

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

ANTI-PROHIBITION PROPAGANDA

Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh is reported to have given notice of his intention to suggest to the Parliament that the Prohibition policy of the Congress be abandoned. It is not surprising, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru himself having set his face against it. The State Governments have been advised by the Centre not to go with the policy at a rapid pace. Some papers have also been carrying on a propaganda against it. The Government of Bombay has been criticized for not accepting the Central Government's advice. Possibly, States which persist in not allowing drink indulgence to their subjects will have to do so on their own responsibility for meeting deficits in revenue.

The ostensible reason is, no doubt, revenue. Ours is a nation of paupers. But modern Governments want to run like millionaires' establishments. Money must be found for them now and anyhow. People addicted to self-indulgence and vices like drink, gambling, speculation, races, entertainments etc. are believed to be better patrons of Finance Ministers than honest producers of wealth. Also, the belief is that a country is safer in the hands of people who can kill and destroy men and materials than of those who can educate and create them. So the former must be maintained by the latter, if even their number is less and their expenses exorbitant.

But the plea of revenue is true, if at all, only in part. The greater fact is that from times immemorial vices have been an accompaniment of riches and power. Kings, courtiers, politicians, army-men, judges, and some of the wealthy love vices as part of their accomplishments and social etiquette. They transfer the infection to their menial servants, and from them the vices reach the lowest strata of society. The former find in the vices an easy way of killing time; the poor find in it an easy way of forgetting their wants and worries.

Under the austere lead of Gandhiji, the Congress pledged itself to prohibition. But as in several other items of the Constructive Programme, its members did not sincerely believe in it. Several Parliamentarians cannot do without wine. Several judges, advocates, editors and writers cannot compose their thoughts without

stimulating their nerves with a dose from the bottle. And wealthy people cannot feel lively in its absence. They do not object to the Government taxing them for it. They can afford to pay the taxes and enrich the Government with revenue. They are prepared to be full democrats in this respect. Hence, liberty to drink is put forth as a fundamental personal right of the citizen. This is the reason for their resistance to the prohibition policy, and for feeling a measure of satisfaction in declaring its failure.

But drink is ruinous to the people. Will legislators and administrators of law, order and justice fulfil their obligations to the people by encouraging their ruin? What are we heading for?

Wardha, 23-11-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

MEASURES AGAINST BLACK-MARKETEERS

The Berar Chamber of Commerce has sent telegrams to several important heads of Government to the following effect:

"(We) strongly protest against the wholesale arrest of businessmen and their humiliation by police under Preventive Detention Act by Madhya Pradesh Government. Such police rule to terrorize merchants is unwarranted and unjustified. The ordinary Civil and Criminal laws are sufficiently wide for the purpose. (We) request you to stop immediately the application of lawless laws and police tyranny, and restore citizen's fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution."

Similar protests have also been raised by mercantile associations of Bihar, Bombay etc.

I have already referred to this subject in the columns of *Harijan*. I have therein expressed my disapprobation of the manner in which these arrests are carried out.

But merchants and Chambers of Commerce should also take into consideration a couple of points in this connection. The mercantile community has forfeited the sympathy of the people; in fact, the people are quite disgusted with the profiteering tactics of black-marketeers. The rough and humiliating demonstrations are approved by the people; indeed, they would appreciate even more insulting treatment of black-marketeers. Some journals expressed disapproval of my criticism of the police methods and made uncharitable insinuations. As I write

this, I get a letter from a youth praising the Governments for their measures. Others have suggested that I should withdraw my previous article. All this shows the extent to which the popular mind is provoked against black-marketing, profiteering, *pagri*-taking etc. Whatever the High Courts might ultimately rule on these methods, for the present they have become useful for both winning popularity for Government and spreading a feeling of terror among merchants.

Secondly, it is not enough that merchants and Chambers of Commerce should merely protest against Government measures. If they wish their protests to be treated with respect, they should also undertake the responsibility of developing the civic sense and honesty in merchants.

Kautilya describes in his *Arthashastra* (Treatise on Political Science) how the various trade guilds of his time controlled their members to ensure that the quality of goods should be of the right standard, and be available at reasonable prices. They themselves punished those who cheated people with false weights and measures and by adulteration, and even excommunicated the offenders. If the present-day Chambers of Commerce do not develop such strength and capacity in them their protest against harsh treatment cannot be very effective. Each Chamber of Commerce should seriously consider the taking of steps in this direction. Otherwise with loss of public sympathy, it is not impossible that some of the Government officers or persons having influence with them might maliciously take this opportunity to harass such of them as have given them some offence and invoked their displeasure.

Moreover, the persons receiving such treatment are hardly quite innocent. Their only plea is that there are several others also who are chips of the same block; but they have been picked out on account of personal spite, while others who are in the good books of the Government and its officers are allowed to do as they please unhindered.

It is difficult to catch commercial magnates with sufficient incriminating evidence. Even if there is perfectly reliable information that a particular businessman resorts to black-marketing, he manages it so cleverly that it is not easy to prove his part in it in a Court of Law. This is one of the grounds put forth for detaining persons without trial.

Most of our present-day ills arise out of our disregard of moral principles. If merchants and people in general regarded honesty as the most essential virtue of social life the intensity of our hardships would greatly diminish. The Chambers of Commerce, therefore, should strain every nerve to inculcate civic sense and honesty in the mercantile community. The people, too, should renounce non-straightforward methods.

In this connection, I reproduce below important extracts from a letter addressed by Shri Kedarnathji, President of "Vyavahar Shuddhi Mandal", Bombay, to several mercantile associations:

"We all know through what difficult times the masses are leading their existence today. The present dearth of the prime necessities of life beats all records of the worst years of famines in the past. The poor and middle classes of our country are being cruelly crushed under its pressure. They are surrounded on all sides by enormous difficulties, diseases, internal quarrels and anxiety for the present and the future. The culture, civilization and morals of society had never been in so much danger as they are now. There might be several international causes also for this condition. But we must also confess that our own hard-heartedness is largely responsible for making these environments so tight as to throttle the people's necks to suffocation. Until there is a change for the better in our hearts, no amount of ordinances, controls, or punishments can improve our condition.

"The atmosphere all around us is surcharged with base and violent thoughts, acts and intentions. But even in this atmosphere, my friends and I have a firm faith in the innate divine spark in man. We believe that our life can be pure and better only when that spark gets quickened and we all realize and begin to act on the truth that man is not made to lead a life of selfishness but of *dharma* (duty), and that *dharma* consists in willingly working for the happiness of others and sharing their burdens. This alone can free us from the miseries, which besiege us on all sides. It is on this hope and faith, that I have started a society named "Vyavahara Shuddhi Mandal" (Pure Life Association) on 29th May, 1949. Its object is to purify the day to day life of myself and the people. To achieve this object, I am anxious to contact all commercial and mercantile associations, their managing committees and ordinary members at their convenience." *

Shri Kedarnath addressed the above circular letter to 34 mercantile associations. I understand that none of them has made a reply to it. If their sense of moral responsibility and honesty has become blunt, what sympathetic response can their telegrams of protest induce?

I do not say this to justify police methods but to make merchants realize the decline in their prestige in society.

Wardha, 22-11-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(Translated from Gujarati)

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PROCUREMENT AND ISSUE PRICES IN HYDERABAD STATE

[The following hardly needs any comment. The Central Government should look into the matter, both for correcting scandalous and expensive administration and for meeting food deficit. — K. G. M.]

I give below the Hyderabad Government Foodgrain Procurement and Issue prices in Taluk centres of the State. They speak for themselves and show how the Government agencies are exploiting the *rayats* and minting money in the State. These prices are official prices sanctioned by the Government.

(Hyderabad currency is converted into Indian currency at Government exchange rate).

Procurement prices paid to <i>rayats</i> who deliver at Govt. Taluk godown doors (per <i>palla</i> , i.e. 3 Bengali maunds)		Issue prices at the same godowns	
Jawar	Rs 21 13 9	Rs 33 8 9	
Bajara	Rs 21 7 0	Rs 27 7 0	
Paddy	Rs 24 13 9	Rs 31 7 0	
Kangani	Rs 18 13 9	Rs 27 7 0	
Wheat	Rs 44 0 0	Rs 54 0 0	
Rice	Rs 32 2 0	Rs 42 13 9	

I may mention here that no cartage is given to *rayats*, even if they have to bring Procurement foodgrain from a distance of 30 miles and beyond.

Bombay State Prices

I am also giving below the rates of Procurement and Issue prices of foodgrain in the adjoining Mundargi centre in Bombay State for comparison to show how little margin they keep between Procurement and Issue prices, paying better prices to the *rayats*.

Procurement prices (per <i>palla</i> , i.e. 3 Bengali maunds)		Issue prices	
Jawar	Rs 27 12 0	Rs 28 8 0	
Bajara	Rs 30 6 0	Rs 31 10 0	
Paddy	Rs 36 6 0	Rs 37 14 0	
Kangani	Rs 19 0 0	Rs 21 8 0	
Wheat	Rs 55 0 0	Rs 58 8 0	
Rice	Rs 52 2 0	Rs 55 8 0	

I presume that Hyderabad State's poor figures of Foodgrain Procurement are mainly due to these low prices paid to the growers. In my opinion our State is self-sufficient in so far as staple foodgrains are concerned.

I represented about these abnormal price differences between Procurement and Issue through the Hyderabad Press. The matter was discussed in the recent Government Press Conference and I learn from the editorial column of the *Deccan Chronicle*, dated 24th October, 1950, that the Government could not give a satisfactory reply. Over and above these huge profits the Government of Hyderabad is paying annually as much as sixty lakhs of rupees as subsidy to this agency known as the Hyderabad Co-operative Commer-

cial Corporation administered by the Hyderabad Government Supply Department.

I feel that the food problem of Hyderabad may be solved to a greater extent provided —

(a) As in the Madras State the Procurement and Issue of foodgrain are entrusted to co-operative societies.

(b) The Procurement and Issue rates are revised as follows :

	Procurement (per <i>palla</i> in Indian Govt. Currency)		Issue	
Jawar	Rs 28 0 0		Rs 30 0 0	
Bajara	Rs 28 0 0		Rs 30 0 0	
Paddy	Rs 36 0 0		Rs 40 0 0	
Kangani	Rs 24 0 0		Rs 26 0 0	
Wheat	Rs 55 0 0		Rs 58 0 0	
Rice	Rs 50 0 0		Rs 54 0 0	

(c) Proper arrangements are made, just like in Madras State, to take weighments and pay off the *rayats* for procurements in their own villages.

Koppal (Hyd. State)
30-10-'50

S. A. AGADI

REWARD

In December, 1949, His Excellency (the Governor of Orissa) was pleased to announce a reward of Rs 1,000 for the best and the cheapest labour-saving device useful to farmers in Orissa in any kind of agricultural operation. Twenty entries were received from different persons and institutions. But none of them has been judged by the Expert Committee appointed for the purpose to be suitable or deserving of the reward. His Excellency has therefore been pleased to keep the award open up to the end of March, 1951. The competition is now limited to a few agricultural operations only, viz. sowing, weeding, transplantation and harvesting. As laid down in the previous notification, the other conditions of the competition are :

(1) The design should be simple and capable of being manufactured from materials easily available in any part of Orissa, preferably by local artisans and its repairs should likewise be simple.

(2) Economy, simplicity, easy availability of materials plus efficiency shall be the important criteria in judging the merit of the designs.

(3) A Committee of experts will be set up to assess the merit of the designs received. The Committee's decision shall be final.

The competitors are requested to send their designs with sketches and explanatory notes etc. in sealed covers to reach the undersigned not later than 31-3-'51.

Public servants under the Government of Orissa are not debarred from participating in the competition.

Government House,
Cuttack

Sd. Illegible
Secretary to the Governor

HARIJAN

Dec. 2

1950

THE ISM OF CONTROLS

It appears as if the policy of controls has become an *ism* with the Government. My impression was that the technique of controls was devised during the last world war on both the sides for the purpose of ensuring supplies of all things needed by the various Governments for prosecuting the war. They were not expected to continue after the end of the war. But from some Soviet literature that has come into my hands, it seems that controls are a part of the common creed of all Socialist sects. Hence, since Congress is committed to the establishment of a Socialist State, it perhaps looks upon controls as an institution that has come to stay. May this be one of the reasons for the obstinacy with which the Government refuses to revise its policy?

The technique of controls appears to have been efficiently developed and carried out in Soviet Russia—no doubt, with a good deal of violence also. Governments less Socialist in outlook than Russia seem to think that they, too, might as effectively and beneficially employ the technique, without establishing the conditions and resorting to means which made it successful in that country.

The most important feature of the Soviet experiment is that it abolished private property in the material resources and means of production simultaneously with establishing control over distribution of profits, commodities and prices. It is not a case in which industries are allowed to be run as private undertakings with a motive of personal profit,—attempts being made only to prevent prices going beyond a particular limit and, where necessary, to supply to the people a part of the essential necessities of their life. Soviet Russia's is also not a case in which articles are produced primarily with an eye on foreign trade and exchange. The primary object of production is to consume the articles at home in a sufficient measure, before their export is thought of. Soviet Russia's is also not a case in which the State machinery—the services—is eclipsed with the tradition of respecting high birth, possession of riches and capacity to render monetary assistance to friends and dependents.

None of these conditions are fulfilled in India. The ceiling of private property and income might be as high as the Himalayas, and the bottom as deep as the Pacific Ocean, and our traditions—which are also the traditions of our services—are to respect the rich and the powerful and to see that they are not put to any dis-

comfort. We are not very much fond of poor and indigent people, whose muscles have been hardened with work and limbs and clothes soiled with dirt. They might be shown some sympathy and charity occasionally, but they are not entitled to respect or priority over the former when it comes to the sharing of comforts and privileges. We are apt to think that these people have always lived in want and penury. If a few *lakhs* among them fall victim every year to diseases and epidemics on account of malnutrition, starvation, and want of houses or clothing, it is not a new phenomenon in their life. Hence, deliberately or through disregard born of life-long familiarity, our system of controls is so shaped as almost to overlook the very existence of these people. Perhaps, some of the very materialistic economists regard their annual clearances as even a boon in disguise for a thickly populated country.

Hearts of men in their natural condition are never too insensate to the miseries of fellow-beings. Children and unsophisticated men and women are moved with compassion and, even if they are themselves in want, they share their possessions with others. But when they give themselves over to a sophisticated theory or philosophy, the native sensibility, which is the heritage of man, becomes hardened like the nerves of a leprosy patient.

Controls are needed indeed. They are needed to put a limit on the amount of private property and income. They are also needed to set a limit upon the scale on which factory-industries might be set up and the extent to which they might be allowed to be concentrated in an area. Controls are needed also to prevent large-scale industries from destroying small-scale industries of similar goods and from throwing large numbers of people out of employment. A discrimination must also be made between industries which promote luxuries, intemperance, momentary excitement, sensuous passions, congestion in cities and towns and those which produce essential necessities of life, and promote health, strength, self-control, knowledge, and industriousness and distribute the population fairly over the land.

Control over distribution is also needed. But it must be of a different type from what is undertaken at present. We are often told that the question of distribution does not arise until there is sufficient wealth to distribute. We must increase our production so that every one might get a sufficient quantity in distribution.

This argument confuses and evades issues. If there were no room at present for thinking of the problem of distribution, all measures for controlling prices, rationing of articles, licensing shop-keepers, preventing free movement of goods etc. should have no place whatsoever. They are undertaken because underlying them

is the belief that whether production is sufficient or insufficient, the necessity for equitable distribution of the produce is always there. Indeed, there is greater need to ensure fair distribution when the production is insufficient, than when it is sufficient.

Curiously, the argument that production must precede the issue of distribution is made in favour of industries only. In respect of agriculture, particularly food, if a State or farmers with surplus production were to say that they could spare only such quantity as might remain after the necessities of their own people were fully met, they would be charged with selfishness and narrow-mindedness. When the people of deficit States could not have a ration of 6 oz. per day, how could a surplus State or a farmer think of eating a full meal? The suggestion is that all should share the deficit of food equally. The same principle should apply to profits and produce of industries also.

In fact controlled distribution must go a step further. If A is a great land-holder and has a large stock of last year's food already in balance, he need not have any part of the new produce (except in exchange for the old), when production in the country is insufficient generally. In the same way, people who have already amassed sufficient wealth need not have any commissions, fees or share in the profits of industries and may be asked to render their services honorarily until proper targets of production are attained, so that those who are poor might get at least a pinchful more in wages or cheaper in prices. To do so would be equity.

The *ism* of controls becomes topsy-turvy in its application, if it neglects control over means of production and private property and income, and is sought to be applied only in the sphere of prices and distribution of commodities. It becomes still more so if the controlled distribution instead of giving priority to people with scanty means and low standards of living and income, neglects or adversely affects their interests.

Wardha, 21-11-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

I am engaged upon a study of the life, letters and works of the late Dr Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. To augment my collection of material, I should be grateful if any one who has letters, pamphlets, articles, tributes, reviews, books or information dealing with him would communicate with me. Letters and manuscripts will be copied and returned by registered post; and a catalogue of all sources of information will be published.

I shall be glad to hear of any photographs, paintings, drawings, or other material that should be recorded in the preparation of this work.

Abdullah School,
Kuantan, Malaya.

S. DURAI RAJA SINGAM

PRE-ADVERTISED CONTROLS

A reliable stores-merchant of Bombay writes to the following effect:

"A Government Press Note (Bombay) publishes that they could get hold of only a very small stock of *gur* from Bombay shops in the execution of their freezing-order.

"There is no reason for being surprised at this. The Government ought not to have expected anything better from their past experience. For weeks before the control orders were actually promulgated they were so openly advertised that merchants knew that they were coming. Hence, naturally, they regulated their purchases so that when the freezing order should come, they might not have any stock in hand worth the name for delivery to the Government. Surely, Government should not have considered the merchants to be so wanting in common sense as to purchase large quantities at a high cost in order to deliver them suddenly on a night to the control officers at low prices!

"For some days before the promulgation of the order, whole-sale dealers used to register orders of retailers for delivery of *gur* as soon as it should come into their hands; and, likewise, the latter canvassed orders from their permanent and well-to-do customers for purchasing as large a quantity as they could afford. Deliveries used to take place within a few hours after their arrival, only inferior qualities being kept on hand for small and non-permanent customers. Thus a kind of decentralized distribution is, indeed, effected, every time a new control is advertised. Only the distribution is in favour of those who can afford to buy in large quantities. The purchasers of weekly or monthly necessities (who form the majority of people) and a few conscientious citizens, who would not purchase in any but a straightforward manner, are the people, who are made to suffer, when controls are imposed.

"If to pre-advertisement of contemplated orders is added the delays of official publication and service of the orders, you can well imagine the opportunity given to merchants to dispose of whatever stocks might still have been left on the date of the publication of a Control Ordinance. Besides, could not the Government have chosen a better time than the Diwali holidays for embittering the people?

"To a question put in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, Shri Dinkarrao Desai is reported to have said that it depended upon "the good luck" of the people, whether they would get *gur* during Diwali holidays. It was to be wished that the people had been left undisturbed to their good luck. But the Government interfered with their good luck and turned it into bad luck!"

Another merchant from District Amreli (geographically in Saurashtra, but politically in Bombay) reports similarly. He asks the reader to

"imagine control officers not being able to get more than five or ten seers of inferior quality *gur* from a few shops in a town where ordinarily some maunds at least was retailed every day!"

Also he asks the reader to consider this: "There were fifteen villages under the rationing area of Chalala (a town in the Amreli Dist.). Thirty thousand maunds of grain had been procured from these villages. But the ration shops had no grains now for distribution! One should imagine the condition of those among the card-holders, who had no other means of getting cereals, and compare it with the fact that in the neighbouring villages in the Saurashtra State, there was no rationing and no artificial impediments in buying and selling. The problem of high prices was of course universally present, but they were open and less high than black-market prices."

The only comment I can make is that controls, in India are a form of legal punishment for being too poor or too honest.

Wardha, 15-11-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

CONSTRUCTIVE LABOUR MOVEMENT

[Extracts from the Presidential Address of Shri Khandubhai K. Desai at the Third Indian National Trade Union Congress, held at Jamshedpur on 29-10-'50.]

Our Role Among the Working Classes

We must ask ourselves the question whether the confidence which the large bulk of workers have shown in the Organization, has been properly utilized by the unions affiliated to us to do constructive work among the workers. I must very frankly confess that our constructive work in the form of acquainting the working class with the advantages and disadvantages and the actions and reactions of different economic and social factors confronting them as well as the country, has not kept pace with the expansion of our Organization. I personally believe that so long as the working class does not realize its own responsibility towards the country and the industry in which it is working and behaves merely as wage-earner, instead of considering themselves responsible citizens of the Republic, the Organization which they have created will only remain a superficial and an ineffective body. I would like to point out that the I. N. T. U. C., in its constitution, has very clearly laid down that the object of the Organization shall be to raise the status and individuality of the worker engaged in the industry so as to make him fit to shoulder the responsibility of a citizen. To the extent the unions affiliated to our Organization have been able to work out this aspect of the constitution, the movement has achieved its object. Therefore, this is an occasion for stock-taking and self-introspection. We must realize that any single day lost in inculcating the true spirit of the I. N. T. U. C. among the working class is lost for ever, and in the present context of the economic and political situation in the country, we cannot afford to be lethargic or inactive.

Two Types of Labour Movement

I had the good fortune of learning at the feet of Mahatma Gandhi. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association which I have the privilege to serve for the last generation, is the creation of Mahatma Gandhi who guided that 'experiment' (as he used to call it) till the end of his life. *** As the experiment proved substantially successful in its various aspects, it was thought some time in 1926 to extend the activities in other centres. The late Prof. Abdul Bari also worked more or less on the principles mentioned above and the result is Jamshedpur labour movement. We see that two types of labour movements — one based on principles of conciliation and arbitration initiated and worked by Gandhiji, and the other based on the traditional technique of *laissez faire* involving direct action and rejecting arbitration or adjudication by either party, worked simultaneously in our country. As it has been seen, one conducted on Gandhiji's principles has proved successful, while the other has not suited our country. *** The Indian National Trade Union Congress is based on the same principles, tested and proved successful in experiment, and in my humble opinion, it has placed before the country the most effective and beneficial approach for the solution of the problems that arise between the industry and the working class.

Labour Movement and Politics

As a close student of trade union movement in the country and as one who has worked as a trade union worker for the last three decades, I must say that unless the trade union movement in its day to day activity is substantially divorced from the ambitions of any political party, there is no future for any independent and free trade union movement functioning on sound lines. I do realize that in the modern world where States are democratically governed on the basis of adult franchise, nobody

can eschew politics in its entirety, but in the case of trade union workers, the trade union movement and the service of the working class should be the main basis of their activities, while politics should be incidental to the main activity and important only to the extent this political affiliation helps in furthering the interest of the working classes. If, however, the trade union movement is made simply an instrument through which any political party would like to rise, it will spell disaster not only to the trade union movement but to the country as a whole. *** The suicidal and disastrous Bombay textile strike is a clear example of what I have stated. I have given this illustration with a view to warn the working class of this country against their future exploitation.

Independent India and the Workers

The emergence of our country as a Sovereign Democratic Republic is the main event of the year. The Constitution that has been framed by our own representatives, assembled in the Constituent Assembly, envisages a State based on democratic ideals and adult franchise. Every citizen of the country who has attained the age of twenty-one will, according to the Constitution, have a voice in determining the form of our Government. The Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights which if exercised with foresight, discrimination and courage, will put an end to various forms of exploitations which we find in society. But even such a Constitution will be of no avail unless every citizen is alive to his or her responsibility and discharges it consciously, so as to influence the State in framing a proper policy and execute it efficiently. *** The Constitution has guaranteed to every citizen full opportunity to develop his or her personality. Every citizen has the right and privilege to evolve an economic and social order that he desires. Even then if our desired objectives are not fulfilled, let us understand that it is due to either our own inertia or ignorance or lack of responsibility. I would like the working class not to feel as if they are orphans or under-dogs but to feel and behave as co-workers and partners in the common goal of making our country attain a prominent position among the nations of the world.

While discussing the relationship between the trade union movement and politics, we have to take into consideration the peculiar circumstances of our country and the objective conditions. The proportion of industrial labour in this country is hardly four to five per cent of the population and it is, therefore, not possible for them to evolve the social order which they desire merely by their own efforts. They will, therefore, have to align themselves and work in co-operation with that political party which has as its objective removal of exploitation by peaceful means and a reorientation of the social order on a just and equitable basis. It should represent the peasantry and the lower middle classes who form more than 80 per cent of our people.

The Economic Situation in the Country

As we all know, the economic situation in the country is far from happy. *** I do feel that the business community and workers must contribute their mite in building up the economy of the nation, because ultimately they are the people who will suffer most if production is at a low level. *** With mutual co-operation, it is not difficult to increase production in all sectors of economic activities and achieve more efficiency. When I say that the production should be efficient, I mean efficiency all round. The worker has to give his best, no doubt; but the other factor in production, namely, management, has also to complete its common share in the efficient and economic management so that the product in every industry is made available to the consumers at cheap prices. Time has now come when mere harping on the slogans of more production, without either employers or the Government taking its share of responsibilities, will be of no avail. In my opinion, the Government must now take the initiative and introduce the necessary discipline in the key industries of the country by proper planning and

avoidance of all leakage, wastage and corruption. Let production be harnessed to needs of the country and the profit motive be subordinated and substituted by service motive. The stability of the country primarily depends on the economic policy of the Government. The fact that the present policy has failed is very obvious. A Government pledged to remove concentration of wealth in the hands of a few would have to base its economics with an eye to the man in the village who hardly earns his bread. Big Business cannot appreciate the ideals of Sarvodaya and we, therefore, urge upon the Government the desirability of shaping its future policy in consultation with mass organizations and those who can represent properly the popular will. As far as the working class is concerned, I need not say that under the guidance of the organization which I have the honour to represent, they are determined to pull its full weight and strength to help the nation in this hour of trial and emergency. The Government should treat the present situation as an emergency and begin to act accordingly. The drift has been permitted to continue long enough and Government must place before the country its clear line of policy not in the abstract and vague manner but concretely, assigning respective duties and fair returns to various sections of the community. The Government will then have the sanction of public opinion behind it.

Change the Top-heavy Administration

I am constrained to remark in this connection that the old financial and administrative set-up, left by the Britishers and which was entirely designed for the Imperialist pomp and splendour, is still being continued without any variation. This administrative machinery has given rise to a top-heavy structure which, in my opinion, is inconsistent with the national economy of the country. It was obviously not intended to serve the interest of the people and therefore it is not suited to our purpose. It is so expensive that our people are groaning under its burden. Therefore, even if an appeal is to be made to the masses to forgo some of the present requirements with a view to make available the present savings and articles of consumption for the future economic development, the example must be set by those who are at the top both in the Government and commercial and industrial interests. I am firmly convinced that the existing wealth-producing capacity of the country cannot bear the strain of the higher incomes and earnings of the classes which are out to perpetuate this tradition without taking into consideration the over-all interests of the masses. The income and consumption of the various sections of the community would have to be co-related with the wealth of the country and I believe that the existing disproportionate economic distribution of the national wealth is the main ground for the disturbances in the economic structure. The Government has set up the Planning Commission as desired by the Parliament about six months back. Now that the Commission has had sufficient time to study the important problems facing the country, we hope it will place before the country its own analysis of the situation, suggest plans of development and re-adjustments of the economic structure and determine the priorities. In this connection, I would urge upon the powers that be to give priorities in the first instance to the development of our agriculture, irrigation and rural resources so as to ensure increased production in food and industrial raw materials. The resources of the country being limited, any plan for utilization of the economic resources for industrial development will be a diversion, unsuited to our country.

Labour Legislations

The Government has on the anvil two labour legislations dealing with the organization of trade unions and settlement of industrial disputes by conciliation and arbitration. I have no hesitation in giving my support to the general principles of these two Bills and the Working Committee of the Indian National Trade Union Congress has while approving the general principles underlying them, strongly criticized certain objectionable features of

the Bills. The Government's assumption of power to modify or reject the awards of the Tribunal is an undemocratic and retrograde step and, therefore, that provision must be dropped. The exclusion of the questions of retrenchment, including reduction of workers by rationalization and construing workers as 'surplus' from the ambit of industrial disputes is also unacceptable. We also feel that the procedure laid down in the Bill for the settlement of the disputes requires to be amended so as to make it as prompt as possible. The scheme of the Act should prohibit any arbitrary or unilateral action by either party without following the legal procedure. I hope that when the Labour Relations Bill emerges from the Select Committee it will have undergone necessary changes and be free from its defects. *** I do not say that either the present draft Bill or what we expect to get in the final stage is going to be perfect in all its aspects. But the *laissez faire* policy of the leading parties to settle their disputes by strikes having met with failures, a new approach to the problem of industrial relations is necessary and the new legislation is an attempt in this direction and as such deserves support of the working classes. If the working will show the defects in actual practice, they will certainly be subsequently removed.

Proper Basis of Industrial Relations

While discussing the Labour Relations Bill, I am tempted to place before the Conference, in general terms, my own view about proper industrial relations. I have been in the trade union movement for the last three decades and had the privilege of understanding these problems from Gandhiji directly. From the experience I have acquired, I have come to the conclusion that industrial relations can only be adjusted smoothly by recourse to conciliation and arbitration and failing that by adjudication. During the British regime, we have gone through a period of industrial relations in this country based on the traditional principles of *laissez faire* methods. If that experience in our country had succeeded, we would have had by now the strongest trade union organization but the actual result is otherwise. The employers and the Communists, imbued with the usual notions of industrial relations, followed the path of direct action resulting in acute hardships and disastrous consequences to both the industry and the working class. If we have learnt anything from this history, we must come to the conclusion that the policy and methods of unregulated relations between the employers and workers have failed to achieve any substantial gain for the working class either in the matter of material benefit or organized strength. During the same period some important industrial centres like Ahmedabad, Indore and Jamshedpur followed the principles and methods of conciliation and arbitration as preached and practised under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. It is a matter of history that where these alternative methods were followed, the workers' organizations gained strength, and raised the status of the working class by giving them not only a higher standard of living but also raising them morally and politically. The conclusion is, therefore, obvious that even normally the solution of an industrial dispute by peaceful means as indicated above is the best solution in the interests of everybody. In the present situation of our country, this method is by far the most effective and beneficial. As I have stated in some other context, the blind imitation of methods practised in some industrially developed countries is not appropriate for our purposes. I can say with emphasis that the policy of "direct action" in every case is most unsuitable with regard to industrial relations. The principles of arbitration and adjudication are of vital importance and best suited to the needs of the country and in the interest of all concerned. We therefore adhere to them; but in cases where the employer refuses to refer the dispute to arbitration or does not comply with the award or makes undue delay, and where the State refuses to refer a dispute to adjudication, the workers are not only entitled to but it becomes their moral duty to resort to strike to resist unilateral and arbitrary actions of either employers or the State with all

the force at their command in a peaceful and non-violent way. A strike or a satyagraha undertaken for the demand of arbitration or adjudication will have the complete support of public opinion and in my view no struggle in our country can succeed without the conscious backing of public opinion. I know that during the last three years, the Government and employers have hesitated to refer disputes to arbitration in various cases and the workers have had to resort to direct action. I would like to make it clear that when I.N.T.U.C. has accepted arbitration as the best method of resolving industrial disputes, it will not flinch from giving fight for this purpose to the employers, or if necessary even to Government if arbitration is either refused or delayed or its award ignored. Under the circumstances, the dispute does not become only inevitable but it becomes a moral issue of self-respect of the workers which must be safeguarded at whatever cost. No sacrifice would be too great for a fight unto the last for vindication of such a principle.

A Comparison with Foreign Countries

Before I conclude the discussion of industrial relations, I would like to place before this Conference what I found at the Annual Conference of I.L.O. where I had the privilege to represent the working class of this country. In my discussions with the representatives of the working class from the various countries in the West, I could find that gradually they are also coming round to this view, though it is difficult for them to get out of the old rut, to which they have been accustomed. But I have no doubt in my mind that within a short time, the working classes of the industrially advanced countries will agitate for statutory recognition of agreements and awards which is merely a legislative sanction for collective bargaining and arbitration. A lot of confusion prevails today regarding the proper relations between workers and employers. I will make an attempt to elucidate the position and status of workers in relation to the industry and the community. The workers are an integral part of the productive industry and not merely hirelings or wageserfs. They are, therefore, as important as the employers who invest their money and employ their skill in management. Neither of them is the owner of the industry; the consumers or the community who pay for the finished product is the real owner of the industry—erstwhile employer is merely a servant of the community like the worker. When there is a difference of opinion between the worker and the employer leading to a deadlock, the community has not only the right but a duty to interfere and provide a machinery to resolve a dispute by applying principles of justice and equity. It, therefore, becomes the duty of a democratic State to regulate by law settlement of disputes. The enactment of the Labour Relations Bill is a step in that direction, even though imperfect. I am convinced that the working of such a legislation by various parties engaged in industrial production will pave the way for gradual evolution of an industrial code and mutual relations acceptable to the producers and the country. One of the main reasons why industrial relations have not assumed a proper and equitable standard, recognized by all concerned, is the peculiar privileges claimed by the industrialist for his alleged risks in the enterprise he initiates. By his emphasis on private gains, he vitiates the entire picture and gives it the form of a family concern and a vested interest, instead of a service to the community where he too is a co-server with others. Any legislation that seeks to curtail his rights and show him his proper place is therefore hated by him. The Labour Relations Bill is just a first step in democratizing industrial relations. We shall gradually march further that way till a stage is reached when industries are run solely for the needs of the people and the employer figures nowhere. This gradual elimination of his importance is a way towards nationalization of the industries.

ASSAM EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FUND

From 20-11-'50 to 25-11-'50

Names & Place	Rs as ps
Shree Ayar Kanji Meraman, Kundarodi	5 0 0
Shree Maganbhai D. Desai, Baroda	5 0 0
Shree Popatlal G. Shah, Bombay	125 0 0
Staff of the New India Insurance Co., through N. J. Dave, Bombay	348 0 0
Visitors to Mahalakshmi Temple through N. J. Dave, Bombay (after 10th)	107 0 0
Shree Arkalgud Sreekantiah, Holenarsipur	25 4 0
Shree J. L. Patil, Salsavadagi	5 0 0
Shree S. Ramalingam, Vilagam	10 0 0
Shree Savitabai P. Naik, Mangalore	5 0 0
Shree Kirtichandra Sharma, Pij	5 0 0
Shree Manek K. Dastur, Bombay	30 0 0
The Theosophy Company (India) Ltd., through Shree B. P. Wadia, Bombay	500 0 0
Shree Kantilal Shah, Ghodnadi	5 0 0
Shree Prabhakar Sharma, Mirapur Ladhya	5 0 0
Shree Bhide, Poona	100 0 0
Labour Wages of the Students of Sharada Mandir, Vallabhvidyanagar	50 0 0
Savings from semi-fast from the Students of Sharada Mandir, Vallabhvidyanagar	51 0 0
Shree Sharada Mandir, (Misc.) Vallabhvidyanagar	58 0 0
Shree Virji & Co., Jharia	501 0 0
Shree Shashikant Trading Co. through N. J. Dave, Bombay	201 0 0
Shree N. J. Dave (from Mahalakshmi Temple), Bombay	144 12 9
Shree Nemidas Vishanji & Co., Sangli	100 0 0
Shree Avinashchandra Pradhan, Lucknow	15 0 0
Sum already acknowledged	21,762 2 3
Total Rs	24,163 3 0

B. C. G. Vaccine in Britain

The following question and answer in the British House of Commons are taken from the *Anti-vivisectionist* of September-October, 1950, p. 44:

Mr Remnant asked the Minister of Health whether he has considered the merits of B. C. G. vaccine as a tuberculosis immunizer, and whether he will make it available to the public.

Mr Bevan: A trial use of the vaccine is being made for selected cases, but I am advised that it would not yet be suitable for indiscriminate use.

I hope the Health Ministry in New Delhi will take note of this and watch their steps.

V. G. D.

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