

# Behar Herald

Chief Editor : S. SA MADDAR

Vol. LXXX ]

PATNA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1953

[ No. 6

### New U.N. Stamp Honors Human Rights



Mexican artist Leon Helguera hails the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a new United Nations commemorative stamp shown above. It will be issued on 10 December, the date the Declaration was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly five years ago. The stamp will be printed in two denominations, the 3c in blue and the 5c in red, in a first and final edition of 2,000,000 copies.

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## REVOLT OF CONGRESS M. L. A.'s

Revolt has been simmering for some time in Madras Congress camp. The dissidents who want to get rid of the "old man of the sea" have several genuine grievances. Firstly, they all expected to be chosen as Ministers when the Andhra Ministers of the Madras Assembly left to join their own cabinet in Kurnool. (Although the residuary state of Madras is now less than half the size it was before partition, the number of Ministers has not been reduced. In fact, more Ministers may soon be needed to buttress the Cabinet. Secondly, land assignments to influential and wealthy Congressmen, which had been going on merrily before under the guise of "compensation to political sufferers", had to be stopped as it made Congress very unpopular in the villages. Where vast numbers of landless

people somehow eked out a miserable existence, rich and powerful Congressmen were grabbing good, productive land as a small compensation for the fight they were supposed to have waged to drive out the British. As conquerors of the country they believed in getting the victors' spoils of war. But Rajagopalachari did not agree as he found that it was making the Congress unpopular.

The third genuine grievance of Madras M. L. A.'s is that they have been asked not to have direct control over the doings of local officials. They are not to send chits to district officials telling them what to do and what not. They are not to try to influence the judiciary in giving bail or acquitting accused persons, or at least to give a lenient sentence. This prohibition has seriously affected their pockets and naturally enough they are smarting under a sense of injury. They

ask bitterly: "What is Congress rule for unless it is to benefit Congressmen?"

## CLOSE UP YOUR RANKS

The Congress President has been re-iterating his sound advice to Congressmen to stop mutual fault-findings and bickerings. It is easy enough to advise Congressmen to be "good boys", but to set the Congress house in order, Mr. Nehru should try to discover the causes that lead to dissension in his political party.

The malady is, of course, widespread. The race for power and for reaping material benefits from the exercise of that power lies at the bottom of squabbles in the ranks of the Congress Party in all the States. We wish it could be said truthfully that those holding positions of responsibility were altogether free from blame. Many Ministers have failed to set an

example in selflessness and integrity. Indeed, the main impulse in the race for office springs from the conviction that many of those reaping the reward of sacrifices made during the British regime do not have as strong a claim to the enjoyment of power, patronage and pelf as their critics. We believe that if all Congressmen holding offices in the Government and in the party organization were to observe the standard of selflessness and honesty emphasized by Mr. Nehru, the situation would be transformed.

Today the confidence of the masses in the Congress is sustained largely by their faith in the one man at the top who constitutes the High Command. The general run of Congressmen and the party machine have been gradually losing their hold on the people. This influence can be revived by fresh evidence of selfless service. The coming years are most critical in that economic stresses are unhinging the people's minds. Indeed, the very fate of democracy depends on the strength of character of the men and women who today form the main body of Congress workers. We can only hope that Congressmen realize the significance of the trust and the consequences of failure to discharge it.

## NOTES & COMMENTS

### THE ANNUAL TAMASHA

This time the Aga Khan is being fattened for his weighing against platinum in Pakistan in

1954. He weighs only 2 maunds and 25 seers, but his devotees hope, by sustained feeding, to increase his weight upto 3 maunds at least. The price of 3 maunds of platinum is estimated to be about 2 crores of rupees. It will be remembered that last time he was weighed against diamonds, but so much real diamonds not being available, industrial black diamonds were got on hire.

### A BAD BEGINNING

By a series of concessions and considerable display of political dexterity, the Andhra Ministry has survived the hazards of the first session of the State Assembly. The Ministry suffered at least two reverses, one over the election of the Deputy Speaker and the other on the issue of the salaries of Ministers; but on the truly crucial question of the location of the State's permanent capital, a fortuitous turn of voting, rather than any calculated procedure, came to the rescue of the Government.

The Ministry has indeed just managed to survive, and that more by evading or shelving problems than by facing them squarely. The Ministry played for time, and perhaps prudently too, and it has succeeded to that limited extent. But much depends on what use it makes of this breathing-space to bring some stability into the political life of Andhra. This stability cannot possibly be achieved through what might be called a "hand-to-mouth" policy or just by appointing more Ministers

or making concessions without any sense of direction or concern for basic principles.

### THE USUAL THING

Morarji Desai's son was married to a girl of Kirloskar, and Bombay's Revenue Minister Hiray's son is an agent of the firm of cookers. A Press Note issued by the Government of Bombay has admitted that an interest-free loan of Rs. 6,00,000 had been given to Cooper Engineering Works and another similar loan of Rs. 5,00,000 had been given Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd.

There is nothing surprising in this. The same Morarji Desai gave a Rs. 200,00,000 contract for digging tube wells to Munshi's son-in-law without calling for any tenders.

### A PETTY SCANDAL

Being in the same city as the Central Government, it is not unnatural that the Government of the B class Delhi State should aspire to have a few scandals of its own. The one that is agitating the subjects of Brahm Prakash to-day is the presentation of a PURSE of Rs. 51,000 to the two newly recruited Deputy Ministers—Shiv Charan Gupta and Shanta Vasisht. The letter has never been in politics and her only qualification for being chosen by Brahm Prakash to be a Deputy Minister is her beauty. However, the "Citizens of Delhi," for no reason whatsoever, forked over half a lakh to present her and Gupta with a PURSE. A dictionary of political terms

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says than when money is given surreptitiously to a politician it is a bribe, but when it is given publicly it is called a PURSE.

The Opposition in Delhi Assembly has ferreted out the names of the *Citizens of Delhi* who contributed to the PURSE and why. These generous citizens are :

(1) Messrs Bhanamal Gulzarimal, Iron merchants, against whom 11 cases are under investigation. Rs. 5000.

(2) An unnamed millionaire who is being prosecuted for printing obscene playing cards : Rs. 2500.

(3) Sardar Gurubaksh Singh, Rs 5000, who has been made an Honorary Magistrate after the purse presentation.

(4) Another Sardar Bahadur, Rs. 5000, who too has been made an Honorary Magistrate after the purse presentation.

(5) Bhai Mohan Singh (Rs. 5000), Maheswar Dayal (Rs. 2000) and S. L. Kapoor (Rs. 1000). They have been nominated to the Delhi Municipal Committee.

(6) Three Delhi Hotels—*Ambassador, Narula* and *Esplanade*, Rs. 5000 each.

They have been given licences to sell liquor in bottles.

### THE TRAGEDY OF KOREA

According to a Reuter message from Hindnagar (Korea), the U. N. explainers failed to persuade a single South Korean prisoner of War to go back to South Korea after 6 days of intensive persuasion. The inference that one can draw about the popularity of butcher Syngman

Rhee's administration is quite obvious.

A Korean Peace Conference which does not take these facts into consideration will never be a success. The unification of Korea requires the elimination of the Syngman Rhee regime and the establishment of a government friendly to Peking. Japan is rearming and bids fair to become a factor, very shortly, to be reckoned with again in the councils of the Pacific. Her association with an enduring settlement of the Korean problem is, therefore, an absolute necessity. Korea, like Germany, may remain divided and a pawn in power politics for years to come until the foreign troops are withdrawn and the Koreans allowed a free hand to settle their own destiny and their own future. No amount of military or financial help by one side or the other can solve the political problems of this unfortunate land which is now in ruins and a very large part of her population is either dead or maimed.

The Americans (under the guise of U.N.) are determined to have it out with the Communists on the soil of Korea.

### A BRUTE MAJORITY

Addressing the conference of presiding officers of Indian legislatures, G. V. Mavlankar, Speaker of the House of the People said: "Majorities are undoubtedly an advantage to push through the programme of the party in majority, but there are also danger spots therein, which are likely to render harm

to the best interests of the party itself, and also to the progress of democracy in the country. Knowing or having very large majorities, the administration tends to become stiff, uncompromising and sometimes unresponsive even to reasonable criticism and shows fascist tendencies."

When the Speaker, who is a member of the Congress Party, holds such an opinion from his

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personal experience, one can easily guess what the members of Parties in Opposition feel.

#### CENSUS FIGURES AND OTHERS

More than a million women in Britain are lonely women; and the number of lonely men is 317,00.

Over half of the homes in Britain have no children under sixteen in them.

In 1952, the people in Britain drank 26 million barrels of beer, 10 million gallons of spirits and smoked 280 million pounds of tobacco.

In the same year the country spent £3,315 millions on food, £850 millions on drink, £821 millions on tobacco and £1,017 millions on clothing.

The get-married-young habit is spreading; nearly half the girls in London aged between twenty and twenty-four are wives. And fifty-one in every 1000 girls, aged between 15 to 19 have husbands. But there are five times as many divorced persons as there were 20 years ago.

#### CABINET CRISES IN STATES

There is more or less Cabinet crisis in all the States. Only in some it is simmering, while in others there is open conflagration.

At the moment the quarrel is taking different forms in different States. For instance, in Himachal Pradesh, it is about reallocation of portfolios; in Ajmer over the elimination of Chief Minister's men in the recent elections to the executive committee of the party: in

Delhi over the retention of two Deputy Ministers, and in Mysore over alleged corruption among Ministers.

The fact is that Ministership is considered a big prize so that every M.L.A. wishes to annex it. If the Centre is largely free from this intrigue it is because of the fear of rousing the wrath of the Prime Minister.

In the case of most Ministers, salaries and perquisites of political office raise the incumbent very high in the social and economic scale with the result that those who get into office wish to retain it even if it means compromising their self-respect and conscience.

Further, those who lose office find reversion to their normal status very galling, for they get accustomed as Ministers to a much higher standard of living. It is not generally realized that the total cost of a Minister to the exchequer is not less than Rs. 6000 a month.

Gandhiji, knowing the demoralizing influence of power and pelf, suggested that every Minister, including the Prime Minister, should stay in M.L.A.'s quarters. This advice was disregarded in the belief that Ministers should live in dignity befitting their office if they were to create an impression on Ambassadors of foreign countries.

Every Congressman to-day aspires to be a Minister to serve the country. As the first step to this he wants to be an M. L. A. When he, very legitimately, tries to get nomin-

ation for election, Mr. Nehru calls him a BHATIARA. However, any amount of abuse cannot deter the patriotic Congressman from trying to serve the people as a Minister. He realizes that the members of the Cabinet are in no way superior to or better than him. (Barring of course a few exceptions here and there such as the selection of Miss Shanta Vasist as a Minister for her beauty, or the selection of a son of Tusar Kanti Ghosh for the sake of the father). "If A can be a Minister, why not I?" they all exclaim in surprise. All Congressmen have fought fiercely in the War of Independence, they have all made tremendous sacrifices in the process, most of them have a charkha somewhere at home, they generally wear khadi and Gandhi cap in public. Is it surprising then that they all seek to be Ministers as a small return for all that they have done for the country and its people? Cabinet crises will continue so long as Cabinets are not very much enlarged and every Congressman gets a chance of being a Minister at least for a year. The Congress President should be a realist and not have his head in the skies.

#### REPRESENTATHIEVES RAISING A SHINDY

A memorandum signed by over 100 Members of Parliament the majority of whom are Congressmen, has been submitted to the Speaker of the House of the People and the Prime

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Minister urging them not to reduce their travelling allowance.

The rules provide for one and three-fifths fares of the highest class of railway travel. After the abolition of the first-class in the Indian Railways, Members, who were so far paid at first-class rates will now get only second-class fares.

The signatories argue that this is too meagre and that they should be entitled to payment on the basis of aeroplane fares, air conditioned coach rates, or failing these at least the original first-class rates.

#### WORRIED MULTI-MILLIONAIRES

According to India's multi-millionaires, India's cotton textile industry is in the doldrums.

The war gave the industry its biggest boost and exports, which amounted to 177,000,000 yards in 1939 shot to the record height of 1,072,000,000 yards in 1950. Foreign exchange amounting to Rs. 890,000,000 was earned in this peak year of 1950.

Over the past three years, however, there has been a steep decline in exports. In 1951, the country exported 732,000,000 yards. The following year saw another sharp drop to a total of 543,000,000 yards.

Up to the end of October this year, a bare 463,000,000 yards have been exported. On the basis of present commitments, it is estimated, this year's export figure is not likely to exceed that of last year's, with foreign exchange earnings amounting to Rs. 420,000,000.

This is disappointing when considered against the 5 Year Plan annual export target of 1,000,000,000 yards.

It is said that the postwar re-entry of Britain and Japan in the world's textile markets—and India's seemingly complete inability to meet this competition—are largely responsible for the fast dwindling exports.

India has a big advantage arising from the fact she grows her own cotton, whereas Britain and Japan have to import their supplies.

It is also a fact that Indian labour is far more poorly paid than British or Japanese labour.

The great Indian capitalists say that during the war it was

not possible to replace machinery and these also were worked to their full capacity, so their wear and tear has been considerable. They have calculated that Rs. 300 crores would be needed to fit new machinery and they are paupers. What they do not say is that they made profits of thousands of crores during the boom years and swallowed up all that money leaving nothing for replacement of machinery. They perhaps hope that as the Government of India has to spend thousands of crores under the five year plan, a small sum like Rs 300 crores can be given to the Indian mill industry as help to Swadeshi.

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# An Enthusiastic Reception

( Translated from Parimal Goswami's book "Markeh Lengeh" with the author's permission )

By ESOBSS

The throng of people made things hum at the meeting. That was because the room was not large enough. It was a medium sized hall in a zemindar's house. The zemindar himself was one of the organisers of the meeting.

The occasion was the thirtieth anniversary of the poet, Haladhar Haldar's birth. The ceremony was being observed that day by the literary men of Bengal.

This was an unparalleled event in the history of Bengal, because though Sahitya or literature has received some scanty praise in this province, no man of letters had at this young age received such high honours.

Neither had Rabindranath obtained from his countrymen at this tender age an address of welcome at a public meeting.

In the meantime the province of Bengal had made rapid advance. The time for hero-worship had come with the dawn of independence. Those who had fired a single shot from a smuggled revolver became heroes. Bengal had nearly forgotten the claim of literary men.

How many literary men had made sacrifices? Not a single one had been killed in the 1946 riot. Two only disappeared, but came out from hiding at last.

Plain sacrifice has little value. There must be something dramatic about it. Thousands of cultivators had sacrificed themselves to feed the people. Who gave them an address of welcome? Only

can shotgun patriotism be regarded as the standard fit to be honoured by the democratic Govt. Nothing else matters.

So the literary talents of Bengal could not wait longer with such a genius as the poet Haladhar Haldar in their midst. All poets and story-tellers are lovers of the country, but they have been neglected.

Then there was the danger that if Haladhar Haldar the poet was not recognized immediately as a hero the essayists might leap into prominence because they also claimed to be patriotic.

The average life of the Bengali is twenty-three years. The poet Haladhar Haldar was already thirty. During the past twelve years he had written twenty five thousand poems; is not that a genuine proof of patriotism?

The crowd of hero-worshippers thronged round Haladhar Haldar at the reception given by literary men representing the 'nation.' A song composed by the poet himself was sung by admirers who then declared the meeting open.

One by one the speakers rose and delivered fine harangue pronouncing their eulogy on the poet. The first speaker said:

"Haladhar Haldar is the pride of Bengal. He has composed his songs with all the emotion of his heart depicting the sufferings of the country. Bengal's sky, Bengal's bird, Bengal's breeze are the subjects of his poetry.

Then began the second phase of his poetical life. From

the sky he descended to the earth and composed an excellent poem *The Kencho* (earthworm) let me read it out to you.

This is a wonderful poem, reminding the Bengalis that they must remain on earth below, not in the sky, because they are earthworms having no backbone. Therefore, Haladhar Haldar is a far-seeking poet, and being a seer he is a Rishi!

The walls reverberated the clappings. The second speaker said:—

"That Haladhar Haldar is a seer, a Rishi, is proved by his poem *The Himalayas And The Bay of Bengal*. He could have mentioned the waving corn comparing it to the waving stone and waters. But he was cautious, not knowing which rice field should fall to the lot of a new Rashtra."

Applause again! The meeting continued for five hours with singing and dancing. Then did the president rise to deliver his epoch-making address:—

"Haladhar Haldar voices the feelings of Bengal. Therefore Haladhar Haldar is himself Bengal.

"He has written one thousand poems on the national flag, seven hundred on the riots, five hundred on bombs, and four hundred on the Boundary Commission.

"These mean that the energyless Bengalis have for the moment no plan to be immediately carried into execution. The poet thus wants to stimulate the Bengalis to action by these subjects of his poetry."



Haladhar Haldar is a Maha Bengali, he is a Super Bengali."

The meeting broke up with half an hour's continous cheering and prolonged vociferation. The hall became empty slowly. Haladhar Haldar was borne in procession through the public streets by several admirers.

About ten or twelve of the organizers of the meeting loitered here and there, and were later

invited to tea in the zemindar's drawing room.

As the cups went round the first speaker said "The Kenchoo" (earthworm) poem is all bunkum! Nothing figurative or emblematic in it!"

Another speaker said "And what is this humbug of a poem *The Himalayas And The Bay of Bengal?*"

Yet another speaker said "I have seen all his poems written during the last seven

years. What we claimed for his poetry at the meeting and what we styled as indicative of the field of his vision were stretched beyond legitimate extent. Weren't they?"

Still another said "To tell you the truth none of that fellow's poems leaves an impression on the mind!"

The president of the meeting observed "Does that Shala know how to compose a poem?"

## Delhi State Politics

The autumn session of the Delhi State Assembly brought the rival groups in the Congress Assembly Party into an open conflict. The way the Ministerial group and its opponents wrestled with each other on the floor of the Assembly was indeed sickening in the extreme. Not that the differences in the Party are a new development. But they now appear to have reached the Cabinet level.

The Chief Minister Brahm Prakash, heads the Ministerial group. The anti-Ministerialists, are still without an active leader. The differences between these groups date back to the day when, on the eve of the general elections, nominations for Congress tickets were made. Brahm Prakash, who was at the helm of affairs in the State Congress organization at that time, succeeded in manoeuvring most of the nominations for those who belonged to his group. This sowed the seed of discon-

tent among Congressmen. The group led by Dr. Yudhvir Singh, an old widely respected Congress leader, never got reconciled to what his supporters call the Tammany Hall technique of Brahm Prakash. This group succeeded none the less to have some of its members nominated for election and had them elected to the State Legislature. Eventually the Ministry was formed by Brahm Prakash with most of his own followers.

For a time everything appeared to run smoothly though an under-current of discontent among some members was evident even then.

There was, therefore, despite discontent, no serious challenge to Brahm Prakash's leadership for quite some time, probably thanks to the absence of an outstanding personality to lead his critics. Dr. Yudhvir Singh has continuously been ill and has not been able to attend more than one session.

The Government's inept

handling of the refugee and other problems, which have cropped up during the past two years, has now led to serious dissensions even within the Ministerial group. At least two Ministers are known to have become directly involved in this rift. Several developments had strengthened the ranks of the Delhi Ministry's critics inside the Congress Party. First, the elevation of two of the three Parliamentary Secretaries to Deputy Ministership caused considerable heart-burning. Then came the appointment of honorary magistrates and nominations to the New Delhi Municipal Committee. As if these were not enough, the grant of three liquor licences and of a contract to a cooperative society run by prominent Congressmen came to add fuel to the fire. But the smouldering fire burst into flames when a purse of Rs. 51,000 was presented to the two Deputy Ministers, Mr. Shiv

Charan Gupta and Miss Shanta Vasisht by "their admirers and friends" for service rendered. But even the Ministerial "loyalists" were not happy about the way this was brought about. The Government's bungling with what is known as the Grain Syndicate Case was another factor that went to deplete the support Brahm Prakash was earlier able to command from the Congress Party in the State Legislature.

The split inside the Cabinet, which came to the fore during the session just concluded, has now assumed serious dimensions. It is maintained in knowledgeable quarters that in the decisions which his Government takes, the Chief Minister does not consult the only other Minister of his Cabinet. Dr. Sushila Nayyar, the Health and Rehabilitation Minister, was not consulted in the choice of the two Deputy Ministers. In respect of the nominations to the New Delhi Municipal Committee and the appointment of honorary magistrates too she was left in the dark until the decisions has been made public. The Health Minister is also known to have opposed the grant of three new liquor licences. These licences are held by firms, who had been blacklisted earlier. The terms of new licences are held to be even more attractive from the point of view of the holders. After the death of Shafiq-ur-Rehman Kidwai, his portfolios of Development and Education were given to an inexperienced, junior Deputy Minister, Miss Shanta Vasisht, who is a newcomer to politics and can boast of hardly any-

thing. She was least qualified for the jobs assigned to her. It was openly alleged at a party meeting that in appointing her as Deputy Minister, the leader had completely ignored the party. The choice of Mr. Shiv Charan Gupta, the other Deputy Minister, too came for much criticism.

After the recent "fire-works" in the Assembly, both during the question-hours and debates, the Congress High Command have taken a serious view of the affairs of the Delhi State Congress, particularly its legislative section. The anti-Ministerialists are now said to be busy framing a detailed charge-sheet against the Ministry, including allegations of corruption, nepotism and inefficiency.

In the Assembly the Opposition members had severely criticized the Government's handling of the Grain Syndicate Case. The gravamen of their charge was that the Ministry had been trying to shield some officers, including those alleged to be spoiling the case and to patronize corrupt and dishonest officers. Instances cited by them related, to a lawyer who, according to them, had earlier been removed from service by the Special Police Establishment of the Central Government, but was now appointed assistant to the Special Prosecutor in the Grain Syndicate Case, and the Special Prosecutor, who hails from Bombay, and had allegedly the indirect blessings of the accused. The Chief Minister could never provide a satisfactory reply to the House.

Even in regard to the grant of liquor licences, the nominations to the New Delhi Muni-

pal Committee, the appointment of honorary magistrates, the grant of a contract to a Congressman's Cooperative Society and the presentation of the purse of Rs. 51,000 to the two Deputy Ministers, Brahm Prakash was weak and vacillating in his explanations. - Indeed his replies were often contradictory. Feelings naturally ran high and at one stage there was a virtual scuffle between a prominent member of the rival group and a Deputy Minister in the lobbies. This had an inevitable repercussion. The anti-Ministerialists requisitioned an emergency meeting of the Party to discuss not only the evasive replies, but also the sale by Brahm Prakash of his land to a colonizer for about Rs. 57,000/. (The market value of the land would be no more than Rs. 22,000.) This requisition was a counter-move to the Ministerialist proposal to take disciplinary action against certain members of the rival group.

During the trial of strength in the Assembly as well as in the Party meetings, Dr. Sushila Nayyar, the Deputy Leader of the Party, kept scrupulously aloof. She was absent at the emergency meeting of the executive of the Party which was called to consider the issue of disciplinary action against the Congress anti-Ministerialists. Even at the stormy party meeting held on requisition she was not present for more than 15 minutes, although it lasted for well over four hours. In the House too, she did not come forward to defend the Government. Moreover, except

(Continued on page 85)

# Birth-Control And The Educated Middle Class

The publication of the 1951 Census report and the bold and rather unorthodox observations of the Census Commissioner on the problem of population increase in India have thrown into sharp relief an issue which has vital bearing on the present and future of this country. It is an issue which is generally tabooed in public discussions. Yet unless we are willing to court a national disaster, the whole question of planned parenthood or birth control must be squarely confronted. Educated public opinion in this country should, therefore, be grateful to the Census Commissioner for bringing this vital question into limelight.

Before discussing the question it has however to be recognised that in our present circumstances the practice of birth control cannot be expected to be widespread in this country. The main beneficiaries of contraception at the moment will naturally be the educated middle-class. To realise the necessity of birth-control and to practise it hygienically, the woman must attain a minimum level of modern education and general culture. That condition is absent in the case of the vast bulk of Indian womanhood. The multitude of them perform the process of reproduction almost like animals. Sex-intercourse is practised as a matter of habit, and even as a duty. Children are born at random. They are brought into this world without any

sense of responsibility on the part of the parents. If some die at birth or soon afterwards, others follow directly. The standing tragedy is regarded as a freak of fate. The belief in fate or in the Will of God precludes the realisation of the sense of responsibility which alone could introduce intelligence in the process of procreating.

At the other end of the social pole, there is no necessity for controlling the birth-rate artificially. With the rich, in the position to have varied interests in life, the birth-rate is automatically controlled. Even those who can well afford to bring up any number of children, as a rule, have only a few. This is so particularly among the well-to-do, with modern education and culture. There are various reasons for this apparently paradoxical phenomenon, the main being unconscious practice of birth-control. It results automatically from the mode of life of the educated and cultured rich.

In the prevailing cultural atmosphere of India, the question of birth-control arises only in the case of the modern educated middle-class. Therefore, the introduction of the practice will not generally touch the problem of population. Nevertheless, it will certainly enable the middle-class to overcome some of the difficulties they experience under the given socio-political conditions of the country. Unemployment has become a veritable nightmare for the middle-class youth; none of the palliatives suggested,

even if seriously applied, will relieve the distress. The hopeless position of the middle-class, in its turn, reflects the economic bankruptcy of the masses. "Prosperity" built on the precarious foundation of mass bankruptcy cannot in any way be shared by the middle-class. The solution of the problem lies in a quickening of the general economic life of the country.

Meanwhile, the distress of the middle-class grows, sapping the physical energy and weakening the mental vigour of the very social elements who are to play an important role in the impending democratic revolution which must take place as a condition for the rejuvenation of the Indian society.

Any number of young men are married while still in school, and are fathers of children when they find themselves unemployed, indeed practically unemployable, on finishing their academic education. Can one expect them to be public-spirited, concerned with anything but their own affairs? Weighed down by their own burden, they have no time to think of others. Unemployment may

(Continued from page 84)

during question-hour, or when the discussion related to her departments, Dr. Nayyar preferred to be absent from the House. She came into open conflict with Brahm Prakash on the report of the Privileges Committee.

—Thought

make the educated youth discontented; some of them may be driven to desperate acts. But on the whole, it is bound to have a depressing and demoralising effect. Those engrossed with the immediate problem of earning a livelihood cannot have a broad vision. They are bound to be indifferent to general social problems, and disinclined to have a long perspective of things.

Of course, all these immediate problems will not be directly solved by the practice of birth-control. But it will be beneficial psychologically, and in consequence arrest the moral degeneration and physical deterioration of the youth. In other words, the practice of birth-control may not have any direct economic value; it will, however, touch other aspects of the social problem. It will free the youth from handicaps imposed upon them by tradition and the established social and domestic customs. That freedom will enable them to see beyond the tip of their nose, so to say; to take a broad view of the situation; to realise that their particular problems result from a general problem. They will have a greater freedom of action, and that will mean a great impetus for the mobilisation of the forces of social renaissance.

The practice of birth-control will relieve the youth of the burden of domestic responsibilities which, incurred obligatorily, they simply cannot discharge under the given conditions of the country. The young people marry, and have children automatically. Why should they not avoid the responsibility which cannot be discharged, for

no fault of theirs? Why should they, as a matter of animal habit, sanctified by patriarchal social traditions, beget children they cannot provide for, cannot equip suitably for the struggle of life, cannot even guarantee the minimum requirements for a normal physical growth? The alternative may be not to marry; and celibacy is a laudable virtue in this country. But it is not generally practised simply because it cannot be.

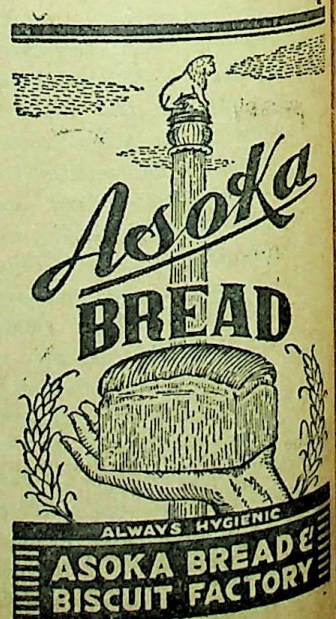
The institution of marriage is primarily based upon the necessity of performing a fundamental biological function, in an orderly manner, so to say. The opposite sexes naturally attract each other. Celibacy, therefore, is an outrage against nature. However, supposing there is a mass flight from marriage, what will be the result? There will be a promiscuous practice of sex intercourse in the so-called immoral and illicit manner.

One may choose not to marry, refuse to enter into a man-made relation; but he is bound to obey the law of nature. Some of the bachelors may be celibates; the majority are not. Therefore, apart from the moral aspect, the abnormal situation will produce a new problem—illegitimate children *en masse*. That nasty problem—could be obviated in one of the two possible ways: clandestine infanticide on an enormous scale, or practice of birth-control. No sensible person would dispute that the latter alternative would certainly be preferable, morally as well as humanly. Trying to find an alternative to the "immoral and unnatural" practice of birth-control, we are thus driven to

that very device as the lesser of the two evils born of a futile attempt to find an easy way out of a difficult social situation.

Then, mass flight from marriage is not a practical proposition. It is not permitted by Hindu social custom. To marry is a religious duty; so also is to beget children—in wedlock. Those who would not permit the practice of birth control on moral and religious grounds, could not, for the same reason, countenance refusal to marry, except in the cases of individuals taking the vow of celibacy, and these can only be exceptions. But in the case of women, marriage is the law. If a large number of men refuse to marry, there will be an equal number of unmarried women—a situation not permitted by our social

Use, Always



12th December, 1953

custom and religious tradition. So, by compelling the women to marry, Hinduism deprives men also of the freedom in that respect. Polygamy no longer offers an escape out of the dilemma; on a large scale it has become an economic impossibility. Consequently, practically all men also must marry, as a rule, if Hindu society is to stick to the prejudice that single women are misfortunes. The hypothetical remedy of mass flight from marriage thus has to be ruled out. It is unavailable as well as ineffective for curing the evil of unwanted children.

The practice of birth-control has become an economic necessity for the distressed middle-class; therefore, it is finding favour with the more intelligent, more courageous and more responsible among the educated youth of both sexes. Realising that under the given economic conditions of their class, they may not be able to bring up children properly, they are reluctant to incur the responsibility. Nor do they wish to prejudice their freedom of action by early, premature parenthood. They want to grow as men and women, live a love-life free from the cares of domesticity before becoming fathers and mothers. They feel that the duty to themselves must have priority over their other duties. There is no selfishness in this attitude. On the contrary, it betokens a sense of social responsibility.

Few normal youths would choose to be celibate bachelors, or old maids hugging the dubious virtue of virginity. The control of child-birth, either in wedlock or outside, is the only

way out of the dilemma. The more courageous are advocating it; the practice is growing. The venerable custodians of India's religious traditions and the self-appointed keepers of her moral conscience are horrified and scandalised by the perversity of youth. But what alternative way do they show? Dare they enjoin that children must be bred as a religious duty, even when the parents are fully conscious of their inability to provide for the new-comers? By issuing such absurd injunction, our elders would forfeit their claim to guide the youth. There is a confusion, which is more

confounded by pompous moralisings and platitudinous talks about Indian ideals. That does not help when a grown up and responsible person is confronted with the question: To be or not to be—should birth-control be practised or not? There must be a clear answer. The question is too acute to be begged. None can advocate habitual breeding of unwanted children, and yet claim to have any sense of responsibility. On the other hand, prejudice precludes the courage of facing the fact. Failed by the elders, the youth must find their way out of the crisis.

—The Radical Humanist

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# A Germ Collection

There is a rather strange zoo in Washington, capital of the United States. It is not the kind of zoo where animals are kept in cages and where you can take the children on a Sunday afternoon. It is a zoo where germs are kept.

This may seem rather odd, but it is of very great importance for ordinary people everywhere. Although the 'zoo' is in the United States, it is really a kind of international centre.

Officially, it is called The American Type Culture Collection, where more than 3,000 kinds of germs are kept alive and healthy. These germs are not necessarily our enemies, but it is important to study them so that we know exactly what they can do.

x            x            x

In one test tube, for example, there is a strain of germs isolated from the sore knee of a little girl called Tracy. This child was brought to a New York City hospital with a serious infection. To the surprise of the hospital physicians her infection cleared up much more quickly than they expected. Careful study showed them why she got well so soon.

When she hurt her knee in the first place, a special germ strain had entered there which was producing an antibiotic drug capable of killing other kinds of germs. The drug thus discovered was named 'Bacitracin' in her honour, and it is now used to treat infection in other little girls and boys, and also in adults.

x            x            x

In another test tube, there is a very useful kind of germ known as No. 7469. These

germs are very particular about their diet. They will not thrive unless they are fed a proper amount of vitamin B 2, also known as riboflavin, one of the vitamins needed by human beings. So scientists are able to use germs of this strain to test how much of this vitamin is contained in a vitamin pill or breakfast food. They feed the germs a meal containing everything that is needed except vitamin B 2. Then they add a little of the pill or food which they want to test. The speed with which the germs grow and multiply shows how much vitamin is contained in the material being tested.

x            x            x

Scientists from all over the world send unusual germ strains to the Type Culture Collection. One strain was found at the bottom of an Irish well; another was isolated from the bone marrow of a corpse in Tasmania; a third came from wine made by Ivory Coast tribesmen in Africa. Botanists have sent germs found on a Brazilian avocado tree, a Californian poppy, a Puerto Rican onion, and an Argentinian lemon. Strangest of all, perhaps, it a very deadly germ isolated from the tip of a poisoned African arrow.

x            x            x

A strain of germs called "Old 465" has a fascinating history. In 1848, the British Navy sent out an expedition to rescue an earlier expedition headed by Sir John Franklin, which had been lost in the Arctic wastes. The rescue group left tins of canned pemmican, a mixture of pound-

ed meat and raisins, in places where the lost expedition might find them. Sir John and his men never found them, and presumably starved to death. But a few germs in the tins did not starve. When the tins were picked up 75 years later by a Canadian expedition, they were carefully opened, and a strain of germs was found alive and prospering. These were of a type unknown to science until many years after that Arctic pemmican was made. Descendants of "Old 465" are still doing well in Washington.

Other germ strains kept in the zoo are useful for making chesses, wines and vinegar, for tanning leather, for producing alcohol from wood and for manufacturing several vitamins. Two germ strains have a remarkable ability to separate certain kinds of pure radium out of ores containing many impurities.

There is also to be found the very useful germ which causes "milky disease", a sickness quite harmless to men and most animals, but fatal to a widespread insect pest, the Japanese beetle.

Most fascinating are the germs which produce antibiotic drugs. The Washington zoo has the germs which manufacture the first and best-known of these "miracle drugs", penicillin. It has the germs which produce the newer broad-range antibiotics, useful against dozens of human infections. In addition, it has many kinds of germs which produce little-known antibiotic drugs having very specialised uses.

# RIGHTS ARE NOT "FOR MEN ONLY"

The story of women's rights is a fascinating one. They have been subject, throughout history, to extraordinary changes of fortune. In some instances women have been regarded as chattels; in others, they have been honoured like sovereigns, from the mere fact that they were women. Civil law has frequently regarded women as irresponsible; but there have also been matriarchies, in which home and society alike were founded upon maternal authority.

There have been periods of total emancipation, and periods of enslavement beyond all hope of deliverance. Sometimes men have placed women in a position of eminence; at other times women have had to win their own rights at the cost of a long struggle against the distrust, fear and derision of contemporaries.

In Ancient Egypt, women, though for a time enslaved to man, very soon attained complete equality with him. Girls, when they came of age, were given the same rights as men.

A marriage involved a double contract, in which the rights and duties of each spouse were clearly stated; these were to all intents and purposes the same for each party. These contracts show that the right to personal property existed for both sexes, and that either spouse could divorce at will, subject to payment of fair compensation.

In the working classes, women seem to have been given the lighter tasks, such as weaving or the business of buying and selling. Men were responsible for the hard work. In the country women and children shared labour in the fields with men, on an equal footing.

Although Egyptian civilization readily recognized the rights of women, this was not the case with most of the peoples of antiquity.

In Ancient Greece, especially with the Boeotians and the Spartans, society long adhered to the primitive law that regarded women as veritable beasts of burden. Women were bought and sold like cattle, or captured by force. Even at a later stage, a father long preserved the right of marrying his daughters off as he chose, without consulting her wishes; and he had the right of life and death over her.

### *Philosophers Disagree*

Athenian civilization grew less harsh, under the influence of certain philosophers. But though Xenophon took up the defence of women, Plato was shocked to see them become the equals of their husbands. Aristotle declared that women were very inferior, particularly as regards their reasoning powers, "Virtue is conceded to them; but it is a virtue proportioned to their capacities, and so a lesser virtue than that of men."

We know, from the comedies of Aristophanes, to what freedom and self-reliance women had attained in his century. But it was custom rather than law that gave them this freedom.

In Rome, the legal status of women varied with the times. At an early period, they lived in a state of utter subjection to father or husband. Except for the priestesses, who were granted certain privileges, women were excluded from any intellectual life. Cicero, Tacitus and Cato denied that they had any capacity for judgment. At the most, they were consulted about the choice of a husband; but divorce, by mutual consent, was permitted.

Finally, Seneca and the Stoics in the first century of the Christian era, affirmed the equality of the sexes, though stating that women were less fitted than men for the study of philosophy. A system of co-education was adopted, in upper classes, so that a master could teach a brother and a sister at the same time.

This accession to intellectual life enabled women to take a greater part in the propagation of Christianity. But women were not emancipated either in private or in public law.

The great Renaissance, which began as early as the twelfth century in Mediterranean countries was accompanied by a great advance in women's emancipation. Chivalry honoured women as a source of fine feeling. Thus

ladies, princesses and middle-class women took a distinguished part in the social and cultural life of this period. In Italy more particularly, in Provence and in Languedoc women spoke Latin, wrote, verse and encouraged arts and letters. Certain women even taught in universities.

The fourteenth century provides many examples of women of distinguished mind; the court of Queen Joan of Naples was one of the most brilliant of the period, and Christine de Pisan, daughter to Charles V of France's physician astrologer, must have been stirred by the condition of women in her time, for apart from poems and tales she wrote *The City of Ladies*, a discourse on women's education. She maintained that the social inequality of the sexes was not dictated by nature: "If it were the custom to put girls to school and teach them as boys are taught, women would understand the subtleties of art and science as well as men do". It took a few centuries to fulfil this prophecy.

Famous women in the sixteenth century included Margaret de Navarre, sister of Francis I; Margaret de Valois, the wife of Henry IV; and Miss de Gournay, who was Montaigne's adopted daughter and wrote a treatise on the equality of men and women. So much for France. In Italy, Angela di Brescia founded the Ursuline order (1537). In Great Britain, we have Queen Elizabeth of England and Mary, Queen of Scots.

Two independent and unprejudiced minds of the sixteenth century, the great Erasmus and Cornelius Agrippa, championed the education of women and their access to profession then closed to them.

#### *No legal status*

In the following century, in France at the time of the Fronde, some great ladies played an active part in politics, while others greatly influenced literature. It was not long before the question of women's right to education, and of their civil rights, which had been left to custom and the good pleasure of parents, arose in a compelling form.

In ancient French and English law, an unmarried woman or a widow could go to law, enter into a contract, or make a will in the same way as a man. But with marriage a woman lost all legal status from this point of view.

In England, Mary Astell (1668-1734) was the author of two works demanding the equality of the sexes in family and social life.

Later, Elizabeth Montagu and Hannah More, through their writings and their influence, continued the struggle for women's rights. Mary Wollstonecraft was also devoted to the same cause; her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) claimed economic rights for women—a prerequisite of social and political equality, particularly as regards the labouring classes. This work was dedicated to Talleyrand, who had recommended equal education for both sexes.

France of the eighteenth century had made little progress in these matters from the legal point of view, but shortly before the Revolution there was a great advance in outlook particularly among the bourgeoisie.

#### *Sadly prophetic*

When the States General were convoked in France in 1789, women presented petitions for their cause. A pamphlet demanded that they become eligible for membership of the Assembly. Dressmakers embroideresses and modistes called for the protection of their professions "not to usurp men's authority, but to be sheltered from adversity."

The women's movement was led by Olympe de Gouges, who published an eloquent *Declaration of the Rights of Woman*.

"Woman is born free and equal to man in rights. The principle of all sovereignty resides entirely in the nation, which is but the association of men and women. The law must be the same for all. A woman has the right to mount the

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scaffold; she should also have the right to mount the tribune."

This last sentence proved sadly prophetic, for Olympe de Gouges was guillotined in 1793, for having opposed the principles of the Terror.

After lively controversies during the nineteenth century the women's movement continued to expand under the Third Republic. In 1880, a few militants demanded the registration of women as voters. No positive results were secured by the end of the century, but women had succeeded in entering various liberal professions (the bar, medicine etc.).

In England, however, the women's movement developed on a large scale, with the John Stuart Mill as its most distinguished champion. He wrote: The subordination of women stands out as an isolated fact in the midst of modern institutions...It is relic of an ancient intellectual and moral world, destroyed everywhere, yet preserved in a single aspect.

In the House of Commons, when the electoral (reform) bill of 1867 was discussed, he proposed the substitution of the word "persons" for "man" (as has been done, by the way, in the Universal Declaration of 1948). His motion was defeated by 196 votes to 36. The woman's movement pointed out that, several centuries before, women had had the right of suffrage, and that no legal act had been passed to deprive them of it. Many women thereupon entered them-

selves on the electoral lists, but the authorities struck their names off. However, the movement grew and enfranchisement for local elections was finally obtained.

In most countries political rights were finally conceded to women in the twentieth century.

In England, the "suffragette" movement was vigorously conducted by Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney. These two women unflinchingly used the most riotous forms of publicity—public demonstrations, tumultuous meetings, etc.

### Hunger—Strikers

Women's eligibility for municipal office was secured in 1907, but this merely stimulated the emancipationists to further efforts. Windows were broken, letter-boxes were destroyed, and the Prime Minister was insulted in the House of Commons by suffragettes who had managed to enter in disguise. When the militants were put in prison, they promptly went on hunger-strike.

When the first World War broke out in 1914 they declared a truce and went into war



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service. The partisans of women's suffrage continued to increase; shortly before the end of the war, in 1918, the Representation of the People Act was carried, giving voting rights to women over thirty years of age. This Act was completed, in 1928, by a measure that entitled women to vote at the same age as men.

In France, between 1897 and 1927, married women obtained the right to retain their nationality, to dispose of their salaries, to go to law, and to be guardians. They also secured the right to higher education.

The Constitution of the Fourth Republic gave women the same political and civil rights as men, as is now the case in most countries.

In the United States, women had, shortly before the end of the 1914-1918 war, secured the right to vote, by virtue of an amendment to the Constitution.

In the political field, the greatest progress in the fight for women's rights has been

made since the end of world war I. Before 1914 only four countries—Australia, Finland, New Zealand and Norway—accorded voting rights to women. By 1918, the number had increased to 13, though in some cases rights were restricted. Between 1917 and 1945, however, a further 34 States gave women the right to vote, and in the first four years after World War II, women in 12 other countries finally enjoyed this right.

Yet by 1949, in only 52 of these 59 States did women have full voting rights with men and in a number of other countries the right is still withheld. Since 1946 the United Nations has been working to end such discrimination. One country which recently (Nov. 6, 1952) accorded voting rights to women is the Lebanon. Here, women form the majority of the voting population—395,000 compared with 385,000 men of voting age.

During the past fifty years women have played an increasing part in the profession in industry and public affairs. In many countries they hold public office as cabinet ministers and some are serving their countries as ambassadors. Recently an Indian woman diplomat, Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, sister of Prime Minister Nehru of India, was elected President of the United Nations General Assembly.

Though women have proved their capacity to meet all the responsibilities of citizenship and of professional and vocational life they are still subject to many inequalities and anomalies. Discrimination regarding employment and education are two examples. The United Nations is working to bring about a wider application of the "equal work" and, in co-operation with Unesco, to ensure that women are accorded equal educational opportunities with men.

—UNESCO.

## Science Jotting

Q fever, a pneumonia-like disease caused by a tiny germ called *Rickettsia burneti* unknown before 1937, is rapidly becoming a problem in parts of the world.

Since the disease was first identified among abattoir workers in Queensland, Australia, Q fever has been found "almost

everywhere that a search has been made."

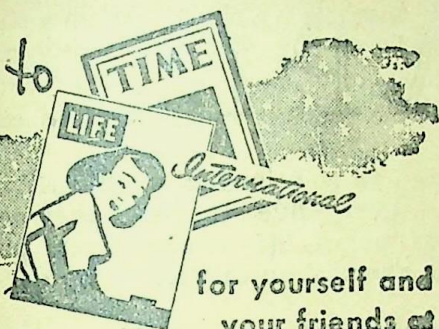
The first serious outbreak of the disease was among troops in Southern Europe during World War II. In one 1945 epidemic in Italy, 269 cases were reported in a battalion of 900 men. Three outbreaks of the disease

were registered in England and Wales within two years.

That Q fever is treated with the antibiotic terramycin. *Rickettsia* are smaller than bacteria but larger than viruses. They are found in bodies of lice and other arthropoda.

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