



POLICY

In its' Light

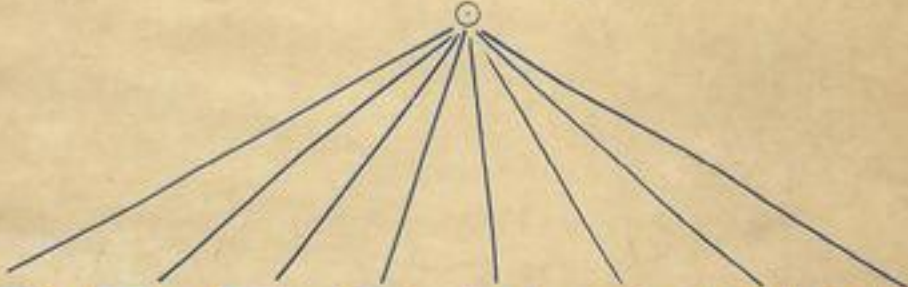
STRATEGY

In its' Light

TACTICS

In their Light

Immediate Programmes



SPECTRUM

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by Shri D. B. Thengadi

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In its' Light

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POLICY

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INDEX

1. A Challenge	1
2. Consumer Protection	3
3. Thoughts on Co-operation	8
4. BMS and Total Revolution	23
5. An Ideology for National Reconstruction	26
6. On Marx and Marxism	30
7. Islam and Communism are incompatible	40
8. Organisational Patterns — Communist and Bharatiya	47
9. Inaugural address at Bharatiya Vichar Kendra	49
10. Whence — Whither — How	57
11. Economic Responsibilities of our Ancient State	68
12. Social Change through Violence ?	71
13. Why Committees & Panels ?	74
14. Trade Union Movement needs a Broad Base	81
15. Trade Union Movement Leads	86
16. Your Questions : Our Answers	88
17. B. M. S. Symbol	97
18. A Message	99

A CHALLENGE

It seems that after twentyfive years of its existence, the BMS is being put to a severe test.

By now the BMS is quite competent to protect and promote its organisational interest inspite of all possible odds. There need not be any diffidence on that score.

But that has never been our main concern. We never suffered from institutionalism. We have always treated BMS not as an end in itself but as an effective instrument in the service of the workers and the Nation.

And to-day both these are heading, speedily towards a catastrophe though for different reasons. And the growth rate of BMS, though commendable in itself, is not keeping pace with the rate of deterioration on both the fronts.

True, the policies of the Central Government in different fields are not yet firmly finalised. All decisions in the meanwhile are based on ad-hocism.

But the trend discernible so far is quite disturbing. It is unmistakably pro-rich and anti-poor. The unholy alliance between the government and the capitalists is already an accomplished fact. The recent unprecedented price rise is only an outward symptom of this deep laid malady. This shameless surrender to capital, foreign as well as Indian, by the Government has come rather too soon.

To meet this challenge,

Complete Trade Union Unity is a must.

The National scene is too well known to need elaboration.

Our north-eastern zone is in flames. The international complication beyond our north-west frontier is quite explosive. Fissiparous tendencies are getting stronger everywhere. Even the otherwise shy government had admitted that foreign agents are active in our country. The extent of their infiltration or the magnitude of their mischief is not yet fully discovered. The Law and order situation is deteriorating day by day. We are already in the midst of a grave economic crisis. The Government that works is not working at all. People are losing faith in the administration. And Mrs Gandhi is losing her grip over her party, bureaucracy and the people. We are drifting towards chaos. And all this when some foreign powers are vitally interested in balkanisation of our mighty nation.

More than ever before our national security and integrity are in danger.

To save the country from the impending catastrophe, complete national solidarity is a must.

The attitude of the government is least helpful in this respect.

Like senators of the declining Rome, our rulers are interested more in their personal and partisan ends rather than in destiny of the nation.

Patriotic workers are caught between the deep and the devil. Can we ignore the miserable plight of the sixty percent of our people? Can we shirk the responsibility of securing justice for them?

Never.

And again --

Can we afford to impair national integrity?

Never.

What then must we do?

The only way out is the disciplined militancy of the United Trade Union movement.

This must be our immediate target. The nation expects Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh to give appropriate lead to the working class at this critical juncture.

Let us gird up our loins and equip ourselves to play effectively the role assigned to us by Destiny.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

BMS has always laid great stress upon the consumers' movement. In its National Charter of Demands the BMS has prescribed in this connection, the following duties and disciplines for the Socio-Cultural leaders of the country :

TOWARDS CONSUMERS

To recognise the fact that consumers' interest is the nearest economic equivalent of national interest.

To rouse consumer-consciousness in the society.

To organise Consumers' Forums to steadily and continuously educate consumers about all matters affecting their interests, including the current state of affairs in the industrial field of the country.

To mobilise public opinion through frequent consumers' conferences in order to bring appropriate pressure to bear upon governments, traders or different parties to industrial relations, whenever necessary.

To organise consumers' resistance and consumers' strike in course of which they would refuse to purchase the product of any plant, following anti-consumer policies.

To set and propagate consumption patterns with a view to encourage Swadeshi and healthier personal habits.

To set up, for major industries, Consumers' Advisory or Consultative Councils on the model of the two 'Coal Consumers' Councils' of Great Britain which make annual reports to the Minister which are laid before Parliament along with the report received by the Minister from the National Coal Board.

Duties prescribed by BMS for Consumers' Forums/Councils were as follows:

Apart from the general work with a view to protect and promote consumers' interests, to undertake specifically the task of disseminating knowledge and information about consumers' needs and problems; protecting consumers against hazards in foods, drugs, appliances, machines and other consumer goods; adopting measures such as vigilance, investigation, legislation, etc., against unfair trade

practices, cheating, charging of exorbitant prices, short weights and measurements, deceptive packaging, misleading advertisements, quackery of all kinds; and persuading consumers to buy only the standardised and certified goods, as far as possible.

BMS recognises the fact that the interests of consumers cannot be fully protected without concerted efforts of various officials as well as voluntary agencies. There are various aspects of the problem that are equally important.

Consumers' cooperative movement is comparatively older in India. But adequate attention has not yet been paid to consumers' education, organisation, resistance and protection. Of all these aspects, the most ignored one is that of consumers' protection by law.

Consumers in India are least protected as compared to their counterparts in Western countries. For example, in Great Britain we come across the higher level of consumer consciousness; wide-spread network of official and unofficial agencies assisting the consumers; consumers' organisations with membership in millions; and an impressive legal framework for their protection. Those, who ought to know, inform us that in Great Britain the Consumer Credit Act, 1974 provides for the licensing and regulation of consumer hire business; the Food and Drugs Act 1955 and 1956; the Trades Descriptions Act, 1968 and 1972, the Unfair Contract Terms Act, 1977 and the Sale of Goods Act, 1979, safeguard the consumer's interests with regard to the purity of foods; the description and performance of goods and pricing information. The Weights and Measures Acts 1963 and 1979 regulate the marking and accuracy of quantities and introduce a system of average weights for certain pre-packed goods and the Govt.; is empowered to control the supply of any goods in the interests of the safety of the consumer by the Consumer Protection Acts 1961 and 1971 and the Consumer Safety Act 1978.

Compared to this, the conditions in India are quite unsatisfactory.

It is a matter of common experience that a consumer is put to great distress and misery due to artificial shortage or irregular supply of essential consumer goods and services due to want of proper control on production and distribution, due to concentration

of power in the hands of managers of large public undertakings and Land lack of proper vigilance and inadequate Government machinery. This directly results in throwing the consumer to the vagaries of hoarders, unscrupulous traders and bureaucrats. The Government has taken to itself the power to prosecute the offenders under various Acts such as the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, Drugs (Control) Act, 1950 etc. However, the consumer has no proper forum to ventilate and resolve his grievance. As the leaders of the Grahak Panchayat have put it, the big concerns take the consumer to be a Jerusalem pony on which it can lay all the load with full confidence that it will neither bray in protest nor falter in its steps in the march to its own funeral.

In this context, the contribution of late Shri R. K. Mhalgi, M. P.; to the cause of consumers deserves special mention. The Consumers' Grievances Settlement Bill, 1981, to provide for special measures to ensure protection to consumers of essential commodities and other consumer goods and services, was unique in certain respects. Shri Mhalgi was justified in claiming that his was a revolutionary measure, because it was the only of its kind in the whole country which proposed to give a statutory right to consumer to approach the judiciary directly. The Bill defined 'Consumer' as 'a customer who buys or offers to buy, essential commodities or other goods, or uses or offers to use an essential service or any other service on payment of a declared price or charge.' 'Grievance' was defined as 'a dispute or difference between a consumer and the service rendering companies or undertakings, arising out of the non-supply or short supply of essential commodities or adulteration or fair prices or quality or quantity or terms of rendering such services or goods in relation to the matters specified in the following schedules :---

SCHEDULE I

1. State Road Transport Corporations and other modes of conveyance.
2. State Electricity Boards and other private Electricity Companies.
3. Services rendered by Municipal Corporations or Municipal Councils.

4. Supply of milk by Government milk schemes.
5. Shops dealing in grain, cloth, kerosene, (edible) oil, firewood, coal and selling any consumer goods.
6. Services connected with and maintenance of hospitals.
7. Supply of articles of stationery and books to educational institutions.
8. Motor Vehicles.
9. Cooking Gas supplied by companies.
10. Services rendered by Telephones, Post & Telegraph Departments.
11. Services rendered by banks.
12. Railways.
13. Insurance Corporations.

SCHEDULE II

1. weights and Measures.
2. Adulteration of goods and particularly of medicines.
3. Inefficient supply of commodities such as cooking gas, kerosene, oil or any other consumer goods supplied by ration shops.
4. Malpractices indulged in by vehicle drivers, such as not following the rates schedule as framed by the Regional Transport Authorities.
5. Hoarding of goods and causing non-supply or inadequate supply by traders.
6. Not giving proper information to the consumer in the matter of supply so also non-supply or insufficient supply of commodities. Non-compliance in the matter of price of the consumer goods and guarantee of the quality and quantity (as prescribed by Weights and Measures and the Indian Standards Institution)

The Bill provided for the constitution of a one-man Tribunal for each district and appointment of an Investigation Officer for each Tahsil or Taluka. The entire procedure was duly prescribed. A consumer as well as a trader, or a Consumers' Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, as well as an association

of traders were authorised to make a complaint to the Investigation Officer. The Tribunal was required to submit a failure report along with findings in cases where no settlement or agreement was reached and to forward the same to the Judicial Magistrate or a Court of Civil Jurisdiction or a Competent Authority, as the case may be, having jurisdiction under various Acts, and to recommend penalties including fine or simple imprisonment or both where in the opinion of the Tribunal a complaint involved an offence of grievous nature.

To sum up, it was a comprehensive Bill and the first of its kind. But, unfortunately, the matter was not followed up after his sad and untimely demise. (In Maharashtra Legislative Council Shri. M. G. Vaidya had introduced similar Bill-but without success.)

It is nobody's contention that mere legislation can effectively protect the interests of consumers in absence of other attendant factors. But any scheme for social security and social welfare, appropriate legislation has its own due place. Had the Bill mentioned above been pushed through, a new chapter in the history of national economy would have been opened.

I sincerely hope that before long some effort would be made by some legislator to pick up the thread where Shri Mhalgi had left it.



THOUGHTS ON CO-OPERATION

At the outset, I congratulate the Nana Palkar Smriti Samittee for selecting this subject for this occasion. Because of the unprecedented price rise, shortages and large scale adulteration, this happens to be the most important topic of the day.

Shri Nana Palkar was an institution by himself. As a dedicated Swayamsevak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, he believed that “संहता कार्य शक्तिः” alone can lead the Nation to its ultimate triumph. He was himself an embodiment of selfless co-operative spirit. It is in the fitness of things that while observing his death anniversary we should take up this subject for comprehensive discussion.

I may state with modesty that long before the present phase of economic crisis, our attention was naturally diverted to the practical problems of poor consumers,—workers being the worst hit section of the population, next only to the unemployed and under-employed.

In its ‘National Charter of Demands of Indian Labour’, that is, ‘An Order of Duties and Disciplines’, submitted to the President on 22nd November, 1969, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh prescribed the following duties of Consumers’ Forums/Councils :

“Apart from the general work with a view to protect and promote consumer interests, to undertake specifically the task of disseminating knowledge and information about consumers’ needs and problems; protecting consumers against hazards in food, drugs, appliances, machines and other consumer goods, adopting measures, such as, vigilance, investigation, legislation, etc; against unfair trade practices, cheating, charging of exorbitant prices, short weights and measurements, deceptive packaging, misleading advertisements, quackery of all kinds; and persuading consumers to buy only the standardised and certified goods, as far as possible.”

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh was also aware that the measure of Consumers’ Forum would be inadequate unless it is accompanied by a systematic move for organisation of Labour Co-operatives and Consumer Co-operatives. For Co-operative

Enterprises, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh Charter prescribed the following discipline :

‘Discipline For Co-operative Enterprise’

“To run the enterprise entirely with a motive to give to its members an economic service and promote amongst them goodwill and brotherhood.

To give special attention to build smooth relations amongst its members by honesty in dealings, discretion in tone and manner of criticism, mutual understanding and respect for common decisions.

To plan and execute the purchase and sales policy by devoting full care to quality of goods, market conditions, terms and conditions of sale, time and place of delivery and courteous habits.

To maintain proper and efficient accounting and audit system, ensure neat and safe stocking of goods, conduct efficient management of credits, debts and working capital, institute proper care of assets and remain accountable to periodical meetings of managing board and general members.

To organise industrywise, District, State and National Federations of Co-operative enterprises to pool together expertise, undertake bulk purchasing, buffer stocking, etc.; strengthen and consolidate co-operative movement and obtain from Government and local bodies the necessary assistance in the form of acquisition of suitable land, site for building, loan and other credit or financial arrangements; direct supply of controlled items, if any, and generally to acquire suitable legislative and executive protection as may be conducive to the sound growth of the co-operative movement.

In respect of management of the enterprise and labour relation, to follow the common discipline enunciated for all arrangements and respective industries in this Order.”

Needless to add that this Discipline continues to be as valid today as it was four years back.

Notwithstanding these generalisations, I must admit that we have not yet participated in a big way in the consumer co-operative movement. Consequently, we are sadder but wiser today. In fact, the current multi-dimensional economic crisis demands that all nationalists should give top priority to the organisation of

consumers' co-operatives throughout the length and breadth of the country.

It is true that the present crisis is the cumulative effect of a number of factors, such as, indiscriminate deficit financing, tax-evasion, parallel economy of black money, heavy dose of indirect taxation on essential commodities, restrictive practices of monopolists, unprecedented rise in administrative and other vulgar and ostentatious expenditure, overdrafts to States, rampant corruption, inefficient management of public undertakings, vast idle capacity of installed machinery, wrong industrial strategy of the technology, the location and the size of the industry, unhampered continuance of foreign banks and other foreign-owned industries, restrictive clauses in the foreign collaboration agreements, encouragement to luxury goods and a marked decline in the production of consumer goods and, most important of all, the unholy alliance between the ruling party and the private vested interests. The crisis is manmade and not natural, though it has been aggravated by draughts and other natural calamities. We could have raised the purchasing capacity of the rural unemployed and under-employed through introduction of unemployment insurance, organisation of financial consultancy service of the nationalised banking in all areas, massive rural works programmes, labour-intensive projects, organisation of agro-based, forest-based and small-scale industries with the greater emphasis on Bharatiya technology, decentralisation of the process of production, dispersal of industries and decentralisation of industrial ownership. We should have introduced consumption tax to curb ostentatious and conspicuous consumption, appropriate changes in the patterns of consumption, maximum reduction in all non-developmental expenditure and better incentives for small domestic savings. The Government ought to have firmly adopted measures, such as, imposition of severe, deterrent punishment to hoarders, profiteers and black marketeers; drastic curtailment in deficit financing; abolition of monopolies imposition of low ceiling on profits and dividends; progressive labourisation of industries and channelisation of small savings into industrial investments. Our Plans should have laid greater emphasis on the production of essential consumer goods and banned the production of luxury goods. In fact, the unrealistic planning of the Planning Commission, wrong

policies of the self-perpetuating ruling party, corruption and high-handedness of the bureaucracy, the changed materialistic values of life gaining ground during the post-independence era, aggrandisement of the foreign collaborators,—all these have combined to bring about the present economic disaster. Certainly, the main responsibility for the same rests with the Government and under the present set-up voluntary efforts of non-official agencies are not likely to yield substantial results if the government is determined to learn nothing and unlearn nothing from the past experience. Unfortunately, there is a growing tendency on the part of the Government to aspire for ever-increasing authority and ever decreasing responsibility.

While all patriots will have to make a concerted effort to bring appropriate pressure to bear upon the Government in this respect through all constitutional yet agitative measures, they cannot afford just to wait and watch, as helpless spectators, the deteriorating conditions of the poorest consumer, until the erring Government is either mended or ended. On their own they must launch some projects to help the consumers in the meantime. Hence the propriety of organising consumers' co-operative movement at this juncture. In India as well as in other countries, the consumers movement has received a boost-up particularly during periods of inflation and scarcities.

The dictionary defines 'Co-operatives' as "belonging to, or pertaining to an organized group or combination working together for mutual industrial benefit, the savings or profits being distributed among the people in proportion to the amount of business they do with the association". "Co-operation" is defined as, "the voluntary association of a number of persons to carry on, as an organised group, some form of business, such as production, marketing and banking, the saving or profits to be devoted to the mutual benefit of the members".

It is difficult to trace the early history of Co-operativism. It is not in keeping with the modern fashion to refer to co-operative life patterns of ancient Hindus, early Christians and American Indians. There are no official records of the earliest co-operatives in the West because co-operative laws and regulations did not come

until there was some growth of co-operatives in some country. We are told that there were some co-operatives in Scotland prior to 1800. In the United States, William Bryan founded a Co-operative Store near Hudson and Leroy streets in New York in 1830; but the real co-operative movement in that country started after the Civil War, though the record of co-operative stores there is not encouraging. In Scandinavian countries a beginning was made at the beginning of the century. In Norway, Iceland and Sweden, there is a variety of well-knit co-operative effort. Sweden whose first well-known co-operative, Lagunda and Hagunda District Commodity Buying Company of Orsundsbro, was started in 1850, and the oldest active co-operative in 1867 in Trollhattan, has a large number of producer, consumer and service co-operatives bound together in strong Federations— 338 societies covering more than a third of that country's population. Switzerland's co-operative movement began in 1851. Germany, Belgium and Canada pioneered credit unions by the middle of the last century. In Germany, Italy and Russia, the co-operative movements were nipped in the bud by Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Mussolini and Hitler abolished the co-operatives and Stalin took them over, thus changing them from organisations run by the members to those run by the Government. In Great Britain, we are told that Robert Owen initiated the spirit of co-operation, Dr. King of Brighton blended it with the day-to-day practical problems and the Rochdale Pioneers evolved it into a principled movement. In democratic countries, co-operatives were opposed by business corporations and capitalists who wanted to have their business margins and profits kept secret, because since the operation of co-operatives is open to the study of its members and also non-members, it reflects the actual cost of doing business, thus lowering the margin of profit, interest charges and the cost of housing and increasing the quality of products—apart from eliminating middle men and unneeded services. As Snorri Thorfinson aptly says, "A complete history of co-operatives would fill several volumes, with at least one devoted to each of the Scandinavian countries where the movement is so much a part of the economic and social progress. In brief summary, the co-operative movement is one built by common people, usually people with difficult economic problems to solve. It is people, united people

working together. It has progressed by trial and error; it has thrived on opposition, its heroes are for the most part the quiet, unsung type; and it is democracy in business”.

The principles governing the co-operative movement were first formulated by the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in 1844. They included: one vote per member; directors chosen by the members from among active members; earnings distributed according to the value of business done by the patron; and a continuous educational programme for members. The Gaitskell Committee laid down the four basic principles of Co-operative Democracy. They are : Democratic Control, Dividend on purchases, Fixed Return on Capital and Consumer Protection.

The Karve Committee, appointed in 1964 by the International Co-operative Alliance, considered the Rochdale Principles of the Rochdale Pioneers and reformulated them, eliminating the subsidiary principles of cash trading and political and religious neutrality. The Karve Committee principles are : 1) Open Membership, 2) Democratic Control, 3) Limited Interest on Share Capital, 4) Patronage Dividend, 5) Promotion of Education and 6) Inter-cooperative Relationship.

Though the co-operative movement in India has really started since 1904, and in this part of the country a cloth store was organised as an independent institution in 1913-14 by Shri G. K. Deodhar at Poona, and consumers' movement did receive some fillip during and after both the World Wars, the real and systematic organisation of consumers' co-operatives commenced only during the Third Five Year Plan period, after the recommendations of the Natesan Committee were taken up for implementation and the Government of India launched the centrally sponsored scheme of consumer co-operatives. The consumers' societies have not received the same response from the people as credit societies. Credit is simpler to handle than trade which requires a much greater discipline and co-operation among members and a higher managerial skill though the turn-over of business in consumers' co-operatives is bigger than in the case of credit co-operatives and the margin of profits tends to be higher. According to latest information, there are about 400 wholesale consumers' stores with 2,300 branches and 14,000

Primary Co-operative Stores in the urban areas. The present structure of consumer societies is as under i. e. Top to Bottom Level :

- (i) State Consumers' Federation at State level,
- (ii) Central Wholesale Stores at District level, and
- (iii) Primary Consumers' Stores in cities or urban areas.

Primary Consumers' Stores are affiliated to District Wholesale Stores and the latter to State Consumers' Federation.

The consumers' societies are functioning in urban areas only. The rural areas are served either by Co-operative Marketing Societies or Primary Agricultural Societies or by private traders. A consumer store can become a viable unit in urban area having population of at least 50,000. In other areas, the local marketing societies can be entrusted with the work of distribution of controlled commodities. In Maharashtra, wholesale stores, most of them with branches, were organised in every district and also in towns with population exceeding 50,000. The Maharashtra Rajya Wholesale Consumers' Co-operative Societies Federation was registered on 12-9-1964 with the central wholesale stores as its members. The scheme which was a centrally sponsored scheme till 1968-69 has been passed on to State Governments from the beginning of the Fourth Five Year Plan and State Governments are now responsible for the development and stabilisation of the consumers' co-operative movement.

The Expert Committee for the Consumer Co-operatives in Maharashtra State, headed by Dr. A. U. Shaikh has done a signal service to this cause.

As a matter of fact, since the inception of the co-operative movement, various committees and commissions have been appointed by the Central and State Governments, and though the entire recommendations of any one committee—from MacLagan Committee to the Rural Credit Survey Committee—cannot be said to have been fully implemented, their reports serve a very useful purpose of furnishing much needed data and analysis of various problems confronting the movement.

The Shaikh Committee visited 27 institutions in Maharashtra State and 14 outside the State. It has tried to cover all the aspects

of the movement such as its present condition; the organisational structure of the consumers' co-operatives; efficiency norms for them; their purchase policies; their relationship with other bodies; business with or on behalf of Government; staff-regulations; training programmes; member-education; consultancy services; business premises; Government assistance including Guarantee scheme; their audit, and guidelines for success. The Committee has enumerated the following factors for success :

- 1) Proper location of shops,
- 2) Control over purchase; judicious bulk purchases; economical rates keeping market trends and customer's tastes in view,
- 3) Regular stock checking and remedial action regarding shortages,
- 4) Periodic review of stocks—old stocks disposed of at reduced prices and return of stocks at reduced prices and return of unsaleable/ damaged stocks,
- 5) Fixation of reasonable sales prices, if possible, below market level with membership-rebate-discount,
- 6) Cash sales as far as possible,
- 7) Adequate working capital including deposit from members,
- 8) Large turnover with quick rotation,
- 9) Cost of management and overheads low,
- 10) Efficient, honest and painstaking management for supervision and regular meeting of managing committee and monthly staff meetings, review of working reports of branches and head office,
- 11) Centralised system of maintenance of accounts of all branches in head office and proper stock control, either by commodities ledgers or value control double compartment system,
- 12) Proper selection and training of staff,
- 13) Maintenance of good customer and trade relations, e. g., home delivery system, patronage bonus, prepacking.
- 14) Service facilities for goods sold through the stores, e.g., cleaning and prepackaging; home delivery ; cycle repair; tailoring; free medical advice; milk supply; agency for liquefied petroleum gas (Bursane, Kosangas Calgas, Indane),

- 15) Processing activities/consumer industries, e. g., flour mills; spices powdering; cycle assembling; paper and stationery; printing presses.

The Committee has rightly said that the goal of the store should be to make all members consumers and all consumers members in the long run. It has highlighted the need for co-operation from housewives, marketing societies, manufacturers, the State Marketing Federation, the State Trading Corporation, the Food Corporation of India, the Indian Oil Company, Railway authorities, Transport authorities, the Civil Supplies Department, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Fisheries Department, Textile Corporation, the Directorate of Food and Drugs, Consumer Guidance Societies, National Co-operative Development Corporation, Municipalities, Improvement Trusts, Housing Boards, Maharashtra Co-operative Housing Finance Society, Nationalised Banks, Apex Bank, Central Financing Agencies, Auditors, Processing Societies, Industrial Co-operatives, Small-Scale Industries, Industrial Finance Corporation, Agricultural Refinance Corporation, Urban Co-operative Banks, the Khadi & Village Industries Commission, the Parliament, Public Sector Undertakings, Modern Bakery, other Financial Institutions of the Government, the State Government and the Government of India.

This lengthy list indicates beyond all doubt the weakness of the Consumer Co-operative Movement and the need for Inter-Cooperative Relationship. The main aim of the Inter-Co-operative Relationship is to seal the leaks in the form of exploitation by non-producing middlemen. The recommendations of the Committee on Inter-Cooperative Relationship appointed by the Bombay State Co-operative Union and those of the Commission on Co-operative Principles appointed by the International Co-operative Alliance are extremely helpful in this respect. The main recommendations of the Bombay Committee are as follows :

- (i) To establish Co-partnership between different types of societies for some common purposes;
- (ii) To sponsor mutual nominations of Directors or members on Boards or Committees of Management;
- (iii) To form joint Committees or Boards;

- (iv) To organise and develop auxiliary or subsidiary type of co-operatives under the care of principal units;
- (v) To develop a sense of co-operative partonage amongst the co-operatives; and
- (vi) To organise "Public co-operatives".

While the Indian Co-operative Movement is far from achieving the ideal of inter-co-operative relationship, in Maharashtra, State Marketing Co-operative Federation has taken hold by giving representation to the Co-operative Consumer Federation, Co-operative Sugar Factories and other processing units on its Board. While we are fully aware of the difficulties in the way of evolving such relationship, we are reminded of the following encouraging observations of Dr. D. R. Gadgil :

" The integrated character of the co-operative organisation was continuously emphasised by their well-knit leadership That the initiative has always lain with non-official leaders, they have shown readiness to experiment and have always acted closely together to give strength to each other and maintained the integrated character of the co-operative sector have been the chief characteristics of recent developments in Maharashtra".

Nevertheless, it is high time, as professor

D. Jha suggests that the National Co-operative Union of India should set up a Committee on the problem of Inter-Cooperative Relationship at different levels of operation.

So far as the weakness of the movement is concerned, the co-operators need not fight shy of accepting assistance and protection from the Government and its various agencies. Such a need has been felt even in advanced countries like Japan and the U. S. A. In the case of the farm credit system which started in the U. S. A. with share capital contributed entirely by the State, it took as many as 45 years in one case and 35 in others before the capital contributed by the Government was repatriated and the institutions came to be owned and managed exclusively by the farmers or their organisations. In the Paper submitted at the Plunkett Foundation for Co-operative Studies Conference held in July 1973 at Oxford, Dr. C. D. Datey states that the

U. S. A. Government withdrew from the scene when the objective of having co-operative credit agencies operating all over the country was achieved.

It is certainly the duty of the democratic State to protect co-operatives from the competition and opposition of private vested interests. Further, it should also ensure that the benefit of its assistance is properly spread among all sections and not confined to a few. But the State intervention should not amount to converting co-operatives into an agency of the Government and curbing the popular initiative. In this respect, the view of de Rocquigny as quoted by Prof. Davidovic is balanced. He stands for "a moderate intervention on the part of the State in favour of co-operation". Prof. Davidovic observes, "The best way of developing co-operatives is from below by people themselves, by those needing co-operative action". The main theme of Prof. Davidovic's paper 'State financing Leading to Self-financing Co-operatives' is that while State sponsoring, guidance, assistance and even partnership are necessary, particularly in the developing countries, for the development of co-operative economy, the State should fully safeguard and strengthen co-operative self-help and the spirit of mutual aid so that in due course the co-operatives will become completely self-reliant and independent of patronage from the State. The intervention of the State to promote and strengthen the co-operative form of organisation should not, on the one hand, result in using the co-operatives to serve the political interests of the Government in power and, on the other hand, kill the initiative and the desire to conduct their affairs independently of the government to such an extent that the co-operatives develop an attitude of dependence and even mendacity and have, therefore, no alternative but to be subservient to the political and the economic objectives of the Government".

In this context, Dr. Gadgil said, "The attitude of non-self-reliance is the great bane in our development. It takes place everywhere. The State Government, the Zilla Parishad, the Co-operatives, all are looking to the Government to subsidise".

Dr. Gadgil has aptly summarised the points of success of co-operatives in certain areas as follows :

- (i) That from the grass-roots onwards the leadership has been built up and there is inter-change and contact at all levels.
- (ii) The movement is healthy where the Government respects the co-operators and allows them large autonomy.
- (iii) And where the co-operatives are largely self-reliant.

Dr. Gadgil urged the co-operators to think in terms of a system, and not only about individual co-operatives. He said, "There is no real deep thinking in either organisational, the operational or the theoretical problems of co-operation when it embraces a society. In the Indian context when it is expected to cover the whole of rural society with a co-operative net-work, it is not as much the organisational problems of the individual society, it is the organisational, operational and theoretical problems of the structure what I call a system, that are important. Unless we build a co-operative system which is viable and operational successfully, we cannot match the national expectations."

Dr. Gadgil stressed the micro approach and said, "One can think of the socio-economic characteristics of not only a unit but also of the system". The co-operative system, again, is a part and parcel of the total national economy. It is necessary to have an integral approach.

From this point of view he observed, "However efficient a nationalised bank may be, it does not build up the co-operative community, and for proper development, the building up of a series of socio-economic organisations at the local level into a tier of federal authorities, this is the system which one wants really to bring into being. This is not merely in one sector but in the entire rural economy. Such a build-up of the co-operative system is and must be, in our opinion, the ultimate idea".

Though the Rural Credit Survey Committee has observed that "Co-operation has failed but Co-operation must succeed". There is no need to be despaired. Co-operation is part of Indian genius. True, overpoliticalisation has played havoc in this field. But it is not as if this is inherent characteristic of Indian temperament. Even today we are having properly managed co-operative societies, such

as Chintamani Co-operative Supermarket, Coimbatore, Janata Bazar Bangalore, etc. In Maharashtra also, the record of, The Samarth Co-operative Consumers' Central Stores Ltd, Thane, 'The Shetkari Sahakari Sangh, Kolhapur', 'the Apna Bazar', Bombay, to cite few examples, is not discouraging. Where one group can succeed, the other can succeed too. Proper care should be taken about selection of co-operators and survey of the relevant factors such as, the total volume of business that may be expected from these people; their attitude toward a co-operative; present competition, both as to quality of service offered and the type of opposition that may be expected; distance from other co-operative facilities of a like nature; and probable trends in the production and market needs of the area. The intensive programme of co-operative training should enable the willing patriots to equip themselves properly for this purpose. In this direction also, we have made a good beginning. For example, the compendium of the Short Term Orientation Course in Teaching Techniques and Audio Visual Aids for the teaching staff of Maharashtra Rajya Sahakari Sangh by the Dhananjayrao Gadgil Co-operative Training College, Nagpur, is quite commendable as a step in the right direction. What is needed actually is the dynamic and comprehensive rethinking on the entire subject in the light of the past experience.

For the purpose of such rethinking, the Report of Co-operative Independent Commission in England, headed by the Rt. Hon. Hugh Gaitskell, is very instructive as a model, though it was first published more than a decade back. Shri M. V. Madane's publication on the Report deserves serious study. The Commission brought forth in its report many weaknesses of the British Co-operative Movement which had undermined the strength of the co-operative societies vis-a-vis the growing influence of the private multiple retail organisations. The Tables prepared by the Commission such as 'Share of Co-operative Retail Societies in Total Expenditure on Goods and Services, 1890-1956', 'Estimated Shares of different Types of Retailer in Total Retail Trade, 1904-1956', 'Estimated Shares of Co-operative Societies and Multiple Shop Organisations in Total Retail Sales, 1935-1956', 'Estimated Cooperative Share of Retail Sales by Commodity Groups in 1935, 1950 and 1955', 'Estimated Shares of Co-operative Retail Societies, Multiple Shop

Organisations and Other Retailers in Total Retail Sales of Different Trade Groups', etc., enabled it to have the correct diagnosis of the malady. The Commission has enumerated the following four major weaknesses in the Movement that were responsible for the failure to increase the co-operative share of retail trade over the two previous decades. They were : the number of co-operative outlets, the distribution of co-operative shops, the quality of shops, and the goods sold in the co-operative shops. While dealing with all the various aspects of the consumers' co-operative movement and making appropriate recommendations to the retail societies, the wholesale societies, the Co-operative Union, and Co-operative Retail Development Society. The Commission has frankly stated that the societies did not realise the growing danger of private combines; that they also lacked initiative during the period under consideration; and that this was the cumulative effect of complacency, lack of initiative, lack of member-education and absence of careful planning. The three aims which a co-operative society should keep in mind to protect the consumers are stated by the Commission as follows :

- 1) Never to be consistently undercut in price by any major competitor;
- 2) Never to sell shoddy or untested goods ; and
- 3) To maintain the highest standard of shop location, layout, appearance and service.

Apart from setting up a Committee on the Problem of Inter-Relationship, it is imperative that a highpower Commission be set up immediately on this British model to go through the entire problem of consumers' co-operative movement in the country.

While it is necessary to introduce appropriate structural changes in the co-operative system in general and the consumers' co-operatives in particular, it must be realised by all concerned that the basic pre-requisite for the success of co-operativisation is the evolution of co-operative temperament or aptitude for co-operation. Co-operative institutions cannot succeed unless their growth is preceded by the development of co-operative spirit. The aptitude for mutual co-operation has been the distinguishing characteristic of the Bharatiya socio-economic order. Its basis was co-operation,

and not competition. The Dharma which sustained the Bharatiya Society enabled our ancestors, at one stage, to evolve a Stateless Society comprising various mutually co-operative self-organisations.

“न राज्यं नैव राजाऽसीत् न दण्डयो न च दाण्डिकः ।
धर्मोऽयं प्रजाः सर्वा रक्षन्ति स्म परस्परम् ॥”

The success of the ‘co-operative system’ can be ensured only if we resolve to reinculcate this spirit of Dharma as expressed by Rigveda :

‘पुमान् पुमांसं परिपातु विश्वतः (विश्वतः) ।’

‘Let man protect man from all sides’

I am confident you all join with me when I quote From ऋग्वेद —

समानीव आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।

समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वा सुसहासति ॥

समानो मंत्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।

समानं मंत्रम् अभिमंत्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

देवा भागं यथा पूर्वं संजानाना उपासते ॥



B. M. S. & TOTAL REVOLUTION

Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh is the national confederation of Bharatiya Labour based upon the principle of genuine trade unionism. The term 'Revolution' does not find place in the constitution of BMS. It does not confer the distinction of being 'Revolutionaries' on the BMS activists. In other words, the BMS constitution expects them to be genuine trade unionists; they themselves aspire to become Nation-builders. They conduct BMS work as an integral part of the Nation-building activity.

Does it mean that BMS is reactionary or conservative? A 'reactionary' is one who reacts against something. For example, the French Political Philosophers Louis Bonald and Joseph de Maistre are considered to be 'reactionary', because their thinking was a reaction against the ideas which had led to the French Revolution. They were however, not bracketed with sceptic conservatives such as Montaigne and Hume who thought it advisable to conserve existing institutions. 'Conservatism' as a political term came into currency during the 1830s, but 'Philosophical conservatism' dates back to 1791, the year in which Edmund Burke's 'Reflections on the Revolution in France' was published. Today, however, the more prevalent view is that both the conservatives as well as the radicals, stand for progress, with the only difference that progressivism with caution is conservatism and progressivism coupled with adventurism is radicalism.

In the initial stage of trade union movement trade unions were considered as the vanguard of a new social order. Syndicalism of France and Guild socialism of Britain developed as a radical doctrine inspired by the ideal of extending trade unionism to all areas of society. But in course of time it was found that although unions have often struck work for political reasons, their main concern has been with immediate economic benefits rather than long range revolutionary transformation. Consequently, Lenin came to believe that the working class by itself cannot achieve sufficient revolution, but will content itself with making 'trade unionist' demands. This course will end in a compromise which will leave the bourgeoisie in power. Social consciousness must therefore be brought to the proletariat 'from the outside' by the intellectuals who lead

the movement. Lenin thought that spontaneous action by the workers could only lead to defeat of the revolution. The revolution must be organised by professional full-time revolutionaries of both proletarian and intellectual origin, working under the strictest, highly centralised and conspiratorial discipline (Apart from the inspiration of Marxism, more traditional Russian revolutionary patterns in the voluntarist and conspiratorial sides are discerned in the Leninist technique of revolution)

Syndicalism of France aspired to bring about revolution through the general strike. But it failed to convert trade unions into instruments of revolution, notwithstanding the enormous growth in the organisation and influence of Trade Unions in France.

In Britain, which is the cradle of trade unionism, the unions never adopted the ideology of Revolution. They had to conduct long and fierce struggles to secure trade union rights. But they achieved this goal through legislation. Even legislation generally followed practices which had already become widely applicable, 'the intention of the legislation being to pull the minority of laggards into line with what has become the standard practice over a wide range of industry.' In most cases, the basis for the ultimate legislation was set out in the voluntary agreements and arrangements reached in industry between the organised employers, on the one hand, and organised workers, on the other. Revolution was never on the agenda of the British trade union movement.

The Socialist movement in Europe was generally reformist and democratic. The word 'socialism' was first used in England in 1827 in the 'Co-operative Magazine', a periodical which expressed Owen's point of view. The word travelled to Europe and America through France where it became current in 1832. This doctrine arose in opposition to the free-market or capitalist economy. But the non-marxist socialism sought to transform existing societies as a whole by means of reforms. Most of the non-communist trade unions of the west are wedded to this brand of democratic socialism.

In theory, Fascism stood for participation of workers in the management of their respective industries. Its activism owed its

inspiration to syndicalists like Georges Sorel. It was, however, opposed to socialism because the latter preached class conflict whereas fascism sought to bind the whole of society together in a nation with one common interest and one common will. But it did not, or could not, use trade unions as instruments of Fascist revolution.

It has been rightly said that every revolution writes its own history, that every revolution evolves its own technique and methodology. Again, it is a fact that the 'total revolution' envisaged by J. P. is qualitatively different from the revolutions in the west in that it is committed to peaceful and non-violent means. Nevertheless, revolution is revolution, and there is much to learn from the experience of all other earlier revolutions. So far as the pre-requisites of, and the equipment for revolution is concerned, there is much common ground between the revolutions in the past and the contemplated revolution in our own country.

The first pre-requisite of any revolution is the revolutionary education of general masses. Revolution may be bloody or bloodless following the dictum of Barthelemy de Light's 'The more violence, the less revolution', but it is necessarily preceded by revolutionary education.

The educational, dialogical quality of revolution is one of the most effective instruments for keeping the revolution free from becoming institutionalised and stratified in a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy; for counter-revolution is carried out by revolutionaries who become reactionaries.

Are we having with us today the type of activists who will undertake this slow and patient task? Or is it merely a vote-catching slogan, a short-cut to success in the next general elections? Those who ask Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh to endorse the philosophy of Total Revolution must reply categorically this question first.

AN IDEOLOGY FOR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION (Introductory Remarks)

When I read the subject for today, I was a bit nervous. The very first word is 'ideology'. English language, not being as scientific as Sanskrit, has many slippery words; 'ideology' is one of them. But I take it that we are using it as it is being used in common parlance, though many words in English have changed their meanings from time to time.

Now we are thinking of national reconstruction. The very word suggests that we are already a nation, and not a nation in the making, and that there is already some construction which is to be restructured. Both these implications are there. Now all of us are anxious that our nation should progress. But at the same time as our Parameswaranji has suggested there are various viewpoints. I think you will agree with me if I say that while discussing the subject we are not as free as were the Founding Fathers of United States when they first gathered to draft the constitution of their newly constituted state. That was a newly constituted state, whether it was a nation or not. They could work upon a clean slate. There was no history, no tradition. So they were in a different position from ours. The revolutionaries in France and Russia, who brought about French and Russian Revolution, were also in different position, because they wanted to bring about change--'Revolution', as they called it. They were convinced that a change was to be introduced, not only in the superstructure but in the very foundation of their respective societies. So they thought of total revolution. The term total revolution connotes drastic alteration, not only in superstructure, but also in the very foundation of the society. We are not in that position, for the simple reason that we do not think that the foundations of our society require to be changed, or that they are outdated. Our foundation has always been the Dharma. And we know the Dharma consists of two parts. Firstly the Universal Laws which were visualised by our Seers. They were not made; they were not composed; Those Seers just saw the Universal Laws. Secondly, in the light of those Universal Laws, from time to time,

they restructured the society. The Universal Laws are unchangeable. But in their light we have changed the superstructure of our society from time to time. In different Smritis we find different rules and regulations. So Dharma being the foundation it is impossible to think of such a drastic change as was envisaged by the revolutionaries in France and Russia and was termed by them as total revolution.

We are an ancient nation and we know that for the last 12 centuries we were engaged in a life-and-death struggle against foreign aggressors. And that is why we had no time, as we used to have in the past, to re-adjust our social structure to the changing requirements of the times. That accounts for the sort of stagnation which gave rise to various perversions and corruptions in the social order. But as revered Mahatmaji has said, while we have to remove all those perversions and corruptions in the social order, we should not throw out the baby along with the tub. And therefore, before thinking of anything else, we have to consider what parts of our national structure have become obsolete and out-of-date and thus deserve to be eliminated when we think of a new social order.

As our foundations are very firm, and they are useful not only for our nation but also for the entire humanity, naturally we have to think in the light of those foundations, that is of Dharma. We cannot dissociate ourselves from the past; that does not mean that we should inherit all the commissions and omissions that appeared on the scene during the period of stagnation of the last twelve centuries. Therefore, our revered Guruji has said that our progress should be like that of a tree. Tree advances it progresses, and in course of time if some leaves or branches become dry, they drop off or we cut them off. But at the same time we are particular that the life-sap must be continued; continuity of life-sap must be ensured. Against this background our national reconstruction is possible only on the basis of our Dharma the nature of which I have just elaborated,— eternal, unchanging Universal Laws and in their light ever-changing socio-economic order. That should be the basis. Now whether this Dharma can be adjusted within the framework of the term 'ideology', I don't know.

You know about the word 'revolution'. Revolution never meant originally what it means today. But at the time of the French

Revolution the Minister exclaimed 'this is a revolution, Sir' And the word changed its meaning. What I mean to say is that I am not very particular about the word, "The Letter Killeth." But **Dharma** should be the basis and it is capable of enabling us to reconstruct our nation today, tomorrow, day after tomorrow, under any circumstances. It is the one thing that can never become obsolete. It is **Sanatana**. **Sanatana**. means ever present. It never becomes stale.

Now various problems are there in different departments of life. We have to think about them and find solutions to them. In ancient days, our society was dynamic and **Dharma** was a living force. On its basis we used to restructure our society from time to time.

For example in case of political life, we know that at different times, in different regions, we have tried different forms of governments. For example as our **mantra** says :

ॐ स्वस्तिः साम्राज्यं भोज्यं स्वाराज्यं वैराज्यं पारमैष्ठ्यं राज्यं
महाराज्यमाधिपत्यम् ॥

These are all various forms of government and some new ones can also be added. We had also experimented anarchism. So also in the field of economics. From **Smriti** to **Smriti**, you will find that rules and regulations about economic life have been different. Though the basic principle was, as has been, emphasised by our Guruji.

यावद्विभ्रियेत जठरं तावत्स्वत्वं हि देहिनाम् ।
अधिकं योऽभिमन्येत स स्तेनो दण्डमर्हति ॥

Whatever is sufficient to fill your belly, to that alone you have a legitimate claim, whosoever claims more is a thief and should be punished. And,

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृध्रः कस्यस्विद् धनम् ॥

All these broad principles are there but at the same time merely broad principles do not make economic order. Therefore, **Smritis** have given rules and regulations about economic life and they differ from one **Smriti** to another. So in every department of

life Dharma has its own reflection, and as I said, for the last 12 centuries **Dharma** had no scope to operate, to play its own role because we were engaged in life and-death struggle. Now we are free. It should be possible for us to consider the spirit and the letter of Dharma and to reorganise different departments of national life on its basis. That is why, I think, when Pandit Deendayalji drafted the first manifesto of Jansangh, one of the articles of faith was **Dharma Rajya**. Because it was a manifesto of a political party the word **Rajya** was used there which was appropriate. But the importance he gave to the concept of **Dharma** is evident from the fact that **Dharma Rajya** was one of the articles of faith. He was realistic, a man of principle and firm convictions and, therefore, instead of using bombastic and romantic word as one of the articles of faith, he used the term "Dharma Rajya" I think that should serve as a guide to our thinking also.



ON MARX AND MARXISM

- Q. This being the Centenary year of Marx, I would like to know your evaluation of Marx, Marxism or Communism.
- A. From the wording of your question it appears that you consider Marxism and Communism as synonymous. But that is not the case.
- Q. Is there any difference between the two ?
- A. Yes. Whether Marxism is just a philosophy and Communism, a political practice based upon it, may be debatable. But it is certain that Marxism and Communism are two different circles and though they are overlapping to a great extent, they are not identical. For example, it has been pointed out that far from being an advocate of totalitarianism, Marx was an ardent champion of liberty. His contribution to the rise of dictatorships has been minimal, almost accidental while he did visualise 'proletariat dictatorship', he also made it clear that it was to wither away with the state. The emergence of communist dictatorships owes much to the circumstances in which the Bolshevik revolution occurred in Russia—the need for secret political work that influenced Lenin's formulation of the principle of 'democratic centralism' as the cornerstone of party organisation, and the absence of democratic traditions among the people.

It would be more appropriate to distinguish Marxism from different current versions of Communism, and not to hold the former responsible for all the acts of omission and commission by the latter.

- Q. Are you opposed to Marxism because you are a devoted follower of Hinduism ?
- A. No. I am not a follower of any 'ism'. I am only a Pracharak of R.S.S. I have not yet come across any thought-system which can be described as 'Hinduism'. Hindus are followers of various thought-systems including communism. The correct English equivalent of the term 'Hindutwa' is 'Hinduness' and not 'Hinduism'.

You will be interested to know that one devout Hindu, i.e. Shri Vishnu Buva Brahmachari had conceived and published in Marathi his similar idea of commune in 1867, the year in which the first volume of Das Capital was published. Both these documents were published almost simultaneously.

Q. I think you are underestimating Marx because some of his predictions proved wrong ?

A. That is not the case. It is true that the course of events has not followed the Marxian predictions as early as in 1895, a few weeks before his death. Engels had written that "History has proved us and all who thought like us, wrong" And again "and once again it was proved how impossible even then, twenty years after the time described in our work, this rule of the working class still was.... But history has shown us too to have been wrong, has revealed our point of view of that time to have been an illusion." Of predictions by Marx, Engels says, "The wonder is not that a good many of them proved wrong, but that so many of them have proved right".

But we do not reject Marx only on this ground. We know that correctness or otherwise of predictions cannot be the sole or even the main criterion to determine validity to any doctrine.

We are in agreement with Antonio Gramsci, Gyorgi Lukacs and Mao Zedong when they say that failure to predict the future does not affect the validity of Marxism. This validity is to be judged by its own merit. It is on the ground of its demerit that we have rejected Marxism. But this is not an occasion to go into a detailed discussion on this subject.

Q. It is claimed that Marx was a completely original thinker ?

A. It seems people have very curious ideas about originality of thinking. Even as you cannot live in a vacuum, you cannot also think in a vacuum. New ideas do not emerge out of nothingness. Every thinker receives something from the previous and contemporary thinkers. It is immaterial whether you describe it as borrowal or assimilation or impact or influence. The originality lies in assimilating the available knowledge and arriving, on its strength, at entirely new conclusion, finding, discovery or pers-

pective through one's own unique and novel perception, comprehension, interpretation and expression. The borrowal does no discredit, because it is natural, inevitable and, often, beneficial. Had not Newton said that he could see farther than others because he stood on the shoulders of the previous giants? This is not discreditable for Newton or the previous giants,

Q. Do you mean to say that Marx also had borrowed from others?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you cite any example of such borrowal by Marx?

A. Of course, for example :-

G.D.H. Cole informs us that Redbertus and Mark both alike drew from some of the common earlier sources and that there is some reason for holding that Marx was influenced by Redbertus in the formulation of some ideas in his later writings, especially in dealing with the problems of overproduction and business crises.

From Market, Marx borrowed "You have nothing to lose but your chains" and 'workers have no country',

'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' from Balanqui and Babeuf's Manifesto of 1796,

'Workers of the world unite' from Karl Schapper, 'Unearned income' which forms the 'surplus' extracted from workers was gleaned by Marx from Saint Simon and Redberts,

'Crises of overproduction' from Sismonde. This was also the idea of Proudhon,

'Communist Manifesto' was considerably inspired by Sismonde's writings.

The word 'Communism' was not coined by Marx. Maurice Cra-nston informs us that the word 'Communism' was first made popular by the Owenite writers in England the 1840s. In their use it was simply a transliteration of the French 'Communisme'. This Owenite term, i. e., 'Communism', was appropriated by Marx for his own different theory, and, subsequently, the Owenites had to use a different term. i. e. 'Communitarianism' to describe Owenism.

Contrary to the general impression, Marx was not the originator of 'class-concept' or 'class-struggle-concept'. Marx has said, "And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new, was to prove : 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society..."

Thus it is wrong to presume that Marx was the originator of these concepts.

But, as I said earlier, this does not minimise his greatness as a thinker. Every thinker has to pass through this stage.

Q. What is your evaluation of Marx ?

A. It is extremely difficult to evaluate any great man because of injustice done to him by his opponents as well as followers. Someone has remarked that when God wants to punish any great person, he gives him disciples. But by now two facts about Marx are sufficiently highlighted : his greatness and the failure of the experiments conducted in his name and under his banner.

Q. Your remark about his followers.....

A. For example, Revered Shri Guruji used to say that Marx was not a crude materialist as depicted by most of his followers, that the source of his inspiration lay in ethics though he did not put it in so many words because in European mind ethics was associated and identified with religion and church, that he utilised economics as his instrument and that it is on ethical, and not on purely economic grounds that his condemnation of dehumanisation and alienation becomes justifiable. Shri Guruji also condemned dehumanisation and alienation in unequivocal terms.

The New left leaders like Herbert Marcuse also feel that economic exploitation is not the only cause of alienation. Shri Guruji

attacked Marx on ideological grounds; but about Marx's motivation his understanding was better and deeper than that of the majority of Indian communists.

In communist world also every communist group condemns all other communists as 'revisionists' or 'deviationists'. If all the certificates issued by communists to communists throughout the world are collected, the inescapable conclusion would be that world communism is equal to world revisionism or world deviationism.

This injustice to Marx by his followers is not an entirely recent phenomenon. For example, see the following remarks of Engels. "The materialist conception of history has a lot of them now-a-days, to whom it serves as an excuse for not studying history.

"In general, the word 'materialistic' serves many of the younger writers in Germany as a mere phrase with which anything and everything is labelled without further study. That is, they stick on this label and then consider the question disposed of."

"And as for our own Party.....a large section of the German Communist Party is also angry with me for opposing their utopias and declamations."

Again Engels wrote.....

"You, who have really done something, must have noticed yourself how few of the young literary men who fasten themselves on to the party give themselves the trouble to study economics, the history of economics, the history of trade, of industry, of agriculture, of the formations of society..... It often seems as if these gentlemen think anything is good enough for the workers. If these gentlemen only knew that Marx thought his best things were still not good enough for the workers, how he regarded it as a crime to offer the workers anything but the very best!"

In India, summarising into a very small compass many thousands of words in which Communist doctrines have been debated from Piekhanov to Lenin through the thoughts of Kantsky, Kerensky, Lessalle, Belinsky and others who attempted a middle line between the revisionism of Bernstein and

the Bolshevik views of Lenin, the learned judges of the Supreme Court of India have passed the following remark about one eminent communist leader of our country. "We are doubtful if he has fully appreciated the (Communist) literature, if he has read it". And "either he does not know or has deliberately distorted the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin for his own purpose. We do not know which will be the more charitable view to take . . . It is obvious that appellant has misguided himself about the true teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin."

Q. How is it that you admire Marx though you reject his theories ?

A. It is the Hindu way of thinking. Adi Sankara has showered highest praise on Lord Buddha by saying :

“य आस्ते कुलौ योगिनां चक्रवर्ती स बुद्धः प्रबुद्धोऽमुनश्चित्तवर्ती”

(Chakravartin of Yogis)

At the commencement of the Mahabharat war, the Pandavas threw their arrows at the feet of Bhishma, Drona etc. This is our Hindu tradition.

Secondly, I am convinced that had Marx been alive today, he himself would have altered his theories even beyond recognition, in the light of the latest Einsteinian Science. Again, during his life-time he had no leisure or opportunity to study Hindu Dharma and Culture. This was unfortunate. Such a study would have enabled him to fill in many gaps in his theories and revise his cosmic view and perspective, since his thinking was dynamic. He was not dogmatic like his followers.

Q. Why do you accuse his followers of dogmatism ?

A. The whole history of communism is full of such examples. As an illustration, see the following policy-statement L I. Brezhnev, in his speech at the ceremonial session in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses on 7 October 1975, devoted to the anniversary of USSR Academy of Sciences, said about the party commitment to Soviet Science : "I would like to dwell especially on one most important question, the party's commitment to our science. Whatever discipline the Soviet scientists work in, they are always characterised by a typical

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(Chakravartin of Yogis)

At the commencement of the Mahabharat war, the Pandavas threw their arrows at the feet of Bhishma, Drona etc. This is our Hindu tradition.

Secondly, I am convinced that had Marx been alive today, he himself would have altered his theories even beyond recognition, in the light of the latest Einsteinian Science. Again, during his life-time he had no leisure or opportunity to study Hindu Dharma and Culture. This was unfortunate. Such a study would have enabled him to fill in many gaps in his theories and revise his cosmic view and perspective, since his thinking was dynamic. He was not dogmatic like his followers.

Q. Why do you accuse his followers of dogmatism ?

A. The whole history of communism is full of such examples. As an illustration, see the following policy-statement L I. Brezhnev, in his speech at the ceremonial session in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses on 7 October 1975, devoted to the anniversary of USSR Academy of Sciences, said about the party commitment to Soviet Science : "I would like to dwell especially on one most important question, the party's commitment to our science. Whatever discipline the Soviet scientists work in, they are always characterised by a typical

feature, their high consciousness and their Soviet patriotism. The Soviet scientist bases his whole scientific activity on the scientific ideology of Marxism. Leninism is an active champion of Communism, fights any reactionary and obscurantist forces. Our scientists subject all their practical activity to the task of realisation of the noble communist ideals". Our much condemned Vedicist cannot be more irrational more fanatic and more obscurantist than a modern Marxist. If only they realised how fantastic their claims are and in what ridiculous position this trend would land them if carried too far.

As if every human progress has been possible because of the basic tenets of Marxism. But for these, Roentgen could not have discovered X-ray, nor Alexander Fleming his penicillin. Do you know why Veslius stumbled upon the "Structure of the Human Body" and Harvey upon "The Motion of the Heart and Blood". It is because Marx wrote his Das Capital. Freud, Jung and Adler owe their pioneering genius to the Marxian dialecticism." We have not yet heard the last word of dogmatism from communist lips. When colonisation of moon and other planets will commence, Marxists are bound to put forth a plea that all planets belong to them since the very growth of space-science became possible because Marx propounded his theory of Dialecticism.

Such dogmatism can convert even the best-intentioned persons like St. Francis of Assisi into Attila, Ivan, Chengiz of Timur.

But, to be sure, all this holds good in the case of the western communists, because intolerance or fanaticism has been a part of their heritage.

- Q. By implication, you are suggesting that the case of Indian communists is different ?
- A. Of course. The Indian Communist mind is naturally split-torn between the inherent Hindu inclusiveness and the imported semitic exclusiveness.
- Q. You are talking only of Hindu communists. what about the non-Hindus in different communist parties ?

A. Are they really non-Hindus, nationally and culturally ?
I wonder.

Q. Communists all over the world have been always described as
'anti-national' ?

A. Till the fifties the situation was different. The communist world was a circle with a centre. But subsequently communists all over the world began to wonder whether they were not actually following foreign nationalism in the name of internationalism. This gave rise to Eurocommunism and to internecine feuds between different communist countries and parties. Enuciation of polycentricism by Palmiro Togliatti in the early sixties has shattered the dream of unicentral communist world and intensified the thrust towards autonomous models. In India also this realisation is growing. But because of their Hindu heritage, Indian Communist leaders react differently; they are more tolerant and less assertive as compared to their Eurocommunist counterparts. This is at once an asset and a liability.

Q Communist leaders will not like this reference to their Hindu heritage. They will resent it.

A. I do not know. But they are certainly aware, that for Karl Marx the connotation of the word 'Hindu' was national as well as religious-cultural.

Q. Had Marx been conversant with Indian History and situation ?

A. He was a keen student of contemporary Indian scene. That is why we find him writing regular dispatches about our War of Independence in 1857. He had studied Indian history through the sources then available in Europe.

As I just mentioned, in his dispatches and other writings, Marx used the term 'Hindu' in national as well as cultural and religious sense.

He, however, had not come in close contact with the Hindu Shastras.

Q. When you speak about the failure of communism, is it your contention that the world communist movement has achieved nothing ?

- A. When it is said that any movement has failed, it simply means that it has failed to achieve the object for which it was started. It does not mean that the movement has achieved nothing. No movement can continue for long unless it has relevance to the situation. The dark side of the communist movement is a matter of common knowledge. But it cannot be denied that a number of well-meant, selfless idealists have sacrificed and even embraced martyrdom for it, however misconceived the whole affair might have been. These sacrifices have not gone in vain. The goal will not be attained. But the mankind has received some benefits as a result of the movement. For example, capitalism is changed because of the pressure of the movement. This is an achievement at least partly responsible for the defeat of communism in highly industrialised countries like U. K. or U. S. A.
- Q. They say that in India the process of polarisation has already begun. In this fight to the finish who will finish whom—the leftists or the rightists ?
- A. I do not understand this language. Firstly, the terms leftism and 'rightism' are irrelevant to and unrealistic in the Indian situation. Secondly, the Hindu genius is known for its ability for synthesis. The Hindus never burnt the library of Alexandria or conducted Spanish inquisitions. This is the land of Shankara and Vyasa. This genius will not fail to manifest itself once again. I think that the "Universe of Vedanta" by Shri Bani Deshpande indicates that the process has been already initiated.
- Q. My earlier question about evaluation of 'Marxism' is not yet replied ?
- A. It is for the communists to tell us whether Marxian thinking is only a scientific way of thinking or an 'ism'. 'Ism' is a closed book of thought, the moment it ceases to be closed it ceases to be an 'ism'. Thinking is dynamic, when crystallised, it becomes a thought; and when fossilised, an 'ism'. If it is only a scientific way of thinking, then it cannot fail; but in that case, Marx's followers will have to allow it to be changed from time to time, and, in course of time, changed even beyond recognition, in the light of the latest findings of various sciences and disciplines.

Many 'established' facts of Newtonian science have been unsettled by science of Einstein, and even Einstein cannot be considered as the last word in the field of science which is continuing its onward march. If an 'ism', it has already failed, because no communist country could faithfully implement even the basic tenets of 'Marxism'. To the best of my knowledge, Indian communists have accepted Marxian thinking as an 'ism'. In that case, their 'Marxism' is a total failure.

The apparent glorious victories of USSR in certain directions are the victories, not of 'Marxism' but of the Soviet Imperialism. The one should not be identified with or mistaken for, the other. Thus our evaluation of 'Marxism' depends considerably upon the view-point of communists themselves on this matter. They do not accept the contention of Shri M. N. Roy that "to insist that the deductions made from an analysis of the conditions of a century ago hold good even today and will hold good for ever, is deviation from Marxism." To Indian communists, it is an 'ism'. (Their approach to Marxism is teleological.) Therefore, we are compelled to say that it is already on the decline, though final decisive defeat may come after a few decades. But Marx himself held a different view. Commenting on the French 'Marxists' of the late eighteen seventies Marx used to say :

"All I know is that I am not a Marxist." If this stand is taken, the evaluation would be entirely different. But let us know from our communist friends their own view on this matter, that is, whether what Marx gave them was just a scientific way of thinking, or a full-fledged 'ism'? In the larger interest of mankind I, however, feel that it would be advisable to appreciate Marx's insistence on scientific thinking, to conduct the same with the help of the time-tested Hindu Science of correct thinking with which, unfortunately, Marx was not well-conversant, and to reject the so-called 'Marxism' which he never waned to create. His greatest gift to the posterity is his insistence on the scientific way of thinking, the greatest injustice done to him by his followers is their invention of 'Marxim' which is the fossilisation of his dynamic thinking.



ISLAM AND COMMUNISM ARE INCOMPATIBLE

“World would be divided into two hostile camps, no doubt. But these would be the camps of the Believers and the Non-believers—not of the Haves and the Have-nots, as communists would have us believe”, remarked a Muslim League M. P. from Kerala in the course of an informal discussion recently in the Central Hall of Parliament.

Continuing, he observed that ultimately followers of all faiths would have to realise this ‘basic truth’.

This casual talk set me thinking—seriously particularly in view of the recent political alliances in his home-state.

What is the nature of the relationship between Islam and Communism? Occasional strange bed-fellowship in politics apart, these two creeds are essentially incompatible with each other.

Islam and the State

According to Islam, sovereignty belongs to Allah only. No human being can claim that supreme position. “There is no ilah (object of worship) except Allah”. “Unto Allah belongeth the Sovereignty of the Heavens and the Earth and whatsoever is therein”. (Quran : V-120). says, “O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty. Thou givest authority unto whom Thou wilt, and thou withdrawest authority from whom thou wilt”. (III-26).

His sovereignty is now being challenged by the totalitarian communist state which arrogates to itself the divine attributes of omnipotence and sovereignty. Authoritarianism of the State has been aptly described by a dictator in the following words: “Everything for the State, nothing against the State, nothing outside the State.” This concept leads to the encroachment by dictators upon the sovereignty of God.

The dictatorship of the communist party thus seeks to dethrone Allah who alone is the Lord and who again cannot be suffered to share his authority with an organisation or individual even if the latter be the secretary-general of the communist party. In the communist state, members of the political bureau of the party are

the ilahs and rabs (lords and masters) of the people. Man's overlordship (ilahiyyat) and domination (rabubiyyat) over man—which is the peculiar characteristic of the dictatorship of the party—is incompatible with the spirit of Islam. While the Holy Quran explicitly declares that “ We shall ascribe no partner unto Him and none of us shall take others for Lords beside Allah”, the communists all over the world accept the overlordship of the Red dictators of Russia or China and would not suffer even Allah to share their totalitarian authority.

Islam can be described as ‘ totalitarian ’ since it comprises within its fold all the various departments of individual and social life. But the basis for such authoritarianism is the universality of the ‘ Divine Law ’ which is binding upon the State also. The sphere of the State domination cannot be co-extensive with the entire human life. They ask, “ Have we also got some authority ? ” Say : ‘ All authority belongs to God alone ’ (III).

True, western parliamentary democracy also is not quite in keeping with the tenets of Islam. According to the authority of Islam, moral chaos may result from the western type of democracy since men are usually more susceptible to their untutored instinct and unbridled passions. It is dangerous to confer ultimate authority on individuals who are not learned, balanced, farsighted and elevated enough to be invariably in conformity with the Divine Will. It has, therefore, been stated that even if all the Muslims put together pass any piece of legislation which is not in keeping with the dictates of the Holy Quran, that enactment will have no validity at all in the view of Islam.

From this point of view, the Islamic State is theocratic. It is so far as the consensus of opinion among Muslims can decide any issue about which explicit command of God or his Prophet does not already exist. Even the unanimous resolution of the National Parliament would be treated as null and void if it is in any way in contravention of the injunctions of the Shariat. Muslims enjoy limited popular sovereignty under the Suzerainty of God. Since full sovereignty belongs to God alone, one who rules in accordance with His Law would be His vice-regent authorised to exercise such powers as are delegated to him by the Sovereign.

The right to govern has been conferred upon the entire community of Muslims, and not upon any single individual or party. Party system can have no place in the Islamic Society. All believers are repositories of the Caliphate which is popular vice-regency. "Everyone of you is a ruler, and everyone answerable for his subjects. And one Caliph is in no way inferior to another". Within the framework of Divine Law everyone has full scope for personal development, full freedom to develop his faculties in any direction that suits his temperament.

Even the State is not authorised to curtail this individual freedom for the convenience of its totalitarian plans. No regimentation by the State is permissible. There is no room for dictatorship since everyone is a Caliph, though, for administrative purposes, all Caliphs concentrate their Caliphate in any one of them who becomes responsible to God as well as to those other Caliphs who have delegated their authority to him. Dictatorship is the negation of such popular vice-regency. Islam does not vest in Ameer the dictatorial powers. The vice-regency vests in the entire community of believers. Neither the membership of the Politbureau nor the key position in the administrative apparatus can entitle one to superiority over his fellow-beings. "No one is superior to another, except in point of faith and piety".

The dictatorship of the Party virtually puts an end to the concept of the Caliphate of every Muslim. It is a direct anti-thesis of the Islamic concept of popular vice-regency. The Prophet wanted to demolish man's supremacy over man. The State deserves to be obeyed only if it functions as an agency set up to enforce the Law of Allah which forms the very basis of the Islamic State. The administration can be run properly only by those who have implicit faith in the injunctions of God as revealed in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah (Practice) of the Prophet. The non-believers have no right to participate in the administration of the State or in the shaping of its policies.

Endless tussle for power inside the communist party, and State is too well-known a phenomenon. History has witnessed ruthless, inhuman beings, fired with the lust for power, reaching the top of the communist hierarchy through pools of blood. But Islam lays

down the criterion for the selection of the leader (Ameer) thus :

The most respectable among you is he who is the pious." (The most pious is not likely to accept the communist principle which states that end justifies the means). Again, no person should be elected to leadership if he is himself hankering after it. The Prophet has commanded that no candidate should be given his coveted post. How many of the communist rulers in the world can successfully pass this test of desirelessness ?

Under Communist regime, the judiciary is subservient to the State. Under Islam, it is independent of the Executive. The Judiciary represents not the State but the Almighty God.

Social System

While communism in its pure form seeks to destroy family organism and set up 'communes' as primary units of society, the Prophet gave recognition to the former and strived in many ways to give stability to it. For this purpose, he prescribed man's guardianship of women; defined the rights and responsibilities of husband, wife and children; set forth the laws of divorce, separation and conditional polygamy; and prescribed penalties for fornication and false accusation of adultery.

Islam does not conceive of class system within the community of Muslims. All Muslims together constitute one brotherhood. While as a community they are distinct and different from the non-Muslims, there can be no class distinction or class conflict among themselves.

Economic order in Islam

Islam resents compartmentalisation of thinking. Economic problem is, according to Islam, a part of the larger problem of human life. It should not be separated from the whole and looked at as if it were an isolated problem of life. Economics should not be segregated from the totality of life. Man is not merely an economic animal, devoid of moral and spiritual motivations.

The divine limits consisting of certain principles, checks and regulations are applicable to the economic sphere also. The right

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The divine limits consisting of certain principles, checks and restrictions are applicable to the economic sphere also. The right

to private property has been recognised; but it is subject to certain restrictions imposed by God—not by the State. Everyone has a right to seek the means of livelihood according to one's capacity and natural endowments.

Economic disparity on account of varying abilities of different individuals is also conceded to a limited extent i.e., to an extent to which it is in accordance with nature. But no one is allowed to adopt such means for the acquisition of wealth as would lead to his own moral degradation and cause moral or material loss to the society. Hence the distinction between the lawful (halal) and the unlawful (haram) means of earning wealth, and the ban on the latter.

A similar ban is imposed upon the methods of expenditure that are declared unlawful because of their potentiality to cause moral and social injury. Hoarding or money lending with interest is prohibited. It is lawful to invest money in one's own trade, or in providing capital to others, or in participating in the profits and losses of the joint undertaking.

Apart from other details such as removal of all tariff restrictions on exports and imports, abolition of octrois, cesses and tolls on the movement of commodities, maximum possible reduction in the expenditure on administration and army, complete abolition of the stamp duty on judicial proceedings, provisions regarding the methods of management of land, settlement of trade disputes and formation of capital for trade and industry, the two other significant features of Islamic law deserving special reference are its law of inheritance ensuring to a great extent the distribution of wealth within certain degrees of relationships and the system of Zakat which formed virtually the Islamic institutions of social insurance against sickness, disability, old age, poverty and unemployment.

It is worth noting that the economic order of Islam is based upon the restrictions imposed by 'Divine Law'. The State is not empowered to give its own economic order. In regulating economic relationships within the society, emphasis is laid upon the subjective change of heart rather than the objective regulations or interference by the State. Whether it is wakf, the legal obligation of Zakat or the

voluntary gift of Sadakat, the stress is on self-discipline, not on regimentation by the State.

The prophet asked his followers to refrain from two vices, miserliness and bad disposition. "He is not a Momin", the Prophet declared, "who eats his fill while his neighbour lies hungry by his side." "He who works for the welfare of poor widows and the poor", he observed on yet another occasion, "is like him who strives in the cause of God, or like him who fasts all day and stands up to pray all night". And, again, "whosoever receives an orphan hospitably, entertaining him with his food and his drink, God will certainly give him paradise.." "Hast thou considered him who belies religion? That is the one who treats the orphan with harshness and does not urge others to feed the poor."

In matters economic, the Prophet appeals to the heart, the conscience. He does not rely upon coercion by the Almighty State. Under the peculiar conditions obtaining in his contemporary Arabia, he was not called upon to define the details of the ideal employer - employee relationship. He has, however, given the broad guidelines. "Your servants are your brothers and your stewards; God has placed them under charge; whosoever then has a brother under his charge, let him feed him out of what he eats himself, and let him clothe him out of what he clothes himself with; and compel them not to do a work which will overpower them, and if you do compel them to do such work, then assist them in accomplishing the same", and again, "when anyone of your servants comes to one of you with food, if he does not make him sit to dine with him, let him at least give him a mouthful or two thereof; for, verily, he has stood by its heat and its management."

Obviously, the approach of Islam to economic problems is entirely different from that of communism.

This difference in the approaches is not accidental. It flows from a still more basic difference between the two.

Differing outlooks and goals

As is wellknown, communism is thoroughly materialistic. Islam believes not only in the existence of God but also in His

sovereignty. God is not only the Creator, but also the Nourisher, the Sustainer, the Law-Giver, the Guide and the End of the world, "He is the First and the Last and the Outward and the Inward". (LVII-3). Communism wants 'matter' to usurp the throne of the Almighty. But according to an Arabian Writer, "Allah offered him (the Prophet) the keys of all the treasures of the earth, but he refused to accept them." Four days before his death, giving the last sermon of his life, the Prophet said, "God had allowed His servant to choose either the gifts of this world or the things which belonged to Him, but he chose for himself the latter." To be sure, the Prophet was not a materialist.

According to communists, the goal of human life and action is highest material prosperity. According to Islam, it is the enforcement of Divine Law.

The points enumerated above are only illustrative. The fact is that Islam is as much at variance with and opposed to communism as any other spiritualistic religion can be. Basically, the two are thoroughly incompatible. And the conflict between the Believers and the Non-believers has been going on, on the global plane for a long while. The Non-believers are comparatively better organised in the process. Will the Believers all over the world realise what my friend described as the 'basic truth' ?



ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS

COMMUNIST & BHARATIYA

(The Communist Party vis-a-vis Bharatiya Socio-Cultural Organisation.)

The Communist Party is a cult identifying itself with only a fraction of the national society.

Bharatiya Socio-Cultural Organisation is neither a party nor a cult. It identifies itself with the entire national society.

The Communist Party is an Indian arm of a foreign nation-state. BSCO is the National Society itself, well-knit and based upon better national character.

The C. P. is a cult of the unfaithful members of the national Society.

BSCO embraces all the parties and cults to which faithful members of the national society belong.

The C. P. seeks to proletarianise all, including the culturist.

BSCO seeks to acculturate all, including the proletariats.

The C. P. believes that the State moulds the Society.

BSCO believes that the Society moulds the State.

The C. P. stands for complete subservience of all socio-economic entities to the Party and its State.

BSCO stands for complete autonomy of all socio-economic entities without interference of any Party or State.

The C. P. stands for the totalitarian State.

BSCO stands for decentralisation of all authority.

The C. P. stands for regimentation.

BSCO stands for elastic discipline.

The C. P. seeks to suppress the individual in the name of state discipline.

BSCO seeks to evolve self-restrained individuals unfolding their individualities within the framework of social discipline.

The C. P. believes in the basic character of Matter, of which Mind is only a Super-structure.

BSCO believes in the basic character of the Existence (चैतन्य) of which Matter as well as Mind are mere projections.

The C. P. is a tribe of believers in Matter alone.

BSCO is the organisation of believers in Matter also.

The C. P. strives to institutionalise the ideal.

BSCO strives to idealise the institutions.

The C. P. aspires for the horizontal division of the national society in two hostile camps.

BSCO aspires for the vertical arrangement of the national society.

The C. P. Stands for central plan-wise arrangement of jobs, with no reference to individual aptitudes.

BSCO stands for aptitude-wise arrangement of jobs adjusted with total production-and-service-needs of the society.

The C. P. envisages a lifeless state apparatus of which individuals are merely the cogs and wheels.

BSCO is a family of the nationals, differing from an ordinary family only in degree but not in type.

The C. P. takes a compartmentalised view of life according to which interests of different social organisms are mutually conflicting.

BSCO takes an integrated view of life according to which interests of different social organisms are mutually complementary.



INAUGURAL ADDRESS

AT

BHARTIYA VICHAR KENDRA

I consider it a great privilege to be able to be present here on this occasion, because inauguration of Bharatiya Vichar Kendra is a very important affair according to me. I feel that it is a modest beginning of a gigantic affair, but howsoever gigantic endeavour it may be, beginning must necessarily be modest, for it is said that "even a thousand mile long march must begin with first step". So, though this is a modest affair today, it is sure to grow, and therefore, I think that to be able to be present here on this occasion is a great privilege and honour. And for this, I am extremely thankful to Shri. Parameswarji, who is the main spirit behind the whole affair.

This 'Vichar' is a very important word that indicates the type of activity that is to be undertaken by the centre. Nowadays, under democratic set up, 'Vichar' is taken to the background and what all remains in political life is 'Prachar', i.e., propaganda, not seeking the truth nor giving education, but only propaganda. Therefore, people are accustomed more to 'Prachar' and less to 'Vichar'. Vichar is only seeking the truth. Truth does not depend for its validity on propaganda. If it receives mass support, well and good. But, even it is opposed by vast majority, Truth prevails on its own. Its validity does not depend upon majority, support. The seeker of truth is objective, dispassionate, scientific in approach, devoid of prejudices, biases, inhibitions and so on. All that he seeks is truth and nothing but truth. And to arrive at the truth is the reward for all his efforts; it does not wait even for recognition. Once Rabindranath Tagore visited Pondichery Ashram. He had discussions with Yogi Aurobindo. At the end, Rabindranath asked "Why don't you come out to give your message to the world"? Yogi Aurobindo replied: "Truth need not go elsewhere". That shows the type of confidence of a truth seeker.

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approach is hypothetical. Particularly the representatives of international communalism and international sectarianism; these representatives are also conducting certain centres. But, the conclusions that they have to arrive at are already in their pockets. And whatever facts that they come across are to be adjusted so as to suit their conclusions that are already arrived at; that is not a scientific approach. Facts are not to be suited to conclusions, but, conclusions, should flow automatically by way of natural deductions from the facts. Bharatiya Vichar Kendra will have these special characteristics, that without accepting any hypothetical approach, it will have search, research, of truth, and on the basis of facts found, conclusions will be drawn. There are no prejudices, biases, inhibitions, and therefore, conclusions already arrived at. We are thinking only of truth seeking.

I am reminded of a fine sentence from Mahatma Gandhi. We know that Gandhiji considered truth and non-violence as two highest principles of life. And once he said: "People say God is Truth; I say Truth is God". That was his conviction. Now, this truth is to be found, searched, at different levels. There are various problems that require investigation. They say that diagnosis is half the cure; even proper formulation of a problem paves way to some extent towards its solution. So, truth seeking at different levels for various problems has become necessary. Problems are at all levels, from personal disorganisations to national problems, to international peace and war, to the problem of true nature of the cosmos;. There are various problems at different levels and whichever problem we are able to solve, will help in a general way to the solution of problems at other levels. In keeping with this spirit of joint investigation, we think that whatever individual efforts are being made, to arrive at truth, regarding different problems, should be pooled together. It should be collective, leading to collective wisdom, This joint effort will be more helpful. That is why the idea of the Kendra has been conceived.

Now, Vichar Kendra is alright, but one may naturally ask what is the propriety of adding the word 'Bharatiya.' Because the truth has no caste, no nationality; knowledge is always universal. In that case, why the adjective 'Bharatiya'? Naturally, this question

can arise in any mind. First of all, the nature of 'भारतीयत्व' is to be understood properly. By culture, by national temperament, by tradition, Bharatiyas were qualitatively different from nationalists of some of the western countries. The quality and character of our nationalism is certainly different. In some of the western countries it is presumed that there is incompatibility between nationalism and internationalism. And therefore, those who are staunch nationalists are against internationalism, staunch internationalists oppose even their own nations. Such things have happened in the past. For us, the very 'दर्शन' is different. We believe in the growth of human consciousness. When a child is born, it identifies itself. With the growth of consciousness, it identifies with the family, progressively with community, with the whole society and nation and so on. But, our culture expects that this consciousness should have further growth so as to identify oneself with the whole mankind, "वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्". And, we are expected to identify with the entire animate and inanimate existence, and ultimately with the entire universe "स्वदेशो भुवनत्रयम्". So, from identification with oneself to identification with the whole cosmos, there should be a line of development of human consciousness. All these stages are inclusive, not exclusive. And for us, there is no incompatibility between nationalism and internationalism. These are only various stages of development of human consciousness. And, therefore, true Bharatiya is as much national as international. This special characteristic of our national culture must be taken into account if we are not to misunderstand the word "Bharatiya" in this particular context. Now, Vedas say that Knowledge is Universal. Even science and technology, though some super powers may try to keep them as their special secrets, are easily universalised. But, when we say Bharatiya, it means that we are seeking truth at distinctly different levels. Various problems are confronting us. We want to have investigations into them.

As sons of Bharatmata, we want to adopt proper attitude in this effort of truth seeking. Because, there had been a conquest right from 1834, there has been a systematic effort to create diffidence, inferiority complex in Indian minds, giving an impression that everything Bharatiya is inferior, everything Western is superior.

And our own scholars, because of the glory and glamour of British Empire, were so carried away by this propaganda, that they also subscribed to this theory of superiority of the British and other white races. It has gone a long way in creating diffidence and inferiority complex among our people. I don't say that we should have superiority complex—that is another extreme, which is to be avoided. But because of this inferiority complex, commonman in our country is unable to see the truth as it is. For example, commonman today is frustrated and disappointed with the present situation. Because he feels that we are not a worthy people, he concludes that the present situation is an outcome of our inherent weakness. He is not aware, that as a matter of fact, we possess everything that is necessary, essential, to make any nation great; all the potentialities—huge manpower that can be converted into assets, all resources, all talents. People say that West is advanced in science and technology. But, we know that we are the **third** largest scientific community of the world, though we have not been able to utilise the talents of the scientific community, due to brain drain. Despite this, we are the Third largest scientific community. So, talents are there, resources are there, manpower is there. With all these, we are lagging behind the rest. Germany and Japan which were destroyed during World War II, have advanced and they are competing with the earlier super-powers now. Israel, which was formed only recently and which is so small in area and also in manpower, is drawing world admiration. Because of the inferiority complex created in the minds of our people, the average citizen is of the view that we do not deserve to be a great nation. That is why we are lagging behind. And he doesn't understand that we have every potentiality necessary to make our nation great. And what was lacking after 1947 is not the potentiality, nor the talents, nor the researches, but the will-power the will of the leaders to make the nation great. And that is why our talents, researches, and other potentialities have not been properly channelised, and we are becoming a backward nation. We were dazzled by the material advance of the West, particularly after industrial revolution, hardly realising that the very beginning of the industrial revolution is more accidental rather than preplanned, and also without realising that these were exactly the periods during which we were engaged in a life and death struggle against an

aggressor; and in war conditions, no nation can make any progress. It is possible only in normal peace condition. We know that in ancient times, we were in communication with the outside world, and people claim that many sciences and arts have migrated from our country to Europe, via Persia, Arabia, and made further progress. So, communication with the outside world, particularly with Europe, was nothing new for us. But the period of their advance and the period of our life and death struggle coincided in such a manner that we could not have any time, mind, or energy left out to know what is happening outside. And, that was the reason why we could not take due cognisance of their material advance. Now, all these facts are ignored by our intelligentsia. And we believe what Macaulay wanted us to believe that we are inferior in quality, compared to the rest. As a nation, others are superior. While we the Bharatiyas do not want to carry any superiority complex, we are certainly opposed to carrying this inferiority complex, and therefore, seeing the whole atmosphere vitiated by such a wrong inhibition. So, it has become necessary that some thought centre (vichar kendra) should be started. It should be free from such prejudices, neither superiority complex, nor inferiority complex, with normal mind seeking the truth. Now, in keeping with our culture, tradition, temperament, genius, we stand for cultural intercourses, action and reaction of different cultures upon one another. We were having it in our own country in the past, and we will continue to have such action and reaction of different cultures upon one another even in future. In the light of eternal universal laws as seen by our seers, to effect change in socio-economic order has been the system of our Dharma, in the light of unchanging universal laws, ever changing socio-economic order. So changes must be there. There is a point of reference of universal laws as seen by the seers. So, we are not averse to change, but what should be the nature of change? We have to scrutinize what we have inherited from the past. Some of these might have been outmoded, outdated today, not useful today. They will have to be left out. Some of it may be eternal in character, universal in character, and therefore, will have to be retained. Similarly, from other cultures, we will have to find out what is best and what is not so very good. Whatever is best in other cultures, we need not be reluctant to accept. But there should be

assimilation in our own culture, not blind imitation. Imitation is best different from assimilation. In assimilation, we scrutinize the portions of different cultures, adopt and adapt them in such a fashion that they become organic part and parcel of our own culture. Imitation is just transplantation. So, we have always considered that it is our moral obligation, it is India's moral obligation to offer her best to the outside world. And it is her right to accept the best from the outside world and assimilate it in her own culture. So, in this fashion, we believe in cultural intercourse. But, we are opposed to blind rejections simply because it is non-Indian, or blind acceptance, blind imitations, simply because it is western. We want to scrutinize our own inheritance, our own heritage, our own past as well as the stage of different cultures, and the best in both are to be assimilated so as to become part and parcel of our traditional culture. And, therefore, in view of the fact that international communalism, international sectarianism have their representatives in this country, who are having hypothetical approach so as to twist the truth and to make it adjustable with their hypothesis, and since average citizen of this country is suffering from diffidence, inferiority complex, in his mind by means of systematically organised British educational system, it has become essential that there should be some thought centre which will follow this Bharatiya approach. Particularly, today the problem we are facing is, as I have said, that, on every level, we have to investigate. Otherwise, we will not know the truth at every level. Therefore, I mention the problem of personal disorganisation, the extreme form of which is suicide. Upto the problem of cosmos on every level we have to conduct joint investigation. There are different problems on regional levels. I am just reminded that Kerala has some systems, social systems, peculiar to itself Our Marumakathaya or Martriarchal system, that was there for so long. Now what was the impact of this Marumakathaya or Martriachal system on the socio-economic conditions today? In what way this system which is peculiar to Kerala has contributed to the present socio-economic conditions? It is the problem about which a joint investigation is necessary. So, on national and international level, there are various problems. Now, we know that some problems are essentially international in

character, for example, ecological problems, and problems arising out of nuclear weapons. Some problems are peculiar to different nations. e. g. Negro problem of United States, untouchability in our own country. So, while some problems are international in character, others are national, still others provincial in character. About all these, we have to have investigations. But the most important of them all, so far as the present stage of our Bharat is concerned, is, what model of progress is to be accepted by us as a nation. There is a tendency to accept western pattern as a universal model of progress. Still, the glamour of westernisation is so much that average citizen is inclined to believe that westernisation is modernisation. For example, in our own economic field, we have blindly followed western pattern. For example, what should be the size of industry, technology of the industry, location of the industry, pattern of ownership of industry? In everything, we have blindly imitated west without taking into consideration our own heritage, our own tradition, our own temperament, our own peculiar circumstances prevailing. Without taking into consideration all these, we have accepted western paradigm as our own model of development. We will have to consider whether this is correct, or we have to study all the paradigms and accept the best from all the cultures and assimilate them in our own. Every culture should have its own model of progress and accordingly, our own culture should have its own model of development. And, though China was in many ways indebted to Russia and to Karl Marx, Mao Tse Tung had said in China that westernisation is not modernisation. He had the guts; he had the courage to say that. We should also have the courage to say that westernisation is not modernisation and while we stand for modernisation, we do not stand for blind imitation of the west. So what paradigm should be the model for our progress and development, is an essential problem so far as our national march onwards is concerned. To consider all these things comprehensively, objectively, dispassionately, it was necessary that our own intellectuals should come together, should think together, should pool together their individual wisdom, and to have joint investigation into the truth, at every level and arrive at conclusions in the light of the truths, in the light of the facts found, not hypothetically, but conclusions flowing naturally, logically, from the facts we have found. Accepting this

procedure, our intellectuals should have some joint investigations, and I think that it is with this end in view that Bharatiya Vichar Kendra was formed. I am sure that in Kerala, inspite of various efforts by outsiders and their representatives, their agents, to mislead the people, there are intellectuals who command respect in their respective fields, respective disciplines, and who are inclined to adopt this line, and to contribute to the joint investigative effort for the Bharatiya Vichar Kendra in its proper form.

On this occasion, I just request all such intellectuals who understand the line adopted by the objectives set forth by Bharatiya Vichar Kendra to adopt Bharatiya Vichar Kendra as their own personal endeavour and contribute their intellectul mite to the joint effort. This is my honest, humble request to the intellectuals who have gathered here and I hope, with the sincere co-operation of all of you, this modest beginning today, will thrive into a gigantic endeavour within a short time. With this hope in mind, and with your permission, I formally declare that Bharatiya Vichar Kendra is inaugurated.



WHENCE-WHITHER-HOW

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru is reported to have once remarked that our country is confronted with as many problems as there are individual citizens therein. One wonders whether this was not an understatement. Considering the variety and magnitude of our problems, it seems impossible to cover their entire canvas.

For example, we have large forest areas inhabited by Vanvasis who are illiterate, superstitious and exploited by the alliance of conservators and contractors. Some of them are so ignorant that they do not use water after nature's call. Most of the members of the denotified communities or the ex-criminal tribes and all the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes are still at a safe distance from the sphere of influence of 'civilisation'. Our villagers are generally not conscious of general cleanliness and public hygiene. Whose responsibility is it, for example, to destroy the breeding grounds of mosquitoes? Sense of cleanliness and clean habits are absent even in urban areas. How many local self-government bodies can boast of efficient drainage systems, public latrines and urinals, and sewage purification and disposal? (Measures against and prevention of the danger of environmental pollution is a far cry.)

Even in metropolitan cities, there are wards having no proper sanitation or planning to avoid unhealthy congestion of men and traffic. Minimum cleanliness has not yet become a part of our social nature. How many will remain outside police custodies if spitting or throwing waste material in public places is made a cognisable offence? General civic sense is lacking even in urban areas. Voluntary observance of traffic rules; explaining correct address to any stranded new-comer; switching off lights and fans while leaving room or alighting from train; natural tendency not to damage public property and to prevent others from doing so; sense of social responsibility while using or occupying night shelters, choultries, restaurants, lodges, hotels, hospitals, hostels, school buildings, maternity homes, public transports, libraries, public halls, parks, stadiums, playing grounds. or the cremation or burial grounds, etc; helping an old, disabled in crossing the road, preventing a child from being overrun by a vehicle, getting down from

man-driven rickshaw while on ascent; rushing to the rescue of the victims of goondaism or natural calamity or accident—in the Nafar Kundu spirit—all such gestures are generally missing.

While apathy or indifference to the welfare of others is almost a rule, very often the urbanites are not alert about their own interest or welfare also. What is the percentage of citizens who know phone numbers of public authorities that are to be approached in cases of emergency such as fire, robbery, murder or accidental death in the neighbourhood? It is said that courtesy costs nothing but earns much; and it is admittedly a lubricant in the social life. But even that is being generally withheld. Mark Twain once wrote sarcastically, "To do good is noble; but to ask others to do good is nobler, and of no trouble". But urbanites have no time to spare for even such 'Nobler' nonsense. No suffering, however worst, of a fellow-citizen can move their hearts. They have become so callous or "sthitaprajna".

(Considering the gravity of the problems posed, all this may appear to be too childish a narration. But we must realistically know the starting point of our Herculean efforts for national reconstruction.)

'Development' is a multi-dimensional concept. It covers all the various aspects of individual as well as national life. But our English-educated elite can think of only one aspect of dimension of development, that is, economic. They do not have an integrated view of the entire life. Thus, conventionally, 'development' has come to mean only economic development. And they are convinced that this much-coveted gold can be achieved by imitating the West—by converting India into a carbon copy of the West. They are sadly mistaken. By way of illustration let us consider a few examples.

From the last century we are following the Western pattern of industrialisation. As in the West, in our country also the process of migration to urban areas is being accelerated. This has given rise to social situations unprecedented in our history. Disintegration of family organism and village common wealth; absence of sound community life in industrial areas; an inadequate housing; large slums; industrial accidents; illiteracy; self-alienation of individuals

shifted from the rural to the urban areas; imbalance in sex ratio; lack of social and moral values on the part of villagers psychologically uprooted from and torn off their natural social environment; high individualisation of industrial life; lack of balance between the material and the non-material advance; inability to adjust to the strains of new life-style under the impact of Western civilization; erosion of traditional cultural values without generating simultaneously new compensating values—all these factors are quite new and they constitute a challenge to our national genius.

The impact of these factors is further deepened on account of decay in religious and educational institutions; maladjustments in existing social institutions; superstitions, both traditional and modern; caste and communal prejudices; and ever new varieties of corruption. Consequently; it can now be said that larger the city, greater the crime rate per thousand,

WESTERN MODEL : Following the western model, our plans have encouraged the patterns of production unsuited to Indian conditions. The criterion for evaluation of economic progress must be a continued rise in the standard of living of a common man, and not the Gross National Product. What is relevant is the consumer goods content in the national product. For the poor masses, increase in production of steel, chemicals, machinery, etc., though important in itself and inevitable in the long run, cannot be a substitute for the production of essential commodities, and yet it, i. e. the former, constitutes presently a substantial portion of the GNP. Again, we have laid greater stress upon the production of luxury goods. The patterns of production have in them an in-built mechanism which would resist the patterns of distribution inconsistent with the former.

It is, therefore, wrong to presume that we can increase the GNP through increase in production of capital goods and luxury goods and subsequently manage to distribute equitably the total national product. High production techniques involved in production of luxury goods reduce the employment and help concentration of wealth in fewer hands. It is, therefore, necessary to change the present pattern of production, ban luxury goods, reduce investment in capital goods industries, and boost up consumer goods industries.

This will also help the process of reducing disparities in incomes—apart from providing additional employment and supplying additional consumer goods.

In the West, there is a growing craze for computerisation, which has been creating problems even under conditions of full employment and fair wages—in spite of bilateral agreements. The very nature of computer's operations suggests that for full utilisation of the capacity of computers, a country must have already attained certain level of education, culture, skills and industrial and economic growth. Our country has not yet reached that stage. In the face of the staggering problem of unemployment and low wages, we feel that it would be suicidal to accept indiscriminate use of computers as is being done in the west.

We recognise the distinction, though thin, between 'inflation' and price-rise. 'Inflation' means excessive growth in money. It generally leads to increase in prices. But in developed countries, excessive demands rather than excessive money supply, is the chief cause of price-rise. When demands exceed the capacity to produce, prices rise. Hence the strategy of curbing demand in those countries. The same strategy cannot be applicable to a developing country like India where demand in market is far behind the genuine and essential needs of the poorer sections. Under Indian conditions, an attempt to curb demand through anti-people legislation would only mean further pauperisation of toiling masses. To keep the growth rate of money supply at par with that of national product would be, along with other measures such as demonetisation, drastic curtailment in administrative expenditure, etc., more realistic. We do not accept the view that rapid economic growth is necessarily accompanied by rising prices.

UNEMPLOYMENT : Next only to inflation, unemployment is the most urgent problem of our economy. After World War II, many of Keynesian theories became outdated for the Western countries, since during the post-war period their more urgent economic problem has not been unemployment and trade depression, but scarcity of capital, equipment and inventories. But in India, unemployment continues to be the most urgent problem. Hence the unsuitability of the current Western methodology to Indian

conditions, and the need to devise our own ways and means to combat this evil, keeping, however, in view the Keynesian strategy of maintaining employment by investment in a period of chronic unemployment. We have to initiate the cycle of raising the purchasing capacity of the lowest economic unit, boosting up thereby a demand for consumer goods, which in turn would boost up consumer goods industries that can provide greater employment and increased earnings to the sub-subsistence level workers, and help reduce the income-disparities.

While taking cognisance of the public debate in the West about the balance between the desire to save and the desire to invest, we believe that this debate is not as relevant in India as it is in the West where a decision to save is not necessarily a decision to invest, and savers as a group are generally different from investors as a group. We, however, agree with the view that the amount of economic activity determined by total spending, saving, and investment must be managed by government for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

We will have to take into account the 'Saving-Investment' mechanism of our country where household saving accounts for over 75% of the total savings and direct investment of this saving is the prevalent practice, the investors being also in overwhelming numbers than savers. We will have to provide adequate incentives for savings and give adequate scope to small investors which can be done efficiently only by changing the present industrial strategy. We must press into service the traditional rural saving habits. Small investors should be encouraged to increase investment and curtail conspicuous consumption on which consumption tax should be imposed. We should fully utilise the traditional cultural values laying great stress upon austerity and simplicity, for the purpose of capital formation.

SWADESHI : We should revive the spirit of Swadeshi to noticeably alter our consumption patterns. We will have to frame import policy and industrial policy so as to eliminate all non-essential imports, utilise imports mainly for producing producers goods, make luxury consumption a costlier luxury, boost up import substitution programme, progressively minimise maintenance import or imports of raw materials and components required for stepping up the growth rate such as fertilisers, pesticides,

crude oil, chemicals, non-ferrous metals, special varieties of steel and components and spare parts of machinery, strengthen domestic production with a view to meet substantially the requirements of industrial expansion, and substitute with courage and conviction the more sophisticated Western machinery with that designed and produced indigenously.

To be sure, blind imitation of the West will not be helpful. On the contrary, it is imperative to unlearn many theories taught by them. For example, we were told that there is inherent incompatibility between defence and development; increase in wages and expansion of employment avenues; capital formation and decentralisation of economic authority; urban demand for price stabilisation and rural demand for remunerative prices of agricultural produce which should cover entire cost of production and leave reasonable profit margin for Kisans; reasonable returns to Kisans and reasonable wages to agricultural labourers; or modernisation of industries and introduction of Bharatiya Technology. If the planning process moves from bottom to the top, instead of from top to the bottom as has been the practice so far, these apparent incompatibilities will disappear to a great extent.

Our experience so far should convince us that aping the West is detrimental to our national development and that we must conduct fresh and original thinking in the light of our traditions, requirements and conditions. The items deserving immediate reconsideration are :

—Redefinition of the objectives and the order of priorities of planning, suited to Indian conditions.

—Firm definition of 'Poverty-line' under Indian conditions.

---Evolution of indigenous Bharatiya Technology.

—Rethinking on the size, the location, the technology and patterns of ownership of different industries.

—Formulation of an integrated national economic policy on investment, employment, productivity, prices and incomes/wages.

—Any firm ratio between the minimum and the maximum incomes in the country.

—Insistence on economic self-reliance and freedom from economic imperialism of foreign interests.

—Appropriate policies on Automation as well as Labourisation.

—Stringent measures against blackmarketeers, hoarders, smugglers, speculators, and officials protecting them.

--Ratification of I.L.O. Conventions No. 87-1948 on Freedom of Association and protection of the Right to Organise, and of No. 98-1948 regarding Right to Collective Bargaining.

—Faithful implementation of the recommendations of the Report on the World Employment programme of the I. L. O.

But unfortunately our rulers are too busy to find time enough to attend to such minor, insignificant details. For example :

Thirty-six years after independence, we have not evolved any firm definitions of 'Employment', 'Unemployment', 'Under-employment', 'Rural Poor' etc; in which category are to be placed persons who can find occasional work only during harvest time or insecure daily-wagers on construction work. We have found out that the single-dimensional methodology becomes inadequate and even irrelevant for assessing unemployment and under-employment under Indian conditions. But we had no time to evolve suitable methodology to assess the magnitude of this number-one-economic-problem of the country. We have been too busy elsewhere.

It is surprising that while we are conducting planning exercise for the last so many decades we do not have in our possession a complete list of existing industrial units—big, small and cottage—with location particulars and description of activity. (Whatever incomplete information becomes available is not made use of immediately, and consequently it loses its utility due to rapid changes taking place in the structure of the small-scale and cottage sectors.) The figure given in the case of physical achievements—appraisals of District Industries Centres Programme are also unrealistic.

The Govt. of India cannot furnish us with a complete picture of our total resources.

Even on simple but important issues we had no time and mind to conduct any research. For example, in how many cases would it be feasible to scale down the size of plants, without reducing their efficiency, taking into consideration the high factory overhead charges such as depreciation, interest on capital and high

management charges; transportation charges from the factory; and the high proportion of intermediary profits after passing through many traders? How far is it practicable, on the strength of suitable technology, to reduce the number of migrants from village to cities, minimising thus the evils of over-urbanisation?

Will it be possible on this basis to locate new industries in small towns and villages, utilising local capital, local labour, and local entrepreneurial talent? Can such industries become self-supporting with the help of efficient marketing organisation, provision of appropriate infrastructure, and revival of the spirit of 'Swadeshi'? Can some of the traditional large-scale industries be profitably divided into different small-scale units as has been the case of Railways in Yugoslavia? Is it practicable and advisable to have fresh spatial planning?

DRINKING WATER : The callousness of the Government has reached such a stage that even the basic human needs are not being attended to. For example, it is a matter of common knowledge that even more than 'Roti, Kapada or Makan', safe drinking water is the basic need of all living beings. The programme for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (April 1981 to March 1991) envisages full coverage of the rural population by the end of the decade. But the fact is that, though the Govt. has declared that only 1,30,761 'problem villages' remained to be provided with water supply as on 1-4-1983, at least 50% of our villages are suffering from the paucity of safe drinking water and, in the meanwhile, the official priority is for Colour T. V., electronic gadgets and luxury goods.

It has been a fashion now-a-days to talk about 'Rural Reconstruction'. But are we serious about it? Even the relevant information regarding power, water, soils, plant nutrition, soil-water-plant relationship, etc., is not fully available. About the total irrigated areas, different Ministries furnish different figures. We have failed, so far, to identify the 'rural poor' on any scientific basis; ensure availability of the credit, inputs and technical assistance to small farmers; compel large agricultural income to finance fresh investments in minor and major irrigation, power, etc; provide adequate storage, processing and transport facilities; and pay serious attention to development of water resources, scientific reconsolidation of

lands, construction of approach roads and drainage works, levelling of land, digging of field channels, etc., and thus build up infrastructure for rural development.

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION : Since the name of revered Gandhiji came handy as a vote-catching device, the ruling party had to accord special status to the problem of 'Rural Reconstruction'. 'Gandhiji's concept of society as an 'Oceanic' structure comprising of concentric circles of live and vibrant communities, of which the village or the primarily face to face community was to be the hub and the centre, is vital to democracy'. Gandhiji wanted to create an integrated structure of self-governing institutions from the village and small town upwards to the national level in order to enable the people to manage their own affairs'.

The Government launched the Community Development programme in 1950 and introduced Panchayati Raj in 1959. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee argued in 1957 that there should be administrative decentralisation for the effective implementation of the development programme and that the decentralized administrative system should be under the control of elected bodies. 'Development cannot progress without responsibility and power'. The underlying premise and promise of the Directive Principles enshrined in Article 40 of the Constitution was that the dynamics of rural reconstruction and growth of our democratic institutions will draw enduring strength largely from the purposeful participation of the people through habits and instructions of self-government at the grass-roots.

But as the Asoka Mehta Committee Report indicates, the whole thing was an exercise in futility. Even subsequently much window-dressing was done. Alleviation of rural poverty has been recognised as one of the prime objectives of the Sixth Plan. The programmes continued during 1982-83 included the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP), and programmes connected with Agricultural Marketing. During the 6th Plan period, it was expected that at the rate of 3,000 families per block, 15 (fifteen) million families would be assisted under the Integrated Rural

Development programme. A scheme titled 'Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas' is the latest one.

But it has now become obvious that these impressive institutions, programmes, schemes, etc. have been useful more for the propaganda of the plight of the rural poor.

What are the reasons for this failure ?

Firstly, the utter insincerity of the rulers. Treating this task only as an effective instrument for election politics, they did not give adequate and deep thought to the real problem. For example they treated this programme as an isolated one. But the Rural Urban Relationship Committee, constituted by the GOI in 1963, had observed that urbanisation should be considered as 'continuous process of transition from rural to urban, treating the present differences as only a stage in the continuum'.

Shri S. K. Dey also observed, 'My experience, across India and the world at large, confirm that development by definition is an integrate process, and rural development is but part of a rural-urban continuum. Development cannot be achieved except through a categorical co-ordination between all nation-building agencies on the one hand and the people in their multifarious organisations and institutions on the other. Coordination of official agencies as a secure measure is a myth except when it is achieved through control by democratically elected representatives of the people. The logic has to be followed through with scrupulous care.. If these be not done, programmes of development will tend to concentrate on a few who together with their counterpart in the administration as well as in the political system, will ride roughshod on the hunchback of the people'.

Thus it appears that the criminal negligence of the Govt. and the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the people are the two factors mainly responsible for our all-out failure. There is reason to believe that our rulers are prepared to mortgage or sell economic freedom of the country to foreign interests. Indian Monopolies, foreign capital and the Government of India seem to have entered into an unholy alliance against the poorer masses of the country, which is also detrimental to our national self-respect and national sovereignty. The logical consequences of their 'jihad' against the poor millions is inevitably the end of democratic system.

But, in the last analysis, it is the people that can make or mar a government. People get the Government they deserve. And unworthy Government can continue in power only so long as the people continue to remain unworthy. Worthy people and unworthy government cannot go together for long. Therefore, the crux of the problem lies in the level of national consciousness of the common man. If this level is raised, the Government, worthy or unworthy, will have to follow the policies and programmes conducive to the process of national reconstruction. In the absence of this consciousness, no programme, policy or plan can succeed.

Thus, the most important and basic, though invisible, infrastructure of the nation-building is the level of such national consciousness. So long as this basic constructive work is not accomplished all other constructive work is bound to end in failure. So far we have put the cart before the horse. We have started with commissions, committees, formal planning, programmes, schemes, institutions, constructive work, TRYSM, symposiums, seminars, papers, discussions, etc. But we have not cared to do the first thing first, that is, to build a builder. As revered Shri Guruji put it :

“Our real national regeneration should, therefore, start with the moulding of ‘man’ instilling in him the strength to overcome human frailties and stand up as a shining symbol of Hindu manhood embodying within himself all our traditional virtues of love, self-restraint, sacrifice, service and character. We should unfailingly keep this vision, this real essence of our glorious nationhood before our eyes, so that we can again rise to our original pedestal of world preceptor.”

We have, therefore, to change our order of priorities—give highest priority to man-moulding programme, initiate and expand conventional ‘constructive works’ only to the extent to which such ‘moulded men’ become available, refrain from all indecent haste, and follow the dictum of revered Shri Guruji ‘Hasten Slowly’.

Our victory is certain. But undue, unscientific haste will delay the hour of ultimate triumph.



THE ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR ANCIENT STATE

While stateless, self-governed society is the ideal of Bharatiya culture, completely "Free" enterprise in the modern sense of the term is not consistent with the spirit of our traditions. So long as different parties to industrial relations are not spiritually elevated, some external authority would be required to step in to regulate their affairs.

Or else, as Kautilya apprehends, the strong would devour the weak, following the ways of the fish, in absense of any regulations.

Regulation of Industrial Relations

Consequently, all Bharatiya Law-Givers have dealt at length with the subject of employer-employee relationship and the part to be played by the Government in its regulation. They have further prescribed, from time to time, the rules governing relationship between the State and its employees. The general responsibility of the State in the economic sphere was also clearly defined by every Law-Giver. Shri Shitala Prasad Misra has very ably covered this topic in his "Labour Problems in Ancient & Medieval India".

The State and the Workers' Unions

In ancient times workers and artisans used to organise themselves in industrywise unions or guilds whose leaders were generally influential with the administration and often held high posts in the State. Federations of such unions, termed as 'Naigam's, occupied an important position in the civic and political life of the country. The unions were self-governed. Brihaspati informs us that the State had to accept the decision of a union about its members; that the work of those unions was carried on according to democratic principles; that the presidents of the union were expected to be expert, capable, and reliable persons; that if the chief of the union tried to obstruct or harm a member through malice, it was the responsibility of the State to intervene; and that if a dispute arose between the president and the members of a union, it was the duty of the State to intervene and to bring about a conciliation.

(Brh. X 8; XVII/9; XVII/18; XVII/19 XVII/20).

Social Security and Unemployment

The ancient State was alive to its duties towards the sufferings of citizens. From the account of Hieu-en-Tsang, it is clear that the State and the vaishya community had, during his times established charity homes and well-equipped dispensaries for the benefit of the paupers, widows, childless persons, and other helpless citizens. According to Kautilya, even widows, defective girls, female ascetics, old mothers of prostitutes, King's old maids, and the dismissed maids of a temple could not be suffered to remain unemployed. He has laid down that they should be given the work of spinning wool, bark thread, and cotton (Kautilya 2/23/41/2). Women unable to leave their homes, helpless due to their husbands' absence, physically handicapped girls, and women in need of earning their livelihood, should be provided with jobs at their homes by the Superintendent of the Textile Industry (Kautilya 2/23/41/12.). The son of dead employees, the old, the minor, the infirm, the afflicted, the paupers and women due for maternity deserved financial assistance from the State (Kautilya 5/3/91/29/31). Mahabharata (Sabha Parva 124) directs the king to look after the destitutes and disabled ones.

Facilities to Workmen

Quoting from "Lectures on the Economic Condition of Ancient India", Shri Mishra has explained how the Government did not recover taxes from workmen because they worked for the Government. The Government, states Hieu-en-Tsang, was liberal and did not take forced labour from the people; the work was got done with restricted payment of wages. The Government servants received land in lieu of remuneration and the workers received wages.

According to Megasthenes, the State used to give priority to the security of workers and artisans. They were exempted from taxes, could receive State aid during the periods of distress, and enjoyed many other facilities at the expense of the Government. An employer hurting any limb of an artisan was sentenced to death. Al Beruni also refers to the systematic arrangements for the safety of the employees and their protection from accidents.

Wore in Lieu of Taxation

It was customary to offer extra work, in the service of the State, in lieu of the payment of taxation. Vasishtha directs artisans to perform Govt. work without wages for one day in a month (Vasishtha Smriti Ch. 19, p. 490).

Gautama prescribed the same rule for artisans, labourers, sailors and charioteers (Gautama Smriti, Ch. 10, p. 397). 'Megasthenes also refers to such honorary service to the State but states that the builders of ships and armourers were given wages and food by the State.

Industries not Privately Owned

There are references to industries not managed by the private citizens. During the Mouryan period the factories under the civil boards used high quality materials, and employees therein were paid fair wages by the Municipal Board. During the same period the practice of digging mines and working of factories at the Government expense came into being. Under Vijayanagar empire, 500 artists are recorded to have been working upon gold and silver thread in the Government factories.

State, the Regulator : not Proprietor

Nevertheless, the role of the state in case of such industries had been that of a patron. The State never tried to usurp the position of the Vaishyas, for that would have meant the violation of Varna dharma. In ancient India, the State was mainly the regulator of industrial relations. Private industrialist did not enjoy unrestrained freedom of action; but regulator of industrial affairs was not allowed to become an industrialist himself. The Varna Dharma effectively prevented concentration of economic authority in the hands that wielded political power.



SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH VIOLENCE ?

“Social change through violence” is a topic which, by itself, is difficult to write or speak on. For me, it is more so, because I am not an authority on the subject. Neither am I a sociologist. But, I am only a student. Nevertheless, I am happy to be able to share my thoughts with you on whether or not it is desirable to achieve social reforms by violent means.

We all do realise that in this world nothing remains static “Jagad gachhati iti” which means that, that which moves on is the “Jagat,”—the world. Everything in this world is in a state of transition; change is inherent in the very nature of things. Society is just one aspect of human endeavour. It is, therefore, necessary that social laws and conventions, too, are changed to cope with the changing times and needs. Different situations and different times call for different strategies and different solutions. Old order must change yielding place to new, lest one “good” custom should corrupt the world. That is, even “good” customs of today may become bad in the context of changed circumstances. Take an example—the caste system once formed the basis for the healthy growth of society. Today, it is its bane and should be dispensed with; so too, polygamy and polyandry.

But whatever the nature of social reform, we must ensure that it falls within the framework of the universal, unchangeable and unquestionable law. This law is the law of morality. It holds good at all times and in all places. Without morality, life at all levels—individual, social and political—becomes miserable. All details such as person-to-person relationships, code of conduct, etc., should, therefore, be worked out in the light of this universal law. So changes are desirable; there can be no doubt about that.

But some questions about changes and reforms naturally arise. What changes are desirable ? Who is to decide whether a change is at all necessary ? What are the means to be adopted for implementing a given reform ? It would be wrong to decide these important issues solely on the basis of public opinion. Although public opinion is certainly a major factor in determining the

success of a reform, it has its limitations; it is not always enlightened and it is susceptible to manipulation by vested interests.

The wave of public opinion cannot be a criterion on which we should decide whether a particular change is desirable or not. Propaganda is such a powerful weapon that public opinion can be manipulated in any way. Hitler used to say that powerful propaganda was capable of making the entire nation commit collective suicide.

‘Democracy’ is all very well, but asking the lay public to decide on such important questions, would be like asking a Parliamentary Committee to write “Hamlet”. So then, what should be the criterion for arriving at answers to these questions? In olden days, our country had leaders who were educated and spiritually elevated. They had an integrated view of society and its problems. They were above all factionalism, never stood for individual gain, had nothing to seek for themselves, but were so elevated that for them whole society was their family. Whenever there was a general feeling that some changes were necessary these moral leaders of the society were brought together to discuss objectively, dispassionately and comprehensively all the aspects of the social situation and decide whatever change was necessary. In the absence of such moral leadership it is very difficult to say whose opinion about social change should be accepted as authentic or authoritative. Today there is a paucity of such leadership and hence all the difficulties.

Nevertheless, some social evils like dowry, communalism, untouchability, to name a few, are obvious. There can be no two opinions about getting rid of them. But we must guard against impatience and overzealousness because these often take the form of violence. Violence sometimes, is unavoidable, justifiable, and in some rare cases (like the battle of Kurukshetra), even commendable. But who is competent to handle this weapon of violence? For not every type of violence can be appreciated or accepted by society. Only if it is advocated by leaders who have no personal axe to grind, who use the weapon with a detached mind and for ‘lok sangraha’, can violence be a benevolent weapon like a surgeon’s healing knife. When Lord Krishna persuaded Arjuna to

take to weapons he also told Arjuna 'Sukha Dukhe Same Krutva, Labhalabhau Jaya Jayou tato yuddhaya yujyaswa.....' So if one fights as a matter of duty, unaffected by pain or pleasure, success or failure, gain or loss, one will not be committing sin. Otherwise one is a sinner. That is what the Lord said while persuading Arjuna to fight. Our History is replete with such noble persons—persons like Shivaji, Guru Govind Singh, etc.,

But, by and large, violence cannot justify itself however exalted the end for which it is used. For, firstly it is often self-defeating. A revolution always swallows its first child. That is, those who are instrumental in bringing about the revolution are generally liquidated by the rulers after the revolution. The experience of violent revolutions has never been very happy. Secondly, it has a tendency to perpetuate itself, although under a different set of conditions. No wonder then that the communist parties of the western countries are reconsidering their theses of 'Social revolution through violence.'

If this be the 'case' for violence in the political field, what to speak about it in the social. There are bound to be differences of opinion in every society and if violence is used to settle such differences, a civil war would inevitably result. The consequences of such a war are unimaginable.

Violence, therefore, should be eschewed if society is to survive. All changes and reforms should be brought about by non-violent means. Towards this end, it is necessary to bring together all moral and spiritual leaders for guiding society in the correct direction. Legislation can also contribute towards building a healthier society, but this can help only if people are properly educated earlier.

We have to realise that change for the better is necessarily a slow,—a gradual process. It calls for education, persuasion, and not the least, tremendous patience.



WHY COMMITTEES & PANELS ?

The Janata Party had, in its Election Manifesto dealing with the problem of Wages, Prices and Incomes Policy, categorically stated that :

1. The wage policy for the working class and agricultural labourers will be based on the need-based minimum wages;
2. The workers should get a substantial portion of the gains of increase in productivity;
3. Rise in prices will be fully neturalised by D. A. and
4. Disparity in incomes in the country will be reduced to 1:20 in ten years,
and 1:10 in the next ten years.

Even without the appointment of any committee, certain measures could have been taken immediately :

Working out the quantum of the need-based minimum wage. It is directly related to the Cost of Living Index Number.

At the most, it can be said that the index number should be scientifically recompiled. But that does not take much time.

Therefore, no panel is necessary to determine the rate of the need-based minimum wages.

Prevelent wages are far below the level of need-based minimum.

The Co-ordination Committee at Hyderabad has worked out the quantum of Minimum Wage as on 1st January, 1977, in the light of the then price-structure.

The Committee has presumed for this purpose that an average family of a worker consists of himself, his wife and two children (We know that the average family of a workman comprises not less than five (5) units).

Nevertheless, the figures worked out by the Committee are as follows :

1. Food Requirements	Rs. 300.00
2. Clothing	Rs. 120.00
3. Other Expenditnre	Rs. 210.00
.....	
Total Rs.	630.00

No Committee is required to determine the share of workers in the increased productivity of their concern, particularly in the case of those public enterprises whose productivity rise after the last agreements is already ascertained.

While price-policy may take some time to be evolved fully and in an integrated manner, some measures can be adopted immediately without waiting for the evolution of such a policy. The measures are :

1. Ban on export of commodities in short supply;
2. Effective public distribution system, under the supervision of Peoples' Committees;
3. Buffer stocks of essential commodities; and
4. Sound import policy.

The scheme of price-control suggested by the ILO team to Kenyan Govt. should also be studied. Certain devices suggested by the team, particularly that of setting up the price-review committee with appropriate powers, can be adopted in our country with some modifications.

Finance Ministry Notification dated October 13, 1977, refers only to "serious distortions" that have crept into the structure of pay, D.A and other compensatory allowances of employees in public and private sector, and to the low incomes in agricultural sector.

It makes no reference to the disparity of incomes in the entire country, disparity between the incomes of a landless labourer on the one hand and the Tatas and Birlas on the other.

The ratio of 1:20 prescribed in the Ruling Party Manifesto is that between the minimum and maximum incomes in the land not between the wage-earners, not just in the wage-bracket. The terms of the panel do not mention this ratio.

The Manifesto refers to the Ratio of 1:20. Now, it is understandable that actual quantification may take some time. But certain steps can, and should be taken immediately to pave the way for implementation of this ratio. For this purpose, constitution of a committee is unnecessary.

For example, what prevents the Govt. from immediately imposing a ceiling on the perquisites and allowances of managerial cadres.

Decisions to curb and abolish Monopolies must be taken on political level. It need not be the result of the recommendation of any committee.

Incomes from work can be regulated easily, incomes from property cannot. To eliminate the islands of riches in the midst of the vast ocean of poverty, political decision is required. Inequality in terms of shares cannot be reduced just by reduction in disparity between the minimum and the maximum incomes.

For this purpose, it is imperative that the policymakers should have, even at this stage, a clear concept about the right to private property.

It should be recognised that every person has a fundamental right to property which is adequate to ensure his livelihood; means of livelihood must be a fundamental right. But any property in excess of the means of livelihood cannot be included in the same category, since it is capable of being used for exploitation of others.

Unanimity on this point is a pre-requisite for the formulation of any sound policy.

Because the prescribed Ratio cannot materialise only through the instrumentality of fiscal, economic and other measures, suitable amendment in constitution is a must for this purpose.

Unless our policy makers make up their minds on this point, the work of any panel or committee to this effect will only be an exercise in futility.

Have they made up their minds? That is the relevant question.

As an immediate measure, the Govt. is thinking of effecting a wage freeze. The British experience shows that a policy of freezing wages is feasible only in a crisis. It cannot be extended over a period of, say, one decade. And even the most optimistic estimates do not assure us that we can achieve the target of full employment within a decade. To freeze wages for such a long period is

impossible, and fraught with disastrous consequences. Justice demands that wage freeze must be accompanied at least by a freeze of dividends.

Is the Govt. prepared to freeze Dividends ?

Generally, labour costs constitute a very low percentage of the total costs giving a lie direct to the mispropaganda that industrial labour is receiving bumper wages at the cost of the nation.

Production loss due to industrial unrest is generally marginal. Main reasons for loss of production or underutilisation of installed capacity are different. They are :

1. Non-availability and poor quality of raw materials;
2. Inadequacy of demand;
3. Lack of balancing equipment;
4. Power shortages and failures;
5. Break-down of machinery;
6. Deficiencies in the managerial structure; and
7. Rivalries between different factions of management and between different employers.

There is no justification for making worker a scapegoat for somebody-else's faults.

Even before the appointment of any panel, it is necessary to prepare its background by introducing certain measurers.

For example, it should be obvious to any thinking mind that national policy on incomes, wages and prices cannot be formulated in isolation, without formulating simultaneously, and in an integrated manner, national policy on employment and productivity.

In the absence of full employment in rural areas, it is impossible to implement the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act for the benefit of the agricultural workers, weaver-workers, beedi workers and other weaker sections.

The present position of these sections is literally horrible.

In pursuance of the recommendations of the Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates (1968), a comprehensive labour force survey was undertaken by the National Sample Survey during 1972-73. According to this survey there were about 5,000

million unemployed man-days in a year in the rural areas. This is equivalent to about 21 million persons being wholly unemployed.

The number of agricultural workers and surplus labour in agriculture was, according to one estimate, 75 millions.

This means that we will have to create 75 million jobs in rural areas immediately. The number of Agricultural workers is 47-48 million today.

The number of share-croppers who are also the rural poor is not available. But they constitute the bulk of the cultivators who numbered 78.17 million in 1971.

In rural India 3.93 per cent of Households possess 30.88 per cent of the cultivable land, while 50.62 per cent of households possess 8.97 per cent of the land; most of their farms being uneconomic.

The rural poor is entirely at the mercy of his employer-cum-landowner-cum-moneylender-cum-patron, for sheer survival.

Rural Indebtedness and the system of Bonded Labour are still continuing.

What is the wage-level of the rural poor? According to the 25th round of the NSS survey in 1970-71, the Agricultural wages were less than Rs. 2 per day in Orissa, Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra, and in Madhya Pradesh they were Rs. 1.50 per day.

The plight of Beedi workers in these areas is not dissimilar.

In 1974, the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, completed a study, entitled "Patterns of labour utilisation, wage structure and labour productivity in selected regions of Tamil Nadu".

The overall daily wage in the four selected districts varied from Rs. 2.88 in Chingleput to about Rs. 3.50 in Salem District. The Labour Dept. of West Bengal Govt. observed, after a survey of six districts in 1974, "When this very poor daily income is evaluated in the context of the average size of the family, it really baffles reasoning as to how they continue to live".

The report on Bankura Dist. remarks, "The fact that he, i. e. the agricultural worker, exists, is a miracle".

According to a survey by the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority, about 2,00,000 persons lived on the pavements

during 1975. And about 56 per cent of these pavement dwellers had an income of less than Rs.80 per month.

According to experts, more than unemployment, underemployment was the crux of the problem in rural areas, and it was more acute in tribal areas, where the wages were the lowest.

Have we, with us, the correct assessment of the magnitude of this problem of unemployment and underemployment ?

Figures, wherever available, are as unreliable and unrealistic as those for the wealth and incomes of the big industrial houses. The published figures of both have no relation to truth.

After giving relevant figures on unemployment and underemployment in the documents of the first 3 plans, the 4th plan document suddenly refrained from giving any figures whatsoever, on these items.

The Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates observed in 1968 that, "The estimates of labour force, additional employment generated, and unemployment at the beginning or at the end of a plan period, presented in one-dimensional magnitude, are neither meaningful nor useful as indicators of the economic situation and that the method adopted by the Planning Commission so far might be given up".

Thus, since diagnosis is half the cure, evolution of a correct methodology to assess unemployment and underemployment ought to have been the very first step by the new regime.

It did not necessitate constitution of any committee of the type of Bhoothalingam Panel.

And without this preliminary work, no panel can proceed with its assigned task in a scientific manner. Or is even the evolution of Dr. Schumacher's 'appropriate' technology to depend upon Bhoothalingam's recommendation ?

In fairness, it must be said that the new Govt. has taken a bold decision of allocating 40 per cent to agriculture and boosting up labour intensive cottage and small-scale industries in rural areas.

But what guarantee is there that this allocation will not benefit the rural rich, as it did in the case of the green revolution, and that the small-scale industries will not bring big capital surreptitiously in rural areas; under the cover of Benami transactions? And what

efforts are initiated to evolve 'appropriate technology' for this purpose ?

Again this question is interlinked with the problem of the attitude of the Govt. towards foreign capital.

Is the Govt. mentally prepared to nationalise or Indianise all foreign capital, to delete the restrictive clauses in all foreign collaboration agreements, and to tell the multinationals that they will have no share in the Equity of the collaboration concerns ? They may have share in the produce, but not in Equity. Is the Govt. prepared for this ? Or they want Bhoothalingam to render advise on this point ? Is he competent to do so ?

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TRADE UNION MOVEMENT NEEDS A BROAD BASE

Does the present Trade Union Movement aspire to represent the entire working class ? Can it be really described as protector of all the downtrodden, the poor, the exploited in the country ?

The attention of our trade unions has been drawn mainly towards the plight of workers in organised industries. This is natural and justifiable on grounds of necessity, practicability and utility. These industries cause concentration of labour-force which facilitates growth of Trade Unionism. But in industries and occupations that are not so organised, the need for workers' organisation is still greater. This is the paradoxical situation. Those who are in need of greater protection are least protected either by trade unionism or by legislation.

In urban areas, there is a huge number of unprotected workers such as fishermen, saltpan workers, mathadis, hamals, lokhandi jatha workers, casual piece-rated workers under Mukadams, tolaiwals, etc., employed in iron and steel markets or shops, cloth and cotton market or shops, docks, grocery markets or shops, general markets and establishments, railway yards and goods sheds, public transport vehicle, godown, vegetable markets, etc., in connection with loading, unloading, stacking, carrying, weighing or such other works including work preparatory or incidental to such operations. No doubt, the Maharashtra State Government has taken initiative in enacting law, i. e. 'Maharashtra Mathadi, Hamal and other Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Welfare) Act 1968' for their benefit, but in other States they are still unprotected, and trade unions in this field are rare and weak.

Casual workers in Railways, Public Work Departments, Irrigation Deptts, Transport Corporations, State Electricity Corporations, Construction Works, Engineering concerns, Central and State Government Deptts, Ports and Docks, etc., are also being neglected, though workers of most of these establishments have their own trade unions. In most of these, Standing Orders do not specify the strength of casual labour against the normal strength of the establishment and the process of decasualisation is not being followed

strictly. In fact, if employment is discontinued for a short period and the worker is re-employed, this short period should not be treated as a break in service, and after a casual worker has completed a stipulated period of service, he should be allowed the same benefits which a permanent worker enjoys. Pending completion of decasualisation, there should be a better regulation of their conditions of work.

Construction workers are particularly subject to irregularities and inhuman treatment. The 'Fair Wage Clause' is not strictly enforced and there is no review of the fair wages from time to time. Attendance registers showing permanent local addresses of all construction workers are not generally maintained. What is needed is enactment of regulatory and protective legislation for them, setting up of adequate statutory enforcement machinery, and prescription of severe and deterrent penalties to contractors, sub-contractors, labour contractors, etc., for malpractices. Building contractors should be classified and registered. In Government undertakings, there should be a suitable planning of the programmes undertaken to ensure a reasonably steady volume of work and employment, and workers should be provided with mobile dwellings at work-sites.

The forest workers also are, by and large, not being taken care of by our trade union movement. Distribution of surplus lands amongst them; debt-relief measures; protection of the Minimum Wages Act; Priority in forest services, i.e., those of forest guards, watchmen, etc., placing the private forest areas at par with Government forest areas for purposes of concessions; preservation and restoration of their traditional right in the forest areas, introduction and encouragement to forest-based industries; protection of forest labour co-operatives from the conspiracy of contractors and conservators, encouragement to the formation of Co-operative Corporations for managing the forest labour societies; simplification of co-operative laws, rules and regulations; immediate rehabilitation of vanavasis displaced in the name of 'development'; setting up of machinery at the Central and the State levels to follow up strictly and implement the already accepted recommendations—these, among others, are some of the

measures required for their protection. The anti-social systems such as 'Gothi', 'Palemod', etc., prevalent amongst them must be eradicated. This responsibility, though social in character, must be shouldered by our humanitarian trade unionists.

Who will, again, share the socio-economic responsibility for the upliftment of the nomadic and the semi-nomadic (ex-criminal) tribes, termed otherwise as 'denotified tribes'? The protection and facilities offered by the Constitution to Scheduled Tribes have not yet been extended to these 'denotified tribes'. The nature of their problems is partly social; it is not practicable to bifurcate the social from the economic, and social institutions organised for their welfare are not sufficiently powerful.

Traditional artisans in the urban as well as the rural areas are 'workmen' in the literal, but not in the legal sense, since they are self-employed and not wage-earners. For their benefit, it is necessary to evolve indigeneous technology and organise market co-operatives. What trade unions are to industrial workers, market co-operatives are to traditional artisans. And they themselves have no central organisation for this purpose.

In agricultural sector, trade union movement is too weak. Though signboards of a few organisations on the state and the national level do exist. It is natural. While in factories workers from different places come together at one place, in agriculture, workers from one place are scattered over a wide area, making growth of trade union consciousness among them extremely difficult. They cannot profitably clubbed together even with petty Kisans in Kisan organisations, and the ideal of a co-operative commonwealth of peasants, artisans and agricultural workers does not appear to be so very attractive under the new circumstances, though the methodology of urban trade unions cannot be applicable in this sector for obvious reasons and new appropriate methodology has not yet been conceived.

Our Central Labour Organisations have not yet taken adequate cognisance of the problems of the employees of more than ten thousand social work and social welfare organisations. Shri Gulzarilal Nanda had determinedly kept them outside the purview of

industrial law on the plea that these are social service bodies and not profit-making industries. But in the first place his own Bharat Sewak Samaj had undertaken a number of construction projects on contract basis with profit motive, and, secondly, most of the employees of such organisations join the service for earning their livelihood, and not with missionary zeal. There are certainly some persons who take a vow to lead dedicated life for this humanitarian cause, but their number is small. Average worker of such bodies joins the work as 'employee' for all practical purposes. It is unjust to impose missionary character on him only for the purpose of pay-scales. Though national reconstruction demands that the spirit of selfless service should be imbibed by as many citizens as possible, there is absolutely no justification for keeping employees of these organisations outside the pale of industrial law and trade union organisation.

Domestic servants all over the country would require a different type of remedial measure because of the very nature of their work, and the direct personal relationship between the employer and the employee. But there is no other apparatus available today to look after their interest or welfare, though the difficulty in organising them in some suitable form or other is obvious.

Private, as distinct from municipal sweepers; leather workers in small towns and villages; workers employed in cottage industries; those and many other similar sections are in this neglected category. I was surprised to know that the number of boys engaged in tiffin carrying at Bombay is more than 12,300. A comprehensive survey from this point is the need of the hour.

Notwithstanding the enactment of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for rehabilitation of bonded labour which provides for a total subsidy of Rs. 4,000 per released bonded labour and a total outlay of Rs. 25 crores for the sixth plan period, the plight of bonded labour has not undergone appreciable change. It has not been possible for the official agencies to evolve correct strategy and methodology for identification, release and rehabilitation of these labourers. The problem of child labour is also defying solution, inspite of appropriate

legislation. Millions of children torn away from their loving parents are victims of heavy workload, longer working hours, and inhuman treatment in unorganised industries like hotels, restaurants, etc. as well as organised industries like beedi and match factories. Law cannot do much, so long as there are no alternative employment avenues for other elderly members of their families. Official agencies have failed to do the needful in this respect. It is the moral responsibility of the Trade Union movement to look into these cases and arrange for appropriate relief. The Central Labour Organisations must consider themselves as the trustees of the bonded labour, the child labour and the workers in the informal sector of urban areas (such as shoe-shines etc.).

Again, how pitiable would be the condition of one who enjoys protection during active youth but finds oneself deprived of it during the evening of life ? The protection of industrial law is not extended to pensioners, ex-servicemen and their associations. The current pension rates need to be revised, co-relating them with the present cost of living index. These revised rates should be linked to the index number. Pension Committees should be organised in different industries and services in order to expedite judiciously the disposal of cases and grievances pertaining to pensions. Pensioners should be provided with—

- a) light, part time jobs for a period of ten years after retirement;
- b) a guardian's allowance (to those having one or more children under sixteen); and
- c) facility of free medical treatment during life time of themselves and their dependents.



THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT LEADS

In view of the peculiar crisis through which our country is passing to-day I wish to highlight one major contribution of the Indian trade union movement to the cause of national reconstruction.

Widespread and continued disturbances in the entire North-Eastern Zone; explosive international complication beyond our north-western frontier; reported sinister designs of the neighbouring countries; internal activities of their agents; riots at Moradabad, Aligarh and other places; progressively deteriorating law and order situation; sustained growth of regionalism, casteism and communalism; recent unprecedented price rise; pro-rich and anti-poor policies of the Central and State Governments; and obviously loosening grip of Shrimati Indira Gandhi on the bureaucracy, the party, the people and the trend of events, all these factors pose a grave threat to our national security and integrity.

It is impossible to meet the challenge of the situation without complete national solidarity.

From this point of view what are our assests and liabilities ?

The first liability is the partisan and anti-poor attitude of the various ruling parties. They have come to power by getting votes from the poor and campaign-funds from the rich by promising to protect each from the other. But having come to power they are now serving the interests of those who have furnished them with campaign-funds. The defenceless poor are left in the lurch. And the party interest invariably supersedes the national interest.

This can be remedied only if the level of national consciousness of common citizen is higher and such conscious citizens unite to bring appropriate pressure to bear upon the various Governments forcing the latter to behave properly in consonance with the common national interest.

This brings us to our second liability which is the present attitude of our political leaders.

Not being idealistic, the power-politicians are concerned more with block votes than with national integration. They, therefore, find it more convenient to deliberately encourage divisive

disruptionist tendencies such as casteism, communalism, regionalism, etc. These are the stumbling blocks in the way of achieving national solidarity. Many right thinking citizens have by now become sceptic about the inherent capacity of our people to rise above petty, divisive feelings.

And in this respect a silver lining is provided, to the otherwise dark picture by our trade union movement.

No doubt, the trade union movement itself stands divided and there is multiplicity of unions in every industry. Nevertheless, almost all trade unions can rightly claim that they have succeeded in overcoming these disruptive tendencies on the strength of the consciousness among workers of their common economic interests. This certainly is a great achievement.

Here is a lesson for other fields of national life also. If consciousness of common interests is roused, the fissiparous tendencies die their natural death. And why should it be impossible to generate consciousness of common national interests among all citizens ?

Political leaders may not like it. Because they thrive on factionalism. But if genuine patriots are worried over the malady, the experience of trade union movement should expel their apprehensions and cheer them up.

In this respect, the Indian trade union movement is giving a constructive lead to all seekers of National Solidarity.



YOUR QUESTIONS : OUR ANSWERS

Q. : BMS claims that it lays equal stress on Rights and Duties. The Labour Movement everywhere is concerned only with the rights of the working class. Your stand in this respect appears to be unconventional.

A. : You know we have presented the National Charter of Demands of Indian Labour in the form of the Duties and Disciplines of various social organisms. Every right has a corresponding duty, and every duty a corresponding right. According to Bharatiya Culture, right and duty are the two facets of the same coin. T.H. Green defines rights as 'those powers which are necessary to the fulfilment of man's vocation as a moral being.' According to Mac Cunn "Rights are certain advantageous conditions of social wellbeing indispensable to the true development of the citizen." For Laski, rights are those conditions of life without which no man can seek in general to be himself at his best. The last definition reminds us of the famous dictum; 'Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam'. One can give the best and the maximum only when one fulfils one's own aptitudewise duties; that again is the only way to ensure Green's "fulfilment" and Mac Cunn's 'true development.' N. Wilde says, "It is only in a world of duties that rights have significance". The appeal of Rights is to the baser instincts, that of Duties to the higher ones. The language of 'rights' pre-supposes completely separate identity of an individual citizen who is to assert himself against the society. But as A. D. Lindsay observed, "No one can really be an absolute individualist any more than any one can be an absolute socialist. For the individual and society interact on one another and depend on one another." The relationship between the society and the individuals is analogous to that between a body and its various limbs. In the matter of culture, the West is far behind our nation; hence their primitive insistence on Rights to the exclusion of Duties. As a mature people, we are aware that if every individual fulfils his social obligations, rights of all individuals are

automatically protected. But if, on the contrary, there is a growing tendency to ignore one's own duties, rights of all will always be insecure.

Q. : Your assertion that BMS is thoroughly non-political seems to be ridiculous. Politics is all pervading; it covers all departments of life. How can anyone be absolutely non-political?

A. : An organisation can be. Political science is concerned with the foundations of the State, its essential nature, its forms or its manifestations and its development. Aristotle was father of Politics as science. As Garner says, "Political science begins and ends with the State." For Dr. Leacock, "Political science is the study of Government only." Gareis observes, "Political science considers the state as an institution of power, in the totality of its relations, its origin, its setting, its objects, its ethical significance, its economic problems, its life conditions, its financial side, its end, etc." Prof. Seeley says, "Political Science investigates the phenomena of government as Political Economy deals with wealth, Biology with life, Algebra with numbers and Geometry with space and magnitude." B.M.S. is not concerned with the state; it is an instrument of society or nation.

Q. : You are making a distinction between the State and the Society, which is artificial.

A. : No. The distinction is very much real. In modern times, they have developed sociology. As Gilchrist says, "Sociology is the science of society, political science is the science of the state or political society." Sociology studies man as a social being. Society is the complex of organised associations and institutions within a community. The 'distinction' you are referring to is clearly brought out by Krancnbury who says, 'While sociology examines the formation and the operation of groups as such, political theory focuses its attention on a special group namely the State.'

Q. : Well, I will not stretch this point too far. But I am sure that no sane person who is acquainted with the modern political life will agree with your contention that the Nation is different from the State.

A. : We have often explained this point. A State covering more than one nation or a Nation divided between two states—these are not a rare phenomenon. Even in the case of national states, there is functional demarcation between the two concepts. Again, Government and sovereignty are the indispensable ingredients of the State concept; they are not so indispensable for the Nation concept. The functional differences persist even where the Nation and the State are co-terminus. I need not elaborate whatever has been explained already by BMS, it would be useless repetition.

In his "We or Our Nationhood Defined" Revered Shri Guruji has clarified the difference between the two concepts. Yogi Aurobindo has emphatically stated that the state is NOT the Nation. In "Nationality and Its Problems" we are told that "the conception of nationality must be divorced from that of the state. They answer to different needs, fulfil different functions. To thrust them into an enforced and unnatural marriage is to sin alike against reason and experience. The only issue of such a union will be, in the future, as in the past, tyranny, hatred and the spirit of revenge. From these diseases the world is perishing today and they are strange doctors who would cure it by reinforcing its malady." Hans Kohn is of the view that "the most important out-ward factor in the promotion of nationality is a common territory, rather than the state."

According to Zimmern, "Nationality, like Religion, is subjective; statehood is objective; nationality is psychological; statehood is political; nationality is a condition of the mind, statehood is a condition in law; nationality is a spiritual possession, statehood is an enforceable obligation; nationality is a way of feeling,

thinking and living; statehood is a condition inseparable from all civilised ways of living."

The Nation-builders attach limited importance to the institution of state. Their attitude towards the state-apparatus is very well reflected in the following remarks of Sri Aurobindo: "Even if the governing instrument is better constituted and of a higher mental and moral character, still the state would not be what the State idea pretends that it is. Theoretically, it is the collective wisdom and force of the community made available and organised for the general good. Practically, what controls the engine and drives the train is so much of the intellect and power available in the community as the particular machinery of State organisation will allow to come to the surface, but it is also caught in the machinery and hampered by it and hampered as well by the large amount of folly and selfish weakness that comes up in the emergency. Doubtless, this is the best that can be done under the circumstances, and Nature, as always, utilises it for the best. But things would be much worse if there were not a field left for individual efforts doing what the State cannot do, deploying and using the sincerity, energy, idealism of the best individuals to attempt that which the State has not the wisdom or courage to attempt, getting that done which a collective conservatism and imbecility would either leave undone or actively suppress and oppose. It is this energy of the individual which is the really effective agent of collective progress.

The State has no soul, or only a rudimentary one. It is a military, political and economic force; but it is only in a slight and undeveloped degree, if at all, an intellectual and ethical being. And unfortunately the chief use it makes of its undeveloped intellect is to blunt by fictions, catch words and recently, by State philosophies, its ill-developed ethical conscience.

The State is bound to act crudely and in the mass; it is incapable of that free, harmonious and intelligently or instinctively varied action which is proper to organic growth. For the State

is not an organism, it is a machinery, without tact, taste, delicacy or intuition. It tries to manufacture, but humanity is here to do, to grow, and create." To sum up, in this particular matter B.M.S. is in a good company.

Q. : You have often said that communist countries are also becoming nationalistic. Has the word 'nationalism' gained popularity in those countries ?

A. : Emil Lengyel informs us, that although nationalism has become the dominant sentiment in the Soviet Union, in China and in the Eastern European Communist block, it is not the popular word in that world. The explanation of this incongruity may be this ; fascism, labetenoire, the black beast, had made nationalism, deific making it the centre of its idol worship. It had created, as the communists see it, a tribal nation, claiming superiority of 'blood', culture, and historic heritage over all others. The fascists' nationalism was to reveal its transcendent nature through national devotees who volunteered the supreme sacrifice in wars. The supreme sacrifice, of course, would have been for all the nationals to sacrifice themselves in a collective self-immolation on the altar of the national idol, the national god. The word 'Nationalism' may have thus acquired a tainted connotation in the communist world, but not the concept itself. Therefore, another word had to be adopted. The word that contemporary communism has adopted is 'patriotism'.

The word has a curious history in the Communist world. At first, it was a word of derogation, describing the attributes of hostile forces. Because the socialists of the West were no longer considered internationalists, the Communists had denounced them as 'social Patriots'. The words 'patriot' and 'patriotism' had denoted vacuous, high-sounding, breast-thumping identification with parochial values. At the same time, the extreme right also extolled patriotism, which came to mean a higher degree of nationalism, in which the nation took the place of pater-fatherland- the ultimate refuge and full identification. A patriot is 'one who loves his country and zealously supports its authority and interest', the dictionary says. This is in

contradiction to the concept of global collectivism of the devout Communist. In spite of this, patriotism is the word the communists have adopted as the description of their politico-social attitude. To distinguish it from the common variety, however, they call it 'socialist patriotism', a juxtaposition that is a contradiction.

The choice of nomenclature or terminology may be naturally influenced by previous mental associations or current prejudices, but contents remain the same. All communist countries have adopted nationalism; it is immaterial whether they choose to describe it as nationalism, patriotism or socialist patriotism. Even about U. S. S. R., Lengyel informs that Internationalism is the official creed of the Soviets, and for a generation there was the communist International, "comintern"—"Moscow International". The Comintern was disbanded during the second world war. Its kin, the less ambitious Communist Information Bureau, "Cominform" had a short shrift, too. Since then there has been no International in Moscow.

Nationalism dominates the entire Communist world.

Q. : You have refused to accept any of the western 'ism's, but have not yet presented any blue-print of the socioeconomic order envisaged by you. This is a purely negative approach.

A. ; Not necessarily so. You are probably under an impression that communists have with them some standard, universal blue-print of the ideal socio-economic order. That is not so. As Lenin had said, Karl Marx had not written a single word about economics of socialism. When asked by Swatantryaveer Savarkar about the blue-print of Russian Social order after communists came to rule that country, Lenin had simply replied that blue-print is evolved through trial and error method only after the stage of implementation is reached—after the seizure of state—apparatus, and that in earlier stages only guiding principles for the new order can be given and Marx had already accomplished that task. For Lenin, communism in the initial stages meant only sovietisation and electrification of Russia. That was his pragmatic approach. In India we have text-book communists.

In this context, what was the attitude of Karl Marx himself? Wolfgang Leonhard explains it thus in his 'Three Faces of Marxism':—

“As for the detailed development of these phases and the solutions that would have to be found for individual practical questions, Marx and Engels declined all discussion, since they regarded this as utopian speculation. “The working class (has) . . . no ready-made utopias to introduce pardecet people,” Marx declared. They have “no ideals to realise but to set free the elements of the new society with which the old collapsing bourgeois society already is pregnant.” It is not the task of communists “to create utopian systems for the organisation of the future society,” least of all in questions of details; To speculate on how a future society might organize the distribution of food and dwellings heads directly to Utopia”. The people of the communist society of the future “will not care a rap about what we today think they should do.”

The Indian communists who inquire about our blue-print are probably unaware of these observations by Marx.

Q. : What you meant when you said that Mao tried to sinify Marxism ?

A. : Mao was in search for a Chinese model of Development. The Great Leap Forward, the Socialist Education Campaign, and the Cultural Revolution, were experiments in this direction. Many of his ideas were perfectly chinese. For example, the perfectability of human beings, cosmological dialectics, and cultivation through self-examination. On Chinese model he sought to evolve an alternative science, an alternative technology, an alternative system of Medicine and an alternative model of democracy. He wanted to tear a whole civilisation away from consumerism. He sought to avoid a rule by technocrats and managers. He resented the concept of the surrender of individual and collective autonomy to the forces of production. He always cited examples from Chinese history and mythology. All this amounted “sinification” of Marxism. It is this process of sinification that the post-Mao leadership has clearly thrown overboard.

Q. : You claim that even Russian Communists are getting interested in the non-Material. Can you elaborate it ?

A. : Russian scientists are conducting research on telepathy, telekinetics (moving of objects by mind power), kirlian effect (Photographing Aura of living beings including men), kirlian photography as applied to Medicine, psychic healing, Exterrestrial civilisation (on other planets), Hypno Therapy, releasing talent in the sub-conscious, sight by touch etc. Many of the Institutions for the above subjects are Government-sponsored and hidden from public eye.

Q. : If you have no faith in the existing political parties why do you not form a Labour Party on the model of the British Labour Party ?

A. : Your contention that the experiment of Labour Party in Great Britain is worth imitating is not correct. In our own country we have seen such experiment meeting with failure at Ahmedabad where the N. L. O. (National Labour Organisation) formed its own political front, National Labour Party. Shri V. V. Giri had announced the formation of the Indian Labour Party. The attempt was abortive. The ratio of Industrial workers is far higher in Great Britain as compared to India. Even there the idea could not succeed. The idea in formation of Labour Party was that the working class should have a voice in politics. Workers wanted to protect their own interests. But the trade union movement as such had no clear-cut ideology. The Trade Unions resolved to enter politics. The organisation which conducted the first election campaign was called the Labour Representation Committee. After the L. R. C. got 25 m.p.'s elected, they began to call themselves Labour Party. This Party is like no other party in the west. It is not having a clearly defined ideology. It has only a vague concept of socialism.

It is not based solely on individual membership. When I visited that country, I was told that there were eight million affiliated members through Trade Unions, (though workers

are free to opt out), and eight Lakh individual members. The complaint I heard was that once in office, the Labour Party ministers ignore the Resolutions of not only the British Trade Union Congress but also of the British Labour Party. Once in power, they follow the policies that they consider 'realistic'.

It is wrong to presume that all workers in that country are supporters of the Labour Party.

History tells us that from 1884 onwards British working classes constitute roughly two-thirds of the electorate. Yet the Labour Party, like the Conservative Party, cannot count upon more than one-third of the entire vote. It is seldom that more than 20% of the middle class vote goes to Labour, whereas it is rare that less than 40% of the votes of the working classes should be cast for a party other than Labour; and in most elections a third of the middle-class vote represents about half of the Conservatives' electoral support. To go by voting behaviour, the middle classes continue to exhibit class-consciousness to a greater degree than the working classes. The conflict between the British T. U. Congress and the British Labour Party during recent years is a matter of common knowledge. This British experiment, therefore, is not worth following here.

Q. : What is the role of B. M. S. in political life of the country ?

A. : Under ideal conditions, mass organisations are expected to remain independent of political parties and to function as pressure groups as well as alternative power centres. The B.M.S. also is to play the same role.





B. M. S. SYMBOL

On 23rd July 1955, the Bhopal Conference of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh resolved that the B.M.S. Flag would be Bhagwa rectangular (2' x 3'), and that the symbol should be determined subsequently after mature deliberations. Accordingly, suggestions regarding the B. M. S. symbol poured in, in the B. M. S. C. H. Q. from different provinces. Naturally enough, in the initial stages there was a tendency to select for this purpose some tool of instrument implying industrialization. That, again, was just in keeping with the order of the day. But gradually more fundamental and basic form began to dawn upon the minds of the B.M.S. workers. Hammer and sickle, wheel and plough, they are good in their own way. But how is it, the workers began to question themselves, that of all the species inhabiting this globe, Man alone has been able to evolve such tools, machines and other material instruments of civilization? On physical plane what distinguishes man from the rest of the living beings? Their investigation led them to the unique physical feature of man i. e., an opposable thumb. Man could achieve agricultural and industrial progress because he alone had developed an opposable thumb. But for such a thumb, material progress would have been an impossibility. In absence of the [opposition of the thumb the hammer, the sickle, the wheel or the plough could not have come into existence at all. Human thumb is the first and the basic physical cause of all material and scientific advance of mankind. Consensus of opinion now was, therefore, in favour of selecting an opposable human thumb as the B.M.S. symbol. The reasons for such a choice are aptly elucidated in the following passages from "How Man Conquered Nature" by Minnie J. Reynolds :

"The first step in Man's progress and in his Conquest of Nature was made possible by what is called the "opposition of the thumb". If Man's fingers were arranged side by side, and worked in parallel direction, he could not grasp objects with his hand and

hold them firmly, enough to be able to work with them, as he now does. In that case it is doubtful whether he could have survived in his present form. Without his thumb he could not have used tools as he does. But, with his thumb set opposite his fingers, he has been able to protect himself with weapon, to shelter, to clothe and to feed himself and to use implements of his own manufacture to build and dig with."

"Man is, it is true, not the only animal that possesses a thumb. All animals have some sort of a thumb, however rudimentary, and apes and monkeys have a thumb opposite their fingers. Like man they can handle objects. They can pick fruit from the branches of trees and shower them on other animals below them. Trained monkeys can be taught to do things that seem almost human: they can use a knife and a fork to eat with, and a cup to drink out of, dress and undress themselves, and do many other things, in a humanlike way. That they can do so is due to the fact that they, like man, have a real hand, and thumb in opposition to the fingers. Their thumb is, however, so short and so undeveloped that their powers of grasping and holding are, compared to those of man, insignificant. The thumb of the most animals are of no more use than the "prehensile" toes that many Asiatics possess. They can use their big toes to pick up light objects but they cannot grasp them really firmly, because there is no opposition between the big toe and the other toes.

"The first step in the conquest of Nature by man was probably made when he picked up a stick or a stone and used it to kill other animals. Man does not possess the strong teeth or claws of the lion or tiger, nor has he the speed of the hare or the deer to escape from his more powerful enemies. He cannot leave like the panther, nor can he strike poison like the snake, among many enemies more powerful than himself. Primitive man was weak and helpless. To protect himself he required a weapon; and the greatest difference between Man and the other animals is that Man is a tool-making animal. . . . Man's first forward step was the invention of an efficient weapon; and his subsequent development, from the earliest times down to the present day, is marked by the development of his weapons. Indeed, science divides the History of Man into various eras, according to the material used by him for his tools and weapons in each of them."

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A MESSAGE

From An Ideal Idealist to All Idealists

During Emergency, the National Executive of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh was to meet at Bombay. By that time, Shri Thengadi had resigned from BMS to function as Secretary of the Lok Sangharsha Samiti, after the arrest of its second Secretary, Shri Ravindra Verma. Shri Ram Naresh Singhji alias Bade Bhai had succeeded him as BMS General secretary. This is a letter written by Shri Thengadi, to the newly elected General Secretary on the eve of the National Executive meeting, during those dark days.

My dear Bade Bhai,

You have asked for my message on the eve of our National Executive Meet. Personally, I am not competent to give any message to the idealists. But on this occasion, I am sending you a message to idealists from Terence Mac Swiny who was himself an ideal idealist.

In the present politicised environment of all-pervading opportunism and careerism, we, the recipients of the Mother's message, are likely to feel diffident, depressed and pessimistic. The healthy advice of Terence Mac Swiny will be of great help to all idealists under these conditions —

“Let the new born enthusiast, just come eagerly to the flag, be warned of hours of depression that seize even the most earnest, the boldest and the strongest”.

“Our work is the work of men subject to such vicissitudes as hover around all human enterprise; and every man enrolled must face hard struggles and dark hours. Then the depression rushes down like a horrible, cold, dark mist that obscures every beautiful thing and every ray of hope. It may come from many causes: perhaps, a body not too robust, worn down by a tireless mind; perhaps memory of long years of effort, seemingly swallowed in oblivion

and futility; perhaps contact with men on your own side whose presence there is a puzzle, who have no character and no conception of the grandeur of the cause, and whose mean, petty, underhand jealousies numb you—you who think anyone claiming so fine a flag as ours should be naturally brave, straightforward and generous; perhaps, the seemingly overwhelming strength of the enemy, and the listlessness of thousands who would hail freedom with rapture, but who now stand aloof in despair,—and alongwith all this and intensifying it, the voice of our self-complacent practical friend, who has but sarcasm for a high impulse, and for an immutable principle, the latest expedient of the hour. Through such an experience must the soldier of freedom live. But as surely as such an hour comes, there comes also a star to break the darkened sky; let those who feel the battle-weariness at times remember, when in places there may be but one or two to fight, it may seem of no avail.

Still let them be true and their numbers will be multiplied: Love of truth is infectious. When progress is arrested, don't brood on what is, but on what was once achieved, what has since survived and what we may yet achieve. If some have grown lax and temporise a little, with more firmness on your part mingle a little sympathy for them. It is harder to live a consistent life than die a brave death. Most men of generous instincts would rouse all their courage to a supreme moment and die for the cause; but to rise to that supreme moment frequently and without warning is the burden of life for the cause, and it is because of its exhausting strain and exacting demands that so many men have failed. We must get men to realise that to live is as daring as to die. But confusion has been made in our time by the glib phrase: "You are not asked now to die for Ireland, but to live for her", without insisting that the life shall aim at the ideal, the brave and the true. To slip apologetically through existence is not life. If such a mean philosophy went abroad, we should soon find the land a place of shivering creatures, without the capacity to live or the courage to die—a calamity, surely.

All these circumstances make for the hour of depression; and it may well be in such an hour, amid apathy and treachery, cold

friends and active enemies, with worn-down frame and baffled mind, you, pleading for the old Cause, may feel your voice is indeed a voice crying in the wilderness; and it may serve till the blood warms again and the imagination recover its glow, to think how a Voice, that cried in the wilderness thousands of years ago, is potent and inspiring now, where the voice of the "practical" men sends no whisper across the waste of years".

"We do not set up fine principles in a fine conceit that we can easily live upto them, but in the full consciousness that we cannot possibly live away from them.... An earnest band is more effective than a discreditable multitude."

Terence Mac Swiny

