, but their number would be about the same. It estimated it at eight lakhs. Since the population of Andhra was about 200 lakhs, the consumers constituted only about four per cent.

According to the Wanchoo Report, the excise revenue of Andhra before Prohibition was about Rs 560 lakhs. It amounted to Rs 70 per consumer! A small minority of about four per cent

of the population, which is the poorest and the weakest, contributed Rs 70 per head to the provincial revenue! It is inequitable and should go.

If the poorest section of the population must be taxed, in addition to the present indirect taxation, it is more equitable to levy a *poll-tax on all adults*. As a direct tax, it will be better than an indirect one. With low incidence and broad base, it is likely to yield about the same revenue as the excise tax, with its high incidence and narrow base. It will be collected directly and not through speculating contractors. It will be paid when the tax-payer is sober and not inebriate as in the case of the excise tax. Its administration will be comparatively easy since there is a National Register of adults kept up-to-date for election purposes.

P. KODANDA RAO

Man vs. Machine

To

The Editor, *Harijan*

Sir,

We talk in season and out of season about protection to village industries in India. In the *Harijan* of 21-11-'53 you have dealt with the unfair bus competition with the bullock cart. In Thana District a new evil has sprung up of late in that several dredgers are employed to dig out sand from the bottom of the Ulhas creek. This has displaced thousands of poor owners of indigenous boats, whose wives and children are reduced to the condition of semi-starvation. With mass production of sand through the dredgers the bullock carts which transported sand before, have now to make place for motor trucks. Some years ago these unfortunate and misguided owners of village boats even went to the length of destroying and drowning the dredgers out of sheer disappointment and a few precious lives were also lost. The number of dredgers has since doubled. Is it not high time that we suited action to our utterances of protecting village industries and removing unemployment by giving due protection to these slowly dying village crafts?

Paye, 12-5-'54

V. N. KHANOLKAR

[I quite agree with the above that our planners for national development must seriously study such problems of unfair competition of capital and machine arrayed in unholy alliance against man and his bread labour.
15-5-54

—ED.]

Farm Mechanization No Good

Dr. L. Dudley Stamp in his *Our Undeveloped World* writes (p. 147):

'It is well, however, to stress that nothing would be gained at this stage by any change in agricultural production that resulted in saving of man-power. That would simply throw the entire rural economy of the country out of gear. It may even be doubted whether there is room for the gas or oil-burning machine which would rob the cultivator of bullocks and manure that they yield. India might better use some of the smaller specialized types of farm implements rather than attempt large-scale farm mechanization.'

V. G. D.

AGATHA HARRISON

(By Pyarelal)

Agatha Harrison, who passed away the other day, was a gift of Charles Andrews to India. It was in 1931 at the time of the Second Round Table Conference in London that she first came to us. Seeing me snowed under by the heavy mail which six postal deliveries at four different addresses brought every day, Charles Andrews deputed her to assist me. Before long she became one of us.

She completely identified herself with India's non-violent struggle. During our stay in London, once it became necessary to type out the whole of Sir John Anderson's repressive Ordinance No. 9 of Bengal for Gandhiji's use. It was an atrociously long document. India Office said they had only one copy and it could not be spared. She finished the job overnight, but next day confessed that she was so affected by its contents that she had found it difficult to go on with her typing! Towards the close of our stay in London, she offered her services as a liaison between Gandhiji and British officials and friends of Indian freedom in England. Her offer was accepted and she continued to discharge that role till the end.

A peacemaker's is by no means an easy role. Often it seems a thankless task. Agatha had grit, perseverance and patience, and sturdy common sense which enabled her to win and retain the confidence and respect of everybody — whether it was Lord Halifax or Sir Samuel Hoare, Lord Pethick-Lawrence or Cripps, Linlithgow or Amery, Gandhiji, Nehru or Patel. She made them all feel that they could trust her. Her sincerity and good sense overcame even hardened prejudices and forced open doors that were normally shut.

When darkness stared her in the face, she turned to Gandhiji to revive her optimism and replenish her faith. One such occasion was in 1941, when India and England were both adamant on the issue of India's participation in the war on British terms and there seemed to be hardly any meeting ground between their conflicting view-points. After giving his analysis of the situation, Gandhiji on that occasion wrote to her: "Can you now have a glimpse of why you find endless difficulties in the pursuit of your thankless task? But you must go on. Every good deed is like a good seed. It is never wasted if it is sown in cultivable soil."

She was the only person, who could get round Mr Amery to allow her to write to Gandhiji on the political issue that divided them at the time of Gandhiji's detention during the Quit India struggle. Gandhiji's reply was noteworthy as showing what a granite wall the mediators were faced with and why the attempt to bridge the gulf failed.

"As for the subject matter of your letter, I am the same man you have known me. The spirit of Andrews is ever with me. But suspicion about my motives and utter distrust of my word in high places has hitherto rendered every move made by me nugatory. However, I am watching, waiting and praying. Truth and non-violence remain my sheet-anchor as never before. They sustain me. I do not give up the hope that light will shine through the surrounding darkness."

Agatha was an ardent worker in the women's cause, being connected with the International Women's Conference and the Indian Women's Conference. She was spiritual-minded without being solemn and tolerant without being lax in the practice of her faith. She could enjoy a joke at her expense and bring to bear upon a tense situation her lively sense of humour. Her sympathies were broad and always with the underdog — whether it was in China, India or Africa. She was ever faithful to the spirit of C. F. A. and was unwavering in her conviction that tensions are due to a lack of proper understanding among people and establishment of personal contacts between the parties concerned on the human plane, is the key to the removal of estrangements. To that end she laboured unsparingly and without a stop.

The testimony she bore at Gandhiji's last birthday celebration in London, provided the key to her own faith too. Countless men and women in the world, she remarked, bore Gandhiji in their thoughts on his birthday, as he continued to face the acid test of non-violence. "We are more sure than ever that Gandhiji's reliance on the power of the spirit is indomitable."

The world today needs more than ever that faith and silent servants of humanity like Agatha filled with that faith, to break the vicious circle of suspicion, fear and hate which threaten all that we hold dear. No wonder Pandit Nehru described her as one of those rare spirits, who continue to labour in patience and in faith to serve humanity, without caring for distinction for themselves or even recognition of their service, but who really constitute the "salt of the earth".

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