

HARIJAN

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI
(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

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TWO ANNAS

REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

III

Other Necessary and Important Reforms

Further to the welcome reform in the medium of instruction there are other new reforms which have become necessary. As I stated previously, they present themselves before us on the basis of the recommendations of the Mudaliar and Radhakrishnan Reports; as for example:

1. Where will the high school stage begin?
2. Secondly, how far should the high school stage continue?
3. Thirdly, how should the high school stage be related to the primary or the basic stage?
4. And fourthly, what relation will it have with the further stage of higher or university education?

I may not discuss these questions of reform elaborately and merely state my views regarding them without going into argument:

1. Henceforward the high school should realize that its main function begins with standard eight and that if it has standards five to seven today it is merely expedient on account of our peculiar circumstances.

2. The function of the high school is to carry on the instruction imparted during the basic stage of the 6-14 age group further as post-basic instruction. I understand that this is at present the main idea being described by the phrase 'multi-purpose high school'. I may here mention that 'matriculation minus English' was what Gandhiji meant by basic education and that according to him it included what is known as secondary education. Government education departments sub-divided this stage into two merely to suit their administrative convenience. They laid down that the years after the primary stage of four years shall be reckoned within the secondary stage. However, while making this unnatural sub-division they took care to reckon primary and secondary standards as one entire whole as standards one to eleven. If it means anything it does this that the department also recognizes the unity of the whole process of

education during the primary and secondary stages as one indivisible whole.

3. The high school should add to its function the instruction given at the university up to the intermediate stage. The recommendation of the Mudaliar Commission that such-type of high schools called higher secondary schools is worth considering.

Programme for the Bombay State

If these reforms are to be incorporated in the educational set-up of the Bombay State,

1. The years of primary education which have been reduced from eight to seven should again be restored to eight. Experience of the innovation over a sufficiently long period indicates the desirability of the restoration. This can easily be done either by sub-dividing standard one into a junior stage after the age of six for a year and a senior stage for another year or by going back on the old practice of having an infant class for a year before standard one.

2. The high school should add standard twelve after standard eleven and the university should undertake imparting instruction only after what is at present known as the intermediate class in colleges.

3. The first degree course at the university stage should extend up to two years only. In our region the university cannot afford the expenses of a three year degree course. This means that the university itself should undertake the work for these two years. One year more may be given for those who desire to take up an honours course.

As the reform suggested in 3 does not concern us directly as secondary teachers I shall not elaborate the point further. We are concerned only with the student class between the age of fourteen and eighteen and we should therefore consider the question of their training in more detail.

Importance of the 14-18 Age Group

How important the question of this training is does not require any mention. They are the most valuable years in the age of the student, that is, the future citizen. It is the nation's basic and primary duty to see that they receive during these years of their lives true and comprehensive education. To hope to re-build the nation without the foundation of such education would be vain

indeed. It would be like hoping to erect a mansion on an unsound foundation; for such a mansion it will be unwise to expect to have storeys as superstructure. This is the reason why education up to this age is compulsory in progressive nations and that is also why we seek to do the same thing in our own country. A national scheme of universal compulsory education must embrace the child's age from six to seventeen or eighteen years.

The Seed of Reform : Labour and Craft-training

And the pivot of such universal education consists in bringing out the full meaning of the cultural and social value of labour or work and handicrafts. I am not advocating work with the hand and craft-training as mere means of earning; such economic gain will be its inevitable consequence. What I want to emphasize is that these two have been responsible for bestowing on man, the human animal, his peculiarity and his strength distinguishing him from other animals on earth. By the use of his hands and his fingers man has utilized his scientific intelligence to create and build up his civilization. When the English system of our education bade good-bye to these two essentials of civilization we invited a great evil upon us as a nation. Unless we again place them in their position of pride in our system of education we can hardly hope to progress as a nation. Even as the system of education which is passing away had English as its seed, the seed for the new plant of education we now want is the one indicated above. As I understand it, this is the essence and meaning of the new idea of education Gandhiji has left to us. It is for us teachers now to begin to embody the idea in a system by our faith, perseverance and industry.

Multi-purpose High Schools

A word of caution will not be out of place here. Our colleges have fallen prey to a craze for specialization in all branches of study. Occupational technical training is getting the better of cultural education. The evil effects of both these trends have begun to percolate to the high schools also. When multi-purpose high schools begin to function there is a danger of these effects getting stronger. If these evils descended to the high schools it is likely to do grave injury to national education. Secondary teachers have to be vigilant in this direction. We must therefore see to it that this new type of multi-purpose high school is not planned and organized as an institution for mere technical education, but it must be an institution for training in culture through labour that is work with the hands and craft-training, which are inseparable elements of education for life and culture; indeed they are the medium of education and they must therefore energize and animate our entire planning for these high schools.

Education Should be Independent

Opportunity and freedom to try new experiments in dealing with the child is the life breath

of the work of new education. The one meaning of the saying that the nation must have freedom for its development and progress is that the teacher should have freedom in organizing his work of teaching. That national education to be national has to be free of government control is true not only in the case of a foreign government but all governments. The British Government in India started and perfected a method of government control through grants-in-aid to schools and educational institutions. They have left this method to us as a bad legacy. It is my considered opinion that this method should now undergo a drastic reorientation.

In the same manner if the teacher or the school had no freedom to experiment in matters like text-books, courses of studies, time-tables and such others the new method of education we seek to establish will hardly have a chance to take root and flower into all its beauty.

It is true we teachers have to earn this freedom by our own effort and work for the new idea. But it does not mean that we should get that freedom or independence when we prove that we deserve it. No. The case is on the same footing as when we demanded Swaraj from the foreigner. If one wants to learn to swim one has to plunge into water. Capacity to digest freedom and to derive benefit from it develops only under freedom and along with it. It is time this truth is incorporated in our system of education if the life of the people of India is to develop in all its strength and grandeur.

The plant of new education will take root in our land and draw sustenance from it only if this sort of freedom is allowed in the field of education. Only then will our gifted young men and women be inspired to take to the profession of teaching in the spirit of dedication and national service. Nations build up the strength of their people through two institutions,— religion and national education. History teaches us that the spirit of true Swaraj and democracy can grow in a people only when they can enjoy freedom in these two fields of their national life.

Teachers' Problems

Please do not misunderstand me when I am saying that the teacher should do his work in a spirit of dedication. I certainly do not want to suggest that the teacher should do his job with no remuneration or with whatever he might be allowed. Neither do I in this connection perceive much meaning in placing before teachers the analogy of the ancient *guru*. Teaching is surely a vocation and there is no harm in accepting it as such. What I only wish to emphasize is that the teacher should never forget the spirit of his vocation that it is a self-imposed duty and a great work of national service. Questions like grades in service, age of retirement, rules for service, the teacher's relation with the management and the government department of education etc. are details of importance because these matters touch

the question of the teacher's self-respect and contentment.

Secondary education has nowadays become a matter of private enterprise. Government have been following a policy of handing over high schools run by them to deserving private bodies. The policy that even private enterprise shall not be on the lines of private ownership but trust ownership has been laid down. The aim of all these changes is to drive out the element of business or trade which has unfortunately entered to a large extent in the field of secondary education and to create conditions wherein the work of teaching can be carried on in an atmosphere conducive to real education of the pupil. Now I am sure no one can have any quarrel with this aim. But we must go into the details of the question and consider how this aim can be fulfilled. While considering the ways and means for achieving the aim it should be kept in mind that the achievement would be impossible unless the teacher is allowed to work in freedom, unless he can work with honour and self-respect and unless he is contented. It may also be remarked that to believe that the trust and not the individual will perform the work better may as well prove mistaken. It is an undisputed principle that the quality of the world of man will ultimately depend on the quality of the individual. The royal road to the improvement of the quality of the individual is his freedom to grow to and understand and shoulder responsibility.

The subject of a teacher's charter, i.e., the statement of his rights and duties, is often discussed in teachers' conferences. The idea is worth taking up. But such a charter could be of help in organizing the machinery for national education if it was based on the idea that teaching is a social service, is an act of service to the nation. Such a charter would also be helpful in building up certain healthy conventions of honourable conduct in the teacher's profession.

10-2-'55

(From the original in Gujarati)

By Mahatma Gandhi

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SPEAK TO THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The Avadi Congress resolutions were available in Hindi also, but it appears they were originally drafted in English and then were translated into Hindi. This is now a matter worthy of consideration.

The official language of the Congress is Hindustani. This must now be fully observed. Thus acting, this great organization can pave the way for the Government of India also to do likewise by 1965.

For instance, what term would have been used for the expression 'Socialistic Pattern of Society', if the resolution had been originally in Hindi? I am not asking this from a narrow spirit of any exclusive love of our languages, though love of one's language is nothing wrong. There are serious reasons for my asking it. I may better quote Jawaharlalji to describe them.

He was the president of the 1936 Lucknow Congress. His message to the Socialist Party in the Congress which met at that time contained the following:

"As you know, I am vastly interested in the Socialist approach to all questions. It is right that we should understand the theory underlying this approach. This helps to clarify our mind and give purpose to our activities. But two aspects of this question fill my own mind. One is how to apply this approach to Indian conditions. The other is how to speak of Socialism in the language of India.

"I think it is often forgotten that if we are to be understood, we must speak the language of the country. I am not merely referring to the various languages of India. I am referring much more to the language which grows from a complex of associations of past history and culture and present environment. So long as we do not speak in some language which has that Indian mentality for background, we lose a great measure of our effectiveness. Merely to use words and phrases, which may have meaning for us but which are not current coin among the masses of India, is often wasted effort. It is this problem of the approach to Socialism that occupies my mind—how to interpret it in terms of India, how to reach the hearts of the people, with its hope-giving and inspiring message. That is a question which I should like a Socialist to consider well."

It is fairly about twenty years now when we are again being treated to socialistic talks. And now it is the Congress itself that begins it. The observations contained above therefore, become very relevant and deserve to be noted.

It was a unique characteristic of the leadership of Gandhiji that he instinctively observed this law of successful working among the people. It not only helped him to succeed in his work, but also he could thereby win the hearts of our people. This way was natural to him, for he yearned to work for them and to do that he all along looked to our villages and lived in their midst so that he might not miss to know the village people well enough to touch their hearts and to intuitively know their minds.

Therefore, as Shri Jawaharlalji aptly says, what is Socialism and socialistic pattern should

be told them not only in their own language but also in such terms that they may know what it will mean to them in their real life and work. Obviously, for that thing, it is necessary to work constructively from below and not from above and speak in their own language.

18-3-'55

(From the original in Gujarati)

HARIJAN

April 2

1955

REVOLUTION: THROUGH VIOLENCE OR NON-VIOLENCE ?

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The Parliament is discussing at present an amendment to Art. 31 of the Constitution pertaining to the citizen's right to property. It is natural that various objections may be raised against such a fundamental change and that it is even being totally opposed. However, the question is quite simple, though it must be noted that it goes deeper and has more far-reaching consequences than are realized by the opponents of the amendment.

Right to property is a legal right, that is, a right set up and recognized by man-made law. It is natural that man should have and possess things essential to life. But man as he is constituted is prone to steal from the possessions of others, is prone even to robbing them. This is also man's natural tendency or we may say his defect. This defective tendency in man has to be checked and controlled. It is also equally true and important that things essential to life should, as a matter of course, be available to every one. We thus arrive at the conclusion that not only should the tendency of men to steal or rob other people's possessions and property be checked and controlled but also there should be some order or rule regarding man's proneness to collect and possess things as property. As man went on functioning in society by this dual logic he had to set up the institution of the State and its law. Therein lies the reason and the purpose of the institution of State and its law in society and so too their fulfilment.

So the State affords legal protection to property honestly acquired by its citizens and ordains that such acquisition is just. No one then can dispossess the citizen of such property, not even the State itself. And if the State considered it necessary to dispossess some citizen of his honestly acquired and justly held property for public good, it is bound to do so legally and to compensate to the dispossessed citizen for it. Only such property that is dishonestly acquired or unjustly held can be taken away from its owner without compensation and it may then be transferred to its rightful owner or it may be forfeited to the State.

Thus, a well-organized or just political order recognizes three fundamentals: (1) that right to property honestly acquired and justly held be safeguarded; (2) that if the State for reasons of public good deemed it necessary to dispossess a citizen of his property it should do so legally and compensate the owner for it; and (3) that minimum essential property or means of livelihood are made available to everyone of the citizens.

The three statements enumerated above have been recognized as fundamental in the Constitution of our country. No doubt they should not be lightly tampered with or altered. But in the ultimate analysis the Constitution of a country is also a law of the land. And law unfortunately becomes the game of the lawyer and the courts. The law of the Constitution too is not immune from this tendency.

So, the argument that the Constitution can never be amended does not stand valid. Recognizing the possibility of change the Constitution itself has laid down a precise procedure for the purpose.

While the nation has been endeavouring to march forward in the direction of progressing the need for an amendment has been keenly felt for some time since. The problem facing the nation is this: The grossly cruel economic disparities regarding property and income as they are perceived have to be removed. Means of production available to the nation have to be worked in the interest and service of the nation as a whole. To this end some citizens might have to be dispossessed of their property. If that has to be done, what should be the compensation to be paid to such citizens? How was the compensation to be assessed? What would be just compensation?

Courts and lawyers commonly tend to follow and uphold traditional values prevailing in society; thus they would hold that the current market rate of property should be the measure of compensation. Could such measure be considered right in view of the inequalities, poverty and unemployment? Could it be deemed really just?

When such a basic problem faced some peoples of the world in their history they had to wade through bloody revolutions for its solution. When the Constitution of a country or its courts fail to show an effective way for a peaceful solution of such a problem like the one we as a nation are facing today peoples and nations have been known to have continued their march in the direction of progress by violence. Those who are today building their case on the argument of the immutability of the Constitution dare not ignore this point involved in the present controversy. It is more likely than not that people of this persuasion are consciously or unconsciously being misled by unexpressed notions of faith in a capitalistic order of society which assures and safeguards the interest of the haves at the cost of the rest of the nation.

The problem that faces us today thus boils down to this simple and forthright proposition: We have secured our political freedom by the method of peaceful revolution. Do we want to achieve our economic and social freedom by the same peaceful process of revolution or do we want to drive our common people, even if unknowingly, to take the way of a sanguinary revolution? We have been successfully solving our land problem through the Bhoodan movement and by abolishing the Zamindari system of holding land, and by amending our tenancy laws. What then do we propose to do to solve the problem regarding other properties in industry etc.?

In this regard Gandhiji has prescribed to us the doctrine of trusteeship. Legislation should follow that principle. I may rather say that in Swaraj the doctrine will generally work through suitable laws enacted in a democratic manner. If we prove incapable of doing so we had better realize, sooner rather than later, that the people would inevitably be landed into the situation of a violent and bloody revolution.

The Parliament is earnestly trying to find a peaceful way out of this dilemma by amending Section 31 of the Constitution. The amendment proposed suggests that in certain matters pertaining to the field of our national life which is pregnant with revolutionary possibilities courts are incapable of determining compensation for properties to be taken over by the nation. If they were allowed to do it they are likely to adopt traditional standards of justice; and such justice could never be true social justice. It is the function of the Parliament who is the authoritative representative of public opinion to establish such justice and courts, with their traditional or customary standards, cannot be allowed to interfere with it. We should show the capacity to take such a step in a democratic manner if we wish to achieve revolution by peaceful means. Otherwise, notions of unconstitutional and sanguinary ways for social change are sure to prevail over the minds of the people, which, as we know, are acceptable to the communist way. The vital difference between the communist and the democratically socialist way is to be found here. It is quite plain that the Indian people who have chosen to follow the Sarvodaya way and its doctrine of trusteeship cannot but adopt the democratic and non-violent way of revolution.

23-3-'55

(From the original in Gujarati)

By Vinoba Bhave

BHOODAN YAJNA

[Land-Gifts Mission]

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P.O. NAVAJIVAN, AHMEDABAD - 14

PERMANENT LITERATURE IS ABOVE SECTS*

(By Vinoba)

It is a matter of great pleasure that I have an opportunity to meet you all. I have already travelled on my mission in three of our great provinces: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal and in all the three of them I have received the blessings of the men of letters. I have also had their sympathy. They have willingly given unstinted co-operation in the work of Bhoodan as also in the cause of Sarvodaya.

You must have heard of Shri Maithilisharan Gupta and Shri Siyaramsharan Gupta who are both great poets of Uttar Pradesh. In fact on our mission we had camped at their residence. At Chirgaon in the Zansli District nearly all the Hindi men of letters had come together. They all blessed us and our work.

Then on in Bihar the men of letters gave us their co-operation in plenty. The names of Benpuriji and Dimkarji are known throughout the province. Both of them wrote on the mission and expressed their sympathy in abundance.

In Bengal our success was beyond expectation. Men of letters who have already established their reputation in the field of literature were kind enough to come and meet me. They heard whatever I had to say with deep sympathy. Later on Shri Tarashankar Vandopadhyaaya wrote an article on the topic in the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*. Therein he let us know that his heart was in the movement right from its beginning.

After my travels in these three regions I have now entered your province.

Men of Letters Are above Sect or Class

Men and women who have given themselves to the pursuit of literature are never sectarian; they do not belong to any one religion or sect. Why, the very fundamental characteristic of men of letters is that they are above narrow sects and sectarian loyalties. Those who are bound by sectarian loyalties can never hope to create permanent literature. They can but give literature which merely serves the need of the moment. Men and women who leave behind them literature of permanent value are always free from feelings of sects and religions; indeed, they are above them. They are by their very nature, attracted to any event which touches life's very fundamentals or tends to revolutionize it. To begin with such an event may belong to some religion or sect, but if it shows elements affecting the fundamentals of life the true man of letters is sure to be drawn to it. This has been my own experience. Truth to say I did not make any special attempt to draw the attention of our men of literature to this cause; their attention was naturally attracted to it and they began to look to it with eagerness, hope and faith. The political parties followed suit. Men in the Congress, in the Praja Socialist Party and others came to realize that this mission had in it such elements as could not but influence politics. Thus they too began to give their attention to it.

Aim of Bhoodan Is to Serve the Daridranarayana

The poor and the lowly of our land had of course been attracted to the cause from the very beginning. They felt that here was work in the cause of the Daridranarayana himself. They had expected that after the advent of Swaraj some movement whose sole aim was to serve them would begin. But we saw that after Swaraj was established nothing of the sort came to pass. Those who carried the burden of Government had their own peculiar difficulties. So, what the poor expected did not come about. But they, the poor of the land, were eagerly waiting to see, as Swaraj had come, what was proposed to be done for them i.e. for improving their condition. For these people the Bhoodan movement has proved to be something which gave new

* From the speech delivered before men of letters at Baleshar (Utkal) on 6-2-'55.

life. Not that the movement has rendered any very great direct help to them. In fact, we, through the movement, have yet been able to collect only thirtysix lakhs of acres of land. This land will go into their hands when it will be distributed. Till now though nothing actually has come to them the phrase, service of Daridranarayana, has come into popular vogue all over India.

This word Daridranarayana is not new. It was coined by Swami Vivekananda. His urge to serve the poor and the lowly of the land was so deep, and the vow that he took to do so was so great that the word came naturally to him. Later on Deshabandhu Das made it current and Gandhiji made its use universal. He begged money for the Khadi movement in the name of the Daridranarayana from all over the country. He got the money which went into the starting of the Charkha Sangha. At a time when the State did not belong to us, when it belonged to Englishmen, when no one bothered about the poor of India's villages, Gandhiji drew everyone's attention to them. After Swaraj they had hoped that the State would be theirs; that the nation would first and immediately undertake to raise them from their condition. Why, people had expected that the Viceregal Lodge would soon after Swaraj be converted into a hospital. Gandhiji himself had said something to that effect. Well, somehow it did not come to pass.

Gandhiji's Insight Was Extraordinary

I was working among the refugees in Delhi in those days. They used to make a grievance that though Gandhiji had asked for the conversion of the Viceregal Lodge into a hospital it was not done. They had no shelter in those days. So, naturally, their eyes turned to the Big House. They used to say, why, only a very few people were occupying it! Well, that too was not to be. . . .

We understand that Gandhiji possessed a wonderful intuitive insight which led him to immediate identification with the heart and the aspirations of people. He had no need to think long over it or to reason it out with himself. What magic, after all, was there in a handful of salt? Who could have thought of wasting his attention on it? True, Gokhale had on some occasions spoken in the Imperial Legislative Council to the effect that there should not be any tax on salt. Gandhiji intuitively took his cue from the suggestion and showed to the Indian world and the whole world what magic common salt possessed. He declared that it should be available to the people without cost. Almost all our languages have a significant word: *namak-haram*. Among other things it signifies that if there was any one thing which lent taste or appetizing quality to the whole of life it was salt. The English have a phrase: 'bread and butter'! But in our country instead of bread and butter we say bread and salt. Gandhiji declared that we would manufacture or pick salt without any hindrance and break the law of the British. People were left wondering how making of salt in this manner could lead to a universal movement for civil disobedience of the laws of the State, but the idea worked because it had the seed which touched the very life of the people of the country.

Women Embody Culture

Take another instance: that of picketing of liquor shops and booths. Gandhiji made our sisters do the job. People were discussing as to who was to do the picketing. They could not dream of allotting the task to our sisters. These liquor shops, they argued, were dens of goondas. Men and women from the lowest strata of society infested them. Then Gandhiji came out with the curious proposal that our sisters be sent to the task. And what was the state of our womenfolk in those days? They never stirred out of their homes. They were secluded behind the purdah. They used to wear costly ornaments, which were in reality but shackles put on their wrists and ankles though made of gold and silver. Moreover, they were known as the weaker sex; they were known to be timid. And the suggestion of sending out these sisters to face the dregs of society and goondas so obviously seemed, to say the least, strange. People began objecting that the atmosphere of the localities where liquor was vended reeked

of foulness physical and of language. How could, they said, we think of sending our sisters in such places? But Gandhiji replied that our sisters embodied in themselves the best that was in our culture and that where lack of all culture had to be dealt with it should be done by those who represented the best of it. He pointed out that if we wanted to fight evil, we had to do it through those from amongst us who embodied good in themselves. The forces of darkness can be successfully coped with only by the forces of light. Then we saw how well Gandhiji's idea worked. Our sisters went to their job and the addicts were ashamed of themselves. Such then, we saw, was Gandhiji's natural intuitive insight. He had the wonderful intuition which led him to identify himself with those who were insignificant in the eyes of the world. And, besides, it came naturally to him. These were the ideas and movements which lent immense strength to our forces of freedom. Others there were who thought of these ways from the wrong end. They used to believe and say that the items of our programme for the fight for freedom, such as prohibition, Khadi etc. derived their strength from their association with the struggle for Swaraj. What they failed, however, to perceive was that these items of the programme animated our people. In truth, the movement for Swaraj derived its moral basis from them. And then we had Swaraj.

So if we now have before us any task to perform it should necessarily be for and in the service of the poor. So, later on Bhoodan came. We secured thirtysix lakhs of acres of land through the movement. Surely, this achievement is nothing big. But its great significance lies in the way these few acres were obtained for the poor of the land. If merely the acres of land so far secured in Bhoodan were counted they certainly do not amount to much. Land in India is estimated at about thirty to forty crores of acres. Compared with that figure these thirtysix lakhs work out to a mere one per cent of the total acreage in the country.

But for men of letters this phenomenon in the India of today should be particularly significant. And for this reason: They have a capacity to recognize even a small spark where others remain blind to a dazzling light. A single spark is enough for the man of literature. They enjoy the capacity to realize the full significance of the spark, the germ of light and the seed of a blaze. Others can judge of a seed only when they see and taste the fruit. Then only can they say if it is sweet or sour. The sense of perception and taste bestowed on the man of literature, however, is unalloyed and pure. The word used in our ancient language for the man of literature is *kavi*— poet.

कविः कालदर्शी— the poet is he who can perceive change or revolution. Merely writing out the letters of the alphabet in a particular order does not make a poet. The poet is he who has the capacity to perceive the on-coming change, he who can see in the future, the beyond. The world lacks this capacity to see the beyond behind the present, because its eyes are shaded by a curtain. So he who is able to see beyond the present, to perceive the coming change or revolution is the poet. The sight of the ultimate and the beyond is open to the eyes of the poet, not so to the eyes of the ordinary man of the world. The poet is able to see the whole in a mere sign or a small symbolic event. As it is, now we have been able to get through Bhoodan some land, but in the days when we were going about on our mission in Uttar Pradesh we were not in a position to show results. Even in those days Shri Maithilisharanji and Shri Siyaramsharanji were attracted to this cause and they could perceive and say that it expressed the innermost heart of this ancient land of Bharata. Whatever manifests the spark of life attracts the man of letters. I would therefore request you all to view our work, our mission, the cause of Bhoodan with unblinded minds.

(From Hindi)

ROAD TO SOCIALISTIC PATTERN OF SOCIETY

(By Vaikunthbhai L. Mehta)

II

Self-Employment

Even more important is another sector of our economy, that of self-employed persons engaged in industries other than agriculture who, in the aggregate, contribute more to the national income than factory enterprises and who number many times those engaged, on a wage basis, in the factories. Unfortunately, among producers of wealth their *per capita* income is the smallest. This is due to the fact that, like their comrades in the field of agriculture, these self-employed persons have poor resources, are subject to exploitation, are unable, under the stress of competition, to find enough work throughout the year and have above all neither the knowledge nor the wherewithal to achieve technical improvement.

In the Directives of Social Policy embodied in the Constitution, there is a reference to the promotion of cottage industries on a co-operative basis in rural areas, a basis which found acceptance with the Economic Programme Committee as likely to be helpful in keeping out the element of exploitation and securing orderly growth, both technical and organizational. It is through these industrial co-operatives or rural multi-purpose co-operative societies that we have to plan for the redress of the grievous imbalance in our economy between agriculture and industry.

Unemployment

That takes us to a consideration of the cancer of unemployment which cuts into the vitals of our national life. Without making any direct reference to this problem, the Economic Programme Committee came to the conclusion that "the aim of economic planning (in this context) should be to provide for the full employment of human, animal and natural resources with maximum productive efficiency in order to reach the national minimum standard of living which should ensure a balanced diet, sufficient clothing and living accommodation to every family." Equally clear was the Committee in its view that industries producing articles of food and clothing and other consumer goods should constitute the decentralized sector of Indian economy, developed on a cottage or small-scale basis and run, preferably, on co-operative lines.

The location of these industries providing full and varied employment of man-power and raw materials should be so planned, it was recommended, as to make districts of average size as nearly self-sufficient as possible in respect of consumers' goods, particularly food and cloth, which supply the needs of the people. In order to secure this development, the Committee urged that "the respective spheres of large-scale, small-scale and cottage industries should be demarcated as clearly as possible to avoid economic insecurity and destructive competition." That the State Policy should be directed towards this end is also

the view of the Planning Commission when it suggests the formulation of common production programmes for the related large-scale, small-scale and cottage industries.

State Policy

The clear enunciation of State Policy in the sphere of industries producing consumers' goods, becomes a matter of urgency not merely in the light of these definitive recommendations, but also because of the demands and expectations arising out of the decision to plan for a socialistic order of society. From the sociological point of view, to quote from a recent publication of Mr Bertrand Russell's, the "lack of opportunity for personal initiative is one of the great dangers of the modern world." In India, we still have the opportunity open to us to plan for an order of society in which, to the extent that is feasible and that is compatible with our objectives, we can provide for the exercise of these qualities which enrich human endeavour and minimize the scope for the exercise of powers of control and authority over the lives of the industrial producers.

Petty Dictators

Most kinds of manufactures of consumption goods, Mr G. D. H. Cole remarks in "the British Co-operative Movement in a Socialist Society", "are better suited to co-operative organization than to nationalization" and presumably even more so than industrialization of the capitalist variety. The "road to a better society", as Mr Aldous Huxley summed up in his *Ends and Means*, "is the road of decentralization and responsible self-government." "Capitalism", as he says elsewhere, "tends to produce a multiplicity of petty dictators each in command of his own little business kingdom. State socialism tends to produce a single, centralized totalitarian dictatorship wielding absolute authority over all its subjects through a hierarchy of bureaucratic agents." To increase the number of co-operatives and to extend their scope may not look revolutionary, but it would certainly result in a radical modification in the existing system in the direction of common ownership and distributive justice.

However, it is neither the psychological nor the sociological consideration that should impel us to plan for the vigorous development of decentralized consumers' industries on co-operative lines as an integral part of our socialistic pattern of society with the shelter afforded or protection of the type contemplated by the Economic Programme Committee of the Congress and by the Planning Commission. It is extremely doubtful if the spectre of unemployment can be laid at rest unless we provide on an organized, systematic basis and on a nation-wide scale employed in rural areas, partly in part-time occupations, partly in full-time industries.

There is, indeed, scope for additional employment on roads, canals, field embankments through the extension of agriculture to reclaimed

lands or through the increased availability of irrigation for the crops. That will absorb some of the population surplus to the land, but large numbers will still remain who are in the category of earning or non-earning dependents, both agricultural and non-agricultural.

First Essential

Besides, while planning for intensified industrialization, account is invariably taken of idle installed capacity, no such consideration is given to the handlooms, the *ghanis* and the other appliances of cottage workers which rarely work to capacity for lack of resources or of markets. It is this installed capacity the full use of which must be the nation's first concern, so that the objective of economic planning, as set forth by the Economic Programme Committee, can be brought within reach of attainment by the immediate increase of the means for fuller employment. The numbers who can ply and should be enabled to ply at the traditional occupations, industries and crafts is already large and gets swollen as time passes, because agriculture cannot find sustenance for increasing numbers. It is these persons willing to do a good day's work for a bare living that throng towns and cities, adding to the complexities of the social problems of unregulated urbanization. The intensification of large-scale industries, whether producing capital goods or consumers' goods, as past experience shows, can provide employment only for a fraction of these large numbers of the unemployed and practically none for the under-employed.

Positive Step

Moreover, the growth of industries producing consumers' goods invariably spells the displacement from their traditional crafts of large numbers and should, therefore, in a socially controlled economy, be disallowed. The positive step which follows, as a corollary, is the intensification of production by organized effort in the corresponding cottage industry. Such a process is essential to check the growth of unemployment, to increase employment opportunities, to enable production to expand in pace with demand and, above all, to permit of our planned economic effort resulting in more equitable distribution of wealth and income. One of the makers of modern Israel, Mr Ben Gurion, has said that "the evil of the world stems from our attempts to live off the labour of others." The father of our nation gave us the same message, namely, that democracy should inform productive activity and that we should ever strive to achieve economic self-sufficiency. In planning for a new social order, let us not ignore this teaching, for, otherwise, we shall fail to eradicate unemployment from our midst and to progress towards an equalitarian order of society.

HEALTH v. CHEMICALS

"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all argument, and which cannot fail to keep us in everlasting ignorance—this principle is contempt prior to examination."—Paley

Recently there has been much concern expressed about the indiscriminate use of chemicals in the processing of food. This awakened interest is due in part to the reports following the Committee stage discussion of the Food and Drugs Amendment Bill in the House of Commons, when it was stated that there are 700 chemicals used in foods for purposes of colouring, preserving and sweetening, and 276 of these chemicals have not been cleared as safe. They might be injurious to health. Harmful insecticides and sprays were also mentioned.

The member for Bournemouth W. said a great amount of worry is being expressed whether some of these drugs are actually harmful and might be partly responsible for the increase in certain diseases such as polio and cancer.

In an earlier issue of *The Sower* we suggested polio might be a deficiency disease.

Such suggestions are ignored or cried down. Nevertheless, our hearts and minds remain unchanged, and from the wilderness we continue to raise our voices in the endeavour to call a halt to the almost total disregard of Nature and Nature's laws.

Again we suggest Britain ought to aim at a more balanced economy, and seek to increase the fertility of her soil by practising the same infallible technique by which Nature manages her operations. A healthy soil means healthy crops, healthy animals and healthy human beings.

It is increasingly agreed that disease-resistant health depends upon good nutrition. We believe that the greater use of chemicals in the soil, in our food and drinking water, the spraying of crops with doubtful insecticides, and the removal of important foods such as the germ and bran from wheat, will cause a decrease in resistance to disease. If we feed upon artificial and 'dead' foods we can expect to be a degenerate people.

There is no wonder a crutch has to be supplied to support the cripple. The N.H.S. with its teeth, spectacles, wigs, tonics and drugs is nothing to be proud of. Certainly nothing for Britain to boast about. If we were a healthy people we should not need this expensive national crutch. The sooner we are able to discard with it, the healthier, happier, and wiser this country will be. *Good health is real wealth.*

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