

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

FAST AGAINST COW-SLAUGHTER

Shri Arjun Bhagat of Ahmedabad had gone on a fast unto death in the first week of March last for absolute banning of cow slaughter, but was persuaded to break it after a few days by the intercession of local prominent men. It was reported in the papers that his fast led to some breach of law and order.

I take this occasion to express my views on the subject of cow slaughter.

The agitation for the protection of the cow seems to me to have started from the wrong end. It should be clear that in the preaching of *ahimsa*, persuasion to abstain from beef-eating should precede the one for abstaining from killing the cow.

I am of opinion that India as a nation, irrespective of caste, community, or religion, should abstain from beef-eating for various reasons, — economic, social, moral, cultural etc. On this matter there should be a complete unanimity among Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Whites and non-Whites. Just as in some countries people do not eat the meat of the horse, in some others that of the pig, so also in India out of respect for the feelings of millions of inhabitants of the country, beef-eating should be looked upon as repugnant to the culture of the nation. If this proposition is accepted by all, the problem of cow-slaughter will become easier of solution.

Let it be remembered that the Muslims are not the only beef-eaters. Indian Christians also have no objection to it. But a great many of both of them go without beef, in fact, even without meat, for a greater part of the year on account of their poverty. Some of them eat beef only on festivals, beef in India being cheaper than mutton. The Parsis generally forswear beef as much as the Hindus. Perhaps only a few 'modernized' Parsis might have given up their old abhorrence for it. It is only the European Christians, who, as a commercial group, do not abstain from it. There are, no doubt, some exceptions even among them. On the other side, there are among Hindus also some, who are beef-eaters. If they do not eat the beef of slaughtered cows, they eat that of dead ones.

These are from the Harijans. They do it out of sheer poverty. But though actual beef-eating is confined to these poor classes, the offence of promoting the slaughter of the milch cattle is perpetrated by Hindus of all communities. For, all sections of the Hindus, who own cattle in large numbers and live by them, sell them to butchers. The economic pressure prevails over their religious sentiment.

Hence, if we desire to stop cow-slaughter, we should first concentrate upon persuading meat-eaters to give up beef and Hindu owners of cattle to desist from selling them to the butcher. This is the first and the more important step. If this could be achieved, we shall strike at the very root of cow-slaughter. The problem would then assume a different form, and would have to be tackled in a different manner. But since there is no background for it now, its discussion, at the present stage, is not relevant.

So, I appeal to Shri Arjun Bhagat and other devotees of the cow, to take up the activity of converting beef-eaters into abstainers from beef. Of course, the conversion should be made by persuasion and appeal to the heart and the head. No distinction can be made between the meat of the slaughtered cow and carrion. The Hindus should be requested to take the pledge of not selling milch cattle to butchers. If they succeed in this propaganda, they will achieve their object even without legislation. In the past, humanitarian teachers and religious preachers followed this method to wean the people from meat-eating and drink. There are recorded incidents in history when through moral persuasion and importunity even great princes and rulers had given up meat-eating. Such social and moral revolutions can be wrought only by preachers and not by statesmen.

Finally, I would request those who have no religious abhorrence for beef-eating to voluntarily give it up out of respect for the feelings of millions of their countrymen and accept abstinence from beef as a part of Indian national tradition and culture. This will be a great act of compassion on the animal kingdom and a gesture of goodwill and fellow-feeling towards the Hindus on their part. It will also help in

removing an important barrier in the way of breaking caste and communal differences. If beef-eating is abandoned the ground for killing the cow will disappear to a large extent.

I hope that all those who worship the cow will ponder over this and wholeheartedly engage themselves in this constructive side of cow-protection, and strike at the very root of the problem of cow-slaughter.

Wardha, 3-4-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

HINDUSTANI TALIMI SANGH Teachers' Training Course (1951-52)

The Hindustani Talimi Sangh offers a 10 months' training course in the practice and theory of *Nai Talim* from July, 1951 to April, 1952. Admission will be restricted to about 40 men and women only. Training will be given in the basic crafts of (a) Agriculture and (b) Spinning and weaving, of which each student will choose *one*. All students, whatever basic craft is chosen by them, will be expected to spin daily for cloth self-sufficiency, and to take part in the kitchen-gardening. No shorter courses will be available.

Candidates should usually be over nineteen and less than thirty years old, and must be physically fit. No uniform qualification in academic education is insisted on, but general knowledge equivalent to the 'Intermediate' standard of an Indian University is the minimum desirable. Other things being equal, preference will be given in the selection of students to those candidates who possess knowledge of one or more handicrafts, who have previous experience of some form of constructive social service, or who are training themselves for a specific piece of work in *Nai Talim* to which they will revert when their training is complete.

The time is now ripe for teachers' training colleges of post-graduate standard to be opened in a number of States to supply their own local needs for graduate teachers of *Nai Talim*. The Talimi Sangh will do its utmost to meet the needs of such States admitting a few well-qualified workers, and preparing them to form the staff of the future regional training colleges. It is expected that men and women will be selected for this advanced work from those who have already had some experience and training in the field of *Nai Talim*.

Institutions and individuals who wish to have further particulars of this course are requested to write to the Principal, Nai Talim Bhavan, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Sevagram P. O., Wardha District, Madhya Pradesh for a detailed prospectus and form of application. Applications for admission should reach the Principal as soon as possible and in any case before the 15th May, 1951.

M. S.

THE ECONOMICS OF PROHIBITION

The total income from liquor and narcotic drugs of all the provinces before 1947 was a little over 53 crores of rupees (according to the figures for 1946-47). This sum does not include the income derived by the States. It must have been considerable. On the other hand, the above sum has decreased to the extent of the excise revenue of the areas that now form part of Pakistan. Roughly speaking, the provincial or State Governments must now be getting Rs 50 to 60 crores from spirituous liquors and narcotics. This is not an insignificant sum. But if we think of it from another point of view, i.e. consider the huge sum the people must be spending after this vice — and it is the function of economics to do so — the excise income obtained by the various State Governments pales into insignificance. And in addition to this, if we take into account the great harm caused by it to the health of the people, their social and family happiness and in respect of many other things, the harmfulness of the liquor revenue becomes patent. True economics is not confined to the income and expenditure of the Government but it consists in seeing how and to what extent these are made in the interest of the people, and particularly that of the poor and backward sections, whose good is the distinguishing feature of a *sarvodaya* policy.

Calculating the sum spent by the people on drink etc. to be four times the excise revenue, our people must be spending about two billion rupees after spirituous liquors and narcotics every year since 1946-47. This comes to about Rs 5 to 6 per capita. This is too much for a country with such an acute shortage of food-stuffs.

But this is not the main point. The major part of this huge expenditure after liquor is generally incurred by the poor and backward people in the villages. And thus the excise income is mainly derived from the poor. Surely, it is a very heavy burden for them. They are being sucked through toddy and liquor to fill Government coffers. If the object of Swaraj is to promote the interest of the people, Government should not soil its hands with this revenue and should relieve the people of this burden. The cause of sheer humanity and service of *Daridra-narayana* — both are served by so doing. But let us leave this argument here.

Thanks to prohibition, this huge sum has ceased to flow to the Government treasury. Government have to make up the deficit. Consequently the burden was transferred to the moneyed classes in the form of some tax or other. The main and hidden cause of the cry against prohibition today lies in this fact. The moneyed people think that formerly crores of rupees were had from the poor in the form of excise revenue and consequently their money was saved to that extent; but due to prohibition Government had to tackle new sources of

income and this burden fell on their shoulders. The Marxist dictum, that the fundamental urge behind the people's intellect is economic self-interest, seems to be applicable here. What other inference is possible when the educated classes argue against prohibition in the name of liberty and equality, keeping this simple basic fact in the background? This is the true economics of prohibition. What is gained or not gained from it should not be decided from revenue derived from it by the Government, nor from the self-interest of the educated and moneyed classes.

The problem should be considered from the point of view of the interest and progress of all including the poor and the backward. That alone is entitled to the name of the *science of wealth*. Otherwise it would be a science of money-making. And in that case Government would also have its eyes rivetted on gain like the ordinary businessman. This would be like the well-known adage, "Plough or no plough, my hire must be paid." Our ideal of equality also is not served in this way.

We shall consider that aspect hereafter.
(Translated from Gujarati) M. P. DESAI

QAUMI EKATA SAMMELAN (NATIONAL UNITY CONFERENCE)

[The following has been received for publication. — Ed.]

You will agree that a nation's strength, progress, wealth, advancement and internal peace depend on mutual co-operation of all the forces of the country and national unity. Unless narrow outlook and communal tendency is done away with and differences in outlook arising as a consequence of such narrow outlook and communal tendency are entirely uprooted, no national unity and real democracy can possibly be built. The forces which brought independence to us are in reality the forces of democracy and nationalism. This is also the call of the age. Communalism is the opposite of nationalism and democracy.

In the recent past, communal frenzy has tremendously affected the mode of our thinking and dealing and has terribly upset the whole process of our thinking and mental balance. We need hardly repeat here what has, in the recent past, happened in our country due to such thinking.

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, ever attempted to save us and the country from communal poison. He sacrificed his life in this very connection and thus threw upon our shoulders the great responsibility of our right duty. It is regrettable that even after the sacrifice of the Mahatma, communal tendency and the consequences arising out of it are still rampant in the country and it expresses itself in our day to day life, in our social and political dealings in various forms.

It seems, therefore, essential that to completely uproot communalism from this country of ours and to strengthen real democracy and nationalism, we should sit together, bestow our best consideration on the problem and with a determined resolution find a solution for it. The basic reason of the communal atmosphere and the communal happenings should be searched and some suitable and practical plan should be evolved to successfully fight out communalism in the country. Various problems that are confronting the Nation in relation to and terms of old historic events, culture, religion and such other questions should be considered afresh to find synthesis and mental balance in such a manner that National Unity may be built on the basis of a national culture. The

youth of the country in particular and of course, the entire mass of the nation, should be imbued with a feeling of real democracy and nationalism. A spirit of new thinking should be infused in them so that the process of our thinking, living and acting may be filled with national and democratic ideas and we may soon find the entire atmosphere of the nation changed to give the right lead to the development of our nation on all sides.

With this end in view, on 24th and 25th April 1951, a National Unity Conference (Qaumi Ekata Sammelan) of such persons of different schools of thoughts, religions and institutions of this country who pin their faith in nationalism and democracy for the progress of the country is proposed to be held in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).

You are cordially invited to participate in this conference. We hope you will make it a point to attend the conference and benefit us by your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

(ACHARYA) NARENDRA DEV
(Vice-Chancellor, Lucknow University)
SHRIKRISHNA DATT PALIWAL, M.L.C.
(President Jan Congress, Uttar Pradesh)
E. M. PHILLIPS, M.L.A.
GANGA SAHAI CHAUBEY, M.L.A.
SHIVMANGALSINGH KAPOOR, M.L.A.
(ACHARYA) JUGALKISHORE, M.L.A.
(President P.C.C. Uttar Pradesh)
GOVIND SAHAI, M.L.A.
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HAYATULLAH ANSARI
PADAM NATH SINGH
YASHPAL

14, Lat Kallan, Lucknow AKSHAYA BRAHMACHARI
(Translated from Hindi) (Convener)

(Note: Though the Government of Shri Govind Ballabh Pant has been doing its best in maintaining communal peace in Uttar Pradesh, and has attained a measure of success therein, there is an undercurrent of communal discontent which requires to be carefully watched and handled, lest it might grow within like a disease germ driven into the body, awaiting an opportunity to burst out later in a virulent and uncontrollable form. There are a few delicate problems between the two communities, which need to be solved justly and amicably in a manner which will leave no trace of bitterness. They require the goodwill, liberality, spirit of understanding, and freedom from both inferiority and superiority complexes in the leaders and moulders of public opinion of both the communities.

I understand that the purpose of the above conference, in which leaders of all political shades have joined, is to create a feeling of national solidarity among the people of all sects and to seek the solution of outstanding problems. If it can suggest practical remedies and programmes, it would strengthen the hands of the Government in creating a lasting peace in U. P.
— K. G. M.)

Wardha, 11-4-'51

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April 21

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CONTROLS AND RATIONING

It is apprehended that if food grains were completely decontrolled and ration shops totally closed, it would lead to a great hardship to the people of scanty means. On the other hand, the attempt to close the free market, without the power to give through the ration shops the quantity of food reasonably needed for daily consumption, leads to black-marketing, corruption and demoralization. An appeal to put up with small deficits can be expected to meet with success if it is for a short period only. But if the deficit is considerable and extends to long periods and is accompanied with indications, which show that considerable food does exist in the possession of the wealthy or in underground stores and can be purchased on payment of a higher price, the average needy consumer cannot be strongly condemned if he is jealous of the wealthy or purchases from the black market. Such average needy consumers must be distinguished from those well-to-do and over-shrewd people who purchase secretly not for their immediate needs but for storing large quantities in advance from fear of a possible scarcity in the future.

The above is a statement of the case on behalf of the consumer, who purchases from the black market. He is not averse to control of prices and rationing. Rather, he demands them, provided they are administered more thoroughly and the ration is sufficient to meet his normal needs. Rationing entails inconvenience, and, if, in addition to it, it is also so insufficient that he cannot avoid going to the black market, he does not appreciate the system.

On the other hand, the producer of food (or, for the matter of that, any useful article whatever) also pleads a similar defence for selling in the black market, and lays the blame for it on the control of things produced by him. The summary of a Gujarati letter from an agriculturist published in another column is an illustration of this.

He represents the cultivator, who complains that the fixing of ceiling prices of products produced by him at a lower level than is suitable to him, without at the same time making adequate supply of materials needed by him available to him at cheaper rates than those prevailing in the market, is the cause of all hardships to himself and the consumers of his product.

The sugar merchant makes a similar complaint. He says that the ceiling price of sugar fixed by the Government was too low to induce him to produce sugar profitably, unless he could also purchase sugar-cane at prices suitable to him. As this was not done, he was unable to

produce sugar, with the result that both he and the consumer were inconvenienced. He would like to have either a strict control of sugar-cane prices or no control on sugar. The control on *gur*, he says, would be unnecessary if that on sugar-cane were effectively administered.

The textile industry, likewise, would have itself released from controls or in the alternative provided with cotton at rates favourable to it.

Similarly the *vanaspati* manufacturer in respect of groundnut, and, I suppose, the jute manufacturer in respect of jute.

And the farmer, the producer of grains, cotton, groundnut, jute etc., would like to have all controls against his produce to be raised, unless the things needed by him such as, iron, cement, fodder and other foods for his cattle, engine-pumps, fuel etc. are supplied to him cheaply.

The gist of all this is that every one wants a strict control of prices and adequate supplies of materials needed by him, but wants liberty to fix his own price for selling his produce. Thus, apparently, Shri Harekrushna Mahtab would seem correct when he says that every consumer, i.e. every person in that capacity in respect of any article, is a pro-controller, and every producer of such article is a no-controller. It also drives one, apparently, to the conclusion that controls cannot be applied to isolated articles. They create more mischief than good. You cannot successfully control prices of agricultural products until you make the needs of the agriculturist cheap, that is, under the present system, make transport, marketing facilities, bullocks, manure, water supply, machinery, fuel, cloth, and many other things cheap and abundant. If the balance-sheet of the cultivator can be made favourable to him in a natural free-trade manner, the balance-sheet of the whole nation can become so. But if it has to be so done by the artificial method of controls, it is like a fine *sitar*, which cannot be struck at any point without producing vibrations in all the strings on it, and also in the resonating box, and cannot but create confusion unless every cord is properly attuned.

If the producers do not want controls, it is to a great extent in their own hands. They must not insist on producing things only at a margin of profit, which they regard as essential for inducing them to work. For, if they want a wide margin of profit, they must be prepared also to pay the workers and the staff salaries and wages, which the latter regard as essential to induce *them* to work. This means, that all emoluments must vary from day to day in accordance with the price index.

If this vicious circle is to be broken, the only point at which, it seems to me, it can be done, is the voluntary curtailment of the 'margin of profit', and the payment of wages and taxes in part at least in kind. Money-profit as the strongest incentive to work is the bane of our present economic problems.

Ultimately, it is a spiritual question. The money-profit incentive is indicative of the uncontrolled desire for self-indulgent, luxuriously comfortable, grand and artificial standard of living. We have to choose between self-control, and extraneous control. If we do not submit to self-control, the evil of extraneous control is bound to intervene as long as there is some capacity left to carry on government. Since in administering controls, government will always meet with resistance in such a highly individualistic society as ours, slowly or catastrophically, they must lead to disturbances of a riotous nature. One may call these disturbers Communists or criminals as might suit one. But the root of the evil lies in the absolute emphasis on the individualistic view of life and happiness, and an utter disregard of the duty to society. No government in Asiatic countries would, it seems, be able to prevent these disturbances, the aid of Western countries notwithstanding. It is in the hands of the producers and well-to-do consumers to prevent violent movements. The only way to do it is to put a voluntary control on the instincts of acquisitiveness, self-indulgence and the individualistic view of life. We must work for all, live for all, share with all and suffer for all. In other words, we must adopt a life of *shuddha vyavahara* (honesty), *samaashraya* (community) and *sarvodaya* (well-being of every one).

Wardha, 7-4-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

A. I. R. Language Policy

The cinema and the radio are two very potent instruments for Hindi-*prachar* work. The cinema has, in its own interest, made its Hindi simple and direct so that it might secure the greatest amount of intelligibility of the people. This cannot be said of the Radio. It can as well be made to serve a particular school of thought or a particular brand of culture through its language policy. The Constitution of India has now laid down the language policy of the country, which the radio must henceforth abide by. Hence the following announcement (taken from the *Hindu*, 11-4-'51) by Shri R. R. Diwakar, Minister for Broadcasting, in the Parliament is very welcome from various points of view :

"Referring to the language policy in regard to Hindi, Mr Diwakar said, it was being examined by the Advisory Committee set up for the purpose. At the first meeting, it had been unanimously decided that maximum intelligibility should be the test of language used. A.I.R. was not a medium for the development of any particular culture or school of thought, and keeping Article 351 of the Constitution for purposes of general freedom, 'we are thinking of developing that type of language which will be easily understood not only by the Hindi-speaking people, but by the non-Hindi-speaking people also.'"

M.

A CULTIVATOR'S PLAINT AGAINST CONTROLS

I am a real cultivator owning 40 *bighas* of good land. When prices were cheap, I could save something between two to five hundred rupees annually after meeting all the expenses. But since the imposition of controls, I have been incurring an annual loss of Rs 200 to 500, my last year's loss having been Rs 450. This loss is exclusive of the cost of special cattle-food (*methi*) for a pair of bullocks. A pair of bullocks needs 2½ mds. (Bengali) of *methi* every winter. Its present price is Rs 40 per md. *Guwar* is another essential cattle-food. Unless the price of *juwar* bears adequate proportion to the prices of *methi* and *guwar*, i.e. is at least Rs 16 per md. the farmer cannot balance his budget.

If I had sold my *juwar* in the black market, I could have realized Rs 387-8-0 more. If there had been a genuine cultivator in the ministry, he could have realized the farmer's condition, and would have saved him from the temptation of profiteering and black-marketing. As it is, honest cultivators can only pray to God to relieve them either from controls or from life itself.

But while I suffer my burden, I sympathize with the cultivator, who has to resort to corrupt practices. He is an unwilling victim to the system of controls. Just see why he has to do so.

Take the instance of sugar. Before the controls, the price of sugar ranged from 7 to 10 annas and *gur* sold at 8 as. per lb. As soon as control is imposed on a commodity, a black market is created therein and prices shoot up, the supply from the ration shop being too inadequate. In order to avoid purchases from the black market various tricks are employed to meet the deficit. For instance, the cultivator gets rations of sugar on the cards of his labourers at the rate of 8 as. in cash or 2 lb. *juwar* per each card. The labourer does not need the sugar, he needs more *juwar*, and so he sells his quota of sugar to the agriculturist, and purchases his extra *juwar* from him, thus both becoming black-marketeers at once. That he needs more *juwar* is not his fault. Is it possible for a labourer to live on 6 oz. of food day after day for seven years? I dare say that from the humblest farm-labourer to the ministers, none could have managed to live for so many years without purchasing a part of their cereals from the black market, wherever the free market of grains is closed. To the extent we have to eat more than 6 oz. of cereals per day during three meals, every one of us is a law-breaker, and made so by the system.

(From a Gujarati letter)

A CULTIVATOR

Correction

In the article "On Way to Shivarampalli — III (*Harijan*, 7-4-'51) page 43, col. 1, lines 16 and 17, please read *gunthas* for *vighas*."

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

V

March 14, Adilabad (Seventh Halt, 15 miles).

We left Patan Bori and crossed the 'Khuni' river. The workers from Adilabad were waiting to receive us on the bank. We were in the Hyderabad State now. The town was at a distance of about a mile, and we reached it about ten in a sort of procession, accompanied with the tri-coloured banner and cries of *Vande Mataram* and the like. There was a time when the flag and things associated with it could not be tolerated in Hyderabad, and the people had to suffer for daring to exhibit them. In that sense they felt a bit free today. Nevertheless their faces betrayed anxiety and unhappiness. Vinobaji made a special reference to this, in his evening prayer. "So long as your spirit is not awakened, you can experience only a change of miseries and not their end. One misery goes only to give place to another. People were not happy during the Peshwa regime. So when the British Raj came, with Mountstuart Elphinstone as the first Governor, his administration was hailed in the beginning as a bringer of relief. Work was done at fixed hours, law and justice appeared to rule and so on. But not long after, they again became miserable. Violence, like allopathy, suppresses one disease only to give rise to another. How did you obtain your salvation from the Razakars? With police and arms, that is violence! You relied on an external means. There was no experience of a fundamental change in life. How can life then be happy?"

Referring to the various problems facing the country, Vinobaji said, they did not surprise him. Our country was very big, it was only three years since we achieved our freedom. We were suddenly called upon to shoulder the responsibilities of government. That was the reason why our country was passing through delicate circumstances today. But he believed that the solution of these difficulties did not lie in human effort. It must be sought through *Ramanama*.

Explaining the implications of *Ramanama*, Vinobaji said that a person believing in and relying upon *Ramanama* would not feel inclined to have recourse to spurious forces. He could not be a devotee of both Rama and Mammon. "When you have enthroned Hari in your heart, how can you allow any one else to occupy the same seat?" Vinoba then referred to the numerous factions which divided the people. They had blocked the country's path to progress. With their removal, the way would be clear and unity achieved.

Hyderabad is a State of many languages: Telugu, Marathi, Kanarese, Urdu and Hindi. Vinobaji advised the people to learn as many of them as possible.

Then he referred to the misery prevailing everywhere in the country. It was necessary for any one at once to engage himself in service. The secret to forget all differences is *Hartinama*. "We all are children of God: *अपुत्रं पुत्रः*. The body will be reduced to ashes one day, and it will be difficult then to discriminate between the ashes of a Brahman and those of a Harijan. We have put on the body in order to serve our neighbour and the world, and to love one another and foster love in the world. Therein lies the fulfilment of the purpose for which the spirit receives the human form. That is what *Harinama* stands for."

Speaking about the Sarvodaya Samaj, Vinoba said that he heard people say that they had once entertained great expectations of Congressmen, and now their attention was centred on the Sarvodaya Samaj. "What a delusion!" Vinoba observed. "Sarvodaya is not a nectar-dose which one may take once to be relieved of all troubles. To achieve *Sarvodaya*, we shall have to take the pledge that we will not exploit others' labour for obtaining our living. Indeed, we shall serve others to the best of our abilities. This is the basis of the Sarvodaya Samaj, to which all can belong. No witness is needed for its membership. Whosoever claims that he accepts the principles of the Sarvodaya Samaj is its member."

Concluding, Vinoba appealed to the people once again to sink all differences—including even that of being or not being a member of the Sarvodaya Samaj, if such mental reservation existed anywhere.

From Adilabad, we were scheduled to proceed straight to Hyderabad. But Shrimati Parwatibehn, who is conducting a Kasturba centre at Mandwi, 22 miles to the east of Adilabad in the interior, requested Vinobaji to visit her centre. Vinobaji agreed in spite of strong advice of the members of the party who were apprehensive of his health against doing so. The discussion which took place reminded me of Tukaram's verse *जेथे जातो तेथे तू माझा सांगाती, चाकविनी हातीं भरुनियां*. (Wherever I go, you are my companion, holding and leading me by the hand), which Shrimati Mahadevital had recited on the first day of the tour. The words since proved full of meaning.

Daily Time-table

Our party has become like a travelling Ashram. The morning bell rings at 3-45 a.m.; prayers at 4-30; march at 5 a.m. sharp, with singing of *Ramadhun*; arrival at destination at about 10 a.m.; bath, meals, rest etc. till 2 p.m.; correspondence till 5 p.m.; interviews, prayers, speech, question hour, etc. from 5 to 8 p.m.; retiring for sleep at 9 p.m.

While the foot journey gives first-hand information about the real state of affairs in the country, correspondence keeps Vinobaji in touch with the day-to-day difficulties of the workers all over, and he guides them in their work, even from the tour.

Some Correspondence

Let me give a few extracts:

To a worker who wrote about the life of hard labour of the villagers:

"It is not true to say that villagers lead a life of hard labour out of faith in work. They do it because they must. They have no alternative to it. Labour done from a sense of helplessness brings no lustre to the doer. It is faith, which imparts lustre. A person with faith in work does not like to exploit anybody, nor allow himself to be exploited by others. Wide and all-round self-sufficiency alone can eliminate exploitation. This is possible only with living faith in work (*अमनिष्ठा*)."

To a colleague he wrote:

"For individual revolution, individual effort, for collective revolution, collective effort; and lastly, for social revolution we must make a social effort. That is our line of thinking. Individual, group, and society are the three stages through which salvation is to be accomplished. Friends and colleagues have not yet realized the full importance of our work. They still regard it as a temporary zest, which will subside after a few days. They are not to be blamed for that. Our past conduct is responsible for this. It is possible that necessary discipline is lacking. God willing, it will be fulfilled."

March 15, Kushalapur (Eighth Halt, 13 miles).

Harikirtan and *Bhajan* (devotional chorus singing) went on for about an hour and a half after we reached the destination. Out of a total population of 1,200, 200 were Harijans. They were not allowed till now to use the well and enter the village temple. Both these places were thrown open to them at the hands of Vinobaji. He visited every house in the village. He found a Muslim's house very unclean. On enquiry, he was told that the owner cleaned it only on Fridays. Vinobaji persuaded him to clean the house every day. On the prayer ground he saw a few servants cleaning the place. He himself took up a broom and started doing the work. Immediately local men joined him. The ground was cleaned, and sprinkled with water. Vinobaji worked throughout for about an hour.

Bhajan parties came from different places to join the prayers. On the previous day at Adilabad Vinobaji had given his interpretation of *Ramanama*. On this day we experienced how the whole atmosphere was surcharged with *Ramanama*. Vinobaji, however, was not to be satisfied only with the music of *Ramanama*. He, therefore,

started his instructions: "God has gifted man with two great instruments: speech and hands. You have been using your gift of speech by taking *Harinama*. You must also use your hands for doing God's work. Prepare your own cloth. If you do that your *bhajan* will bear abundant fruit."

Vinobaji first spoke in Hindi, then in Marathi and thereafter his speech was translated into Telugu. As the population comprised of people speaking all these languages, the people heard all the versions patiently.

March 16, Mandvi (Ninth Halt, 10 miles).

Baliram Patel, the founder of this village, is a Banjara—a caste originally coming from Rajasthan and well-known for its commercial talent. It is scattered over several parts of the country. Their women still wear the old-style Rajput dress—a heavy and big *ghaghra* (a skirt) and an *odhani* (a sari of short length), and heavy and crude ornaments on the head, ears, nose, neck, arms and legs. Baliram introduced dress reform in his family, adopting the Gujarati style of dress now usually adopted by Marwadis in towns. He was excommunicated by his people for this innovation and had to suffer all the hardships of a reformer. But now, he has a following of a thousand families in the country. Though Baliram's regular school training did not go beyond the fourth year, he is the author of a scholarly work, the *History of the Banjaras*. He is the mainstay of the local Kasturba pre-basic education and health centre conducted by Shri Parvatibehn and her colleague in the village.

Vinobaji visited the pre-basic school, spent about an hour in the midst of the children, whose language, though he could not speak, he could easily understand. It is a mixture of Marwadi, Gujarati, Marathi, and a few other dialects including Telugu.

The children enjoyed Vinobaji's company, played their music, showed their craft work, including spinning, and saw that Vinobaji, too, was interested in them.

The population has increased from 995 in 1941 to 1195 in 1951. The village looks well-planned, with big roads, a primary school, a hospital building and a weekly market.

At the prayer meeting, Vinobaji said that though Mandvi did not lie on his way to Hyderabad, he could not resist the pressing invitation of Shri Parvati who had invited him to see her work. Although it meant a deflection from the route, he was glad to see and speak with them.

Kasturba, Vinobaji said, was in the line of our great women Arundhati and Sita. Her name will be associated with Gandhiji, in the same way as that of Arundhati with Vasishtha and of Sita with Rama, as the companions of their life. Arundhati had taken a vow to walk by the side of her husband in such a way as not to obstruct his path as is seen in the two stars after their names in the heavens.*

Sita insisted on accompanying Rama during his exile, and Rama could not withhold his permission. Similarly Ba had followed Gandhiji wherever he went. She followed him to jail, and died in jail as a soldier of Freedom on Bapu's lap. Important work of village service is being organized throughout the country in her memory. This centre might look small externally, but it would be wrong to regard it so. If they took the necessary care, it would grow into a big tree. Vinoba recited the verse of Dnyanadev which said that a little piece that had been planted at the entrance, had grown into a creeper which had risen to the sky. He asked the people to co-operate fully in the work that was being done there.

In the evening, a ninety-year old Gond touched

*The second star in the tail of the Great Bear is known as Vasishtha (Mizar). To the outside of it, near by, is a faint star called Arundhati (Alcor). After the marriage ceremonies are over, it is usual to show Arundhati to the bride and impress upon her to take that as her ideal in her life's journey with her husband. Arundhati keeps step with Vasishtha without ever obstructing his way.

Vinobaji's feet. Vinobaji inquired if he wanted to live longer, and if his life's desires had been fulfilled. He replied that he had heard Vinobaji's name and wanted to see him. Now that by God's grace he had obtained his *darshan* he would die a happy man. We were informed later that the Gond was a village physician and highly respected in the village.

There are only about 8 or 10 houses of the Gonds in the village. They live in a locality of their own and maintain their own independent economy. A Gond lady, seeing that Vinobaji was moving towards her house, ran hurriedly into her cottage and came out with *kumkum* to apply on Vinobaji's forehead.

There were a few places of interest in the neighbourhood of Mandvi, a hot-water spring, an ancient temple etc. Baliram Patel desired Vinobaji to visit them, offering his car to take him there so that he could reach Hyderabad according to the programme. A foot journey would have meant a further delay of three or four days. But Vinobaji was not to be tempted. He declined to deviate his course further.

Before leaving, Vinobaji advised the workers to be studious and to devote daily some time to reading. "Unless we had a stream of joy within, it is difficult to carry on the work. More so for ladies, who have to work in villages!"

March 17, Talamadgu (Tenth Halt, 15 miles)

As we left behind the hills and forest of Patoda and approached Talamadgu we saw a procession marching towards us singing in accompaniment with local musical instruments. We were led to the village Patel's house in solemn ceremony.

Talamadgu is known as a cotton centre, but spinning was done only in a few houses. "Why not in every house?" asked Vinobaji. "No worker," was the reply. The Reddies were established and better placed in life than others. There were a few amongst them who desired to do some social work. But no one was free to think in terms of the village. In the prayer meeting, therefore, Vinobaji had to say a few words in this connection: "You must learn to think of the village, in the terms that the whole village belonged to you. The condition of the people is very miserable. Therefore sink all your differences and employ yourselves in removing the agonies of the people. There should be none who is not happy here. Don't try to discriminate between the unhappy, by looking at their caste or religion. All those who are suffering belong to a common class, viz. the suffering class. In the same way all good people—saints and friends of the people—do not belong to different castes. There is only one caste, namely, the God-loving class. So, too, the sinners have no different sect or caste. They are sinners and that is the only caste they belong to. God will not ask you whether you are a Reddy or a Brahman. He will ask you the account of your deeds: Whether you have practised virtue or sin, whether you have been a pious man or an evil one. The money which you amass is not going to accompany you in Heaven. Devote, therefore, whatever you possess in the cause of your people's service. It is only then that you will be able to stand erect in front of God!"

March 18, Gudi Hatnoor (Eleventh Halt, 14 miles)

On our way to Gudi Hatnoor, the people of Sitagoondi had arranged a heavy reception. They had also arranged for our breakfast and we accepted the *juwar roties* prepared by the villagers. Sitagoondi was only ten miles from Adilabad. Many people had therefore arrived from Adilabad also.

At Gudi Hatnoor we were lodged in the Dak Bungalow. The village music and cries of '*Gandhiji Jai*' filled the atmosphere. We had now come to a *pakka* road. "The good roads are no doubt very convenient for merchants to visit and exploit the villages," Vinobaji said referring to the villages he had visited. "Even today, in the villages near Mandvi some occupations do exist still. The

dye is there; the *charkha* has still survived; the flour-mill has not yet arrived. The oil *ghani* is still working. But how long will this state remain? So long as the roads have not been built. The moment the roads reach the villages, the flour-mill will be established by the capitalist, and you will fall a prey to it."

The hand *chakki* helped to maintain the health of the people. The songs on the *chakki* created a cultural atmosphere in the villages. Vinobaji recited a few *chakkis* songs in Marathi. Such songs were in abundance in Marathi literature. But they are slowly dying out, because the hand-*chakki* has disappeared. "I have therefore come to warn you. People will come to you under the pretext of service and will loot you. If your *chakkis* are stopped the songs associated with these *chakkis* will also perish."

(Abridged)

D. M.

FOOD AND CULTURE

A sudden upsurge of culture propaganda and uproar in some of the capitals of our States is a sign of the times. Observers must study this phenomenon as it vitally affects the birth and growth of freedom and true democratic progress in our country.

In this connection the following observation made by the *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, in its editorial of 17-3-'51 deserves consideration:

"Culture is not something that one can develop by talk or by holding conferences and setting up academies. Culture in its essence is the projection of a people's way of life. There cannot be a national cultural tradition which shuts out the broad masses of the people. That is mere ivory-tower exotic refinement which soon degenerates into decadence, as has happened with the rise and fall of dynasties."

It is said, art and culture flourish as a result of the plenty that brings in its wake leisure which is said to be necessary for their expression. This leisure may be of the few, or of the many. All along through the ages in history a leisured class of a few going easy by riding on the shoulders of the many has always existed, demanding and encouraging the so-called art and culture to enliven itself. The many under such an order have always been the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the upper few. But there is, there should be, another art and culture which is born of the true leisure of the whole people. In fact, it is a misnomer to call it leisure. It is really a necessary period of relaxation after honest and strenuous bread-labour, exclusive of the period of sleep. The mind, which being not quite fatigued, is active, and being robust and pleased with the day's or season's work, seeks to express its happiness and joy in life in its own original manner. The modern age holds or should hold this to be its ideal, and strive to have it. Its artificial development by people, who have not experienced the preceding happiness and joy of life resulting from honest and strenuous bread-labour, is to be classed with the art, which has lost its soul and will therefore naturally decay.

Again culture is not a mere matter of art and literature, though both may serve its true ends if they themselves are true to their vocations. It was in this connection that Upton Sinclair declared that much that went under the name of art was "Mammon-Art". At a time when our people have no food, nor

raiment, nor shelter to a necessary and sufficient degree, the first concern of any culture worth the name should be to mind first things first and to take to life-giving productive labour. Everything else will then be added unto it and will come into its wake at its proper time and in a manner which will be original and not a mere copy of or improvement over the past. It will then not need to be made attractive by means of coloured rays, rosy powders, balms and operations for concealing age, fantastic dresses, and unnatural angles and curves of the various limbs of the body. These are a travesty of art and culture, by people who have not known the joy and contentment of life, but make a pretence of it before spectators, equally ignorant and innocent of a truly happy life.

14-4-'51

M. P. DESAI

Marvellous Co-operation to Save a Life

Mr Robert Sullivan, a 42-year-old employee of the consolidated Edison plant in New York, was the victim of a coal dust blast which killed two other workers. Sixteen members of his Union gave some of their skin at once and before he left the hospital 80 skin donors had been called on, some of them workers who did not know Mr Sullivan and who submitted to operations taking six four-inch sections of skin off their legs.

Thirty surgeons working in relays kept him alive after he had recovered from severe shock, and the main grafting was done between last November and last month.

When he left the hospital with his wife on Wednesday he looked much the same as before since he luckily escaped serious face injury. His company rounded up the donors and gave him an ice-cream party at the hospital. Standing over the group was Dr. Currier McEwen, Dean of the New York College of Medicine, who attributed Mr Sullivan's recovery to "teamwork in modern medicine, the patient himself and the kind friends he has."

ALISTAIR COOKE

(Abridged form the *Times of India*, 3-4-'51)

(Note: None of those who thus combined together to save Mr Sullivan will be credited with exceptional saintliness. They were ordinary men and women of the world. Such conduct does not need a great religious and philosophical attitude towards life. It is born of the training, which teaches that no man lives for and by himself, but with the help of and for the welfare of every one in the society. — K. G. M.)

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