

HARIJAN

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

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TWO ANNAS

SCHOOL TEXT-BOOKS AND GOVERNMENT

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The problem of text-books for primary and secondary education has come to the surface not only in the Bombay State but in other States of the country also. Everywhere the problem presents similarity. The chief one is that the problem which is educational is treated as if it were one of trade and supply. This fundamental misconception is in evidence everywhere. Without going into the causes why things happen this way it would be worthwhile concentrating on understanding what actually happens when the administration of education is not carried on in a manner suited to it.

The worst consequence is that in the field of education the broad view vital to it is lost sight of and the officials of the department of education resort to regimentation. Inspectors of the Government department of education like those in other Government departments such as revenue, post and telegraph etc. become mere administrators, so that matters like the progress and content of education which should be their primary concern become secondary in their view or are lost sight of altogether. Let us take an instance. Education departments of the Central and State Governments have before them the immense task of executing the great plan of Basic Education, but where are they devoting their attention? To what matter are they drawn away? What are the things in which those departments are wasting their and the nation's time? With what aims in view are their training schools for teachers and the latter themselves working? Replies to these and such other questions, I am sure, will immediately bring home to the readers what I have been trying to convey.

Nor does the problem end here. Once the process of education is diverted into a wrong channel it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to bring it back to its natural and sacred course. Government departments have reserved for themselves the right to sanction text-books for use in schools by legislation. This is an odious remnant of the policy adopted by foreign government which had better now be discarded. It is obvious that a foreign government can rule only

with suspicion towards the people of the country. It has to keep the system of education under its direct control if it wants to maintain itself. Now, text-books constitute an important item in the scheme of control. Controlling the use of text-books, therefore, becomes a government function under foreign rule. This idea still persists. And the machinery of the education department which was trained in the technique of administrative control has also remained what it was. One can understand that Government, therefore, cannot immediately take the risk of removing itself from between the department and those responsible for conducting schools. But on the contrary, Governments are aiming at establishing such control over schools now, as was not in existence even under foreign rule. To that end they carry on curious experiments with equally curious different results in the various States. Ideas about administration which took shape during war time in an age of controls and new ideas of setting up a socialistic pattern of society add to the mischief so that the problem of education does not purely remain what it should be but becomes one of supplies and controls for regulating them.

What is actually happening in this field in States like Bombay, Travancore-Cochin, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi etc. should serve as a timely warning for our Governments under Swaraj. It is necessary that all the education departments of all the Governments took timely warning from these events because otherwise the machinery set up for carrying on the English system of education will prove worthless along with the system itself. The system has had its time and is now falling away. If along with it the machinery began to fall away also the consequences would be disastrous because it will not be able to cope with the entirely new task of basic reform in education. And we have no other machinery ready to take charge of it.

This unfortunate eventuality seems to be coming into being. If we looked deeper into its causes they might be found latent, perhaps, in the plans which are at present being considered for building up the nation. One feels inclined to ask the question whether these plans are supplying the true drive and inspiration to the nation.

These plans instead of undertaking the real tasks facing the country seem to be drawn away to schemes which can be called wishful. Take for instance the Constitutional task of giving compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen. Has a plan for it been considered and worked out in detail? It has been stated that the method of compulsory education will be the basic method * of education through the medium of craft as shown by Gandhiji. But has any thought been given to its execution in detail? When the first Five Year Plan was under consideration we were told that as there was shortage of food the problem of adequate food supply should receive priority. But what now? Indeed, can we say that even one State Government is having a plan for its own scheme of education? If it were the case serious mistakes that have been committed in the matter of text-books, for example, would surely have been avoided. Education is a national activity and should, therefore, evoke national effort and people should be aided and enabled to create an independent system of national education by the Government. If instead of cultivating such helpful attitude Governments were to rush into undertaking doing everything for the people as soon as some difficulty was felt, we would have to pay dearly for the mistake. Ideas of a Welfare State would not serve our purpose here. If the Welfare State idea were unconsciously to take the form of paternalism, then the idea of democracy would suffer decay. Particularly, in the field of education, education itself would suffer. That would mean destroying a living instrument for the building up of our people.

10-7-55

(From Gujarati)

To Foreign Subscribers

We sometimes receive foreign currency notes by post from our foreign friends to be utilized as subscription for the *Harijan* weeklies. We learn from the Reserve Bank through our Bankers that the payment should be made by foreign subscribers through Banking channels as the sending of currency notes by post causes a violation of Exchange Control Regulations.

We, therefore, request foreign friends to send us their subscription through banks and not directly by post.

14-7-55

JIVANJI D. DESAI
Managing Trustee

* This method has a peculiar view of its own regarding the plan of books in teaching. Books are not at the centre of the scheme of the method, nor are they the medium of education as we see today. This point of view is surely going to affect the problem of text books under discussion in no insignificant manner. But a consideration of the whole question deserves separate treatment.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS FROM DAY TO DAY — II

(By Damodardas Mundada)

1

During the week from the 31st May to 6th June, Vinobaji encamped at Meringi, Bikrampur, Kujendri, Chakunda, Sundhi Dhamini and Durgi in the district of Koraput, touching over a score of other villages on the way all through the dense forest area, witnessing the most affectionate and cordial reception accorded by the people, listening to their sweet music, appreciating their devotion, observing their social customs, way of life and the richness of their culture as was manifest in their poise, walk, dances, songs and innocent faces, and discussing the matters of the land and the people with the youngsters in the party.

Nothing Less Than Gramdan Now

On arrival at Meringi, six miles from the previous halt, Vinobaji, at the very outset, declared that he was not going to plead for anything less than total land's gift. Pieces of land had not much attraction for him. And they responded.

He asked them to shed all their fear complex. Inspite of Swaraj, these Sauras, who otherwise bravely wrestle with the tigers, were afraid of the policeman or, for that matter, of any uniform. He wanted them to shed that fear complex completely.

Regarding his own mission also, he made it clear that it was not a matter of any coercion for them whatsoever. On the contrary, his mission was one of love for religious duty and collective good and they should respond to it only if they were convinced about his ideas.

Before reaching Bikrampur, our next halt on 1st June, we crossed the Mahendra Tanaya river twice within a distance of six miles. Bikrampur is predominantly a Telugu speaking area. Vinobaji told the people how glad he was to meet them as they reminded him of the place of the first Bhoodan which happened to be a Telugu area.

He distributed the certificates for 109 acres of land to 12 families of one village which greatly impressed the gathering.

He then referred to a letter from Smt. Rameshwari-devi Nehru of Delhi. The letter said how some lady volunteers, during the Bhoomi Kranti Week, visited the district of Karnal in the Punjab and how they received not only Bhoodan but Sampattidan also and could also sell a lot of literature. The letter also conveyed how a wave of enthusiasm was witnessed in that area. The atmosphere was thus ripe for Bhoodan everywhere and the people were certainly ready to respond. It was now the turn of the workers to spread out all throughout without delay, Vinobaji declared. He also pointed out that the mission was no more limited to his person. It had become universal and every one had to contribute his or her share in its fulfilment.

No More Suppression Now

Referring to the thousands of landless who attended his daily prayer meetings, Vinobaji pointed out how they were quite justified in expecting that their long-felt demand of land would now be fulfilled. They were now an awakened people and would no more remain under any suppression whatsoever, nor did he want them to be so under any circumstances, he declared. Liberty implied complete and unqualified freedom to all; the country was indeed slave when and where even the animals and birds were kept in cages. In this connection he narrated how on the 15th August 1947 he had, in a village where he had gone to address a meeting, persuaded a villager to set the imprisoned parrot free.

The point was that real Swaraj implied that we neither suppress any one, nor are we being suppressed by any one. We suppressed the Harijans and in turn were suppressed by the British. Gandhiji taught us to rid ourselves

completely of this slavish mentality and he wrought revolution through the path of love and persuasion.

It was now essential to apply the same principle in resolving the land problem, which was the main problem of the day, he concluded.

Kujendri Ashram

We spent two days—2nd and 3rd June—at Kujendri. There is an Ashram there started in 1940 by Shri Vishwanath Patnaik, a co-worker of Shri Gopabandhu Chowdhari. It was the regular custom started by Shri Gopa Babu to send the members of his Bori Ashram at Ramchandrapur (in the Cuttack district) in rural areas and make close contacts with the villages. Shri Patnaik was a member of his Ashram. At Kujendri he found that spinning and weaving in the huts of the Sauras still existed, though almost on the point of extinction due to the inroads made by the mill cloth. He decided to settle there and patiently started his Khadi work with zeal and perseverance.

Charkha in Forty Villages

The Khadi work at Kujendri now includes all the various processes from cotton growing to the final finishing of the cloth. This gave Shri Patnaik all the scope and opportunities not only to make experiments but also for the expansion of his field of activities to popularize the Khadi in the adjoining villages as well. Thus rooted deep in about fifteen hundred families of the surrounding forty villages almost all the Sauras, particularly at Kujendri, spin and weave their own cloth. At Kujendri, it may be noted, as many as 120 houses out of the total 150 are self-sufficient in cloth. The remaining thirty include ten families of the Komatis, the Telugu 'Banias' who are usually money-lenders, ten families of iron-smiths etc. and the rest include potters and others. Most of them spin, but they do not usually weave for themselves. It is particularly the Komatis who purchase the mill cloth also. There are about ten weaving sheds shared in common by all the hundred and twenty families. They have adjusted the timings and period extending over the whole year and the time-table works smoothly, each family finishing its quota of about 50 yards a year. Silvers are made simultaneously usually in the summer for the whole year by each family as per its needs. It does make a really pleasant sight to see every verandah in this village so exquisitely furnished, not with the chairs and the sofas, coaches and divans, but with the spinning wheels and weaving paraphernalia.

Nai Talim at Work

And the most pleasing sight among them all was one of "Nai Talim at work", to put it in the words of Vinobaji, when we saw young boys of ten efficiently working on the shuttle of the handloom with deft and quick fingers like any grown up and experienced weaver. These Sauras, it is obvious, have not to face any problem of unemployment or unhealthy competition. The Government or the Planning Commission have neither to plan about them, nor be anxious about raising their standard of life. There is absolutely no doubt that the standard of life of all the villagers of Kujendri has increased during the last twelve years. The quantity of cloth they use is much more than what they did before or what is evident even today in other villages. This could not have been even conceivable through any other source except the practice of self-spinning and weaving they have adopted. All that remains to be done now is to start the morning and evening classes and impart them the rich treasures of knowledge stored in the Ramayana, Mahabharat and the Upanishads.

Apart from Khadi, these villagers also press their own edible oil from the oilseeds they themselves grow.

An Example Worth Following

It will be interesting, I am sure, to know how Shri Patnaik got a well constructed in the village. There was acute scarcity of drinking water in the village. Patnaik exhorted the village people to be self-reliant and to offer

Shramdan. The digging of the well was soon completed. Stones etc. required for constructing the well were also procured through voluntary gifts. Some cash, was, however necessary to meet the expenses of cement, limestone, etc. and to make the payment to the mason. Patnaik also succeeded in raising some fund locally and for the rest he approached the Gandhi Seva Sangh.

The exact amount of the grant he had applied for was Rs 10/- (ten) only. And, what an achievement in comparison to this grant! Excluding Shramdan and the cost of the materials procured locally as gifts, only Rs 28/- were spent in cash for the well which is 50 feet deep and which would have otherwise cost at least Rs 300/- in those days. The expense today, including everything, would not be, to give a modest estimate, less than Rs 2,900/-.

Bhoodan Yajna Averts Impending Crisis

Though most of the land is mortgaged, is possessed by the Komati moneylenders of the neighbouring village, the villagers of Kujendri still have small plots of land of their own, from which they have contributed about 60 acres to Bhoodan. At one time couple of years ago it seemed that there would be violent struggle over the issue of the land between these villagers and the moneylenders. Violence was, so to say, just on the point of bursting out, when, to the relief of all, there came the Bhoodan Yajna movement. Shri Vishwanath Patnaik, who would have otherwise even sacrificed his life to stop the much feared violence and carnage, saw a ray of hope in Bhoodan and led the movement in this area under the guidance of Shri Gopabandhu Chowdhari and Smt. Ramadevi Chowdhari. Since then he has been devoting all his time and energy to this work and it is mostly to his credit that Bhoodi Kranti is on its way to complete success in this area of the Koraput district.

While this is being penned, news has reached our camp that 96 villages have already been received as Gramdams in the districts of Baleshwar and Mayoorbhanj alone. In this connection, I may also remind my readers that the number of Gramdan villages in the Ganjam district is 24 while in the Koraput district which we are touring at the moment, it is 98, if not more in the meantime. Including others received in the districts of Cuttack, Puri, Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Koonjhar etc., the total number of Gramdan villages in Orissa alone has reached the modest but highly impressive and significant figure of two hundred and thirty!

At Chakunda, therefore, Vinobaji opened his mind before the audience and said: "Let the world speak of you as belonging to the backward tribes, but to me you are not so at all. Can they really be said to be belonging to the first row whom money has become next to God, nay God Himself, and who are not tired of manufacturing and mobilizing means of destruction? Or, are these ahead of all, those who have been living like brothers, know no quarrels and are prepared to embrace the most modern economic ideas?" Explaining the last point, he said: "Was not Gramdan the most modern economic thought of the world?"

Transformation through the Law of Love

He did not stop at this but went on to say how he was inclined to stay in their midst for longer period and cancel some of his programme, if necessary. His short stay in the district had impressed him about the disposition and enthusiasm of the residents to welcome new and real values of life. While redistributing land in the Gramdan villages, there were occasions when a person, for instance, who had owned over 24 acres had, in the redistribution process, accepted gladly only 3½ acres, for that was his quota as per the unit of his family members. On the contrary, landless families in such villages have been receiving from one to ten acres. Who wrought this miracle? Was there any law of the land, except the Law of Love, which had the power to bring about this transformation in human life?

13-6-55

HARIJAN

July 23

1955

THE NEXT EDUCATIONAL PLAN-FRAME

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The Union Education Ministry has presented a 1080-crore rupees plan of work for incorporation in the Second Five Year Plan. Like the plan-frame, this also is said to suffer from over-ambition. Queerly enough, the Planning Commission, though not seeing the same drawback in its own handiwork of the proposed plan-frame, remarks that way ; for, the Commission does not accept the Education Ministry's plan-frame and suggests that not more than 500 crores can be allotted to education in the forthcoming national plan. The Planning Commission can succeed in its pruning of other departmental plan-frames only if it begins to reform its own plan-frame, which is surely inflated with ideas of aids, and incomes hardly possible to be realized. And there is to be at the top of it, deficit finance to boot which is really a deficit and no finance in any real sense of the term.

The above is only one aspect of the educational plan-frame. The more pertinent one is, what is going to be actually done during the next Five Year Plan-period. I have not with me at present the blue-print detailing it. I write this from what I gather from the daily press.

In primary education there will be increased attempt to implement the national policy of introducing Basic Education. Along with it, and mainly, there will be further attempts to start more schools so that about 75 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 11, and about 30 per cent of children between the ages of 11 and 14, could be brought to school by 1961.

In secondary education there will be instituted a certain number of multi-purpose high schools.

In higher education, it is proposed that universities should have a 3-year first degree course instead of the 4-year one we have at present.

And there is to be a uniform attempt to raise the teacher's pay in all the stages. I think, this will be one of the major items of additional expenditure which will be welcome. But, the nation will have to be assured by the Education Ministries in the land that teaching work will be really done with love and integrity; that the perfunctory manner in which matters educational are being conducted at present will be radically changed; and that the undisciplined commercialization that has set in as a result of the out-of-date system of English education that still persists inspite of our disliking it and wishing to change, will be brought under control. This is a vital change necessary in our entire educational system. It should have the topmost

priority in any planning worth the name. Unless we mind that, our schemes of quantitative expansion will only fail, complicating the matter and creating more confusion and chaos in the already chaotic conditions. This is surely not to decry expansion or to deny its need. My contention is that it should not confound our vital needs of qualitative change or basic reform of our education.

Coming to the plan-frame of quantitative expansion and reform it is necessary to remark that there are too many irons in the furnace for simultaneously being hammered into shape. The programme envisaged by the Ministry lacks planning and educational statesmanship.

For example, the 3-year degree course reform can be envisaged as the last stage of reformed studies of 10 or 11 years before it in schools. The latter are also to be reformed both in their curricular and organizational contents. It would be, to say the least, idle to provoke the universities with the baits of grants-in-aid to undertake a reform they seem to be reluctant to do. It will unnecessarily disturb them without any immediate compensatory gains. For, a mere change in years from 4 to 3 is a mere change in period and with no really substantial gain in quality. The saving of a year can well follow the sound reform in the previous stage of the first 11 years of schooling. It will naturally emerge and even justify itself. To go into it at present will be only blindly following a suggestion of old Commissions that took their main thoughts from British models. These are now unsuited as such. We have to create our own type of an educational system which must serve the interests and needs of the whole of our people, whom we wish to bring to school and university. The passing age had in mind only the restricted needs of a few classes who formed not even 10 per cent of our people. Therefore the educational plan-framers may be better advised to go into deciding its priorities and leave out items like 3-year degree course for a later date.

Undoubtedly the topmost priority is the work ordained by the Constitutional Directive of providing by 1960, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. The educational plan-frame admits that this is impossible to do within the time-limit of 1960. And if the Planning Commission makes a cut in the 1080-crores programme, this will be the more so. What should be done then? This is a problem as formidable as its counterpart in the economic sphere, viz. our colossal under- and unemployment. The Union Government plan-frame owns defeat here in the same way as the Educational Ministry in the former problem of universal national education.

It was here that the Father of the Nation scored in his wisdom and foresight over the mere educational or economic experts in Government and outside. He proposed that Basic Education, i.e. education through productive

hand-industries only can ultimately be a sound proposition even financially, as it will be also productive of consumer goods. As a counterpart of the same idea, he said that these industries must also provide the fullest employment for our idle human resources, thus assuring on the other hand, a necessary social background and atmosphere for the new idea of Basic Education to grow and thrive.

We have happily begun to accept the economic or industrial part of this composite proposal of Gandhiji, not so the former one of educational reform. I mean, the Union plan-frame has, however reluctantly, come to accept small-scale industries as an integral part of its scheme, whereas the educational plan-frame, however much it may wish to, cannot do so to that extent, because the top people of our educated world still look askance at it, and do not seriously apply their mind how to reorient and reorganize our entire education.

We should note that education is not now to be a microscopic class activity. The Constitution provides for a citizen's right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment etc. The right to education is for complete education up to the highest available, for those that deserve to have it irrespective of their economic status, sex, class, or creed. This right cannot be given through doles and aids; it must be in the natural gift of the social, economic and educational order that we will build now. It is in this context that Basic Education and village and home industries form one integral programme and render themselves inevitable for us if we wish to really build a healthy, self-reliant and prosperous new order. The Education Ministry should plan its work in the land on this principle and with such a larger perspective. This will make its demand for necessary finance irresistible and imperative. Work and education cannot be refused to a citizen who desires them in a healthy and well-ordered State. To assure them the Government of India must recognize the worth of the above two items of the Gandhian programme of rebuilding the nation vis-a-vis the next Five Year Plan.

13-7-55

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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WHAT SWARAJ SHOULD MEAN

(By Vinoba)

[From the prayer-speech delivered at Gokaranpur camp in Orissa on 13-5-55]

It cannot be asserted with any certainty whether people living in our villages have as yet come to know that our country has attained Swaraj. This is because our villages live in such ignorance that people in some places do not even know that Swaraj has come to us.

That the British power has withdrawn itself from the land is the only fact of what has happened in India. This fact is described as Swaraj. People seem to feel that the rule of the Congress obtains today as that of the Muslims, of the Marathas or that of the British did before. But the present regime does not in any manner resemble that of the British or of the Muslims. The present rule is your own. It is the rule of everyone of you. The fact that the Congress carries on the Government of the country does not in any way mean that there is a power apart from us which governs us. But the people do not yet realize, do not yet actually experience that it is their own rule or that they themselves are governing themselves or that it is their own responsibility to carry on their government.

Swaraj must be felt and experienced in every one of our villages. People in every village should manage their own administration themselves. Only then will they truly realize that Swaraj has come to the country. As it is, the people in a village start quarrelling amongst themselves and go to courts which are in the cities for the solution of their disputes. Now, is this Swaraj? Experience of Swaraj will come home to the people only when the people in a village decide their disputes themselves and will not go out elsewhere for their decisions. When people in the villages will decide for themselves not to have any internal disputes or if there are disputes or differences, to resolve them in the villages themselves will they have a realization of Swaraj.

When people living in each of the villages will make up their minds that the land in their village belongs to everyone of them, that they will till it together, that no individual will have ownership in land and that land will belong to the village as a whole, Swaraj will come to every one of them.

When people living in each of the villages will decide to manufacture the cloth they need in the village itself, to sow and grow their own cotton, to spin by the hand on the wheel, and to use the cloth thus made, will they have an experience of Swaraj.

When people living in every one of the villages will decide that those of them who are illiterate will teach their illiterate brothers and sisters for an hour every morning and every evening to read and write, that there will not remain one person male or female who cannot read and write, and that everyone will be literate, will the realization of Swaraj come to them.

When people living in each one of the villages will determine not to have any dirt in the village, to cover the dung and urine with earth and thus to convert them into manure, and to turn the whole of the place into a model of cleanliness and beauty, will they experience Swaraj that is freedom.

When people living in every one of our villages will make up their minds not to use opium or tobacco, not to drink intoxicating liquor, to free themselves from all sorts of evil addictions, Swaraj will come to them.

When people living in each one of the villages will decide once for all not to continue such differences among themselves as between the touchable and the untouchable, as between the Adivasis and the others, to believe every other person as one's equal and to love all the inhabitants in the place equally, will Swaraj come to them.

When people living in every village will decide for themselves that they will meet together every evening and will read together with devotion the Gita, the Bhagavata

and such other books, that they will not allow a single child to remain among them who does not know how to read these great works, will there be Swaraj in the village.

When the sisters who live in every one of the villages will make up their minds to consider all the boys in the community as their own sons, to love them all equally and when all the boys and girls in the place will get food and drink and education on a basis of equality, will the village have Swaraj.

When people in every one of the villages will begin to take care of the cows and the bullocks in the village and when they will have food after the animals have been fed they will feel that they are enjoying Swaraj.

And Swaraj will be there in every village only when people in every one of them should shed all fear and declare that they will not be bullied by any threats whatsoever, when they will determine not to be bullied by anyone and not to bully anyone, not to be oppressed by anyone and not to oppress anyone, and not to yield to anyone who threatens them.

Every village will have an experience of Swaraj when people living in them will speak sweet clean words, will give up using foul language, will take the name of Rama and will always bear goodwill to all creation.

I have described till now the characteristics of Swaraj. Our Swaraj is in our own hands. It is we who can create Swaraj for us and none other. Just as another cannot sleep for us, or just as another cannot eat for us, or just as someone else cannot die for us, just as everyone of these acts one has to perform for oneself and no one else can do it for him, so too no one else has the capacity to give us our Swaraj. If we wanted to assuage our hunger we have to eat food ourselves and if we wished to quench our thirst we ourselves have to find out water to drink. If we wanted really to use Swaraj for our benefit we will have to cultivate all the virtues I have enumerated by ourselves. When people in a village will not remain ignorant but will have received knowledge, when they will grow fearless, when they will be industrious, loving and perfectly clean, we will be able to have an experience of Swaraj in our land.

(From Hindi)

WESTERN CIVILIZATION — A PROBLEM

(By Wilfred Wellock)

[Continued from 9-7-55 issue]

IV

Consequences of Industrial Revolution

First the Industrial Revolution mechanized and dehumanized men by its process of industrial specialization, depriving them of responsibility and creative opportunity and thus of the power of self-expression, and then set about stimulating their appetites and desires in order to consume the rising industrial output and at the same time appease their unsatisfied thirst for life!

We thus reach an age in which all recognized values are purchasable with cash. Leisure and cash are expected to make up for the spiritual deficiencies caused by the passing of satisfying creative, social labour. Under this regime a nation's dope account rises annually.

The economic impasse thus leads to the impasse of materialism, which is attended by fragmented human beings and a host of problems which cannot be solved at the materialistic level. Among those problems is the weakening of moral codes and sanctions which manifests itself in a serious fall in business honesty, and in the growing attraction of crime to our youth. But what we call crime the offenders call adventure and romance, which reveals

a staggering lack of knowledge or sense of right and wrong and of relative values. But what can we expect when no more than a very small percentage of our youth ever receive training in the art of living or in the discernment of values in human conduct, especially spiritual values? Below a certain social level the majority of youths are pitchforked into repetitive jobs against which they quickly revolt, when those possessing grit and imagination drift into crime as the only avenue to a life of adventure of which they have knowledge or to which they have access.

For this condition the social system must accept a large share of responsibility. We have produced a generation that is suffering from spiritual starvation. It is still hungry, emotionally impoverished, and culturally and religiously forsaken. Our need is not more and better prisons or bigger police forces, but the reorganization of our economic, industrial and cultural life so that responsibility and creative opportunity may be the heritage of all.

The decay of religion as a social force and guide to conduct has had much to do with the present crime situation. This decay coincided with the divorce of economics from ethics and the consequent departure of spiritual values from the labour of the people during the course of the Industrial Revolution.

Consequently, it is our fundamentals that are wrong. Life is one, a unity which rapidly disintegrates when one of its major functions ceases, as happened when creative and social values were taken out of the labour of increasing percentages of the people. Once spiritual values and principles cease to control the vital functions of life, religion quickly loses its significance and meaning; and religion will not regain its lost power until it earnestly seeks to restore to human labour the spiritual values which alone can make it wholesome and holy.

The nature of a man's work has more to do with determining his spiritual health and well-being than any other single factor and if it fragments him, religion cannot make him whole except as a stimulus to a social revolt. Man must work in order to eat, but if his labour does not develop the whole man, his imagination and creative genius, and thus satisfy his inward being, his life will be out of joint. The right to wholeness is basic, and it should be one of the major aims of religion to make it possible for all men to achieve it. It was the failure of religion to do precisely this and also to demand economic justice for the workers during the first century of the Industrial Revolution that was responsible for the great exodus from the Churches of Britain during the first three decades of the present century.

The acceptance of the inevitability of human fragmentation in the interest of 'progress' was also responsible for a change of emphasis in the working-class struggle for justice and freedom. The economic pressures of

the struggle for markets and the consequent necessity for increased specialization blocked the road to responsible, creative labour for the average worker, in consequence of which propaganda was concentrated on shorter hours and higher wages. It is a long jump from the values of the early Christian Socialists and of the pioneers of the I.L.P. to the "bread and butter" politics of the last thirty years.

The spirit of man wilted under the materialism of quantitative production for the capture of markets, whence politics become a sordid personal and class struggle for cash and power. The 'good life' was reduced to maximum consumption of goods and services.

The Welfare State is the logical outcome of that policy, and an indispensable condition of a materialistic civilization, notwithstanding the unpleasant fact that it has increased personal dependence upon the State and reduced personal responsibility precisely when it needed to be increased.

Worse still, the longer present trends continue, the more fragmented will people become, and the more dependent will they be upon endless diversions in order to preserve their mental balance. Meditation is essential to spiritual growth, but fragmented people spurn meditation because they are afraid of themselves, the desolate caverns of the starved mind. To such people conscription and war are often a means of deliverance from a futile and meaningless existence.

V

The Root Problem of Our Time

The root problem of our time is how to pass from a quantitative civilization which fragments the human person to a qualitative civilization which makes whole persons.

Happily, there are many in all walks of life and in all social groups and political parties who are coming to these conclusions. They realize that Western civilization has run off the strips and is heading for disaster, and they are looking for a new way.

The immediate need is a larger body of believers in a new creative era. As a nation we must stop wasting our thought and substance on negations. Anti-Communism will get us nowhere except to war.

All our major problems have a common source: the materialism of abundance. War, the hydrogen bomb, the Democratic-Communist conflict, market and raw material shortages, all arise from misconceived abundance. The greater the abundance the greater is the clamour for it and the more numerous and powerful become the tensions and antagonisms which poison international relations. But as war is the outcome of the triumph of material forces over spiritual, so peace is the outcome of the triumph of spirit over matter. The latter triumph will come by way of a finer culture and a religion which gets down to the roots of spiritual being and human wholeness in the daily labour of the

people. The revolution we seek will enable men to put their souls into their labour. Such labour will transform desire, thus a nation's economy, and make straight the road to peace.

Sad to relate, our men of culture and religion are almost as negative as our politicians. They preach a gospel of salvation which humbles itself before obliteration, bombing and even the hydrogen bomb. Faith in Truth, even in Christian Truth, in righteousness and justice, has to be modified by circumstances. When Caesar's claims have all been met, there is little left to quarrel about. In other words, they offer no valid alternative to modern materialism, or none which carries spiritual values into every aspect of personal and social life. They thus forsake the Truth that is their only hope, and bring their cause into disrepute.

Our choice is between the hydrogen bomb and a new way of life (which is yet old); between the materialist principle of getting, and the spiritual principle of finding life by giving it. As always the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, but to enter it we need the knowledge of Truth, also understanding and faith, all of which come by meditation.

We must, therefore, combat the view that peace will come through strength. Strength increases fear all round and challenges the enemy to reply in kind. It also tempts its possessors to adopt a dictatorial attitude towards the latter, which invariably has the opposite effect from that intended.

As between States, fear tends to run to power on both sides. It induces fear in one's enemy, and new efforts to increase power. Hence the vicious spiral of power, which interacts on nerves and tempers with incalculable results.

There is thus a limit to the amount of power which any nation should wield, especially as during a crisis power tends to reside in few hands. No nation and no person is big enough or good enough to decide the fate of many nations, let alone half the world.

In this age of perpetual political strain, the danger of war arising from human limitations is greater than is generally realized. The human brain is incapable of rational functioning in a situation where a decision involves the fate of a continent and even a hemisphere, especially when similar action might be taken at any moment by an enemy who is likewise distraught and afraid lest he should not get in the first blow.

This further fact must also be borne in mind, that when the quality of life falls below a point that is psychologically ascertainable, it becomes a matter of indifference whether life and civilization continue or end. When life loses its savour despair quickly sweeps across the spiritual barrenness of a spent civilization. Then time has a stop.

Fear rises with the power of weapons, and when the power reaches that of the H-Bomb, the whole world will be at the mercy of FEAR in the day of crisis.

NOTES

Missing Aspect of the Plan-frame

Shri N. K. Bose, writing on "The Human Aspect in Planning" in the *Vigil*, June 4, 1955, notes that "it is in the fitness of things that more attention is being paid to the human factor in the Second Five Year Plan". That is to say, it must not be allowed to be a mere economist's or a statistician's plan, but should touch our national life at its very base, which is the village life. Otherwise we might be misled to believe with Prof. Mahalanobis where he says that prohibition is impossible, maximum excise duty must be extracted from drug and drink; salt and such other essential goods should also be taxed, even by amending the Constitution, if necessary; etc. etc. Now it is obvious that these are opinions which are born of the idea that the F. Y. Plan is an economic matter mainly, if not exclusively. The new Plan must be saved from this lurking danger. Shri N. K. Bose in his above article points the danger in the following terms:

"Although there is much inertia at the base level of our rural and social life which shows itself in obstructionism or otherwise, it is necessary, if we want to get things done in the right way, that we should not try to bypass these difficulties by an abundant use of money, or by the exercise of authority from the top, but try to solve the real problem which happened to be at the human level itself. Unless that is done, life at the base can hardly be rebuilt until the present generation of Indians are laid in the grave and a new generation comes into being whose childhood days have been built up round River-Valley Projects, National Highways and Fertilizer factories. Changes can be brought about by authority, but that tends to the concentration of power and eventually to totalitarianism. Changes can also be brought about in a different way, through a stimulation and encouragement of initiative and authority at the base. That alone seems to be the way of democracy. Gandhiji's theory of decentralization was not merely for application in relation to the production and distribution of goods which men needed, but its keystone was the decentralization of authority. And if an economic plan succeeds without corresponding decentralization of power, if people at the base are left spiritually anaemic, what will it matter even if the standard of life is raised high? For it is not by bread alone that man lives; this being as much true in the political sphere as it is supposed to be true in the spiritual sphere of man's life."

M. P.

Gujarati Examinations for Non-Gujaratis

In response to a demand from non-Gujaratis residing in Gujarat for holding examination for the study of Gujarati language, the Gujarat Vidyapith has decided to hold four graded examinations in Gujarati language for non-Gujaratis: viz. *Prathamik*, *Subodh*, *Prabodh* and *Vinaya*. In the first instance, it is proposed that the examinations to start with be held in four centres: Bombay, Surat, Ahmedabad and Rajkot. The opening of more centres, if required, will be considered later on.

A prospectus setting forth syllabuses, rules and regulations etc. for the Gujarati examina-

tions can be had from the undersigned. (Price As. 3). Further correspondence in the matter should be addressed to Pariksha Mantri, Hindi Prachar Samiti, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad-14.

Gujarat Vidyapith,
Ahmedabad-14

Maganbhai Desai
Registrar

5-7-55

(From Gujarati)

Gandhiji on Religion *

God and therefore religion are fundamental necessities for normal healthy life — to the individual as well as to nations. Here in this book the reader will find Gandhiji speaking from his heart on various occasions in the course of thirty years of the matured period of his life. What a modern man who did very great things thought on the subject of God and religion cannot fail to be instructive to educated men and women in these difficult days.

"We the human family are not all philosophers. Somehow or other we want something which we can touch, something which we can see, something before which we can kneel down. It does not matter whether it is a book or an empty stone-building or a stone-building inhabited by numerous figures": so wrote Gandhiji, defending temple-worship in the background of other prevailing religions. "Hindu Dharma is like a boundless ocean teeming with priceless gems. The deeper you dive, the more treasures you find," said Gandhiji.

Any one who desires to understand what sort of a man the Father of the Nation was, must read this book. One may not want to learn anything about religion that is not in our Shastras or in other religious books. But here is a facet of the mind of a great man we love and to whom the nation is grateful. It has a value over and above a book of religious instruction.

Madras, 11-4-55

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

* From the foreword to the book *Truth is God*; compiled by R. K. Prabhu from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi bearing on God, God-realization and the Godly Way. Pub. Navajivan, Ahmedabad-14, Price Rs 2-0-0, postage etc. As. 11.

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