

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

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TWO ANNAS

OUR BASIC ECONOMIC APPROACH

(By Jawaharlal Nehru)

If you permit me, I will say something about the Karve Report, because it seems to me there has been a great deal of misunderstanding, misapprehension and confusion on this issue. The difference of opinion may come in, in regard to certain emphasis at a certain time.

Now, what are our basic approaches? One is that we want, naturally, to add to production, to add to the wealth of the country, to make the country more and more industrialized. I do not think that we can advance in a big way without having industry on a big scale and without adopting the latest techniques. By big scale I mean not only big industry but also more widespread one. If we want to develop iron and steel plants, we must have the latest type of iron and steel plants; if we have a locomotive factory we must have the latest type; if we have anything, say, cement factory, fertilizer factory, defence factories, or the most basic and most important of all — machine-making industry, they have to be of the latest type. We cannot have out-of-date techniques and be able to compete or be able to produce as much out of them. That is one line of approach.

The other and equally important line of approach is about employment. We cannot afford to have unemployment in the country, specially large-scale unemployment. To provide employment is not only a duty but a social necessity. If we do not, there is trouble, either way.

Now, we have to balance these two, and in balancing them, there are many other factors too. There are many other social factors to be considered. Of course, a big objection to the old capitalistic form of industrialization is that it does not care at all for the social unhappiness caused by it, although finally it increases the production of the country. In fact, the whole of Marx's "Capital" deals with the growth of industrialization in England and the terrible misery it caused. In fact, the whole basis of the Communist outlook is based on what happened in England in the 19th century. It is rather out-of-date. One cannot repeat that and one does not want to repeat that in any country. We cannot afford to

repeat it, because people just do not put up with it. And, of course, we do not want to.

Therefore, while adhering to the principle of adopting the latest techniques, we have to temper it, all the time, by considerations of the effect of it on the employment situation. If something causes unemployment, then, we have to think what to do, because looking at it even from the capitalist point of view, it should be our business, to give a dole if we cannot give employment. That is what countries like England and others have to do. Out of the abundance of their production, they give a dole to their unemployed. We just cannot afford to give a dole to 10 million persons. It is also a bad thing to give a dole. It is far better to give work than a dole, even though the work may be uneconomical. We cannot have lower techniques and compete in this world; and we cannot have high techniques in our big industry and our middle industry and out-of-date techniques in some other industry. But it is worse to pursue a policy which does not help us in solving, not suddenly, but as far as we can, our unemployment problem. Apart from the social unhappiness caused and even from other points of view, it is far better to have employment spread out; and when spread out, purchasing power makes the economic system go faster. Agreeing to those principles, how to balance them? We have to do that all the time.

So far as the Ambar Charkha is concerned it has not been, if I may say so, finally appraised. There are two ways of appraising it. One is that experts should work it for a few months and give their opinion. The other and perhaps a better way is that hundreds and thousands of persons, ordinary people, should work it, and we should find out how they have done it, because that is the real test. Now, this is being done. The results thus far obtained are, on the whole satisfactory. As I said, we are in the middle stage. But they give hope, a fairly good hope. The Ambar Charkha is being distributed to some thousands of persons, and their experience of it and their reports would be very helpful. Apart from the technical reports from some technical people who are examining it, even now it does appear to be a hopeful thing and indeed, if I may say so, somewhat better thing than we expected.

But the Ambar Charkha is not the last word on the subject. As it is, even the Ambar Charkha, when used can be improved. Obviously, improvements can be made with practice and use, and it can be made a more and more effective instrument. There is no reason why the Ambar Charkha or any such small household machine should not use electric power, when the time comes, so that gradually technical efficiency is achieved in that small machine too, subject always to other considerations of unemployment. It is quite conceivable, indeed possible, that with somewhat slightly improved design of Ambar Charkha, if not with the present one, we can really approach the big production technique. There is one advantage of the small production technique, that is, we do not have to transport goods and thus the cost of goods is lessened. Undoubtedly, it will be less efficient, I mean to say, economically less efficient, than the big machine. We shall have to balance them. It really becomes a question, not of arguing in the air but of considering all these factors and seeing and giving the highest precedence to the employment factor.

The Khadi Board has made out some kind of a programme for the next five years. It is a good thing to have a plan before us to discuss, to have some idea. But, as a matter of fact, it is based on a number of uncertain factors. As time goes, say in the next six months, we will be in a much better position to talk about the Ambar Charkha. Next year, having known its productive capacity over large areas, and how it can be improved technically, we shall be in a still better position. The programme we make now will only be a tentative programme which should really be appraised and varied after 12 months or two years. In effect, we should see two years ahead and judge from year to year.

There is another aspect. It relates to estimating the consumption of cloth in this country. The consumption of cloth is going up in this country — going up fairly fast; even if it goes up slowly, in the totality it becomes big. If we make an appraisal — whatever our appraisal may be — and calculate accordingly, it is all very well. If the demand is much greater, then there is a lag. Then, prices go up and difficulties occur and inflation occurs. We want to avoid that. We do not want to take a risk in that matter and allow demand to outstrip supply of both sides and thereby create other conditions which affect not only our cloth position but our whole economy. Therefore it is to be considered how rapidly the Ambar Charkha can produce.

In regard to Ambar Charkha, the main difficulty is not the working of the Ambar Charkha. It may be good. But the main difficulty is in spreading it out over thousands of villages. The main difficulty is with regard to its organization. It is relatively easy to organize a huge iron and steel factory, but it is difficult to organize something which is spread over more than fifty thou-

sand villages. The servicing of it, if something little goes wrong, is another problem. The giving of raw materials and the collection of yarn is a tremendous job. If this machinery does not work satisfactorily, as one might expect, then there might be a lack of production. Therefore, one should rather err on the side of over-production rather than under-production. It is from that point of view, therefore, that one has to think of what spindles might be required in the mills or elsewhere. If by calculation we have enough, then there is no difficulty. If we have not enough, then one has to consider as to what extent we should encourage them. All these matters, thus, become questions of careful consideration of the facts and not of theoretical arguments or principles.

It was indicated to us that there is quite enough capacity at present in the mills, plus, if necessary, a third shift, plus, if necessary, the spindles that are standing idle. It is a matter that has to be considered. My point is that the question is not one of high principle, but of careful consideration in details of the position, so that we may spread the Ambar Charkha as rapidly as possible, see its results, and go on spreading it and at the same time seeing to it that no risk of shortage arises because of the growing consumption and demand in the country. I do not want merely an argument about high principles because, so far as I know, there is no difference in our basic approach. There might be differences like emphasis here and there. We have to proceed by method of trial and error, keeping these principles before us and not taking any major risk in the operation.

The Ambar Charkha must be given every possible opportunity to develop, to develop in both ways. The present Ambar Charkha should firstly be tried in the widest possible way. Secondly, to develop it, all necessary technical improvements should be made. That is necessary. Having said that, another point arises, how far one should encourage any additional spindles in mills? That is a matter of calculation and appraisal of estimates. Our calculations will become more and more accurate as we know the functioning of the Ambar Charkha. It is no good discussing it in the air. With principles I agree, and one of the principles is that we have to push the Ambar Charkha to the utmost. The argument that is advanced is: what is the good of pushing the Ambar Charkha if you cannot absorb the yarn that is produced by Ambar Charkha? That is a very valid argument. We must obviously guarantee the absorption of the good yarn produced by the Ambar Charkha and then spread the Ambar Charkha.

Further, we are fortunately at the present moment, having what is called an expanding economy. But we are apt to think in terms of static economy. The expanding economy means more wealth, more purchasing power and more

goods production. If we think in terms of the static economy, then, we put a check on expansion of economy. All these difficulties arise. It is no good merely discussing some rather vague approaches. The vague approaches are all right, but we must also get down to hard facts and figures.

There is one other factor, I may mention, which we should not forget. There is great strain on our finances in spite of our growth because of our big development schemes and there is a big gap between our estimated resources and what we intend to spend. Well, normally one looks to gap to fill it, may be, by some greater effort and possibly and largely by some external assistance. The external assistance may come, but I do not think we should be too sure of relying on external assistance. And, as various developments are taking place in the external world, it may possibly become not desirable for us to ask for external assistance.

(Reproduced from A.I.C.C. *Economic Review* 15-12-55)

Beware of Irredentism

Dr. Rajendra Prasad speaking at Madras on 15-11-'55 bewailed of one thing that is painful to so many others also, in the following words :

"It is really astonishing how soon after Gandhiji's death we have forgotten so many of the things which appeared to us to be absolutely clear and open and almost self-evident while he was living. It is really astonishing how those things now appear not only to require proof but also appear to us to be wrong in many matters.

"What was the fundamental thing which Gandhiji said? Of course, he has often stressed the importance of the economic condition of the people, removal of hunger and disease; he was not ignorant or of indifference to all these. In fact, he did his best to remove these. But at the same time he built up the whole thing upon the solid foundation of the spirit and morals. This foundation we are not able to see today, but if we build upon it, we shall be able to build correctly and strongly in future."

In a similar strain, the Congress President, during his last tour in Assam, said that the first and the most poignant casualty in post-independence India seemed to be the disappearance of the spirit of self-sacrifice and renunciation, — an asset of our people with which we strove and won our independence. The latest witness thereof is what we see today about the States reorganization and the mood and the mind with which we approach it. Looking at the sad picture, there are a few who say we should rather postpone the issue. This is obviously a counsel of despair — an unhelpful negation. Delay will not solve it for us, because whenever we take it up again we will have the same difficulty, if the mood and the mind are the same as we exhibit today. Therefore we must change them and boldly face the issue with the strength of collective wisdom and sagacity at our command, and come to a decision that may be a stepping-stone in the further and onward march of our people to the cherished goal. We must rise above narrow or irredentist provincialism that seems to have overwhelmed us today.

20-12-'55

M. P.

MILL v. AMBAR CHARKHA

(By Manilal Doshi)

I may say I am in the cloth trade and its production the whole of my life. I have also travelled all the countries of the world that produce cloth. From my experience of about 25 years, I may say that the Ambar Charkha is the most effective instrument for the removal of unemployment of our villages.

Even as an old cloth factory-owner I may say that the Ambar Charkha means decentralization of mill cloth industry.

As I am one of them, I understand the anxiety of mill-owners in this matter. The introduction of Ambar Charkha will surely affect the mills. But if we intend to give work to our millions of the unemployed, it is comparatively nothing to worry about.

Those who compare the prices of the mill cloth with those of the Ambar Charkha cloth naively forget to note that the mill industry of India is protected to the extent of 100 per cent import duty and that foreign cloth import is banned.

I am sure, if the Ambar Charkha is helped by similar protection or even to a lesser extent than the above, it will be proved that decentralization of cloth industry is a sure remedy of our country's evil of unemployment.

The mill industry is aided in diverse ways from Government, viz. through providing it with such facilities as electricity, water, land, capital, protection etc. If devices like the Ambar Charkha which give employment to the millions of poor people in India are helped even to a lesser extent if not equally, the country is bound to go on the way to prosperity.

If our villagers are supplied with electricity, good roads and means of transport and communication etc. it is certain that centralized industries will see the end of their unnatural existence in cities. Is it therefore that people who are for the latter cause delay in such supply to villages?

The Minister of Commerce and Industries, Shri T. T. Krishnamachari must look at both the large-scale urban and the small-scale village industries with equal regard. Instead of that, to openly favour centralist mill trade is unjust and unbecoming.

Those who compare prices of mill cloth and Khadi should always remember that if Khadi production is helped suitably in the same way as mill cloth production is helped with facilities like electricity, water, cotton, finance etc. then the centralized mill industry will never stand competition with the decentralized village industry. It is therefore that talks of throttling down the latter at its very inception seem to arise at present; this is surely not in the true interests of the country and millions of its rural population.

(From Gujarati)

HARIJAN

Dec. 31

1955

THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I draw the attention of the reader to Shri Jawaharlalji's speech published elsewhere in this issue. It is an account of an unpublished speech delivered by him on December 5, 1955, at the meeting of the Congress Party in Parliament. Undoubtedly it is a very important statement of our present economic policy. It shows us the attitude and approach of the Prime Minister at the present juncture of our economic thought and development. The juncture is very critical and consequential indeed. Therefore what we decide about it has far-reaching importance and bearing on the future of our country.

The issue of economic progress of our country has polarized itself under two slogans — first, increasing production through industrialism; second, increasing employment through expanding small-scale village industries. The Prime Minister naturally wishes to be cautious in his approach to this difficult situation. He avers that there is no quarrel about the basic principles involved in this matter. As he says, "With principles I agree, and one of the principles is that we have to push the Ambar Charkha to the utmost." The other is to adopt latest techniques and assure production "in a big way". The two have to be reconciled in a co-ordinated economic drive.

The problem therefore is, how to balance them? There is the obvious need for increasing production. The West has shown its technique, and it is being improved almost daily. But there is a catch here in our Indian conditions, viz., the problem of what is called "technological unemployment". "If something causes unemployment then we have to think what to do," as the Prime Minister admits. Therefore, we must mind the second and equally — if not more — important principle of providing for increasing employment.

The Constitution has directed that :

"The State shall endeavour to secure by suitable legislation or economic organization or in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities and, in particular —

"The State shall endeavour to promote cottage industries on an individual or co-operative basis in rural areas".

This is a constitutional responsibility of the State. As the P. M. says, "looking at it even from the capitalist point of view, it should be our business to give a dole if we cannot give employment. That is what countries like England and others

have to do..... We just cannot afford to give a dole to 10 million persons. It is also a bad thing to give a dole. It is far better to give work than a dole, even though the work may be uneconomical..... It is worse to pursue a policy which does not help us in solving, not suddenly, but as far as we can, our unemployment problem."

To secure harmony and balance between this apparent paradox of industrialism on one side with the consequent 'technological unemployment' involved in it and on the other side the social, economic and even political necessity of increasing employment or of removing our colossal under- and un-employment is a problem unique in modern economic history. It requires an equally unique solution. The way to it lies through developing decentralized technique of exploiting our immense man-power through implements like the Ambar Charkha. It is the Gandhian way of an agro-industrial economy of decentralization spread out in the millions of homes of our villages. The speech of the P. M. reproduced here bears ample testimony to the serious issues involved in this question. Let us patiently apply ourselves to solve them without prejudice or pre-conceived notions born of Western economic or technological orthodoxy.

21-12-'55

REFORM IN EDUCATION

(By Vinoba)

[From a speech delivered at the School at Sunaveda, District Koraput in Orissa, on 23-7-'55.]

Society has been divided into two distinct sections, since the advent of the British in India. They gave English education to some few and left others without any education whatsoever. Only five per cent of the population were educated by them and the rest were left innocent. Besides, as a result of the education they imparted those who received it were incapacitated from living in harmony with the others and migrated from the villages to the towns and cities. How could English education be of any use in our villages? As a result society is split into two parts in one of which people do not work at all with their hands but do so only with their brains, and in the other they work only with their hands because unless they did so there could not be any production. But the system could not develop the intellect of the latter. There was, of course, some development because in God's own plan the minds of those who work with their hands in open air are sure to be cultivated to some extent. But if they had the additional advantage of receiving formal education they could have improved their implements and tools and developed their crafts and industries.

The very nature of the education imparted these days is such that those who receive it learn only reading and writing and ordering others about. As a consequence some few do not work at all and others toil day and night. Education has come to mean leaving work or labour. Educated persons learn to be ashamed of working with their hands. Now, it is a very dangerous position indeed wherein the mind and body are separated from each other. God has given hands to everyone as also brains. Therefore, hands should be given work and brains should be educated. The educated should be able, and devoted to work with their hands and those who labour should be educated. Thus when knowledge and work, education and labour are brought together will the country be prosperous and united. Otherwise it is sure to be divided into mutually exclusive sections.

In the conditions obtaining today some people are blind and some are lame. The lame are not able to walk but are able to see and the blind are not able to see but are able to walk. When society is divided into sections of the blind on the one hand and of the lame on the other it cannot function properly. But society has to carry on. So, today, the lame ride on the shoulders of the blind. The blind man who, poor fellow, is not able to see keeps on walking and the lame man who rides on the shoulders of the former shows the way. Because the lame man is riding on his shoulders the blind man feels the former is his superior. Those living in the villages who labour feel in the same way that those living in the cities are superior because they ride on them. So these lame will have to be asked to get off the shoulders of the blind in the first instance and to be told that God had not made them lame but that they themselves had done so. That is why, the blind should tell them, they were compelled to ask them to get off to the ground because only then could they learn to walk.

We of the villages pay money to those of the cities and buy their things and articles. And they cheat us in the bargain. The first thing we have to do, therefore, is to develop industries in the villages, to take a vow to buy things and articles produced and made in them, and to resolve not to buy things and articles manufactured by machinery in the cities. Only then will these city people who are lame and are riding on our shoulders get off to the ground. Then, if they begin to labour and work with their hands their bodies will be stronger and healthier. Today as they do not work with their hands they do not feel really hungry. But they would not give up eating sweets, fall ill as a result and are compelled to take resort to physicians. Such condition is not good for them. They should, therefore, learn to work. Knowledge should be available to all but should be given along with work. Shri Krishna, we know, was a man of great knowledge. He gave knowledge to Udhava and taught the Gita to Arjuna. But he used to serve cows and horses. He also used to smear the ground with cow-dung paste and to collect leaving from leaves used as dishes after dinner was over. We should always keep this ideal of Shri Krishna before our eyes. If we work and labour we are sure to attain knowledge as he did.

I am glad to learn that a school is run here for the Advaitis. I am told some crafts are always taught here. For myself, however, I shall test the education you give from two things. The first test will be that you will have land attached to the school where you will produce all the food needed by all persons living and working here. I would not be satisfied if you carried on a little farming just to show as a sample. The other test will be that all the students and teachers and their families who live here will use Khadi woven by themselves from yarn also spun by themselves. It means that my test for the success of your experiment will be those living here producing their food and cloth by their own labour. They should also produce the fruit and vegetable they need. Your vegetable garden should also grow herbs needed for curing illnesses you are likely to fall a prey to. All students should be proficient in the art of cooking. You should so arrange things that both teachers and students work and labour together. I would, thus, test your work by the measure of the self-reliance you achieve in the matter of food and cloth.

The test of the education you impart here will be all your boys learning the Ramayana, the Gita, the Bhagavata and the Upanishads and their enthusiastic pursuit of knowledge. If you could achieve all this I shall certify that a school exists here. Also, as now the work of Bhodan is going on all over the country all schools should provide for a proper study of the Sarvodaya idea and ideal.

(From Hindi)

VANASPATI RAISES ITS HEAD

(By J. C. Kumarappa)

We have been constantly warning the Government and the people about the dangers lurking behind the Vanaspati industry. It kills the ghee trade, ruins the ghani oil industry, and cheats the consumers out of nutritious food by providing an adulterant for ghee. At long last the Government seems to be awakening to its evils.

The Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, Union Ministry of Food and Agriculture has brought out a pamphlet entitled *Studies in Ghee*. A sample survey recently carried out in 34 towns by the Directorate for the Government of India disclosed that there is a widespread adulteration of ghee sold in the markets. It is impossible for an average consumer to test the "ghee" offered by appearance, taste or smell. Thirty-three per cent of the samples collected contained practically no ghee at all. Twenty-five per cent were found to be adulterated to the extent of fifty per cent, and thirty-three per cent contained only traces of ghee. It is reported that the most common adulterant was Vanaspati and such of the ghee used is made from buffalo butter mixed with that of the cow.

Only eight samples were found free from adulteration but "were of poor nutritive value having free acid fatty percentage beyond three per cent."

Out of the 84 samples collected from July to September 1952, 56 were adulterated with vegetable fat and another 20 were reported of doubtful quality and there was a suspicion of goat and sheep ghee.

These analyses were carried out by the Central Food Technical Research Institute, Mysore and by the Control Laboratories of the Directorate of Kanpur and Rajkot.

Adulteration with Vanaspati is stated in the report to be the most prevalent form in almost every part of the country.

The Vanaspati manufacturers form a combine and jointly advertise their wares. We have been advocating the control of all advertisements dealing with food and allied products being made subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health. These advertisements should state clearly the constituents of the articles offered for sale.

Such steps are imperative in the interests of the unsuspecting general public. The food of our people is extremely poor in nutritive value and to make things worse the Government encourages further exploitation of the ignorance of the public instead of protecting them. We hope at least now proper measures to safeguard the consumer will be taken up seriously.

(Reproduced from *Gram Udyog Patrika*, Dec. '55)

DECIMAL COINAGE

(By M. S. Kirtloskar)

Though in complete agreement on principle of decimalization, I am afraid, the procedure by which it is sought to be introduced in India cannot but create confusion amongst not only the rural illiterate, but urban intellectuals as well. That the Indian Government and the learned M.P.s thought of the Bill so light-heartedly, is really surprising.

In due course of time the people will have in their pockets both the new and the old coins. The smallest common coin being a four anna coin, the exchange between the new and the old below that denomination i.e. between 25 Naya Paisa and 16 pice will be very difficult. The merchant class which sells, will naturally give equivalent prices in new coins by rounding off the fraction of the Naya Paisa to the next higher Naya Paisa. The rural illiterate will not be able to comprehend the equivalent value of Naya Paisa with the old pice, especially when equivalent values are not given at all.

For example : How much will the post office charge for a one anna stamp in new coins ? Not 6½ Naya Paisa but probably 7 Naya Paisa. Again, how should I pay for a cigarette packet costing 10 annas if I possess one eight anna piece and the rest in Naya Paisa ? In short, if I carry Naya Paisa I will have to pay more.

Hence I have some suggestions to make which, I hope will simplify the matter very considerably. I hope due consideration will be given to my suggestions.

Firstly, our foreign exchange rate with the Rupee should be maintained.

Then new notes and coins worth Rs 1½, on the obverse of which are printed '100 Naya Paisa' and 'One Nishka', should be issued. Naturally the obverse of the Rupee note or coin will have letters '80 Naya Paisa'. Similarly letters '40 Naya Paisa' on the obverse of a half-rupee coin, '20 Naya Paisa' on the obverse of a four anna coin, '10 Naya Paisa' on the obverse of a two-anna coin and '5 Naya Paisa' on the obverse of an anna coin should be printed. With this arrangement, without any disturbance in the economic field the *smallest common coin will be one anna worth 5 Naya Paisa or 4 pice*. All the coins being familiar nobody will be cheated.

It should be noted that four Nishkas make one five rupee note and eight Nishkas make a ten rupee note. Again no botheration.

This change will make any person, illiterate or literate, understand the relative values of new and old coins and no confusion is possible.

After three or four years the Government on a fixed day should revalue the rupee by 25% linking the exchange value with the Nishka. It should then withdraw one rupee, two rupee, five rupee and ten rupee notes and introduce Five

Nishkas (500 N.P.) and Ten Nishkas (1,000 N.P.) notes.

I am sure by this method the change-over to the decimal system will be absolutely smooth.

The names 'Nishka' and 'Naya Paisa' are provisional.

The introduction of Naya Paisa and withdrawal of old pice and half-anna coins' afterwards is taken for granted.

Only two new coins will be required.

ROLE OF BHOODAN IN MODERN INDIA

(By Suresh Ramabhai)

Eight years of freedom have secured for India an honoured place in the comity of nations. She is recognized as a nation anxious to live at peace with every country in the world without exception. Even towards South Africa, she is seeking to evolve a peaceful way of righting the wrongs of the oppressed people; and towards this end has imposed a super-human restraint upon her citizens. This avowed endeavour to retain a peaceful state of mind in the face of deliberate provocations, as in the case of Portugal and Pakistan, has earned the respectful attention of the world. But we have to go a long way before radiant light of freedom is enjoyed by our teeming millions. We have not yet been able to redeem the pledge we made to our village-dwelling cousins.

Let us have a look at the situation. Seven out of every ten Indians are villagers. They are the real India; not our English-speaking towny sector. In the political sphere the villager does possess the right to vote. By his preponderant numbers his will expressed through the ballot-box is sovereign. But it has not become a reality to him and he may even look upon it as a legal fiction if this sovereign Indian citizen were to measure his might in terms of odd earthly goods. Politically he is almost inarticulate. Socially he is tied to the rake of caste and faction. Culturally he is caught between a receding tide of spiritual values and an aggressive urge for aping the town and its ugly ways.

Economically, he has a fascination for riches and the pleasures that riches yield. Only he is so crushed that he cannot lift his head up. Also the current economic system does not consider his needs as primary. It gives more importance to production of things rather than to the needs of man who uses these things. The growth of unemployment — both urban and rural — has aggravated poverty and social differences. The continued collapse of village industries has made the problem of economic integration between town and village more acute. For instance, during the period of the first five-year plan, the prices of iron and steel goods have gone up by nearly ten per cent, while the prices of the peasants' food-grain on his threshing floor have gone down

by ten per cent, thus creating a disparity in the price-structure of nearly twenty per cent in five years.

Further, the gulf between manual and mental labour persists as fearfully as ever. The higher the emoluments or earnings of an individual, the less the amount of manual work he does. The wages of our most skilled craftsman, say the carpenter or mason, are far less than those of an engineer, a judge, a professor or a minister. Manual skilled work commands less prestige than clerical quill-driving.

Freedom has come but old stagnant values, crippling standards do hold sway.

It needs little reflection to state that if conditions remain the same as they are, the village, and with it the whole country, is doomed. Even our hard-won freedom is likely to fall into peril.

All this calls for a change—a transformation of the standing order and a new reorientation of values. Not less important than the need of change is the method of effecting this change. If immoral means or unrighteous methods are adopted to bring this change, it will create far bigger and more intricate problems than it will solve. Again, a stress on moral means unaccompanied by rapid social change will not catch popular imagination and prove futile.

In short, there is need for immediate social change together with change in outlook. This cannot be achieved by stressing class differences and evoking class hatred. A wiping out of the few have's by the many have-not's is not a difficult task. But it will not usher in the required equality and justice. Hatred of possessor and love of possession cannot go together. Possessiveness should not be mistaken for wealth. The really rich are those who have risen above the sense of possession and all those who nurse possession as sacred are poor, whether they be moneyed or not. Unfortunately, possession is as deep-rooted in Indian life as the caste system. Like caste, possession is a formidable obstacle in the evolution of social unity and advancement of human consciousness.

The land-gift movement is an attempt to strike a straight blow at the evil of possession. Taking first things first, its author, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, has begun with land. He says it can no more belong to an individual than can do air, water or sky. Its private ownership should be tabooed and it should, therefore, belong to the village as a whole. The ownership of the village land must rest with the village and it must be distributed, by common consent, according to the needs of the various inmates. It is easy to see that if land ceases to be a marketable commodity, is owned by the village and is equitably and unanimously distributed among all residents, it will shake the standing structure to its depths and pave the way for a new one. The whole village will thereby turn into a family and its atmos-

phere will undergo a metamorphosis. Rivalries and feuds will either be solved in the village itself or disappear. Principles of self-help and mutual aid will govern its life. People will grow the requisite crops and turn the raw material into finished goods themselves. Village industries will flourish and the village will cease to dance to the tune of anybody without. Economic disparities will vanish as also the social. Life would be shared as in a family and family values will pervade the village air. The villager would thus come into his own and fashion his life according to his own free will and taste. Only then would a true democracy follow or people's rule be established.

Obviously no law can bring about this transformation. It can consolidate pieces of land but not fragments of hearts. It can set right the soil of cultivation, but not the soil of mind. Land-gift is not an agency of land-brokers. It is the creed of crusaders resolved to replace old values by new, to establish non-possession as a social coin and to demolish the wall between mental and manual work.

Vinoba's movement invites attention not because it offers a panacea for all ills but as the first wedge hammered into the existing vicious circle to tear it up. It is the basis of all reconstruction or reform. Various ameliorative measures can increase food production, revitalize village industries and infuse a sort of life in the village. But they will fail to change the climate of the village mind which will continue to adhere to old ruts and values. The land-gift mission, therefore, needs a sincere trial.

The response that it has evoked during the last four years and a half testifies to the soundness of its philosophy and approach. The donation of more than six hundred villages in a single district of Orissa speaks for the depth with which it is penetrating the heart of our people. The other day I met a small gathering in a countryside of Bihar. I gave them an idea of Vinoba's mission. A white-haired veteran, about seventy-five years old, got up, came forward with his donation and remarked, "I follow what you say, Bhoddan is the way to establish true freedom in our country. And I want to assure you that I would refuse to die until true freedom is established."

The millions of India are now on the move and a new era is in the offing.

(By Courtesy: All India Radio)

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SECOND CAPITAL OF INDIA

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I am glad to see that the suggestion of making Bombay the second metropolitan city of India (*vide Harijan* of 17-12-'55 "Make Bombay Second Capital of India") is gaining ground and has reached the high quarters at Delhi. Papers report that Shri Vinoba favours this idea and has conveyed his mind on the matter to Delhi. I thank him on behalf of the people for putting this good idea before the High Command.

Surely this is a better proposal than the one of making Bombay a mere city state. Those who favour a three units formula for Bombay State re-organization will surely prefer this to the idea of a small city state. I feel that the mind of Maharashtra, if it has to choose between the two, will lean towards Bombay being glorified to be India's second Capital. The people of Bombay also will like it.

Such an arrangement will make for soothing estranged feelings and bridging over the unfortunate tensions, bitterness and violent fanaticism that have unfortunately overtaken the mind of the city.

Sparrows from some quarters in Bombay come and whisper in my ears that Bombay city politicians might perhaps feel that they will stand to lose the advantage of having a separate legislature and ministry etc. But, I am sure, they will not cling to this narrow view of a personal nature and stand in the way of securing for their city a unique prestige and position which it highly deserves.

In my previous note on this subject I had referred to the S. R. C. Report's chapter on Delhi. In para 593, it considers "the argument that a denial to the people of Delhi of the benefits of popular government at state level would be a retrograde step." And it replies that "people residing in national capitals enjoy an advantageous position and they must be prepared to pay some price for it." It must also be remembered that their representation in the Parliament and consequently in the Union Government is to be there. Again, the civic life of the metropolis will be mainly governed by its Municipal Corporation armed with larger powers and duties and in closer alliance with other bodies like the Port Trust, the City Police Constabulary, etc. A suitable form of unified government machinery for the metropolis might well be thought out, which may give full scope to the people to manage their affairs in an equally important and onerous manner, if not better.

In para 590 the S. R. C. Report discusses the area necessary for the metropolis and says that "rural areas to the extent that they are not indispensable for the future urban expansion and

development of Delhi, can be retroceded to the parent state or states." If Bombay is to be second metropolis, this argument might probably apply to the area envisaged for Greater Bombay city state.

We must be clear that if Bombay is to have a status of its own, — and this is increasingly getting clear even after the debate in Parliament wherein Maharashtra speakers added more reasons why the S. R. C. proposal was unworkable and should therefore be rejected, — we should better not give it a state status but make it the second seat of the Central Government, which it is really today, and is growing more so after independence.

25-12-'55

An Eternal Life Process

Sir,

I have read your leader "Orthodoxy and Revolt of Youth" with care. I consider the previous article "Fear, Insecurity and Indiscipline" more important because people of all ages should guard against them.

There is always a conflict between old and new that began with time itself. But is not death nature's way of changing the old order and every birth nature's gift of new strength to build, if we dare, a better life?

Let us have more faith in the life to come and pay greater attention to it. A society's future depends on its education.

Yours etc.
A. P. P.

Bhavnagar,
16th November, 1955

[The old rejuvenates itself with the advent and influx of the new. The result is seemingly an eternal conflict between the old and the new. But really it is an eternal life process, — one of assimilation, which must be carefully nursed and duly fostered to be strong and healthy. Education may be said to be the way to do it well.]

The correspondent's remark that people of all ages should guard against "Fear, insecurity and indiscipline" is noteworthy. The old also suffer under these, — which goes bad enough for them and the body politic consequently.

24-11-'55

M. P.]

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