

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

MESSAGE OF THE CHARKHA JAYANTI

(By Gandhiji)

India as a nation can live and die only for the spinning wheel. Every woman will tell the curious that with the disappearance of the spinning wheel, vanished India's happiness and prosperity. The womanhood and the masses of India have been awakened as never before at the call of the spinning wheel. The masses recognize in it the giver of life. The women regard it as the protector of their chastity. Every widow I have met has recognized in the wheel a dear forgotten friend. Its restoration alone can fill the millions of hungry mouths.

No industrial development schemes can solve the problem of the growing poverty of the peasantry of India covering a vast surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. India is not a small island, it is a big continent which cannot be converted like England into an industrial country. And we must resolutely set our faces against any scheme of exploitation of the world. Our only hope must centre upon utilizing the wasted hours of the nation, for adding to the wealth of the country, by converting cotton into cloth in our cottages. The spinning wheel is, therefore, as much a necessity of Indian life as air and water.

Young India, 13-4-21

[According to the Hindu calendar, Gandhiji's birthday falls on 23-9-54. He chose to name it as Rentia-baras (रेंटिया-बारस) — the Charkha Jayanti and asked the nation to celebrate his birthday better by remembering the Charkha, which, in a nutshell, symbolized the essence of his teaching. The above is quoted from his article on the National Flag which we adopted in the year 1921. Even today these lines warn us about where the real solution of our economic problem lies.

18-9-54

M. P. J

By Vinoba Bhave

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EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

(By Vinoba)

I have often expressed the view that women need to be much more thoroughly educated than men. Today not only in India but throughout the world the field of activity for women has become rather restricted. Some of these restrictions are due to natural differences, but many more have arisen from man-made conventions. Especially those women who will take up social work must receive the best education — an education which should be a preparation for life and not for pleasure as it is at present. I hold the belief that when women possessed of the knowledge of the self and inspired by the spirit of *vairagya*, i.e. detachment — who will be as great and gifted as Shankaracharya — arise, they will bring about a true revolution in the country. Women are regrettably backward in the Hindu society. Apart from legal and social disabilities, there are others arising from religious prejudices in regard to their position and ability. There was a time when women did not have the right of the study of the Vedas or that of living a life of *brahmacharya*. Even scholars well-versed in the Shastras held this view. When such ideas prevail, there is naturally much hindrance in the way of women's progress. A girl has then no other ideal before her than that of a married life. Her entire education and training is devised with this end in view. In India we do not seem to conceive of women as being able to live independently in their own right and devote themselves to wider social, national or spiritual ideals. They are expected to serve through the husband or the son and be content with it. I do not say that the service which they so render is any the less. But I do believe that they have a right to independent enterprise if they will it. But this the Hindu social tradition is not yet prepared to allow. One commentator goes even so far as to say that the very word *purusharth* (पुरुषार्थ) i.e. valour, enterprise, brave deed, shows that brave deeds are meant only for men, and women are only to assist them. The subject calls for a rather deeper consideration than I can give it at the moment. I will only say that to entertain a view which is found in practice to relegate women to a position of inferiority is to do insult to the spirit for the spirit is the same everywhere and a spiritual view, therefore, cannot permit any invidious distinction to be made between men and women.

As regards the content of women's education they must first of all be taught the elements of spiritual knowledge. Women in ancient India used to be devoted to spirituality. There is in the Mahabharat a dialogue between King Janak and Sulaba. Sulaba, a woman seer, initiated Janak, a philosopher-king into the secrets of spiritual knowledge. There are many other stories like this. Such was the high status enjoyed by women in India once. Things are woefully different today. The first need in any scheme of education is that of imparting spiritual knowledge. We are not the physical body but the spirit which is distinct from the body and, unlike

* From a speech at the Kasturba Gram-Sevika Vidyalaya, Pusa Road, on 26-8-54.

it, indestructible; we must needs control the senses; God is there within us; we can realize Him here in this life if we make the right effort; all beings are forms of the spirit and therefore one with us; all these things should be taught to them. Women should be made proficient in this knowledge. The basis of education should be the knowledge of Spirit. There is great need for introducing into the education of women the virtues of devotion to truth and austerity in life so that they may develop the courage to rebel against the existing society. He who has even a little of the knowledge of the Spirit can stand up against the whole world. He would not be cowed down even if the whole world were against him. It is my firm belief that we can bring about a radical change only through spiritual knowledge. Books can help in this and there are a number of good books available; the Gita, the Upanishads and other books by good writers of our times; but it is not mere book-learning that I mean but the imbibing of the basic thought which they seek to express. If that is acquired, the rest can be easily added to it.

So far as work is concerned, I take the view that certain types of work should be reserved for women. Just as the city-dwellers have deprived the villagers of their industries, in the same way men have deprived women of theirs and thus reduced them to the position of the objects of enjoyment. This is especially so in what is called the fashionable society. There they keep their women as though they were not living human beings but lifeless dolls. They have no responsibility at all. Life for them is merely an occasion for pleasure. It does not need to be pointed out that such an attitude towards life enervates the society and destroys it.

I happened to see the weaving section of your school as I was being shown round. I asked why they had arrangements only for elementary weaving. Why should not the girls be trained in advanced weaving? There was a time when weaving was regarded as the preserve of women. Now it is men who do the weaving proper while women perform only ancillary operations. The same has happened in the case of sewing. With the arrival of the machine men have usurped that work. Thus women have lost almost all occupations one after the other. The main reason for the state of servitude in which women find themselves is this that they have no occupation with which to earn their living. They can cook well not only what is regarded as tasty food but wholesome food. They must know the art of cooking—the cooking which is a branch of the science of health. They should also be able to grow and manage a kitchen garden. Then they should know cow-keeping.

Along with these, they must be proficient at least in one language—their mother-tongue, the regional language or the national language. For you here Hindi is all the three. So you must acquire perfect proficiency in Hindi and as a complement to it you must also know some Sanskrit.

I have never understood how anyone with only a two years' training can go among the villagers and serve them. A little or only an elementary knowledge will not do. Knowledge must be perfect. By perfect knowledge I mean the capacity to acquire knowledge by one's own efforts. Not that they do go on learning without undertaking any service-activity. I mean that after they have completed a particular course of training they should be kept with more experienced women workers where while they work they will also have the opportunity to perfect their knowledge and they should be given independent charge of an area only after they have had sufficient experience.

After Swaraj, some work has, of course, to be done by the Government. But there are many items of work which the Government cannot do. The women are to be brought out of the *pardah*. Who will do it? The evil of dowry has to be eradicated. How? The age of marriage for girls has to be raised. Education, social service work, and many other things have to be done. Who will do

it all? The Government cannot do it. We will have to do it. We have to do it by building up *loka-shakti* and by arousing the people to the need of doing their duty as *dharma*. I do hope that there will arise in our country brave and heroic women who will have the radiance of the sun and who will dispel all darkness from our midst with their shining rays.

(Adapted from Hindi)

WHO SHALL STARVE ?

(By Peter Freeman)

"Who shall starve?" This was the question put to the world by Mr Norris F. Dodd, Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, in his last Annual Report (1952) following a review of the critical position in which the world is likely to find itself in the next few years.

He pointed out that the population of the world is rapidly rising at a rate of a million a month in the Far East alone and probably as much again in the rest of the world.

Food production, although improving is NOT keeping pace with this increase in the number of mouths to feed.

In the past, the rich and wealthy have always secured all they wanted and the poor have died from starvation. This method of "supply and demand" has been the answer to this problem hitherto.

Lord Boyd Orr has recently stated that half the world's population is under-nourished, and one-sixth on the verge of starvation (one-sixth represents over 400 million people).

But we are now a democratic people. Will the "poor" be always content to starve to death!

Is there some other answer? Can Humanity discover an alternative way of solving this problem?

Here are the simple facts :

Land and Population

Date	World Population (in millions)
1650	550
1800	900
1850	1,250
1900	1,500
1951	2,500

The world's population has, therefore, multiplied by nearly five times in the last 300 years. Yet the supply of land does not grow any more! In fact it is continually being eaten away by various causes such as the inroads of urban development—more houses and factories, better working conditions and recreation facilities, and in spite of intensive agriculture and modern machinery the increase is insufficient.

What does Our Land Produce?

Using figures provided by the British Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture of the U.S.A., which are accepted by the

National Farmers' Union, we have the following tables. An average acre of land produces per annum one of the following items:

Animal Food	lbs.	
Beef	..	168
Mutton	..	228
Pigmeat	..	300
Poultry	..	350
(Average 250/300)		
Cereal and Vegetable Crops	lbs.	
Wheat, barley, etc.	..	2,000/2,500
Beans, maize, etc.	..	3,000/4,000
Potatoes	..	20,000
Carrots and swedes etc.	..	25,000
(Average 2,500/10,000)		

Thus the figure for cereals is over ten times that of animal food, and that for vegetables is about 100 times as large. In one case brought to my notice, over 70,000 lbs. of vegetables was grown on one acre.

In addition, the animals themselves consume a great deal of food. Thus the pig eats at least five times its own weight.

Very many these animals are unhealthy and are prone to tuberculosis, foot-and-mouth disease (of which there have been outbreaks of over 500 cases in the six months—causing an average slaughter of about 120 animals each), swine fever, fowl pest, etc. This has caused enormous losses.

Further, nine-tenths of all cases of food poisoning are traceable to meat in various forms. In addition all our "common land" is practically reserved for the grazing of cattle and sheep, and these out-of-date "rights" will not allow a single seed to be sown or a tree to be planted on an inch of it!

This "common land" now produces only 12 lbs. per acre per annum over the whole country and millions of acres are still preserved for such purposes.

Starvation or Vegetarianism ?

From a study of the above figures and allied information, it will be readily seen that everybody who insists on eating meat is depriving hundreds of other people of their food supplies somewhere in the world!

About half of the world's population already lives practically on a vegetarian diet and its advantages are unanswerable.

The Committee on Nutrition of the British Medical Association in 1947 made a critical analysis of the evidence of man's need for protein, which is relevant to any consideration of the relative merits, as follows:

"It is generally accepted that it is immaterial whether the essential protein units are derived from plant or animal food, provided that they supply an appropriate mixture of the units in assimilable form. There is at the present time no convincing evidence

that animal protein has an intrinsic value of its own." (Italics ours)

Sir James Scott Watson, Chief Scientific and Agriculture Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, made the following comments at Birmingham in December, 1952:

"A change from meat eating to a vegetarian-fish-and-milk diet is one way of keeping pace with the food needs of a growing world population. Another possibility would be a major change in food habits by people who now consume large quantities of meat. It has been calculated that, if we ourselves would be content with a vegetarian diet, which would be nutritionally satisfactory, we could become nearly self-sufficient."

The Cause of War

During the first world war, Denmark could not import cattle food and so most of the animal stock were killed off, and Denmark as a country became practically vegetarian. At the end of the war the Danish Vital and Health Statistics reached a higher record than ever known before and amongst the best in Europe.

The fundamental cause of war is fear of our next day's supply of food. Nations go to war to secure their future food supplies. This ever growing fear may lead to a third world war. No impartial observer of world affairs could fail to realize that there must be deep fundamental causes for such a menace, and that while political and constitutional factors may minimize the disaster, and, of course, will be necessary in the application of the measures to secure world peace, these alone will never be sufficient to establish peace on a firm and sure basis for all mankind for all time and under all circumstances.

It is the Western countries that are both the largest meat-eaters in the world and have suffered most from war. Nor will this warfare cease until man stops this ruthless war upon his younger brothers, the animals, in the many acts of cruelty, barbarism, and exploitation which find expression in vivisection, in hunting, in the wearing of furs, and, most terrible of all, in the eating of their flesh for human food.

Our Responsibility

Before we condemn others for the menace of war, let us see that *our* hands are clean from the wholesale and unnecessary murder of highly sentient creatures. The institution of peace depends upon the protection of the weak by the strong, and is best carried out by example rather than by precept.

As Dean Inge says:

"The great discovery of the nineteenth century that we are of one blood with lower animals, has created new ethical obligations which have not yet penetrated the public conscience."

Let us, therefore, help to abolish all needless cruelty and usher in a new civilization based on kindness, sympathy and understanding where peace shall reign supreme.

(From *Peace News*, January 22, 1954)

HARIJAN

Sept. 25

1954

A RIGHT DIAGNOSIS AND A WRONG REMEDY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Shri G. D. Birla, addressing a New York audience last week, is reported to have described our economic problem as follows :

"We have now reached a stage when pure agricultural economy cannot raise our standard, however hard we may work."

I do not know what he meant by 'pure agricultural economy', because India's main and the largest employing industry is agriculture, and therefore we have essentially an agricultural economy in our country. However, to resume the thread of Shri Birla's argument, he said,

"There is only one answer to the problem—'industry'.....We have to forge (the) missing link needed between resources, the mouths and the hands."

He also said,

"The desire to consume is much more than what is consumed....The desire to buy is there, but the wherewithal is absent. The immediate problem, therefore, is to raise the purchasing power of the people, so that they can buy more goods which ultimately could be produced."

The question of distributing purchasing power to the people obviously leads us to the urgency of giving them work, i.e. so organizing production that maximum number of people can get something to do with their hands, so that they can buy something to put into their hungry mouths. The missing link, therefore, undoubtedly, is to find gainful employment for our idle hands. Which means that we must industrialize the whole of the community through suitable industries which will develop in alliance with our basic industry—agriculture. It is here that the Capitalist school of thought comes with an answer which it is difficult to agree with. The answer is born of the pathetic faith in Capitalistic industrialism, and its two main props, machine and money. This is what Shri Birla said :

"It is estimated that our total investment in organized industry at the present valuation amounts to about Rs 40 billion which, in terms of dollars, figures out at \$ billion."

And he further added,

"If we plan doubling the existing investments, we have to find a capital of \$ 8 billion out of which half would be required in foreign exchange for purchasing equipment abroad."

Wherefrom to obtain this huge sum of money and whatfor the half of it should be sent away to foreign lands, are questions that he has not discussed. How much more employment this will secure, what purchasing power will be distributed thereby and among how many and in what manner,—these questions also are not touched. However, he admits that "it is no use too much

modernizing equipment as long as there is unemployment,"—though he again reverts to the assertion of his faith in money and machines, as if almost apart from man and in disregard of his main requirement of employment,—and he adds :

"And yet we cannot dig well with fingers. This is the problem that requires solution. An investment of \$ 8 billion half of which in foreign exchange, and know-how."

The problem rather is, how to regulate and reorganize consumer goods industries like cloth, oil etc. so that they are not concentrated in a few hands only, and to decentralize and distribute this economic power in the hands of the many, through suitable scientific implements to be devised by our scientists and mechanics. Then, land along with these in the hands of our hungry millions, will be giving us an economy which is not purely agricultural but is really industrial also, without injuring the true needs and interests of man. Money and machine will then only cease to control and dominate, exploit and unemploy our people. Our industrialists should desist from their collective enterprise of exploiting the field of cloth, oil etc. with centralized money-power and rationalized machine, leaving it to the people. Then only can we establish an agricultural economy aided by small-scale industry which assures true economic freedom and independence to our people.

Such would be the human solution of the problem before us ; it will usher in a new industrial revolution bereft of the ugly results of its 19th century edition, which we will be revising in the light of the experiences the world has had of it during its run of about a century and a half.

18-9-'54

Not a Serious Difficulty

Dr. Hardev Bahri, discussing the question of the change-over of the medium of instruction from English, notes the paucity of text-books and absence of terminology also ; however he says that this is not too serious a difficulty to deflect us from our duty, and illustrates the remarks by an example as follows :

"The example of the Hebrew University, founded in 1925 is inspiring. In the past 29 years the University has sent out nearly 1,800 graduates who were taught everything they learnt in the science and humanities in Hebrew that has grown ampler and richer with the passing of the years. The teachers and their pupils there have published hundreds of books and thousands of articles in the flexible, dignified modern Hebrew they themselves have helped to evolve. That is the case of a language which has remained unspoken and unused for centuries." (*The Leader*, 31-8-'54).

We can have no reason, therefore, to despair of our languages which are living, and are spoken and written ones. Only we must set our head and heart to this task. Where there is a will, there is surely the way to achieve it.

6-9-'54

M. P.

PROHIBITION IN MADRAS

(By R. Santanam)

It is an intriguing suggestion that there has been an increase in the number of offences detected and therefore the policy of prohibition is not a success. It follows that a Government should not throw people's money into a bad venture. Total prohibition came into force in the whole of undivided Madras State in 1949-50. The number of offences reported under both the Abkari and the Prohibition Acts for four districts in 1939-40 was 18,969. The number of offences was about six times as large in 1951-52, being 109,558 for the whole undivided State.

Those who advance this thesis may also pause to consider some important factors that militate against a proper enforcement. First, the habit of drinking has been long in vogue. As William Hazlitt remarked, either you hit the mark or miss it. Even so with discontinuing habits. Second, the machinery of the Government was for long geared to foster and spread the evil in order to fill the exchequer. Third, in the early years of trial and expansion the revoking of the Prohibition Act during the War poured cold water on a proper enforcement of the Act subsequently. Fourth, the increase in area of enforcement from four to twenty-six districts should by itself account for a considerable increase in the number of offences. Fifth, to dispassionate observers it will appear that even though the Congress was voted to office all these years, none of the ministries have been stable enough to watch over the proper implementation of the party manifesto. To boot, there are alluring wet pockets around. To me, it seems that it is too early to form an opinion under the circumstances. Impatient idealists only remind us of the sterile lady who went round the *pipal*, because she was told that it had remedial effect, and immediately felt for signs of conception. But there are others who are not idealists but sound and practical.

The Government has thrown away, as it were, a large annual revenue from toddy. But financially the policy of prohibition has been a success in so far as the Government made up the loss. But worldly-wise men tempt the Treasury official by pointing to his increasing responsibility in the implementation of developmental schemes under the Plan. They would suggest the revoking of Prohibition Act to secure funds. It is as though a man listened to a discourse on Shri Ramayana all the night and pulled down the nearby temple as the first act the next morning! Well, that was that far his understanding and devotion went. Welfare of the individual or society and drink evil are incompatibles. There is no cause for a flutter if the number of offences should increase in these relatively early years of enforcement if that were the result of vigilance. The future is, of course, towards increasing amelioration that is welfare work.

VINOBA IN DARBHANGA — II

(By "Dadu")

"Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink. This is literally the situation in the flood-ravaged parts of Darbhanga District. Its Samastipur Sub-division was covered by Vinoba on foot and boat during the fortnight, from 11th August to 25th. The misery of the people inhabiting this area is beyond all description.

Leaving Hansa in the early morning of 15th August, we crossed the Boorhi Gandak, Bihar's River of Sorrow No. 2 (Kosi being No. 1) and covering a distance of about 18 miles by boat reached the village Singhia (near the Narhan railway station) at about 11 o'clock. On our way we halted at Chhatauni where people gave a very hearty reception, offered some land-gifts and a prominent resident of the village, Shri Ram Lakhan Singh donated his life for the cause. In the afternoon Vinoba went round the Singhia village, met the flood-stricken people and gave them his message of hope and cheer. I must add here that at Vinoba's bidding, our party strength was reduced to fifteen and most of the luggage was left over at Samastipur.

In spite of the floods, the attendance in the evening prayer was quite large, about ten thousand, including a good number of women. In his post-prayer address, Vinoba expressed his extreme happiness at the opportunity God gave him to be present in their midst that day. He observed that calamities were a blessing in disguise. They teach us to sympathize with others, to soften our heart, and help one another. "Some people maintain," said he, "that on such occasions Government should be asked to offer help. But I want to tell you that when calamity befalls village after village, the residents of the village itself must come forward to help each other. One must give what one has. I want you to donate your Sampatti (wealth) for those poorer than you. Those who have land must offer land, while those who have neither Sampatti nor land can offer Shramdan (labour gift). Could you grasp the truth that one is authorized to eat only after sharing it with others, it would be all right. If you accept this and all of you offer one-sixth of your Sampatti all troubles can be easily met."

Vinoba also warned the business community not to take advantage of the poor man's misfortune and asked it to donate bountifully. He added, "On such occasions we must pray to God to give us a rich harvest of love. Let grain decrease but love must increase. If both decrease, God help you!"

Vinoba continued, "It is fifteenth August today. Seven years ago we won our freedom or Swaraj. We shall take a vow today to make our Swaraj stronger and deeper. Every village must get Swaraj. How will it be possible? Only when every village turns into a family. If we get more religious in our conduct, Swaraj is also strengthened. Religion does not consist in going to the Ganga and having a dip. Were it the case, the fish who are always in Ganga water would all get *Swaraj* or heaven. Religion consists in having a dip in the Ganga of love, *Prem-Ganga*. It develops only when brother helps brother and one serves the Narayan manifest in the lowliest and the lost, in the heart of every creature. So doing our Swaraj will grow firm and impregnable."

Leaving Singhia on Monday morning at five, Vinoba went for about three miles on a kachha road and latter began to walk in knee-deep water, not availing of the boat placed at his disposal by the local people. Passing through waist-deep and, at times, chest-deep water, he reached the village Samarthia at eight. In the afternoon he went round the village. The evening prayer was held at 4-30. Many women also came from far off villages and attended the meeting in drenched clothes.

Referring to the calamity of floods, Vinoba said, "The distress is, in fact, an occasion for *bhakti*, an occasion to donate with an open heart. Thus distress would be converted into a blessing and *dharma* would flourish. I want that the distressed must be helped by all means. Who would

render this help? Everybody. One should help him who is poorer than him or herself. Look at the water. Whether it be on a hill, plain or in a gutter, it always flows downward and runs towards the sea which is at the lowliest. So also those who are in misery should assist those who are in a worse misery. Pleasure lies in sharing it with others. Misery decreases on sharing while happiness increases. When there is some pain or wound in the ear, the eye weeps. Why should the eye weep when she herself is not in trouble? She will reply, 'We are all one and regard each other's pain or pleasure as our own.' No sooner a thorn enters the foot than the hand runs to take it out. The hand does not say, 'I am of a higher stature than the foot and can't go to its help.' The hand knows no peace until that thorn is taken out. So also the whole village is one body and we must all partake of each other's weal and woe."

For the journey from Samartha to Narhan on the 17th, a boat had to be taken as the water was very deep at places in between. We reached the camp at about 8 o'clock. In view of the fact that with the close of the rainy season, cholera and other diseases are likely to overtake villages, Vinoba placed some concrete suggestions before the people in his post-prayer address: First, they should use boiled water for drinking purposes, not the ordinary water. Secondly, the villages should be kept clean, all rubbish and foul material to be deposited in suitably dug pits and all water, be it near a well or elsewhere, be directed along proper channels. All the people of the village could apply themselves to this task and make the village mirror-like clean within two days. Thirdly, bazar sweets should not be used during these days. So also dirty or over-ripe vegetables and fruits should not be taken. Before cooking, vegetables must be rinsed in Potassium Permanganate water. Vinoba felt confident that if these precautions were duly observed, the village would remain free from any disease or ill effect.

On the 18th we encamped at Rosara. On account of the floods no good site could be obtained for the evening meeting. They, however, assembled at the local H. E. School ground which was filled to capacity. Asking the people to rely on their own efforts rather than of the Government, Vinoba told them after the prayer, "While the strength commanded by the Governments is not much, they are full of conceit and self-righteousness. Hence all Governments keep all power centred to themselves. Suppose there were one-world Government today with its centre somewhere in Iraq, Mesopotamia or Caucasus. Now in case of floods in the Mississippi it would send a delegation to assess its loss. For estimating the loss due to a misfortune in Japan, it would appoint another commission. Do you think that such activities would help the needy at the right time and to the right extent? The disadvantages of centralization, therefore, become conspicuous on such occasions as flood. This is why I insist on decentralization of political power as well."

Vinoba continued that honesty and truth were very much at a discount in our country these days. All of them, vakils, traders, politicians, seemed to be provided with a charter to tell lies. "Then who is to speak truth? Children and Sadhus! But as nobody is expected to speak truth they also don't. Consequently, our school boys and girls tell lies and play truant and our Sadhus have turned affected and vain. What is worse, our children are regarded as thieves. I was horrified at the scene in the examination hall when I appeared for the Matric. I found 'invigilators' roaming about anxious to 'catch' boys. It means that the examinee fails in the simple test of trust and honesty. So falsehood pervades in all walks of life in the country and reaches its climax in business. And I hold that the so-called white market is no less black than the 'black market' in India. So wretched is the condition of our country. We do take the name of *dharma*, but it is met nowhere in practice. Look at our temples. We have

entrusted their charge to *pandas* who have little of *dharma*-sense in them. I do not want to talk ill of others, but that is the naked truth. What I want to say is that immorality reigns in all activities of ours. I believe that our formal acts provoke God's wrath and hence these calamities." Concluding, he expressed the hope that if Bihar workers took to this cause devotedly during the rest of his stay in this State, they could change its face.

Starting from Rusra at 5:10 in the morning of the 10th, we took a boat at 5:45 and reached our next halt, Singhia thana at 1 p.m. Some young girls and women saw Vinoba in the afternoon and posed a question:

"The women of India are very backward. Something, however, is being done for them. But in our Singhia thana, in particular, nothing has been done so far in this direction. Would you, therefore, suggest ways and means for the betterment of women in this area?"

Vinoba was very glad to meet these sisters with such an important question. He assured them to deal with it at length after the prayer. He said, "We notice that in Indian society, mother occupies a higher status than father. Therefore, what a woman can do to contribute to the maintenance of society, culture and religion, man cannot. In India it is the women who have protected religion. They do, however, stick to old things, whence progress is blocked. But this is not their fault alone. A deplorable want of education is mainly responsible for this. Women must, therefore, be imparted more and more education and knowledge. But that education should not be one leading them to luxury, vain fashion, indolence and sensuality. It should be an education of noble *sanskars* making them virtuous, pure-hearted, fearless and self-sufficient. Books like the Ramayana, Gandhiji's *autobiography* and *Gita-Pravachan* should be thoroughly studied by them."

He added that the object of Bhoodan Yajna was to create a *san-ras* society, i.e., one without any differences of caste, creed or colour. It is cruel to divide it into mental workers and manual labourers, or between man and woman. "If hearts unite crores of hands would be able to accomplish something solid. If hearts go asunder, so many hands will only quarrel and try to destroy each other. The history of India is replete with instances of such rivalries and jealousies. It is my endeavour to transform the society into one homogeneous whole."

Friday, the 20th, we were at Shumbha Bangarhatta. This is an area where means of communication are few and far between, the nearest railway station being at a distance of no less than 15 miles from Shumbha. In the workers' meeting in the afternoon, Vinoba inquired of the elder ones amongst them whether they would not give him their co-operation in the *Gram Raj* struggle as they gave to Gandhiji in the Swaraaj struggle. For, could there be a programme more revolutionary, more peaceful and more for the service of the poor than the Bhoodan Yajna? They agreed and promised to do their best.

The last halt of the week was at Pokhran. We reached there after midday covering a distance of 14 miles (by boat) in seven hours. There was a rush of women visitors all through the day and they were also present in very large number in the prayer meeting. It was Krishna Janmashtami day. In his evening address, he spoke of Bhugavan Krishna who occupied himself with one manual work or other all his life. In his early years he looked after cows and later attended to horses. In Yudhishtira's Yajna he took to cleaning leaves left over by the Brahmanas after meals. Krishna was thus an innocent manual worker as also a *Gyani*. "Yet we have twisted Gita to teach us idleness and no-work-doing. Our learned Vedantis waste hours in their discussions on how to avoid work. Oh! if they could discuss only how to avoid food! Our professors are those who enjoy six months' leave,

teach hardly for two hours a day and draw hundreds of rupees per month. The less they work the more learned they seem to be. And yet, we idiots, send our children to them. Let us learn from Krishna Bhagavan to work ceaselessly and to respect work." He concluded, "The essence of the message of Bhoodan lies in the respectability of work. We should refuse to eat without doing manual work."

We are for one more week in the flood-affected parts of Darbhanga before we enter the Muzaffarpur district on our third and last round.

4-9-'54

A WARNING FROM U.S.A.

(By Joseph R. Bryson)

The liquor interests (in U.S.A.) today are trying to make everybody want liquor. They realize that young people are the largest potential source for new customers, and they are employing every channel, are using all means, to exploit our young people, our women, and our military forces to gain recruits for their trade.

They know that young men and women love sports, and the beer manufacturers have made it a practice to specialize in the broadcast of sports activities such as baseball, football and basketball, and have sponsored these programmes on condition that beer is advertised as a 'healthful beverage which will make the youth 'men of distinction' promoting their success and happiness.

They not only pay for the broadcasting of these sports activities, but pay the players to testify in behalf of the merits of their particular beverage as enabling them to excel in the sports. Again and again during the broadcast the listening audience is urged to drink some kind of beer. They get the players to tell how good and exhilarating the drink is.

Radio and television respect no boundaries; they enter all homes to exploit the youth in spite of the protests of parents who have the welfare of their children at heart. They enter into the dry as well as the wet sections of our country, and everyone listening irrespective of his sentiments or his occupation and profession, is urged to buy alcohol. Many youngsters who otherwise would never come in contact with alcohol beverages are exposed to these advertisements constantly and are deceived and enticed by the false propaganda they hear and see over the radio and television.

Millions upon millions are spent each year to gain new recruits from the ranks of abstainers. The best advertising salesmen and the best artists in the land are hired to make full-page advertisements in the leading magazines and newspapers, soliciting the public to use the advertised products. With great skill and subtlety these advertisements emphasize that drinking is a mark of distinction.

Impressionable and immature boys and girls who see these colourful and attractive full-page solicitations are deceived by them and lured to

become "men and women of distinction" by the alcoholic route.

The consumption of liquor has increased in the same ratio as the amount of money expended for liquor advertisements. The 1951 drink bill exceeded nine billion dollars. According to Dr. E. M. Jellinek who is attached to the World Health Organization as an alcohol expert, 38,00,000 Americans can be classified as alcoholics.

The public is continually subjected to allegations in liquor advertisements which are manifestly untrue or at least highly misleading. These fallacious assertions as to the merits of liquor and its stimulating and invigorating effects upon the human mind are captivating the youth of America and are leading many of them into an alcoholic trap from which there is no release.

In their advertisements the liquor advertisers never hint at or point out the dangers of becoming alcoholic addicts. They present only the glamorous side of indulgence.

(Reproduced from *New Outlook*, December '53)

[This is a warning to us. We are a nation of abstainers by our habits of diet, our ideas of social honour and respectability, and by religion as well. This is a very cultural asset and a priceless heritage, thanks to our forefathers who forged our civilization and culture. This must be preserved and enriched with scrupulous care and closest attention. All States in India, including those that are still off prohibition on account of one consideration or another—all must heed to the lesson and warning contained in the above from U. S. A. and take due steps accordingly.]

14-9-'54

M. P.]

NOTES

The Objective Health Approach to Prohibition

Alcohol does more harm, individually and socially, than all other narcotics combined. It constitutes a grave public health problem.

The challenge that beverage alcohol flings in the teeth of our civilization is one that education cannot continue to ignore. Sooner or later, the issue will have to be faced realistically. With the proper threefold attack the challenge can be met. The duty of the school is clear: (1) teach the facts, unemotionally and scientifically; (2) create the proper attitude; (3) train young people to be well integrated personalities with constructive emotional patterns and a well developed sense of social responsibility.

[Dr. L. C. Goffin, Supervisor of Public Health Education in the schools of Los Angeles, Calif.]

The problems of alcohol and of mental hygiene are closely connected. In too many groups of society, drinking habits have taken such firm root that they exert a marked influence on the individual and collective mind.

[Prof. M. Alexander, Brussels, Belgium, at the International Congress Against Alcoholism, Paris, Sept. 1952.]

(From *New Outlook*, December '53)

The Gandhi Jayanti Spinning Competition

The All India Khadi and Village Industries Board has decided to organize on the occasion of the Charkha Jayanti a series of spinning competitions from the 2nd October 1954 to the 12th February 1955.

We will expect all constructive work institutions that are in the country to take part in this competition for which they should get together spinners in large numbers.

The institutions intending to take part in the spinning competition are requested to send for the booklet concerning the rules of the competition from The Khadi Department, Khadi Board, P. B. 482, Bombay-1.

Bombay, 13-9-54

Valkunthbhai L. Mehta

Chairman

A. I. K. V. Industries Board

(From Gujarati)

AS OTHERS SEE IT

[The *Manas* of 2-6-54, U.S.A., describes "Vinoba at Work" in the following words.]

The press of today is filled with forebodings of violence, and the leaders of powerful nations seem practically obsessed by the commanding force of violence. Meanwhile, in India today, there is interesting exercise of an entirely different sort of force—the force of public opinion.

Vinoba Bhave, Gandhian leader of the land-gift movement, has explained that he is perfectly willing to use the pressure of public opinion in persuading Indian landowners to give land to the landless Indian peasants. Vinoba maintains that social progress must ultimately depend upon faith in man. Even communist theory, he argues, adopts this view. As he puts it:

Marx has said: The power of the State will be captured by the poor people to begin with, but in the end "the State will wither away." This means that there will be no State authority towards the end, and the governance of the country will go on without the interference or function of any central power. If the Communists respect this maxim enunciated by Marx, then they have to believe in the goodness in man and trust the people.

The landlords are responding to this appeal, which combines the compulsion of conscience with the pressure of public opinion. What can such methods accomplish? So far, according to reports, more than 25,00,000 acres have been given to landless peasants. Thus proceeds a redistribution of India's natural resources, without conflict and without bitterness.

By Mahatma Gandhi

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PROHIBITION IN RAJASTHAN

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

"Jaipur, September 14.—The Rajasthan Legislative Assembly yesterday talked out a non-official resolution moved by Mr Jagat Singh (Jan Sangh) demanding immediate enforcement of prohibition in the State.

"Mr Bhoianath, Revenue Minister, replying to the debate, said enforcement of prohibition would be untimely and inopportune. In addition to the loss of the present revenue it would mean an additional burden on the State exchequer as the Government would have to recruit enforcement staff.

"Several opposition members supported the resolution while Congress members supported it on principle but opposed it as it was inopportune at present." (The *Hindustan Times*, 15-9-54)

It is painful to read the above message specially where a Congress Minister says that "prohibition would be untimely and inopportune." That he was a Revenue Minister who said this explains why he made such an untenable statement. It is also noteworthy that it fell to the lot of the opposition parties to support prohibition, in teeth of a funny position taken by the Congress members who defeated the proposition by talking it out.

The position raises serious questions regarding the Congress and its position as an organization. Why should prohibition be entrusted to a Revenue Minister, who will generally not have time to lose money nor will lose any time or opportunity to get money, if he can help it?

We learn that the Central Government is interesting itself in seeing that the Constitutional Directive regarding prohibition is duly implemented as a part of the new Five Year Plan. It should be laid down that every State should have an independent ministry for prohibition separate from revenue or finance. The Minister-in-charge must be a person who sincerely believes in the policy of prohibition.

The Rajasthan Assembly debate raises a question regarding discipline as well. Can Congress Ministers air views in the public which are against or inimical to the declared policy of the Congress? The Rajasthan Minister should better have noted that the Congress holds that prohibition is any day opportune; rather, it is one of the fundamental items of the Congress programme. Such default on the part of ministers may gradually undermine the faith people still have in the pledged words of the Congress.

18-9-54

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