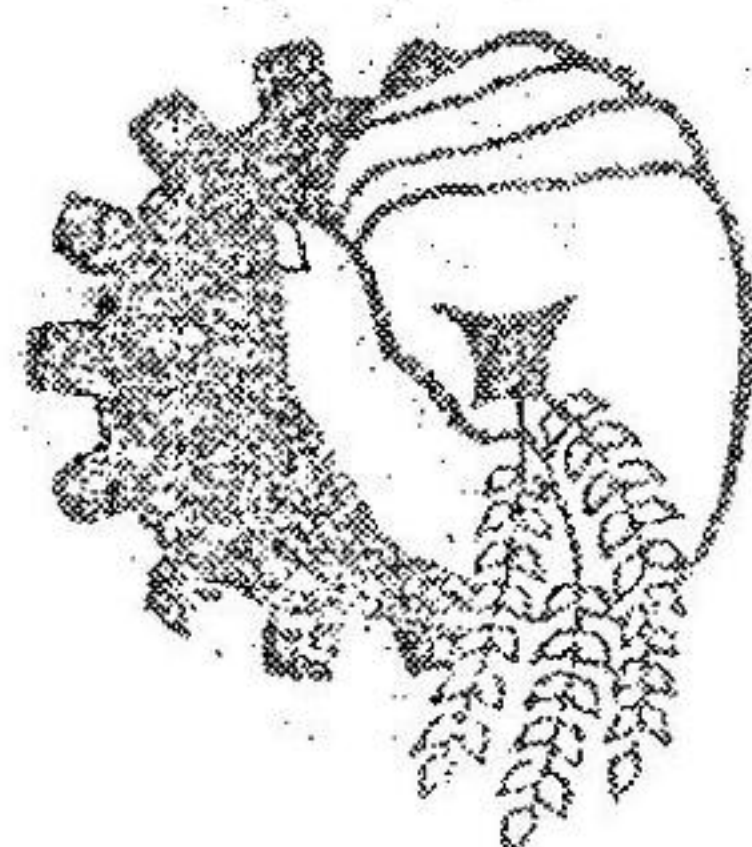


FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

YOU 65 ARE FOOLS

But
So Were
Great Personalities



ALL INDIA RESERVE BANK WORKERS' ORGANISATION

(Affiliated to N. O. B. W. & B. M. S.)

Subedar Chatram Road, BANGALORE-560 009

ALL INDIA RESERVE BANK WORKERS' ORGANISATION
(Affiliated to NOBW & BMS)

BANGALORE.

2nd December, 1983

Friends,

We have ventured to publish herewith the speech delivered by Sri D. B. Thengadi, Founder of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh while inaugurating the eighth biennial conference of our Organisation in Bangalore on 8th October, 1983.

The speech is unique in as much as Sri Thengadiji has roused the dedication in the activists through banter.

You will find that in one respect the title of the booklet differs from the contents. With no stretch of imagination can one expect Sri Thengadiji to call others as fools. We hope you will kindly excuse us for the mischief.

Brotherly yours,

P. S. PUTTURAYA
President



I am told that it is the informal inauguration of the conference of the All India Reserve Bank Workers' Organisation. So this being an informal function, I have the privilege of holding an informal talk with you.

You know that one of the special characteristics of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh is that it is a genuine trade union organisation. Another characteristic of it is that it is not just an institution based upon a constitution, each and every clause, article of which is used for breaking the institution. Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh is not an institution, it is a family. It is a family of workers, of activists, of trade unionists. Hence in this inaugural session, I have decided to locate the first problem before everyone of you. As a matter of fact, when some of your colleagues met me, I asked them what are their problems. They told me that so far as the NOBW is concerned, it has refused to sign an agreement, which has been signed by the AIBEA/NCBE. The agreement is accepting computerisation and hence anti-labour. So how to mobilise the bank workers against the agreement on computerisation is one of our problems. In the Reserve Bank, particularly, it is not a problem, but there is no recognition in the sense that the management does

not negotiate with us. Even at Nagpur due recognition has not come, inspite of proven majority and there are other local problems. All these were discussed. As at this inaugural session, I must deal with the number one problem of every one of you, I asked them what is their number one problem. So again they repeated the same problems, computerisation, recognition etc. But I was wondering whether these are the problems before each one of you. When, as members of one family we are meeting here we should find out what is the problem number one before each one of us. I could not agree with your activists that computerisation or recognition is the problem number one. I felt that the problem number one before each one of us is very different. Unless that number one problem is satisfactorily solved, unless we get the solution for that number one problem in our own minds, all these conferences, resolutions and organisations will be exercises in futility.

What is the number one problem before each one of you or at least 60 % to 70% of you? When you decided to come over here for the conference, spending few hundreds from your pocket, taking leave from the office, some of you may be on leave without pay, the problem number one must have been posed by your wife, when you started for the railway station. She must have told that all these activities of yours are sheer foolishness. "Look at the other persons in our locality, in our housing colony, in our Township. They are enjoying happy family life. You are

a fool attending your union office everyday, depriving us the pleasure of your company, not caring for wife and children, not going frequently to see movies as others are doing in our housing colony. Every Saturday-Sunday, you are busy in some meeting or other, while, our neighbours who also serve in the Reserve Bank go for outings, picnics, with the whole family. They are so happy, whereas you have made our life miserable" she must have told. So all these activity of Reserve Bank Workers' Organisation, N. O. B. W, BMS is a sheer folly. I do not know how you could have wriggled out of it. Therefore to each, one of you it must be the problem number one because it is an every day affair. Hence you must give a deep thought to this problem. After all, I feel that what your wife has told you is correct. What do you get after doing all this union activity? You are not going to become a minister. You are not going to have any monetary benefit. Your photo will not appear in the newspapers. You donot get publicity, money or position. In fact you get nothing. So, while you are moving hither and thither for this union work you have nothing to gain. Considering the values of life that are current, prevalent in the society today I am inclined to agree with your wife that all your activity is a sheer folly. You must ask yourself, whether you should continue this activity or not. The prevalent values of life are selfishness, diplomacy, cunningness, elbowing out others while pushing forward oneself. You are doing nothing of this. So what will happen? You will run like a horse, work like an ass and ultimately gain nothing. So why are you doing this nonsense?

Why are you following this wrong course of action? Therefore I am inclined to agree with your wife. She is worldly wise. She has practical wisdom. While she has to look after the family and children, you are just like a loafer, vagabond running hither and thither on union work.

While I told you that I agreed with your wife I have not told you the other aspect of it. It is that I am not the only person who is following this foolish folly. Many wise men have done so and in this foolishness they were much more, far advanced. I may be a fool, but many great persons in this world are far more foolish than myself and that is the only consolation. The consolation is not that I am following a wise course of action. I know it is foolish. The only consolation is that great people, those who have changed the course of history, those who have left their impact on world history, have been many times more foolish than myself, that is the only consolation for me. Not that I gainsake from it, I am a loser. But many great persons were losers too, many times more as compared to me. That is the only satisfaction.

I remember, a friend of mine failed in the examination thrice. He was a brave man not afraid of examinations. But, when he failed for the fourth time, he was really repentant. He went to his room on the first floor of his house, entered it and closed the doors and bolted it from within. When his mother

asked him to come down for taking meals, he refused to come down stating that he did not want to show his black face to anyone. His refusal to open the doors, unnerved the family members and they were worried that he may commit suicide. In the afternoon three of his classmates came to meet him and called him out. But he refused to come out. They asked him why he was so much upset. They told him that Bhalya who used to always pass in first class, who had some distinctions to his credit had also failed that time. Bhalya had suffered from typhoid fever during the examinations. When my friend learned that Bhalya had also failed that time, he opened the door came down along with those friends, asked his mother to prepare snacks for his friends. He was very happy, not that he had passed in the examinations, but Bhalya had also failed. In the same way, I am certainly a loser, but the only consolation I have got is that many great persons in this world were more foolish than me and greater losers than me. Why should I persist in this position? So first of all my request to you all is that before continuing your cause of the RBWO, NOBW or BMS you must find out why you must act like a fool, With human life being limited, whatever you want to enjoy you must enjoy now only. Instead of enjoying life, you are not only making your life miserable, but also that of your wife and children. You must consider it at this stage. If wisdom dawns upon you immediately, refrain from doing the work, right from this conference, but if you want to persist, you will have to decide whether your action is justified.

A person with a split mind cannot work with full force.

We know that before 1947, we were engaged in the freedom struggle. In the freedom struggle many distinguished Lawyers, Doctors, Engineers abandoned their brilliant careers and jumped headlong in the struggle for independence. As a result their families were ruined, but they were not unhappy over it. They had the satisfaction that they were suffering for some noble cause. You and I may think that it is false. Who has seen what independence is? The wife and children are starving, that is the reality. But they had the satisfaction that they were suffering for a laudable cause. So many courted arrest, went to jail for years together. So many families were ruined. Then we have heard of the revolutionaries, young budding revolutionaries. What was their age group, may be twenty, twentyfive. A very prosperous enjoyable life was before them. They were youngsters with ability. But they were pained at the situation obtaining then. They offered themselves at the altar. They were hanged. Some of them were shot dead. We have heard of Khudiram Bose, hardly 19 years old when he died. Bhagat Singh, 26 or 27 years old when he went to the gallows. It is a long list of illustrious martyrs. Why did these young persons climb the scaffolds?

Today we are proud of the fact that in this century, before our own eyes mankind has registered

progress which is unprecedented, the rate of progress mankind never before used to. What factors were responsible for this progress? Mainly sacrifices performed by the scientists. What type of sacrifices have they performed? Can we imagine? Experiments were conducted not only on mice, not only on cats and dogs. Some experiments were so risky, yet the scientists conducted those experiments on their own bodies at the risk of their lives. In the case of some dreadful diseases, the scientists were so full of compassion for those who suffered from those diseases, they wanted to find out the genesis of those diseases. They conducted the experiments on themselves, suffering months together all the agonies arising out of those diseases. They were healthy people, but to find out remedies for those maladies, they themselves became victims of those dreadful diseases like venereal disease or contagious disease like leprosy. Dr. Hansen, who did not have a trace of leprosy, out of compassion for the lepers, tried to find out the genesis of leprosy whereby he himself became a leper and then conducted experiments on himself. To minimise human suffering people have gone to that extent. Apart from scientists, we find such foolish persons in different communities also. That is also responsible for the progress of mankind.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, Pope sent a circular to all the churches that there in the south seas is an island which is inhabited only by lepers from Europe and America. As there

were only lepers, the problem before the Vatican was that there was no one to give them the message of the Lord. Was anybody prepared to go there for the purpose? So that they may be given the message of the Lord and that they also may be emancipated? Whosoever went there would have himself become a leper, he would have been torn out of the glamour of civilisation and its fruits, at least it was very clear. From Belgium, a boy of nineteen came forward for the purpose and he offered his services. He was the only son of a rich family, delicate in stature as he was not expected to perform any manual work at home. He went to the island, stayed with the lepers when he could have stayed at home and enjoyed the fruits of the level of civilisation that Europe was having at that time with all the inventions and gadgets. But he went to the southsea islands, stayed with the lepers, whereby he himself contracted leprosy. He died as a leper unsung and unhonoured. He committed that foolishness, when he could have enjoyed life as the son of a rich person. Even a matric failed student of India would not commit this foolishness.

After the demise of Prophet Mohamed, Abu Bakr became the Khalif. Then for the first time the question arose as to what should be the salary of Khalif, because Khalif was not only the Chief of the spiritual but also temporal world. The entire Mohammedan world was supposed to be led by him. Hence the question was what should be the salary to be paid to him. There were discussions and ultimately the matter was taken to him. He could have given

any figure, but he said that the salary of the Khalif should be equivalent to that of an average manual worker in the region. This was also height of foolishness. He could have demanded any amount, people were ready to give. He commanded highest respect in the mohammedan world. So this foolishness is a part of the greatness. Only foolish people have changed the history of the world. Wise men have not changed the history of the world.

In our own history, you are well conversant with politics. BMS is not in politics. But you know what type of behaviour our politicians are having today. When they are told that there was a time when Bharata and Ramachandra quarelled with each other, each claiming that the Kingdom of Ayodhya belongs to you and not to me, Bharata telling Rama that you are the real Raja and you must come and rule Ayodhya, and Rama telling Bharata it is yours and you have to rule. I do not think that this type of quarrel will arise in 1983 even in a single corporation ward in Bangalore. It is because people have become wise. Our history is full of such examples: People leaving their home and hearth, abandoning all enjoyments, suffering the whole life. What exactly that prompted these otherwise wise people? To commit this foolishness, what inspired them? I think we must consider this. I am not going to reply, I leave it to you. Because I told you that I am more in agreement with your wife than with yourself. But I request you to consider the question that why such obviously foolish things were done by such great personalities.

Shivaji by his own efforts established Swaraj. When Guru Ramadas came, he told him that you are my guru and I am offering the whole Swaraj to you. Do you think that even an uneducated municipal councillor would commit such foolishness now? No. So how is it that persons who were so great, could commit such foolish acts which will not be committed by matric failures of 1983. In our country it is said that the ultimate goal of all life is happiness. That is what our seers and sages have said. But how this happiness has to be attained? to be achieved? For this they have said "ATMANO MOKSHARTHAM, JAGAT HITAYACHA".

All actions should be with this purpose. Then you can attain happiness. For emancipation of one's own soul and for the welfare of the entire world. With these twin purposes if your actions are committed, then one becomes happy. All actions should be with this purpose. Then you can attain happiness.

Now this is an old conservative, orthodox obscurantist concept which we modern progressives will not take into consideration. But one modern institution, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has said that "poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere" Actually going some steps ahead our forefathers have said that "misery anywhere is a threat to happiness everywhere".

I only request you to consider along these lines. This is a question to be replied in the first person singular 'I'. So every first person singular must reply this question by himself. I am only posing this question

*Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.*

-W. H. LONGFELLOW

FROM "A PSALM OF LIFE"