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SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS DECAY

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ENERGY results from differentials in levels. This is as true in the moral and economic fields as in physical dynamics. We must at the lower level maintain the urge to improve one's lot. At the other end we must encourage the urge of sympathy and the innate desire to help those who are in want. These two incentives, the one to raise oneself and the other to help others and, for that purpose, to part with one's possessions, are the priceless features of healthy social life. Any policy that damages these two social urges is harmful. There should be constant motion upwards and downwards and both motions should be the result of free will. Any programme of State compulsion at levelling tends to atrophy the spirit of enterprise on the one hand and on the other to harden sentiments replacing charity by its opposite, namely, callousness.

Congress policies have already yielded these harmful results. The sources of private charity have been dried up by heavy calls from the State in various forms. As a result of the policies and statements of the Government, uncertainty has enveloped life. Parity in social and economic conditions must be aimed at in order to generate healthy individual energy, enterprise and compassion. But forcibly directed State egalitarianism results in just the unhealthy opposite of these urges.

We ought not to lose faith in human nature. When Mahatma Gandhi said that the rich should be persuaded to hold their wealth as trustees for those around them, he did not propound an unpractical or alien scheme but said what was both practical and was in the tradition of our people. If only we shed our fear of religion and do not frown on communal philanthropy, we can still organise voluntary social cooperation on a very large

scale which will give satisfaction and joy both to those who have and those who have not. A policy of compulsion is a policy of despair and will be both morally harmful and ineffective in operation. Above all, it ends in blasting incentive and establishing official tyranny.

The Prime Minister of India wants to pack into a few years the economic results that more advanced countries have taken a much longer time to achieve. This is impossible, but the impossibility of it is ignored in the pursuit of spectacular claims to special distinction. Propaganda has thus come to replace the actual promotion of welfare.

Reckless expansion of currency together with centralisation of State-power and grants and subsidies to purchase popularity have spread the mentality of free-money hunger at all levels and made people lose the sense of obligation to repay loans and respect for contracts. Instead of greater industry and self-reliance, dependence on official favours has become the chief feature in commerce and industry.

The cause of poverty and unemployment is insufficiency of production. The remedy is increased production. To increase production hard work, discipline, efficiency and the application of right methods and techniques are essential. These cannot be conjured up overnight. They take time to be properly brought into play. It is the failure of the Congress leaders to realise this fact that is responsible for the disequilibrium, misgovernment and injustice that have come to pass for progress in recent years.

Shortcomings by way of production are now being covered up with plans to distribute property in defiance of moral principle. Two things hold society together and keep at bay the predatory urges of those individuals who covet their neighbours' goods and possessions. The first is the moral law having the sanction

of tradition that each man is entitled to the fruits of his labour and shall not encroach on what another has acquired in the same manner. The second is the protection of the State for the possession, enjoyment and bequest of what one has legally acquired. Both these principles are being discarded by the Congress rulers in the ostentatious pursuit of what they call socialism, with disastrous consequences to the very incentives that contribute to the nation's wealth.

The policy of expropriation in order to give land to all the landless is obviously an impossible policy, as there is not enough land to go round, in whatever manner the owners of land may be dispossessed. Dispossessing the owners of land which they have lawfully acquired is an attack on the fundamental basis of social cooperation. Taking land from the owners proposing to give it to others feeds people with greed. Public morals cannot but be undermined when those who have invested hard-earned money in land on the assurance of law, or have inherited it, are arbitrarily deprived of it by State action while others with no title to it either in the form of work or purchase receive a gift of it.

Every act of injustice leaves behind a trail of hatred as well as disregard of law and morality. Feeding the greed of some sections of the community and filling others with hatred and jealousy, the Congress in the name of Socialism is destroying the basic foundation of individual morality, substituting predatory lusts for the restraints inherited from religious tradition.

The value of religion to human beings lies in the self-restraint it imposes on them to act justly and fairly to others even when they have the power to act otherwise. There is no antidote to abuse of power except the influence of religion and the code of self-denial inculcated by it. Against the temptations of material ambitions and pursuits and the brutalities

they are apt to lead to, religion is society's sole armour and protection.

The loosening of the religious impulse is the worst of the dis-services rendered by the Congress to the nation. We must organise a new force and movement to replace the greed and the class hatred of Congress materialism with a renovated spiritual outlook emphasising the restraints of good conduct as of greater importance than the triumphs of organised covetousness. Every effort should be made to foster and maintain spiritual values and preserve what is good in our national culture and tradition and avoid the dominance of a purely material philosophy of life which thinks only in terms of the standard of life without any reference to its content or quality.

The laudable desire to raise the standard of life among the masses should not become a pretext for orgies of coercion and sadism. When the techniques for developing popularity for a political party is mixed up with dislocation of ownership engineered with State authority, the administration degenerates into a vast bribe-distributing machinery for preserving that party in position. The nation's morality is sacrificed to party. Discrimination between supporters and opponents is the natural attendant of such schemes. The dismemberment of such integrity of national citizenship as we possessed, creating various classes of citizens, some with privileges and others with disabilities, has been the initial accomplishment of Congress policy mocking its pretensions as an architect of the Welfare State. The exhilaration and joy of voluntary social service should replace the greed and class hatreds generated by the compulsory programmes of socialism. The trusteeship doctrine was propounded by the Mahatma and should be resuscitated as an emergent national imperative. In place of the propaganda, the organised political bribery, the bureaucratisation and monolithic centralisation of the present Congress policy, the trusteeship doctrine will introduce into the

politics of the country, honesty, good fellowship, high and noble example, and the economy and efficiency of individual attention and dedication. It will substitute the substance and reality of benefit to all in place of the blend of favouritism and victimisation of official creation that is now made to look attractive under an imposing facade of high sounding slogans.

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