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**A VISION
of
FUTURE INDIA**

By
K. G. MASHRUWALA

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**NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD**

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K. G. MASHRUWALA



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HIS VISION OF FUTURE INDIA

In the course of the tributes that were paid to the memory of the late Shri Mashruwala mention was often made to the well-known fact that he made Herculean efforts for helping the Bhoodan Yajna Movement as conceived and sponsored by Vinobaji. He also discussed in the columns of the *Harijan*, and in correspondence, its implications in respect of the Planning as contemplated by the Government of India for achieving the economic freedom for the masses of India and set forth his views on the subject unhesitatingly with a view to mould and guide public opinion and to canalize criticism or opposition to the Government Plan on healthy non-party lines.

Members of the public, those of the Commission charged with the task of drawing up a first Five Year Plan for the country among them, discussed its various implications with him as the Plan filtered to the public through various official and non-official sources. Shri Mashruwala was perhaps the foremost among constructive workers who participated in the discussions most dispassionately and yet went to the utmost lengths to agree, wherever he could, with the sponsors.

He offered his criticism on the Plan with his usual balance and laid his unerring finger on its shortcomings, indicating as to where and how the Plan differed in its very basic conceptions and approach from those of Sarvodaya principles and social order as visualized by Gandhiji or Vinobaji.

With the progress of the work of the official Planning Commission and its allied agencies and movements in the country such as Community Projects etc., during the closing period of his life, Shri Mashruwala wrote oftener on these subjects, and his now famous correspondence with Shri R. K. Patil, a member of the Planning Commission, and other writings on the subject, have a definite bearing on the various aspects of the Plan as now officially set forth before the Indian public.

While discussion on the published part of the Plan and its implementation are in progress all over the country, nothing could have been more appropriate on the part of the publishers than to have offered to the reading public some of the more important of Shri Mashruwala's writings on the subject in a book form and help all serious-minded persons in the country in assessing more or less correctly the difference in the Gandhian outlook and approach as distinct from the official one in their efforts today to achieve the economic millennium for the country.

Bardoli Ashram, 3-1-'53

SWAMI ANAND

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**A VISION
of
FUTURE INDIA**

A VISION OF FUTURE INDIA

Bajajwadi, Wardha,
2-9-'52

My dear Dada Sahab,

I am sorry for having been so late in replying to your letter of the 5th ultimo. If my health and time had permitted I wanted to reply during some time last week. But I simply could not. In the meanwhile I tried to study the views of Shri Jugatram Dave, whose scheme you have mentioned in your letter. I also shared your letter with Shri Narhari Parikh and Vinobaji to ascertain how exactly they thought in this matter.

Now to come to the subject :

I. Difficulties Facing Decentralization

1. Let me first of all admit the great difficulty which faces us, the advocates of decentralization. Theoretically, we draw the picture of a political and economic order consisting of independent village republics federating themselves into higher and higher unions, until we reach a federation embracing the whole country, and thence, in course of time, the whole world — each higher union enjoying only such powers as its units agree to confer upon it. In that case the highest union would have the minimum of functions. This would be possible only if we had to commence our life after a complete chaos, with no Central, Provincial and other authorities at all in existence. But what we actually have is that we have

in existence a fully empowered Central State, and partially but well-empowered Provincial States, and lower organizations can exercise only such powers and perform such functions as might be assigned to them by the Provincial States, with the sanction of the Central State. Hence, it is possible now for the smallest units to come into their own, (if violence and ultra-radical methods are to be avoided), only by inducing or bringing pressure upon the Central and Provincial authorities to divest themselves of as many of their powers as possible and restore them to the smallest practicable units.

2. But the process that has been going on (no doubt for historical causes) is the reverse. According to the ideal of the 'Welfare State', the State is increasingly made responsible for every item of an individual's needs — not only from birth to death — from conception to cremation. If we are to assume that the same historical process is destined to continue, in course of time, the U.N.O. will end in a World Government, in which even big countries like U. S., China, U.S.S.R., India etc. will function more or less like Class A States, and the sanction behind every one of them will be Force.

Centralized Welfare State

3. I must confess, I do not look upon this as an ideal to be aspired after. There might be some, who regard this to be an ideal worthy of man, and some who think that a process destined historically cannot be reversed by the efforts of dreamers of an opposite type; and that we must carry the present process to its logical end — namely, the institution of a very strong Central World Government controlled by the strongest group of its units. And this logical end will be

achieved, as this whole process has hitherto developed, as a result of wars and violent revolutions.

4. If we are convinced that this is not a worthy ideal, and we definitely want to avoid wars, violent revolutions, and dictatorships either of the Fascist (Individual Capitalist) or of the Bolshevik (State Capitalist) types — India must abandon *this* ideal of the Welfare State. We must feel convinced that we must resist this end of humanity and that, if we will, we can do it, whatever Historical Determinists might say to the contrary.

5. We do want every person from the moment of conception till death to enjoy the objectives of the Welfare State. But if this can be done only by making him from birth to death something like an A, B, or C class prisoner of the State, under the outward semblance of democracy (and U.S.S.R. also regards itself to be a democracy of its own type), it is much better to live, as we have lived from the birth of humanity till now, in some sort of hard struggle for existence than be just comfortable, well-kept animals by a small powerful group of our own species.

6. If this is agreed, we must voluntarily and in a planned manner commence to vest the smallest units with progressively increasing autonomous powers. I am aware that the small units are at present too weak and backward to know their own minds, and the how of it. But that does not mean that the Central authorities should plan for them and impose the plans upon them and ask them to execute them or create organizations for executing them. The authorities in the higher ladders should try to understand the inner yearnings of the smaller ones and if on account of their ignorance, short-sightedness and narrow-

mindedness, there are any shortcomings from the point of view of the safety of the State, justice, equity, good conscience, welfare of the last man in the small unit, wellbeing of the nation as a whole etc., we should correct their ideas by advice, persuasion etc. If the Centre finds them obdurate and absolutely resistant to good ideas and broad-mindedness on a matter of an important moral principle, (for instance, communal and caste equality), it may in the last resort, refuse to co-operate with the small unit and leave it entirely to shift for itself until it feels that it itself is the sufferer, and that the insistence on a matter of principle was in its own benefit. But as a general rule, it should patiently guide them to the right goal.

Picture of Decentralized Society

7. So our first task should be to prepare each small unit to undertake the responsibility of being self-supporting, self-reliant, in as many matters as possible, politically as well as economically. Let it be proclaimed, for instance, that at the end of five years—say, from 1st April 1958—India will be divided into suitable firkas, each firka consisting of a townlet with villages within a radius of 5 to 10 miles of it; and it will be vested with the maximum of authority within its sphere; the authority will include its policing, defence against dacoits, judiciary, education, taxation etc.; it will frame its own Constitution, of which a few general forms suitable for different regions may be indicated. The firka must be self-sufficient and self-reliant in normal times in, at least, food, clothing, oil-seeds, housing, cattle, manure, building of roads etc. It should be liable to give only a stated part of its revenue for the maintenance of the higher units above it.

It should be entitled to develop as many industries from the raw materials available to it as it can, and must see to it that there is no unemployment in the area.

8. The firka would be divided into village units, but on account of natural causes, the self-sufficiency of each village may not be quite complete. So I would make the firka to be the smallest republic. But the village units there have to be with their Village Panchayats. A Village Panchayat must consist of its entire adult population, and not of its nominated or elected representatives. It must evolve its own way of ascertaining the general sense of the village and the way of executing it. In case of sharp division on matter of an intricate or controversial nature, the way of deciding may not be counting of votes, but reference to a trusted authority or individual, or even toss of the coin. The firka government will necessarily consist of representatives nominated or elected by the Panchayat. So ultimately the firka will be smallest full government vested with residuary powers. Each higher union will exercise only such powers as are assigned to it from below. The residuary powers will remain with the firka. Even the higher governments must not run on party government methods. Where there are radical and irreconcilable divisions, the opinion of the units should be obtained.

9. I feel that the party system government and the bureaucracy instituted on the British model does not suit the Indian way of life. It has killed talent, initiative and sensitiveness for ethical values and justice of the ordinary man ; and legislators and even ministers have often become a useless burden on the public. India will fare better by a government made

of representatives of the whole house, irrespective of party labels, party labels being not recognized officially. There should be no *whips*, or ordered voting, and no canvassing. A government will not resign because any of its propositions is disapproved, but will execute it in such form as the house decides. I understand that it is so in Switzerland. It will suit India better than the British model, which we have taken for granted at present.

10. This is my general picture of future India, and, on the same lines, of the World Federation. I have referred to it here, because of its bearing on the land problem and the production of food.

II. Migration to Other Continents

11. I feel that ultimately Indian—or for the matter of that Far East Asian—land and food problem cannot be solved in their own countries alone. Our people must get an opportunity of migrating to other continents—America, Africa, Australia etc. Africa and New Zealand, Fiji etc. made (as they feel now) ‘mistake’ of inviting Indians to settle there. Now they want to retrace those steps. Australia became forewarned and refused immigration of coloured people altogether. America is also afraid of it. But it also realizes that the tide cannot be resisted for all time to come and desires to ward off the ‘evil’ as long as possible. Hence, its policy of keeping Asians into Asia by every method possible. “Increase your food, decrease your population, or get extirpated by long drawn out civil wars, but keep within your bounds; and we shall help you with funds for any of these purposes.” This seems to be the guiding star of its policy. It also realizes that a continuous flow of poverty-stricken Asians into America must create

in the long run a struggle for power there, and lead to some form of socialism, and curtailment of the standard of their own living. Russia is, to them, the arch-devil of the Socialist cult, and hence its dread of it.

III. Mechanization Bound to Increase Unemployment

12. Our agriculture and industries must be adjusted against this background. Whether, in either of them, large-scale and mechanized methods will always lead to increased production cannot be said with certainty. It will depend upon various factors. But what can be said with certainty about them is that they progressively reduce the number of human and animal workers formerly engaged in productive avocations, and in spite of all our efforts to create new industries and avenues of employment, the number of unemployed increases more rapidly than that of new industries, trades etc. It must be realized that new avenues of employment if not of a productive type, but of service type, however useful, are in the long run parasitic in their nature. Even if mechanized and large-scale methods succeed in producing large quantities of consumable articles, the simultaneous increase of large-scale unemployment results in progressively diminishing the purchasing power of the people. European countries thrived because they could capture so many markets of the world; they could also colonize elsewhere, and found empires. If the European countries, with their dense populations had found no outlet for their people and goods elsewhere, they would have come to graver ruin than China or India by their industrialization. Even then their cut-throat competition and rivalry was unable to solve the

problem of unemployment, with the result that the greater the industrialization, the more intense and constant have been their wars until they have led to World Wars and genocides. Their prosperity has been comparatively short-lived.

13. We must take a lesson from their experience.

IV. No Private Property

14. The Bhoodan Movement is based on the principle of "All land belongs to God". The ownership of a particular man on a particular plot is, ultimately, a limited ownership only. It is for the purpose of making him take utmost interest in his work, and put forth all his energy and talents in developing his holding. He works with love, but not necessarily for his own needs only. "All land belongs to God" is only a limited application of the principle ईशानास्वमिदं सर्वम् (All this is pervaded by God). That is not only land, but all that exists in the world and is produced by man, does not belong to him but to God, and he is entitled to take only his due share of it. The second half of the *mantra* तेन हृदयेन भुञ्जतेः (Enjoy it by renunciation) follows the first as a matter of course. So ultimately private property of every type must come to an end, and so also rents, interest, profits etc. The Bhoodan Movement seeks to bring this about not by force — either of the State, or indirect coercive methods, or violent revolution — but by converting the largest possible number of propertied as well as unpropertied people to this creed. As it is, a majority of the people, even if they belong to the class of absolute have-nots are capitalists in embryo, and think in terms of private ownership, profits, wages etc.

V. The Samashraya System Explained

15. My articles on the Samashraya system referred to in para 3 of your letter must be read in the light of this intermediate stage.

16. When I wrote those articles, the idea of Bhoodan Movement was not born, and so I spoke in terms of wages and dividends in accordance with their present ownership rights. But as I contemplated, that no worker on land — indeed, no family in a village, should be absolutely landless, I suggested the assignment of a minimum plot of land to every one for “hobby cultivation”. The better term has been suggested by a friend: viz. “subsistence holding”. It may not be full economic holding in your sense, because the cultivator will need other sources of income also. I also believe that agriculture or cattle-breeding alone should not be the only vocation of any one. Even where it provides an all-year-round employment, some industrial occupation (not necessarily for commercial purposes) must be associated with agriculture, and every artisan or industrial worker should be associated with agricultural occupation. The “subsistence holding” was thus meant for both village-artisans and agriculturists proper.

17. You are right (para 4) in saying that payment of dividends being the last item of distribution, would be only nominal (if at all) at least for some years. Indeed, it would disappear altogether when the principle of सबै भूमि गोपालकी (All land belongs to God) is brought into practice. At present, land reform legislation contemplates ceiling and bottom holdings, and also sub-tenancies. Hence I had to allow the idea of dividends. Even with improvement of agriculture, land will have to be allotted to new generations, and

a part of it will have to come from the ceiling owners. So this item of paying dividends is only a residuary and intermediate possibility. Ultimately it must entirely disappear, and in no case should it have the shape of either Debentures, or Preference Shares. Mangroth — the village which has donated all its lands to Vinoba — may well become the model of land distribution.

18. The word 'wages' in my articles really has a meaning wider than the usual one. It is more akin to the monthly withdrawals of a partner of a firm against his share than to a wage. In a partnership consisting of sleeping partners, working partners with different investments of capital, and working partners without contribution of capital, the last two draw regular monthly allowances at an agreed rate, the sleeping partner gets interest plus a share in the profits. He generally does not draw in the middle of a year. At the end of the year all share the profits, if any, after reckoning the interest on capital. In case of loss, usually the working partner without investment does not bear it. He is a sharer in profits only. The monthly allowances allowed to be drawn by the working partners, I have called here wages. Since they will be *full*, that is sufficient to pay their maintenance bills, it does not matter if there is nothing left to divide. The actual workers will not have starved in any case. And if sleeping partners cannot get anything, they must suffer it, or become active workers, or part with their interests.

I shall now deal with some of the paragraphs of your letter in serial order.

19. Para 5 — Whether it is a Co-operative Society or a Panchayat, I do not contemplate its management through a Board of Directors. There might be an Executive Committee, but it will not issue directions to be acted upon by the members or raiyats, but it will be its duty to carry out and see to the implementation of the wishes of the general body of the Society or the Village Panchayat. The authority must vest in the general voters, and not in a few people. The Managing Body may advise, but it will not decide.

20. (a) Para 6 — No amount of increased production and opening of avenues for employment in new industries will solve the problems of unemployment and poverty, if our economic order is based on rents, interest, profits, transportation charges etc. Ultimately all wages form part of the cost price, and the greater the wages the higher the cost price, and so too the higher becomes the sale-price. The result is that the wages can never be more than the selling price of essential articles, and the demand for rise in salaries can never end. If, to add to this, you carry on mechanization to a perfection, the number of unemployed must always increase. The only way out is liquidation of commercialism i.e. abolition of rents, interest and profits.

(b) Secondly, large-scale industrialization and militarization are twins. Under commercialism one needs the other. Hence, I do not see the rosy picture which you have raised in this paragraph. With every improvement in technical science, the military expenditure will increase disproportionately.

21. Para 7 — I hope your attention has been drawn to the criticism of Vinoba against cultivation on simple wage system. Apart from the cultural drawbacks of

wage system, the impossibility of assuring a really full wage in a commercialized system, is another objection. Whether it is State Capitalism or Private Capitalism, the larger the enterprise, the greater is the number of administrative staff—who takes no part in production and is better paid than the actual workers. So the cost price always rises, and the wages are never enough to purchase all the needs of the labourer. The distance between the least paid and the best paid continually increases. It has become so even in Russia. So even if capitalism is allowed, the salvation of a thickly populated country like ours lies in strictly limiting the scope of large-scale agriculture and industrialization. Where they are indispensable, they should be run on utmost economical lines, i.e. on no profits no loss basis, with moderate salaries, without commissions, director's fees etc.

22. In the field of agriculture large-scale cultivation should be undertaken to bring new areas under cultivation only, and with a view to ultimately make them available for landless peasants working on them. I also have in mind some areas, where machinery might be employed with very great advantage. For instance, in the hilly tracts of the Himalayas and other mountainous regions to level down rocks and prepare larger terraces than those made by men. There, mechanized methods might well give greater employment to men than now, and it may be necessary to divert labour from the plains to the top. Land development and irrigation projects with the help of heavy machinery has, I believe, a great field in mountainous regions.

23. Unless you are able to get a "New India" or a "New Asia" on some other continent, large-scale

cultivation will make the unemployment problem intenser day by day. On our own land, we may manage to live decently only on a moderate standard of living and through decentralized methods of production and distribution, moderately mechanized methods, and by associating agriculture and industries together.

24. (1) Para 8 (i) (a). The difference lies in the methods. The present-day co-operatives are more or less joint-stock companies on a small scale. The Panchayats also, as contemplated by you, are like a board of directors elected by the members by counting of votes, and more often than not, on political party or communal lines. Even thereafter they will decide matters by majority among themselves, and not always unanimously. And after their election, they will be playing the role of masters, and issue injunctions, which their electors must obey. Both in politics and economics, we are building up a democracy of electing masters, instead of "ministers" (i.e. who render service), with an irrevocable authority for a number of years. Experience shows that this has led to discord and bitter feelings in all institutions, including even our Sanghs. The evil of party groups (पक्षवाजी) based not even on principles but, on personal or family and clan rivalries, has been a long-standing curse of our villages. It is party-politics on a miniature scale, but with all the cunning and ingenuity of large-scale intrigues. We must build institutions on lines, which will restore amity and concord and not create fanatics of political and ideological dogmas. We should attempt to discover methods of correcting this evil.

24. (2) (b) The Planning Commission's proposal is that with 2/3rds majority, the remaining 1/3rd may

be coerced to join the Village Management scheme. I would say thus : You might disenfranchise all those, who are well-known bad characters. But for the remaining, effort should be made to take decisions unanimously, or at least *nem con.* If a counting has to be made, there should be a majority of at least, say, 80 to 85 per cent, and if there is a matter of principle or conscience involved on the issue, no one should be coerced to accept an arrangement not acceptable to him on that ground. He may be allowed to go his way.

24. (3) (ii) (a) Consolidation of Holdings, i.e. trying to give such owners as have their fields scattered hither-thither in a compact area by effecting exchanges with neighbours — is one way. There is no objection to resort to this method, wherever it is possible and necessary.

24. (4) (b) Creating natural co-operation among neighbouring holders for purposes of agricultural operations. Such co-operative work does not depend upon regular co-operative societies.

24. (5) (c) The term "co-operation" loses its meaning when "co-operatives" become "competitives" and just a firm of retail shopkeepers, entering into rivalry with other similar co-operatives or private shops. In the issue of licences, permits, supplies, grants, loans etc., Government follows a general policy of preferring co-operatives to private organizations. Since Government itself is run on party lines, this has led to rival co-operatives, one favoured by the party in power and the other trying to checkmate it. To remedy this one way would be to insist on having only one multi-purpose co-operative in one unit, to eliminate all private dealers in distribution, and to make membership in the co-operative society

compulsory for every householder. Both Vinoba and Naraharibhai have disapproved of this, and for good reasons. "Co-operative" loses its meaning when it becomes compulsory and becomes incapable of giving sufficient opportunity for original talent to shine. Hence my feeling is :

24. (6) (i) That co-operatives, whether in selling, purchasing, or distributing, should be restricted to carry on their operations for and among their members only. They must not become commission agents or middlemen between non-members on the one hand and Government or the world on the other. Their purchases must be for the needs of their members only, and not for sale to the public. Their sales to the public must be confined to their own productions. Permits, grants, loans and other helps should be given to them for proper distribution among their members only. The natural advantages arising out of joint purchases etc. should be sufficient incentive to co-operation. As long as the urge is not from within, let the people choose their own way of life, and Government treat co-operative societies and individual applicants or private dealers on the same footing, except that the latter two should have placed on them a ceiling limit.

24. (7) (ii) Barring very small holdings — holdings smaller than even the size indicated by Vinoba — all holdings do generally require some outside help at irregular intervals during the monsoons in various field operations. The members of the family by themselves are not able to cope with all the work of sowing, weeding, reaping etc. which has to be done at the right moment without loss of time. This raises the issue of outside labourers. Where are these labourers

to come from if every peasant labourer is to be a self-cultivator, it is asked. Subject to correction as regards figures of acreage, my idea is this :

(a) Holders of between say 3 to 15 acres, should perform (and I believe they do) these operations by mutual co-operation. They would fix their own terms and turns.

(b) I regard holdings of less than 3 acres as coming under the category of " subsistence holdings ". I have said that every one, even artisans of full time occupations, and seasonal occupations, should have such holdings. They will be even less than one acre, but may be upto three, or if the family is large, or the soil inferior, even larger.

In addition to work on their own plot, they would also find sufficient time and need to work for wages on larger holdings — i.e. those above 15 acres. If the owners of large holdings will lend their ploughs, bullocks etc. to carry out some of the major operations of their small holdings, they would get even more leisure, and would be better workers still. It will be co-operative *cum* wages. If their small holdings are in the neighbourhood of and, better still, adjoining the larger holdings, it will be as good an arrangement as that secured by consolidated holdings, and more convenient. The Adivasis of the Surat District had a tradition of choosing a landless son-in-law for their daughter. The son-in-law was given a small plot of land for his own cultivation, and he also worked as a labourer on his father-in-law's fields. This was a good way of sharing one's land with the landless. This principle should be extended and improved upon.

(c) The registered farms and village management schemes create a class of absentee landlords,

technicians, managers, supervisors, foremen, and a staff of workers. They perform no physical labour themselves, and still their emoluments are bound to be greater than those who do physical labour. In fact, these are even worse and more parasitic class of middlemen, than those who do the work of retail distributors, brokers and commission agents, — given equal honesty in the dealings of both classes. The latter class has to work harder and boss less than the former as a whole, and their way of living is not quite so different from the rest of the community, as that of the administrator class. In the society envisaged by us, there should be none, who is exempt from physical labour, — except for physical reasons i.e. ill-health, want of limbs, old age, infancy etc. Let it be understood very definitely that it is impossible even by magic to banish unemployment and ensure welfare to every one, in a system which presupposes the existence of rents, interest, profits, large-scale transports, administrative departments, modern military defence, and other non-physical workers. If this is further accompanied with ever-increasing mechanization of work, in a country with abundant man-power and comparatively a small market outside, instead of going towards welfare we shall proceed towards concentration camps and large-scale man-slaughter as in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

24. (8) (iii) Hence, we must propagate and work for uniting the whole village into, if possible, one joint family. If not one, let it be a few. Say, units of about 50 to 100 families each. They must put all their lands and all their manufactures, and gains from every source into a common till. Whether some individuals thereof work as artisans, labourers, managers, or even

are engaged in trades and services outside the village, they should bring all their gains in the common till, and all should share them as in a coparcenary. You know that a joint Hindu family unit is joint in food, worship and estate. Next to it is one separate in food, but joint in worship and estate, and the last is that of being joint in estate only. When it separates in food, each draws from the common till what it needs for maintenance. For convenience, its amount may be fixed according to a budget. The wage or salary in the *samashraya* system proposed by me is just this withdrawal fixed for convenience. It may be in kind, cash or both according to convenience. The distinction between joint property and self-acquired property should be abolished. But this will be regarded, at present, as a reactionary idea. We have been for more than two generations working for the dissolution of the joint family ; and yet the essence of community life and the goal of community projects should be this. If you call this Communism, it is Sarvodaya Communism.

25. Para 9 (pp. 4 to 6 of your letter). I think it is unnecessary to say anything specifically on these paragraphs, after the foregoing. If it is conceded that it is possible to have intensive cultivation through both large-scale and small-scale agriculture and equal results can be obtained and employment can be provided in both, why should we complicate matters and also disturb the psychological satisfaction of the small-scale holder ? Let us work upward through what obtains at present for bringing about greater production and more equal distribution. The problem of distribution should not be separated from that of production. Regarding compensation I

endorse Vinoba's views. The Bombay Tenancy Amendment Bill as recently framed was a good measure in regard to the fixing of price and payment by easy instalments. I do not know in what form the Bill has been ultimately passed.

26. Para 10. I do not think I need go into a detailed discussion about the pros and cons of land distribution. We have to face the realities of the wave, which has pervaded the whole world, and which is, fundamentally, morally justified. People cannot accept the present inequality of possession. Even if, as those who argue against distribution urge, it might lead to fall in production and to further hardships, let the risk be taken. Necessity is the mother of invention. I have indicated in para 22 the field for employing methods of large-scale production with up-to-date machinery. Let the Government open up uncultivated reclaimable lands and create new tablelands in mountainous regions, and work upon them with up-to-date methods for some years, and then distribute them to the persons who have worked under them on suitable terms. But private ownerships over large areas, are not to be tolerated by an awakened peasantry. So proceed towards their liquidation quickly, else it might be too late. If it is done early, the landlords might save something. If it is late, they might lose all. Please do not take this as a politician's warning, but as a dispassionate friend's reading of the situation. Academic discussions about how much land a man needs will not help us much.

27. Para 11. It does not matter much if the Village Co-operative Management does not materialize for 15 or 20 years yet. But it will be possible to

make beginnings now if there are good workers, as in Mangroth. It can also be initiated in new colonies.

28. Para 12-13. Yes. I believe I have sufficiently discussed this in the above paragraph.

29. Para 14. Shri Narharibhai has mentioned a few industrial occupations which have to go with agriculture. They are dairy, spinning and weaving, soap-making, gur-making, *ghani* etc. Some of these would have to be organized on a co-operative basis. But when I speak of industries, I consider them in two aspects : One, as providing them with additional source of income in addition to self-sufficiency ; and two, as saving their out-of-pocket expenses ; spinning and weaving upto a certain stage ; coir-making, paddy-husking, grinding, dairy, are primarily for self-sufficiency, i.e. for saving their expenditure ; but they can also give them supplementary income. But cloth-weaving, bread, ghee, biscuits, *poha*, apiary, fruit, poultry, gur, sugar, unrefined oil etc. are agricultural industries catering for city people also. I think there can be many others. If it is settled that cities should receive all agricultural produce in a form ready for direct consumption to the largest extent possible, all such industries should be organized in villages themselves, or in the firka.

30. Agriculture is not likely to be an all-year round full-time occupation for at least 25 years next, for the simple reason that a great part of it will have to depend upon rain water only. Where you have sufficient irrigation, the necessity of providing rest to the soil will require every land to be kept fallow for a period by turns. And when I say agriculture should be married to handicrafts and village industries, I mean that every agriculturist should take some part

in industrial work, and every artisan should take some part in agriculture ; and let me go further and say that every clerical worker must take some part in both.

31. One more suggestion before I end this long epistle. In my opinion if we abandon all other parts of community projects and concentrate on creating every type of irrigating facility from small or deep wells and culverts to biggest canals — for five or ten years, in every part of the country, and leave the rest to the people, we shall have done a great work.

32. I wish I had compressed this in a smaller space, but if I were to recast it now it will need re-writing the whole. So please excuse me for its length and the inordinate delay.

Harijan, 18-10-'52

Yours sincerely,
K. G. MASHRUWALA

APPENDIX I

Shri Patil's Letter to Shri Mashruwala

Planning Commission,
Govt. of India, New Delhi,
Dated, 5-6 August, 1952

My dear Kishorlalbhai,

I am writing this letter primarily to ascertain from you, your views about the nature of our future rural society, and particularly its organization with reference to the cultivation of village land. If there are any references to your articles in the *Harijan*, and particularly those in which you have dealt with my apprehensions about Vinobaji's Bhoodan Yajna, they may please be treated as incidental and necessary to such ascertainment, and not as a reply to your articles. I want to know your views particularly as we have reached a stage in our thinking of the problem, where we see little light, and I thought perhaps in the process of writing this letter and obtaining your views, some points may get cleared.

2. In planning we have always to keep in view the final picture of society as one visualizes it, and plans for it. Of course many intermediate steps may be necessary to reach the final stage, and the short-term steps may be necessitated by urgent economic and political considerations. But in all such cases, one has to relate these steps to the final objective and be clear in one's mind how one proposes to reach it. Obviously short-term steps must not be in conflict with the long-term objectives.

3. Though you do not want to be dogmatic on the point, your view from the articles in the *Harijan* dated 16-9-'50, 17-2-'51 and 17-3-'51 appears to be against individual proprietary right in land. You envisage a system under which all village land will be regarded as one single unit, of which each present owner is a shareholder to the extent of the crop-value of his fields. A small plot should be assigned to each cultivating family for 'hobby cultivation'. The rest of the land is to be cultivated as village land. The cropping should be according to the needs of the village and the produce must cover (a) the full maintenance of the population for at least 15 months, (b) payment of wages in addition to food to wage-earners, (c) payment of dues to Government including levy, etc. You also envisage payment of dividends to shareholders after making allowances for public hygiene, sanitation, schools, roads, etc. This is in recognition of ownership right in land and these could be transferred, without involving any physical division of land.

4. It thus appears that you envisage a system in which ownership is recognized, and paid for, though being the last item, the payment would be only nominal at least for some years till agriculture is developed. You also envisage wage-earners who have no interest in the ownership of land, though of course they must be paid 'full' wages. That is, the existing owners and agricultural labourers should manage the land in the just interest of both, and you would not necessarily require that each person who works on the land must necessarily own it or have an ownership interest in the land of the village.

5. If a Co-operative or a Panchayat were to work this system, there will have to be an authority guiding the cultivation in the village, and all the cultivating workers would have to accept the guidance of this authority. Alternately the Co-operative or the Panchayat may divide the village land into small units and make over these units to individual families for cultivation, on their making available to the Panchayat, a certain payment, out of which all the dues in para 3 could be paid. But the agricultural workers in the first case and the family units in the other case will have to follow the general directions given by the Panchayat.

6. This is precisely the method under which the Co-operative Village Management will work in the beginning. In addition, it will be under an obligation to find work for people in the village who cannot be employed in cultivation, because there are already too many people on the land. That is, such people may engage in Khadi production or oil production, etc., and exchange their goods for food. After the ownership dividend is abolished, the cultivators would be the owners of land. And there would be only two classes, cultivators and artisans. As the economy develops, and other more paying avenues of employment can be found for the village people, there will be migration from the village and the pressure on the land is reduced, and the standard of the remaining people in the village slowly improves.

7. Till the village could have such a system of management, it was to have a Village Production Council whose functions are as given at pp. 88-89 of the Draft Outline. Your objection to all this is as follows :

“ Thus the Planning Commission prefers cultivation by paid labour directly under officers either of the village management, or the proprietors of registered farms, or co-operative farming societies to cultivation by agriculturists as free individuals. The principle that land must belong to the actual tiller is rejected.”

You then proceed to criticize and differentiate the Co-operative Societies as envisaged by the Commission from the Sarvodaya conception.

8. I have three questions to ask :

(i) Is the final conception of Co-operative Village Management, the same as your idea of village organization through a Co-operative or Panchayat ? If not, where lies the difference ?

(ii) What would be the stages in which you propose to reach this conception in our present circumstances ? The Commission had suggested registered farms and development of Co-operatives, but for the sake of argument, I will concede that they are open to some objections.

(iii) How would you visualize the functions and authority of the Village Panchayat and Co-operatives so that they would not be open to the objections that you have taken about Co-operatives or Joint Village Management ? Co-operatives must obviously function through officials and co-operation involves the loss of individual freedom in the interest of the group.

9. I might add that this conception of yours that the village lands should be managed jointly and no individual should be entitled to own any particular part of it is in conformity with modern and advanced economic ideas on the subject. Such a large unit of

management not only enables the village resources to be utilized in an optimum way, but it also facilitates the application of capital and modern scientific knowledge quickly to our agricultural conditions. This does not mean that even with such management our farming will not be intensive. There is really no organic connection between the size of the farm and the mode of cultivation, i.e. extensive or intensive. Larger units of cultivation do not necessarily mean that there would be employment for only a smaller number of people than in a system of small individual holdings. It might be possible to employ even more people in a large unit than if the same land were divided into small units. It is, of course, true that there is a very severe pressure on land today and that it will manifest itself in some way or other, however the cultivation of land is organized, but the real issue is which system will relieve that pressure in the shortest possible time. The pressure has to be relieved by creating more employment in agriculture, in industries organized on a cottage and small-scale basis, and in tertiary occupations. All this presupposes the creation of a larger surplus for investment in the economy, and it is comparatively very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve this when agriculture is organized on the basis of small, uneconomic farms.

Much of the confusion on this subject arises because the issues are discussed in very general terms of the economies of large-scale cultivation, and the scope for intensive small-scale cultivation without specifying the desirable size of the unit in either case or the conditions requisite to their success. There is no organic connection or relationship between the size of a farm and the character of cultivation whether

intensive or extensive. One can have intensive cultivation on a large farm, and small farms need not necessarily be intensively cultivated. Similarly, extensive cultivation beyond a point need not yield any extra economics, and this point may come fairly early in the process of extension if there is either a lack of the necessary managerial and technical skill or if there are very real obstacles to mechanization. It is, therefore, a question of deciding the optimum size of cultivation taking all factors into account, including the incentives of peasant farming, the necessity for introducing new techniques, the economies of large-scale, the limitations on mechanization, the scope for intensive cultivation based on availability of irrigation and manure, etc. This is a matter of judgment, but, on the whole, it would appear that under the conditions obtaining in India today, there is a case for enlarging rather than diminishing the size of the unit.

I believe these are also Vinoba's views as appears from his reference to a Gokul and your reference to it in your last article on my apprehensions.

9A. The next question is how do we reach this stage and what are the intervening stages? It is granted that there is a pressing necessity of creating a large amount of employment in the rural areas and the question has to be reviewed from this angle in the immediate future. It will also, I think, be considered that Co-operative Village Management is the quickest way of creating a large amount of rural employment. In fact, the scheme put forward by Shri Jugatram Dave proceeds on this basis. Therein, he has assumed payment of full compensation at market rates for the land. But it is only because we feel that there is no immediate prospect of establishing

a scheme of Co-operative Village Management that we must look to some other method or procedure.

10. The only other solution is a scheme of land distribution. I state for your information the supposed objections to a scheme of land distribution and how they can be met.

The main arguments against the policy of land distribution may be summarized as follows :

(a) It will increase the number of uneconomic holders and will be a step further away from our objective to have a larger unit of cultivation.

(b) It will lead to a fall in production and the marketable surplus.

(c) It will lead to a withdrawal of investment from agriculture.

(d) The administrative complications of land distribution would be so great that it will not be possible to undertake such a programme without detriment to other developmental activities and the immediate objective of achieving self-sufficiency in food.

(e) The land available for distribution will be so little that we may be able to satisfy the demand for land of only a very small section of the people. In this event the ceiling will have to be progressively reduced, which would affect a larger number of existing holders and thus ultimately create more instability.

Let us consider these objections in detail.

(a) The surplus land made available after the imposition of a ceiling need not necessarily be distributed in uneconomic units. It could be distributed in economic units to groups of persons who are in a position to cultivate it effectively. The experience of

land distribution in connection with Acharya Vinoba's Bhoodan Yajna in Hyderabad supports this conclusion. In undertaking such a scheme the land-man-ratio can be kept at such a level as will enable his family to obtain at least a bare living.

Besides, such a course need not take us away from our objective of having a larger unit of cultivation. Apart from the fact that land distribution programme need not increase the number of uneconomic units, the goodwill generated by this move could be canalized in inducing the beneficiaries to come together in small groups of producers' co-operatives, and increase their unit of cultivation, or, at least, have certain auxiliaries to more efficient production in common ownership. It might also become possible to organize co-operative societies on a village scale for all non-farm activities like credit, supplies, marketing, etc. Progress in these directions is in any case necessary, and land reform will help rather than hinder the process.

(b) The second objection is that such a course will lead to a fall in production and the marketable surplus. While the possibility of such a result happening cannot be discounted, it cannot be stated that the type of land distribution indicated above would necessarily lead to such a result. In fact, in so far as the surplus is taken from such cultivators as, because of their large holdings, are unable to pay personal attention to their lands, there is a possibility of increasing production by the distribution of their surplus land. Greater incentive for increasing production will be brought to bear on the cultivation of these lands. And such lands may form a large proportion of the surpluses taken over. Further to guard

against the fall in production and the marketable surplus, it could be provided that the new allottees of land should make to the Government (or the village body, as the case may be) their annual instalments of payment for the land allotment partly or wholly in the shape of grain. Such a levy will induce them to put their best efforts at cultivating the land and raising the output.

(c) It has been said that redistribution will lead to a withdrawal of investment from agriculture. But even today, conditions are so uncertain that there is hardly any fresh investment going into agriculture. The whole atmosphere is surcharged with apprehensions about the next step in the land sector. As long as the agitation for distribution continues (and over this we have no control), the tendency will be to reduce rather than increase the commitments on land as far as the larger holdings are concerned. Until the issue is settled in a way which suggests that there will be no further disturbance to property relations in this sector in the near future, we shall probably have the worst of both worlds. Some measure of contraction in working capital may perhaps be inevitable as a result of dispossessing the larger holders of land, but it will not be of the order that is sometimes suggested. Working capital is in the last analysis required mainly for employing labour, purchasing seeds and manures, etc. To a great extent the working capital now employed for hiring labour will be effectively replaced by the direct application of manpower under peasant proprietorship.

(d) The next objection taken is that the administrative complications of land distribution will be so great that it will not be possible to undertake such

a programme without detriment to other developmental activities. There is considerable force in this objection, but if a policy decision is called for on merits, it is better taken and implemented at an early stage even from the point of view of development. The real decision to be taken is the necessity for such a step.

(e) Lastly, it has been argued that the land available for distribution will be so little that we may be able to satisfy the demand for land of only a small section of the landless rural population and that, in consequence, the ceiling would have to be progressively reduced under pressure. This is indeed an important and valid objection. There would be no point in imposing a ceiling if the surplus land thus made available for distribution is negligible. If this leads to frequent downward adjustments of the ceiling, it would be a source of considerable instability and would in fact take away much of the economic and political value of land reform of this kind. The answer is that, in fixing the ceiling even in the first instance, care must be taken to see that it is neither so high as to yield only a small surplus for distribution nor so low as to affect middle peasants. This is a matter which can be judged only in relation to conditions in each area — as a rule, no land which yields an income of less than Rs 300/- per year should be allotted to any individual and the ceiling should be fixed at five to six times this amount — but the practicability of determining a ceiling which answers these requirements cannot itself be doubted. Broadly speaking, a policy of land distribution as visualized here will not affect more than 10 per cent of the

cultivated land and, therefore, 90 per cent of the land and its possessors will be unaffected.

11. And yet we must be quite clear that we are embarking on a scheme of land distribution because we cannot establish quickly and in a democratic way the scheme of Co-operative Village Management over a substantial area in the country ; and we cannot wait till this is achieved. But land distribution does not absolve us from our responsibility of establishing Co-operative Village Management for the whole village. Indeed as land distribution might touch 10 to 12 per cent of our total occupied area, we have to take steps to strengthen the Co-operative Movement over the whole rural sector till the whole village enters into C. V. M. How can we speed up this process ? Can you give any new ideas to achieve this ?

12. Do you agree that in the present circumstances land distribution is the next step ? Do you agree that it will have to be a sufficiently wide distribution, if the possibility of creating fresh pressures for land distribution in a few years is to be avoided ? The possibility of such pressures would lead to great instability and confusion in the rural areas. If you have land distribution once, it must be such as to obviate the necessity of having it again. For this purpose, it will have to be sufficiently liberal.

13. Do you think such a large-scale distribution could be carried out in the country in a peaceful manner ? Even then, it would not give land to all the landless, but to about half their present landless population ; the remaining will have to remain without land, but special steps will have to be taken to see that they have a living.

14. In the closing part of your article, you have said that 'agriculture will not stand alone, it will have to be married to handicrafts and village industries'. How do you visualize this marriage? Concretely, what industries can an agricultural family engage into? Off-hand we cannot think of anything else except grinding, paddy husking and spinning. And even these would be largely on the basis of self-sufficiency and not as providing subsidiary sources of income. Weaving, oil-pressing would be ordinarily whole-time occupations. Do you consider that it would be possible for an agricultural family to engage in agriculture and also engage in other industries besides those indicated above? If so, will not agriculture suffer? And if this is possible today, will it be so, when agriculture develops? I should have thought that agriculture will have to be an industry by itself yielding sufficient income for the maintenance of a family. In agriculture, I include dairying, poultry and bee-keeping. Other industries will have to be carried on in the village as independent professions by families who do not engage in agriculture except as labourers in the peak season.

An early reply is requested.

Harijan, 11-10-'52

Yours sincerely,
R. K. PATIL

APPENDIX II

Shri Patil's Apprehensions — I

Shri R. K. Patil is not reconciled with Vinoba's scheme of giving small plots of land to landless peasants. He has the following doubts :

(1) The area proposed to be gifted — generally five acres of dry land or one acre of wet land — is uneconomic — that is, too small to be advantageously cultivated. It is too small even for employing bullock power and other aids for the development of their land. It cannot find sufficient capital and cannot repay loans made on it. The owners will therefore again lapse into indebtedness and lose their lands to their creditors.

(2) As a consequence, the standard of cultivation will remain poor and undeveloped and production will diminish.

(3) More people than necessary will be occupied in agriculture, thus preventing diversification of employment in the rural areas. In the interest of economic prosperity, it is desirable that the number of people living on agriculture should, increasingly diminish, and that on cottage and small-scale industries should progressively increase.

Shri Patil is a member of the Planning Commission and is believed to have taken a leading part in drawing up the agricultural scheme of the Draft Five Year Plan. That Plan has recommended a particular land policy. Shri Patil naturally looks with misgivings at a scheme of distribution, which might conflict with the policy planned by the Commission. Shri Patil's objections must be examined against the background of that policy.

The policy has been explained in Chapter IV of its Draft Five Year Plan.

It wants to reorganize agriculture as a branch of modern commerce. Hence, like any other commercial undertaking, it would regard it as efficient, if it produced maximum crops, at minimum cost and with smallest number of workers. Increase of production, reduction of cost and reduction of number of workers is to be the main aim in the reorganization of Indian agriculture.

In the achievement of this aim, it holds that small holdings are a hindrance.

“Agriculture cannot be developed as an efficient industry unless the unit of management becomes much larger than it is at present. . . . The application on a wide scale of scientific knowledge and increased capital investment. . . . (is possible) only if agriculture is organized on the basis of relatively larger units of management and production than the existing holdings.” (p. 98).

Thus the main aim of the Planners is to secure convenience of management, and the reason is ‘economic production’. Ensurance of equitable distribution and provision of employment are not the main concern of the Planners. This is in accordance with the goal of all types of Capitalistic systems, be it private Capitalism, institutional Capitalism (as in limited companies, so-called co-operative societies, trusts etc.) or State Capitalism.

As Vinoba’s movement is more mindful of the immediate and pressing problems of unemployment and equitable distribution, there is necessarily an element of conflict, which the keen eyes of Shri Patil cannot fail to notice.

Having come to the conclusion that the aim of the land policy is to bring about “a substantial increase

in the size of the unit of management", the Draft Plan discusses four methods of doing so. It rejects the idea of "nationalizing the land and making it available for collective cultivation" as also of "placing a ceiling on existing holdings," and declares in favour of the following two :

(a) "offering inducements to small farmers to become members of co-operative farming societies;" and

(b) "taking the village as a whole as the unit of co-operative management in which, while meeting the claims of ownership through an ownership dividend, the entire area is treated as a single farm and is divided for convenience of cultivation into suitable blocks."

Having set down the aim and the methods, the Plan lays down the programme of reorganization. It is divided into two parts ; one the distant, for eventual realization ; and the other for being pursued during the next few years, as leading towards the first.

The distant programme is "to establish a system of Co-operative Village Management", with the following "essential features" :

(1) The whole village will be the unit of land management ;

(2) rights of ownership will be reorganized and compensated for by payment of dividends at each harvest ;

(3) actual workers, whether owners or labourers, will be paid remuneration for work done according to the nature of their work. To the owners this will be in addition to their share in the dividends ;

(4) whether lands should be cultivated as a single block or in separate blocks, and by individual families or groups of families, will depend upon the needs of cultivation and other local circumstances.

Care will be taken to see that suitable incentives are provided to actual workers to put in their best efforts ;

(5) this system will be introduced compulsorily for the whole village if two-thirds of the owners or permanent tenants holding not less than one-half of the cultivated area of the village give their consent.

It will be noticed that if the number of owners is very large, it would be increasingly difficult to get a majority of two-thirds to bring about this reform. Further, if many holdings are too small, it is possible that the consenting two-thirds may not possess half of the land. Since Vinoba's *Bhoodan-Yajna* expressly aims at creating small owners Shri Patil may well apprehend that his scheme of distribution creates a hurdle in the way of the Planning Commission.

So much in regard to the ultimate end of the Commission. We shall consider next week the immediate programme contemplated by the Planning Commission for attaining the ultimate end.

Harijan, 31-5-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SHRI PATIL'S APPREHENSIONS — II

It was shown last week that the ultimate goal of the Planning Commission in regard to agriculture was to establish a system of Co-operative Village Management. Let us now see the immediate programme contemplated by it, as steps towards this goal. It is given as three-fold :

- (i) Establishment of Village Production Councils ;
- (ii) Establishment of Registered Farms ; and
- (iii) Promotion of Co-operative Farming.

The Village Production Council is designed to be the virtual controlling body of village agriculture. Whoever cultivates the land, will have to do it in accordance with the instructions of this Council. It will also be the dispenser of all aids to cultivators, and stand between the Government and the agriculturists. It will be bound, I believe, to carry out the instructions of the Government regarding the production of crops.

The Registered Farm is the rebirth of zamindari and absentee landlordism in a new and worse garb. It has been already noticed that the Planning Commission has rejected the method of "placing a ceiling on existing holdings and utilizing land in excess of ceiling for increasing the size of uneconomic holdings, or for distribution to the landless, or for co-operative cultivation." But Tenancy Reform Laws of some States have already passed such legislations. Possibly the Commission regards this as an erroneous step and wants to rectify it in a different manner.

The device proposed is the 'Registered Farm' system. For this, it is suggested that :

(i) holdings above a prescribed level should be organized as Registered Farms ; and

(ii) holdings below the prescribed level should be brought together increasingly into small co-operative farms.

The minimum size of the Registered Farm will depend upon the nature of the land, but the suggestion is that it should be "about six times the economic holding" for that region.

It is suggested by the Planners that the policy of the State should be on the one hand to encourage

the formation of such Farms, and on the other to bring them under State control. The controls will be :

(i) adoption of "approved scientific methods of agriculture" and development of the farms as "efficient units of production" ;

(ii) sales of improved seeds and surplus food grains to Government ; and

(iii) employment of agricultural workers on prescribed terms and wages.

The Registered Farm System has, I understand, already come into existence at least in U. P. Perhaps also elsewhere. Just as a large-scale industry pushes out one of the same type on a small-scale, so is this Registered Farm doing in the field of agriculture. Like the textile mills, the sugar mills, the *vanaspati* and oil mills, the bone-crushing industry, the Registered Farm is being patronized by Government in various ways, such as, supply of seeds, manure, loans, transport and other facilities. It is easier and more advantageous for the administrative machine to deal with a handful of big and influential applicants than to do so with a thousand small ones. These influential managers can easily contact the highest officers directly and get their demands promptly executed, with the result that small holdings are forced to look more uneconomic than they actually are. Moreover, the Registered Farm System makes all actual workers on agriculture a gang of mere wage earners. They are like Tea Estates and Coffee Estates brought down on the planes. Their existence is hostile to the basic conceptions of Sarvodaya. Shri R. K. Patil with his great enthusiasm for Registered Farms naturally looks askance at Vinoba's land-distribution scheme.

In cases where the Registered Farm System is not feasible, the Planning Commission suggests the method of establishing Co-operative Farming Societies. The following encouragements have been suggested for their formation :

(i) the area should not be less than that for a Registered Farm, no maximum need be prescribed ;

(ii) societies should be preferred by Government in the supply of seeds, finance, technical assistance and marketing ;

(iii) in consolidation proceedings such villages should be given first preference as have established such societies ;

(iv) culturable waste lands should be preferentially assigned to these societies ; and

(v) "no adverse tenancy rights should be allowed to accrue against those of its members who may not be engaged in personal cultivation. The object of this condition is both to encourage the formation of Co-operative Farming Societies and to assist them in reducing the number of workers required for cultivation of any given area."

Thus the Planning Commission prefers cultivation by paid labour directly under the officers either of the Village Management, or of the proprietors of Registered Farms, or of the Co-operative Farming Societies to cultivation by agriculturists as free individuals. The principle that land must belong to the actual tiller is rejected. The actual workers on the land will be paid their wages, and they will purchase their food from the local ration shops. It may well be something imported from abroad. The actual crop produced by them will be sold in the best market.

The word "co-operation" is looked upon with favour by all schools of economics. Sarvodaya also blesses 'Co-operation'. But it is clear that the Co-operative Societies envisaged here are quite a different type of economic organizations than those conceived of by Sarvodaya workers. The first-mentioned are but Joint Stock Companies of small shareholders trading in agricultural produce. There is no reason why these Societies should not be called Limited Companies trading in agriculture. The word Co-operative Society applied to them is a misnomer. These companies are designed to facilitate State control, administrative machinery and regimentation, and to make every agriculturist a farm labourer. They are also intended to reduce the number of farm labourers without any guarantee to find employment for the dismissed workers. The co-operation for mutual help among producers and artisans following a common trade, craft, or occupation stands on altogether a different footing from the above societies. Both the Registered Farm system and the Co-operative Farming Society system as envisaged above are antagonistic to the Sarvodaya ideal.

Obviously Vinoba's movement is a hurdle in the policy advocated by the Planning Commission, and naturally Shri R. K. Patil is not reconciled to it.

But Vinoba's movement has caught the imagination of the people. Its moral and psychological appeal has affected Shri R. K. Patil himself. Hence, instead of opposing it on the ground of its conflict with the policy of the Draft Plan, Shri Patil has put forth the plea of insufficiency of the acreage proposed by Vinoba, thereby causing a fall in production and

prevention of diversification of employment in the rural areas.

We shall hereafter examine how far these pleas are good on merits and whether Vinqba's scheme of distribution stands in the way of increasing production and development of rural industries, and even of consolidation of holdings and the like.

Harijan, 7-6-52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SHRI PATIL'S APPREHENSIONS — III

Extent of Holding

Let us now examine the subject of 'economic holding'. It is a complicated subject, since what makes a holding economic depends upon various factors. If agriculture is to be pursued as an all year and full-time employment, sufficient unto itself without the assistance of any other income, it will mean one thing. If it is expected ordinarily to be supplemented by a subsidiary occupation it will mean another. Whether the subsidiary occupation is meant to give some income or to make for self-sufficiency will also make some difference. Then, the nature of the soil, irrigation facilities, regional climate, the kind of seeds sown, manure applied etc. must also be considered to determine what constitutes economic holding. It will be more appropriate, therefore, to consider the question not in the form of 'economic holding', but in that of 'unit area necessary for convenient and advantageous management by an individual agriculturist family'. Let me call it 'minimum family managed holding'. A genius like Dr. George Washington Carver might be able to earn a comfortable income from a plot of 30 feet by 30 feet i.e. 100 sq. yards. It would be 'economic holding' for him, but

even for him it may not be a sufficient area for convenient cultivation. On the other hand, for a cultivator in the sandy desert of Rajasthan, or the mountainous regions of the Himalayas, even 50 acres of land might not be economically sufficient, and the owner would need the assistance of a secondary occupation to make his both ends meet. Yet it may be more than a conveniently manageable unit. Hence, the search of a fixed formula for 'economic holding' is rather vague. We might be able to succeed better in arriving at a reasonably agreed figure if we seek to determine the minimum area for a family managed holding — the family being taken as consisting of five members of whom one is an able-bodied whole-time worker, and the rest contribute in the aggregate at least an equal share of labour ; in other words the total labour of two workers. If in addition to their own full-time labour, their efforts are supplemented now and then with the labour of a pair of bullocks and of co-operating neighbours or (circumstances allowing) paid labourers, it might make the cultivation more efficient or economically profitable ; but even if they had to work without any such assistance, and only with a pick-axe and a shovel, the family should be able to manage that area. Every facility that the family might be able to get whether in the shape of fencing, manure, good seed, sufficient and timely rain or irrigation, improved implements, rotation of crops, security from pests and crop-destroying wandering animals, technical advice in agricultural operations, cure of crop diseases etc. would make the same area a better producer and economically more profitable, whether the family wants to sell its produce or consume it at home. Economic advantage depends upon

these facilities and factors and not merely upon the extent of the land. The law of diminishing returns will probably apply more quickly with multiplication in the units of area, than with provision of other facilities.

If the approach suggested above is sound, I do not think that under our present circumstances — that is, having regard to the life, customs, traditions and actual socio-economic state of our agriculturists, — five acres of dry or one acre of wet land can be regarded by any one as too small a unit for convenient management by a family. As a matter of fact in the major part of India, a majority of holdings are so much smaller than that sought to be given by Vinoba, that Vinoba's distribution may well be regarded extravagant. As has been pointed out in one of D. M.'s letters, there are in U. P. individual holdings as small as .40 acre, and regarded by the cultivators as sufficient units. In a specially prepared note, Shri Bandhudas Sen of Gandhi Vichar Parishad, Wardha, quotes the following statistics of Indian holdings, from the *Agricultural Journal of India*, (1926) :

Less than 1 acre	23%
1 — 5 acres	33%
5 — 10 acres	20%
Over 10 acres	24%

In Orissa, he points out, "nearly 26.7 per cent peasant families have less than one acre of land."

"In comparison with the average size of holdings", Shri Sen says, "it must be admitted that the principle of distribution of 5 acres of dry land or 1 acre of wet land per family is an improvement over the existing situation."

As said above the economic advantageousness of holding depends on various factors, the area being comparatively a minor one among them. It has been repeatedly pointed out, and admitted by Shri Patil himself somewhere, that there are countries in the world and cultivators even in India, who take far more yield from holdings smaller than 5 acres of dry and 1 acre of wet land, than large-scale agriculturists. China and Japan are particularly mentioned as examples of small holdings. Hence the proposition that the small holdings are less economic than large ones requires, to put it mildly, to be thoroughly investigated. There are eminent agricultural experts who hold the opposite view.

So far as our country is concerned, I put it very softly when I say that there is no satisfactory data to assert that given equal advantages and aids small-scale holdings are definitely 'uneconomical', that is to say, yield proportionately less than large areas. No one will deny that there has to be some limit beyond which a holding cannot be advantageously reduced. At the same time, there is a limit beyond which holdings should not expand, in the interest of both the soil and the people. If proper cultivation methods are followed, there is a greater likelihood of its turning out that the limit of profitable holding is reached at a much lower area than is supposed.

The fact is that though agriculture has always been the most important activity of our country and the mainstay of not only of our people but also of the State, it has been the most neglected subject for centuries. Although, every State big or small—every zamindar, *inamdar*, feudal chief, religious institution, moneylender and proprietor of large areas of land,

has drawn his or its income preponderantly from agriculture, during the last four hundred years at least, it does not appear that any of them took any interest in the development of agriculture — whether by way of improvement of soil, seed and implements, or of instruction of the actual cultivator. The cultivator has somehow derived and preserved some skill by imitating his immediate predecessors, and has rather forgotten a part of the traditional knowledge than added to it. The revenue policy and laws relating to transfer of land of the British Government both in the Zamindari and the Ryotwari areas have been most ruinous to agriculture. Their trade and commerce policy and administrative convenience has been uniformly directed towards the suppression of small cultivators. Though moneylending existed in India for scores of centuries before the British rule, hardly, so far as I know, a moneylender could become an *owner* of land. The laws of transfer of land enacted by the British enabled moneylenders to own large areas of lands without even an iota of knowledge about agriculture. The moneylender converted into an owner of land did not take even that interest in the improvement of agriculture, which an *inamdar*, a *jagirdar* or *deshpande* might take. When he began to feel interested in agriculture, he began to produce money-crops and city fruits. There has been no atmosphere, no encouragement, no opportunity to the actual producer of food-crops to make improvements in agriculture. Pressure of various kinds has certainly been put upon him. But it has been always in order further to impoverish him. No pressure has been exerted on him to shed his ignorance, expensive social customs, fashions, vices etc. or to make him acquire

better knowledge of his occupation and the science pertaining to it. Many a clever farmer has been either drawn away from agriculture or reduced to an unskilled labourer in the course of a few generations, but very few made it more efficient than their ancestors. Intensive agriculture has never been seriously tried in an appreciable measure except perhaps during this century in canal irrigated areas. Where it has been so done, I do not think that it has been proved that small holdings yield less than large ones.

The uneconomic nature of small holdings on the ground of area alone does not stand proved. And if we go by the experience of Japan and other countries where intensive agriculture has been made successful, small-scale holding seems to have more points in its favour than the other one.

Harijan, 14-6-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SHRI PATIL'S APPREHENSIONS — IV

Large Holdings

The burden of my argument last week was that 'convenient holding' and 'economic holding' should be considered apart from each other, and that whether a holding is large or small, our immediate attention should better be concentrated on intensive cultivation in order to make agriculture most advantageous.

The necessity of having continuous plots of larger size than those generally existing at present is not denied. But consolidation, combination and collectivization of holdings is a long-term programme. It is a controversial question and not easy of decision. Even after we have come to some other decisions about the

manner of doing it and enacted legislation about it, it will take long before the administrative machinery is able to implement it. The work can be carried on without disturbing the efforts for making every type of cultivation intensive. From every point of view it is the latter programme which requires our immediate attention and action. It means providing whatever facility that can be made available to every cultivator, be he the smallest one with less than a *bigha*, or a large one with an undivided plot of 500 acres, to improve his cultivation. The facilities to be provided might take a hundred forms. And in distributing these facilities, it is not the large cultivator who should be served first or preferred, but the smallest and the least resourceful one. The number of the latter is legion, and in the aggregate they cultivate a greater area and produce more crops than the large cultivators. It may be desirable that the small cultivators should be drawn together not only in their agricultural interests, but also in their agricultural operations. But their inability to do so should not be the reason for not making their cultivation as much successful as possible. The reason for their unwillingness to combine with others should also be studied. Even as a mother would feed the weakest child first, a Government pledged to the welfare of the people should attend first to the needs of the cultivator who is poor, backward, even unintelligent and foolishly obstinate, and then lead him to forms of co-operation, consolidation etc.

India's agriculture suffers because India's administration is not carried on on the principle of the service of the most backward and poor first. Besides the delays of red-tapism, it neglects the poor cultivator, and practically compels him to go to the money-

lender or the selfish, the tyrannical and the influential ones of his own class. Not on account of any deliberate callousness of heart or calculated policy, but instinctively our caste-conscious and class-minded officers attend to the needs of the influential classes and disregard those of the backward ones. The latter are suppressed at every step. Co-operative and village management are good ideas, but when they are brought about in order to make things easy for the *administration*, and in a way which vests power into the hands of a small clique, they become tyrannical.

Vinoba has said repeatedly that this present distribution will not stand in the way of general agrarian reforms. As it is, we are a nation of small-holders, and our laws of inheritance and transfer may have to be suitably amended in order to prevent fragmentation and transfer of land on the one hand, into the hands of non-cultivators, and on the other into those of giant cultivators or combines. Some limit to the extent of a holding must be fixed. Vinoba does not ask exemption for his donees from the operation of such laws. They will apply to them also along with others. Rather, Vinoba has seen to it that there will be no transfer of land for ten years at least. It may be assumed that that period is sufficient for every State to pass such laws as may be necessary to put into operation its permanent agrarian policy.

As to what that policy should be, Vinoba has indicated that he wants the whole village to be organized as a single unit on the principle of the joint family. Whether within the village, the cultivated plots should be individually large or small, and how large and small, will depend upon various matters ; but, subject to correction by him, I believe, he

has no objection on principle to the plots being sufficiently large, if the villagers are agreeable, and if the principle of employment for every one and provision of necessities to every one is ensured. Though there is not much room in India for mechanized cultivation, if without harm to the principles of self-sufficiency, ensuring the largest amount of self-dependence possible, and providing employment to every one, mechanization can be used advantageously to any extent, there is no objection to consider it. At present it appears to be merely an academic question. If mechanization on any large scale is out of question in India, it is clear that the plots cannot be too large.

Joint large-scale cultivation can be brought about in various ways : The Planning Commission has suggested two : namely, that of registered farms and co-operative farming, leading to village management. Communists advocate collective farming. All the three reduce the actual cultivator to the position of a mere wage earner, and make agriculture a centrally directed activity, subservient to the industrial and commercial policy of the State. If the State policy is non-Communist it might order production of all jute, cotton, sugarcane, tea, coffee, tobacco etc., and feed the country on imported food on the principle of cheapness. If it is Communist, it might feed the worker well, but relegate him virtually to the same position as his well-fed bullocks. Against the former, some day he might be able to protest by democratic methods, if there is no war for a long period. Against the latter, he would be faced against a single-party's totalitarian dictatorship. An indentured labourer could obtain relief at the end of the term of his agreement. The Communist worker

would be at best a well-fed slave of the State from birth to death.

None of these can satisfy the just and reasonable aspirations of man. We want a system which will give every man reasonable scope for freewill and action in the interest of himself as well as society. We want a system in which work a man must, but not for money, but for himself and society, and not out of fear, but of his own love and the love which society shows to him.

It is difficult to say what should be the exact form of such a system. I realize, and it should be realized that we cannot evolve a system which can be altogether perfect. We are imperfect beings and have to evolve systems for imperfect beings. Hence none of our systems can be entirely free from fault, and none can be good for all times. While, therefore, we might point out where a system adds to our convenience and comfort or is harmful, we need not be too dogmatic, if the implementation is honest, done with the best of motives and in a non-violent manner. I suggested some ideas in this connection in 1950-1951 (*Vide Harijan*, 16th September, 1950, 17th February, 1951 and 17th March, 1951)* while discussing Collective Co-operation in Agriculture. But the ideas have been advocated without a sense of dogmatism. I have an open mind on the subject. All that I can say is that the system proposed by the Planning Commission as also the one enforced in Communist countries does not satisfy me.

Two things more in conclusion. They have been often stressed before and may be done so again. Agriculture will never stand alone. It must be, as Wilfred Wellock puts it, married to handicrafts and industries.

* These articles are given in this booklet as Appendix III.

Secondly, a thing which has to be purchased by every one, including the producers (labourers), at a price nigher than the cost even by a pie, can never reach every one, no matter however abundantly produced.

Harijan, 21-6-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

APPENDIX III

Shri Mashruwala's Three Articles

(i)

CHEAPNESS

For life, air is more important than water, water more important than food, and food more important than cloth. Nature has so provided that what is more important is also more easily available and less capable of being exclusively possessed. One has only to keep his nostrils open and allow his lungs to be exercised to supply oneself with air. Water requires greater effort to get and consume, and is capable of being exclusively possessed to a certain extent. Food is still more subject to these handicaps. It requires labour, and also a base, for production — not to speak of tools. And this gives rise to the complicated question of ownership of land and its produce.

Cheapness depends upon two factors : abundance of supply and difficulty of exclusive possession. To the extent water is capable of exclusive possession, it, too, loses its cheapness. This happens, for instance, in the case of water in private wells, tanks, cisterns, parts of current running through one's lands etc. Even if it were abundant, and not needed by the possessor, he is able to charge some price for it. It loses its cheapness also, where it is not abundant.

Since land, the base on which food is produced, as also food itself is limited and is capable of being exclusively possessed and has been so done, it is still less cheap than water.

It is not possible to increase the amount of cultivable land beyond a certain limit, and, though its productive capacity has not reached its maximum limit, the quantity of food will be, in any particular period, always limited. Food will, therefore, always cost something. It cannot be free or very cheap. But its costliness is further enhanced by the degree of exclusive possession exercised upon both land and its produce—the food—and by the employment of arable land to uses other than the production of the necessary amount of food. In order to reduce the costliness of food, it is necessary to increase the productive capacity of land, to employ as much arable land as is needed for production of abundant food in preference to other uses, and to reduce the possibility of exclusive possession of land and food, at present secured by the institution of private property. All land and its produce must belong to the State as Trustee for its people and such other beings as it can reach. Whether a holding is a large zamindari comprising hundreds of acres, or a small farm of a few *bighas*, the possession or legal ownership over it and its produce must be deemed to be on behalf of the State. (The word *State* should be understood here in a wide sense. It does not mean the Central Government or the Government of a province, but the smallest local Government).

The institution of private property, the desire to possess one's lands and house, and to have as much of them as possible, and to consider all surplus profits

of one's lands or industry as one's own wealth is very deeply rooted in people's minds. Many people think that it is an instinct inseparable from human nature. They believe that it is the only incentive, which can make man work energetically for creating wealth. I do not believe so. But it is true that it has established itself for a long time in human societies, and it might take some time to get over it. It might also need graded stages to convert man from a worker for selfish ends into one for the welfare of the State. But it is necessary that this should happen, and we must endeavour to discover methods for achieving it.

The abolition of the zamindari and malguzari systems has removed the absentee landlord to a certain extent. It was necessary. The next thing necessary is to bring about a right adjustment of relations between landed and lessee cultivators and agricultural labourers.

Our present economic and social order, based on individual and separate proprietorship, is very crude. It does not enable a cultivator to realize that it is not sufficient that his own piece of land should be well cultivated and yield good profits, but that his neighbouring fields should also be cultivated in the best manner possible and that he stands to lose if the neighbour's cultivation is bad. Rather, under the present system, a cultivator has often the devilish desire to adopt methods which might injure the neighbouring lands and their proprietors. For instance, it is not an uncommon experience in villages that, if there is a common well between two fields, their proprietors will vie with one another in causing damage to each other's fields, and in that evil rivalry both the fields will deteriorate in quality and they will bring their

own bankruptcy through ruinous litigation. The system, which makes it possible to partition property not capable of being physically divided in a profitable manner, must be ended. In a factory owned by a limited company, a holder of even fifty per cent of shares cannot claim a physical partition of the factory and ask for specific possession of half the factory. He might seek to become its managing director on the strength of his fifty per cent shares, but that would mean possession of the whole factory. In the same way, the land of a village must not be physically partitioned, if it could be tilled together with greater advantage, or has a common source of irrigation. Each field must be assessed in accordance with its capacity to produce its staple crop of cereals in a normal year, and it should be assigned a capital value, not in terms of money, but in terms of produce. Assuming that absentee-landlordism has been totally abolished previously, and all the fields in the villages are so assessed, all of them should be regarded as one unit, constituting one single village industry, of which each hitherto owner is a shareholder to the extent of the crop-value of his fields. A small plot should be assigned to each cultivating family, whether it hitherto owned any land or not, for what may be termed "personal hobby-cultivation". This is to satisfy its patriotic sentiments for land, to enable it to make experiments, to grow fruits, vegetables, flowers etc., particularly liked by it, to keep its goats, swine, poultry etc., and for other similar purposes.

The rest of the land must be cultivated as village land. An estimate should be made of the cereals, pulses, vegetables, etc. needed for (a) the full maintenance of the population for at least fifteen months.

(b) payment of wages, in addition to food, to enable wage-earners to purchase their own necessities, (c) payment of revenue and other dues to Government, (d) payment of 'procurement levy' if any, (e) payment of interest on debts if any, and (f) expenses of and incidental to cultivation. Whether some of these items are paid in cash or kind, and whether its clothing and other needs are produced locally or purchased from outside, these are charges which have to be met by the village, before there can be any surplus for capitalization, innovations and improvements, or sharing of profits. The sum total of these items is, therefore, the minimum agricultural wealth, which the village must produce in order to live.

But the village must produce much more than this, in order that it might improve its agriculture, provide for public hygiene, sanitation, schools, roads etc., raise the standard of living of its population, pay rewards or bonuses to regular workers; and, lastly, dividends to share-holders. The last two payments are possible only after making due reservations for the other items, but they are items, in which labourers and share-holders would be personally interested, and they would realize that these are possible only if they all worked together with all their energy. They would be all workers whether they directed, managed, supervised, or toiled as labourers according to their capacity.

The interest in the share could be transferred wholly or partly as the owner liked. On his death, his heirs would take such part of it as each might be entitled to. It would not entail physical division of the land, except that provision would have to be made to assign a plot to a new family entering into a

community either from outside, or through division of the family.

This is roughly the kind of organization which I think should replace the present one. Whether it should be set up through co-operatives or *Panchayats*, is a matter of convenience.

It should, I believe, result in a united effort to work on the field with zeal and hope, and in creating more food. One would be also interested in showing that the production is more than that estimated. There would be no exclusive possession of individuals either over land or its produce. So there would be no cause for concealing the produce as at present. All these are factors, which lead to cheapness.

Harijan, 16-9-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(ii)

COLLECTIVE CO-OPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

The Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee has circulated for opinion a "draft statement of programme" of land settlement and agriculture. It consists of 15 points. Ten of these deal with the principles of land tenure and the method of farming, the eleventh with the prices of agricultural produce, and the rest with the fixing of the maximum limits of personal income.

The fundamental principle of its land settlement is co-operative farming. It is laid down as follows :

"Food is the most elementary need of man. The chief means of producing it is land. Land is the gift of nature, and not the product of man's labour. Land should, therefore, belong to the community, and not to a few individuals who may exploit it by their ownership to grow rich by starving

the landless. The proprietorship of the farmer will consist of (1) the right to cultivate his land, (2) the right to bequeath this title, and (3) the right to sell this title subject to the conditions laid down by the community in this behalf. Below-basic holdings shall be pooled into co-operative farms and all the functions of a better-farming nature shall be co-operatively performed. Production programmes shall be followed by all. All farms operating in a village should work under the control and supervision of the community as represented by the Village *Panchayat*."

Co-operative farming along with proprietary interest in particular plots of land has been generally advocated by most of our 'progressive' thinkers and planners. The necessity to recognize the proprietary interest or occupancy right in particular pieces of land is regarded as unavoidable in order to provide to the cultivator an incentive to work hard and to improve his land.

Incidentally in an article (*Harijan*, 16th September, 1950),* not intended for discussing this proposition in particular, I observed :

"Our present economic and social order, based on individual and separate proprietorship, is very crude.....The system, which makes it possible to partition property not capable of being physically divided in a profitable manner, must be ended. In a factory owned by a limited company, a holder of even fifty per cent of shares cannot claim a physical partition of the factory and ask for specific possession of half the factory. He might seek to become its managing director on the strength of his fifty per cent shares, but that would mean possession of the whole factory. In the same way, the land of a village must not be physically partitioned, if it could be tilled together with greater advantage or has a common source of irrigation. Each field must be assessed in accordance with its capacity to produce its staple crop of cereals in a normal year, and it should be assigned a capital value, not in terms of money, but in terms of produce. Assuming that absentee-landlordism has

* See the article *Cheapness* in Appendix III, page 54.

been totally abolished previously, and all the fields in the villages are so assessed, all of them should be regarded as one unit, constituting one single village industry, of which each hitherto owner is a share-holder to the extent of the crop-value of his fields. A small plot should be assigned to each cultivating family, whether it hitherto owned any land or not, for what may be termed "personal hobby-cultivation". This is to satisfy its patriotic sentiments for land, to enable it to make experiments, to grow fruits, vegetables, flowers etc., particularly liked by it, to keep its goats, swine, poultry etc., and for other similar purposes."

I find that I do not stand alone in thinking on the above lines. Apart from the Communists, who are believed to be the protagonists of this system, there are other agricultural reformers also of a similar view. I received a leaflet last week from U. P. in which the same principle was advocated. Prof. P. N. Driver of the Agricultural College, Poona, in his scholarly book *Problems of Zamindari and Land Tenure Reconstruction* ably pleads for the same system. It is therefore worthwhile to explain this idea more fully.

I would advocate the initiation of this kind of agricultural tenure on new lands for settling landless agriculturists, and then extend it to old tenancies.

Suppose a new area of a thousand acres of land is to be colonized by a hundred families. It is estimated that the total area could produce two *lakh khandis* * of wheat, if fully cultivated. Its productive value, therefore, is two *lakh khandis* of wheat. This capital may be divided into 20,000 shares of ten *khandis* each.

Set aside in the first place 100 acres of land at the rate of one acre per family to be given to it for being cultivated and used at will. It may also be used

* One *khandi* = approximately 1,600 lbs. — *Ed.*

in part by the family for constructing its house. Thus each family will get an equivalent of twenty shares in the form of a plot of one acre each.

The remaining 900 acres of land must be utilized for collective co-operative farming by these hundred families. No particular part of these 900 acres shall be the exclusive property or occupancy of any individual. It is the joint property of the colony, to be managed by its Managing *Panchayat*. The *Panchayat* shall decide which part is to be cultivated, which is to remain fallow, what is to be sown in each field or strip and so on. The members of the 100 families who will work on this land must be given "reasonable" wages. If their labour does not suffice, external labour can be engaged. But such labourers must be given "full" wages such as may be earned in other forms of labour.

(The difference between "reasonable" wages and "full" wages may be explained by taking the example of partners in a firm. Each partner draws a definite sum every month for his maintenance. It is bound to be less than his total share in the firm. But at the end of the year he will take up the balance. The amount drawn by him every month is no more than a "reasonable" allowance for an earner in his position. But the employees of the firm would have to be paid "full" "living" wages all along. If the full wage of a peasant labourer is one rupee a day the share-holder's reasonable wage may well be about ten or twelve annas).

The value of the remaining 900 acres of land is, according to the supposition, $900 \times 200 = 1,80,000$ *khandis* of wheat distributed into 18,000 shares of 10 *khandis* each. These shares may be purchased by these 100 families, provided that no family can purchase

more than 400 shares ; in other words, none can possess more interest than that in twenty acres of land. The share-holder would have individual proprietary interest not in any particular plot of land, but only in his shares, which he can sell, give away in gift, pledge, will away, and pass to his heirs. All the unpurchased shares should be regarded as held by Government.

It may be recalled that one acre of land has been allotted to each family. This plot may not be divided into more than four parts ; i.e., if the owner has four sons each would get a quarter acre. That much portion can also be given away by sale, gift etc. But no family may, by means of purchase or otherwise, own more than two acres of specific land.

With regard to the yield and profits of the joint cultivation of 900 acres, I had made the following suggestions in the article above referred to :

“ The rest of the land must be cultivated as village land. An estimate should be made of the cereals, pulses, vegetables, etc. needed for (a) the full maintenance of the population for at least fifteen months, (b) payment of wages, in addition to food, to enable wage-earners to purchase their own necessities, (c) payment of revenue and other dues to Government, (d) payment of ‘procurement levy’ if any, (e) payment of interest on debts if any, and (f) expenses of and incidental to cultivation. Whether some of these items are paid in cash or kind, and whether its clothing and other needs are produced locally or purchased from outside, these are charges which have to be met by the village, before there can be any surplus for capitalization, innovations and improvements, or sharing of profits. The sum total of these items is, therefore, the minimum agricultural wealth, which the village must produce in order to live.”

I have chosen the name *Samaasraa* (Sanskrit *Samaashraya*) for a colony or society based on this principle : for instance, a society named Pioneer

Collective Society would bear in Hindi the name *Aadi Samaashraya* or *Aadi Samaasraa*.

I request the Ministries of Agriculture and Rehabilitation, the members of the Planning Commission, as also others interested in land tenures and co-operation to examine these suggestions.

Harijan, 17-2-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(iii)

INDO-U.S.A. TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

[Late Shri K. G. Mashruwala wrote the following as a foreword to Shri S. Ramabhai's booklet *Agreement or Slavery Bond?* published by the Hindustani Culture Society, 145 Muthiganj, Allahabad. The question touched by Shri K. G. M. in it is much more serious than is generally understood at present. It is hoped the foreword reproduced below will draw the attention of all serious-minded people, particularly those who are associated with the implementation of the T.C.A., to the great issues involved in this Agreement with the U.S.A.

2-10-'52

— M. P. D. J

Often a transaction or public event, which does not immediately create a great sensation in the public and is practically neglected even by the general politician or economist proves later to have been the turning point in a nation's history. It plants a weed, which after some time, grows rapidly spreading itself far and wide, going deep into the soil and smothering everything in its vicinity. It looks harmless and even pleasant in the beginning, but ultimately when it begins to exert the influence on its surroundings, it would already have become too late and too difficult to get out of its entanglements.

The Agreement signed between U. S. and India on 5th January, 1952 has appeared to Shri Suresh Ramabhai and many of us a transaction of this type.

The Government of India having entered into it with great deliberation and evidently on the advice of experts, is naturally completely satisfied with its achievements. Not a few of the leading dailies and economic organs of industrialists have also given it their blessings.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's deep concern for bringing about the economic regeneration of India at the quickest possible pace is well known. He is impatient with lethargic people who are easily satisfied with a little advance here and a little achievement there. He has great faith in modern technical science and wants it to be fully employed in India for the economic advancement of the country. He wants to see India undertake and complete projects as grand as any in any part of the world. There is no doubt that India is capable of doing all this. Who does not know her past achievements and her position as the leading nation of the world for centuries in every field of life? We are descendants of the same people, on the whole intellectually well-developed, and given adequate opportunity, guidance and means, there is no reason why we may not achieve as much again.

For more than two centuries past, enormous wealth has been drained away from India into foreign lands, and she has been bled white. It is not possible, Pandit Nehru and many others probably feel, that India can rebuild her prosperity with the aid of her own resources. At any rate it cannot be done at anything more than a snail's pace. If we can obtain, by way of either loan or gift, funds or materials needed

by us for developing our country, consistently with our national independence and self-respect, no sense of either timidity or vanity on our part should prevent us from seeking, negotiating, or accepting such aid. There is nothing intrinsically wrong or immoral in it. People enter into partnership and loan agreements every day in their private life and still retain their individuality and equality of status. Whether doing so will put a person in a position of subordination to the other party in matters outside the sphere of agreement depends upon the quality of self-confidence possessed by him. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, perhaps, feels that it would be cowardly on the part of India to reject aids or loans undoubtedly needed by her merely from the fear that the acceptance of such aids may render her incapable of preserving her independence in national or international affairs. Pandit Nehru has more than once shown his independence of spirit, and why should he think that any Government succeeding him will not be able to do so equally well? No doubt, there is some risk, but none can achieve much without risks.

This is theoretically a valid attitude. But it is not in conformity with the actual experience we have in the private life of individuals or the political history of nations. On the contrary, the general experience is that a debtor becomes subservient to the creditor in every manner. He loses all initiative and freedom to decide his course of action. The consequences of disobedience to the will of the creditor or the benefactor are so grave that he does not dare to take the risk.

A study of the Agreement of 5th January, 1952 and of some of the secondary agreements that have

since been signed in pursuance of it, shows that the risk to which India has become exposed through these is so grave that the Agreement may well prove to be virtually a bond of slavery. I need not repeat what those risks are, as they have been well described by Shri Suresh Ramabhai in his booklet. The risks are not only economic but also political and psychological. The psychological risk that I refer to is the possibility that at least two opposite types of complexes might be created in the people ; that we cannot live without the goodwill and friendship of America ; and that (as a strong reaction against the first) we must run into the Communist camp in order to liberate ourselves from the first. The very thing, which is sought to be avoided by U.S., might happen, with greater impact by agreements of this type. The drama of China and Korea might be re-enacted in India.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's sincerity of purpose is not to be doubted. He has confidence in himself, confidence in the innate capacities of our people, and faith in the role which India must play in future as a great nation of the world. He believes in the unity of the world ; in the abolition of war and in peace. He believes that this is possible only through non-violence and not through armaments. That he cannot run away from the war machine in the immediate present is a concession to the realities of the situation and not an acceptance of the proposition that peace can be saved by piling and perfecting destructive weapons. But simply because he has to make these concessions and cannot face up to all the implications of his faith, he does not want to run away from his duty.

On the economic programme, frankly, it seems to me that Panditji's thinking is not quite clear. He does not love centralization and regimentation ; but he appears to me to have almost a superstitious faith in the power of the machine, of scientific appliances and of the economy of mass production. Production by the *charkha*, village industries and bullock plough methods, appears to him, perhaps, as of too rudimentary a nature to be considered seriously by the Government of a great Republic, with a population of 36 crores of people. Hence, he is indeed earnest to industrialize the country. He does not seem to agree with those who think that war and large-scale industrialization are almost inseparable companions.

Due to this attitude of his, he is constantly attracted towards gigantic schemes, and has launched so many of them. Some of them have been disastrous failures, and in some others, the Government has been cheated by its own officers, advisers, technicians and others. One of the greatest and costliest lessons of the schemes has been that we have proved ourselves to be too much depraved in moral character and wanting in love for our country. Other considerations apart, our national regeneration cannot be achieved merely by heavy economic reconstruction. The moral reconstruction of our country on solid foundations is even more important and basic than economic reconstruction. The latter should follow step by step in the wake of the former.

But, great though the losses have been on account of failures and dishonesty in connection with various schemes, they are most of them only isolated transactions. The present Agreement is a continuous process. It is virtually a charter to U. S. to establish herself in

India, first as a trading concern, and then as India's political boss. The Government of India has agreed to place at the disposal of U. S. all its administrative machinery and to become her advertising agency. U. S. officers, employers etc. will be allowed to live in India and move and mix with the people of India without being subject to even civil laws of India. Who can prevent them from propagating any political or social views they please, and creating factions in India? The next elections might well be a rivalry among U. S. sponsored, U.S.S.R. sponsored, and purely Indian parties.

I am in entire agreement with the principle that the whole world is one; that, after all, it is but human and natural that one section of mankind should help another in times of need; that he who has much should share his surplus with him who has little; and that both the giver and the receiver should feel blessed. Grand achievements and scientific advance should not be inconsistent with peace. But it is clear that motives of U. S. in aiding Europe and Asia are not so altruistic as are needed for such an attitude. They are frankly made for organizing an anti-Communist front. Equally similar is the attitude of the Communists. These two are at daggers drawn against each other, and each tries to spread its tentacles over other peoples for their own ends, and not out of any brotherly love. So long as this is the attitude of these two ambitious countries and their collaborating nations, we must rebuild our country by our own efforts. It is better to be slow in our progress, than to put up a facade of progress, when behind it there is only a state of bankruptcy that may lead to civil strife or international warfare.

Herijan, 18-10-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

