

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

Vol. XIX. No. 18

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, JULY 2, 1955

TWO ANNAS

## BUREAUCRACY v. DEMOCRACY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I happened to notice a news item dated May 27 from New Delhi. It was to the effect that the Railway Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri celebrated the marriage of his daughter eschewing all the grandeur, pomp and show usually associated with a minister of Government. The railway authorities would have been eager to help in all manner of ways, but Shri Shastri did not accept it and only took the services of his personal relatives for the occasion as he would have done if he were not a minister of the Government. It is also said that the railway authorities had proposed to make special arrangements of travelling for the bridegroom's party who were to go to Delhi from Allahabad. When he learnt of the proposal, he cancelled it of his own accord. He also prevented the railway officials from arranging to bring some articles useful for the occasion free of charge.

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri deserves our congratulations for this exemplary, unassuming simplicity. One cannot escape the temptation of comparing this event with the huge fuss that was made in the name of V.I.P. at the time of the last *Kumbha Mela*.

Our bureaucracy has been very wrongly trained during the British regime in this matter. Unless the training was rectified the power of the people will not be cultivated. Let me give an instance about the railway department itself which I personally witnessed recently.

I was travelling in a day-train some days back. The crowding due to the marriage season was so unexpectedly heavy that bridegrooms who are supposed to be specially privileged persons on the occasion had to accommodate themselves in insufficient sitting space even in first class compartments. And some of them could hardly find space to stand! Passengers who were travelling from long distances with reservation tickets saw to their dismay that the railway authorities had conveniently forgotten to attach reservation labels to their compartments. They, too, had to share the rush because they did not disallow newcomers to enter their compartments as the Indian ideal of good breeding dictates.

At this very moment a big police officer had secured a whole compartment by getting the reservation label fixed to it. I was told that reservations were not allowed during the day. I was therefore surprised to see the reservation thus allowed and asked a railway official about it. He, however, ignored my question. I believe he was helpless and could not dare to take notice of my question. I feel certain that local policemen had seen the railway people and got the compartment set apart for their Saheb. How could the travelling ticket examiner dare to enquire whether the extra eight annas for reservation had been paid over and above the fare? I also drew the attention of the railway official to the strange fact that there was no reservation card for those who had reservation tickets for long distance travelling.

Only two military men were occupying a compartment meant for six persons in the same manner. The reservation label was attached to their compartment also, hence the two soldiers got some passengers who had entered the compartment to vacate it! The reservation label made the position of the unfortunate passengers helpless and the railway officers were not prepared to persuade the two men to show good manners by allowing some passengers to sit in the compartment when there was such extraordinary heavy crowding on the train.

Why should such things be possible for the police and the military? They, too, do not now have any special privileges outside the law. No one is free from the rule of the law which has been established by the Constitution in our land. But it is for the people now to assert the rule of the law by their correct behaviour and self-purification. It is up to the Government also to come to the help of the average citizen in such matters. The big task of converting the bureaucracy which is traditionally trained in the autocratic ways and habits of a system of monarchy to the ways and habits of a democratic system lies before our Governments. It does not involve any budgetary provision of capital for expenses and should be attended to before all other things. Can we hope that matters of such primary importance will be included in the Second Five Year Plan?

1-6-'55

(From Gujarati)

## "BUILDING FROM BELOW"—I

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

### 1 Objectives

Planning presupposes clearly laid out objectives and a pattern to work for. The next thing would be to decide upon a system best suited for their fulfilment. The book *Building from Below*—shortly B.F.B.—(vide previous issue, p. 132) in its first chapter discusses this and says:

"The objectives of economic development and the main principles that should govern all national institutions and their activities in India are already specified (italics mine, M.P.) in the Preamble and in the Directive Principles of the Constitution. While the Preamble sets before the country a fourfold objective, the Directive Principles specify the contents of those objectives and the role of the State in creating the operative conditions for their attainment." (*Ibid*, para 1)

Paraphrasing this, the book summarizes the objectives by saying:

"Thus, while the broad objective of economic development is the progressive raising of the standards of living of the people, the social and economic order through which it is to be realized must be equalitarian in spirit and in fact. Creation of the right social order is, thus, as important as economic progress because the latter without the former is without substance. The effectiveness of an economic system must, therefore, be judged not merely by its productive efficiency but also by its ability to subserve the main social requirements." (*Ibid*, para 4)

### 2

#### Appropriate Economic Pattern

How can these requirements be met best? Which is—if there is one—the appropriate economic system for it? The answer given by the B.F.B. plan is:

"The search for an appropriate economic system that will ensure equitable distribution of the benefits of economic progress finds the choice limited to the experience of capitalism and communism. It is not necessary to examine in detail here their respective merits and defects. It is enough to note that the operative pattern in both systems results in a sharp stratification of society—into employer and employee, master and servant, exploiter and exploited, or what you will—with all the consequent inequalities of status and opportunity with their attendant frustrations.

"The more recent attempt to evolve another system to secure for the people the advantages of both and avoid the pitfalls of each, popularly described as the 'mixed economic system' also, does not provide an effective alternative. The logic of public ownership in an overall system of private enterprise necessitates, on the one hand, increasing legal prohibitions and controls to demarcate the functions and operational field of the public sector, and public ownership of the means of production and participation in production function, on the other, results in an increase of bureaucratization of services. The original causes that lead to public ownership operate as powerfully as before, till public ownership becomes the principal form in the economy. Mixed economy at present and as it seems likely to develop in the future, thus, fails to satisfy the main need of the country.

"In other words, the known and tried economic systems, either in their approach or in their operative pattern, fail to reconcile economic development with social and economic justice; and, in the context of the serious social, economic and political frustration in the country, arising from the serious gap between achievements and expectations, the need for evolving a suitable system becomes imperative." (*Ibid*, paras 5, 6, 7)

Thus it rejects not only the two known systems of capitalism and communism, to which all agree, but it also does not accept the 'mixed economic system', for which we now use the term "socialistic pattern". And, it cuts a new line best suited to India's conditions. In doing so the approach is not merely economic, but is also social and human, because the real pattern of society we wish to have in India is unique in a way. We aspire for a free and democratic Sarvodaya society, though the B.F.B. does not use that term.

### 3

#### Essentials of the System

The following are the essentials of the system it suggests for adoption:

"An economic system will be appropriate to India only if it is based on the need to utilize her vast, growing and perishable man-power resources, to acquire all investible capital and build all social overhead capital. To be acceptable, the system must be sufficiently elastic to adjust itself progressively to the country's demographic trends on the one hand, and, on the other, must operate in a manner such that the earnings arising from the productive employment of the entire labour force are equitably distributed among its members. Such a system alone can create the conditions in which capacity to save increases simultaneously with the need for investible funds. In other words, at each stage of its operation, the system must provide the conditions for an equilibrium between demand and supply of capital.

"That this alone is the correct approach to the evolution of an appropriate economic system for India is confirmed by the growing problem of unemployment. Though its magnitude cannot be accurately measured in the absence of adequate statistical data, and indirect estimates involve many assumptions that are open to question, it is conceded that unemployment not only involves economic waste, but also constitutes a threat to the social and political stability of the country. In India today, there is, in addition to the growing number of the urban educated unemployed, widespread unemployment and disguised under-employment in the rural sector. Calculated on any basis, the combined total of their number would indeed be staggering.\*

"An acceptable economic system must, therefore, be orientated towards providing full employment to the total labour force of the country.

"Full employment implies not only the traditional economic concept of employment for the entire labour force, but also the more important social and human significance of employment that engages all faculties of the particular human being in the work assigned to him. In other words, employment needs to be not merely full, but also integral to serve simultaneously a man's individual or personal and economic needs.

"Integral employment, for the purpose of this analysis, may be defined as employment that brings into

\* In the absence of accurate statistics of unemployment two different estimates of potential unemployment in the country can be made as working hypotheses, although strict accuracy cannot be claimed for either. The breakdown of India's population by livelihood classes, and the number of the non-earning dependants in the age group 15 to 54, commonly taken as a part of the working force, yields us 8.6 crores as the potential unemployment in the country. Another estimate worked out on the basis of the difference between the total population in the age group 15-54 (1864 lakhs) and the actual labour force employed in the country (1432 lakhs), corrected for disguised under-employment in agriculture at 50 per cent shows 9.5 crores as the unemployed in the country.

full and active play all the resources of the individual. It provides full scope for all the aspects of the worker's human nature, such as initiative, enthusiasm, imagination, inventiveness, resourcefulness, perseverance etc.

"In the system of integral employment, therefore, economic development and social progress are no longer two distinct problems, but part of the same problem." (*Ibid*, paras 9, 10, 11)

## 4

## Full Self-Employment

Having shown that the main aim, therefore, is to remove unemployment by means of 'integral employment' the B.F.B. says:

"The problem is thus to evolve a form of employment that approaches the worker as an integral human being and seeks to satisfy each of his many needs.

"The only form of employment that engages the man, his faculties and time in integral economic activity and human development is self-employment.

"The largest unit in which self-employment can function without detriment, but with advantage, is the family. The family is a natural multi-purpose co-operative that seeks to satisfy the various needs of its members. Family self-employment will, therefore, facilitate the full, productive utilization of the variegated talents of its members, old and young, without in any way damaging the content or significance of self-employment. Moreover, in the process of satisfying the wants of its members, the family provides not only the multi-craft employment but also technical training to the young in accordance with their respective capacity to absorb it. It provides thus not only integral employment to all its members but creates the conditions for continued progress towards higher levels of production and consumption. Thus a system of multi-craft self-employed families provides both the form and content of integral employment and sets up not only an efficient economic system, but also a significant social order. It is now necessary to examine how it helps to attain economic efficiency and social significance. (*Ibid*, paras 12, 13, 14)

(To be continued)

## COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

(By Kshitindra Kumar Nag)

With the enormous increase in production available through the modern machine industry, advertising plays a great role — thus coming to no little influence — in the 'economic' society. Concomitant as it is with the marketing problems of the mass production how can modern advertising remain immune from catching infection of industrialism?

In concluding his conversation with an American journalist, Gandhiji said, "My view is that evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization, can eradicate them." (*Harijan*, 29-9-'40). Concurrently, at the other end of the world in the West, Wilfred Wellock now advocates, "...that the Industrial Revolution was rooted in injustice, and that violence was inherent in its ends and in its means... Its aims were maximum production, maximum sales and maximum profit, and its means minimum wages and maximum hours of labour, maximum prices by selling in the dearest markets and minimum costs by buying in the cheapest."\*

\*From his article reproduced under a suitable heading "A Permanent War-Making Economy", *Harijan*, 27-12-52.

For example, note the famous nobel-laureate physician Dr. Alexis Carrel's observation aptly testifying to the above fact. In his *Man the Unknown* on page 36 (published in Pelican Books 1948) he has written:

"Our life is influenced in a large measure by commercial advertising. Such publicity is undertaken only in the interest of the advertisers and not for the consumers. For example, the public has been made to believe that white bread is better than brown. Then, flour has been bolted more and more thoroughly and thus deprived of its most useful components. Such treatment permits its preservation for longer periods and facilitates the making of bread. The millers and the bakers earn more money. The consumers eat an inferior product, believing it to be a superior one. And in the countries where bread is the principal food, the population degenerates. Enormous amounts of money are spent for publicity. As a result, large quantities of alimentary and pharmaceutical products, at the least useless, and often harmful, have become a necessity for civilized men. In this manner the greediness of individuals, sufficiently shrewd to create a popular demand for the goods that they have for sale, plays a leading part in the modern world."

Dr. Carrel has written of England or America but the same process of advertising, alas, has gone pretty long way in poor India. For instance, papers here make no scruple in carrying advertisements of the Tea Board continuing to develop the bold idea of tea-drinking as a necessity even to children who are usually guarded against baneful habit-forming things. According to the *Boys Scouts*, "growing boys especially should have nothing to do with tea, coffee or any stimulant." (*Boys Scouts of America*, p. 332). How long will it take for such advertisements to unsettle the settled customs and ways due to our indifference and for lack of social control?

There is a growing body of enlightened opinion in the West which is worried about its "costs" of progress, and we at this end are welcoming it as the acme of civilization. To hug the ways of those who dominated us and to think that we cannot get along without them is the height of absurdity when we are free. Freedom has no prestige!

The profiteer does not care what happens to his country and its poor. Even the press liberally listens to him as if ideals are of no value! On the contrary, they should have taken upon themselves the task of sounding a note of warning and make us unlearn many things that have been introduced by the erstwhile rulers and build anew our requirements to fight out the evils of centuries of enslavement.

1-6-'55

By Mahatma Gandhi

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# HARIJAN

July 2

1955

## PLANNING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The economic classification of industries as capital-intensive and labour-intensive is noteworthy in another way also, which is very relevant and significant. In their effect on the people these two types of industries bear a consequent distinction also.

One such distinction is that capital-intensive, viewed from another angle, is capital-desiring production-mindedness. This relegates equal distribution to a secondary place. Now we know that equal distribution is no less — if not more — important than production, if our aim is social justice and equality. Capital-intensive industries being essentially production-minded and capital-covetous usually tend to create or intensify the existence of the classes as the rich and the poor, or the wage-giver and the wage-earner; and in their result upon the general process of distributing increased wealth as capital-intensive production, these industries make the rich richer and poor poorer. We may say, the whole thing, by nature, is not in any way conducive to natural social justice and an egalitarian order. It breeds class distinctions.

On the other hand, labour-intensive industries have quite different effects. These industries are essentially and directly employment-increasing and distribution-minded. They directly aim to provide work to all in their own economic and social conditions and ameliorate them. This is their immediate object and rationale. Thus they remove unemployment and in this way they forthwith begin to secure to the social economy maximum production also consistent with the claims of social justice and right to work which cannot be any time overlooked if our aim is to have an egalitarian order and healthy and balanced economic progress.

The planning that goes on today as the First and now the Second Five Year Plan is clearly capital-intensive. Its aims are still in a formative stage. They follow the traditional pattern of planning devised by Western socialism. Its effects are visible as they are feared to be. A few months ago a writer in the columns of a daily paper quoted statistics from official records showing that the rich were getting richer and the poor poorer. We have now the results of a rural survey from Government sources which indicate a similar trend.

The Reserve Bank of India had undertaken a rural credit survey in about 75 sample districts in the country. The main conclusion of this body is now reported to be that "the level of debt as well as the proportion of families indebted was

generally higher among cultivators than among non-cultivators and among the former the burden was greater on those of small holdings." (*The Times of India*, 17-6-'55). The First Five Year Plan mainly aimed to provide for gigantic schemes of irrigation-cum-electricity production. They are still not complete. These capital- and power production-intensive schemes can immediately help non-cultivating classes only. Their employment potential is comparatively low. All this is obvious.

There are very many other interesting lines of inquiry also in this phenomenon in our fluid economy today. It is for economists and sociologists to study and point them out. As a layman, however, one can say that the nature of truly beneficial planning for our people should be pre-eminently labour-intensive. Otherwise the fear that always inheres in a capital-intensive industrial pattern, viz. creation of classes who are rich and those who are poor, will also overtake the new order which, on the face of it, denies social justice of equal distribution of wealth and opportunities. It will also tend to make the State a planning, i.e. a controlling State with a kind of authoritarianist democracy, if one can say so. The economic power will centralize itself in the hands of the Government or the capitalist and the general administration will more and more be bureaucratic and managerial. Therefore our planning should not be economic or industrial only; it must be with an eye to the total advancement of our people in all the spheres of their life as a co-operative commonwealth.

23-6-'55

## PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A press report says that a deputation on behalf of cloth mills is going to S-E. Asian countries to see how far they can secure custom there. There was a time when India exported cloth to these countries and beyond up to China. But there is a difference between then and now. Then there was no competition, nor machines causing unemployment, nor also modern exploitation and its obliging money mechanism and such other tricks. The world today is getting smaller, thanks to science. The above-mentioned evils also as if concentrate themselves in the body international and spurt out as disease from it. That the above deputation goes in search of profit from cloth trade and commerce is obvious. Therefore, the question needs to be thought of with due foresight and wisdom in this new age.

The Government also is in a way interested in such development of factory goods trade: it gets from it ample excise duties. And when we see that the Government at present is out to get money from whatever sources it can, there is the danger of its forgetting to take a long view of this matter. The added reason for such fear from it is that its departments view their work in the conventional way of orthodox economics.

Economists now accept and say that there is no other way to remove unemployment but to take to Khadi and village industries. Rather, the Second Five Year Plan considers them unavoidable as a necessary part of its frame-work. It is worth while seeing how it does so.

The Government desires to establish certain highly capital-intensive industries under the new plan. It wishes to finance this scheme even with the help of foreign aid and the dangerous device of deficit finance. There is the danger of these ways injuring the country's economy. If there is not enough production of consumer goods, the situation would be alarming. To avoid this untoward eventuality, it is proposed that the plan should resort to labour-intensive village industries. This will help remove unemployment also. Thus it is that Gandhiji's idea of a human economy as contrasted with modern money or capital economy, — an economy wherein labour is capital and therefore man can occupy a pivotal position — that has asserted itself in the plan of our economic building, due to its sheer strength of its intrinsic truth and vitality.

If what is reported about this welcome change is true, it shows that in this also we find that the slavish dependence on the West is visible. Prof. Mahalobis of Calcutta had called certain foreign economic experts to his Institute. We learn that they advised, after studying our economic conditions, that colossal man-power we have and village industries are in no way less efficient than machine-industries and it is economically scientific also to utilize them. Thus did the idea of Gandhian economics get its approval from the West which had its effect on our blotting-paper mentality.

It is indeed a good thing that we have realized this special thing of Indian economics, as pointed out by Gandhiji. Did we not heed to his idea of non-violence in politics only as a practical and workable measure? Similarly now has it come about in economics also. This is a happy thing indeed, because it is surely going to help our progress. I hope it will have its good effects in accelerating the pace of Basic Education and in bringing out its true meaning and significance.

If, as is being contemplated, consumer goods begin to be produced through village industries, it will, to that extent, tell adversely on the sale of factory production, — an unwelcome eventuality for the mill industry. The obvious way out of it is to try export possibilities. And there is nothing wrong in it, as a policy, as it is in the nature of such capital-intensive mechanized industries to behave that way. They must needs be fed amply well by raw materials, otherwise they will cause our economic ruination. So also they will behave, if we cannot sell the huge piles that they might produce.

This is the state of things European Industrial Revolution has brought about in the world during the last two centuries. There is growing

dislike for imperialism these days; but the rivalry in market-hunting, which is the cause of imperialism, still stands. We cannot afford to forget this fact at present when the above cloth trade deputation is going abroad in search of foreign markets.

It will not do in the present age to think of this by following the Western way blindly! India desires peace and no-war. She wants no sort of imperialism for herself. This policy must inform the endeavours of the above trade deputation; otherwise as Europe gradually came to have war as a result of its trade rivalries, so India also cannot escape it if she committed a similar mistake in her international trade.

If we should have world peace, international trade also must be based on love and friendship, and plied without incurring jealousy of anyone. Justice and propriety must be observed in these relationships also.

There is something like an economics of peace or no-war. Its basis is a nation's economic self-reliance aided by international trade based on mutual want and good human neighbourliness. Today international trade is a sort of a race or a gamble in rivalry born of selfish interest, profit motive and exploitation, and not mutual benefit. Further, there is a scramble for capturing the trade for oneself, causing the whole affair a matter of international politics. We must keep ourselves away from this evil in international trade.

17-6-'55

(From Gujarati)

## **TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUDDHA**

*(By Magambhai P. Desai)*

Newspapers inform us that the twenty-five hundredth anniversary of Lord Buddha will be celebrated next year at Bodhgaya on the full moon day of Vaishakha and that rupees eight crores will be spent for the purpose. It is a beautiful coincidence that the day is believed in tradition to be the one on which the Buddha was born, attained knowledge, and attained *Nirvana*. Next year there will be a great international celebration on the occasion and the Buddhist nations of the world will also prominently participate in it.

The occasion will be utilized to resurrect the four principal places of pilgrimage of the Buddhists. They are Lumbini, the place where prince Siddhartha was born; Bodhgaya, the place where the Lord attained knowledge; Sarnath, the place where the *Tathagata* gave his first sermon; and Kushinara, the place where the Buddha attained *Nirvana*. The principal celebration will be held at Gaya. It has been decided to hold the celebrations on the site where the Sarvodaya Conference was held last year. In the neighbourhood of the site is situated the Samanvaya Ashram established by Shri Vinoba.

The aim of the Samanvaya Ashram is to work out a synthesis of the tenets of Shankara



and the Buddha or to evolve a perfect philosophy. Let us hope the Conference will discuss further this idea. The idea has entered the field of public discussion now in another way also.

The religion of the Buddha was born in India but it spread, developed and firmly established itself outside the country. It practically ceased to exist in the land of its birth after the age of Shri Shankaracharya. It does not, however, mean that India gave up or forgot the message of the Buddha. The religion of the Hindus, which is a synthesis of various views of life and of different practices of realizing the Truth or God, gave it its proper place in its system of thought and practice. It is quite in the fitness of things that India should think of resurrecting the four places of pilgrimage which are the visible symbols of the message of Ahimsa to which the world is now looking up with hope and eagerness after a sad experience of the opposite principle.

The fact that China, Japan, Cambodia, Burma, Ceylon and such other countries are also nations friendly to India in the international political field lends a pleasant colour to the forthcoming celebrations. Let us hope and wish that all the nations who will thus come together in the name of the great prophet of non-violence will not only show the way to liquidate *Mara* (Satan) who sneaks into the hearts of individuals but also find out ways and means for the liquidation of the great catastrophe of war which threatens humanity now and again and give to the world the great truths and the eightfold path to achieve this end. India has a great responsibility here, because she owns Gandhiji as the father of the Indian nation.

\* \* \*

Shri B. R. Ambedkar has been threatening again that he will go out of the Hindu fold to enter the religion of the Buddha and seems to think of arranging some celebration to mark his conversion next year. The religious thought of man is becoming so liberal and all embracing in the present age that the very idea of conversion from one religion to another rings curious indeed. The reason is obvious. To one who seeks to be truly religious the religion of his birth fully shows the way and there is full scope for improvement in it. This is why one fears the step contemplated by Shri Ambedkar might not have a religious but some other end in view. If the spite he has cultivated all his life for the Hindu religion is driving him to the step, his conversion to another religion could hardly be credited with the true religious motive; nor will he or anyone else acquire any religious merit out of it.

I remember here Kasturba and Bapu of revered memory in this connection. When the late Shri Harilalabhai, their eldest son, gave up Hinduism and accepted Islam as his faith, the aged parents expressed their feeling only by saying that if their son was really to become a

favourite of God—*Lal* of Hari by now calling himself Abdulla they had nothing to complain; the word Abdulla also means favourite of God.

In the same manner Indian society can tell Shri Ambedkar that if by becoming a Buddha he was becoming a greater servant of India there was no harm in his doing so. But if the motive or sentiment driving him to his conversion is something else it is going to benefit neither the religion of the Buddha nor anyone else.

18-5-'55

(From Gujarati)

## LITTERATEURS' ROLE IN BHOODAN

(By Suresh Ramabhai)

"What do you expect of us?" This question was put to Vinoba the other day in Orissa by a prominent Hindi litterateur. The gathering included some well-known writers and journalists hailing from different parts of the country. "Do you want us," continued our friend, "to write such novels, stories or poems as are full of words like *Sarvodaya* and *Bhoodan*? Shall our contribution to your movement be measured by the number of times we repeat these words?"

Vinoba was rather amazed. He is the last man on earth to ask anybody to do something against the dictates of one's conscience. He smiled. Then a Marathi writer broke in, "May we know after all what does Bhoodan expect of us? What would you like us to do to render effective service to the Bhoodan cause?"

With eyes half closed, Vinoba paid his respectful compliments to the literary community and began with the words: "Tukaram has sung a song in which he addressed God as follows, 'Thou dost not know the splendour of Thy name, I know it.' Likewise, the litterateurs do not know the splendour of their name, I know it. Great is the glory of literature."

Vinoba then said, "When in my heart I analyse the word *Sahitya* (literature) I reach the conclusion that literature connotes non-violence. You will wonder at this analysis and call it sheer idiosyncrasy to bring in non-violence everywhere. But men of letters have themselves observed that the best literature is only suggestive. Why? Because it does not invade the reader. If somebody were to be attacked by sermons, be those sermons useful and timely, their touch is not soothing."

Vinoba continued, "A good work of literature is that which is capable of multifarious interpretations. This is just the contrary of what happens in a book of law—where one sentence carries only one meaning. If there are two or more it creates confusion. When one reads Valmiki's *Ramayana*, one does not come across many sermons. Like the flowing Ganga, it makes a fluent reading. And different people interpret it in different ways. Nay, the same man interprets it in different ways at different times. I, therefore, do not expect of litterateurs to do something for me at the cost of their own qualities or taste."

After a pause Vinoba added, "Literature like God's love has no motive behind it. It is self-motivated. But the peculiarity of literature is that it achieves without a motive what cannot be achieved with motive. I love Gita for the same reason. It teaches us to keep no motive. It further dares to the extent of asking us to do fruitless work. I do not know of any other book providing inspiration for fruitless action.

"The same is the essential feature of my interpretation of literature. It contains such vital strength as to convert labour (श्रम) into comfort (श्रम) Nothing substantial can be obtained without labour. But such is the grace of literature that it transforms labour into comfort. The two cease to be contradictory. In the domain of literature the two go together. Literature casts no burden on the mind."

Relating an incident of his own life, Vinoba went on, "Once I fell seriously ill. I repeated the name of God as also of my mother who had long since departed. I pondered over why I recounted the name of the mother who was no more and who would possibly not come to my rescue. Yet I used the word, Such is the magic of this word that its very recitation confers peace and solace. This is a word which is full of poetry. There are plenty of such words in our languages. This is why people turn poets in our country even though they are not disposed to it. Such is the nature of these words that they are capable of multiple interpretation and man easily becomes a poet. I feel that there is far greater power of poetry in Indian languages than in others. Of course, it is there in Arabic and Latin. But much more so in Sanskrit because it is a very ancient language.

"The world of a poet is like a dream-land. His thinking is subtle, fine and, therefore, abstruse. In practical language a poet means an idiot. In the Koran too the Prophet has said several times that 'I am not a poet.' I could not first grasp why he says so. But at one place I found his observation: 'I am not a poet who says one thing and does another.' There is enough of poetry in the Koran. It is the fountain-source of all Arabic literature. And yet Mohammed says he is not a poet. It is no satire: I have interpreted it in my own way—the prophet says: 'I want to present some clear thoughts before you all so that they may guide you in your life.' The thinking of a poet is not clear, it is obscure: he himself being not fully aware of the depth of his poetry. What strikes a poet does not belong to the realm of his clear thinking. He seems to get at things easily, naturally. In the Upanishads, a poet is called 'Kranta-Darshi' (with a revolutionary vision). Some people interpret it in the sense that a poet sees the distant scene. Quite so. But its another meaning is that a poet's vision is very mysterious. What is clear to the eye is visible even to a beast. In Sanskrit, the word 'pashu' is derived from the root 'pashya' (to see). A beast is never satisfied with argument, it demands proof. So where there is an insistence on seeing things or on evidence, there is beastliness—which is not there in a poet at all, for his language conveys several pictures."

A curious awe marked the faces of his audience as the stream of Vinoba's thoughts rolled on.

He continued, "Now you say that you want to help in Bhodan Yajna. If a litterateur really helps it would be so subtle that none would be able to recognize it. A novel is a failure if it betrays that it has helped Vinoba. The best help is that which remains unknown. Such is the enviable position of God. He helps and yet we do not know it. He gives without hands, sees without eyes, hears without ears and writes without pen. The best poet is he who has written nothing at all, his heart abounding so much with poetry that he cannot give expression to it. It does not mean that whoever does not write is a poet. It only means that there can be a great poet whose strength of poetry does not see the light of day because of its unfathomable depth. Looking at from this point of view, we find that a function of literature is that it remains inexpressible. These days everybody thinks of publishing his works. But the characteristic of best literature is non-publication."

"Therefore," Vinoba continued, "when I appeal to litterateurs for help, my only desire is that they should do co-thinking with us. We want them to share our deliberations. I do not want to enjoy the nectar alone. You are poets (रसिक) : so please join us in this enjoyment of ours. After sharing with us, it matters little whether you write or not.

"I believe that the great men whom the world knows are not so great as those whom it does not. The conduct of a learned man (जारी) is subtle, obscure. So my request to you is to share our experiences. Let you be co-sharers (रसभोगी) with us. Later if it does not find expression in words or action it would be the greatest

source of help. For that thing would continue to be in your mind and you would always be very near us."

An hour had passed. Vinoba's words seemed to come as a challenge. He closed with a story: "A pupil once went to a teacher and inquired of him what knowledge he (teacher) imparted. The teacher was silent. The pupil repeated his question and again the teacher kept quiet. The pupil asked for the third time and yet there was no reply. On the fourth occasion, the pupil burst forth, 'I asked no less than three times and yet you are mum.' Then the teacher submitted, 'Thrice I have replied and replied in the best possible manner. Yet you could not follow. And one who cannot follow without words, how shall he follow with words?' In the same manner, men of letters may well tell me, 'O wretch! If you cannot follow without our writing anything, how can you follow even if we write something?' What I have, therefore, demanded from litterateurs is only sympathy, a sympathy of the heart. I simply beg for a union of heart with heart."

It was past ten p.m. But Vinoba had thrown open his heart before that august assemblage. The words 'union of heart with heart' rung in my ears. This is Bhodan. This is non-violence. This is life. I recalled to my mind Kabir's famous couplet:

पोषी पड़ पड़ जग सृष्टा ।  
वंदित हुआ न कोई ॥  
ढाई अक्षर प्रेमका ।  
पूरे सो वंदित होई ॥

(It is not the reading of volumes that makes a man learned, but the simple lesson of love.)

May we, the people of India—litterateurs or others—learn and live this lesson of love, union of hearts, transform our life accordingly and prove to be the torch-bearers of a new era and the builders of a new world!

12-6/55

### AMERICAN FOOD FOR THOUGHT

[The following extract being the first two paragraphs of chapter 12 of *Yankee Storekeeper* by R. E. Gould, published by Bantam Books, New York, is commended for the serious consideration of all interested in the evolution of India on the American pattern. In this passage, the American storekeeper laments the pitiable downfall of the typical American farmer during the last twenty-five years; the self-reliant, independent, industrious, honest, resourceful and productive farmer has now become dependent, helpless and untrustworthy. These may be fleeting remarks of a fiction writer but still they are true in so far as they reflect standards of public life in that country.

M. Arunachalam]

"Times have changed. When I started in business every farm had a good farmer on it. If one of them came in and bought five barrels of flour, a barrel of sugar, a tub of lard, and couldn't pay for it, there wasn't really much to worry about. Next week he'd come in with something from his farm. Every week he had something to sell because he was a farmer and raised things for that purpose. He brought apples, potatoes, eggs, butter, veal, lamb, wood, maple syrup, hay....."

"In my territory the typical farmer today has a dozen children, a radio with the battery down, an old automobile that won't run, and nothing worth buying. We still see some good ones of course, but they have become exceptions. For that reason the farmer offers the country storekeeper very few business opportunities. Their credit is generally poor, they have no effects to fall back on, and they have less and less produce



to do business with. Instead, most of them work out, and their prosperity goes up and down with the business of the mills where they have jobs. When the mill is running at capacity, they are good as wheat. When the mill is down, the storekeeper has to harden his heart."

### NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND HUMAN WEAL (By R. Santanam)

If India accepts American aid her words of protest against nuclear and thermo-nuclear explosions lose moral sanction. If her protest has moral sanction behind it then she should give up the aid. There does not seem to be another alternative so long as the morals of these foul explosions are equated to the American economic aid.

Threat of use of force rather than use of force is a deterrent against crime. Hence, possession of nuclear weapons by opposing parties is not a guarantee that peace will be if arguments fail. Democratic nations must realize this. If arguments and reconciliation are the basis of democracy then weapons are its enemies. Nuclear weapons are far more so. While nuclear weapons may reciprocally preserve a dubious peace, the principles of non-interference and co-existence embodied in the Panch Sheel make a peaceful contribution towards peace. This indicates the need for a change in hearts and not in weapon or argument.

Japan suffered from deadly effects of the atom bombs in 1945 and is now suffering from the experimental explosions. There is a saying in Tamil that even though the showers stop drizzling does not. Both mar clear weather. Protests from the Japanese have not been of avail although the U.S.A. seems to be interested in Japan's prosperity. While the people are maimed and killed in limb and womb, it does not matter so long as there are more dams and bridges, more roads, more factories and more food and more employment. Who are to enjoy these facilities, when the people are crippled? Nuclear weapons and economic assistance seem to be contradiction in terms. When the prospect is total annihilation by atomic weapons it does not matter if there is one ear of corn less on the field or a thousand more. The situation reminds me of the man who lit the hearth of the poor neighbour and poured water down the chimney so that the fire was extinguished. Those who advocate receipt of foreign assistance from the hand that may kill any only remind us of those who oppose prohibition at home. They say that Government is throwing away millions of rupees by the policy of prohibition while those millions can be used to develop national welfare. They forget that prohibition by itself is a welfare measure. It is far less costly to develop in a few more years with or without foreign aid than to be overtaken by the deadly effects of nuclear and thermo-nuclear explosions.

### VILLAGE OIL INDUSTRY

(By A. Vanian)

A major portion of the oils pressed from *gingelly*, *niger* seeds, *karadi* (*kusumba*) and mustard are a few oilseeds that serve as edible oils. Therefore it is a good move to bring legislation to reserve these seeds exclusively for the processing of village oil-presses. This step is an absolute necessity.

This alone will not do full justice to all oilmen. There are a number of village *ghanis* that are today engaged in pressing oil from seeds like groundnut, linseed, for edible purposes. A few of them also press *karanji*, *mahuva*, *Candle-nut*, *Neem* and such other non-edible seeds for other village industrial and household uses. In all these fields the village oil *ghanis* face competition from the power-driven oil-mills. It is necessary to afford such *ghanis* some relief. In order to bring about an effective relief for all the village oilmen, the above said move, namely, the reservation of certain well-known oilseeds will fall far short of their requirements.

Hence the following suggestion is offered for the consideration of all interested in the development of this important village industry.

Mere oil-pressing by power should not be allowed as an industry. Factories that require oils as their raw materials alone should be allowed, if necessary, power-driven mills to be set up within their compound. That is, every power-driven oil-mill should be an adjunct of a processing industry such as soap factory, hair-oil factory, lubricant manufacturers, paint manufacturers but not *Vanaspati* factories, as there should be no place for these latter in our country. The oil thus pressed should be completely used up within the unit of production itself. These factories should not be allowed to bring into the market any portion of the raw oil pressed out by them.

Such a restriction will be a great relief to all the village oil *ghanis* to press and deal in oilseeds as linseed and groundnut also for edible purposes.

We trust this suggestion will meet with serious consideration of all those concerned with the development of this Village Industry.

(From *Gram Udyog Patrika*, June 1955)

By Mahatma Gandhi

### TRUTH IS GOD

(Foreword by Shri C. Rajagopalachari)

[Gleanings compiled by Shri R. K. Prabhu from the Writings of Mahatma Gandhi bearing on God, God-realization and the Godly Way.]

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NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE  
P.O. NAVAJIVAN, AHMEDABAD-14

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Subscription Rates—Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14s. or \$2.

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 14.