

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

Vol. XVIII. No. 22

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1954

TWO ANNAS

## GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The National Congress of Women met at Calcutta in June last and passed several noteworthy resolutions. I have on my pending file, the cutting of the following one deserving to be specially noted here :

"Women in search of employment was the subject of another resolution. It proposed a nationwide scheme for utilizing the spare time of housewives who are not highly educated or trained, by providing a network of training centres on a *mohalla* or ward basis where women could obtain work to do in their homes in the nature of sewing, toy-manufacturing, leather work, etc. The exploration of further avenues of work for women was stressed and it was suggested that for women in rural areas, handicraft centres should be started with raw material and marketing facilities provided by the Government."

The hard times through which we are passing today make it necessary for women, specially of the middle classes, to be in search of gainful employment. I do not know whether it is a healthy sign of our social order wherein women are required to go out of their legitimate and rightful sphere of the home and in search of employment. In urban areas, the search is growing rampant, chiefly on the part of the educated young women ; it is fast on its way to creating a social problem, not merely economic in nature.

However, leaving aside this larger point for the present, it must be admitted that our women-folk do generally require to be gainfully and healthily employed in their spare time from their daily home duties. They should, therefore, have with them suitable home-crafts and due training facilities should be made available for them. This may be better done by our basic educational system itself, to be further supplemented by diverse vocational classes conducted by voluntary agencies chiefly of women.

The resolution quoted above rightly points out such a need, and at the end notes that facilities for marketing produce from such home-crafts must be provided by Government. While approving the suggestion, it must be added that much of such produce should be better consumed in our own homes. Normally speaking, it must have

an automatic market — our homes themselves. The home-crafts that may be chosen should be accordingly thought out. It is here and from this point of view that Gandhiji's suggestion of spinning and Khadi is pre-eminently useful and important. The Women's Congress can well take up the idea. Khadi is the Queen of women's home-crafts. That alone is potent enough to supply all our homes with a highly gainful, self reliant and honourable home-industry, which may, in course of time, revolutionize our social, industrial and economic life. It will have a very wholesome effect on the education of children and the peace and wellbeing of our homes. The Charkha is the real emblem of happy employment for women in their very homes. All other crafts can well develop round that radiating centre. It is *the* job for our women, creating revolutionary forces for the good of our home economy and the nation as well. It will be a real act of service to the nation if our women's organizations take up this suggestion. This will enable them to go out in the villages, where really the work of the welfare and uplift of women is most needed.

17-7-54

## TO THE TOWN-BRED

(By Gandhiji)

The village work frightens us. We who are town-bred find it trying to take to the village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life. But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically, if our desire is to establish Swaraj for the people, not substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse. Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live. The difference will be fundamental. The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly and willingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation. Let us not flinch from the necessary sacrifice, if we will live as an independent self-respecting nation.

Young India, 17-4-24

## VINOBA IN CHAMPARAN

### II

(By "Dadu")

The week began with our march to Motihari. Leaving Turkolia in the small hours of the morning on Sunday, July 4th, we reached Motihari just before 7 a.m. Motihari is the headquarters of Champaran district. As we approached the town, the sky resounded with the cries of: "*Champaran zila men bila-zamin ke Koi na rahega, Koi na rahega*" (there will be none landless in the district of Champaran). We encamped at Benajaraia Pandal, the headquarters of the District Congress Committee.

There was a stream of visitors all through the day. In the afternoon representatives of the press and intellectuals of the city met Vinoba at a conference. To a query whether he intended to offer non-co-operation against the Zamindars or Government, Vinoba replied, "Bhoodan itself is Satyagraha where defeat is out of question. But it may come in future if there be need. Non-co-operation and Satyagraha are a part of the Bhoodan process. But I do not think in terms of the next step. As Bapu said, 'One step is enough for me'."

When questioned about the progress of the movement, he observed, "Of course, the response of the people is beyond expectation. Only workers are wanted. But those who have not donated land today will do so tomorrow. They cannot escape it as they cannot escape death."

The evening prayer was attended by more than 10,000 people, including women. In his post-prayer discourse, Vinoba began by referring to a recent utterance of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in which the latter had asked the people to stand on their own feet rather than seek others' help. Vinoba called it a right resolve made at the right moment and in keeping with the teachings of our scriptures. He pointed out that we must be self-sufficient in our basic requirements like food, clothing, medicine, etc. in which no nation should depend on another nor exploit any other. We have ample wealth in the form of human power, intellect and natural resources, which can help us easily to stand on our own feet. Vinoba deplored that some people were afraid of the enormous population in the country: If we had 36 crores of mouths to feed, we had also 72 crores of hands to work with, which must be provided with suitable tools and implements to work with. He added that for an adequate employment of these resources, two things were very necessary—unity amongst ourselves and decentralization of the powers enjoyed by the Centre. As regards the first, he suggested that changes must be introduced in the methods of election which were aggravating the evils of communalism and casteism. We might have different ideologies, but for work we must have similar programmes on

which all parties or groups agreed. The second requisite required a distribution of the powers held at the Centre. It was fantastic that a few brains at Delhi should plan for the whole country in their own way. Every village must be developed as a self-sufficient unit. What was desirable was distribution of work on right lines and the things which could be made in the villages should be prepared there. He asked the city people to contribute to the Sampattidan Yajna regularly. Finally, Vinoba enjoined upon the youth to come forward and donate their life for the cause.

On the fifth, we stayed at Bharaulia farm. Champaran is rich in farms belonging to various mill-owners. In his post-prayer speech, Vinoba placed three points before the farm-owners of Bihar. First, farms should be converted into trusts and all the labourers working on the farm should be taken as trustees of the farm with the same ownership rights as the farm-owners'. Secondly, in place of the money crops, they should grow all such crops on the farms as are required for the people in one form or another. Thirdly, sons of farm-owners should work and labour on the farms together with those of the labourers, and that no tractors, except for breaking fallow lands, be allowed thereon.

Our next halt, on the sixth, was at Madhubani Ashram. During the course of the morning walk from Bharaulia to Madhubani Ashram, there was a talk with Vinoba on the place of *bhiksha* in society. Vinoba observed that salaries, however small, were a burden to the Central pay-master body or authority, while *bhiksha* involved no bodily labour. Hence all those who resorted to *bhiksha* should do some bodily labour regularly. They may go round for 25 days in a month and rest for five days at one spot. Within, they must have feeling of *sannyas*, while they must behave as a *yogee* from without.

We had a student-visitor from Delhi, shortly to go to Europe on some tour. Explaining to him the significance of the Bhoodan Yajna movement, Vinoba said, "Essentially it is a moral movement. Mine is not so much to provide food to the hungry as to bring it home to the people that before they take their food they must share it with others. I want to create an atmosphere of 'giving' in this age of 'taking'." Vinoba also dwelt on the necessity of the recognition of Hindi, Urdu and Bengali in world conferences. He held the view that in international gatherings, a language which was spoken by more than five crores of people should find a place. Thus twelve languages, six of Asia, viz. Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic, and of Europe, viz. English, French, Spanish, Russian, Italian and German must be accorded equal status.

In his post-prayer speech, Vinoba asked the people of Madhubani locality to take a pledge that they would refuse to use those city-made



things which they could prepare themselves, e.g. cloth, oil, *gur*, shoes, etc. They must have their own schools and dispute-settling institutions. They would then be able to establish Swarajya in their villages.

On 7th July, we were at Dhaka, a Thana headquarter. In his address after the prayer, Vinoba said that Kisans could develop into the greatest devotees of God if only they made certain changes in their life. Religion was meaningless without the practice of love and honesty. The society, continued Vinoba, was said to be divided into two classes: the haves and the have-nots. But the latter had also feeling of ownership like the former. He, in fact, also wanted to have two classes, viz., those who had cast off the ownership and those who had not. The war between the two would be a non-violent war. If the Kisan transferred ownership to the society, his honesty would gain strength and solidity and he would be regarded as a true *phal-tyagi* in the terms of the Gita.

In the afternoon on the same day, Vinoba met the young Brahmachari students of Sarvodaya Gurukul, Bairaginia, a village in Muzaffarpur district, about seven miles from Dhaka. He asked them to make their own cloth and produce their own vegetables. He recommended regular study in the early hours of the morning. He also stressed on the need of imparting essential elements of all religions together with the teaching of the Vedic religion. The fundamentals were the same in all. Besides they must be taught some language other than the mother-tongue, Hindi.

The workers' meeting in the afternoon of the 8th July at Bakhri, in Patahi Thana, was very remarkable. About 14 workers, both Congress men and Praja-Socialists, came forward with their gifts. Vinoba expressed the hope that they would be able to carry successfully the banner of revolution in their Thana as also the district.

Referring to this event in his post-prayer speech, Vinoba said that like evil, goodness was also contagious. Nay, it was 'contagion' lasting far longer, as goodness was an attribute of the soul. To spread this 'contagion' more and more people should come forward to donate their life for the cause.

On the 9th we were at Chaita, another village in the Patahi Thana of Champaran. The response in the workers' meeting that day was not so generous as in previous one. Workers, rich as they were, recognized the virtue of the movement but their attachment came in their way, they said.

The week closed with our stay at Madhuban where the evening meeting was attended by no less than 10,000 men and women. Addressing them after the prayer, Vinoba observed that a right thought, *sad-vichar*, if not turned into ac-

tion, carries no value. It must be raised to the status of a religious thought, *dharma-vichar* and brought into practice. "I want our workers to understand the basic difference between *sad-vichar* and *dharma-vichar*. Bhoodan belongs to the latter category."

14-7-'54

Camp: Kesaria (Champaran)

### NATIONAL ILL-HEALTH SCHEME

One out of every eight patients who go to a doctor (under the National Health Scheme in Britain), an investigation has shown, goes to be treated for the common cold. But there is no treatment for the common cold—except the exercise of commonsense! One-eighth of the doctor's patients, in fact, are wasting his time and their own.

Nor is this all. In a book just published a former medical Director General of the Royal Navy, Sir Sheldon Dudley, reminds us that there is still no specific treatment known for influenza. Nor even a means to shorten the duration of flu's attack.

And did you realize that there is no medical evidence that the operation for tonsils, performed annually on thousands of children, is of any benefit to them?

In other words, huge sums of money are being wasted on "treatment" and "cures" which are of no clinical value whatsoever.

Sir Sheldon urges a new approach. We must forget our present preoccupation with disease and instead concentrate upon health. Prevention, he reiterates, is better than cure.

The Minister of Health, Mr Iain Macleod, has been saying the same thing. "We must encourage the cult of good health," he tells us, "rather than emphasize the healing of ill-health."

But what is Mr Macleod doing about? The cost of N. H. S. is growing to a frightening size. We cannot afford the present wastage on what are virtually "quack" remedies. Unless the Ministry acts quickly the N. H. S. may become unworkable.

(Reproduced from Editorial, *The Daily Sketch*, London, 2nd Nov. '53)

[When in our own country, we are thinking to organize Health Schemes like the British, it is worth while noting what Britain is experiencing about its N. H. S. Is it not a better plan to spend whatever we can spare from our national budget, for health rather than for ill-health?

12-7-'54

M. P.]

By Vinoba Bhave  
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# HARIJAN

July 31

1954

## EAST AND WEST MEET

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The four great statesmen of the modern world met in conference a few days ago—Sir Winston Churchill and President Eisenhower in Washington, Prime Ministers Nehru and Chow En-lai in Delhi;—the former two in the West, the latter two in the East. A cartoonist suggested in his drawing whether this was how East and West, which should meet as one, were behaving at present.

There is also another significant thing about the two meetings. At Washington met only England and America; the Soviet Communism which is a product of their world, was not present at that meeting. Unlike that, the Delhi meeting might be said to have both the worlds in it, viz., the so-called 'free world' and the 'Communist World'.

At Washington the latter world was not present. Not only that, the two statesmen who met there did so with a view to confabulate what should rather be done to bag the latter world and stop its onrush in S-E. Asia.

The separate deliberations therefore that took place at the two places marked themselves out accordingly. We saw something about it in one of the previous issues of this paper.

Fundamentally the world problem is only one: Technology and industrialism are the new attributes of this age. The Western world intensively devoting itself to science came to discover the power-driven machine, and with its help set up a new and exclusive economic order, and buttressed it with adequate armaments etc. With the strength and power acquired therefrom it roamed over the whole wide world and brought as much of it as it could under its heels. The sole aim of this episode in world's history was to draw away raw materials for feeding the colossus of the all-devouring machine that Western industrialism had devised. To do the job successfully well the West established its colonial rule in the East and thus assured to itself unimpeded supply of raw materials and monopoly market for its manufactured goods.

This business of colonial exploitation by the Western world is going on for the last one century and more. The world is now smarting under its mal-effects and is trying to see its way out of them.

One very apparent effect of this new order was that the peoples of the world came to be divided in two camps—the colonial powers of the West and the rest in the world that became

under the new order 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the former. The latter are at present described as economically backward, who have now become conscious and desire to come to their own in their own homelands. Naturally this is a cause of worry and annoyance for the colonial powers.

There came about a second thing as a result of the machine age, which is even more significant than the first noted above. This was to divide the very world which gave birth to the new age. Western thinkers called it capitalism, which set in a class-war among the very people who prospered under the new economic order in the world. A great lover of the poor that he was, Marx closely studied the whole phenomenon and provoked a thought world that has been a very efficient cause of revolution among those peoples, which we all know is the socialist or the communist doctrine. Thus the new machine age not only divided the world into two, but it also caused a deep schism in the very Western world as well.

The effect of the new age on the exploited Eastern peoples was no less remarkable. It gave birth\* to another great and efficient cause of revolution: Gandhiji forged the weapon of Satyagraha to meet the challenge of colonialism to the Eastern humanity. The world has not till now heeded to nor studied the Satyagraha doctrine as well as Marxism; however it is a complete social philosophy for the removal of ills from which the whole modern world is suffering. India represents or is expected to represent this new philosophy.

I do not propose here to go into an elaborate comparison of these two philosophies or their technique of revolution. However one of their aspects should be noted here. Marxism is the child of the 19th century urban civilization of the modern West; in comparison to it Gandhism is a philosophy of the rural civilization, which is an emblem of the ancient culture of the East. Marx did not work in rural environments and for their problems or amelioration; his work was conditioned by the technological surroundings of the urbanizing West. Gandhiji's work was more broad-based than that. If we note that most of world's population also, like that of India or China, lives in villages, the chief problem for the world too is to study them and work for their problems. Cities do not constitute a special or separate problem, as they come in, I think, as a part of the larger problem of rural life. The thesis of David Mitrany in his recent book

\* Japan, as a result of Western impact on her, took to imitating Western ways, which is not noted here, for the obvious reason that it was no new philosophy nor a new technique of revolution that may help backward nations of the East to rise and come to their own. China's revolution is in the process of finalizing itself and taking shape.



*Marx Against the Peasant* that Marx neglected the problem of the Peasant and his life, is, I think, a true one.

Over and above this, there was another noteworthy difference also in the two meetings of the four statesmen: The Washington meeting represented the urban civilization of the opulent West; while the Delhi meeting represented world's rural civilization of the poor East.

At the present juncture in world's history, when fundamental questions in its progress are agitating mankind, we should seriously study them. The backward nations of the East should also do it. Imitating the opulent and dominating West will not help. It is rather a question of devising a way of life so that all the peoples of the world may co-exist in peace and happiness, with mutual aid and self-reliance. The main question for the world is to free itself from the deadly grips of colonialism and capitalism. Marxism, in its search for ways and means to do it, was conditioned by Western technological conditions and accepted violent means as good enough. Gandhism worked in quite a different context and with the general background of world's human problem accepted non-violence as the basic condition of its technique. It is necessary that India and China and other backward peoples of the world keep this larger view before them and work accordingly. For, so working, they will benefit the whole world also and the cause of its peace.

18-7-'54

(From the original in Gujarati)

### CADET CORPS UNIFORM AND KHADI

(By Magambhai P. Desai)

A secondary school teacher in the course of his letter to me writes:

"For a few months past a new student activity, called the Auxiliary Cadet Corps has come into being in our school. Some three teachers who underwent the training in the class that was conducted for two weeks in Ahmedabad last May took the initiative and started the activity. How far this activity will inculcate discipline and spirit of service in school students is a question which future alone will answer. But at present students in great number are rushing to join in this activity; for, they are dazzled and attracted by the pomp and show which go with the Auxiliary Cadet Corps. It is almost obligatory to put on the uniform of mill cloth, boots, socks and hats.

"I offered to the Managers of our school to supply them if they desired, the fast-coloured *Khadi* Khadi for the Cadet Corps uniform. But they forthrightly rejected my proposal with a remark that there was no place for Khadi in this activity.

"You must be aware that spinning, weaving and even Hindi are taught half-heartedly in secondary schools. Teachers as well as their superiors have no faith in them. Not only that, but they seem to be all the while anxious to throw these subjects overboard at an earliest opportunity.

"Most of our Government officers with their showy and pompous dress have been, for the last seven years, wiping out the love for Khadi, simplicity and spirit of service from the minds of young boys. If now the Auxiliary Cadet Corps activity gives preference to mill

cloth for uniform, the bureaucracy will find it still easier to obliterate whatever traces of love for Khadi etc. are left in the intelligentsia. The reason is not far to seek. Most of the students join schools and colleges with the object of securing Government posts. They, therefore, try to imitate Government officers in their dress and behaviour."

The above letter is helpful to understand what goes on in the name of education. It can be described as an apt instance of an unchallengeable indictment against the system of education that obtains today in the country. The other day Pandit Jawaharlalji, giving vent to his heart anguish about the sad state of education, observed that the present primary and secondary education was quite useless. We find here the reason for this sad remark of Shri Nehru.

Why should Khadi have no place in uniforms for Cadet Corps? Incidentally, the names selected for the bodies which aim to work for the service of the nation are not proper. They should be in the national language. Uniforms should be of Khadi. Moreover, if Government has to bear the expenses, it is all the more necessary to see that the nation's money is used in purchasing Khadi. Khadi will also exert a healthy influence of self-help and simplicity on the minds of the students.

It is to be admitted with great regret that the correspondent's complaint against the mentality of Government servants is not baseless and untrue. If Cadet Corps activity is meant for educating our boys, it should be our conscious effort to inculcate in students the spirit of service, simplicity and love for the poor people of India. Why should they not adopt the uniform of Sevadal volunteers, for example, that is simple and in harmony with the nation's ideals and traditions? Why should there be a necessity of boots and socks? This activity must mark the students with patriotism and strength of moral character. We should agree with the correspondent that we cannot afford the pomp and show which erect a wall of separation between us and our simple countrymen.

The remarks about bureaucracy and its influence on young boys are equally true. We have still to work for the bureaucracy giving place to the flowering of true democracy in our land.

13-7-'54

(From Gujarati)

### Our Educational Books

By Mahatma Gandhi

BASIC EDUCATION

Pages viii+114 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As. 6

TOWARDS NEW EDUCATION

Pages vi+90 Price Re. 1-4-0 Postage etc. As. 5

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## TECHNOLOGY IN VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

(By Maurice Frydman)

India is now on the parting of the ways. On one hand, there is the urgent need for more food, clothing, shelter, books, medicines and means of constructive use of leisure, — in short, of a higher standard of life; on the other, the evils of centralized and power-driven production, whether State or private, are so monstrous that there is a strong movement in this country away from all centralization to a return to decentralized production through far going individualization, especially in articles of first necessity.

If village industries have to face the task of satisfying the essential needs of India's population with any hope of success, they cannot and should not be technologically limited to hand and animal power. They will use power, but the power shall come to the worker and benefit the worker, the worker will not go to a factory to work for a wage and benefit somebody else. The technology of village industries must develop in the direction of high capacity small tools and plants which will enable the individual owner-worker to compare in productivity per head and per rupee invested with the centralized industries, in which the non-productive spending on organization, transport, sales and capital dividend exceeds by far the wage received by the workman. The object of the village industries movement is to eliminate every form of non-productive occupation by centralizing in the individual the labour, executive, managerial, financial and commercial functions by giving him an assured market and efficient tools and a general atmosphere of encouragement and confidence.

In other words, while profit-bearing industries are capital-centered and serve capital, life-bearing village industries are man-centered and serve man. While village industries have no quarrel with power as such, control over power production and distribution must not go into hands whose interests are not identical with those of village industries. Power production and distribution must be done for service and not for profit. It must be entirely in the hands of State and Local Governments and social or co-operative bodies and, whenever possible, in the hands of the individual producer himself. While thermal, hydro-electric and even atomic power stations may go on for a long time, the village industries will give preference to small power generators, using the ever replenished sources of energy of the sun, air, water and plants. The ideal village industry's owner-worker will run his own machine tools with locally produced power and keep them in good repair in a local service station. Even the manufacture of village industries plant and equipment can be largely decentralized. There are already primary movers in the markets within the means of a craftsman and run on locally grown vegetable

fuels and there is no reason why in the long run not only production, but also tooling and the power supply should not be largely decentralized.

## MODERN PRESS AND ADVERTISEMENT

[*New Outlook*\* is the name of a little magazine from America. It runs its 7th year. It aims to give to its readers "a digest of ideas and ideals" from whatever sources they might be found. It also borrows "from the treasures of the ancients, since their outlook was often so strikingly appropriate to our own living present." In its first number of the current year, while describing its aim, it makes two introductory observations which are of universal note. It is a commentary on modern journalism and its mass effect of vulgarizing our general taste and ideas, and how advertisement becomes a potent weapon to produce such results. I may note at the end that the *New Outlook* accepts no advertisement. The observations are as follows:

17-7-54

M. P. J.

### I

No single measure of society can give a complete picture, of course; but what shall one say of the view of our lives and the insides of our minds that is afforded by the average magazine rack and newstand of the typical American drug store?

Second-rate, fourth-rate, tenth-rate periodicals — journals, magazines, and newspapers — clutter up our minds and our homes with a type of "literature" no former society has had to suffer in such quantity.

Most of the "free press" of America is subsidized and dominated, directly or indirectly, by commercial advertising, much of which appeals to juvenile motives, to the desire for indulgence, desire for conspicuous display, desire to appear better than we are, desire to be "superior" (whatever that means), and to be envied by those around us.

A good many of these journals squander unbelievable sums of money on the finest artists, the most expensive writers, the most highly developed technical processes for printing in magnificent colour and half-tones. They use thousands of tons of high quality paper made out of wood pulp, to supply which the forests of a continent are being rapidly cut down — and all this effort and expense serves merely to provide a momentary diversion, or escape and relaxation for people who have learned to read (after a fashion, when the reading is interspersed with enough illustrations), but have never learned to discriminate.

Millions of words... tons of paper... thousands of writers... high speed presses flinging pages at us faster than any man can read them —.

Amid the flood of literature the presses are grinding out daily can be found a small trickle of first-rate magazines. Search diligently the length and breadth of the land, and you can even turn up a newspaper or two of real quality — a newspaper written and edited by men and women who do not have to forego their own self-respect or integrity in order to hold their jobs.

\* 1569-61 W. Olympic Blvd. Los Angeles 15, Calif. (U.S.A.) Annual Subscription \$2.



## II

We believe one of the chief causes of much of today's confused thinking is the formidable mass of seductive advertising which actually convinces a large part of the population that it is beneficial to take poisons into the system (quoting "doctors" in support of their contentions); that speculating in foods and necessary commodities is legitimate and in the spirit of "free enterprise"; that race track gambling is a sport for kings and their henchmen rather than for knaves and fools. Indeed, not only does this type of advertising at the consumer's expense too often determine what we shall eat, drink and wear, but also what we shall think.

Therefore, we are going to attempt a small adventure in the line of advertising, to see if the public might not really appreciate a bit of truth and honesty instead of a daily diet of deceit.

## THE 'WHITE' MARKET IS NO BETTER

(By Vinoba)

People complain about the existence of black market in India. But is our so-called 'white' market any better? Let a young boy go to the market and the shopkeeper looks upon it as an opportunity to cheat an unwary customer. The evil is widespread throughout the land and not confined to any one part.

Years ago, I was in Kashi for a few months. I went to a shop to buy a lock. I selected one and asked for the price. The shopkeeper said—twelve annas. I paid him twelve annas but told him, as I was leaving, that it could not cost more than three or four annas. I am by nature something of a mathematician and love to think of things mathematically. I could therefore know that the real price of that lock could not exceed three annas.

The shop lay on my way to the place where I was taking my meals. The shopkeeper therefore knew my face. At last, one day when there was no other customer about, he called me and quietly put in my hand nine annas which were the excess he had charged me. I was delighted to see that after all God in him was awake. It revealed to me that however thick the veil, goodwill was always there in the heart of every individual.

Look at how they haggle with each other in our markets over the most ordinary things. The buyer begins by offering two annas while the seller puts his demand at twelve annas and so it goes on for five to ten minutes, each trying to outwit the other. This is our 'white' market where everyone tries to deceive everyone else. Things have deteriorated to such an extent that even friends and acquaintances are not regarded as being outside the sphere of such exploitation. If I go to a friend's shop, he would not show me any consideration due to a friend; he would charge me the same excessive price as he charges others.

Such is the sorry state of our morals which we have to set right. The remedy lies in cultivating and establishing spiritual values.

(Adapted from Hindi)

## ERADICATION OF CRIME \*

(By Vinoba)

One of the questions raised when some members of the local panchayat saw me this noon was: Why is there so much increase in crime today even in the villages? This is an important question and I propose to deal with it here at some length.

It is true that there has been lately an alarming increase in crime which is bound to cause concern to all those who have the wellbeing of the people at their heart. But there is nothing surprising in it. The surprise rather is why it is so little, looking to the appalling conditions—the ignorance, the poverty and the injustice—in which our people live. The conditions indeed are so exasperating that it should have been far more than it is. The reason why the cases of crime in our country are still so few lies in the fact that the Indians are a highly civilized people. They are not illiterate in the sense of having the ability to read and write—actually about 90 per cent are illiterate—but they have culture, and character and a store of an experience which has been accumulating for the past ten thousand years. There has been in our country an unbroken tradition of the teaching and practice of *dharma* i.e. right law and recurring efforts at building up a just social organization. All this has entered into the texture of the character of our people. Hence they are by nature gentle and peaceful and given to control of the mind.

Some ten or twelve years ago, as most of you might remember, there was a terrible famine in Bengal. Some 30 lakh people died in it according to Government statistics. The estimate of the people was still higher. We were in jail in those days. Some of us wondered why 30 lakh people died without making even so much as a stir. Why did not they, when they were in such desperate straits, take to stealing and looting? There seemed to be no clear answer to this challenging question.

There were some who said that even stealing and looting required some pluck, but our people were so thoroughly emasculated that they could not even steal and loot. In other countries, under similar conditions, people would have thrown off all restraint, and there would have been an outbreak of anarchy.

This set me thinking: I asked myself if we were really so fallen as that. Had we not even such courage as to do things which even rats and cats could do? The question kept revolving in my mind and indeed I felt very miserable, till at last something from within told me that this was not so. If our people did not take to looting, it was because our Rishis had taught that it was not right, whatever the provocation, to hurt others merely out of spite and anger. It could not help them escape death; the most they could

\* From a speech at Pakadihar (Champaran) on 18-6-54.

do was to bring suffering to others also which was not right. This was the reason why they did not lose their restraint and preferred to die silently. And therein lies one of our greatest virtues—a virtue which can be transmitted into a great power. It could be used to create the power of Satyagraha. Those who are capable of such restraint and such endurance can easily develop the power of non-violent resistance.

So though there has been some increase in crime in recent years, it is much less than would be warranted by the conditions obtaining in our country. We should therefore forgive the comparatively few cases of stealing which occur about us from time to time. If a case like that was brought to me, I would recommend that they be sentenced not to imprisonment in jail but to work on land which would be freely gifted to them. I would tell them: Go and work on land, earn an honest living and bring up your children properly.

The real difficulty in this regard lies not with thieves and dacoits who can be easily managed but with us—the respectable and educated city-dwellers. We are committing far more crimes than the former, but nobody takes account of it. All exploitation and hoarding of wealth is a form of stealing—a more sinister form than direct stealing. All these locks which are used to guard the hoarded wealth are an open invitation to commit stealing. Stealing would end only when there are no more locks and keys. A Greek historian writing about India some two thousand years ago said that the rich in India never locked their houses. He was surprised at it. This was when there was fabulous wealth in our country. But now when we are living under near-starvation conditions, we are using an endless number and variety of locks!

We have to consider seriously that while we hold stealing to be a punishable crime, we do not even so much as disapprove of hoarding. That is because the hoarders and their adherents have formed themselves—maybe quite unconsciously—into a class. And since they hold power they have constructed a body of laws which support and guard their interests. We punish the thief but respect the hoarder. The peasant who works hard and earns an honest living is made to sit on the uncovered floor, while the hoarder is offered a comfortable seat on the chair and received with all other honours. We do not consider taking of interest—which is the most naked form of exploitation—a crime. The Koran has condemned taking of interest most emphatically as a heinous crime. But we think that it is a most necessary economic institution.

It is obvious that if we are really anxious to eradicate crime, then we must first find out its root cause which lies in a faulty social organiza-

tion. We must purify and where necessary rebuild the social organization. That has to be done in two ways: First there must be a redistribution of land and all other forms of wealth, and secondly the village head should be entrusted with the responsibility to provide work and employment to all. He can discharge this responsibility only when village industries are started.

Simultaneously with the purification of the social organization, there must also be the purification of thought. Efforts should be made to introduce and establish in our social consciousness the idea that it is a sin to hoard wealth and to avoid physical labour. Why do we consider stealing a sin? Because the thief avoids doing honest physical labour and in an hour or two—which is the time he takes to accomplish his nefarious design—he comes to acquire money which is out of all proportion to the time and energy he spends on it. But this is exactly what the judge who sends him to jail does. He works for hardly three hours and earns a thousand rupees a month. Is this not the same as stealing? Looking at it from this point of view, all those who are engaged in the so-called respectable professions—judges, lawyers, doctors, professors, ministers and industrialists—all would have to be classed as thieves. But they are not so classed because they are in power.

Any way, we have to purify and clarify our thinking in regard to *dharma*. As the Upanishad puts it, 'True *dharma* consists in enjoying through renunciation.'\* It is only by practising this true *dharma* that we will succeed in eradicating crime.

(Adapted from Hindi)

### Ministers' Salaries in India and in Japan

Bombayman of the *Evening News of India* (Feb. 23, '53) met Dr. Miss Shiosak Sakanishi, the author of many books in English and Japanese. She said one thing that puzzled her was the salaries of Indian ministers, as 'our ministers do not get high salaries as yours do. After taxation, the rates of which with us are very high, the Japanese Prime Minister is left with about Rs 550 per month.'

The income per head in India is half as large as in Japan. But a minister in Delhi costs five times as much as his counterpart in Tokio.

V. G. D.

### \* लवतेन भुञ्जीयाः ।

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