

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Shri Balasaheb Pant

Shri Balasaheb Pant, the Raja of Aundh (now merged in the Bombay State and forming part of the Satara District), expired at the venerable age of 84 on Friday, the 13th of April last at Bombay. He was one of the most enlightened ex-rulers of the country, and the first to give to his subjects full responsible government. The Constitution was framed in consultation with Gandhiji and was a model of the type of Swaraj structure Gandhiji had in mind. The Rajasaheb took paternal interest in the people and guided them in their administration and progress.

His interests were varied. *Surya namaskara* (bowing to the Sun repeatedly in a peculiar manner, which provided complete physical exercise to the muscles) was his favourite method for the health and physical culture of the nation, and he took great pains to propagate it. He was also a patron of art and was fond of painting. A great devotee of Rama, he made literary researches in the studies of *Ramayana* literature, and also tried to emulate him in his role. He was an orator with a stentorian voice — a qualification rendered unnecessary now by the loud-speakers, but very much appreciated thirty years ago.

Wardha, 17-4-'51

Seed-Supply

Gentle remonstrances have been sent to me that while Shri Manilal Gandhi was risking his life for resisting the injustice to the coloured races of the world, I ought not to have made a reference to our own social and domestic deficiencies here. The cause of Shri Manilal Gandhi is my own. Personally he is to me more than only a public leader of South Africa or a son of Mahatma Gandhi. I have my full sympathy for the valiant fight he wants to put up against the Malan Government, and I wish that everything that we can do from here should be done to help him in it. With this very purpose I appeal to our own people to wash off the communal poison from our society. The Constitution of our country has made the road quite clear for us, and it is our own fault that we do not act upto it. We must realize how our invidious distinctions here

produce their sinister effects upon our nationals abroad. The following press item will show that it is we who supply the seeds which poison our life abroad. The pity of it is that most of the Muslims who join this demand for separate electorates are residents of the Indian Union.

"New Delhi, March 21, '51

"Indian Muslim settlers in Kenya are being supported by Europeans in the Colony in their demand for separate electorates and seats in the Kenya Legislative Council, according to private advices from Nairobi.

"The old Muslim League and British alliance in the days of Imperial rule in India is apparently being repeated in territories under British colonial rule.

"Changes are likely in the Constitution of the Kenya Legislative Council and Muslim emigrants from India have been urging that they should be given separate representation. Europeans are stated to be supporting the communal demand, for two out of five seats proposed to be given to Indians.

"On the other hand, Europeans have been demanding half the number of seats in the Kenya Council, the other half going to non-Europeans, although the European population is not even one per cent of the total. The Government of India is expected to take up the matter with the British Government and urge a common roll and not separate electorates for Indians in Kenya." (*National Standard*, 22-3-'51) Wardha, 19-4-'51 K. G. M.

WHITHER STUDENTS ?

It is reported that the Principal of a college in Aligarh was seriously assaulted by some students, and he succumbed to the injuries. The reason alleged for this outrage on the part of the students is that as a superintendent of examinations the Principal had occasion to debar from examinations about a dozen students who were found to be using unfair means. Let us assume that the Principal had quite groundlessly and wantonly or with ulterior motives taken that step. Even then, no condemnation can be too severe for the act of the students. Even if they had been innocent, their subsequent action shows that they were unworthy of getting a degree. If college students entertain the belief that they can take the law into their own hands, how may we not excuse the ordinary *goonda* for resorting to the same methods? The student world all over the country should outright condemn this dastardly act. Students have their associations. These together should build up a common code of conduct for themselves *vis-a-vis* behaviour in examinations, discipline, etiquette

regarding co-education and the relation of the sexes, and such other matters.

Students seem to have lost their heads as a reaction to their pathetic zeal to pass examinations by hook or crook. This needs a word for college teachers as well. To be an examiner has become a means of economic gain for which there goes on unholy rivalry among them. As such, all those dirty tricks which are known to trade, have permeated the teacher-class also. Moreover, they are found to threaten students with dire consequences at the examinations if they did not behave as they would wish them to do. In this way even the legitimate grievances of students are suppressed and students get demoralized due to fear. Some are heard to say that such things are helpful for and conducive to discipline. Favouritism and wilfully wrong assessment of marks in the examinations, bribery, corruption, leakage of papers etc. have become a common occurrence. These things also require to be looked into.

It is well our educational institutions analyse this deep-rooted malady that has beset them. It is as well some research students devote themselves to the study of this abnormal phenomenon of examinations, which has created such an economic evil, and danger to society.

12-4-'51

M. P. DESAI

BRIGHT LIGHTS OF SHIVARAMPALLI

It could be safely said that the Shivarampalli session of the Sarvodaya Samaj was a very great success. Indeed, to me it appeared to surpass the previous sessions held at Rau and Angul. The *sevaks* who gathered there must have left the place with a sense of satisfaction, achievement and hope in the place of frustration and disappointment which generally prevailed in the atmosphere before.

Vinoba

The session was mainly dominated by Acharya Vinoba's personality and it was he to whom the success of the gathering is mostly due. His pedestrian tour of more than 300 miles from Wardha to Shivarampalli should be given credit for arousing greater attention of the Sarvodaya Samaj members throughout the country and many of them perhaps visited Shivarampalli to hear and be near him.

As is already known, Vinoba is engaged at present in a great experiment at his Ashram at Paramdham, Paunar, for reducing the use of money as far as possible. According to him, money as the sole medium of exchange has done greater mischief and havoc in the world than anything else. He was engrossed, along with his few companions, in the task of adding to the production of the land with the simplest of implements, not depending even on bullocks for tilling the land. He wants to see what the extreme form of manual labour can achieve in agriculture in the present circumstances, where pumps, machines and tractors are considered to be the most up-to-date and scientific implements of agriculture. Vinoba is so much intent on this fundamental and revolutionary experiment that he was very reluctant to leave Paramdham even for the *Sarvodaya* gathering which was his own creation. It should be remembered that it was from Vinoba that the concept of Sarvodaya Samaj had originated at Sevagram, shortly after Gandhiji's assassination.

The concept was that it should be an unorganized mass of people in which no rule-regulated discipline had a place. The transcendental ideology of the Gandhian philosophy should only be manifest in the general social atmosphere, and personal conscience alone should guide progress. How Vinoba was pressed hard by friends to attend the gathering at Shivarampalli has been narrated already in these columns. The reader also knows how he thereupon decided to walk to Shivarampalli. Vinoba combines in himself the inventive genius and resourcefulness of a scientist, the exactness of a mathematician, the deep erudition of a savant and the valliant ascetic fervour of an anchorite to discard everything which he considers to be superfluous, and artificial for his goal; that is why Gandhiji selected him to be the first Satyagrahi in the individual civil disobedience movement during the crucial times of the Second World War.

To dilate further on Vinoba's personality will not be proper though much can be said to elucidate the grand experiment which he has at present undertaken. But to understand the import and the significance of his message at Shivarampalli the background of the primordial radical agricultural experiment which Vinoba is at present carrying on will have to be taken into account. Oft and anon he emphasized and extolled the value of manual work and personal labour in his sermons and meetings. The thesis which he propounded at Shivarampalli whenever he found an opportunity to do it was the sacredness of labour and the new orientation of the whole constructive programme through it. The purity derived from the simple manual labour and revaluation of all our values in the present civilized world through this value is, according to Acharya Vinoba, the panacea for all our ills and difficulties. If we eliminate money currency and take to labour with a new faith, fervour and piety, the condition of the world would be revolutionized. The need of the hour is production and greater production with this new ideal. Vinoba repeatedly pointed out that if we utilized to the fullest extent our hands with the barest and simplest of instruments at our command, our needs will be more than satisfied. Non-exploitation, decentralized society, simplicity, beauty of life and economic equality will be necessarily achieved, if we learn to look at manual labour with this new vision.

The religious attitude with which this new value of labour is to be understood was the main theme of Vinoba's prayer speeches. Non-attachment is the attitude of the *Gita* and there is hardly in the country a scholar of the *Gita* of Vinoba's eminence, ceaselessly engaged in imbuing this doctrine of the *Gita* in his personal conduct. Vinoba's is a living example of manual labour undertaken with this non-attached religious attitude.

Those of the assembled members of the Sarvodaya Samaj who are not impatient for immediate results must have derived great satisfaction from Vinobaji's sermons. His solutions were comparable to the distant guiding stars on the horizon! They pointed the way but tried the patience of the traveller. There were many and perhaps they formed a majority who were impatient for immediate results. Their minds were greatly agitated on account of the prevalent confusing politics, and their own inability to offer instantaneous remedies for our multifarious present-day difficulties. They saw discontent spreading everywhere against the Government, and found the premier political organization of the country—Congress—simply incapable to stem the tide of frustration and disappointment surging with great force all round. People clamoured for food, shelter and cloth, and no leader, institution or party was able to suggest a way out. Was the Sarvodaya Samaj able to find an immediate solution? What was the attitude of the Samaj towards these problems? Whom should the members vote for in the impending elections? In short, what should be the attitude of the members towards Congress politics and the present Government? These were the questions which

agitated many of those who had attended the *Sarvodaya* gathering.

Vinoba's solution for all these difficulties was 'work with both the hands with heart within and God overhead, and await the results'.

Excepting the exponents of a few main topics, other speakers were allowed three to five minutes only. Several found the time to be too short, but there was no alternative. The gathering lasted for four days, and the time passed away very swiftly. The session was crowded in every sense of the term.

Shankarrao Dev

Shri Shankarrao Dev, with his life-long experience in the political field, clinched the issue in a proper perspective and tried to offer a short-term solution to the problems agitating the members' minds. Instead of attending the meeting of the Congress Working Committee, which he was invited to attend, he attended the *Sarvodaya* gathering from the very beginning of the session. It showed how he valued the deliberations of the *Sarvodaya* Samaj and the *Sarva Seva Sangh*. He advised them to approach the voters from whom real politics emanated and to play the role of teachers to them. It would be more paying, he said, if the *sevaks* approached voters instead of the Government and the political parties in the right spirit. The members of the *Sarvodaya* Samaj should not aspire to be candidates for election but should try to influence and guide them. Politics could thus be shaped in the right direction. This was quite in tune with the moral concept of the *Sarvodaya* Samaj, whose history Shankarrao Dev traced from the beginning. The *Sarvodaya* Samaj was not there to inflict ready-made political solutions on the voters; its function was to guide the people in the non-violent spirit, according to the light which the members had received from Gandhiji. The *Loka Sevak Sangh* was, in his opinion, the last testament which Gandhiji had offered to them and to prove loyal to the great teachings of the Mahatma, the *sevaks* were expected to act as if they were members of the *Loka Sevak Sangh* without offering themselves as candidates for election. It can be said that Shankarrao Dev made a good impression upon the gathering, so far as this issue was concerned.

Dada Dharmadhikari

Dada Dharmadhikari agreed with Shri Shankarrao that members of the Samaj should remain aloof from actively participating in election politics. He publicly vouchsafed to his great failure as a politician and fervently described the present degeneration in politics. Numbers meant everything in politics and there was absolutely no consideration shown to quality, honesty and morality, he very eloquently pointed out.

J. C. Kumarappa

Shri Kumarappa had unfortunately very little time at his disposal. He was called away by an urgent private summons and had to leave the place in a hurry. Within the short time at his disposal, he emphasized the need to reorientate the constructive programme by laying stress on agricultural self-sufficiency in all its aspects. He very brilliantly pointed out the difference between self-indulgent democracy and self-restrained democracy and advised the members to follow the best traditions of Indian culture by keeping their wants under control. Members should not follow the ways of the western self-indulgent democracy in which wants are inordinately multiplied.

Kaka Kalelkar

Kakasaheb Kalelkar was the President of the session for two days and when he left, he drew the attention of the members to the establishment of a classless democracy. As long as the last vestige of caste and *varna* remained, there could not be any classless society, and

economic equality or justice could not prevail in it. People must be taught to rise above caste, creed and *varna*.

Shrikrishnadas Jaju

Shri Jaju occupied the chair after Kakasaheb's departure. Jajuji was specially requested to remove the misunderstanding about the disbursement of the Gandhi Memorial Fund and the work which was to be conducted through it. He pointed out in the clearest terms that there was absolutely no cause for any misunderstanding; though there was some delay in beginning the work, the work had now started in right earnest.

R. K. Patil

Shri R. K. Patil has made it a point to visit the gathering every year and at Shivarampalli he was asked to deal with the very controversial topic of food. In Shri Patil's person the Government and the people's points of view are harmoniously blended together and he could deal with the subject courageously, coolly and ably with a masterly grasp. He very gravely pointed out the greatest urgency of the problem and asked the gathering to deal with it with a religious zeal. Government and people ought to be united so far as this subject was concerned and it was up to the Samaj to create the necessary enthusiasm in the public mind which was greatly lacking. Shri Patil dilated on the difficulties under which the Government laboured and invoked the assistance of the Samaj to rouse people's conscience and to canalize their energies in this respect.

The subjects like the peace-brigade or *shanti-sena*, economic equality, *Harijan-seva*, *Nai Talim*, women's movement, the necessity of creating moral atmosphere, were dealt with by influential speakers within the short space at their disposal and many members ventilated their ideas within the time allotted to them.

It is not the function of the *Sarvodaya* Samaj to offer any ready-made solutions to problems agitating the people's minds. The members think together and express what they feel. Every member is free to carry his own impressions and to follow the dictates of his conscience according to the light received individually in the gathering.

At the end of this short resume in which adequate justice cannot be done to the say of every speaker, it can be said that Vinoba's preaching pointed to a long-term non-violent solution of our present-day difficulties and Shankarrao Dev's speech advised the formation of the *Loka Sevak Sangh* of the constructive workers, so that they could influence the voters, in the immediate future, according to the Gandhian outlook.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, than whom a better votary of non-violence from amongst the politicians of the world could hardly be found, cast his eyes on the *Sarvodaya* Samaj, from which he expected a ray of hope and light in the midst of the enveloping darkness. He expressed this sentiment in a short message which he sent to the *Sarvodaya* gathering and Vinoba in one of the prayer meetings made a mention of this message, and very sincerely tried to reciprocate the same feelings.

Can it be hoped from the members of the *Sarvodaya* Samaj that they would rise to the occasion, form themselves into an efficient moral organization and be an instrument in removing the gloom which is pervading the country?

Nagpur, 16-4-'51

HARI KRISHNA MOHANI

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April 28

1951

FIVE-FOLD PROGRAMME

From the two reviews published with this and the oral accounts of some of the visitors returning from the Conference, it appears that Vinobaji and other leaders of constructive work have placed a five-fold programme of work before the nation. Vinoba has tersely summed it up in one half of a verse as follows :

' अन्तःशुद्धिः, बहिःशुद्धिः, श्रमः, ज्ञान्तिः, समर्पणम् । (Internal purity, external cleanliness, labour, peace and dedication).

1. *Antah-Shuddhi* (internal purity) stands for the *shuddha-vyavahara* (honest-life) movement. It is a call to the people to renounce unfair ways of earning wealth or securing commodities and comforts, and to work together for that purpose. The nation's stock of the principal necessities of life is less than the needs of the people. Those who happen to possess a store of these necessities try to take advantage of the scarcity by demanding more than a fair price for them. The purpose is nothing but to make money — as quickly and easily as possible, regardless of the privations of the people. This is anti-social selfish behaviour. Those, too, who possess large stocks of money take advantage of their surplus wealth by paying more than a fair price in order to secure comforts for themselves in advance of others, regardless of the difficulties the poor are put to thereby. This, too, is anti-social selfish behaviour. No *Sarvodaya* can be established under these conditions. There can be no happiness and peace of mind, whether under controls or without them. Also, there can be no progress, no successful implementation of plans, no maintenance of law and order, and no security of individual or national freedom. Science can manipulate a mechanical heart and a mechanical lung to take the place of those organs in nature. But there can be no successful mode of dispensing with the necessity of honest life and sense of civic duty. We must therefore make a deliberate attempt to return to honest ways of life. The attempt must be both individual as well as joint. We should also develop regard for the needs of others and the good of the public. We must also act together to sustain one another in the effort for honest life, and the attempt to resist injustice and evil.

2. *Bahih-Shuddhi* (external purity) is the *sarvodaya* programme for cleanliness. We are generally credited with a good sensitiveness for personal cleanliness. We like to have a daily bath, to clean our teeth, to wash our hands, to put on freshly washed clothes every day and so on. But this is by no means universal, and the development is only to a limited degree. In the

matter of public sanitation and cleanliness, even in those reputed for personal cleanliness, the sense is, at its best, just germinating. In the general public, it is very deficient and is the main cause of a good deal of disease and constant outburst of epidemics among the people. It is responsible for our heavy infant mortality, poor physique, early old age, and low longevity. An intense drive for external cleanliness, personal as well as public, is another factor, needed for creating *Sarvodaya*.

3. *Shrama* (physical labour) is the third great condition for *Sarvodaya*. The culture which we have imbibed through our so-called education has made us like Aesop's reindeer, which prided itself upon its long and branching crown of horns but was ashamed of its bony and uncomely legs. Though they were extremely useful for saving its life, it regarded them as unworthy and despicable members of its handsome figure. The result was that in spite of a frantic attempt of the humble and faithful legs to save their master, the animal, its majestic horns got it entangled in a bush and torn to pieces by hounds. Similarly for centuries past we have done everything to destroy the dignity and value of labour and, not merely neglected, but suppressed and humiliated those who have, generation after generation, worked hard to produce for us food, clothes, houses, furniture, ornaments and various comforts of life. Those who have washed our clothes and utensils, swept our streets and cowsheds, cleaned our latrines and urinals, manufactured our cloth, pots, shoes etc. stand lowest in our conception of dignity. We think of them with disrespect, behave towards them with insolence, and humiliate them in society; even in temples where we gather for worshipping our Creator, they have either no place or have a low and distant place. All honour is assigned to wealth, power and book-learning. The result is that production has diminished, the desire for a life of luxury and self-indulgence has increased, and while no one wants to labour, everybody seeks to get the comfort which hard labour alone can produce. This is an impossible aim. Whether we labour with our bare hands or with the assistance of implements or machines, labour we must. The capacity and will to labour must be regarded as the mark of a developed body and cultured mind.

This programme can be worked out in a variety of ways. We want to produce food, fruits, vegetables, milk, butter, *gur*, oil, cloth and so many other articles of life; we have to construct houses, schools, latrines, drains, roads, culverts, bridges etc. We want bricks, timber, mortar and the like. We want wells, canals and other reservoirs of water. We look to our land for food; our lands look to us for manure. The manure must be prepared and provided by us. Every item requires labour to be performed. If along with labour we also have better implements, they are

welcome; but if implements are not available, our hands alone can still produce much if we have the necessary will. We need not despise the implements and mechanical aids, but let our hands be employed first. This is *faith* in labour (*shrama-nishtha*).

4. *Shanti* (establishment of peace) is the fourth item. Peace is not to be understood here in its restricted context of abolition of war. Abolition of war is not ruled out, but war is a magnified edition of small conflicts which take place frequently in every small group. If small groups know how to live in amity, to resolve petty disputes, and to abolish fear and jealousy from their small world, it will cut at the root of war in the larger world.

The work of peace is not a duty arising on a particular occasion, called breach of peace. It is a day-to-day living and intimate contact with every section of the local public, and the rendering of service to every life in difficulty. It is like the daily visit of the medical officer, the nurse, the sanitary inspector, the judge, the employer, all put in one. The soldier of peace is the universal friend in need.

5. The last item is *Samarpana*, that is dedication of one hank of self-spun yarn on Gandhiji's annual day. The object of *samarpana* is not served if the hank is not spun by the dedicator himself. This small hank of self-spun yarn is symbolical of the dedicator's respect for Gandhiji, faith in the *Sarvodaya* ideal, faith in personal service, faith in the performance of physical labour, faith in a non-violent and non-exploiting order, and of the equal status of the rich and the poor. It will also be the measure of the *Sarvodaya-sevak's* work among the masses. Every effort should be made to induce as many people as possible to give this hank at the time of the next *Sarvodaya mela*.

Wardha, 17-4-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

SHIVARAMPALLI ACCOUNT

At Shivarampalli, five miles from the famous city of Hyderabad in the South, was held from April 8 to 11, the third Conference of the Sarvodaya Samaj. Shri Vinoba had already reached the place on the previous day, after covering a distance of some 300 miles on foot. Out of a little more than 4,000 (including about 120 in foreign countries) *sevaks* or members of the Sarvodaya Samaj some eight hundred attended the *Sammelan*. The proceedings began under the presidentship of Shri Kakasaheb Kalelkar who was later succeeded, on account of his engagements elsewhere, by Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju.

The life in the *Sammelan* was almost like that in a camp. The first bell of the day rang at 4-10 a.m. to awaken the delegates; prayer at five, followed by breakfast; body-labour thereafter for an hour and a half. This occupied us till 9-30, when we met for deliberations; and between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. we took food and rest

and did personal work. The congregational spinning (*sutra-yajna*) lasted for half an hour. It was succeeded by a three hours' session of the *Sammelan*. The evening prayer was held at 6 o'clock. It closed every day with an address from Vinobaji. Thereafter the evening meal and in-the-camp talks and on to bed.

The first day was allotted to general observations and suggestions by the *sevaks*. The speakers were allowed to speak on any subject they pleased, subject to a time-limit. They covered a very large variety of subjects, such as distribution of the land, economic situation of the country, self-sufficiency, workers' allowances, education, pottery, *sutanjali*, Harijan issue, animal-slaughter, peace-brigades (*shanti-sena*), Satyagraha, Government policies etc. The two outstanding speeches of the day were those given by Shri Vinoba and Shri J. C. Kumarappa. The former stressed these five items: Devotion to body-labour (श्रमनिष्ठा), peace-brigade, yarn-contribution, self-help in *bhangi*-work, and *shuddha vyavahara* (honest life movement). He exhorted the audience to take to these activities in right earnest. Shri Kumarappa explained why he aimed at carrying on agricultural work in a village, an experiment in the evolution of a democracy of self-discipline as against that of self-indulgence in which money reigned supreme.

The food problem took up the next day in which the discussion was opened by Shri R. K. Patil, a member of the National Planning Commission. Though accurate statistics were not available, he said, it was not to be doubted that India did not produce the requisite quantity of food, and that it was necessary to change from subsistence agriculture to scientific agriculture. He also said that production and not distribution-cum-controls was the real problem of the day. Finally, exhibiting his trust in the *Sarvodaya* workers, he appealed to them to make the Government production drive successful.

This was followed by a general discussion in which several members expressed their views on the subject. Shri Vinoba gave three definite suggestions to meet the situation — (i) payment of a part of the wages of agricultural labour in kind; (ii) recovery of land-revenue in kind, and (iii) encouragement of *khadi* in every village home.

The next subject after the food debate was the 'honest life movement' (*suddha vyavahara andolan*) which has been recently placed before the country through the columns of *Harijan*. This discussion went on to a part of the third day (10th). Other subjects discussed on the 10th were regional self-sufficiency, economic equality, *Nai Talim* and attitude towards politics. The last item naturally evoked a keen debate which covered the morning hours of the fourth day also. In the afternoon of the fourth and last day the subjects dealt with were: running institutions by physical work, women's welfare, the

place of Satyagraha, form of Harijan work and peace-army (*shanti-sena*).

The four post-prayer addresses of Shri Vinoba were the most important events of the *Sammelan*. On the first day, he referred to the place of prayer in our work and its importance as compared to other acts of *sadachar* (good conduct), for eliminating pride. In his address on the second day he pointed out the inexcusable delay made in taking *khadi* to the masses whether as a village industry (commercial *khadi*) or as a domestic occupation for self-sufficiency (*swavalamban*). He warned the workers that in the lure of agriculture, *samagra gramaseva* and improved implements they should not forget the real message of the *charkha*, which not only demonstrated the extraordinary greatness of Gandhiji, but was also a symbol of our revolt. He asked them to study carefully what Gandhiji had said on the subject.

In his post-prayer speech on the 10th, Shri Vinoba referred to the message, which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had sent to the Conference. The message said that the country looked to the *Sarvodaya* for seeking the light which had gone dim. Vinoba observed that India had for thousands of years been practising the duty of *daya* (compassion) as a *dharma* (religion) to attain the ideal of *samatva* (equality) called *Brahma* (oneness of life). But now they had come to realize that the real *dharma* lay in establishing true equality, which though it did not deny *daya*, extended beyond simple exhibition of charity. He urged upon the audience to practise *samatva*, (equality). He also pointed out that *samatva* like any other practice, had to be accomplished with *viveka* (discrimination), lest thousands of years may later have to be wasted to develop the sense of *viveka*.

In his last address he summed up the entire proceedings of the *Sammelan*. He had little to add to what he had told them in his opening speech. He had summed up his programme of work in the half verse अन्तःशुद्धिः बहिःशुद्धिः श्रमः शान्तिः समपंगम्। (internal and external cleanliness, physical labour, peace, and yarn-dedication) to help them to remember what they had to do. He also stressed the importance of education and asked them not to be so impatient as to force their will on others, but to bring about changes by imparting education, that is by giving the people their suggestions and ideas, and leaving it to them to adopt their programme and way of life. It was, Vinobaji reminded, the only way to generate real and permanent strength.

The Reception Committee had also arranged a small exhibition of cottage-industries. Another important feature of the *Sammelan* was the eight one-hour meetings in which batches of workers from different parts of the country met Vinobaji and placed their local difficulties before him. These small group talks were very fruitful, inspiring and instructive.

We passed no resolutions as such. But it would be wrong to say that we made no resolutions. In fact we found ourselves entrusted with definite tasks to be performed during the whole year. It is now for us to act up to them intelligently, and render an account of our stewardship when we meet again next year. Tentatively, the next *Sammelan* has been fixed to take place at Sevagram during the last week of February 1952. May each one of us rise to the occasion as demanded.

Wardha, 13-4-'51

SURESH RAMABHAI

'CONSTRUCTION WEEK'

(MAY 20-27)

The following is taken from a Note received for publication :

"The Socialist Party and the Hind Kisan Panchayat are observing a 'Construction Week' throughout India from May 20 to 27, 1951. The importance of constructive work in the context of the present-day mood of frustration and helplessness among the people cannot be overemphasized. The week is being observed with a view to instill among the people self-confidence, hope and an awareness of their responsibility towards the problems that face them. Active co-operation of the people alone can solve the national problems that seek solution. The people should learn to work for their own collective good, with or in spite of the help and guidance of the Government.

"During the week many diverse items of constructive work will be taken up: Digging of canals, tanks and wells, repairing or cleaning of old ones, construction of roads and bunds, digging pits for compost and the like in villages, reclaiming of cultivable waste land, clearing of dumps of filth, drying up of marshes and pools of accumulated stinking water, digging for improved drainage in towns and cities. But in view of the food crisis, the main emphasis in villages will be on digging for water and compost-making.

"This programme is being undertaken in a non-partisan spirit and the Committee formed to direct this programme has approached the Ministers of Works, Health, Food, Information and the Prime Minister for help and co-operation. In this connection it need to be made clear that constructive work will not be confined to this week only. It will start earlier and will continue after the week. But the week is sought to be specially devoted to constructive work on voluntary co-operative basis.

"The local Socialist Party and Hind Kisan Panchayat mean to hold corner, hall, *mohalla* and big public meetings to educate and enthuse the people for this constructive work. A mass collection of 100,000 two-anna bits will shortly start, to meet the expenses of propaganda, publicity, volunteer-training etc. Sites are being chosen in and around the city where volunteers will undertake manual work. Committees are being formed in various parts of the city and rural areas to undertake this task.

"Further information may be had from the Secretary, Socialist Party, Sidiqi Buildings, Bara Hindu Road, Delhi."

The idea of undertaking constructive work of the type mentioned in the circular by people of all ranks working together for the good of the community as a whole is good. In a country divided by so many political and social isms, in

order to bring workers of all persuasions together, care should be taken not to make it an occasion for attacking rival political parties. The temptation to do so results in creating a new type of distinct castes.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

A FIGHTER OF STEADFAST RESOLVE

Shri Pancha Patel breathed his last on the 15th of February last at the ripe old age of 85 at Karadi in the Surat District. Born in a poor peasant family, he had barely acquired even an elementary knowledge of the three R's. But his was the heart of a *bhakta* and the villagers used to assemble at his house every Saturday for *bhajan*. His land being not sufficient for his maintenance, Pancha took to tailoring as a subsidiary profession.

On reading Doke's biography of Gandhiji, of course, in Gujarati, Pancha became a *bhakta* of Gandhiji and on the latter's return home from Africa he eagerly sought every opportunity to take part in his activities, offering Satyagraha in the various campaigns launched upon by him or under his inspiration and guidance.

He had taken part in the Flag Satyagraha at Nagpur. He had also joined the raids on the salt pans of Dharasana.

Pancha was perhaps the first Satyagrahi to withhold land tax when during the non-co-operation days Gandhiji decided upon starting a no-tax campaign from Bardoli in 1921. And though Gandhiji later postponed the programme of civil disobedience, thanks to the Chaurichaura riots, Pancha stuck to his resolve not to pay land revenue till Swaraj was attained. Importuned by Congressmen to pay up the revenue, Pancha approached Gandhiji and was confirmed by him in his resolution. Consequently his land, his only property, was confiscated by the Government. Nothing daunted, Pancha took to the *charkha* and the loom to maintain himself.

When the Congress assumed office and formed ministries in the provinces, Government ordered the restoration of the lands of the Satyagrahis who had forfeited them during the Satyagraha fights. But Pancha would not accept the land nor pay the revenue saying that the Swaraj for which they were fighting had not come. He again sought and obtained the confirmation of Gandhiji. But on the latter's advice he handed over the land for the use of a constructive worker who, Gandhiji said, would pay the revenue.

Pancha was again requested to take charge of his land after the 15th of August 1947 when India assumed full charge of her Government. But the content of Pancha's Swaraj had grown with the time. He had identified Swaraj with Gandhiji's *Ramaraj*. "As long as the administration of the country is carried on with the help of the army," said Pancha, "it was no Swaraj. Swaraj should be based on *ahimsa*." Hence he would not pay the land revenue nor did he care to take charge of his land. He cited the example of Gandhiji and asked, "Has Babu gone back to

his Ashram at Sabarmati? When he goes there I shall plough my land and not till then." Referring to this steadfast resolve of Pancha, Gandhiji had remarked, "Pancha's resolve will remain without a parallel. We have indeed not yet got true Swaraj. It seems to be distant today."

Pancha was a great devotee of Kabir and the galaxy of our poet saints. Shri Vinoba when he visited Karadi in 1949 was greatly pleased to see Pancha and hear him sing his *bhojans*.

He was fearless, devoted and self-reliant. He carded his cotton, spun his yarn and wove it into cloth himself since the days of non-co-operation almost till his death. He was verily, in the language of Gray, "a gem of purest ray serene".

MISGIVINGS CONFIRMED

II

As promised I have to explain this week, why my "misgivings" about Food Technological Research have, far from being removed, been painfully confirmed. The newspaper report referred to in my previous article "Misapplied Science" had only given a glimpse of the Institute and its objects, but this brochure has given me a dazzling close-up view. Among the subjects for study we find the following:

1. Storage and preservation of different classes of food materials; prevention of spoilage; reclamation and utilization of partially affected materials.
2. Processing of foodstuffs with a view to improving their keeping quality and facilitating ready usage; refrigeration, freezing, gas storage, dehydration, canning etc.
3. Treatment of different coarse food materials to improve their palatability, digestibility and general food value; elimination of harmful and unpalatable ingredients.
4. Study of new and hitherto unfamiliar sources of food materials; their processing and supplementation so as to render them more wholesome and acceptable, emergency foods.
5. Preparation of concentrated foods, vitamins and other food accessories, composite and multipurpose foods, ready-to-serve foods, supplementary foods, food substitutes etc.
6. Preservation of fruits, vegetables and other perishable articles, training of personnel into methods of preparation of squashes, jams, preserves, pickles, chutneys etc., and general investigations into fruit technological problems including the possible use of exhaled gases, artificial colorization and anti-oxidants for preservation of shape and food quality.

No. 1 might conceivably be useful to the toiling masses, though I much fear the methods would be far too expensive. As to the rest they concern only the upper, middle and lower-middle classes, who are a small minority of India's population. At the same time the industries to be benefited by these researches are all of a non-village type. Even those which might have had some connection with rural life are hopelessly apart. One of the photographs in the brochure called "Training in processed fruits and vegetables", shows young men in city dress standing at tables and handling elaborate and

expensive European types of equipment. In another place the brochure quite shamelessly announces that, "Particular emphasis will be laid on experiments on rabbits, monkeys and other animals more akin to man, a technique not yet adopted in India".

Some five years ago I once asked Dr Bhatnagar if he could give me anything useful for the villagers out of all his discoveries and inventions. "Oh yes," he said, and took me off to his office in the Delhi Secretariat to see a wonderful collection of samples. There were water-proof things and fire-proof things, and other things which I can't remember. But this I do remember that each time I took a fancy to something and said, "Can you give me the information for preparing this in the villages?", he would reply that the process had been patented. At last I exclaimed in despair "My dear Doctor, the long and the short of it is you have sold your Science to the capitalists!"

That occasion comes back to my mind because in this Research Institute I seem to see the same thing. It impresses me as a gigantic capitalistic enterprise.

It so happened that by the same post with Dr Bhatnagar's letter and brochure came a weighty volume from America called *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* by Weston A. Price. The author of this book has made a detailed study of the evil effects of processed, tinned, and other types of artificial foods, on human health. Some people in the West are awakening to the degenerating effects of their own civilization, but we in India are spending huge sums of public money on creating the very conditions that they are now trying to overcome.

The whole thing is a bad job, and is, alas, only typical of many other projects and schemes through which our unhappy land is being "developed".

Pashulok, 6-4-'51 MIRA

(Note: Along with the above article, Mirabehn has also sent to me the brochure referred to in it. It is an attractive publication, and I read it with all the interest of a science student. Necessarily, therefore, my approach was slightly different. I think that in order to appreciate the viewpoints of both Dr Bhatnagar and Mirabehn, it is desirable that the reader should be acquainted with the contents of the brochure to some extent. I shall try to do so, next week, and make my own comments thereafter. — K. G. M.)

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APPEAL

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress have resolved that a National Memorial Fund be raised in memory of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The funds collected for this memorial are to be mainly utilized for the construction of rural roads, wells and other means of village water-supply and village school houses and for other like purposes. 15 per cent of the amount collected will be reserved for a Central Fund and the rest utilized in the State wherein the money is collected for the objects stated above.

We appeal to all, rich and poor, in India to contribute to the best of their ability towards this memorial which will perpetuate the memory of our great and beloved leader and continue to remind the men and women of the land of the service, sacrifice, and love of the poor that made Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel so dear to us all.

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