

5397

ANSWERING YOU

STIMSON: What is the difference between Socialism and Communism ?

MASANI: Socialism and Communism have in theory the same objectives

A Socialist or communist society is a free and classless society based on the principle: "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need." In practice, such a society would be based on more or less complete equality in the economic sphere and the fullest democracy in the political sphere.

While, however, the theoretical objective is common, there is a wide divergence in the methods that Socialists and Communists seek to employ in achieving the common goal. I would say that whenever democracy exists and it is possible through the ballot-box to change over from the capitalist to the socialist society, the Socialist would confine himself to this method and would avoid a resort of bullets. Of course, in countries where democracy is not established, unconstitutional methods like the general strike would also be considered legitimate socialist weapons.

STIMSON: What does the communist believe in ?

MASANI: In what is called the "dictatorship of the proletariat." The theory is that the Communist Party, on behalf of the working class leads a violent revolution, captures power, and installs itself as a dictatorial Government acting as a sort of trustee for ~~them~~ the working class. After other classes have been "liquidated" (delightful term) and the classless society has been achieved, the dictatorship dissolves itself and "a society of the free and the equal," as Lenin called it, comes into existence. Experience has shown, on the other hand, that the dictatorship is in practice not one of the proletariat but over the proletariat and

that it ends up in the dictatorship of one man-functioning through a hierarchy of bureaucrats. Also, such a dictatorship has no intention whatsoever of "liquidating" itself after the period of transition, as Lenin had hoped. It is claimed by Communists that this is only a transitory phase. That, however, remains to be seen.

STIMSON:

Can you summarize the difference for us ?

MASANI:

What it boils down to is that the Communist is prepared to sacrifice political democracy and individual liberty for the sake of the abolition of private property, while the Socialist, to whom freedom is more precious, prefers to hang on to democracy and liberty whilst striving to transform the capitalist society into the socialist society. To the extent that there would seem to be greater economic equality and social democracy in countries like Sweden or Norway than in Russia, it would appear that perhaps, after all, the Socialist method of hastening slowly yields better and quicker results than the communist method of violent revolution and dictatorship.

STIMSON:

What kind of educational reconstruction should take place after the war ?

HAMPTON:

If we assume - and it is not a very rash assumption that the Allies, who are fighting for democracy, will in the war, then it seems inevitable that great changes

will be made in the educational systems of the democratic countries.

STINECK:

What does this mean ?

HAMPTON:

Well, in the democratic states of the future, privilege will count for nought, and by privilege I mean considerations of wealth and social status. Equal educational facilities will be offered to all and every boy and girl, whether rich or poor, high or low, will be able to avail themselves of all the educational facilities their country has to offer.

HAMPTON:

Yes, and it is safe to predict the free compulsory education for all from the elementary stage up to the end of the adolescent period - will be established in every progressive country, that curriculum will become more practical and diversified and less narrow and bookish than at present, that professional and higher education will be thrown open (at the expense of the State) to all who have the aptitude and ability to profit by advanced courses of study. In the "Brave New World" to which we look forward, the first responsibility of civilised States will be to safeguard the interests of each and every citizen and the most powerful instrument for social betterment will be a sound system of education - education in its widest sense - available to every child (including even those who are physically unfit or mentally retarded).

STIMSON:

I would agree that in outline, appears to be the future of education in those countries which will become democratic in the truest sense of the term.

- STIMSON: Can basic English solve India's language problem?
- MYERS: Language problem ? I've always thought India has a number of language problems - I wonder which one the questioner has in mind.
- STIMSON: Well, what would you consider to be the chief problem ?
- MYERS: To my mind there are at least two. Perhaps I'd better outline them first at least as they appear to me, and then say how, in my opinion, they are likely to be affected by the spread of Basic English.
- HAMPTON: That sounds a good idea.
- MYERS: The two problems are of course inter-related. The first is that of the school-boy, say a little Punjabi boy often. His own language is Punjabi. He has to learn it. He will probably go to middle school where Hindi or Urdu is the medium of instruction. So he has to learn that too. All that means a tremendous burden of language learning.
- The experts say that this babel of tongues causes not a little to confusion in his mind. His thoughts are unconsciously being translated into different modes of speech. Later on, when he becomes a pleader, he will be heard saying in court: "Yeh argument water nahin hold karta hai" (Laughter)
- MYERS: Yes, it's very funny but it's rather tragic too. I think it was Som Nath Chile who said that what is wrong with Indian students is that because of all this language-learning their thought is handicapped. They don't learn their own language properly. They don't master the foreign one forced on them. They just fall between two stools. They are so taken up with words that they have no time for ideas.

MASANI: Surely you're not going to suggest they should only learn English ?

MYERS: Of course not. On the contrary English is the Chief Culprit. I remember a report of the Punjab University Inquiry Committee, in which it was estimated that learning English takes up one-third of the total period of education from the primary to the university stage, and even at that the committee doubted whether - what were the words - the object of all this labour was properly achieved.

STIMSON: But you can't eliminate English either.

MYERS: No, and that's where Basic English comes in. It's a practical English, as opposed to a literary English. It's a scientific English, as opposed to a Shelley or Shakespeare English. It can express all the practical ideas that anyone would want to express, but learning it takes much less than one-third of the total period of education; I doubt if it would take as much as one twentieth. That would certainly lessen the burden.

STIMSON: But, well, man does not live by bread alone. Don't you think Shelley is an integral part of education for every student?

MYERS: For every English student, yes. Perhaps even for a few Indian students who have a gift for language and literature, who are going to be writers, artists and so on. Surely not for the great majority of students.

How many of them ever really make anything of

Hail to thee, blithe spirit

Bird thou never wert

India has her own poets. Why saddle them with ours - with a different background, tradition, language and so on. And for

the few elite

/first

the few elite, it will do them no harm to start with Basic as a foundation. On the contrary it has been proved over and over again that Basic is the best step to English for whatever purpose it may ultimately be used.

HAMPTON:

I think we see your point. What was the other problem you had in mind ?

MYERS:

That's the problem of intercommunication between, say the Punjabi-speaking Punjabi and the Tamil-speaking Madraasi. India badly needs a lingua franca and the only possible one seems to be a kind of Hindustani, a sort of compromise between Hindi and Urdu, in Roman script. Unfortunately it looks as though these two major languages are diverging rather than converging, and a compromise seems further off than ever. That's only one of the two tendencies- the other thing towards the adoption of a basic Hindustani. I'm not suggesting for one that Basic English could ever become an All-India lingua franca that wouldn't be natural. But I think that the teaching of English as a second language on Basic lines in all the schools, and the general spread of Basic English for technical training purposes will make the principles of scientific word selection better known and so may pave the way to a Basic Hindustani in which neutral linguistic principles, and not partisan communal prejudices, will be the determining factor.

STIMSON:

Well, it will be interesting to see how it all develops in the next five or ten years.

....7/-

MYERS: Very interesting indeed. Of course the success of Basic, like that of every other great invention, depends ultimately on People's receptivity to new ideas, to a willingness to experiment and so on. But the fact that the claims of Basic have been endorsed by people like Churchill and Roosevelt, on what we may be sure was expert advice, and the fact that it has been officially adopted by the British Government ~~cuts~~ cuts both ways. Churchill and Roosevelt's support might actively put some people off !

STIMSON: Would you advocate the study of Modern English Literature for an Indian University Examination?

HAMPTON: I am glad you asked me this question, because for a long time I have been of opinion that University authorities in India tend to minimize the importance of contemporary English literature. The Academic mind is conservative all the world over and the reverence paid in India to the English classics you hear that one Indian University (I need not mention the name) have decreed that no English work published after the year 1900 shall be studied as a text by first or second year students !

STIMSON: Yes, this decision seems to me to be culpably wrong and, even, educationally unsound.

HAMPTON: In the first place, young people are - and always have been, more interested in contemporary authors, than in the writers of any past age - no matter how important from the historical or the literary point of view. This is only natural, because modern authors use the language of today - the language which educated people speak, which is found in ~~many~~ newspapers and magazines and heard on the radio.

STIMSON: Would you say that it is the duty of universities to bring to the notice of young people examples of notable contemporary works rather than to leave them to grope in the dark without any guidance in their choice of books which are really worth reading ?

HAMPTON: Yes, the best introduction to the English classics is by way of contemporary literature - It is well-known educational maxim that we should proceed from the more to the less familiar - from Bernard Shaw to Shakespeare - rather than the other way about. Finally, there is an abundance of suitable works written in this country from which to choose in every branch of literature - works which, despite academic blindness, will assuredly rank with what is now recognised as the best in the language. My conviction is that Indian Universities should give pride of place to modern English literature and reserve the study of the classics for those few who have pronounced literary tastes and who wish to specialise.

STIMSON: Who are the important Indian writers in the English language today ?

MASANI: None of the Indian writers in English whom I would consider important and literary figures, because few works of literary importance or artistic excellence have been produced by Indians in English. Raja Rao's Kanthapuram and Vijaybhaskar's Grass For My Feet are perhaps exceptions that stand out by reason of their exquisite handling of the English language. But none of these writers has yet produced a work of far-reaching importance. For this, we have to search beyond the literary field.

STIMSON: You must have a shot at some names.

MASANI: The most distinguished Indian writer of English prose today is Mahatma Gandhi. He has made a style and a language all his own, combining

qualities of Sanskritic nobility, Biblical expressiveness and pleasant simplicity. The influence his writing wield puts him in the first rank of world writers. The second writer of importance is Jawaharlal Nehru. Passages in his Autobiography have been described as monuments to the sheer sensitivity English prose can attain.

Others I would mention as worthy of inclusion in this very short list are Sarojini Naidu, Anand Coomaraswami, Dr. Radhakrishnan and Shree Aurobindo Ghosh.

STIMSON:

What prospects does a career in journalism hold out for young Indian graduates after the war ?

MARK:

X

MYERS:

Prospects in Indian journalism? For hard but interesting pioneer, work I should say plenty. As for the "pice" aspect - every chance. The position after the war will be rather like what it was in England say 30 or 40 years ago. If the Sergent Scheme goes through there will be a much greater number of schools turning out much greater number of boys and girls able and anxious to read but with nothing suitable for them to read. Similarly, it was the starting of compulsory education - the Board Schools - in England that made possible Lord Northcliffe's meteoric career. But it's taken English journalists 30 years to organise themselves into a well-paid honourable profession, and the road hasn't been away. At the moment journalism is I should say the Cinderella of all professions in India - no status, no security, badly paid, badly organised. Whether it remains like this in the post-war era depends on the extent to which Indian Journalists can learn from the mistakes of the west and of course their readiness to co-operate for the common good. Indian Journalism is in its infancy. It's hard work

bringing up an infant, but it's interesting, and yield dividends.

STIMSON:

How far is patriotism a virtue ?

MASANI:

It was Dr. Samuel Johnson, I think, who exclaimed: "Patriotism, Sir, is the last refuge of a scoundrel. Far be it from me to endorse that rather one-sided verdict, though one can think of many instances where it would be justified. The simplest and finest manifestation of patriotism is the love of one's own country, with its rivers and its mountains and its trees and its flowers and of its people with all their virtues and follies. So long as this love for one's country and countrymen is accompanied by a love of all human beings, belonging to other countries as well, there can be little to be said against it. When, however, ~~it~~ this love of one's country takes precedence over love for rest of humanity, it becomes a positive menace. "My country, right or wrong" is the slogan under which masses of people, who call themselves patriots, are led to fight wars and to destroy harmless people very much like themselves who happen to be on the other side of a frontier. In this aggressive fore, nationalism has proved to be the curse of the European people, both in this century and the last.

Now-a-days, nationalism is also taking root in countries of the East, like India and China, and some argument holds good to the extent that such a feeling desires the freedom of its country from external interference and dominations, it is a good thing, because there can be no real internationalism except between nations which are free and equal.

ANSWERING YOU

STIMSON: What is the difference between Socialism and Communism ?

MASANI: Socialism and Communism have in theory the same objectives. A Socialist or communist society is a free and classless society based on the principle: "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need." In practice, such a society would be based on more or less complete equality in the economic sphere and the fullest democracy in the political sphere.

While, however, the theoretical objective is common, there is a wide divergence in the methods that Socialists and Communists seek to employ in achieving the common goal. I would say that whenever democracy exists and it is possible through the ballot-box to change over from the capitalist to the socialist society, the Socialist would confine himself to this method and would avoid a resort of bullets. Of course, in countries where democracy is not established, unconstitutional methods like the general strike would also be considered legitimate socialist weapons.

STIMSON: What does the communist believe in ?

MASANI: In what is called the "dictatorship of the proletariat." The theory is that the Communist Party, on behalf of the working class, leads a violent revolution, captures power, and installs itself as a dictatorial Government acting as a sort of trustee for ~~the~~ the working class. After other classes have been "liquidated" (delightful term) and the classless society has been achieved, the dictatorship dissolves itself and "a society of the free and the equal," as Lenin called it, comes into existence. Experience has shown, on the other hand, that the dictatorship is in practice not one of the proletariat but over the proletariat and

that it ends up in the dictatorship of one man-functioning through a hierarchy of bureaucrats. Also, such a dictatorship shows no intention whatsoever of "liquidating" itself after the period of transition, as Lenin had hoped. It is claimed by Communists that this is only a transitory phase. That, however, remains to be seen.

STIMSON:

Can you summarize the difference for us ?

MASANI:

What it boils down to is that the Communist is prepared to sacrifice political democracy and individual liberty for the sake of the abolition of private property, while the Socialist, to whom freedom is more precious, prefers to hang on to democracy and liberty whilst striving to transform the capitalist society into the socialist society. To the extent that there would seem to be greater economic equality and social democracy in countries like Sweden or Norway than in Russia, it would appear that perhaps, after all, the Socialist method of hastening slowly yields better and quicker results than the communist method of violent revolution and dictatorship.

STIMSON:

What kind of educational reconstruction should take place after the war ?

HAMPTON:

If we assume - and it is not a very rash assumption that the Allies, who are fighting for democracy, will in the war, then it seems inevitable that great changes

will be made in the educational systems of the democratic countries.

STIMSON: What does this mean ?

HAMPTON: Well, in the democratic states of the future, privilege will count for nought, and by privilege I mean considerations of wealth and social status. Equal educational facilities will be offered to all and every boy and girl, whether rich or poor, high or low, will be able to avail themselves of all the educational facilities their country has to offer.

HAMPTON: Yes, and it is safe to predict the free compulsory education for all from the elementary stage up to the end of the adolescent period - will be established in every progressive country, that curriculum will become more practical and diversified and less narrow and bookish than at present, that professional and higher education will be thrown open (at the expense of the State) to all who have the aptitude and ability to profit by advanced courses of study. In the "Brave New World" to which we look forward, the first responsibility of civilised States will be to safeguard the interests of each and every citizen and the most powerful instrument for social betterment will be a sound system of education - education in its widest sense - available to every child (including even those who are physically unfit or mentally retarded).

STIMSON: I would agree that in outline, appears to be the future of education in those countries which will become democratic in the truest sense of the term.

- STIMSON: Can basic English solve India's language problem?
- MYERS: Language problem ? I've always thought India has a number of language problems - I wonder which one the questioner has in mind.
- STIMSON: Well, what would you consider to be the chief problem ?
- MYERS: To my mind there are at least two. Perhaps I'd better outline them first at least as they appear to me, and then say how, in my opinion, they are likely to be affected by the spread of Basic English.
- HAMPTON: That sounds a good idea.
- MYERS: The two problems are of course inter-related. The first is that of the school-boy, say a little Punjabi boy often. His own language is Punjabi. He has to learn it. He will probably go to middle school where Hindi or Urdu is the medium of instruction. So he has to learn that too. All that means a tremendous burden of language learning.
- The experts say that this babel of tongues causes not a little to confusion in his mind. His thoughts are unconsciously being translated into different modes of speech. Later on, when he becomes a pleader, he will be heard saying in court: "Yeh argument water nahin hold karta hai" (Laughter)
- MYERS: Yes, it's very funny but it's rather tragic too. I think it was Som Nath Chitre who said that what is wrong with Indian students is that because of all this language-learning their thought is handicapped. They don't learn their own language properly. They don't master the foreign one forced on them. They just fall between two stools. They are so taken up with words that they have no time for ideas.

MASANI: Surely you're not going to suggest they should only
English ?

MYERS: Of course not. On the contrary English is the Chief Culprit.
I remember a report of the Punjab University Inquiry Committee,
in which it was estimated that learning English takes up one-
third of the total period of education from the primary to the
university stage, and even at that the committee doubted whether
- what were the words - the object of all this labour was
properly achieved.

STIMSON: But you can't eliminate English either.

MYERS: No, and that's where Basic English comes in. It's a practical
English, as opposed to a literary English. It's a scientific
English, as opposed to a Shelley or Shakespeare English. It can
express all the practical ideas that anyone would want to express,
but learning it takes much less than one-third of the total
period of education; I doubt if it would take as much as one
twentieth. That would certainly lessen the burden.

STIMSON: But, well, man does not live by bread alone. Don't you think
Shelley is an integral part of education for every student?

MYERS: For every English student, yes. Perhaps even for a few Indian
students who have a gift for language and literature, who are ~~going~~
going to be writers, artists and so on. Surely not for the great
majority of students.

How many of them ever really make anything of

Hail to thee, blithe spirit

Bird thou never wert

India has her own poets. Why saddle them with ours - with a
different background, tradition, language and so on. And as for
the few elite

/first

the few elite, it will do them no harm to start with Basic as a foundation. On the contrary it has been proved over and over again that Basic is the best step to English for whatever purpose it may ultimately be used.

HAMPTON:

I think we see your point. What was the other problem you had in mind ?

MYERS:

That's the problem of intercommunication between, say the Punjabi-speaking Punjabi and the Tamil-speaking Madras. India badly needs a lingua franca and the only possible one seems to be a kind of Hindustani, a sort of compromise between Hindi and Urdu, in Roman script. Unfortunately it looks as though these two major languages are diverging rather than converging, and a compromise seems further off than ever. That's only one of the two tendencies- the other thing towards the adoption of a basic Hindustani. I'm not suggesting for one that Basic English could ever become an All-India lingua franca that wouldn't be natural. But I think that the teaching of English as a second language on Basic lines in all the schools, and the general spread of Basic English for technical training purposes will make the principles of scientific word selection better known and so may pave the way to a Basic Hindustani in which neutral linguistic principles, and not partisan communal prejudices, will be the determining factor.

STIMSON:

Well, it will be interesting to see how it all develops in the next five or ten years.

....7/-

MYERS:

Very interesting indeed. Of course the success of Basic, that of every other great invention, depends ultimately on People's receptivity to new ideas, to a willingness to experiment and so on. But the fact that the claims of Basic have been endorsed by people like Churchill and Roosevelt, on what we may be sure was expert advice, and the fact that it has been officially adopted by the British Government ~~cuts~~ cuts both ways. Churchill and Roosevelt's support might actively put some people off !

STIMSON:

Would you advocate the study of Modern English Literature for an Indian University Examination?

HAMPTON:

I am glad you asked me this question, because for a long time I have been of opinion that University authorities in India tend to minimize the importance of contemporary English literature. The Academic mind is conservative all the world over and the reverence paid in India to the English classics you hear that one Indian University (I need not mention the name) have decreed that no English work published after the year 1900 shall be studied as a text by first or second year students !

STIMSON:

Yes, this decision seems to me to be culpably wrong and, even, educationally unsound.

HAMPTON:

In the first place, young people are - and always have been, more interested in contemporary authors, than in the writers of any past age - no matter how important from the historical or the literary point of view. This is only natural, because modern authors use the language of today - the language which educated people speak, which is found in ~~many~~ newspapers and magazines and heard on the radio.

STIMSON: Would you say that it is the duty of universities to bring to the notice of young people examples of notable contemporary works rather than to leave them to grope in the dark without any guidance in their choice of books which are really worth reading ?

HAMPTON: Yes, the best introduction to the English classics is by way of contemporary literature - It is well-known educational maxim that we should proceed from the more to the less familiar - from Bernard Shaw to Shakespeare - rather than the other way about. Finally, there is an abundance of suitable works written in this country from which to choose in every branch of literature - works which, despite academic blindness, will assuredly rank with what is now recognised as the best in the language. My conviction is that Indian Universities should give pride of place to modern English literature and reserve the study of the classics for those few who have pronounced literary tastes and who wish to specialise.

STIMSON: Who are the important Indian writers in the English language today ?

MASANI: None of the Indian writers in English whom I would consider important and literary figures, because few works of literary importance or artistic excellence have been produced by Indians in English. Raja Rao's Kanthapuram and Vijaybhaskar's Grass For My Feet are perhaps exceptions that stand out by reason of their exquisite handling of the English language. But none of these writers has yet produced a work of far-reaching importance. For this, we have to search beyond the literary field.

STIMSON: You must have a shot at some names.

MASANI: The most distinguished Indian writer of English prose today is Mahatma Gandhi. He has made a style and a language all his own, combining

qualities of Sanskrit nobility, Biblical expressiveness, pleasant simplicity. The influence his writing wield puts him in the first rank of world writers. The second writer of importance is Jawaharlal Nehru. Passages in his Autobiography have been described as monuments to the sheer sensitivity English prose can attain.

Others I would mention as worthy of inclusion in this very short list are Sarojini Naidu, Anand Coomaraswami, Dr. Radhakrishnan and Shree Aurobindo Ghosh.

STINSON:

What prospects does a career in journalism hold out for young Indian graduates after the war ?

MASTRI:

2

MYERS:

Prospects in Indian journalism? For hard but interesting pioneer, work I should say plenty. As for the "pice" aspect - every chance. The position after the war will be rather like what it was in England say 30 or 40 years ago. If the Sergeant Scheme goes through there will be a much greater number of schools turning out much greater number of boys and girls able and anxious to read but with nothing suitable for them to read. Similarly, it was the starting of compulsory education - the Board Schools - in England that made possible Lord Northcliffe's meteoric career. But it's taken English journalists 30 years to organise themselves into a well-paid honourable profession, and the road hasn't been easy. At the moment journalism is I should say the Cinderella of all professions in India - no status, no security, badly paid, badly organised. Whether it remains like this in the post-war era depends on the extent to which Indian Journalists can learn from the mistakes of the west and of course their readiness to co-operate for the common good. Indian Journalism is in its infancy. It's hard work

bringing up an infant, but it's interesting, and it may yield dividends.

STIMSON:

How far is patriotism a virtue ?

MASANI:

It was Dr. Samuel Johnson, I think, who exclaimed: "Patriotism, Sir, is the last refuge of a scoundrel. "Far bet it from me to endorse that rather one-sided verdict, though one can think of many instances where it would be justified. The simplest and finest manifestation of patriotism is the love of one's own country, with its rivers and its mountains and its trees and its flowers and of its people with all their virtues and follies. So long as this love for one's country and countrymen is accompanied by a love of all human beings, belonging to other countries as well, there can be little to be said against it. When, however, ~~it~~ this love of one's country takes precedence over love for rest of humanity, it becomes a positive menace. "My country, right or wrong" is the slogan under which masses of people, who call themselves patriots, are led to fight wars and to destroy harmless people very much like themselves who happen to be on the other side of a frontier. In this aggressive fore, nationalism has proved to be the curse of the European people, both in this century and the last.

Now-a-days, nationalism is also taking root in countries of the East, like India and China, and some argument holds good to the extent that such a feeling desires the freedom of its country from external interference and dominations, it is a good thing, because there can be no real internationalism except between nations which are free and equal.