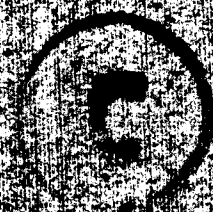


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Pope Pius XII

Few Popes in history have been so widely and universally mourned as Pope Pius XII. In our own country, the highest authorities in the land as well as the most distinguished leaders in every walk of public life have paid fulsome tributes to the memory of a saintly, self-sacrificing scholar, a great lover of humanity, a devoted pastor of his flock, a courageous protagonist of peace, and a patient forbearing ruler who knew how to forgive and disarm with love and spiritual appeal the wrath of his enemies. In this universal chorus of praise for his virtues and sorrow for the loss the world has sustained by the death of so unique a personality, we wish to participate fully and completely. It is a rare thing to find in the modern world such a combination of integrity with high position, of keen scholarship with sympathy for suffering, of patience and fortitude in the face of such intractable problems as those created by the war and the persecution of the Church, of love in a world torn by hatred. Yet the late Pope was a supreme example of such harmony of qualities that blended to make him essentially the 'Pope of Peace' and the strong advocate of international unity. Never before in the history of the world has the sense of the universal community of mankind, surpassing all barriers of colour, wealth.

power, and tradition, played such an important part in the shaping of events. And Pope Pius XII rose to the occasion with magnificent generosity, uninhibited by the prejudices and customs of a vanishing age. His was essentially a 'catholic' mind that was always ahead of his times.

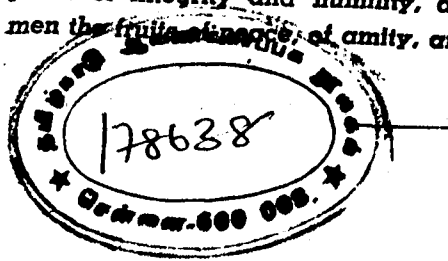
The Pope and Social Action

Burdened with the government of the Church, the Pope however was keenly alive to the vast changes that were taking place around him. Among the many papal documents, addresses and encyclicals published during his reign, some of the most important ones deal with the social order, the consequences of technology, Communism, the international community, the rights of minorities, the rights of immigrants, and the essentials for the preservation of peace. His sharp intellect was tireless in keeping abreast of modern thought in practically every sphere of science, philosophy, culture, medicine, psychology, and other scientific disciplines. Truly, Pope Pius XII will go down in history as one of the great Popes of all times.

Saintliness

Yet above all his intellectual acumen shines the halo of his sanctity, that so impressed all the millions who came to Rome from every corner of the earth. His affability, his humility, and his firm trust in the power of the spirit will always endear him to the Indian people, who have a tradition of non-violence and the peaceful solution of problems. May the memory of his unselfish life spent in the service of the helpless and the poor of all ranks and races be an inspiration to our leaders and our people so that they too may tread the paths of integrity and humility, and help to secure for all men the fruits of peace, of amity, and of universal concord.

The Editor



This Side and That

Food Production

The monsoon season has awakened our leaders to the sorry realities of our food production. Parliament and State Assemblies have been flooded with torrents of eloquence, carrying a spate of recriminations and objurgations, which yielded a plentiful crop of flowers of rhetoric but left our peasantry undisturbed, and as miserable as before. Quite a good deal of village propaganda by leaders and Community Project officers will have to be done to stir our peasants to greater productivity, and sound agricultural education. It is remarkable that all discussions were centred on rice and wheat production, and that nothing was said about diversification in agriculture. As the monsoon is nearing its end, it would have been pertinent to initiate a campaign for gardening in order to help the situation.

The deficiency in our diet is not only quantitative but also qualitative. In general our diet is not only insufficient but it is insufficiently nutritive. It is lacking mainly in iron and in vitamin D, rich in carbohydrates and poor in proteins, as well as unbalanced in the proportions of calcium and phosphate, fats and proteins, etc. A good deal of the deficiency could be made up by developing the consumption of milk, vegetables and fruits. As long as we pay exclusive attention to cereals, we will have an under-nourished population.

It took mankind long centuries to realise all the needs of human diet. It is only at the end of the 18th century that Lavoisier came to state a full survey of the quantitative elements of man's nutrition and that the chemist Proust stressed the contributions of carbohydrates, fats and proteins. If requirements in mineral salts were discovered

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a century ago, the need of vitamins is a discovery of our present century. It is thus no wonder that the masses of our population ignore much of what makes for a balanced diet. But it is noteworthy that the modernest of our most modern leaders do not make the people a little wiser about such elementary factors of a proper Indian constitution. Even those who talk about vital thinking when referring to heavy industries do not speak about such vital factors as balanced diet.

A regrettable trend in the food problem is that it has entered party-politics. All parties are agreed about the foreign policy and the Five-Year Plans, but there has been no agreement on a national basis as how to solve the food problem. It looks good to judge international events and remonstrate with foreign countries, to build huge steel factories and hydro-electric stations that will produce marvels in the future, but what the common people hope for and insist on is to live long enough to see all such marvels of peace and industry. Unless the masses are properly fed, how could they be expected to work for the next generation and grow, keen on a national prosperity they do not experience in their daily life? Could not the political parties come to agree to the obvious fact that food is not a political platform, but a national essential?

National Integration

Communal, linguistic and regional rivalries stand in the way to a smooth integration of the country. Opportunities in trade and industry are still very limited, and the members of the educated middle-classes are engaged in a fierce struggle for gainful employment, and the struggle is worsened by all the emotion roused by community and language loyalties.

A partial remedy which would go a long way to tone down rivalries would be a rapid economic development of

the country, with fair regional balance, and equitable remuneration. The National Planning Commission intends pursuing a fair distribution of trade and industry through the country though it is hampered by the uneven wealth of provinces in natural resources. On its part the Government has launched family living surveys among labour employed in mines, plantations, and factories; some fifty centres are under study. The purpose is to obtain all data necessary to calculate index numbers that will measure the consumption costs among working people, and to obtain a uniform basis to assess consumption expenditure and relate it to wages. It is high time that our former system of basic wage, dearness allowance and bonus be brought into line with the economic changes of the last ten years.

As to the way of toning down and erasing communal rivalries, it can only be expected after a long term of practical forbearance born of mutual esteem and respect; legislation can do little beyond limiting the grossest expressions of uncivic sentiments.

Much the same may be said about the linguistic problem. It is hard to fix a date when legislation from the Centre can impose a solution acceptable to the country as a whole. The demand for the continuation of educational facilities on behalf of English is increasing whilst the propaganda for Hindi has suffered from mistaken measures. The working needs of a smooth running central administration along with the insistence of our commercial, cultural and diplomatic relations with the world at large commend delay and tact in seeking appropriate legislative enactments.

The problem of enforcing Hindi as the official language for the whole country will hardly be made easier with any system of transliteration into the Roman script. The

latest proof of it is glaring enough in the proposal of the Committee set up by the Union Ministry of Education; it proposes a system that would suit over a dozen Indian languages, but this attempt at meeting the claims of intonations and peculiar sounds had to mobilize all the possible dots, dashes, bars, colons and apostrophies that such an array of symbols is bound to be the despair of any school child or adult transliterator who is not fanatically keen on being absolutely precise. The old system had plenty of deficiencies but it had the great merit of being easy to learn and to use, and that is much of a merit in our speed-mad modern tempo.

Social Workers

Social work is a science and an art. In countries where it is officially organised, it implies a course of six years at college or university level, and most social workers are getting salaries which favourably compare with those obtained in other helping professions, like teachers, psychologists, nurses and librarians. Social work if it is taken as a career, is not only a matter of knowledge and skill, it supposes a calling, demanding special qualities of both heart and mind. It is not only a road to a living; it is a way of life. Whether the social worker has to deal with a T.B. patient and his family who must be brought to accept the diagnosis with courage, or with a problem-child, or with an old man who needs a place to live in and an income to live on, or with mentally or emotionally disturbed adults, or with youths prone to delinquency, or with any of the many odd cases which mar the peace or reputation of a group or community, the task calls for full personal attention and devotion if it is to prove successful.

It is a work on behalf of the neighbour, and of the community. Hard to take up, it involves some sort of heroism to be pursued for a life-time. There is always the

feeling that the job is never done; there are often the temptations to discouragement when failures occur and failures are not rare which keep one awake at night. But what profession is worth doing unless it be hard from time to time? What profession in the world can be higher than social work? Is it not a high calling that sets up doing good to others? Is not all civilisation based on concern for others? Without such a care for others, where would be the family, the village or the community?

Social workers are genuine patriots; they strengthen national life in the spirit of betterment for all through peaceful change, and this is a task eminently noble and useful. Most likely few among social workers will ever obtain any public distinction or win a memorial stone; but what is a statue once we are gone? The social worker's monument is people, the people that have been helped, steadied in misfortune, shaped for a true education, rehabilitated to citizenship, and returned to the virtuous path. Are not such human monuments more satisfying than any stone statue? Any man should be ashamed to die if some time or other he has not done some sort of social work of any type. It is by the good we do to others that we enlarge ourselves and that we expand our personality beyond the limits of our narrow self.

Agitation

One should not be surprised or alarmed when here and there popular agitation creates worries or troubles for the forces of law and order; the people, particularly the illiterate section of the public, have hardly any other means of calling governmental attention to their grievances. Fasts and satyagraha involve hardly more than the depth of the feelings. But it is only proper for the leaders to be aware that rowdiness does not signify any argument in reason.

That is why one can be tolerant of mass agitation, but one fails to understand that the representatives of the

people in democratic assemblies indulge in unseemly agitation, as was on occasion witnessed in some of our State Assemblies. It is most important that the rules of procedure in legislative bodies be strictly observed and that the legislative process be kept along normal lines. One can only regret that so many opposition parties show such lapses from traditional democratic behaviour.

One should, however, exclude Communists from any blame of guilty lapses. With them agitation is not a lapse at all; it is rather a matter of policy. Their general tactics prescribe continual agitation; they want their opponents to lose their nerve in the hope that one day they will lose their heads and fall into a fatal mistake. That is one more reason why parties which oppose both government and Communism should beware of any alliance with any turmoil tainted with the Moscow red.

All parties which insist on the democratic way of life should direct their representatives in our legislative assemblies to maintain the decorum which their functions demand in discussing or voting. It is a matter of comfort to see that our Speakers are clear and firm in maintaining the prestige of debates, and rule out any demonstrations suggestive of mobocracy. Unless our representatives at all levels, municipality, district, State and Centre, display self-possession and refrain from rowdyism which is unbecoming even youthful university students, peace and progress are crucially threatened, and the only alternative would appear to be dictatorship, which in the olden days was called tyranny an alternative nobody in India contemplates, except crypto-fascists of the black, brown or red hue. The black and brown have been swept away, but in some sectors Red Fascism is becoming fashionable. Beware, my masters!

A. L.

Wage Determination in India

The problem of discovering the influences that effectively determine wages in an under-developed country like India is perhaps even more difficult than in a highly developed industrial economy. For in the latter case, the forces of supply and demand have been given more time to stabilise and their interaction can therefore be more clearly perceived. In India, both the demand and the supply factors of labour are still in a stage of uncertainty and change, and while the country is being rapidly industrialised, the institutional set-up restricting the fall of wages below a certain minimum and the growing strength of workingmen's unions forcing a rise in wages or preventing a decrease, have already begun to affect both the level and the structure of wages in specific industrial areas of the country. To speak of perfect competition in the labour market in the India of today would be an unpardonable anomaly; neither on the other hand can one speak of monopsonistic tendencies on the side of the demand for labour.

Undoubtedly, economic considerations like the capacity of the industry to pay the wage demanded by the worker hold an important place in determining the level of wages. But in many of the recent awards of the Industrial Tribunals, much attention has been paid to considerations of social justice. The Committee on Fair Wages has divided wages into three categories: the Minimum Wage, the Fair Wage and the Living Wage. The Minimum Wage is expected to provide the worker not merely with the bare sustenance of life but the preservation of his efficiency. For this purpose, the minimum wage must ensure the worker with the means of some measure of education for himself and his children, for medical requirements and amenities.

The minimum wage is meant to prescribe a standard of living for the worker that is above the bare poverty line, and that explains the inclusion of certain amenities like education and medical requirements.

The Living Wage has been so defined as to enable the male earner to provide for himself and his family not merely the bare essentials of food, clothing and shelter, but a measure of frugal comfort including education for his children, medical assistance in time of sickness, the satisfaction of essential social requirements, and finally insurance against the hazards of sickness, accident and old age.

The Fair Wage, according to the Committee, is more than the Minimum Wage, and less than the Living Wage. Its actual level is to be determined by two factors: the capacity of the industry to pay the fair wage, and the prevailing rates of wages in the same or similar occupations in the same or neighbouring localities.

Applications

In the absence of Collective Bargaining between the Management and the Union, wages in many Indian industries are determined by the Awards of the Tribunals, or the Pay Commission set up by Government to determine wages for its own employees, or the Wage Boards recently introduced for the Cotton and Sugar Industries. Whatever be their structure, in determining the lowest level or the minimum wage, they are all agreed on the policy of providing the worker with a wage that will be sufficient not only to cover the essentials of subsistence, but also the requirements of education, medical facilities and other amenities. Normally the wage is expected to cover the needs of food, clothing housing and a few other miscellaneous essentials like fuel and light, of three consumption units for a family.

If the industry cannot pay this minimum, it is suggested that it should not be permitted to exist.

The Jute Awards

A typical example of the way wages have been statutorily raised by the Tribunals is that of the Jute Industry. A major portion of the third award, for instance, which was published on the 20th September, 1955, was taken up with a discussion of the validity of the total cost of the food, clothing, housing and other requirements of the worker that had been determined by previous tribunals. In fixing the minimum wage, the Tribunals always fall back on the figures obtained by the various Labour Enquiry Committees of conditions of the worker's monthly expenditure prior to 1939, which for all purposes is taken as the base year and therefore equivalent to 100 for formulating the Cost of Living Index series. The Tribunals for the Jute Industry maintained that up to the year 1939, the cost of food of a single consumption unit per month was Rs. 5. This amount covered a varied quantity of food, as prescribed by Dr. Ackroyd, who was at that time Director of the Food Research Station at Conoor, and it was roughly equivalent to about 2700 calories per man per day. According to Dr. Ackroyd, this amount of food was sufficient to keep a man in good health and to renew the energy he lost through his daily work.

Thus for three consumption units, the total bill on food for the worker's family would be Rs. 15 per mensem. Roughly it was calculated that food and fuel would form 68% of his necessary expenditure. Thus in all the figure of Rs. 26 per month was arrived at and regarded as a 'subsistence plus' wage level. This was to be paid to an industrial worker for an eight hour period per day and a forty-eight hour period per week, and 26 working days in the month.

But with the outbreak of the war, prices started soaring at an incredible rate. This was clearly indicated in the rapid rise of the Cost of Living Index figure. By 1954, it had touched the 355 mark. In other words, this meant that the prices of essential commodities had shot up by three and a half times their value in 1939. But already by the first award for the Jute industry, an allowance called the 'Dearness Allowance' was being paid to the workers to offset the rise in the cost of living. It was a flat rate that was paid to all Jute employees irrespective of the wages they were earning. It amounted to Rs. 32-8 as. per month, so that the total earnings the worker took home was Rs. 58-8 as. per month. The Tribunals clearly laid down that the purpose of the dearness allowance was to neutralise the rise in the cost of living, but the neutralisation was not intended to be complete. It was only meant to cover 74% of the increase in the cost of living. The workers too were expected to bear a part of the hardships common to all. Moreover the industry could not afford to pay a higher allowance, because its prosperity was connected with a foreign market where competition was keen and where substitutes for jute goods were being discovered. Further the partition of the country had deprived the industry of its raw material.

Apart from these reasons of the capacity of the industry to pay, the Tribunals in their decisions paid very close attention to the arguments of the Unions, especially when there was question of the standard of living of the worker. Underlying this anxiety was the unqualified assumption that human labour was not a mere commodity, that the worker has not a machine, that the employee had a right to be treated as a human person, and therefore provided with the wherewithal for living in consonance with his human dignity. These concepts may not be clearly enunciated in so many words in the awards, but the Constitution

of India, and its policy on labour in particular, is constantly referred to in the various arguments used both by the unions and the judges of the Tribunals.

Rise in Wages

The following table shows how total earnings of the worker have been raised by successive awards.

Award	Year	Cost of Living Index	Basic Wages	Dearness Allowance	Total Emoluments
			Rs. As. Ps.	Rs. As. Ps.	Rs. As. Ps.
First	1948	325	26—0—0	32—8—0	58—8—0
Second	1951	355	26—0—0	37—6—0	63—6—0
Third	1955	325	34—10—9	32—8—0	67—2—9

An analysis of the above table reveals that the Third Jute Industry Award has raised the basic wage while lowering the dearness allowance to satisfy the demands of the unions for a merger of the two elements. It is also obvious that the Dearness Allowance has been closely linked with the cost of Living Index, and that the total emoluments of the worker have been rising at regular periods. What the Awards intend by the increase in wages is ultimately that the Living or at least the Fair Wage level will be gradually attained in every industry.

Union Pressure

Although the various Trade Unions in the Jute Industry are not recognised by the Indian Jute Mills Association which therefore refuses to deal with them, the Industrial Tribunals make it a point to invite all the unions existing in the industry to send in a list of their demands and their grievances. The focus of the disagreement has been inadequate wages, due to the phenomenal rise of the prices of food-stuffs since the last war. Special emphasis has been

placed on securing a rise in the level of the lowest grades of workers, who suffer more through the price increase than those in the higher grades of wages. Thus the great gap between the lowest and the highest paid workers is sought to be lessened. In the Jute Industry, "the range of basic wage extended from a minimum of Re. 0-7-11 to a maximum of Rs. 10-6-9 in case of daily-rated male workers.... (and) from Rs. 30-0-0 to Rs. 355-0-0 in case of monthly rated male workers...." * The differentials in basic wages skilled and un-skilled workers in the same industry is rather wide, the topmost skilled worker earning nearly twenty times the amount earned by the lowest paid unskilled worker.

It is not management but the unions that initiate the trend towards higher wages. Managements on the contrary at least in the Jute Industry have always opposed the claims of the unions in this matter. The unions set the ball rolling when their representatives succeeded in getting the Government to refer their differences with management to an Industrial Court. In the case of the Jute Industry, while the Second Award had fixed the basic wage and dearness allowance for the full period of 48 hours of work per week, the Jute mills had reduced the number of working hours to 42½, because of the fall in the demand for jute goods in the international market. But this procedure had hit the workers badly; instead of getting Rs. 63-6 per month for a working week of 48 hours, the lowest paid worker only received Rs. 56-1-10 per month for a working week of 42½ hours. In this manner the advantages of the Second Award were nullified to some extent. Had the workers been unorganised, it is not likely that the notice of the government would have been drawn so quickly to the actual reduction in the wages of the lowest paid jute workers due to a shortening of the hours of work.

* West Bengal Labour Gazette, May, 1958.

Cost of Living

In basing their main reasons for an increase in wages on the rise in the cost of living, the union spokesmen often questioned the validity of the procedure of linking basic wages with the cost of living in 1939. One of them calculated that both food and fuel in 1939 for a single consumption unit would cost Rs. 5-13 or practically Rs. 6 per month. At that rate the basic wage per month should really be Rs. 32-8 instead of Rs. 26. On the other hand there is a growing consensus of opinion among union leaders that with the increased productivity of the country, labour should have a larger share in the rising national income. In other words, basic wages should rise by 25% and be merged with dearness allowance. As a matter of fact, the Third Jute Industrial Award did raise the basic wages for a 48 hour week to Rs. 34-10-9, and lowered the dearness allowance to Rs. 32-8. But there is no doubt that the practice of linking the basic wages with the 1939 Cost of Living is beginning to cause doubts even in minds of the adjudicators, because the patterns of consumption of the workers have changed since that time and the Cost of Living Index is never likely to fall back to the 1939 level again. If it did, there would be a frightful recession in Indian Industry. So there is a lot of logic in the demand for merging the basic wage with the dearness allowance into a consolidated wage. As a matter of fact for payment of the percentages of earnings by both the employer and the employee to the Provident Fund and the Employees State Insurance Fund, it is the basic wage and the dearness allowance together that form the basis on which the percentages are charged. Thus to a large extent for practical purposes, the basic wage has already been regarded as merged with the dearness allowance. It is only the annual bonus that is still calculated on the basic wage.

Trends

Not only the Jute Industry, but all other industries in India, are affected by this tendency to rising wages. While there are differences in the wages considered regionalwise, within the regions the minimum tends to be the same for the larger industries, engaging a fairly large complement of workers, and falling within the Factory Act. This tendency is quite noticeable in Calcutta, where for instance, the Minimum Wage for the Mine workers in the Manbhum collieries have been fixed by an Industrial Tribunal at Rs. 69-1 per month, while for the workers of the Engineering firms in Calcutta itself, the minimum wage for unskilled workers has been fixed at Rs. 61 per month and of semi-skilled workers at Rs. 66 per month. Similarly in the Calcutta Flour Mills, by an agreement with the Unions, the minimum wages for unskilled workers has been pegged at Rs. 63-7 and for semi-skilled workers at Rs. 65-8 per mensem. One can see at a glance how wages within a specific industrial region are closely linked together and affect each other, so that the same level of wages tends to result.

Economic Pressure

One could possibly argue that it is the pressure of competitive forces, that has ultimately brought about the minimum wage of the lowest paid worker round about the same level. A worker in the colliery or the engineering firm might not sell his labour for less than what is paid to a jute worker. But considering the prevailing unlimited supply of unskilled labour in the country, this argument is not easy to uphold. It is true that the industries in our urban centres and industrial districts have to attract the unskilled labour from the rural areas, and this is no easy task, (at least not as easy as one might imagine), and consequently higher wages have to be paid. But one can hardly deny that it is primarily due to trade union activity and organisation that the industrial worker now obtains a much higher income than the agricultural labourer in

the fields. The trade union must be considered an important element in determining wages and no theory of wages can afford to neglect its influence in any generalisation on the manner in which wages are determined.

Considerations of social justice have also had their share in raising wages to their present level. Article 43 of the Indian Constitution clearly lays down that "The State shall endeavour to secure.... to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life,". The fixed determination of the present Government to bring about the Socialistic Pattern of society only means that this directive of the Constitution is being given effect to by means of statutorily raising the lowest level of wages in view of the ultimate payment of the Living Wage by industry. It becomes obvious therefore that it is not economic pressure alone but also the social environment and especially the institutional set-up that have a large part to play in the determination of wages. Side by side with the social policy of the Government to lever up wages must be added the active pressure by the unions on the employers for higher wages. But this has led in its turn to a lowering of the number of workers in industry and an increase of the workload per worker. This is very clearly seen in the case of the Tata Iron and Steel Industry. While the present labour force is not being retrenched, vacancies are not being filled and though the production of steel is to be doubled from one million to two million tons a year, no new workers are being employed, but the same working staff will help to produce the increase. This is surely the effect of the economic factor reacting in its turn by impelling greater efficiency in the management and greater output per worker. However wage determination is a complex process and in India the process is taking shape conditioned by the peculiar industrial environment of a country passing through the first stages towards advanced industrial development.

A. Fonseca

Religious Values in a Changing World

It is almost a law in religious sociology, that a villager who emigrates to the city is sure to leave behind him his religious practices ; he may take them up again if he happens to return home for holidays or to spend the last years of his life. In the city he has no religion. This is understandable if one realizes what a formidable uprooting a trek to the city implies, and how intimately the religious life of a man is sustained by, and intertwined with, the customary surroundings in which he was brought up and lived. A man who is uprooted is usually therefore a man without religion. Today, not only those who emigrate to the cities are uprooted, the whole of mankind is in that state. Never has there been witnessed such a cultural upheaval as the present one affecting in a more or less degree all men, even those who stay behind in the rural areas. What we are witnessing at present has been called, not an historical evolution, but a sudden 'mutation'.

If on the other hand one keeps in mind the other aspect of this 'mutation', namely that the world is fast becoming a unified whole at the planetary level, then it is no longer so astounding that religion itself is deeply affected by this social, economic, ideological, growing crisis. Sufficient has been written on this topic to dispense us from entering into more details.

The individual is uprooted from the milieu with which his religious practices were inextricably linked up. Even if he gets transplanted into another milieu where religion still prevails, the crisis will be practically unavoidable, as was the case with the Polish and Italian miners who settled among Belgian miners, who are still largely practising Christians, but nevertheless practically gave up their own religion. It is the very transplanting that causes the crisis, let alone the kind of soil into which the plant is put.

It is not only the individual who suffers from this uprooting, whole communities are affected by it. Religion has for ages been instilled into man through a vocabulary, through customs and ceremonies, that were adapted to the institutions and mores of those ages. But most of this has been definitely swept away with the advent of the atomic revolution. Today the work of adaptation has to start all over again. Today all the religions of the world suffer from this 'culture-lag', this lack of adaptation. Adaptation is necessarily behind time, for by the time adjustments have been made, the situation has already changed. This is especially the case at present when the world is evolving at a neck-breaking pace. Nobody knows where exactly we are going. As long as this lack of adaptation prevails, the masses will drift away from religion, only a handful of heroic men will be able to reintegrate it in the modern 'Weltanschauung'. Today, indeed, religion requires such an amount of personal conviction and heroism, that one cannot expect the bulk of humanity to possess it. Religion remains limited to an elite.

The Growing Crisis of Humanity

In every man's life growing crises are natural and unavoidable events. Continually man has to throw off what belongs to the child in order to become more mature. Gradually he acquires wisdom and grows lenient in the judgments he makes on people and things. But in the course of such growing crises a man may reject as childish what before he adored, and to which he may return once again, as to a real value, once he has become more mature. Religion is precisely one of those values.

The different classes of society may be said to be going through similar growing crises. Sociologists go so far as to pretend that at present in Europe, the masses are still in their teens : the proletariat is in full growing crisis,

the peasantry's I.Q. could be situated between the age limits 13 and 25, while the middle classes are already more mature.

The bulk of the French workers, to take an example, do not yet feel integrated in the nation. The reason of their resentment and malaise is less a question of wages than of a hankering for dignity and respect on the part of others. They feel looked down upon by the middle and higher classes. This resentment is a sign of growth and therefore of progress. The French worker is no longer a child, believing upon the authority of others. He wants to understand. As an adolescent in his puberty crisis, he wants equality for all, a classless society. He wants to bear part of the responsibility in managing the factories, he does not stand to be bullied by others. His judgements are clear-cut, his reactions of a primary nature. He has an inferiority complex and has a very thin skin indeed. How well this picture and what follows fit not only the French proletariat but even our present day Indian labouring classes, any body with some knowledge of Industrial Psychology will notice at once.

The proletarians still suffer real injustices and react to them with a bitter resentment that is directed against anybody who is above them. They are against the managers, they are for class-war. They reject spiritual values, if the managers happen to believe in them. This resentment together with the subhuman conditions in which many of them are still obliged to live, are the cause of their religious and cultural defection. For their religious crisis, it should be remembered, is accompanied by a general cultural and demographic crisis.

The reason why the labourers feel insecure, must be found first of all in their minds, and not so much in their economic position. The worker does, not, as a rule, foresee or save money for the future, the lower middle class man,

on the contrary does, even though he may happen to earn less than the worker. The latter acts as an adult, the worker as a child. If there are so few leaders sprouting up from amongst the workers themselves, — and if those who do sprout up sooner or later emancipate themselves from the workers' class, — it is not primarily because capitalism oppresses them but because of their still immature mentality. There is no doubt, however, that the workers will evolve and gradually attain their maturity. But once they are that far they will be no longer proletarians, at that juncture they may feel inclined to take back to religion, which at present they have thrown off as something of their childhood years.

The growing crisis of the various layers of society, which will one after the other reach maturity, and which has been illustrated briefly by the example of the French workers, is at work among the underdeveloped countries of the world. Their anticolonialism, their red leanings, their ultra-nationalism, show many signs that are common with the growing crisis of the proletariat. For them too it will take time, till they reach full maturity. At present they all want independence — and rightly so, — but are not always far evolved enough to make the best of it. They are very touchy regarding their national fame. They retain the techniques of the West, while they reject its philosophy.

It is obvious then, that this growing crisis that affects most classes of society and most countries of the world will have its influence on the religion of those respective classes and peoples, just as do the growing crisis in the life of an individual.

Degrading Structures of Modern Civilisation

Paul Archambault has said that the modern world degrades man. Instead of trying to make a general exami-

nation of this statement let us show how the increasing use of slang or of vulgar language is the sign of this degradation. Adaptation of terms would, of course, have to be made according to people and countries. It would be extremely interesting to make a similar study of the language used by our Indian slum-dwellers.

More and more persons today, use slang words instead of the usual words, in order to express everyday realities. While the rural population is still largely spared from this phenomenon, the masses of workers living in the great cities are immersed in it. We can therefore speak of a slang civilisation.

Slang is not merely a kind of jargon or dialect used by a local group of people or of workers in the same trade, it is that kind of vocabulary that flourishes in degraded societies. Slang words do not have the same meaning as their equivalents in common language. Nor do people use it merely out of snobbery. Slang expresses a special attitude towards daily life, a degraded attitude.

To express a common action such as to eat, various words can be used, which are not exactly synonymous. To 'dine' or to 'sup' or their equivalents, express not merely the animal act of satisfying a biological need, they connote a great deal of social and even religious rites that surround this human activity. In slang many words may be found to express the act of eating. If a man tells us that at noon he will take his lunch, or will eat in the restaurant, we understand that very few social rites will be attached to this rather prosaic action. But nobody will dare to tell us that tonight he is going to 'guzzle' or to 'feed' with his relatives at home, this would be an insult to his family. To 'guzzle' or to 'stuff' oneself, indicates the bare animal act of eating, or even something more degraded, for not even animals 'guzzle'.

Similar examples could be given about slang words used for the concept of working, dying, talking, home. One might argue that there is nothing particularly tragic in the use of slang. This would be true, if slang was used with reference to unimportant actions only, to those namely that do not engage the person as such. But the disquietening feature is that slang moves from those marginal actions to the most vital and holy moments of human existence itself. The use of slang, therefore, denotes a mentality in which all, even the most important, activities of man are materialised and degraded to the animal stage. In slang, most parts of the human body are in fact designated in animal terms. Slang denotes degradation. Where there is degradation, there slang thrives. Modern civilisation is for the majority of men a slang civilisation, they really do live a 'beastly' life. They live in their families, work in factories, travel up and down to work, are born, bred and die in such a way that the slang word is really the only exact term to express what they are doing. How many still know what it means to take breakfast or to lunch, or even simply to take a meal? Instead, they merely 'feed'! Their life is de-personalised, de-spiritualised, de-humanised even, in such a way that what remains is merely the working animal.

Primitives seem to have no slang. However low and rudimentary their culture be, they are never vulgar or debased. Slang only appears when a culture becomes degraded. Before having a slang civilisation, one first needs to have a civilisation.

Why does modern civilisation go through such a process of degradation? Because it reduces nature to a mere scientific object that has to be put to use and exploited by man. Nature has become a mere thing, it has grown opaque. The materialists want us to speak not even of 'nature'

but of 'matter'. In ancient times man saw nature as a reflection of the creator. Modern man, on the contrary, prides himself in the fact that he looks at it with empirical eyes, and boasts that this is the only real way of looking at it. He sees only matter, since he wants to see only matter that can be measured, studied and put to use. The modern world is no more the creature of God, but the workshop where man produces for his own profit. The result is that in this rationally fabricated, or shall we say, pre-fabricated world, coming from the hands of man-the-demiurge, man-the-created feels terribly bored, degraded and frustrated.

The modern world is so degrading because it has lost all spiritual values, it has lost the sense of contemplation and of mystery. In the middle ages, man asked 'Why?', in the 19th century 'How?', today 'How much?'.

How can one expect religion to thrive in the midst of a slang civilisation? It cannot but be restricted to a small elite which manages to remain human. But in such a civilisation, — which one wonders whether it can be called a civilisation at all, — it is not only religion that declines, so does art and culture and morals, so does life itself. For in such a world parents have no motives to bring forth children.

Everything forms a chain: work without meaning, marriage without love, family without home, parents without children, solidarity without affection, world without soul and soul without God. The solution of the crisis of modern civilisation, — and therefore of religion, and of culture, — will have to be 'en bloc' or it will be no solution at all.

New Progress of the Human Spirit

The present day crisis is not going to last for ever. We must go ahead, preparing the further progress of human spirit and of religious life, till both meet again. This has to happen at the individual and collective level.

The young man who gets uprooted from his family will but find the solution to his problems, if he can take root in a social group of co-equals, in which everybody has the same aim in view and where there is scope for exterior activity. Hence the importance of religious youth movements, which have grown tremendously in Europe these last 30 years. It is within such a social structure that the boy must find the occasion to get a satisfactory answer to his religious doubts, he must be able to practise his religion actively and live it as a life of the soul and not merely as an abstraction.

Mankind also, as a whole, has to progress. It has to understand that science has not the last word to say on the meaning of the universe. Science and religion deal with different aspects of the same reality. Beyond the world of science, modern man must rediscover the universe of nature, of the ideas, of religion. To do this will be a genuine sign of his having attained real maturity. Man has to relearn to reflect, to philosophise. Science by itself never leads to God. Where science leaves off, there philosophy has to take over. And where philosophy and therefore natural religion can say nothing more, there man must be honest enough to admit the possibility, at least, of a supernatural revelation by a personal God, who has entered into his creation and has spoken to man, and towards whom the only right attitude is one of listening and of faith. But at the same time mankind has a right to see those who call themselves Christians witness the truth of their religion, by their sense of love and of social justice.

Adaptation

One cannot turn back the clock. Progress is irreversible. The uprooting has to be accepted as a fact. We must adapt the present to the future. For the generation

that is being uprooted, every means should be put into practice to make this process as little painful as possible.

For the generation that will follow, and that has not known the old conditions, religious truths have to be presented in terms that they will be able to understand, moral principles will have to be applied to 20th century situations. Religious rites will have to undergo certain transformations, so as to remain signs of divine grace, signs that moderns can understand.

The Church needs more suppleness in its public worship and liturgical rites, in order to adapt itself to further developments. Religious training will have to be highly personal, so as to help the believers to dominate the events and to do without the sociological struts on which religion till now largely relied. They need a 'surplus of soul-force', to bridge the culture gap between modern situations and their inadequate religious training, which they got in their youth.

Justice and Love

In order to make the growing crisis of the labouring masses and of the underdeveloped world less painful, social injustices, such as capitalism, liberalism and colonialism as well as excessive statism, will have to be avoided at all cost. The wealth of the world will have to be more justly distributed. Psychological adjustments will have to be made. Everything must be put into action to help the masses to free themselves of their resentments and inferiority feeling, by establishing better human relationships. This cannot be done except on the basis of love and respect. They will have to be educated and be given more responsibility in public and economic life.

The present is going to decide whether this growing crisis, through which the masses of workers and of under-

developed peoples are passing, is going to turn out all right or will evolve in a vicious way and create more revolutions and strife.

The Culture of Tomorrow

Positive signs are appearing on the horizon, which show that modern man is in search of a culture, in which it will be possible to be human and therefore religious.

The new man of the West is in search of a style of life in which nature takes a large place. Nature for him is no longer a mere object of science. A great 'back-to-nature' movement, manifested in the craze for camping and trekking in the open, is taking hold especially of the younger ones and is showing good results. Man rediscovers nature as something mysterious and soothing. He recovers the taste for nature and the natural.

He also realizes the value of the gratuitous activity as a manifestation of the self. Art, play, the gift of one self, the love of the neighbour, of God, are being rediscovered as being more eminently human than the mere useful activity. This search for the gratuitous is manifested in the love of sport, of touring and open-air activities, of adventure and risk. The civilisation of gratuity is the antithesis of the civilisation of slang.

Again, the present-day man has a strong sentiment of 'otherliness', manifested in a desire for community living, in the search for ideals, mystiques and philosophies, and for genuine family life based on the mutual gift of one to the other.

He is no longer satisfied with the world of objects and of mere science. He is in search of a scale of values, in which the gratuitous, the spontaneous, the personal and

the communal hold a large place. The Modern world will of course retain its material and scientific acquisitions, but a civilisation where the above values prevail is more human than the present-day slang civilisation. It is up to religion to make the best of these values that are sprouting.

Religious Efforts

In this new civilisation, what will be the task of the elite of believers, who want to communicate the faith to their fellows?

They will have to be very broadminded and take a receptive attitude towards whatever is positive in this world. Social injustices will have to be fought, tooth and nail, especially by those who make profession of religion, and the social structures will have to be reshaped according to the spirit of the Gospel. Evangelisation and the humanisation of social structures have to go hand in hand.

The institutions and customs of organised religion itself, for instance, the parish system to mention but one example, will need adaptation. Special action will have to be exerted on the great variety of new social milieux, that are springing up in modern civilisation.

The work of infusing the religious values into the modern world has to go hand in hand with its material uplift; one cannot do without the other. The state has to organize society in a way that makes possible for man to live a human life in it. In its modern projects, for instance, of industrialisation and population control, it does not always take account of these moral duties. The Catholic Church is particular has in the last 100 years evolved a body of social doctrine, and does not hesitate to call upon and offer her collaboration to the state and to all men of good will, in order to establish a sound social order in which justice and love prevail, and where it will be easier for man to be religious, because it will be easier to be human.

M. Bogaert

The Pope Speaks

PRISONERS, PUNISHMENT AND PARDON

(continued)

Help for those who suffer punishment

Your Association bears a title which well expresses its aims: "Fraternal Christian Aid" and "Friends of the Imprisoned." But the condemned who need help are more than just prisoners.

The penal justice of the past, that of the present to a certain degree, and — if it is true that history often teaches us what to expect in the future — that of tomorrow as well, make use of punishments involving physical torments, mutilation, death and capital punishment in various forms. Hence all that we intend to say about the help to be offered to the imprisoned is meant to apply, at least in its fundamental points, to all upon whom punishment is inflicted, and We would like to consider these prisoners from two points of view, as individuals and as members of the community.

As Individuals

1. Taking them as *individuals*, you must know the prisoners and love them.

(a) Know them.

First of all, *know them*. If you are to help those who are in prison, you must enjoy a soul-to-soul contact with them, and this presupposes an understanding of the other person as an individual who has been influenced by his origin, his upbringing, and the course of his life right up to the moment when you meet him in his cell.

With this in mind, you will invite the prisoner to run back through his memory and give you all useful information, just as a doctor asks his patient for any information about his past that may be of interest, in order to attain a better knowledge of the man and his physical condition. This is called anamnesis. It often happens that sick people — and condemned ones or prisoners as well — may recall things which are of themselves of no importance, while they quickly brush past or remain silent as to other events which may offer vital information for outlining the origin, diagnosis, and prognosis of the illness. In such a case, the doctor should not begin a technical or theoretical discussion with the patient but rather correct false or inaccurate evaluations, insofar as this will help toward a cure of the sick man and an improvement in his future conduct.

So it is not enough to understand the prisoner and his condition; instead you have to help the man himself to know and understand the principles which ought to guide his rehabilitation. The basic idea that has to guide the prisoner in his efforts to get back on his feet is the conviction that he can wipe out the mistakes of the past and take the steps necessary to reform his life and make it over; that the present punishment can help him achieve these two aims, and that it will really sustain him, if he resolves to take the proper attitude toward suffering, that is, to make it an expiation and a restoration of order.

Still, no matter how valuable the services rendered by modern psychology may be in this field, they will always fall short of the final goal, because duty, guilt, responsibility, expiation, are realities whose roots are in the realm of conscience, and they must, as a result, be dealt with from a religious point of view. Hence, if you are to help free a man of inner feelings of guilt and help him to redeem himself by his acceptance of punishment, it is absolutely

necessary to put him in direct contact with God. That is why We have spent so much time in pointing out that crime and punishment take on their full meaning only in the personal relationships between man and God.

(b) *Love them*

So it is also necessary to *love them*. If you are to offer real help to prisoner, it is not enough to approach him with correct notions; it is even more important to bring an open heart, especially if it is a case of some poor unfortunate who was never known the joys of a sincere friendship.

In this way, you will be following the example of the perfect model of an all embracing and devoted love without limits — a mother. The thing that gives a mother such influence over her children, even when they are grown up, even though they may have gone astray or committed crimes, is not a set of ideas that she proposes, no matter how right they may be, but rather the warmth of her affection and the fact that she never grows tired of giving herself, even in the face of rejections; she knows how to wait patiently and how to turn to Him for whom all things are possible.

"Love" is the one expression that is readily understood in every language in the world, without any discussion or argument; it is love whose praises were sung by the Apostle Paul in his "hymn to charity" in the first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 13, 1-13). Despite its depth and sincerity, this love gives no approval to guilty actions of the past, offers no encouragement to deliberately holding on to bad inclinations and accepts no compromise between good and evil in the one who is loved. Even the ideal mother's love is guided by this norm.

What a wide range of types of love govern our feelings and actions! Let us glance for a moment at all the dif-

ferent forms which have been pointed out by ancient wisdom. It may be love of complacency, of benevolence, of beneficence, of union and friendship. You can offer each and every one of these types to prisoners depending on the actual circumstances and the extent of the generosity of your heart.

Love of *complacency* admires and enjoys all that is good and beautiful in what is loved. And how much justification there is for this kind of affection on the part of anyone who gives some thought to the prisoner's natural qualities and the gifts of grace, whether you take them in general as possessed by all men, or specifically in the particular form they have in this individual.

Love of *benevolence* is a deliberate desire and wish that the person loved may have everything that is necessary or helpful to him in the natural or supernatural order, and a sincere display of it does an enormous amount of good to anyone who seems to be deprived of so much, who feels that his very being has been mutilated, that life is ended and hope for the future dead.

Love of *beneficence* is glad to give away material goods (even when one's own resources are quite limited), and even happier to bestow spiritual benefits. You will be able to give these in great abundance if you have an interior life that is rich and profound, and impregnated with the loftiest values of culture and religion.

Finally, love of *union* and *friendship*. Persons who love each other in this way want to be together, to exchange thoughts and sentiments, to put themselves, in a way, in the place of the one they love.

The day will come when the Lord Himself will speak as Supreme Judge at the last Judgment, and say: "I was

a prisoner and you came to me When you did it to one of the least of my brethren here, you did it to me" (Matt. 25, 36 and 40). As if He had meant to say: "I am the prisoner."

Rest assured that you will be exercising a tremendous spiritual influence on the prisoners you help, if you succeed in putting this way of thinking and feeling into action; you will be teaching them to look upon the punishment they are suffering as a purification, a liberation, and a far-reaching recovery.

As members of the community

The prisoner is not merely an individual, but also a *member of society*. He belongs to a family, a social group, a professional class, a community, a state, a people, a nation, and finally the Church. Hence a question arises: Can and ought those in charge of assistance to prisoners try to exercise an influence on the mutual relationships of prisoners and these various groups?

Basically the answer must be "yes", since it is a matter that affects both the community and the prisoner. Even if the latter is not playing an active part in any of these groups for the time being, he still has a juridical or social tie to them at the very least. This means that these connections should be developed in a constructive manner, and not serve as an obstacle to a greater good. As a result, your intervention may often be needed before the penalty is completely paid, in dealing with the prisoner's relationships to his family, the social and professional groups in which he will live after his release, and the authorities to whose care he will be committed.

As for precisely what attitudes you adopt, careful reflection based on the principles of natural reason and even

more on the maxims and sentiments inspired by faith and Christian charity will provide you with useful norms and permit you to achieve positive results in the interest of the community and of the prisoner himself.

These norms, dictated by human reason, and even more by Christian faith, require: (a) Sincere pardon; (b) Belief in the good in other people; (c) Love like that of the Lord.

(a) *Sincere pardon*

The very first thing needed is a sincere pardon, on the part of individuals toward each other and on the part of society toward the individual. Does not everybody share the benefits of the forgiveness of God, Who has taught all of us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" (Matt. 6, 12)?

On the basis of this divine teaching, the Apostle Paul, who was inflexible in demanding a severe condemnation of the man who had strayed at Corinth, was also eager to beg a generous forgiveness for him once he had repented: "This punishment inflicted on him by so many of you is punishment enough for the man I speak of," he wrote to the Christians of that Church, "and now you must think rather of showing him indulgence, and comforting him; you must not let him be overwhelmed by excess of grief" (2 Cor. 2, 6-7).

(b) *To believe in the good in others*

In the second place, you have to believe in the good in other people and have confidence in them. Mistrust smothers any germ of goodness, raises, as it were, a high wall of separation between your heart and theirs, and prevents the establishment of friendly relations.

Your work of assistance ought to be like that of God; He knows what particular gifts of nature and of grace He

has given to each individual, and acts accordingly. When the prodigal son returned, he had no intention of receiving him as a servant, but rather as one of the family despite the irritation and complaints of his elder brother. (Cfr. Luke 15, 22 ff.) Peter's denial did not blind our Lord to his very real love for Him, and He went on to entrust His whole flock to him. (Cfr. John 21, 15-17).

(c) *To love as the Lord has loved*

In the third place, you must love as the Lord Himself has loved. "God has proved His love to us by laying down His life for our sakes," wrote the Apostle John, "we too must be ready to lay down our lives for the sake of our brethren." (Cfr. I John 3, 16).

Love of neighbour is something to be displayed between the community and each of its members, as well as man to man. This love will protect the one who returns from all the dangers that await him; if there is a likelihood that he will give in to weakness, it will strengthen him; it will furnish him all he needs to set to work as an active member of the community.

III. *The Care of Prisoners in the Eyes of God*

Having cast a glance over your field of activity, We can close by pointing out to you how (We have a right to believe) God Himself looks at your work. First of all, He looks at the unpleasant aspects of it realistically. He sees the prisoner's guilt, and He sees the full satisfaction demanded by it. From this point of view, punishment corresponds to guilt, and suffering is inflicted on the man as a punishment.

But through the redemptive work of His divine Son God Himself has interposed His mercy between inexorable demands for satisfaction and inevitable punishment. In this way, justice receives the fullest satisfactions while mercy makes possible a superabundant pardon.

This is the meaning of the words of St. John: "Little children, the purpose of this letter is to keep you clear of sin. Meanwhile, if any of us does fall into sin, we have an advocate to plead our cause before the Father in the Just One, Jesus Christ. He, in his own person, is the atonement made for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2, 1-2).

This is what the Lord teaches by coming down in the midst of men to take upon Himself their guilt and punishment. Just picture Him sitting down at table with sinners: "That is what the Son of man has come for, to search out and to save what was lost" (Luke 19, 10) — Listen to His words to the paralytic: "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke 5, 20), or those he directed to Simon while speaking of the sinner who was kissing and anointing His feet: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much" (Luke 7, 47).

When our dying Lord turned to the repented thief who was expatiating his crimes, He did not take him down from the Cross, and did not prevent his legs being broken, but He did offer him a word of enlightenment, of comfort, and of strength: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23, 43). Here is how the Lord wants you to help prisoners: by bringing the certainty of these lofty truths back to life in their hearts, by saying the very words which enlighten, comfort, and strengthen: Your sufferings will bring you purification, courage, and the greatest possible hope of successfully achieving your goal — the gates of heaven, for you will never reach them along the wide road of sin. You will be with God in paradise; all you have to do is trust in Him and in your Saviour.

Conclusion

May Our talk give you a clearer understanding of the beauties of your work and bring you to love it more deeply, so that you may carry it out with tireless zeal.

The Rights of Children

Already in 1924, the League of Nations at Geneva had drawn up a Declaration of the Rights of Children. These have been amplified slightly by the United Nations in 1948. They are:

1. The Child must be protected beyond and above all consideration of race, nationality or creed.
2. The Child must be cared for with due respect for the family as an entity.
3. The Child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, materially, morally and spiritually.
4. The Child that is hungry must be fed, the Child that is sick must be nursed, the Child that is physically or mentally handicapped must be helped, the maladjusted Child must be re-educated, the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succoured.
5. The Child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress.
6. The Child must enjoy the full benefits provided by Social Welfare and Social Security schemes, and must receive a training which will enable it, at the right time, to earn a livelihood, and must be protected against every form of exploitation.
7. The Child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow-men.

Child Welfare in India

Of late Mrs. Indira Gandhi has been interesting herself in the uplift and welfare of children and her public broadcasts reveal the direction in which her mind is working and consequently the way public opinion is being swayed on behalf of helpless children. "Section 1 of the Children's Act," she observed, "places a duty on local authorities to assume the care of children where it finds a person under 17 without parents or guardians or who have been abandoned by them or is lost or that his parents are temporarily or permanently prevented by any kind of infirmity or other circumstances for providing for the child's accommodation, maintenance and upbringing." She then made a special appeal to the press and the public to co-operate in tackling the 'tremendous problem' of child welfare.

There is need of such an appeal at the moment since with the growing industrialisation of the country, our urban slums are fast spreading their pernicious influence and bringing ruin to many young lives. It is in the cities that the neglect of children is most visible. In many cases abandoned children are picked up from the streets and sent to a home or a creche, of course if they have been discovered in time to save their lives. In others, they are exploited either by their parents or so-called guardians in the interests of the latter. Children have been known not to attend school because their mothers preferred that they should sleep over their hunger, rather than wake up and cry. In the slums of our large cities it is not uncommon for children to be nourished on the refuse thrown into the dustbins. Poverty can be a very hard taskmaster, and from an early age quite a few children are made to feel its agonising sway over their lives.

Helpers

But one cannot forget the wonderful work of several institutions and private individuals on behalf of needy

children. There are the Sisters and their orphanages; the voluntary workers who venture into loathsome slums to look after these children, there are the doctors and the working girls who sacrifice their weekly holiday to assist them, the students of our colleges to bathe and clothe them, and the many other anonymous helpers to bring some happiness into their lives.

However there is no record of the number of such children in need. But it is true that their number is appallingly large. And they must be given the opportunities every child in a democratic country should have. The institutions we have are much too few to attend to the needs of the unfortunate child. Both the Government and private individuals must come to the fore in a determined effort to look after these children. For as Mr. Pant has observed, "The way in which a child develops will determine our future and the future of our people. To some extent considering our population and the stature of our country in the international world, it may also have some bearing on the world stage."

O. W. Francis

Social Survey

Employment

During the last five years, 1,032,240 persons were provided with jobs by Employment Exchanges. The number of categories of people who given employment assistance by these exchanges was about 1,000.

Also, during the last five years, 9,126,659 registered themselves with Employment Exchanges. The number of vacancies notified to Exchanges during the period was 1,582,586.

At present there are 202 Employment Exchanges in the country and the annual expenditure on them is Rs. 36.96 lakhs.

In June 1958, 194,869 new applicants registered their names at the Employment Exchanges bringing up the numbers on the live registers to 1,001,573, an increase of 9 per cent over the previous month. While the applicants increased, the number of employers making use of the Exchanges as well as the number of vacancies notified decreased. During June, 6,361 employers made use of the Exchanges and the number of vacancies registered was 29,144 as against 7,068 and 35,629 respectively in May.

Shortage of foreign exchange is affecting adversely the employment problem. In recent months a number of factories have had to close down for lack of raw materials. Several thousand workmen were thrown out of work in a cable factory in West Bengal. To compensate for this loss of employment a good many new factories have been started in various parts of the country. The recent monsoon too has created many avenues for the labour force by washing away railway lines, damaging bridges, levelling houses and causing breaches in dams and embankments.

Metric System

From October 1st this year in many towns of India the metric system of weights and measures was introduced. The system will be gradually extended to the whole country so that in ten years from now only the metric system will be in use. By then arithmetic books will lose half their pages and school children will bless the memory of the person who invented this humane system. If the British Government had only cared to implement the law

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passed in 1871 to "go metric" we would have had for a long time now only kilograms, kilometres and cents. It is never too late to begin.

The metric system has been adopted by 77 countries in the world, is optional in 16 and authorised by four more. Though the U. S. does not follow the metric system yet it defines the yard and pound in terms of the metre and kilogram respectively. In the U. K. a committee has been set up to study the possibility of changing over.

In a sample survey carried out in 1951, in about 1,000 villages it was found that there were as many as 143 different systems of measurements and weights in various parts of rural India. An analysis of only a part of the material showed that the number of systems for measurement of volume was 150 and for land area 180.

In all, more than 100 types of maunds were in force with weights in standard tolas ranging from as low as 280 to as high as 8,320 compared with the standard maund of 3,200 tolas.

The weight of a seer was found to vary from 8 tolas to 160 tolas compared with the standard seer of 80 tolas.

There is likely to be some confusion in the initial stages of the change over. But with the experience gained in manipulating the decimal system of coinage the buyer will not too easily fall a victim to the cleverness of the trader.

Electricity

The more the generators produce the more the demand for electric power. Madras has recently added 35,000 kilowatts to its power grid and this will be increased within a year or so to 105,000 kilowatts when the full scheme of the Periyar Project comes into commission. As the other hydel projects are nearing completion the power supply is steadily increasing.

Besides supplying the much needed energy for the industrial development of the country the availability of power is bringing a long awaited boon to the villages. During the course of the Second Plan period 12,930 villages are expected to get electric

power for lighting and small scale industries. Of these 5,737 have been already electrified before July 31st, 1958. The remaining will get their lines before the end of the Plan period.

Land Reform

The problem of land reform is engaging all the States of the Union. The question would have been solved by now but for various complications. On the one hand there is the political consideration — whether it be the socialistic pattern or the communistic pattern, not to mention the Sarvodaya pattern of latter day prophets — and on the other the need to raise food production. In some States production of agricultural commodities has fallen on account of the uncertainty of land tenure. The Planning Commission has been urging the States to go ahead with their land legislation and remove doubts and uncertainties from the mind of the people.

Of the State Bills received by the President for his assent during 1957 almost one-third related to land reforms. The Bills — 38 out of 116 — touched upon the abolition of estates, the resumption of jagirs, the tenure of tenants, the reclamation of land, the consolidation of holdings, etc.

Some of the other Bills related to the amendment of the Civil Procedure Code.

The President's consent is required for the Bills touching upon the compulsory acquisition of property and estates.

Bicycles

What a little capital and a little more initiative can do is shown by the spectacular success achieved by many a small scale industry. One such is the bicycle industry in our country. The production in the small scale sector, which started only towards the end of March 1956, was about 109,000 in 1957 as against about 22,000 in 1956. There are 76 units in the small scale sector. Of these 22 are in the Punjab, 14 in Delhi, 10 in West Bengal, 9 in Uttar Pradesh, eight in Bombay, four in Madhya Pradesh and two in Madras. Five units in Rajasthan, two in Mysore and one each in Andhra and Orissa are to go into production in the near future.

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There are 20 large scale bicycle factories in the country which produced about 7.91 lakh bicycles in 1957 as against about 6.64 lakh in 1956 and 4.91 lakh bicycles in 1955.

India has already begun to export bicycles to the neighbouring countries.

Pensioners

The latest "trade union" to come into being is the All-India Pensioners' Association formed in Delhi towards the middle of September. The main aim of the association is to safeguard the interests of Government pensioners both of the Central as well as State Governments.

After the formation of the Association a delegation waited on the Union Home Minister to place before him some of their pressing needs. From the composition of this delegation it is clear that the Association is patronised by even the highest paid pensioners. The leader of the delegation was a former Judge of the Allahabad High Court.

Most pensioners are in a rather unfortunate situation. While the prices of all commodities are steadily rising the pension remains static. The Association has demanded that all those who receive less than Rs. 300 per month should be paid dearness allowance. The Association also has demanded free medical service to all Government pensioners and exemption from income-tax.

Government have already met partially the demand for enhancement of the pension. All those Government pensioners who receive per month Rs. 50 or below receive from 1st April, 1958 an additional Rs. 10 and those whose pension ranges between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100 receive an additional Rs. 12.50.

The Pensioners have requested the Pay Commission to revise scales of pension. But it is doubtful whether the Commission would consider these representations as being within the terms of reference.

One of the most acute problems of pensioners, one which causes much unnecessary suffering, is the long delays in settling pension

claims. There are cases on record of persons who have retired three and four years ago whose claims have not yet been attended to in spite of repeated representations. This state of affairs is not confined merely to the Central Government but to most States also. In 1954 in Rajasthan alone there were something like 3,000 cases awaiting settlement. Of this number nearly 75 per cent of the pensioners were to draw the small sum of Rs. 25 per month.

The total number of outstanding pension cases in the Government of India at the end of September, 1957 was 1,069. The problem was more serious on the Defence side. There were 9,000 cases before the Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions) at the end of November 1957; and of these 8,500 related to Defence personnel and the balance to the civilians in the Defence employ.

The main reason for these undue delays is a failure to observe rules laid down for the settlement of cases. According to the procedure laid down all relevant papers of persons due to retire are to be sent to the Accountant General a year before the date of retirement. Between 50 and 65 per cent of pension claims in the last quarter of 1957 were sent to the Accountant General after the retirement of the employees concerned. Even in these cases the papers were not properly drawn up causing further delays.

Many a pensioner, especially in the lower categories, has been put to untold suffering for lack of an appreciation of the difficulties of these retired elderly people. Recently the matter was raised in Parliament again and the Government have promised to expedite matters. (The HINDU).

Divorce

The total number of divorces granted by courts in the Madras State in 1957 was 178. Besides this there was a unknown number of divorces effected without the intervention of courts.

It is interesting to note that out of the 178 divorces granted 117 were for adultery. The other causes were as follows: desertion 24; cruelty 7; incurable diseases 6; impotens 5; virulent leprosy 3; insanity 3; bigamy 3; renunciation of worldly life 2; restitution of conjugal rights 2; living with first wife 2; second marriage 2; conversion to another religion 1; fraud and misrepresentation 1.

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According to the laws under which the divorces were granted the following information is available: Hindu Marriage Act, 155; Indian Divorce Act, 20; Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1; Special Marriage Act, 1; and Prevention of Bigamy Act, 1.

Food

In spite of the late arrival of the South-West Monsoon this year rainfall has been good all over the country as a result of which the prospects of a bumper crop are very bright. The monsoon crop being the main food crop, the acute food shortage problem which has been causing much anxiety in several States will be considerably eased. Thanks also to the visit of the Union Finance Minister to the U. S. and Canada large supplies of food grains will be coming from these countries. Both the Centre as well as the States have realised that they must pay greater attention to food production if the various other plans for the raising of the standard of living are to succeed. Heavy industries cannot thrive on empty stomachs.

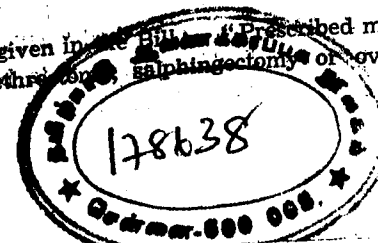
Sterilisation

A private member of the Lok Sabha has proposed a Bill which, if passed, will make our country ultra modern. The grandiose preamble to the Bill reads: "Whereas it is expedient in the interests of health and well-being of society and the financial resources of the State, to prevent certain types of people suffering from highly undesirable physical and mental conditions, from procreating human beings like unto themselves: Be it enacted by Parliament in the ninth year of the Republic of India as follows:....."

All that reminds us of what happened in a certain country in the late thirties. In that country however there was no parliament to safeguard the interests of the citizen but all was left to the sweet will of the ruler. We have no hesitation in stating that this Bill be rejected by our Parliament.

The proposed act is to be called the Sterilisation of the Unfit Act and is to apply to the whole of India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Some definitions given in the Bill: "Prescribed method" shall mean vasectomy, urethrectomy, salpingectomy or ovariectomy, or such other method.



"Sterilisation" shall include such medical or surgical treatment that would effectively prevent any person, male or female, from giving birth to a child.

"Unfit" shall mean any person, male or female, who suffers from such type of leprosy or syphilis, insanity or imbecility congenital or otherwise, that he or she is likely to give birth to children like himself or herself unless sterilised.

The main provisions of the proposed law are as follows :

1. The State Government is to set up a board for each district consisting of the district medical officer as chairman and four other registered medical practitioners, of whom two shall be official and two shall be non-official.

2. Whenever information is given to the chairman of the board that any person is unfit the board procures the presence of that person and examination.

3. The Chairman informs a magistrate who then issues summons to the unfit person to appear before the court and the court, by an order, binds him over to appear before the board.

4. Once the court has ordered a person to appear before a board he must do so. If he fails the chairman of the board will inform the Superintendent of police who will order the arrest of the person and produce him before the board.

5. When the person appears or is produced before the board the board examines him and finds out whether he is unfit or not. If the majority verdict is that he is unfit then he is to be given a written declaration to say that he is unfit. If the majority hold that he is not unfit he is to be discharged.

6. Once a person is declared unfit the board will proceed to sterilise him by the prescribed method "without dismembering any of his limbs or organs." The person is to be sterilised within 21 days from the date of the declaration.

The person who has been bound over by a magistrate as well as the one declared unfit has a right of appeal, within fifteen days.

Any person who gives false information maliciously is liable to pay a fine of Rs. 500.

The sponsor of the Bill states in the Statement and Objects of the Bill that it is a social tragedy to allow lepers, syphilitics, the insane, the congenital idiots and the like to bring forth children. He goes on to say that the lives of such people are miserable and that therefore they should not be allowed, in the better and larger interests of society so multiply themselves. "A positive action to prevent misery and to improve the general health of the nation is called for. A perceptible increase in these types of people, calls for a legal provision to control and avoid it." A noble motive indeed.

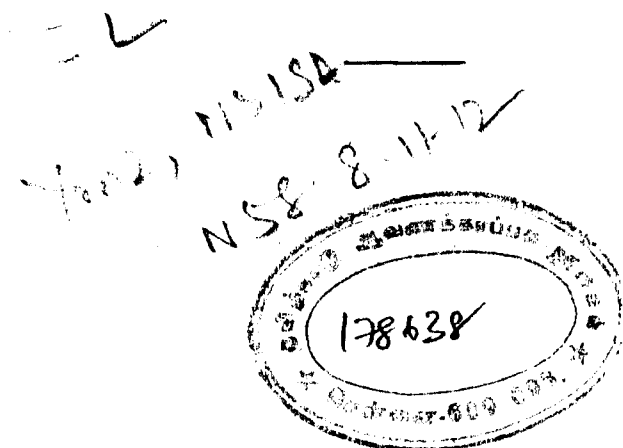
We may be permitted to make a few comments on this remarkable Bill. It is all good to say that children are born who are defective physically or mentally or both. But it is yet to be proved that children born of lepers, the insane or the mentally defective are necessarily defective. It is a fact that children of lepers are not born with leprosy but they contract it later through physical contact with the diseased parents.

Secondly, whether a person is defective or not he or she is a human person with certain inalienable human rights which no power or earth can touch except when such person misuses them. One such right is the right to physical integrity. The State clearly trespasses on forbidden territory when it lays claims to deprive a human person of his natural faculties and powers.

Some of the provisions of the Bill are highly objectionable. Thus the sections of the Act which empower the court to issue summons, bind over a person and give the board the right to sterilise a person which it has declared unfit are highly dangerous to say the least. It is all very well to give the right of appeal. But the fundamental question is what right has the state to proceed against a person who is a victim of an ailment which is afflicting him or her. Instead of alleviating misery it will add immensely

to their sufferings. Surely human ingenuity can and ought to find other means to come to the relief of such unfortunate brothers and sisters and not treat them as if they are a curse on humanity. If this Bill becomes law it will be a sad day for thousands of men and women who have fallen victims to painful maladies. We are certain Parliament will not permit such a tragedy. The sponsor of the Bill, who, we are sure, has proposed the bill with sincere good will, may, we pray, see the evil consequences of such a piece of legislation and withdraw it himself.

F. C. Rodrigues



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