

THE SAMARITAN'S PLIGHT TOWARDS A SOLUTION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

AN EVALUATION OF THE METHODS USED IN THE PAST TO FACE EXPLOITATION IN SOCIETY

Intent of these Notes

- ✓ *To 'conscientize' people to the social reality.*
- ✓ *To assess the value of the solutions proposed so far, to solve the 'social problem'.*
- ✓ *To arouse people from their indifference and lethargy in matters of social injustice and civic rights.*
- ✓ *Unfortunately, many 'good people' faced with the 'social problem' just shrug their shoulders and say: "There is nothing I can do about it"*
- ✓ *To realize that the 'social problem' has to be tackled in a rational and scientific way. It is not enough to approach the injustices and oppression obtaining in society with sentimentality and emotionalism.*
- ✓ *To motivate you and other concerned persons to get involved in social action.*
- ✓ *To disabuse some 'good' people from their complacency and false sense of satisfaction who do lots of 'charity' to the poor, yet forget doing what elementary justice demands of them.*

Cautionary Note:

The philosophy of oppression, perfected and refined through civilizations as a true culture of injustice, does not achieve its greatest triumph when its propagandists knowingly inculcate it; rather the triumph is achieved when this philosophy has become so deeply rooted in the spirits of the oppressors themselves and their ideologies that they are not even aware of their guilt. Marx himself recognizes that in the capitalist system the oppressor is as alienated as the oppressed.

Thus, *I wish to make it clear from the very beginning that when we speak of exploiters, we do not wish to assign conscious guilt to all of them, nor to the purveyors of that social philosophy.* Far from it! Rather, we hope that the conscience of people of good will is capable of being shaken up and of challenging itself. Injustice is more the work of the social texture and of the prevalent systems and culture, than it is of people's intentions. "Indeed, the hour is coming Jesus warned his disciples, "When anyone who kills you will think he is doing a holy duty for God". (John 16/2). (From the Prologue of "Marx and the Bible" of Jose P. Miranda)

General Remarks..

- ✓ *In these notes we present the social problem in a parable form; we attempt to acquaint you with the 'solutions' proposed to solve it and already tried.*

- ✓ *Once the problem and the solutions have been grasped, we evaluate them and invite you to opt for the solution you think most efficacious and just.*
- ✓ *The parable of the Good Samaritan has been contextualized within the socio-political situation prevalent in most countries of the third world.*
- ✓ *In the description of the different solutions proposed to solve the 'social problem', we have somewhat followed a sequential historical order; namely, we described them in the order in which mostly they have been proposed and tried.*

Use of these Notes

- ✓ *Personal reflection.*
- ✓ *Discussion groups.*
- ✓ *Sundry events on conscientization and social justice.*
- ✓ *Catechism and Moral Instruction Classes.*

The Samaritan's Plight (A parable)

PART ONE **THE PROBLEM**

Narrator: A man was going down to Jerusalem from Jericho. On the road, robbers attacked him, beat him up, stripped him off and left him half dead. A simple Samaritan, who happened to walk down that road, saw that poor man. When he saw him, his heart was moved with compassion. He said himself:

Samaritan: "Oh, too bad! Poor fellow, I must help this wretch!"

Narrator: He bent over him, offered him some aid, lifted him up and took him to a nearby inn. He told the innkeeper:

Samaritan: Please, take good care of this man. On my return, I'll pay you whatever you spend on him. Please, see to it that he is looked after and that he recovers from his wounds.

Narrator: Next day, the good Samaritan found another wounded man on the same road attacked also by robbers. Again, his heart was moved with pity. He took this man to the inn also. As the days rolled by, he helped a third man, and still another and another. When the inn was full with wounded men, the Innkeeper was annoyed with the Samaritan and said to him:

Inn-Keeper: Will you stop bringing me all these wayside derelicts into my inn? This, is an inn, not a hospital! Whilst caring for these wretched fellows my business is ruined!

Narrator: The Samaritan was at a loss. He did not know what to do. He muttered to himself:

Samaritan: “I feel sorry for people in trouble. I want to help them. But, in a situation like this: What can I do? What shall I do?”

Narrator: The Samaritan met his friends and discussed the whole affair with them and asked them what they could do to solve the problem. One of them said to him::

Friend 1: Well, my dear, frankly speaking, this is not your problem. There is nothing much you can do about it. The problem is too big for you and us to solve. Forget it! Why do you want to spoil your peace of mind? Enough is enough. Let the authorities and government do something about it. It is their problem it’s their duty and responsibility to see to the safety of our citizens.

Narrator: A second friend remarked:

Friend 2: I too feel very sorry for the victims of robbers and dacoits. We should do something for them. They have a claim to our charity.

Narrator: Straight away he went to the Innkeeper and, for a handsome sum of money; he bought the inn. Then, with great zeal and charity, he raised funds and transformed the inn into a nursing home for wounded travelers. Night and day he combed the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, picked up all those who had fallen victims to the robbers and cared for them with a mother’s love.

Narrator: A third friend felt that the solution to the problem was not charity to those attacked by robbers, but force of arms to repel the robbers and brigands He said:

Friend 3: I know what to. I’ll raise an armed task- force to patrol the road night and day.

Narrator And so, he did it in earnest. He started shooting the robbers at sight. Nonetheless, things went from bad to worse.

On one hand, the nursing home was full of casualties; their numbers went increasing beyond control. Some kind souls suggested opening new hospitals. But how many hospitals could be open?

On the other hand, violence bred violence. The robbers got organized. They secured better and more powerful weapons to fight back

Matters went worse. Finally, it was clear that organized repression was as much of a failure to tackle the Samaritan’s problem as it had been organized charity

Our Good Samaritan was still at a loss. What could he do????

PART TWO; Rational Study of the Problem.

Narrator: In despair, our Good Samaritan consulted some wise and good like-minded Samaritans to find a lasting and just solution to the problem. They suggested:

Wise Samaritans: We feel that we should make a rational assessment of the entire situation. So far, we have tried to solve the problem of the victims attacked by robbers not with our heads, but with our hearts.

First, we approached the victims with love; Next, we have confronted the attackers with hate. Both solutions did not work. We have to rationally study the problem and find a better **solution**.

Let us appoint a committee of experts to study the problem in all its dimensions, so that we may know what its root cause is, and find a proper remedy to it.

Narrator: Immediately, this suggestion was taken up. A high-powered commission was set up to make a thorough study of the problem. On completion of its work, the President of the Commission presented its findings to the Samaritans. The report read thus:

Commission's Report

President: After a careful investigation and study of all the facts bearing on the problem, we, the members of the Commission, have arrived at the following conclusions:

- 1) The people of this area, all the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, are extremely poor.
- 2) They have no means of livelihood whatever.
- 3) They are bonded laborers and daily wagers.
- 4) When the crops fail, as it was been the case these last years, they are deprived of all means of subsistence.
- 5) In the absence of a remunerative work, they resort to robbery, pillage and dacoit.
- 6) The present situation, as it is, was not obtaining years ago..
- 7) It is proved that these people, in former days, were economically self-sufficient and peace loving.
- 8) Many years ago, outsiders came to the land.
- 9) By trickery and insinuation, those aliens dispossessed the original settlers from their lands and properties.
- 10) Through usury and other malpractices, the original settlers were reduced to the condition of bonded laborers and semi-slaves
- 11) The outsiders became their landlords and moneylenders and the people of the land their bonded laborers.

PART THREE Solutions Proposed.

Narrator: The Samaritans were impressed by the findings of the Commission. It was evident that instead of building hospitals for the innocent people attacked on the road or trying to destroy the attackers by force of arms, they had to do something to redeem the local population from their present state of utter destitution. So they requested the members of the Commission to a further probe into the matter in view of exploring possible solutions for remedial action. Accordingly, The Commission sat down again and after long deliberations, the President of the Commission communicated its findings to the Samaritans. .

President: Friends, we are glad to be able to offer you several solutions to your problem. I'll let the different members of the Commission to explain them to you. It will be up to you to choose the solution you deem best.

First Member. Solution 1.

I propose to you to meet the exploiters, landlords and moneylenders and try to convert their hearts. Tell them to be good, just and charitable and to change their minds and their ways.

Exhort them to love God and neighbor. Make them understand that the poor people in this area, now their bonded laborers, are their brothers and sisters. After they change their minds and hearts, they willingly, will part with their ill-gotten properties and wealth.

Narrator: Then, the second Member stood up and said:

Second Member: Solution 2

I suggest that since it easier to change the hearts of the children than those of their parents, you should educate the children of the exploiters right from their tender age. After all, the young of today will be the grown-ups of tomorrow and rule the society of the future.

So, I would advise you, dear Samaritans, to build big and posh schools for the children of the exploiters. Under the pretext of giving them top education, make the youngsters realize the mistakes of their parents. Make them aware that once they inherit their properties it will be their duty to share their goods with the poor and the destitute. Moreover, I advise you to spend money and time to establish prestigious Universities and Institutions of learning like Business Management Centers for the children of the wealthy so that they later on, take the interests of the poor and of the exploited at heart.

Narrator: Now, It was the turn of the third member to offer his solution.

Third Member: Solution 3.

Dear Samaritans, I feel great concern for the poor and the destitute.. My plea is for educating the poor. Their educational and cultural level should be raised so that eventually, in a spirit of healthy and free competition, they will become like the rich in all the good things of life. We have to open up our top schools and institutions to the

poor. They have to learn how to compete with the cleverest exponents of our culture; they have to secure the same degrees as the children of the rich. Then, they will be able to climb the social ladder, become doctors, engineers, managers, proprietors and finally escape the ranks of the poor and oppressed and join the ranks of the upper classes. I plead that at least 20 to 30% of poor children be admitted in our rich and posh institutions. In this way, we shall be able to redeem some of them from the clutches of poverty and oppression.

Narrator: Next, the fourth member of the Commission spoke:

Fourth Member: Solution 4.

Dear Friends, I like to be pragmatic and down-to-earth. The obvious and greatest problem of the people in this area is hunger and poverty. They have nothing to eat; nor clothing or shelter. Rally all your resources to satisfy their immediate needs. It is their stomachs you have to feed, rather than their heads. Start charity campaigns, and relief operations, go abroad and bring shipments of milk powder, cheese, wheat, maize, Soya bean oil, from international charitable agencies like Misereor, Missio, Oxfam, Caritas, C.R.S. etc

I advise you also, to open and promote organizations like the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Interact etc. where the rich will be encouraged to distribute to the poor old clothes, free sample medicines and food packets on Divali, Christmas and other auspicious occasions. They will be able to organize dances, fetes, tombolas, whist drives, lunches and dinners in five star Hotels in aid of the exploited.

I assure you, once the basic needs of the poor are satisfied, they will automatically stop attacking innocent travelers and pilgrims and being a menace to the public.

Narrator Then, the fifth Commission Member spoke:

Fifth Member: Solution 5.

I would go a step further than the previous speaker, I, too, am pragmatic and love solutions that meet immediate needs. However, I am much concerned about the dignity of human beings. By all means, let us fill the stomachs of these poor people and throw some warm clothing on their backs, but, for God's sake, let us safeguard their human dignity. Doling out charity to the poor only confirms them in their poverty and lowers their self-esteem.

Surely, let us take recourse to national and international charitable agencies for help, but I propose that instead of just doling out food and clothing for nothing to the poor, we make them work for them. We should organize food for work projects. In exchange for their labor, let us give them the foodstuffs and other relief articles we secure from foreign or native agencies. Let us encourage the poor to build roads, schools, public halls, small irrigation dams and other labor intensive works for themselves to make their lives more pleasant and comfortable.

Narrator: The sixth member rose and said:

Sixth Member: Solution 6.

I base my solution on the old proverb. “To a poor man, do not give a fish, but a fishing rod”.

We have to encourage the poor people to manage with whatever means they have at their disposal. Not a few of them have small fields on non-irrigable lands. Provide them with wells, pump sets, fertilizers, hybrid seeds and implements of work. In short let us give them the minimum necessary to enable them to cultivate their little patches of land on their own. Some of them may have non-arable lands on hilly grounds and on rocky soil. Teach them how to plant cactuses and other wild plants so that they may be able to draw from such lands some income, however small. Encourage them to start some small poultry farms, piggeries, breed goats, and if any of them have some small water ponds teach them to farm fish, etc.

I am completely sold out to the idea of ‘self-reliance’.

Based on people’s efforts and on their resources however small, let us create in the people a will to improve their lot by just using all the means available to them. “Self help is the best help”.

Narrator: Finally, the last member stood up and spoke thus:

Seventh Member: Solution 7.

Dear Friends of the poor, I am glad to offer you yet another solution. The people in this area admittedly, are very poor, but why? The findings of our Commission clearly explained this.

In former days, these people were not poor, nor were they troublemakers. Now, they are poor because their ancestors were dispossessed of their lands and of their livelihood! Now they are troublemakers because they are hungry and destitute, exploited and oppressed.

My solution, friends, is very simple and crystal clear. Give them back their lands. **This very land we are standing on is not ours, but theirs. In former days it belonged to them. Let it go back to them today!**

Narrator: The President of the Commission was perplexed at these words

President Excuse me Sir, a point of order! **On the face of it, you sound demagogic Remember that we have been called here to solve a problem, not to create a bigger one.**

Seventh Member: Your Honor! It was far from my intention to even hint at subversion, but if my words have given that impression, I sincerely apologize. May I have your permission to proceed?

President: Do.

Seveenth Member: Dear Samaritans, if you love these people, you have to help them, not so much doling them some material helps. It is not fertilizers, wells, pump-

It's none of my business. It's not my problem.
Let the government and the authorities see to it.

Second Attitude: Charitable Involvement

A sentimental Involvement motivated by pity and "charity"
towards the victims of violence.

Doing "charities"

Third attitude: Angry Involvement.

A sentimental Involvement motivated by "hatred" and
anger against the perpetrators of violence

Repression and Violence

Fourth Attitude: Rational and Loving Involvement.

A rational Involvement motivated by love, both towards
the victims of injustice and its perpetrators.

Rational appraisal of the situation.
Searching for a just and radical solution

REFLECTION ON THE FOUR ATTITUDES
MENTIONED ABOVE

Pleading ignorance of the injustices done to others is no excuse for
our lack of involvement.

- As human beings and members of human society we have no excuse to be blind to the social problem and to the injustices done to millions of our fellow beings

- We have not only to get acquainted with the problem, but also to find the right solutions thereto!
- **None of us may remain neutral in the face of the exploitation going on before our own eyes, when the fate of countless brothers and sisters of ours is at stake.**
- **To remain neutral in this matter is tantamount to be an active part of an unjust world order.**
- We tend to shut our eyes and live in an ‘ivory tower’ We prefer not to be conscious of what goes on around us. ..
- It is more comfortable, indeed, to remain in a state of blissful ignorance, but that it’s neither just nor chartable.
- The blissful ignorance of the injustice perpetrated in our society, in moral and juridical terms is called “Culpable ignorance”
- We try to ‘pacify’ our conscience with all sorts of rationalizations and excuses, such as that the social evils are not of our making or that we are not able of tackling them. .
- We blame the government and those in power for the problem and we expect them to take the sole responsibility to solve it.
- The murderous saying of Cain: in a veiled form, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” often surfaces in our minds and hearts
- Yet, all said, we – members of the world and human society - are answerable to God, to others, and to our consciences for the injustices done to our brothers and sisters.
- Truly , **“We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers”**
- As long, as there is evil and exploitation in a society of which we are part of, and which affords us a comfortable life at the cost of others, knowingly or unknowingly, we are accomplices of injustice.
- However ‘technologically’ advanced our modern society may be, if it connives with injustice is an evil and unjust society,

Neither Charity alone or Repression alone will ever bring justice to the world

- Human society faces many social evils: poverty, drugs, prostitution, alcoholism, unemployment, hunger, violence, repression, oppression, etc.
- Many good and well-meaning people - like the Good Samaritan of the story - feel compassion for those affected by those evils.
- It’s very kind of them to assist them. Yet, more often than not, their efforts to help them are motivate by emotional impulses coming from the gut level - pity and/or anger
- Our involvement on social justice has to be motivated by a loving and rational assessment of the roots of the social problem.
- Emotional impulses address themselves only - to the symptoms - not to the real sicknesses affecting the social reality.

1. **Work on the ‘exploiters’ change their hearts. Make them good.**
2. **Work through the children of the “exploiters” by right education**
3. **Work for the ‘exploited’ by giving them Good Education.**
4. **Work for the ‘exploited’ through Charity**
5. **Work for the ‘exploited’ through dignified Charity Food for Work**
6. **Work for the ‘exploited’ by teaching them self-reliance**
7. **Work both for the ‘exploited and the ‘exploiters’ through structural changes. Make our society a just one**

SOLUTION ONE -

Work on the ‘exploiters’ Change their hearts. Make them good

It’s Good, but not Sufficient

- Preaching love and concern for the neighbors, and trying to change the hearts of the exploiters is good, but not enough. It hardly worked in the past.
- Experience tells us that 2000 years of Gospel preaching of love and charity, did not do away with injustice, oppression and exploitation anywhere, even in Christian Societies.
- Often enough exploitation has been worst in many ‘Christian’ countries.
- Preaching alone, unless it goes along with practice, may be a cover-up for ‘dishonesty’ and ‘laziness’.
- Even in the best religious groups and denominations we find lurking ‘prejudices’ and injustices which should be eliminated.
- It is a fact that religions, consciously or unconsciously, quite often backed and sanctified unjust ideologues like: ‘slavery’, ‘economical liberalism’, ‘casteism’, ‘colonialism’, ‘sex-inequalities’, ‘clericalism’, ‘forced conversion’, ‘holy wars’, ‘inquisitions’, etc.
- Religions, unawares, in the name of ‘peace,’ are prone to bless and canonize the ‘status quo’; yet, the ‘status quo’ often enough is nothing else but oppression institutionalized.
- A ‘purified and refined’ religion based on the love of God and on love for one another, is essential to solve the social problem, yet it’s not enough.
- Societal structures based on such ‘purified’ religion should be established and reinforced by law, a thing that, unfortunately, has not obtained in the past.
- Without just structures, even the oppressed themselves if freed from oppression, will turn into oppressors.
- The heart of man both, of the exploiters and of the exploited, left to itself is greedy, possessive and exploitative.
- Atheist and communist regimes after the so-called liberation of the masses have become also oppressive and exploitative.

- Yes, all men - believers and non-believers – need both a conversion of heart, as well as fair juridical, economical and political structures.

SOLUTION TWO

Work with the children of the exploiters through right education

It Looks Good but it is Deceptive

- This solution sounds very good, but it is deceptive. It has been tried already all over the world at great cost of money and personnel. The results, however, to say the least have been very disappointing
- It is well nigh impossible for children and youngsters brought in their family values to shed them and rule their lives by a set of values diametrically opposed.
- When the family values are money, success, prestige, pleasure, competition, material advancement, etc., we are fighting a losing battle telling their children to rule their lives according to evangelical values.
- Of necessity, they imbibe the home values. ‘Values cannot be taught, they are just caught’
- If you adopt this solution we run the risk that in the long run, we, educators are contaminated by the values of the families whose children we try to educate.
- When we, to please the parents of our students, aim at ‘high standards’ of performance, at material success, prestige, and high reputation for our schools and institutions, gradually, we fall in line with the values of those whose children we educate
- Often enough, unawares, we have become their ‘pupils’ and they our ‘teachers!’
- Without intending it, this method ‘perpetuates’ the very order of things - the ‘status quo’- the ‘unjust social fabric’ we enthusiastically set out to transform and redeem. We are trapped!.

SOLUTION THREE.

Work for the ‘exploited’ by Giving them Good Education

This solution is full of wrong assumptions, of false values and of unjust propositions

Wrong Assumptions: It assumes:

- That the socio-economical system we live in is the just one. Is it so?
- That we should preserve the present status quo’. Should we?
- That wealth and power are the be-all and the end-all of life. Is it so?
- That the poor should compete with the rich to climb up the rungs of the social ladder. Are they really able? Have they the means, the power and the pull

- That competition will bring ‘peace’ ‘joy’ and ‘satisfaction to our world?’
- That we should try to make the poor – at least a small percentage of them - rich and powerful as the better-offs society. Is it ethical? It is evangelical?
- That the poor should be helped, not promoted,
- That the best opportunities for education and training are for the wealthy and the high-ups.
- That the cream of jobs and occupations are primarily accessible to the rich, the highly educated, the powerful and the ‘ elite’

False Values

- This solution equates ‘standards of living’ with ‘standards of life’.
- Is the all-end and be-all of life just producing, consuming and possessing more and more material goods?
- Is the value of a human life to be measured by what a man has or by what a man is?
- This solution is based on personal greed and individual promotion.
- Where are the humanitarian, religious and Christian values like love, simplicity, humility, service and dedication in this solution?
- Is the love of God ‘and neighbor present in this solution?
- The purpose of training those few ‘lucky’ 20% or 30% of the poor is not that they should help others but only to promote themselves. In other words to be selfish,.
- Where, in this solution, can you find a thought to change the hearts of the exploiters and oppressors? You just confirm them in the validity of their values and goals in this life.

Unjust and unfair suggestions.

- If only the lucky 20 or 30% of the exploited are promoted in our educational institutions to our consumerism way of life, what about the larger majority?
- It’s taken for granted that the large majority of the exploited be abandoned to their fate. . Is it that a fair and a ‘Christian’ view of reality?
- Actually speaking this solution intends only to rise a few ‘exploited ones’ into the ranks of the “exploiters’. We do not aim at eradicating exploitation. Exploitation will go on.
- By trying to raise some of the poor to the ranks of the rich, we ‘canonize’ the unjust way of life and values of the oppressors.
- Theoretically, according to our Constitutions and to The Universal Charter of Human Rights, all citizens without discrimination have a right to good education, even to a higher education. Then, why to promote only the 20 to 30%?
- It is unfair to expect a minority of the poor - the 20 Or 30%- to compete with the rich and the ‘elite’. It will be an unequal competition, an unfair race.
- The poor, the underfed, the ‘exploited’ are not prepared for that race. It would be a losing race from the very start.
- Experience has taught us that when the poor and the needy are ‘permitted’ to enter our posh educational institutions, they feel consented, not welcome. .

- The lucky poor – the 20 Or 30% - educated in our posh schools, later on unable to afford the costs of higher education will finally fall by the way. At the end, they will feel let down, cheated and frustrated.
- Yet, in practice it is only the wealthy and the corrupt who can “buy or steal the right’ to higher education,
- Our educational institutions shedding their paternalistic attitudes towards the poor – disguised under the name of charity should be run in egalitarian terms Education for all – rich and poor!
- We should not run rich schools, but only simple, unsophisticated and efficient schools for all - rich and poor.
- This solution creates an ‘illusion’ in the exploiters’ that they are ‘good and concerned just by caring for a few children of the oppressed. .

SOLUTION FOUR

Work for the ‘exploited’ through Charity and Alms Giving.

This Solution may be necessary as a temporary relief measure. In the Long Run is Dangerous an Ineffective.

- This solution treats the exploited like beggars. It is against human dignity.
- It’s true, we have to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, but our duty is to free them from their unmerited destitution.
- What is wanted from us is not only to be charitable to a few, but much more, to be just and fair to all.
- Giving charities to people while being unjust to them is a mockery of charity.
- By doling out ‘charities’ to them we confirm them in their misery and abjectness, and keep them dependent on us.
- Charity and relief, of necessity, are called for in emergency situations as floods, earthquakes and other unforeseeable calamities.
- Relief operations, surely, are wanted but only on a temporary basis. They are not lasting solutions. “Charities’ is ‘patch-work’, not a lasting remedy.
- If charity and relief become the normal way of helping the less fortunate members of society, there is something very wrong with with our society.
- Giving’ charities creates in the giver an attitude of paternalism and self-complacency’ It places him in on an “one-up’ position, while it keeps the poor in a ‘one down’ position
- In doing charities, there is the danger that the giver may feel satisfied and believe that he is doing his duty, when actually he does not!
- To give others what is superfluous to us is not true charity, to share what we have even when we feel the pinch is true “charity”. .

- Truly speaking, even what we have, and what we share with others, is not 100% ours! Radically, we received it from the society we are part of. Cut away from human society, we would have nothing.
- To be honest and uncorrupted in administering and handing over to the needy what we have received from national or international charitable agencies is not easy. Nothing should stick to our hands! Popular Proverbs warn us: “Money soils the hands!” and “Where there is money there is muck”
- It’s an unavoidable fact, that people working for relief in N.O.G.s and other charitable agencies are better off thereby. By doling charity, what is not ours, usually we benefit in many ways:: like employment, salary, housing, cars, foreign travel, etc

SOLUTION FIVE

Work for the ‘exploited’ through charity without Paternalism

This solution is a white-washing of the previous one to make it look fairer and more dignified.

- This solution has the weak points of the previous one plus a few more
- We sit as big Daddies to determine what is good or bad for the exploited and destitute. Can we not help them to think for themselves?
- The proposal of the fifth member of the commission seems to take it for granted that the only ‘workable solution’ to the problem of poverty and exploitation is only giving alms and charities..
- Its only ‘originality’, if we can call it so, is that it tries to make alms-giving more palatable and dignified. .
- The needy and dispossessed will have to work for the charities we dole out on them
- We may think great of ourselves for safeguarding the dignity of those whose dignity our society has dishonorably exploited. We profess, or rather pretend, not to dishonor those our society has already dishonored.
- This solution entails bluff and manipulation of the poor. We ask them to work and make them believe that they earn as wages what actually was given to them in charity.
- In this solution there is a large dose of Pharisaic content. Under the pretext of helping the poor and the exploited, we pose as protectors of their ‘dignity’.
- This solution is nothing more than an attempt to whitewash and ‘baptize’ the previous solution with beautiful ‘slogans’ and ‘rationalizations.’
- Surely, we do not deny the fact that alms giving and charity occasionally are necessary and have a place in society, but we state anew that they are not enough, and that they should not be the normal way of uplifting the down-trodden!

- We agree also to the idea that when alms-giving and charity are called for, food-for-work or any other device that tries to safeguard the dignity of those we help, is laudable.

SOLUTION SIX

Work for the ‘exploited by teaching them self-reliance.

Good, but not fair and just!

- On principle, self-reliance is a very good policy. It should be taught and practiced by all, rich and poor.
- To teach self-reliance to the poor is an act of charity better than ‘alms-giving’ or food for work.
- However, let us keep in mind that charity is not enough. The practice of justice comes first, yes, justice to all, to the poor and to the rich.
- Teaching ‘self-reliance’ to the down-trodden and exploited, and to be satisfied with the little left to them, we implicitly own the fact that we – the better offs of society - have appropriated or misappropriated the lion’s share of the goods of the earth.
- There is a danger that if ever we succeeded in making the poor self-reliant on the meager resources left to them, we may feel satisfied as if we had done justice to them and turn a blind eye to the fact that we enjoy a wealth our ancestors or ourselves formerly, deprived to poor from.
- This solution assumes and takes for granted that the enormous disparities and inequalities in wealth and opportunities obtaining in our society, between persons and persons are justified. Are they?
- This solution seems to deny to the poor the right to live a more comfortable life similar to the one the upper classes enjoy.
- The virtue of self-reliance should be preached to all and practiced both, by rich and by the poor.
- How can we, and the likes of us, preach to the poor self-reliance? Do all of us practice it? Are we honest and sincere?

SOLUTION SEVEN

Work both for the ‘exploited and the ‘exploiters’ through structural changes. Make our society a just one

This solution demands justice born of love for all

- This solution is based on ‘justice and equity’. We want and demand that as far as possible, all members of society enjoy equal rights and opportunities not only on paper but in reality.

- This demand for ‘justice and equity’ should be based on a universal and mutual love for all, - **for the rich and for the poor, for the exploited and the exploiters**
- It is because we love all the members of society as brothers and sisters, especially the weak, the deprived, the poor that we want everybody to enjoy all the blessings and benefits society can offer.
- While fighting for justice – rather promoting a just society - all negative feelings should be excluded.
- Only love, - no anger, hatred, revenge, spite - can bring justice and peace to our world.
- It’s possible that while ‘fighting’ for justice, many of us, unconsciously, we give vent to suppressed anger, long standing resentments, even revengefulness for wrongs done to us, not necessarily to the poor.
- Only God knows how many ‘freedom’ fighters and justice’ champions’ have been cases of displaced anger, hate and spitefulness.
- Unfortunately, such called ‘apostles of justice’ motivated as they were by indignation and anger, have bred hatred, dissention and violence, even injustice while fighting for justice!
- Anyone who is not moved by love should not fight for justice.
- Notwithstanding the above mentioned dangers, this solution, in itself, is the most rational, human and divine.
- This solution is based on the “Golden Norm” or central teaching of all religions **‘Do to others what you want others do to you’**.
- Since all of us want to be treated justly we have to treat others justly.
- **This solution demands mutual love and acceptance of both the exploited, and of the exploiters as ‘partners and members’ of one single human family, with equal rights, privileges and duties!**

CONCLUSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Go over the Script’s of the seven different solutions proposed by the High-Powerd Commission and their Evaluations above
- Reflect on them and as far as possible write down your answers on:
 - Which solution or solutions do you like best?
 - Which solution would you adopt? Why?
 - How would you implement the solution of your choice? Your strategies
 - What steps would you take in that direction?
 - What difficulties do you foresee towards its implementation? Name them.
 - How would you solve them?

FINAL REMARKS.

The best solution is a combination of solutions 1 and 7.

A change of heart is absolutely necessary (Solution one)

- A change of heart is imperative for all, both the exploiters and exploited.
- If the exploited do not change their hearts, they will become even worse exploiters than their former oppressors once they are freed from their clutches..
- Without a change of heart, a change of structures will be useless, nay even pernicious. It will always misfire! The evils it will create will be worse than those it intended to eliminate.

A change of structures is also absolutely necessary (Solution seven)

- It's not only necessary as a means to help the poor and the oppressed out of their poverty and exploitation, but also as a necessary painful corrective to help the exploiters to change their hearts!
- Because of prejudice and of an inborn greed in the human heart, the – exploiters – the beneficiaries of an unjust social order are likely to be blind!
- Many exploiters – good at heart - will open their eyes to their former injustices, only when they are not any longer in a position to exploit.
- Exploitative structures, without our being aware of them, will turn us - 'good', 'just' and 'loving' persons - into exploiters!
- The power the structures and ideologies have on our perception of the social reality and on our values is blinding and fatal.
- Caste or ethnic group, sex, national, values, political affiliation, vested interests etc. exert an irresistible distorting and blinding influence on our perception of reality. For instance, once upon a time 'slavery' was considered normal and just even by saints, great honest thinkers and religious people.
- The wage system, the capitalist, the consumerist and the globalization ideologies look just and normal to most of us today. Will they look just and fair to people living two hundred years hence? Aren't they questionable?
- Many exploiters, as individual persons, are very fine people, but when caught up within a structural set-up, unawares, they may play a murderous role. For instance, an execution squad, made of good, kindhearted soldiers in war days may execute innocent prisoners without qualms of conscience.

God ultimately calls us to love and reconciliation:

Healthy and responsible social ethics can never forget to appeal to the human person both for a change heart and to strive for a change of social structures.

To exceed the righteousness of the world, we have to practice a heroic love beyond the call of justice.

WEIGHTS DOWN ON THE MAJORITY

APPENDIX: AN ATTEMPT AT A SOCIO-POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIETY TO EXPLAIN THE EXISTING ECONOMICAL INEQUALITIES

WEIGHTS DOWN ON THE MAJORITY

A SKETCH OF A SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF TODAY'S SOCIETY OBTAINED

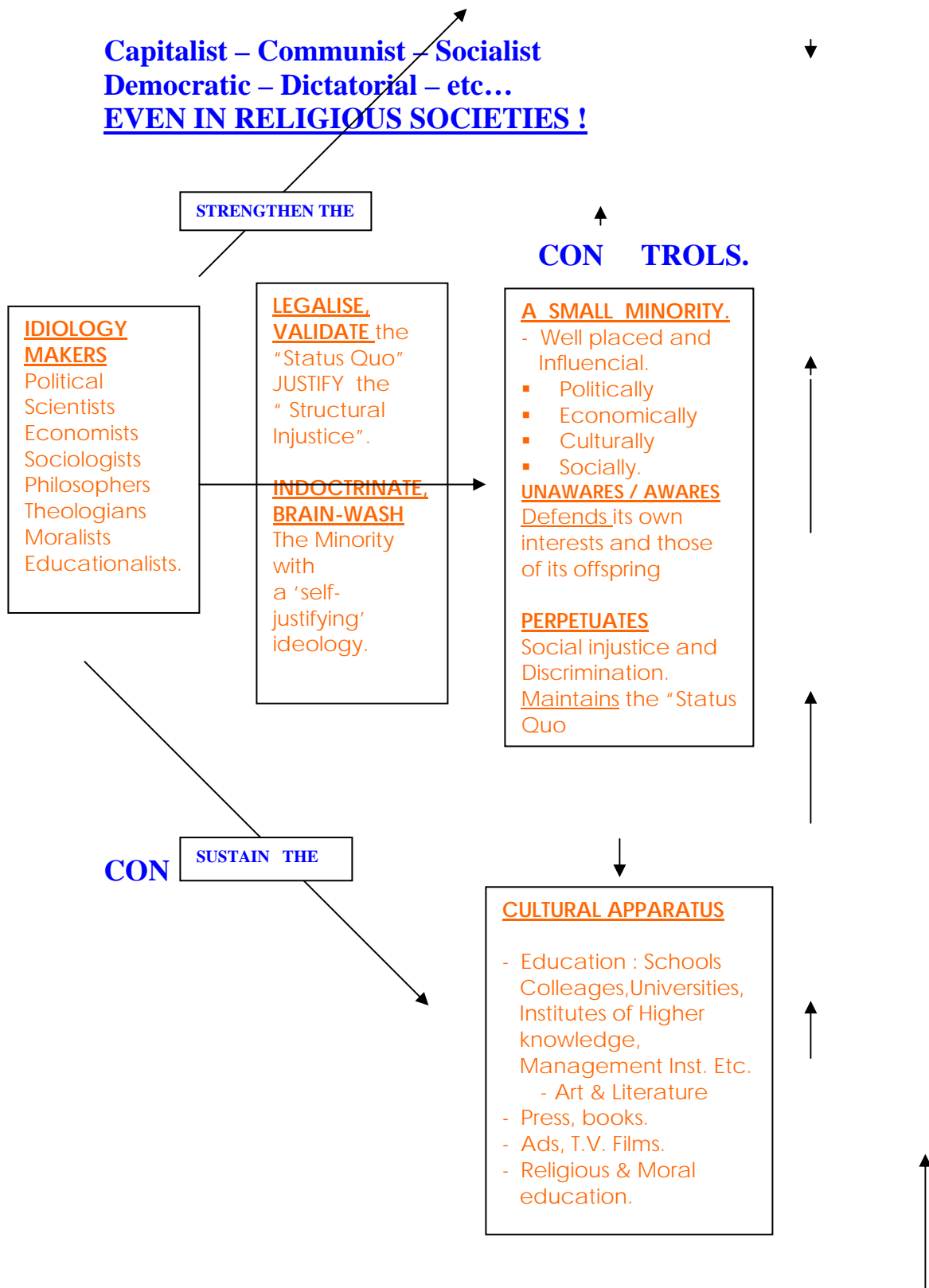
- POWER APPARATUS**
- Police
 - Army
 - Law making.
 - Judiciary
 - Economy
 - Industry
 - Banking/Finance
 - Government
 - Politics

- ↓
- 1) SUPPRESSES – CRUSHES INTO SUBMISSION THE ABSOLUTE MAJORITY.
 - 2) KEEPING IT: DESTITUTE POWERLESS SPEECHLESS DEFENCELESS EXPLOITED

ALL OVER THE WORLD WITHOUT

DISTINCTION OF POLITICAL REGIMES:

**Capitalist – Communist – Socialist
Democratic – Dictatorial – etc...
EVEN IN RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES !**



**WEIGHTS DOWN ON
THE MAJORITY**