

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

## COPYRIGHT IN GANDHIJI'S WRITINGS

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It is therefore desired that all interested in publishing such matter should secure previous permission of the Trust in writing in order to avoid any future trouble.

The Trust requests all those who come across such cases of infringement to bring them to its notice without delay.

JIVANJI DESAI  
Managing Trustee

(Note: There appears to be a deliberate attempt on the part of some publishers to ignore Gandhiji's Will. I have heard some of these arguing that Gandhiji and his writings etc. could not belong to a particular institution. He belonged to the whole world, and his writings might be published by any one desirous of doing so. This is a wrong argument. For very valid reasons, Gandhiji took deliberate steps to guard his writings against mutilation, and bequeathed their copyrights to the Navajivan Trust. This act has apparently not pleased all those who were

close to him and who are anxious to propagate his writings, whether for their own benefit, or of the world, or both. But their displeasure or anxiety cannot give them the desired right. If they wish to publish his writings, as they allege, out of love and regard for Gandhiji and his ideas, they should respect the wishes expressed by him in his Will, and go through the formalities prescribed by law to do so, i.e. obtain the permission of the Navajivan Trust. —K. G. M.)

## PROHIBITION EVER SUCCESSFUL

Some classes of people, a few individuals and newspapers in our country have, it seems, taken upon themselves the gratuitous task of proving that the policy of prohibition has been a failure. Fortunately for us, the number of such people is very small and not in a position to shake the firm will of the people nor play upon their credulity.

Some people have stuck to the plea that as people cannot be made moral by recourse to law, prohibition by law is useless; and having offered this argument they believe that they have proved their proposition — Q. E. D. To such people we would only say this much: The Prohibition Act only says that the Government will not henceforth interest itself in the sale of liquor, because it leads to the ruination of the people, especially of the poor, the women and the children. A people's government, therefore, cannot carry on such an anti-social activity. Just as the law prohibiting theft makes the anti-social act of theft punishable, but does not seek directly to inculcate the non-covetousness enjoined by the *Isha Upanishad* (मां गृध्रं कश्चित्चिद् धनम् । covet not what belongs to another.) in the minds of the people, so also is the case with the law of prohibition. Therefore, if the Government ceases to deal in liquor as a public trade, the main end of prohibition is gained and this is considered to be the chief test of its success.

Some people have begun to indulge in such loose talk as to say that distilling liquor has now become a home industry! Some irresponsibly say that all *gur* is now diverted to liquor-making! All this loose talk is reprehensible; it does not represent the true facts. Do the people who indulge in such talk then want to convey that those who did not drink formerly have

taken to illicit distillation? Can we even say that all the old addicts have taken to such a course? This can never be believed in. A large percentage of these automatically cease drinking for fear of being caught. And supposing all the addicts have taken to illicit distillation, what percentage of the population in the country were they? Supposing this small number has recourse to distillation, still how can we talk of it in terms of a home or cottage industry?

It can be definitely said that prohibition has done a lot of good to the country, and the harm that was being done by liquor will become less and less. There is no doubt about this.

The well-known maxim of the *Gita* is literally true here: स्वल्पमप्यप्य धर्मस्य त्रयने महतो मयात् । (Even a little practice of this *dharma* saves one from great danger). Prohibition is the duty of the State; not only a moral duty, but a political and social obligation enjoined upon it by the Constitution. And even a slight performance of this duty saves both the ruler and the ruled. Gandhiji used to apply the above *Gita* maxim to *khadi*. So far as prohibition is concerned, its truth is patent to all. Therefore, those who use such loose talk as is cited above want to throw the people back into the morass from whence they are being extricated. They slow down the tempo of the people's progress. And this consequence even they would not like. A new class of people plying this black trade and committing black deeds has already begun its work like thieves and burglars in order to reach liquor to those who are addicted to it. They are a fierce lot and needs must be suppressed. But to do away with prohibition is not the way to do it. It would be as silly as repealing the law regarding theft and burglary if these become rampant in the country. Government and society should combat it with strictness and patience. It would not at all be proper to get frustrated and regard prohibition a failure. Such people might succeed and thrive in the cities. But there as well as elsewhere we have to direct our attention to the poor people who are being ruined by drink. Numerous instances like the following can be found here and there. As a matter of fact no proof is needed for the success of prohibition; it is self-evident. Below is given an incident as described by Shri Chimanlal Mehta, a *khadi* worker of the Vedchhi Ashram, who has to visit different villages in the course of his duties:

"Kalamkuva (Taluka Mandvi).

"Two Raniparaj carpenters are working at the house of..... One of them while relating some of the incidents of his life asked me, 'Some say that liquor is going to be introduced again, is it a fact?'

"I asked him, 'Why this question?'

"Chunibhai, said the carpenter, 'I have been plying this trade of a carpenter for the last so many years. But all that I earned by it went to the tavern. Here I am now chatting with you. But if liquor were available I should have been in the tavern long ago. (We were chatting after the evening meal.) I now work on the farm in the monsoon and it gives me

foodgrains for the year and join house-building work in winter and summer. I have been working thus for the last so many years but only last year could I carry a sum of Rs 500 home. Then it occurred to me, did I spend this sum of Rs 400 to 500 annually all these years after drink? Hence I think we should be happy now if liquor is not introduced again."

The above needs no comment. Prohibition is ever successful. It is not dependent upon anything else for its success. It is sin to try to shake the mind of the people from it.

20-2-'51

M. P. DESAI

(Translated from Gujarati)

### A DANISH DAUGHTER IN INDIA

[Gandhiji occasionally referred to Miss Anni Marie Peterson in his talks. I have a faint recollection that I once met her at Sabarmati more than 20 years ago. The people of Denmark were as proud of her, as we should feel grateful to her. I understand that they held a special thanksgiving service for her on 30th January, the day of Gandhiji's anniversary. — K. G. M.]

The passing of 'Periamma' ('Grandmother', as she was affectionately called), Miss Anni Marie Peterson, on 9th January last, at the age of 73, draws the curtain on a lifetime of single-minded devotion to India and her children, unique in its utter wholesomeness and in its relation to national purpose and national culture. To the last, she remained a devoted admirer and follower of Mahatma Gandhi and she belongs, like Deenabandhu Andrews, to the blessed group of foreign friends, who served India in complete harmony with her genius and her aspirations.

Miss Peterson had been a resident of India for over forty years. The joke that she cracked, when I asked her as to when she came over to India, fills me with pleasure and gratefulness whenever I remember it. She said, 'I came to India before you came. She was born in 1878 in a village in Denmark, that land which is famed for Peoples' Colleges, and Peoples' prosperity. From her early years she showed a love of nature and a great admiration for the personality and message of Jesus, two fundamental traits which grew with the years and shaped her life and destiny. In 1909, she joined the Danish Mission and came over to India as one of its members. For over ten years from then, she put in a substantial record of work in evangelical service and in the service of women.

But the national movements started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 and later, shook many of her notions and left a deep impression on her mind and on her career. It was natural that she was touched by the spiritual greatness of Gandhiji and the brave and noble fight that he organized against British Imperialism. She changed over from Mission activities with all its alienness, aggressiveness and alliance with Imperialism, to the current of Indian Nationalism. She left the Danish Mission and decided to organize welfare work on her own under the joint inspiration of Jesus and Gandhi. She went

to Denmark, toured the country, explained her purpose and secured good support from a circle of friends. She decided to start a children's and women's centre at Porto Novo, near Chidambaram and, on her way back, met Gandhiji at Allahabad and obtained his blessings. The building that she has constructed in a completely sylvan atmosphere, a little away from rail and road, is a standing monument of her love of nature, love of Indian culture and architecture, and her sense of cleanliness and tidiness. It is called 'Seva Mandir', is in a pucca Indian style, suited to Indian climate and Indian tradition. Mahatma Gandhi laid the foundation for it during his 1921 tour.

For nearly 30 years, the Seva Mandir has brought up poor girls, from the age of childhood, in an atmosphere of comfort and plenty. Love of children and happiness in seeing them happy, were the basic qualities of Periamma and, to the last, in times of ease and in times of distress, she maintained this tradition of a happy home. She herself reduced many of her wants, loved to dress herself in Indian style, in home-spun *khadi*.

Freedom was her life-breath and she would never reconcile herself to the suffocating regulations of Governmental recognition and aid; and, almost to the last she conducted her institution without such aid and recognition. In 1948, after the Madras State had accepted the Basic Education Scheme organized by Gandhiji, she allowed an aided teachers' training school to be started in the Seva Mandir. Even so, she was resisting the deadening regulations and her last request to Government was a measure of freedom to conduct Basic Education in a wholesome and untrammelled atmosphere.

The collection of books and pictures in the Seva Mandir reminds us of her love of Indian literature and the Indian arts, particularly Indian music. She loved to send her children to Santiniketan for art studies. There was a peculiar spiritual understanding between herself and Gandhiji who used to call her, 'My Anni Marie'. She was one of the few to come forward to conduct the Wardha Scheme of Education when it was propounded by him in 1937, when, owing to technical difficulties, the Kasturba Memorial fund was unable to help her work, he undertook to aid it to a limited extent.

In August 1947, when India attained freedom, no foreigner could have been happier than Miss Peterson who was then in Denmark; but it must have been reduced somewhat when she saw the old bureaucratic machinery functioning as gaily as ever, under the Republic. Her love of India and the Indian children, however, continued unabated till the last and her wish, that she should die in India and that her remains should become part of the Indian soil, was fulfilled on the 9th and 10th of January last respectively.

For the writer and many others like him, Miss Peterson's life was an inspiration; her example enthused them and strengthened their desire for a life of dedication. For Indians in general, it should be an object lesson in the kinship of mankind which transcends all barriers of race and clime, in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. What nobler lesson than this can anybody give or desire in these war-torn and nerve-racking times?

R. VINAYAKAM

### SARVODAYA CONFERENCE, SHIVARAMPALLI

#### Important Notice Regarding Railway Concession to Invitees

Invitees to the Sarvodaya Conference, Shivarampalli, Hyderabad, have been furnished with certificates signed by Shri Gopabandhu Choudhari, Secretary, entitling them to get Railway tickets at concession rates. An important condition entitling the holder of the certificate to such concession is that he must not be travelling at the expense of the Central or a State Government, a local body or a statutory authority. This rule has been recently added. The certificate forms issued to the invitees have not that proviso printed on it. This has created some difficulty. The Deputy Director, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways, New Delhi, has been pleased to direct that a statement as follows signed by the invitee himself on his certificate would be accepted by the Railway authorities as sufficient for sanctioning the concession:

"I hereby declare that my travelling expenses will not be borne by the Central or a State Government or local body or a statutory authority."

Every invitee who has obtained a certificate from the Secretary is requested to take note of this and add the required declaration to his certificate under his own signature.

Wardha, 20-3-'51

VALLABH SWAMI

#### Instructions Regarding Food Arrangements

The reader is aware that Shri Vinoba is walking down to Hyderabad from Wardha in connection with the Sarvodaya Sannam at Shivarampalli. He has started from Wardha on the 8th instant. His presence at the Sannam will attract a larger number of *sevakas* from all over the country. Moreover, his foot march through the provinces of Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad will also attract a larger number of villagers from the surrounding areas. The Reception Committee of the Sannam is making all possible arrangements and has been able to collect some food-grains which are controlled in that State. But if the number of *sevakas* swells there might be difficulty in obtaining additional food-grains. Hence all *sevakas* will do well to bring with them their own ration of grains. The other visitors also are warned that they will have to make their own arrangements for food.

SITARAM

GOPABANDHU CHAUDHARI

## HARIJAN

March 24

1951

### CO-ORDINATION OF HANDICRAFTS AND MECHANIZED INDUSTRIES

#### II

##### Rationale

I resume the discussion initiated in "Harris Tweed' and Khadi."

Since large-scale and mechanized production is the order of the day, and most countries seem irreversibly attached to this form of civilization, it should be realized that the dangers of war, destruction and accidental and natural calamities to which they will be always open will also be unavoidably on a tremendous scale. Not that older civilizations were always superior morally and spiritually and more peace-minded than the present one; but the very pattern of life and the non-development of modern technique kept these calamities confined within small dimensions. The recuperation after a devastation could take place more rapidly and in a more manageable and self-reliant manner than now.

It is difficult to persuade modernized man to renounce the modern way of life, and rearrange life on a decentralized and simpler pattern. Even where decentralized small-scale production is planned, it is contemplated with the help of technical science and power-driven machinery. The power, as also the implements and small machinery needed for this type of decentralization, will be generated or manufactured in a few centralized large plants. They will depend upon raw materials, if not anything else, not available to every nation. Hence there will always be a danger of these central institutions breaking down now and again.

It is therefore in the interest of every nation and every country that it should always nourish and maintain the old non-mechanized system of production, transport etc. well. It should look upon this pattern as its second line of defence. A second line of defence is not the less important because it is second and not the main. It should also be kept fully efficient, so that it can be developed and spread rapidly whenever necessity arises.

This is possible only if Governments and the thinking public look upon people engaged in these pursuits in the same way as they look upon reserve forces in an army. They must be remunerated and kept efficient in the same way as those sent to the front. The remuneration of these producers should not depend upon the quantity and quality of their goods; but upon the time they work. A factory spindle may be able to spin a lb. per day, and a single worker

might be able to manage several such spindles working simultaneously. Hence he might appear to produce several lb. of yarn per day as against half a lb. or so of the hand-spinner. But the production of the former is not attributable to any greater skill or harder labour of the worker. It is due to the different kind of means of production given to him. Since, as much in the interest of the State itself as for the proper living of this worker in the difficult environments surrounding her, it is necessary to preserve her and her form of production. Her half a lb. of yarn is as valuable as the several lb. of the spinner in the factory. For equal hours of good work, the remuneration of both must, therefore, be the same.

The production in this manner will be, after all, very small. It may be less than 1 lb. against the 200 or more lb. of the factory. Hence if the high cost of manual production is distributed on the latter, it will hardly raise the price of the latter by even two pies per lb. Similarly with regard to weaving. The total rise would be trivial and may be made without being felt by the consumer. It would enable the hand-spun hand-woven *khadi* (or mill-spun and hand-woven pieces) to be sold for the same price as similar cloth prepared in the factory.

The result is—

(a) since mechanized means are always liable to sudden and colossal breakdowns under natural and man-made calamities, these natural and simple means of production must always be maintained in good working order and perfected. This must be the permanently accepted policy of the nation, whether the form of Government is Capitalist, Socialist, Communist or any other, because it is in conformity with *Sarvodaya* (the well-being of all);

(b) every man even in cities should be encouraged to pursue one or other of these avocations, and in villages, they should always be allowed to thrive and people pursuing them must be remunerated as fully as any worker in a factory. Diligence and hard work being equal, the amount of production cannot be the proper criterion for ascertaining the wages, since the quantity of production depends upon the instruments of production given to the worker. An electric loom will necessarily weave more than a hand-loom with a fly-shuttle; and the latter will weave more than an ordinary village hand-loom. The quantity will depend also upon the quality of the yarn, and so on. But if the worker on every one of these has put in honest work of eight hours, there is no reason why their remunerations should vary;

(c) the mechanically calculated cost of production is not a perfect basis for determining the selling price of an article. Even if the method of production is the same, a large factory can always defeat in competition a number of small factories, because it can always make a saving

in the cost of production in various ways; for instance, by owning its own sources of raw materials, making its own machinery, developing its own sales-department, savings in overhead or indirect costs such as of packing, transport etc. The cost of an article produced at the apparently cheapest rate cannot be made the basis of fixing its selling price. For, while a large factory saves in costs, it gives rise to unemployment, congestion and various moral, social, economical and political problems; every one of which costs a good deal to the nation. I shall next examine this problem in the context of cotton cloth which is the largest item for the application of this principle.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

#### A FUTILE CONTROVERSY

A futile controversy is going on about the medium of instruction. Every Tom, Dick and Harry indulges in a eulogy of the English language. Though the English as rulers have left us, attempts are being made to impress the importance of their language on our mind. But how can this be successful? None may deny the importance of the English language, but how is it relevant to the subject of the medium of instruction? It is alleged that our languages are not yet sufficiently developed to become media of instruction. But there is a great defect in thinking thus. In fact the real medium of instruction is work, not language. In spite of the barrier of language a thirsty man can express his want to another, and make himself understood. What, after all are the subjects for which our languages are regarded to be undeveloped? Science? Surely, experiments in science are performed by doing and not by talking about them! Then where is the hitch? But they have raised a scare of technical terms. Is any branch of learning or science created after first fixing the technical terms for it? Experience (discovery) comes first, terminology afterwards. Discovery is made and its knowledge imparted to others by direct observation, experiment and experience. Words are brought into use in the course of experiments and observations. Hence there is no harm if English technical terms are employed for some time. So long as it is not decided whether 'hydrogen' should be called *udajan* or *udrajan*, we may carry on with the word *hydrogen*. But it does not mean that because we carry on with the word *hydrogen*, we must continue to use English as the medium of instruction. Hydrogen may well be used in our own languages with propriety. If a Mountbatten can continue for a few days even after Swaraj, why not the word *hydrogen* in our languages? It will disappear when a proper successor comes to take its place!

But what really matters is our mental laziness. It is on account of this that we have rendered a simple thing intricate. It is good if some of our children learn English as a language. But

why should we allow it to continue as a medium? It will be dangerous indeed even if every boy and girl takes up English as a language. Its inevitable consequence will be that we shall not be able to look at the world with an independent approach. The English language will act as a screen between our eyes and the world-scene. Whether we wish it or not, our country will be dragged into the Anglo-American Bloc. Hence we must study other world languages also, such as Russian, German, French, Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Arabic etc. Then only we would acquire an impartial outlook; otherwise, we are bound to become one-sided and will be dependent upon others for our judgment.

We have given the English language a lease of 15 years for the sake of administrative convenience. In a way we have gifted a part of our own life to it. Apparently, it is a concession to those people who feel too old to learn Hindi; but at the same time, it is also a concession to the English and the American people. It means that for fifteen years an American and an Englishman will be able to follow the shades and trends of our politics and administration more easily than our own countrymen. Whatever advantage might have been seen in this, it is not free from danger.

Yet some people assert that English may well be continued as the medium of instruction as long as the language of the administration remains English. If this argument were to prevail, the period of 15 years might well get extended to 50. It is the function of education to show the way; it should, if possible, reduce the period of 15 years to 5. But if education itself were to lag behind, the entire structure of the nation's life will receive a set-back. Educationists must not, therefore, engage themselves in idle and indolent discussions but begin to work and carry out what we have got to do. Then will our thoughts get a momentum, and doubts and difficulties will begin to clear.

We must begin to think in our own language; otherwise we cannot give full expression to our personality. Look, for instance, at the Constitution of free India which we have prepared after months of discussions. But what is this Constitution? Let apart the uneducated, a large number of the educated class, too, knows nothing about it. Had the original thinking been done in our own language the Constitution would have taken a different shape and its thrill would have gone down the spine of one and all. But today it is confined to a book and its translations are even more difficult and intricate to understand than the original. I have given the name '*samavaaya* method' (समवाय पद्धति) to the system of imparting education by means of handicrafts. Some experts said that the word *samavaaya* does not fully connote the sense implied by 'co-relation'. I told them that my word was not a synonym for correlation; but the

name of our system in which craft and knowledge are neither independent of, nor dependent on each other, but are mutually integrated (as the threads of a woven fabric). Integration of this type is known as *samavaaya* in our language. Then they asked me for the English equivalent of *samavaaya*. I replied, "It is none of my business to give an English synonym for *samavaaya*, or to give a Hindi synonym for 'correlation'. Mine is to give a name to the system of education evolved as a result of our experiments — and that I have done". So also, had we thought, from the start, about our Constitution in our own language, its words would have been current coins as the word *samavaaya* is among the teachers and children of *Nai Talim*; i.e. those words would have been live and vital. Only what is vital can give life.

Such a revolution cannot be brought about by administrators. It is for the educationists, teachers and thinkers to do so. On them rests the responsibility not of following, or even of walking hand in hand, but of leading and marching ahead of others.

(Translated from Hindi *Sarvodaya*) VINOBA

#### EFFECTS OF COCO-COLA ON INDIAN INDUSTRY

##### Economic Consequences

Equally unfortunate are the economic consequences of the introduction of Coco-Cola in India. Indian manufacturers have a large capital invested in the aerated-waters industry, and employ thousands of workers. In Bombay, about a crore of rupees has been invested, and about 2,000 persons are employed. In Delhi, there are about 150 licensed aerated-water factories, producing about 12,000 dozen bottles a week, or about 2,000 dozen bottles a day. The number of persons employed is correspondingly large. Similarly, other parts of the country also have their aerated-water factories, engaging large numbers of workers.

With the introduction of Coco-Cola, this enormous capital stands to lose heavily, thus intensifying the economic crisis in the country. Even more sinister are the problems that will arise when thousands of workers in the aerated-water factories are thrown out of work. Some figures are available from which one can form a rough estimate of what this country will have to face once the Coco-Cola industry has begun flourishing in India, a prospect that does not seem too distant under present conditions.

The maximum production capacity of the Coco-Cola plant set up in Delhi is about 6,000 dozen bottles in 8 hours. At first, the drink did not catch on in Delhi, but very soon it began to get a hold on the market. A few months after its first introduction in the city, consumption mounted to 500 dozen bottles a day. Encouraged by the successful beginning the company has made in Delhi, it is now spreading throughout

East Punjab, and has set up a new plant at Ambala. The obvious implication is that the industry intends to infiltrate into every nook and corner of the country. In Bombay, of course, the factory is on the way to completion at Worli, and is expected to start operations, in full blast, shortly.

##### Heavy Loss

Serious economic consequences have already ensued as a result of the opening of the Coco-Cola plant in Delhi. It is claimed that 50 per cent of the consumption of other aerated waters in the city has fallen with resultant heavy loss to aerated-water manufacturers and workers. The prospect before them is little short of utter ruin, which, in the final analysis, is bound to have unsavoury reactions upon the economy of the country as a whole. On the other hand, Coco-Cola is being distributed in a manner that is going to hit the hotel trade in general very hard. Apart from the fact that the trade will suffer from fall in consumption of liquid goods, the Coco-Cola company makes it a policy, as far as possible, not to use hotels for distribution of their product. Coco-Cola is very largely sold in ice-boxes, frigidaires, and slot-machines at wayside corners. Hotel owners and employees are, therefore, another set of victims of Coco-Cola. Other allied trades, like tea and coffee, will also be hard hit by the introduction of this foreign beverage in India.

##### Favouritism

The exigencies of post-war economy have entailed severe restrictions upon all Indian importers, who have, in the recent past, suffered untold hardships in the matter of import licences. The Coco-Cola company, however, has been given licences for the import of 45 machines, costing Rs 50,000 each. While no aerated-water manufacturer, for instance, is permitted a licence for the specific import of bottles, the Coco-Cola company has been allowed to import bottles worth Rs 5,00,000. Apart from the invidious distinctions that have been made, it is difficult to understand on what grounds the company has been allowed dollar currency for an article that is clearly not a necessity, when dollars are so urgently needed for far more important items.

Perhaps the most unjust part of the whole transaction is the favouritism that has been shown to this foreign enterprise as against indigenous industry. The latter has been experiencing the greatest difficulty in getting licences for plant, glass bottles, essences and of course, sugar, while Coco-Cola has had them all for the mere asking. Licensed factories in the whole of Delhi, for instance, receive only about 160 bags of sugar per month, whereas the Coco-Cola enterprise in Delhi has been already given 170 bags within a month and a half. In Bombay, the factories are given only 100 bags of sugar per month all told.

OCTOPUS

## ON WAY TO SHIVARAMPALLI (A DIARY OF VINOBA'S ITINERARY)

### I

#### Reason for the Programme

Paunar, March 7:

Vinoba started from Paunar on the 8th. On the evening of the 7th, he gave a parting message to the Ashram inmates and residents of the village. In the course of his speech, he said, he had not desired to stir from Paunar as long as the experiment, which he had started, needed his guidance and took proper shape. But he had to yield to the pressure of friends, and undertake that tour.

It was good to go to the Sarvodaya Sammelan on foot, because that mode of travelling was open to every one. Those who could not do so might go by train. Foot travel enabled the visitor to see the country, come into contact with the people, and carry the message of *Sarvodaya* to villages. People were eager to hear the gospel of *Sarvodaya* and needed a message of hope and comfort. They were in a state of despair and looked eagerly for someone to show them the way to get out of their difficulties. The blame for their present condition could not be thrown on any one factor, and it was no good discussing the causes. The more important thing was to know the method of surmounting the difficulties. They had started to evolve it at Paunar, and though it was too early to see the results, even the little that had been achieved, gave them a measure of peace and satisfaction.

He did not start, Vinoba said, with any definite programme of propaganda. He would talk to the villagers, understand their difficulties, and try to give them such guidance as their peculiar problems needed. As he had to reach Shivarampalli by a definite date, he would have to follow a fixed itinerary, but on his return journey he might shoot off hither and thither as necessary. He hoped that the young men staying behind would work in the Ashram with unabated zeal, looking upon it as their God-appointed mission.

Vaigaon (First halt, 13 miles from Paunar), March 8:

To the people who had gathered together to hear Vinoba in the evening, he related how they worked at Paunar, both educated and uneducated members, all doing physical labour in the fields and on the well, the *charkha*, the loom and carpentry.

They lived in an age, when even going by train was getting to be regarded as too slow a mode of travelling in the face of the aeroplane. To go on foot might therefore be regarded as madness. But he had chosen this mode, so that he might be able to see villagers in their own places, and acquaint himself with their condition, and know their comforts and miseries.

#### Wages in Kind

The peasant labourers had told him that they apprehended that famine conditions might soon prevail in their village, and they might be unable to get any *juwar* during the ensuing months. He advised them to become self-reliant and not look to the Deputy Commissioner or the Food Minister to supply them with food. God had given every man two hands and a head so that he might be self-dependent. Every village must stand on its own legs. It was foolish to think that the men, who governed them from Delhi, howsoever wise they might be, could liberate five *lakh* villages of India from their hardships.

If the labourers relied upon getting increased wages to meet their deficits, they must understand that the wages could never overtake the deficits, for prices of commodities always increased more rapidly than wages. Hence they must receive their wages in kind. It was well known that the cultivators in the Wardha District, paid their *saldars* (year-bound labourers) at the rate of 6 *kudavs*\* of *juwar* per month plus some money in cash. He had noticed in the course of nearly thirty years last that the measure of six *kudavs* had not undergone any change. It was only the cash payment that had undergone changes, and even differed from man to man. He advised them to follow the same practice for the daily wage-earners. The cultivators must give them half a *pailee* (50 tolas) of *juwar* per day—whatever be the season—along with some cash. The cash payment might vary according to season or according as the worker is a child, a woman or a man, and in accordance with the village customs. A discussion followed this and ultimately, the people accepted Vinobaji's advice. Vinoba congratulated the villagers for their wise decision, and entreated them to observe it faithfully and set an example to other villages.

#### The Analogy of Fingers

Another counsel which, Vinoba said, he desired to give the villagers, was to work together in unison. He gave them the illustration of the hand. It had a thumb and four fingers. All were not equal in size or strength. But if a glass was to be lifted, every finger and thumb united together to lift it. It could not be lifted if the thumb were to refuse to work, nor could it be done without difficulty if some of the fingers did not co-operate. Even the smallest finger would have to contribute its share of energy. So also it was in society. People should take this lesson from the five fingers and each should contribute his mite and work with the rest.

#### Congregational Prayer

Vinoba learnt that the villagers observed a daily programme of congregational prayer, but that it was attended by only one or two elders

\* A *kudav* is a measure of 300 tolas in Wardha, i.e. 10 pucca seers. 6 *kudavs* will be 1½ mds.

and ten or fifteen children. He exhorted the people that they should all take part in it. It would do them good.

(Abridged)

D. D.

### THE SEVENTH ALL INDIA BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

(Sevagram, March 3-5, 1951)

The Conference recently held at Sevagram broke new ground in two directions. For the first time, the general conference was preceded by a three-day conference of *Nai Talim* teachers, who met to pool their resources and find solutions for their day-to-day practical difficulties. Nearly all these teachers then stayed on for the general conference, where their seriousness of purpose and their background of actual experience contributed much to the businesslike atmosphere of the meetings.

The second new feature was the planning of the programme so as to give time for group discussions of specific aspects of *Nai Talim*. One whole morning session and several shorter periods were devoted to meetings of seven "sectional conferences" which surveyed needs in the following fields:

1. Pre-basic Education
2. Basic Education
3. Post-basic Education
4. Social and Adult Education
5. Teachers' Training
6. Books and their provision in *Nai Talim*.
7. Administration of *Nai Talim*.

The findings of these sectional conferences and of the preceding Teachers' Conference were recorded and recorded by the full conference. These findings form an important part of the work accomplished. General satisfaction was expressed with the experiment and a request made that sectional discussions should have an increased allocation of time in future conferences.

The full conference met formally on the morning of March 3rd and after welcome and introduction heard the inaugural address delivered by the Hon'ble Pandit Ravishankar Shukla, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, and the Presidential address by Acharya Badrinath Varma, Education Minister, Bihar. In the afternoon Shri Vinoba Bhave opened the conference exhibition with an inspiring speech. On the second day a full conference session was devoted to the new and important topic of Rural Universities, on which a general discussion was initiated by Shri T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar. On the third day also a short time was allocated to this subject, and the remainder of the full conference session was given to reports from Government and non-Government agencies of *Nai Talim* in the various States, and to the findings of the sectional conferences already described.

The presence of Shri Vinoba Bhave throughout the conference, and his participation in the discussions, were much appreciated by the delegates.

On Sunday March 4, the children, students, and workers of the Talimi Sangh, under the direction of Shrimati Ashadevi Aryanayakam, produced a pageant of Indian history, *Bharat-ki-Katha*, which was greatly enjoyed, and formed a stimulating example of the possibilities of cultural education in *Nai Talim*. Many old students, delegates and visitors themselves shared in the presentation of the various scenes.

Some statistics may be of interest. Every part of India was represented except Himachal Pradesh, whose one delegate was obliged to withdraw his name at the last moment. Out of a total of 634 attenders from outside Sevagram, 384 were accredited delegates of Government or non-Government agencies, 46 were individual visitors and 204 were student visitors from *Nai Talim* training institutions. Distribution by States was as follows:

Assam	5	Madras	71
Bengal	40	Mysore	13
Bihar	144	Nepal	2
Bombay	148	Orissa	14
Cutch	1	Punjab	39
Delhi	33	Rajasthan	1
Hyderabad	13	Sourashtra	6
Jammu-Kashmir	1	Travancore-Cochin	7
Madhya Bharat	7	Uttar Pradesh	17
Madhya Pradesh	72*		

At a meeting of the delegates held on the 5th March, 1951, an Akhil Bharat Nai Talim Sikshak Sangh was constituted with Shri Aryanayakam as President, Shri Dwariaprasad Sinha as Vice-President and Shri Jogeshwaranand Sharma as Secretary. It was also decided to form a Working Committee to which, in the first instance, the President was requested to nominate members from the different States. A sub-committee was also appointed to draft the Constitution of the Sangh.

MARJORIE SYKES

\* Includes constructive work institutions in Wardha.

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