

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

## TO THE WORKERS \*

I have discussed with the workers from different provinces the work they did last year in their respective areas. And though with more careful organization we could have done still better yet there is no reason for any dissatisfaction over what has been achieved. The resolution which was read out yesterday refers to the seven or eight lakh acres of land which were collected last year with a sense of just pride. And though in the course of the discussions I had with the workers I at times admonished them in order to rouse them to greater effort, yet I am also full of admiration for them and acknowledge that those who worked for this success are entitled to great credit.

### Need for Introspection

Next year we want to go further ahead and fulfil the target that we have adopted. It should not be difficult to do so. This year we had only eleven months for our work, next year we will have thirteen months. And since there is a greater awakening among the people and our work is now better planned and more organized than before, I hope that our efforts for collecting the required amount of land will succeed without much ado.

But our work is much more comprehensive and our aim more exalted than that. We will therefore do some introspection, so that we may become worthy of our high responsibility. We should try to remove the faults we suffer from. And we should do so with absolute honesty without yielding to the temptation of looking for similar faults in others. It is not for us to seek satisfaction in the fact that there are others who have the same faults as we.

### Reject Intolerance

In this connection, the incident which occurred here yesterday may be regarded as an eye-opener. A friend wanted to place before us the question of the ill-treatment being accorded to the Bengali language in Bihar. He was overcome with excitement and said something which some of the audience did not like. They lost their patience and began to hoot the speaker. There

\* This is the first instalment of Shri Vinoba's concluding speech on the evening of 9-3-'53 at the Chandli Sarvodaya Sammelan.

were cries of 'sit down' from all sides. If they had kept calm, they could have won his heart. He had expressed his gratitude for being given the opportunity to speak. These cries, therefore, must have hurt him. We must remember that it is very difficult to unite the hearts and very easy to divide them. What made the occurrence more deplorable was the fact that this exhibition of temper was collective; it was not a thing between a few individuals which we might not note as serious. Nor was it just a chance occurrence. It was an expression of the vicious malady of intolerance which we suffer from.

### Beware of Superiority Complex

But the evil arises from something deeper than that. We seem to think that since we belong to the Sarvodaya Samaj and hold Sarvodaya views, we are in some ways more virtuous than others. I fear that some of us might be led into the mistake of considering it a thing of great merit to be a member of the Sarvodaya Samaj or to hold Sarvodaya views irrespective of whether they act on them or not. It is evident that indulgence in this sort of self-deception will be very harmful to us. We aim at serving the world and the humanity and as servants of humanity it behoves us to cultivate utmost humility so that we may discharge our duty well. Otherwise if we develop a superiority complex we will come to grief like the Brahmans at one time. The Brahmans were given to the acquisition of knowledge but they became proud of it and developed a superiority complex which eventually proved their undoing. This intolerance and the pride from which it arises is, therefore, a great fault which we should guard against.

### Need to Study and Contemplate

There are other things which are not so much faults as shortcomings. One of these is that many of us neglect the study of ideas. We do not go to the root of things with the result that our thinking remains superficial. This has been an old complaint. When I refer to it I am not speaking of pure academic study without relation to work. But there are certain ideas behind our work and they are very deep. If we do not study them and fail to realize their profound content then the inspiration which keeps us working begins to pall and fade away. But I am sorry our

workers do not seem to have given much heed to this aspect of our work. I once asked a worker if he had read a recent article by Gandhiji. He replied that he had not. When I said that the article was worth reading and he had better go through it, he answered, "What Gandhiji writes must always be worth reading. But I am doing his work and after all that is the essence of what he says. I may therefore forgo reading it if I find no spare time for it." I then explained that if workers had no need to read it, Gandhiji too would not require to write it. He was also engaged in work, yet he found time to write something every week. We should know then that it might give us a new light and a new insight into things.

Some people justify this neglect of studying and thinking by citing Gandhiji's own words in their support. It is true that Gandhiji did say at times that while people read too much, what they really needed was to do work. But this statement was meant for those who read to no purpose and whiled away their time in useless speculation, not for those who work and hence have a real right to the acquisition of knowledge therethrough. Without it action loses its power and becomes insipid. The nature of our work and the position in which we have consequently placed ourselves is such that we need to think and meditate a great deal. We expect that if we are truly devoted to truth the people around us are bound to develop the same quality. This entails for us the responsibility to go deep into the Truth of ideas. We as Satyagrahis believe that if our heart is pure it must exercise a beneficent effect on the atmosphere around us. This idea is basic to Satyagraha; the whole practice of Satyagraha rests on the acceptance of this idea. And if we accept this idea then we must be prepared to shoulder the responsibility which it involves. We should dive deep into the laws which govern life. If we do not do so, if we do not enter into the depth of the ideas we advocate, I may warn you that however much we may work, the way of life we preach and practise will not last in this land. It may last for us because we will keep hold of it by the strength of our will, but it will not take roots in India. Because India is a land of philosophy; people here are used to search for the philosophic rationale of any conduct that may be preached. The Buddhist religion remained confined to practice. They instituted some social reforms, but did not go into the depth of philosophy. The result was that though India received its beneficent touch yet the Buddhist religion did not stay here for long. I mention this merely to show that this country does not tolerate any practice for very long unless it is supported by a profound philosophy. For example, we see that the Gita starts with the simple question whether Arjun is right in his reluctance to face the battle. And in seeking to answer this question the Gita covers the whole range of human life and thought. This

is a characteristic of our land and of our people. We should cultivate the habit of deep thinking and going into the root of the ideas we hold and preach.

(Abridged from Hindi)

### THE LAYMAN'S REMARK

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The one thing about which our people have been continuously complaining has been the working of our administrative services in the new set-up. People complain that there appears to be a special spate of its worsening under Swaraj. Apparently, there are unpardonable delay, negligence, irresponsibility, bribery and corruption, etc. This may be an exaggerated picture; there may be valid explanations for some of these drawbacks. But the point remains that in the popular mind there persists a very strong impression of this nature, and it cannot be surely ignored by a democratic government.

Even apart from this, the problem of administration and our expectations from it naturally take a new aspect under Swaraj, and the whole thing has to be investigated as soon as possible.

Therefore, the democratic way of inquiry and report has set in, and by now we have already two reports at the Centre on this question—the Gorwala report and the Appleby Report.

Naturally the question arose why there were two inquiries. The reply from Government was that the first report dealt with the *art* of administration, the latter was called forth for dealing with the *science* of administration!

The first report was by an ex-I.C.S. Indian; the second is by an American expert. As far as I remember, the first report among other things said that popular ministers were as much to be blamed as the officers, and in the new set-up there must be some way to check this new source of evil; not only the bureaucracy but the new democracy also has to have a lesson, if we wish to improve the administration. It was perhaps an artful statement of defending the services by saying that not only the services but also the popular leaders as well are blameworthy for any wrong going on if at all.

The second report is by an expert from America. And everything American should be taken to be scientific at least. Papers are full of dissection of this scientific thesis on our administration. The thesis draws our attention to some of our future problems and pats us on the back by saying that ours is one of the few finest administrations in the world today. It is a subtle flattery both of our ex-rulers and the present ones also, though the real credit goes to the former. Let us not feel self-complacent at this 'expert' flattery from America. Because what we as laymen are really concerned with is not the *art* nor the *science*, whatever they may be,



but the actual *practice* of administration ; and the real report on that is the one that is daily to be had from the people to whom the shoe pinches. As the proverb goes, the proof of the pudding lies in the eating : let us mind the practice of administration, which on all admission, surely requires to be improved immediately. Has Government any programme for this ?

20-5-'53

### AN APPEAL TO DOCTORS

[The following are extracts from the inaugural speech by the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad while declaring open the Medical College at Nagpur on 27-3-'53.]

There is a great paucity of doctors in our country at present. I do not know the exact number, but it is supposed that they are far less than we need. This would be very welcome if our people were healthy and free from disease. But it augurs ill while there is still ill-health and disease. The chief duty to which, I believe, the doctors should address themselves should be not merely to cure the disease or bring relief to those who are suffering from it, but to create the conditions which will do away with disease altogether. This means that they should consciously try first to restrict and finally to abolish the profession which they practise and which provides them with their livelihood. That would be their true success. But so long as there is poverty in our country it is itself a great contributing factor in breeding ill-health and there is no doubt that the need for doctors would therefore continue for a pretty long time to come.

I will now refer to an aspect of this problem which is perhaps not sufficiently appreciated by doctors. There have been and still are in our country other systems of medicine. The modernists usually deride them as being unscientific. Now I do not know exactly what is scientific and what is not scientific. But I do know that large numbers of our people are still served by these other systems. It therefore behoves the doctors to study them and find out what is useful in them. They should also find out what is lacking in them which has arrested their development for the past many years and what should be done to restart this development. If there are defects which debar them from becoming truly scientific, the doctors should point out how those defects can be removed.

So far as I know, it is not scientific to take a thing for granted and in the same way it is not scientific to reject a thing off-hand without examining it. A scientist first studies a thing and bases his opinion about it on the findings of such study. I therefore want that you should undertake a truly scientific study of these systems and remove their defects. If this is done and the different systems are made to co-operate with one another, then I think we may succeed in banishing ill-health and disease from our country to a

far greater extent than otherwise. If instead we rely on one system only we will have to wait for a very long time, because we cannot at present afford the expenditure which this involves.

It was said here that there are two crores of people inhabiting this province. How many doctors would we need for looking after two crores ? We will have to open many such colleges before we can hope to produce them in sufficient number. But what is to happen to these people in the meantime till this comes about ? I therefore suggest that all our systems of medicine should co-operate and make use of all available means for fighting disease and keeping people healthy. This is the only way how we can succeed in our task on the health front.

It has been a characteristic of our culture that it presents even the most abstruse subjects in the most easily intelligible forms. Philosophical thoughts which would have taken several pages have been put by the Rishis in brief aphorisms. The means adopted for doing even apparently very big things were of the simplest. This applies to medicine also. We must study how they made use of the leaves and roots of the plants for treating ailments. Now if we work along that line and present our findings to the people so as to make them self-sufficient in respect of medicine, then the villagers will be saved much botheration and unnecessary expenses. They will not need to come to Nagpur from their villages and here submit themselves to different therapeutical tests in various laboratories. If you are able to accomplish this you will not only do good to India but to the whole world. This may sound ridiculous to you in this age in the context of the medical research as it is developing at present. But I think science can do it and the true scientist may well solve this problem. And he may give a scientific form to what appears ridiculous today.

The College which is being inaugurated today is still free from the cramping influence of past traditions. I therefore appeal to you to be liberal in your views and build such traditions as would permit you to give your attention to all things which may be of help to us in our aim. You should specially bear in your mind the conditions in our villages and evolve your system to suit the requirements of those conditions. If you develop such traditions, then this new College will be able to do greater work than those which have been in existence for a longer time but which have been working on other lines. Of course this does not mean that you are to cut off yourselves from the modern science. You should certainly learn it and profit by it and add to it where you can. But along with that you should give attention to other systems also and take care not to reject them off-hand.

(From the original in Hindi)

# HARIJAN

June 6

1953

## THE PRESENT SITUATION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

While inaugurating a Conference of Pradesh Conveners of the Bharat Sevak Samaj (shortly B.S.S.) at New Delhi, Pandit Nehru made one remark which deserves our serious introspection. He said, "I have felt that there is a vacuum in India at the present time. There is a demand for this vacuum to be filled. I want to know how far the B. S. S. can fill that vacuum."

This statement by the Prime Minister is a very serious observation on the present situation in our country. It reminds me of an equally serious feeling that he expressed when Gandhiji passed away five years ago: "The light has gone out."

Read together the two statements mean that as a nation we are still groping in the dark to find out a way suited to our genius for our march to rebuild India of our dreams. During the most eventful generation that ended with the passing away of Gandhiji from our midst, we as a people had a clear way and a simple method of marching on to our national destiny and destination. There was no feeling of a vacuum even to the commonest among us. Rather, the light was there for each and all of us, irrespective of class or creed, language or region, showing the way to all that cared to go on it. Such a sense of positive and clear faith is now lacking; but having once tasted the sweetness thereof naturally we intuitively feel to regain it. Pandit Nehru, I think, was expressing this inner want of our people when he said as quoted above.

The feeling of such a vacuum is being felt by many prominent workers as well. Thus for example, Shri Ravishankar 'Maharaj', a prominent old and tried worker of Gujarat, expressed himself at the Second Gujarat Bhoodan Conference at Nadiad in the following manner. He said that since the advent of Swaraj, he was feeling a void and a vacuum in his mind. Not that he was not working; he was all along occupying himself with this or that constructive activity for the people—a good and necessary one at that; for example, tube-wells for North Gujarat, famine relief, etc. But it did not carry inward satisfaction to him. In his mind of minds he felt that he had no fullness of heart in the business as he had before when fighting for Swaraj. He as if did not feel himself in tune with the urge of the masses. He recently went to China; that even did not help him remove this feeling of vacuum. Ultimately, he got rid of it by personally understanding from Shri Vinoba his

Bhooadan Movement, and he got back his zest and zeal for work as of old.

I have described in my own words Shri Ravishankar's mind to illustrate further the present situation in the country as described by Panditji. It connotes a certain disharmony worrying our soul, lack of attunement with the true genius of our people.

And it must be noted that there is this vacuum in spite of or say even though there are the Congress, the Five-Year Plan and now the B. S. S., etc., all of them functioning their utmost. It means that all these form mere isolated items and are not the coherent lines or colours for an emergent picture of the one ideal we desire to draw. This further comes to mean that the ideal, whatever it may be, is not cherished by all as a common prize to endeavour for. It might be that we do not have its clear picture at all or if we have, it is different and we are only experimenting in various ways of our own to realize it; and the ways are unfortunately divergent.

Thus, for example, those who run the Government today seem to have, as their way for filling the vacuum, the official Five-Year Plan and the B. S. S. as its non-official non-party wing. On the other hand, as those running the Government, they are not non-party, because the Government are Congress Governments at present. This way of the F. Y. P.-cum-B. S. S. is being exploited to its full value under Government auspices. As Shri Nehru said, he was watching to see how far it could fill the present vacuum.

There is another way also. Or rather we have had it already, which we called the Constructive Programme forged out by the people under Gandhiji's auspices. That does not perhaps look so big nor modern enough to some of us. However there is a very large and important group of workers that believes in it and is organizing its way as Sarvodaya Samaj and the Sarva Seva Sangh. It is making as its spearhead the Bhoodan Movement. Like the B. S. S. this Sangh also desires to be non-partisan, that is, it seeks to have in its field of activity all who can subscribe to the immediate programme of collecting land for the landless from the land-owners. All political parties except the Communist bless it and help it in their own way and from their own separate viewpoint, aim or objective, and without allowing to lose their own political identity.

The B. S. S. is a new organization, only a year old. Was such a new organization needed by the situation? Pandit Nehru almost begged this question when he said to the Conveners' Conference that "at his age he hardly could interest himself in new organizations which did little or no work. He was often asked to become President of this organization or Patron of that. He did not accept these proposals as he had a lot of work of



his own to do. But he was always interested in an organization which had the capacity to transform itself into a new weapon for serving the people. 'When you have such an organization you get in your hands a new weapon, like a sword with a sharp blade. Your mind wants to handle this sword and use it for cutting off the heads of wrong things.' (The Hindu, 9-5-'53). A new organization on an all-India basis and chiefly if it is Government or semi-Government sponsored, might just be an office-organization. Shri Jawaharlal perhaps apprehending this said to the Conference "not to let the B. S. S. become an organization whose activities were confined to that of a mere office. Too many rules and regulations strangled an organization." Shri Vinoba also 'would have his Sarvodaya Samaj a loose institution and not so knit as to be an office or an institution with its usual rules and regulations etc.

What does the B. S. S. aim to do? An organization is known by the chief thing or work it aims to do. What is the core of the programme of the B. S. S.? As Shri Jawaharlal put it, it wants to spread the idea in the country that "we can make a new India by using our hands and feet". Schemes for local works all over the country-side are intended to be prepared and people will be enthused to undertake them with what help the B. S. S. may give them. Anti-corruption and anti-adulteration drives are also suggested. Obviously all this is not special or peculiar to the B. S. S. The Bhoodan Movement as also the Congress Constructive Programme cover such items. As a matter for that, Shri Nehru said that Congressmen should associate themselves with B. S. S. in a formal manner. But he warned them that it should not be undertaken in any party spirit or for advancing the aims of any party. "We do not want the idea to go abroad that this work was being done to advance the interests of any party," he said. The question remains, what should the Congress do then? How does it function for filling the vacuum? Or does it stand only on past laurels and abdicate in favour of B. S. S. or such other body?

And what about party interests? How far is it really possible for political parties, as they are constituted and functioning today, to forget themselves and cease advancing their own interests, let alone the political interests of their groups and individuals even? How shall we make party interests irrelevant and redundant in the larger perspective of the nations' good?

All these are some of the salient points in the present situation, which I note as they strike me at present. There may be many others. I am almost thinking aloud when I pen these lines. And when I come to conclude them, the following words of deep pathos—surely not of

pessimism—uttered by immortal Bhartrihari ring in my ears—

यूयं वयं, वयं यूयं जित्वासोन्मत्तरावयोः ।  
किं जातमधुना येन यूयं यूयं, वयं वयम् ॥

[You were for us and we were for you; what has happened now that this accord is gone and you are for yourselves and we are for ourselves?]

And the answer that readily comes to me uppermost is that it is the apple of power that Swaraj has thrown in our midst. I do not cry it down when I say this. It was sought for by us and it is right that we have power in our hands. But should we be overpowered by it? Should it be too much for us? Can our people be not made to learn to do their own things by themselves and without any politics of power sullying it or without expecting Government to tow the line for them? In our answer to this question lies the other answer whether we shall fill the vacuum and march on as one people to rebuild India.

21-5-'53

#### SHRI VINOBA AT GAYA

Nanak says in one of his *bhajans*: One should strive after attaining the 'whole'. It was in the spirit of this precept that Shri Vinoba exhorted the people of Bihar to make efforts for a complete solution of the land-problem in their province. And the district where he first stressed the need for such efforts and which he chose for his first experiment in this direction was Gaya. This was the beginning of the glorious record which Gaya was to set up in the annals of Bhoodan work later.

One of the representatives of the youth who met him before the prayer meeting asked him: 'When other countries in the world are manufacturing atom bombs, do you think we in India can do all we want merely by preaching edifying sermons?'

"Not merely by preaching but by practising them. After all atom bomb is only a form of material energy. It cannot change thought. The atom bomb has none of the power which thought has."

Later in his prayer-speech at the Gandhi Mandap Shri Vinoba made this the theme of his inspiring address. Expounding the superiority of thought-power over every other weapon for changing the world, he said:

"Even the atom bomb is a creation of a thought which occurred in a human brain. It is being produced only to propagate a certain thought which may be a defective one. It is thought alone which has given birth to the atom bomb; all the mightiest weapons cannot do anything by themselves. They require a thinking man to utilize them. The basis of all human activity is thought which may take an outward form of an atom bomb, or of a Danapatra (gift-deed). Both originate from thought, one from a good thought, the other from an evil thought.

"A thought based on untruth shines for a moment but soon disappears, but a good thought endures for ever. When man finds a new thought, he creates plans and schemes to give shape to that thought; but if that thought is found to be defective, the whole superstructure created for it collapses and a new thought emerges. Man destroys the superstructure without a minute's hesitation. These constant experiments have been going on since the creation of the world in all branches of life—sociology, politics and religion. One thought after another is tried and if it is found wrong, another purer thought takes its place. It is thought alone which inspires and induces man to build houses, create governments and parliaments and all that which forms a part of his life."

Citing from the Gita its famous metaphor of a strange tree which has its roots in the sky and its branches below, which lasts for ever and which does not last, Vinobaji said further :

"This metaphor symbolizes man whose roots are his brain and hands and feet are the instruments to give shape to the thought occurring in that brain. One thought gives place to another, thus the tree does not last; yet the sovereignty of thought remains and so the tree lasts for ever.

"Therefore when people tell me that the whole world is going in a different direction, creating more and more dangerous weapons, I tell them that the greatest powers of the world have a limited number of weapons while I possess an unlimited number of them in the form of thought. When this Sun of thought shines, darkness of ignorance has to go. That is why those who go to the roots of the problems of human life always try to keep the weapon of thought in their hands.

"Even if a thought based on truth is created in the mind of an individual in any unknown cave or a jungle, that thought immediately starts on a world tour to reach every human heart. It needs no press or radio, for it has the most powerful medium of propagation, i.e., the sky above us. Like light thought travels through the sky. It may take time to reach every human heart, as the light from a distant star takes years to reach us. And so when I see the unhappy state of affairs around us, I do not feel disheartened, for I know that it is nothing but a mirage.

"And so I go on preaching constantly what is truth to me. I have a faith that when man understands truth, he will be a changed person the next moment. The same hands which created atom bombs would destroy them, if the brain behind them is convinced. I would like workers to carry on the ceaseless work of convincing people and if what they preach is based on truth, the whole world will one day accept it."

"We aim at a complete transformation of human life on the enduring basis of true thought. But man who must become an agent for working

out this transformation finds himself incapable of shouldering this high responsibility. This feeling was expressed by Shri Gauribabu who said : We find we are totally unfit to undertake this great task.

Vinobaji said, "We are all an unfit lot. I too find myself ill-qualified for this work. By nature I am inclined more towards meditation and contemplation. But it would appear that God has decided to make use of the unfit and ill-qualified for His purpose."

To the litterateurs who had complained of their financial difficulties, he said :

"Among the writers some are of the category of Valmiki and Tulsi—men of detachment who are totally averse to worldly joys and success. Their writings spread automatically without any effort. I am of the view that artists, including literary artists, must take up such small industries as will give them enough for their livelihood but will not fatigue their mind. Kabir would not have been Kabir, had he not been a weaver. The poets who lived as the poor masses lived and worked as they did achieved unity with the people and their compositions in song or poetry or fable endured without the help of the printing press. The more the poets identify themselves with the creation the more would their poetry gain in depth and meaning. But I know a majority of the poets are not of this category and they should receive aid and support. But such support should come from the society and not from the Government."

About the Communists Vinobaji said, "They have pinned their faith like fanatics in a book and taken leave of both the intelligence and the consideration of enviroing circumstances. Marx would have changed his views had he been living today, because he was Marx and not a Marxist. The Indian Communists cannot know India because they are ignorant of the Indian thought which has influenced our history for the last ten thousand years."

N. D.

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## NEUTRALISM—A POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

[Gandhiji showed us a non-violent way to achieve our national independence, and we might well congratulate ourselves that weak and passively non-violent though we were, we had a fairly good measure of success in it. But it was only the beginning of the great thing that Gandhiji desired to bring about in our country. He wanted to bring about and establish a non-violent and peaceful order of society in India and therethrough show that it was possible to achieve a non-violent and peaceful world order. This latter task remains to be fulfilled by us. He had also suggested to us a comprehensive national programme of constructive ways and means to achieve that end. It should be remembered both by the Government as well as the people that this programme the nation has accepted and adopted as its own by laying it down in the form of various Directives of the State Policy, in Chapter IV of the Constitution of India. It is worthy of our attention that one of them is as follows:

Article 51: The State shall endeavour to—

- (a) promote international peace and security;
- (b) maintain just and honourable relations between nations;
- (c) foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another; and
- (d) encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

And we may well be proud that this has been fairly well implemented by our foreign policy. Even though it is criticized in a manner by certain political groups, we may say that this has met with the greatest measure of acceptance by our people. It has raised us as a people in the estimation of the world also.

To achieve peace and avoid war in the modern world it is at least necessary that one should bear no enmity or malice towards any one, but try, as far as possible, to be friendly, helpful and co-operative to all. If the world wants peace and no war, this should be the guiding star of the foreign policy and public relations of all the countries. India following the peace mission of the Father of the Nation, has carefully followed this line and it must be said that it has created a very good impression in world affairs. Slowly and surely, we observe that a theory of constructive and positive neutralism is taking shape in modern political philosophy. Though described as neutralism, this attitude of friendship and good-will towards all and no partisanship but co-operative helpfulness for the common good of all is a positive reversion from the age-old policy of balance of power and is an active expression of the one world idea. It lays down the law that nations are not so free nor sovereign as to forget that they have to shape their policies and affairs, both domestic and foreign, for mutual helpfulness and with one consideration of their vital inter-dependence. Such a philosophy is the direct outcome of Gandhiji's teachings of Truth and Non-violence, as applied to a nation's foreign policy.

I came across such a thesis in *Neutrality, Germany's Way to Peace*, a peace-news pamphlet by Stuart Morris. It tries to describe how neutralism is not merely negative, but has very positive significance in the world context we actually see before us today. The following culled from it will, I hope, provide interesting reading to readers devoted to peace and no-war on earth.

13-4-53

—M. P.]

Though the idea of neutrality as a national policy is not new, there has been a growing recognition of the fact that it presents a practical alternative to the policy of national alliances and commitments as part of the post-war development.

The war represented the clash between the Axis Powers and the Allies, but once the common

fear of Germany and the mutual hatred of Hitler had been removed by Hitler's death and Germany's defeat there was no longer any common bond sufficiently strong to maintain the alliance, and the older rivalries and fears quickly manifested themselves. Moreover, the effect of the war on the political and economic position of Britain and France, with the defeat of Germany, meant that the outstanding characteristic of the post-war world has been its domination by two newer powers and its division into two blocs.

That division has been hardened by the attempts of America and Russia to strengthen their defences against each other and by the adoption by nearly all the countries concerned of a policy of rearmament. The new race in armaments, unless it is checked, will once more inevitably end in war—and because the race this time is in weapons of mass destruction, the virtual end of civilization.

For some countries a new international conflict would mean civil war; for all countries it could only result in chaos and destruction. Neutralism derives from the impact of the policies of Russia and America on the minds of men and is a response to the sense of the necessity for creating a political climate in which negotiation between the two dominating powers, would at least relax tension sufficiently to ensure the peaceful co-existence of their two "ways of life."

One possible solution of the problem may be worth discussing. The real enemy of mankind is neither capitalism nor communism, but hunger, disease and preventable death. The creation of a peaceful and prosperous world depends upon the declaration of a determined war on want. Such a war would involve the creation of all the resources adequate to developing the latent wealth of the world, and would require a vast international fund for world development. So, and so only, can we find the resources to wage successfully the only war worth fighting—the war on want.

It is to be expected that the politicians will do all in their power to oppose neutrality and to try to discredit it. It is the greatest challenge which they have to face. It undermines the whole basis of power politics. It would remove from their hands the pawns which they use for their own purposes on that tragic chess-board of life where the squares are either all black or all white, and where red and white pieces manoeuvre for strategic positions as they anticipate the final checkmate. So they talk about neutrality as creating a dangerous vacuum. But a vacuum is not necessarily dangerous or negative. Many of us use a vacuum flask constantly and food for man's life is preserved through the use of a vacuum. A gap may be a positive security. When a dangerous forest fire is raging men do not carry petrol into its proximity. They cut down the trees and leave a gap wide enough to prevent the fire spreading or the danger of some spark igniting a new area. Neutrality is such a gap. It can also be regarded as a bridge across the gap. Nor do we hesitate to build a bridge because a wrong use may be made of it. We risk its use by an escaping murderer, because over it can also, and much more often, pass the feet of those who are on their lawful business.

What is so badly needed today is a breathing-space — a period of relaxation of the political, economic and mental tension. Neutrality represents the possibility of such a breathing-space. Surely the very least which we must demand of the politicians is that if they cannot give us peace, they should give us a truce — a period of, say, ten years in which the rival power blocs should cease their preparations for war against each other, should call a halt in the cold war of propaganda and refrain from stirring up hatred. A period within which each in its own accepted sphere of influence might be free to work out its own way of life to the best advantage, without interference from outside or in the life of others. It might well be that such a truce would not only give us the possibility of understanding each other better and of co-operation in a worthwhile enterprise, but that at the end of it there would emerge an order of society which was not in accordance with the pattern of anything we see today, but by taking the best of each and discarding the worst, would at least give to mankind those conditions in which he can enjoy the fullest freedom, the greatest security and the fullness of the arts of peace.

The politicians also try to discount neutrality by regarding it as the equivalent of appeasement or cowardice, saying that no one has the right to be neutral in the fight between good and evil, right and wrong. In that they are stating a truth, but making a false assumption, since they generally presuppose that all the good is on their own side and that their way alone is right.

There is evil in the world and it must be faced. There is wrong in high places, but it is not confined to one side — to one economic, political or ideological system. Nor, indeed, if we are honest can we say that our own hearts and minds are entirely free from evil. The conflict against evil and all that degrades life and denies to any the right to a full and free manhood must be waged. But that conflict cannot be fought with the weapons of violence and the method of war. It is only by a policy of neutrality that we can free ourselves and our resources for the deeper struggle. Nor can we remain content with old clichés, old policies and discredited methods. If we are to advance with the times in an age of revolution, we must be prepared to adopt revolutionary methods, and neutrality is not only the policy whose time has come, but the policy which is also strong in the strength of the new method of overcoming evil — be it cruelty, tyranny or aggression — the power of a resistance which is non-violent.

Neutrality not only involves freedom from economic, military and political entanglements, it means non-co-operation with what is evil, civil disobedience to bad laws, resistance to domination from wherever it comes by non-co-operation and non-violence. It is only because our minds have become so obsessed with a belief in the

efficacy of violence — a belief as false in the long run when applied to defence as to aggression — that we pay so little heed to the possibilities of this other method of resistance. But it will yet come into its own if the world is to know peace and if evil is to be banished, as it has proved itself in India and is proving itself in South Africa today. When we realize that, the last argument against neutrality will have been swept away.

#### SHRI VINOBA'S APPEAL TO TEACHERS

"Teachers have been the pioneers in the field of new achievements in the world. It is the teachers and Acharyas who have built up India. It is, therefore, my heart-felt desire that teachers and students should go round the villages in groups and batches to deliver the message of Bhoodan Yajna", said Acharya Vinoba Bhave in an appeal to teachers and students in course of his tour in the Gaya district.

Acharya Bhave said: "I expect a lot from all, but I expect much more from teachers and students. Teachers can study ideas in their true perspective. So I want them to obtain land-gifts by explaining to the people the idea behind the Bhoodan Movement. They have at present full two months' time in the summer vacation and they can move from village to village during this period. I concede that teachers, who have to suffer numerous hardships including non-payment of salaries in time, are among the distressed. Nevertheless, if they would work in the vacation they would gain in prestige and also tend to become better teachers.

"Those who work in the service of others have their objects easily fulfilled. When a man devotes himself to the service of others, he so rises in the estimation of the people that what he needs comes to him unasked for. I am fully aware of the difficulties of teachers and they have my sympathy in ample measure. Yet I want them to take up Bhoodan work. Work would make their voice spread far and wide and they would be respected everywhere. I would like to tell the teachers that as they have some experience of what woeful life means they can do something for those of us who are in a far worse plight. Only those who know what it is to be hungry can realize the condition of the hungry and have sympathy for them. Such persons will treat it as their duty to satisfy the hunger of others. That is why those who are themselves poor, should endeavour, to alleviate the suffering of the poor and the destitute," he concluded.

Patna, May 14, 1953

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