

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

OFFICIAL AUCTIONS

In the article on *Salt* I have referred to the necessity of abolishing the *izara* system (granting of licences to big traders). It pushes out small traders and creates monopolies or combinations. A similar evil prevails in the way in which official auctions are held for the disposal of unwanted stocks. Often these stocks are worth thousands of rupees, and consist of articles which could be disposed of in small or big lots as the department might choose. Usually they are auctioned off in big lots. The result is that small traders cannot take part in the auction, and it is practically open only to a few wealthy merchants. They combine together often in secret partnership not to bid heavily against one another and get the whole stock at a nominal price.

A few weeks ago quite a scandal was created at Wardha by one of such auctions. It appears that the Government had a very large stock of old gram and sugar, which it wanted to dispose of. If it had been auctioned off in small lots of, say, 5 to 10 bags each, several small traders of this and the neighbouring districts could have taken part in the auction and the Government could have realized a better price. But the whole stock consisting of hundreds of bags was put up as a single lot, with the result that only a handful of wealthy dealers took part in it. As usual they had combined among themselves, and it is alleged that they purchased gram at a price of half an anna per *seer*, and sugar at 9 or 10 pice per *seer*. Though there was some amount of bad stuff in it, after careful sifting, the purchaser is said to have made thousands of rupees by this transaction within a few days. The subject became a scandal of the city and was naturally exploited by rival political groups. Every kind of allegation has been made against the ministry and the officers concerned. Whether anyone is guilty of reprehensible conduct in the matter or no, this much can be said with certainty that where articles are divisible, they should never be sold in too large lots. They discourage the small trader and also raise the prices for the consumer by creating an unnecessary, large middleman. A small trader is indispensable in the process of distribution. Not so the whole-sale purchaser, if he is not a producer himself.

Will governments and similar public insti-

tutions make it a rule that auctions of their unwanted stocks of whatever kind should be sold in as small lots as is reasonably possible?

Wardha, 30-6-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SECOND CLASS SLEEPING CARS

Last week I ventured a trip to Dehradun. Luckily I could get sleeping berths reserved during the entire journey both ways. From Wardha to Delhi it was a G. I. P. car in which no special sleeping compartments are provided. The result is that passengers without sleeping reservations are obliged to vacate the compartment at 9 p.m. and find accommodation elsewhere or fill up the gangways, unless those who have reserved their berths are magnanimous enough to forego their rights and accommodate some. As a heavy extra charge of Rs. 10 per night per berth is levied, this magnanimity is rather rare and the scene which was enacted at about 9 p.m. in my compartment because of the unwillingness of some of the berthless passengers to go elsewhere until compelled, deprived me of what comfort the half-berth which I allowed to myself could have given.

Compared with this, the special sleeping car on the E.I.R. system from Delhi to Dehradun and back was very comfortable. As there were non-sleeping compartments also, those who had not reserved sleeping berths did not enter this compartment at all. It was a long compartment with 14 lower and 14 upper berths on each side and a broad gangway between the two rows. The window-panes and the Indian style lavatories were not quite satisfactory, but otherwise this sleeping car provides a good model.

There was also a sleeping car on the return journey from Delhi to Wardha. This time it was an M. S. M. Ry. model. It seemed as if no ingenuity was spared to provide as much discomfort as possible at Rs. 10 per night and the normal second class fare for day to passengers, who presumed to purchase sleep while several fellow travellers could not get even a seat on a bench in spite of a second class ticket, and had to fill up narrow gangways and sit or stand on their luggage during the whole night. It was a long car divided into cabins for 6 passengers each both for day and night. There were 6 berths, 2 lower, 2 middle and 2 upper ones. The space between the opposite rows was extremely narrow, perhaps

one fourth of that in the E. I. R. compartment. The height between the berths was such that one could not sit erect on one's berth, if they were all down, so that either one must lie all time or all must occupy only the lower berths during the day, and not attempt to get out of the berth during the whole night. The middle berth could not be lowered or raised, without completely emptying the lower berths of both life and luggage. There was an iron ladder provided to get to the upper berth, which when lowered so hung at its lower end that the passenger on the lower berth might injure himself by an unconscious movement of the body during sleep. The window-panes had a latch which if not swiftly raised in order to close the window might injure the fingers. It was designed to raise itself while raising the pane, but it could be done only by a strong man. There was a narrow common gangway on one side of the cabins, through which passengers had to enter and leave the train, bring their luggage, and go to the lavatories. It was all occupied by 'non-reserved' passengers and their luggage.

Indian-style Lavatories

About Indian-style lavatories in railway trains, the less said the better. It would seem that they are designed by people who have no idea as to how they are used. They are perhaps told that a wash-basin, a water-tap and a lavatory seat must be provided and they are anyhow provided within the space available. Sometimes you find the tap at a height of about 2 feet, sometimes 5 or 6 inches above the flooring. It may be on your back, front or sides, or even at a distance beyond the reach of the hand. The springs are often so hard that only a strong man might be able to make the taps work. The spout inside the basin is so close to the edge that water cannot run directly on your hands, as generally required by Indians.

The seat in this particular car of the M. S. M. Ry. was a raised Indian-style commode, which, I think, is better than the sink-like seats found elsewhere. But it was too small for even a thin person like me, and the wooden board was set with such hard springs that a child or light-bodied person might be hurt if it did not jump out of it quickly. Actually a child which was taken in once or twice got very much frightened by its quick bumping action and took time to be consoled.

I do not think I ever travelled in a more inconveniently designed Second or Inter-class compartment than in the Second class sleeping car of the Grand Trunk Express on the 25th and 26th June. The compartment would be good enough for a party of children under 12, if there was a strong-bodied Superintendent travelling with them, with a few alterations in the berths to prevent accidents. In that case, each cabin might carry even 8 children. For adults it deserves to be condemned.

Wardha, 29-6-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE SWISS MANAGEMENT OF LANGUAGES

[The writer, Mr. Donald C. Townsend, is an American, who has lived in India and wants to settle down here, but is obliged to stay abroad for some years for domestic reasons. At present he is in Switzerland. The following is in an answer to the questions I put to him regarding the way Switzerland manages its various languages. In the course of a covering letter to the article, Mr. Townsend writes:

"The Swiss method.....could be applied in India if only we can get rid of a sense of rivalry for antiquity or regional, race and caste pride, and be willing first and last to be simply Indians, and Mad-rasees, Bengalis, Marathas only incidentally.

"The great wideness and tolerance of mind here is refreshing.so much is taken for granted and custom often replaces law. How few provisions are made in the Swiss Constitution on questions of either language or religion and yet there is no sense of superiority, priority, authenticity, etc. etc. Our-selves have friends who in conversation speak in French and English intermixed like a patch-work quilt and often they find that the more apt word to convey their idea is to be found only in German, and we fall into the same habit.

"I might only add that the answers sent here-with have been checked with the Librarian of The Municipal Library who in turn checked with some-one in charge of the department of law at the Uni-versity as I understand it." — K. G. M.]

If we are to appreciate the way in which the Swiss have dealt with the linguistic question, we must go directly to the Federal Constitution where, in two very short Articles, the basis of the Government's policy is stated.

Switzerland, though a strong national unity, is made up of four races, German, French, Italian and Romanche, each of which retains its national language.

Article 116 of the Federal Constitution states:

German, French, Italian and Romanche are the four National Languages of Switzerland.

German, French and Italian are declared to be the Official Languages of the Confederation.

There is here no possibility of a question of superiority or popularity arising, and as we shall see, this multiplicity of tongues which might so easily have poisoned the national unity of Switzerland has been handled in such a way that it offers no difficulties. Wherever you go in the country you hear conversations carried on in a mixture of two or three or more languages which blend as they flow, like water poured into water.

Among the domains of life over which the Cantons (Provinces) retained their individual control when, in joining the Confederation, they ceded certain powers to the Federal Government, was that of Education. Though subsidies may be granted from the Centre, the Government does not mix in the Cantonal responsibility save as provided under Article 27 which says:

The Confederation has the right to create in addition to the already existing Federal Polytechnique School a Federal University and other schools of higher education or to subsidize institutions of this kind.

The Cantons shall conduct a primary education of an adequate efficiency which shall be placed under the exclusive direction of civil authority. This is obligatory and in public schools it is free.

The public schools may be attended by those professing any religious faith without any interference whatsoever in liberty of conscience or belief.

The Confederation will take necessary measures against those Cantons which may not live up to this law.

Article 27 bis adds :

In order to help the Cantons fulfil their obligations regarding primary education, necessary subsidies are granted.

.....The organization, direction and surveillance of the primary school is the responsibility and right of the Cantons under provisions of the Federal Constitution's management.

Bearing these provisions in mind we may turn to the detailed answer to your questions :

1. What is the medium of instruction in Schools and Universities ?

2. Are there different Universities for three different languages ? Or are there three sections for every department of education in every institution ?

3. What is the educational arrangement in areas where there are mixed populations ?

The medium of instruction in Schools and Universities corresponds to the linguistic area save in the Federal Polytechnique School and the University of Fribourg where professors lecture in their own language, be it French or German. Even in the Italian Canton of Grisons where Romanche is spoken, a knowledge of Italian is insisted on. Students wishing to specialize in a language other than that of their Canton, go to that Canton where the desired language is currently used. There are, therefore, no special sections for the various departments of education in any institution. Where the population is mixed, students are obliged to make their studies in the official language of the Canton or go to another language area.

4. What is the language of the Swiss Parliament ? Do members speak in any of the three languages they please ? Are their speeches interpreted in the other two languages ? Or is every member expected to understand all three languages ?

The language of the Parliament is German as the seat of the Federal Government is in Berne, but even if the French, German and Italian texts do not correspond exactly, it is not only the German which is accepted. Members address the Parliament in their mother tongue. No speeches are translated. As we shall see, most members know the three Official Languages.

5. What is the language in which laws are first drafted ?

The laws of each Canton are drafted in the language of the Canton. Federal laws are drafted simultaneously in German, French and Italian. In the Grisons, laws may be translated from the Italian into Romanche when necessary or when a demand is made. That is a local question.

6. What is the language of the Courts, Government publications, etc. ?

Cantonal Courts and publications are of course in the language of the Canton. But here as in the Federal Courts each lawyer uses his own language while the judgment is pronounced in the language of the accused. Instructions of the Court are given in the language of the region concerned.

Federal Government publications are in the three Official Languages, and are published simultaneously.

7. What is the language in which ministers as well as officers and their subordinates carry on conversation, correspondence, etc. among themselves, if their mother tongues are dissimilar ?

Again, each man speaks in his own tongue. But as they all speak each other's languages — or mostly all — conversations naturally fall into one or another or as is often the case, are a free mixture of them all.

But as throughout Switzerland two languages in addition to one's own are obligatory in the schools, it is rare to find educated people who do not speak the three Official tongues. English being very popular, students often choose it as a supplementary course.

Civil servants, such as postmen are sent to pass periods of apprenticeship in different Cantons to master the languages which they must know.

8. Are there common technical terms, designations, etc., in all the three languages ?

Not necessarily. Newly coined scientific terms may or may not be common to all three. English technical terms, for instance, are often heard in factories and radio shops. The same applies to new French scientific or technical words. Not so much with German and Italian.

9. Which of the three is most common or fashionable or respected ?

Each language enjoys popularity in its own area. None is more fashionable or considered superior to another. Nor is there any rivalry for precedence. To a Swiss who speaks several languages, it is immaterial which he uses.

10. Does the French, the German and the Italian of Switzerland differ from the same of France, Germany and Italy ?

No. Not essentially though dialects have crept in in places.

11. Do Swiss Universities have any connection or affiliation with the Universities of these countries ?

As Universities are each one independent and autonomous, whatever relations they may or may not have with universities of other countries, depends on their own choice.

"The application of the spirit of Article 116 would be very difficult if it did not coincide with the general desire of all Swiss. But it seems to them that nothing could be more contrary to the respect which all members of the Confederation owe to each other than the violation of the principle of equality between the three National Languages." (Georges Werner, Professor of Law, University of Geneva, *La Vie Juridique des Peuples*, Vol. VI.)

Cologny-Geneva

DONALD C. TOWNSEND

HARIJAN

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1949

SARVODAYA CLUB

Shri Kaka Kalelkar has forwarded to me the following received by him from a correspondent, with a request that I should comment upon it in the *Harijan* :

"I have a suggestion to make for your consideration and communication to the proper person if you approve of it. I take my clue from the Rotary Club and would suggest that a Sarvodaya Club be started in India, the main purpose of which should be the propagation of the ideals that Mahatma Gandhi stood and gave his life for through periodical meetings in which men of importance would be invited to speak on these ideals. The membership of this Club would of course be open to all without distinction of caste, colour, creed or nationality and the object would be "Service to Humanity and Propagation of Ideals of Peace and Non-violence". The monthly subscription should be nominal, say Re. 1 or Rs. 2 *per mensem* and all important people of each centre invited to join it. The main difference in the Rotary Club and the proposed Sarvodaya Club would be that whereas the Rotary Club has mainly a Western outlook as its basis, the Sarvodaya Club will be necessarily developed on the basis of Indian Culture and traditions so necessary to give the lead to the world at present. As it develops, district and provincial circles would be formed and Governors elected on the lines of Rotary Club. I can visualize that in a short time this Club would develop into not only an All-India Club but an Inter-national All-World Club and then it would contribute more to bring peace to this much troubled world of the present day than any other single organization at present existing."

We must understand the difference between institutions of the type of the Rotary Club and a Sarvodaya or Gandhian type of institution. While propagation of ideas through speeches, study, discussion, story-telling, drama, songs, display of articles used by Gandhiji, etc. have a place, it must be realized that in the establishment of *Sarvodaya* or social and economic order of the Gandhian conception their place is only a subsidiary one. If it assumed primary importance, you may succeed in having something attractive to look at, but you cannot propagate *Sarvodaya*. A Sarvodaya Club or Mandal can be started only by having a joint programme of work with the following stipulations :

- (1) A part of the work must be the production of something beneficial to the community with one's own hands ;
- (2) Another part of it must be such as will clean the surroundings and improve the life of the community ;
- (3) It must be a kind of work which even the poor and unemployed can themselves do and thus self-respectingly help themselves ;

- (4) Its subscription must be in the form of something produced by its members.

Thus, in India, a Sarvodaya Club can be initiated only through a regular programme of joint spinning and scavenging. Without these I cannot conceive of a Sarvodaya Club for the propagation of Gandhian ideals.

If these items do not attract one, the so-called Sarvodaya Club would dwindle or develop into mere fashionable meetings for debate and entertainment. Since the scope of its discussions would be limited to "Gandhism" and "Indian Culture and Traditions", its sphere would be necessarily narrower than that of the Rotary Club, and therefore it can never vie with it. Instead of taking the clue from the Rotary Club, I would ask the reader and the correspondent to take it from Richard B. Gregg's *A Discipline for Non-violence*,* published by the Navajivan Press. The Rotary Club cannot furnish a model for *Sarvodaya*.

I would also urge the correspondent and all those who think on similar lines to abandon the sense of vanity about "Indian Culture and Traditions", and the habit of making (to a great extent) false distinctions between Western outlook and Eastern outlook and so forth. I, for one, do not understand where the West ends and the East begins, and wherein do we see the superfine qualities of Eastern outlook in our life. The assassin of Gandhiji seems to believe very honestly that it was the *Gita* that gave him the necessary courage to kill one of the noblest human beings mankind had produced. Shall we pride ourselves upon this specimen of Eastern culture? Or, shall we point to the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh killings, abductions and incendiary acts of 1946-47 as proper examples of the high culture which our people had imbibed from *Vedas*, *Quran* and the teachings of the *Gurus*? Or, shall we pique ourselves upon our institutions of untouchability and high and low castes, and our provincial, sectarian and linguistic quarrels? These are things deep down in our blood. Is that the cultural heritage which we shall restore and develop? Our false self-praise cannot but lead to these results. If we wish to progress on right lines let us shed vanity and humbly accept that to whatever supreme height of noble thoughts our scriptures and a few individuals might have attained, our mass life is much gone down both in knowledge and culture, and is much behind the masses of other countries, and must humbly learn from them. These are vanities which have to be abandoned.

All mankind is one, and throughout the world it has developed two and only two cultural traits : the Satanic or the lover of power, pomp and leisure ; and the Saintly or the lover of noble virtues, simplicity and work. Every country has its share of both, as ourselves.

* Price 10 annas. Postage etc. 2 as. extra.

Gandhiji was a representative of the latter and he found his models as well as friends and colleagues in every part of the world. It is only the former that becomes regional. There are no regions in the latter. The Sarvodaya Mandal of my conception cannot be one which takes too high a view of one particular regional culture.

Wardha, 30-6-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SALT

The Salt Tax was abolished on Gandhiji's insistence as soon as power came into the hands of popular ministers. Considering the cost of manufacture of salt, the tax was disproportionately heavy and so people expected that on its abolition salt would become cheap. But as this expectation has not been fulfilled, there is disappointment and complaints are pouring in.

On studying the information I have received I find that there is some defect in the administrative machinery and adequate attention has not been given to remove this defect. It seems that salt was not dear simply on account of the tax, heavy and unpopular as it was, but it was so also on account of the system of licensing by auction which led to monopolization of the business in the hands of a few traders. This system was adopted in order to facilitate the collection of the tax. Just as the Zamindars of Bengal, Bihar and U. P. and the Malguzars of C. P. were originally merely contractors for the collection of land revenue, so the right to manufacture and sell salt is given to a few licensed traders. The price of an article of daily necessity becomes high when its sale is entrusted to a monopolist, even though it might be a charitable institution for service; if the monopolist is a businessman, the less said the better. When the salt tax was abolished, the licence system should also have been abolished, but it does not seem to have been done even now. The result is that while the manufacturer of salt sells it at 6 as. per maund, the licensee (*izardar*) has to be paid at Re. 1 per maund. 6 as. per maund would work out at less than a pie per lb.; Re. 1 per maund at more than 2½ pies per lb.

Besides, there is also one more feature in this system meant for the convenience of the licensees and tax collection, namely, the zonal system, under which each licensee or group of licensees is allotted a different area for supplying salt. In this system it is not the convenience of the public, which has been kept in mind and, therefore, it is necessary that it should be changed. For instance, though Mehsana in North Gujarat is very near the Kharaghoda centre, salt has to be carried to that place from Dhrangadhra. Whether it is any longer necessary to retain this zonal system is a subject which should be reviewed and if at all it is considered necessary, its areas should be altered to suit the convenience of the people.

Another factor which contributes to the

dearness of salt is transport and other trade expenses. On the abolition of the tax, salt has become cheap at the site of manufacture but in transporting it to other places, the freight charges, which include not only the cost of conveyance but the profits also of the transporting agents, and retail merchants' profits are all added to its cost and thus the additional cost is in no way less than the old tax itself. These expenses, I understand, come to about 14 as. per maund, so that the licensee's rate of about 2½ pies per lb. reaches 5 pies per lb. at the other end.

Besides, due to the shortage of railway wagons and the resultant corruption in the railways, salt does not reach certain places in time, thus creating scarcity and black markets. Though on the one hand railway and motor transport has facilitated quick movement, it has, on the other hand, rooted out the various modes of indigenous transport and has thus crippled the merchants and the people. Some of the beasts of burden have almost become extinct. When there were no railways or motor-transport, people had caravans of carts, bullocks, camels, horses, mules, donkeys and even elephants and in this way India's articles used to reach as far as Europe. If the system of modern transport breaks down suddenly, there can be famine in one place and plenty in another, though the distance between the two may not be more than a hundred miles. It is also possible to create exactly opposite conditions—famine in places of plenty and plenty in famine areas—by these modern transport facilities. Thus people in Kheda may be unable to get milk and mangoes in their own places, but people living in Bombay and Ahmedabad might get them at their doorsteps brought from that very district. Similarly, best foodgrains, fruits, etc., of C. P. may have to be bought in Bombay.

There should be an arrangement whereby, along with railways and motor-transport, there should exist other means of transport as well. But how this can be achieved is a baffling question. It is evident that we cannot do without having both these means of transport and we have to put up with the present difficulties so long as we do not find a way out.

If the Congress Committees would render service, they can think over these problems and help both the Government and the people in solving them. Salt merchants also can play a part, because they too are losers under the licence system. If these defects can be removed with the help of experienced men, I reckon that best salt can be made available in any part of the country at a retail rate of half anna per lb. even in the present order of all-round high prices. The wholesale rate will be still less. Even under the present system according to the prices fixed by Government, salt should sell at 7½ to 9 pies per lb. all over India, but on account of the

defective transport system and black-marketing, it is not available in the villages at this rate.

It seems that Government should stop the licence system and the zonal system also should be revised. Government is considering the problems of transport but the necessities of the country are growing so rapidly every day that they should investigate what part animal transport can play along with railway and motor transport. This should be viewed as a second line of defence. To think of erecting a second line after the front line collapses is like digging a well after fire breaks out. Even though the front line may be strong and working, the second line should be always maintained in working order as if the front line had crashed. If we think on these lines, we should also see the necessity for keeping our animal power in good working order. The Transport and Communications Department should consider the problem of reviving animal transport as an important duty and charge. This is neither less important nor less difficult than the problems of transport by railway, motor, steamer and air.

Wardha, 8-6-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Under Gandhiji's leadership, India attained political freedom through more or less a non-violent struggle. Had we all followed Mahatma Gandhi both in letter and spirit, we would not have had today to qualify our freedom as mainly political. Within a small period, then, of thirty years India would have undergone a metamorphosis out of all recognition. As it is, as a result of Gandhiji's insistence on the removal of untouchability, equality of women with men and a spirit of tolerance towards all religions, the Hindu society has made considerable advance in the field of social progress. The reason is that to that extent we fulfilled part of the Constructive Programme. Those, however, who take a broad retrospective view of the past 30 years of constructive work will agree that we have signally failed in carrying out certain other items of the programme inasmuch as the economic structure of society has remained the same. Swaraj, for Gandhiji, meant nothing more and nothing less than complete fulfilment of the Constructive Programme. But with the attainment of independence many a Congressman, from top to bottom, has realized that not only was his belief in non-violence a matter of policy but that his advocacy of the Constructive Programme as well was motivated by political expediency. It would be improper to attribute insincerity to all such Congressmen. Even today, however, the tallest among them exhort workers to prosecute the Constructive Programme with faith and vigour. It is perhaps more out of inertia than conviction. This is especially true with regard to *khaddar* and village indus-

tries. Gandhiji, three months before his assassination, confessed as much when he wrote in the *Harijan* thus: "The plain matter of fact is that I am not the current coin that, I had fancied, I once was. Mine is a voice in wilderness.... Those who being in the political field support *khadi* do so because it has attained that vogue. Today three cheers belong not to *khadi* but to mill cloth for we labour under the delusion that but for the manufactures from our mills, millions would have to go naked...." Those who have lost faith in the practicality of the economics of *khaddar* do not generally dispute the superior democracy of a society based on a planned decentralized economy wherein machinery would play a role deliberately restricted. But they have judged the pros and cons of the present alternatives before the country and have, for the time being, at least, decided in favour of industrialization. In the overall picture, therefore, of the economic system which they want to introduce in India, *khaddar* and village industries have been allotted a secondary place, if they have not been relegated to the background. Big schemes for large scale industrialization have been undertaken and mechanization of agriculture is to follow suit. This is being done with a view to increase the industrial output and the agricultural production in the country respectively. Expansion of the nation's armed forces is proceeding at a rapid pace and they are being equipped with the most modern weapons of war. Those in power in all sincerity want to make India strong and perhaps to raise her to the status of a "Big Fifth" among the powers of the world. They probably represent the view of the majority of the Indian people. It is well known however that Gandhiji wanted India to lead the world along quite a different path; and it is equally well known that he failed to carry conviction in this respect to the greatest and closest of his colleagues.

Thus it is obvious that there is no prospect of the Government undertaking any nationwide experiment in introducing Gandhian economy in the country at present or in the near future. On the contrary, the emphasis is in just the opposite direction. We, constructive workers, are mostly expected to work in villages. We, therefore, should be more concerned with the measures that the various governments adopt for the development of villages and especially that of agriculture. Some developments are taking place which will put the village workers in a very awkward position. On the one hand, when we, while trying to serve the poor, shall be propagating the cult of decentralized economy by our insistence on *khaddar* and village industries, the Governments, which are also helping to promote them, would, on the other hand, be proceeding with their plans for the mechanization of agriculture! Simultaneously with the installation of big industrial plants in the cities

and suburbs, the countryside is going to be invaded by tractors and other modern agricultural machinery. At present the greatest outside check on rapid industrialization is the shortage of available machinery. Yet the appearance today of even a single tractor in every district, for example, and the demonstration of its working attended by Government publicity is bound to impress the peasants and make them machinery-minded. We know how rice-mills and motor-trucks have respectively come to replace hand-mills and bullock-carts. The shape of things to come is obvious to him who would give a moment's thought to the present policy of the Provincial Governments.

The problem before us — village workers — however, is not how we should hold on to our economics of *khaddar* against the overwhelming odds. If after knowing the vast potentialities of the electric, and now possibly of the atomic, energy in creating material plenty, we deliberately reject or rather restrict the employment of highly complicated machinery for the production of the primary necessities for the millions, we do so on some ideologically sound grounds. We believe that material plenty beyond a certain limit does not conduce to the moral or spiritual development of men; more often than not it acts as a hindrance to it. Besides, in a highly industrialized society, as a result of the comparative ignorance of the masses about the complex processes of planned economy, it is the few politicians at the top and the few experts in the various sciences who would hold real power in spite of the outwardly democratic form of government. The problem before us is a little different.

As the first half of the 20th century is coming to a close, the struggle for livelihood is getting sharper and sharper every day almost all over the world. The materialist philosophy of life, which had its birth in the West and which emphasizes only the economic aspect of life to the practically total exclusion of the others, is as it were sweeping the whole world both by its action and the reaction it creates. He who runs may see that after the second World War the forces of Socialism and more especially of Communism are on the aggressive not only in part of Europe but in many Asian countries also. In India too the signs of labour and peasant unrest are unmistakable. The deadly struggle for supremacy between Communism and Capitalism goes on continually whether in a subtle manner as during peace time or openly as during wars. It has resulted in general disregard for moral values on either side. As if to match the unscrupulousness of the Communists in the employment of any means to achieve political ends we find the unscrupulousness of the Capitalists who, not content with their already ill-gotten money, resort, as a rule, to profiteering and black-marketing at the expense of the hungry and ill-clad millions!

It is such a world around us that we find ourselves in both in India and abroad. What with its pre-occupation with the tremendous problems created by the partition of the country and the problem of the integration of the States, the Union Government has not been in a position to place before the people any definite picture of the economy which it holds as the ideal to be reached. The Congress, however, has declared its objective and has described it as a Co-operative Commonwealth. Though it is claimed to be a good via media between the two opposite systems symbolized by Russia and America, it is vague and unappealing to the common people. The Government, on the one hand, is proceeding with its policy of rapid and progressive industrialization of the country. On the other, it is finding it difficult to follow this up by a policy of immediate nationalization of the means of production — land and industries. In spite of best intentions, it seems as if it is failing to evoke appreciation of its difficulties in this respect by the labour and the peasantry. The result is that the number of agricultural and especially industrial disputes is on the increase. And they are bound to increase until either the Government is compelled to change its policy or until it succeeds in effectively suppressing those who demand the change.

That the present economic system is based on injustice is a truth which, I hope, none of us will deny. What are we doing, in our own way, to restore justice? Are we to rely wholly on the Governments to take the initiative as and when it suits them or are we to fight this particular injustice with as much earnestness as we do untouchability or communalism? If we bury our heads ostrich-like in a deliberate connivance at the conflict, we may be ignored as mere visionaries by the large masses of people whom it is our desire to serve. If, on the other hand, we are to make an attempt, through service and sacrifice, to recommend to the people at large the method of Truth and Non-violence, which is Gandhiji's greatest legacy to us, as a universal and effective substitute for the other forms of struggle, we must respectfully ask our elders here to show us the way. They should lay down for us a guiding policy in the light of Gandhiji's practice and precept for the solution of the great economic problem of today.

So far as the rich were concerned, Gandhiji believed in the Trusteeship theory. "Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs and use the remainder for society," thus wrote he to the rich under the caption *A Deploable Incident* in the *Harijan* in about January, 1942. With reference to this advice, Shri Shankarrao Deo asked him, "Why first earn crores and then use them for society? As society today is constituted, the means of earning crores are bound to be impure." Gandhiji in a reply

defended the advice which he gave to the capitalists but partly conceded Shri Shankarrao's point saying, "I have no hesitation in endorsing the proposition that generally rich men, and for that matter most men, are not particular as to the way they make money." He however, never recommended the spoliation of the property of private owners. He wanted "to restrict its enjoyment so as to avoid all pauperism, consequent discontent and the hideously ugly contrast that exist today between the lives and the surroundings of the rich and the poor." The Provincial Governments have generally found no difficulty in enforcing social reform through legislation. They have earned credit for being bold and firm in their policy with regard to prohibition, removal of untouchability and suppression of communalism. Those of us who are working in these fields of constructive work find it easy to co-operate whole-heartedly with the Government, but such is not the case with those who have chosen to work among the labourers or the *kisans*. For the Governments are rather reluctant to go ahead with legislation for the effective restriction, in the interests of the poor, of the enjoyment of private property by the rich. They have no doubt made beginnings, which are but small and halting. It cannot be said that the Governments are waiting for the conversion of the rich who would of their own accord regard themselves as trustees of the wealth they possess. Gandhiji himself has said, "By the non-violent method, we seek not to destroy the Capitalist, we seek to destroy Capitalism. We invite the Capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital. *Nor need the worker wait for his conversion.* If Capital is power, so is work." Gandhiji did believe in the change of heart. But did he on that account wait indefinitely for Mr. Churchill to relent and make him a gift of India's independence? Gandhiji taught us to hate British Imperialism, not the British. We may not, therefore, hate the Capitalists—the industrialists and the zamindars—but we may legitimately get active to destroy Capitalism.

Had Gandhiji survived the peaceful solution of the communal problem, he would have turned his attention to the great problem of poverty, to changing the present capitalistic structure of society. In fact, he had already begun applying his mind to the allied economic problems of inflation, rationing and black-marketing as was evident from his insistence on decontrol of food-grains. The two articles on Socialism which he wrote in the *Harijan* in July, 1947 showed his concern over the growing appeal of Socialism to the youth of the country. Only he wanted the Socialists, and incidentally us also, to realize

that, "Socialism begins with the first convert... and that only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted Socialists will be able to establish a Socialist Society in India and the world." He further added later that "Socialism will not be reached by any other means. *Satyagraha* can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral."

All along during his life-time Gandhiji took delight in accepting challenges to his method of Truth and Non-violence thrown by difficult situations. It is now a historical fact that his gospel made the greatest appeal to the masses when it was presented to them through action. He met the last challenge to his faith by laying down his life and triumphed in death.

The greatest of his followers do not profess, in true humility, to be capable of doing a fraction of what he could do. Even collectively we might fail to achieve anything substantial. But should the prospect of a failure deter the elders amongst us from exploring the further possibilities of *Satyagraha*, especially in the field of restoring economic justice in society?

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