

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 13

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1951

TWO ANNAS

## MISCONCEIVED RESEARCH WORK

I said at the end of the article "Technological Research Institutes" (*Harijan*, 12-5-'51) that I endorsed the misgivings expressed by Mirabeau about the work of these institutes. I shall try to show why I do so.

There is a world of difference between science employed for bringing about *Sarvodaya* and that employed for enhancing trade and commerce.

Let me illustrate it by a few examples :

We are deficient in food. The deficiency is greater to the poor and the middle classes than to the rich. It is the former, who most need substitutes and emergency foods. The Research Institute is asked to help the people in their hunt for them. Now, if the scientist discovers some seeds, kernels, fruits etc. of neglected weeds, grasses and trees found in abundance in nature, and teaches poor people how to make use of them for tiding over an emergency, his suggestions would be welcome and in the interest of *Sarvodaya*. But very often he simply selects one already known to the poor and guardedly used by them. He discovers no new food, but uses his technique to make it an article of flourishing trade by subjecting to complicated processing. He gives it an artificial flavour and appearance, so that even the well-to-do might be tempted to purchase it. The attractive dressing is often done even at the risk of depriving it of its already poor nourishing qualities. The resulting product can be manufactured only commercially in a big plant, under a patented process. When research is directed to this end, the article ceases to be a substitute or emergency food. It becomes an item of luxury and a subject of industry and commerce. The result has often been that it drives normal food out of use and production, nay, even out of existence, while it itself becomes too costly to suit the poor man's purse. A thing which was normally neglected before even by the poor, because better and more nourishing things were available, begins now to supplant the latter, like a substitute or extra employee elbowing out the principal one. *Vanaspati* may be cited as an instance. It is a scientifically processed "attractive edible" of this kind. The scientific treatment of the natural oil, which required no processing whatever in order to be made edible, has enabled *vanaspati* to make both *ghee* and pure oil uneconomical

and unavailable and encouraged and facilitated their adulteration. It has made groundnut an important article of commerce, with the result that cultivators do not wish to grow sufficient food even in the face of chronic shortage, starvation and mal-nutrition. Most of the oilseeds other than groundnut are disappearing one after another. This is employment of scientific research for the expulsion of the better and more nourishing necessities of life and for the deception and exploitation of the people.

Let me give one more example of anti-*Sarvodaya* research. India and several other countries lack food and milk. Both are produced in abundance in other parts of the world. Indeed the production is so abundant in some of them that if man had not been endowed with the intelligence for commerce, nothing could have been more natural for them than to solicit deficit countries to take away their surplus food and milk, — like flowers which feel blessed for being sucked by the bees for their honey. But the commercial instinct intervened and prompted them even to burn their crops and throw away their milk into rivers rather than even sell them to needy consumers for a price, which the latter could afford. But this wanton destruction clashed with their scientific instinct, if not with their humanitarian urges. So they sought the help of research scientists. And the latter obligingly produced formula for the manufacture of synthetic rubber and several other artificial materials from grain and milk. The results might well be that (i) production of natural rubber and (ii) the consumption of corn and milk by the poor as food might become uneconomic. The latter would have to be advised to consume some inferior and artificial substitutes for corn and milk. But they would be flooded with toys, balloons and even houses and motor-cars of synthetic rubber in super-abundance. All this is science misapplied.

This type of scientific research reminds me of a skilful European who, I was told, could make beautiful toys, dolls etc. from rags. She could use any bit of cloth — sound or torn — to make some beautiful plaything out of it. In the beginning rags cost her nothing, and her dolls fetched fancy prices. It became a profitable business so that she could pay a little money to those who would collect rags for her. She could also employ some girls whom she taught the art. By



and by the demand for toys became greater than the quantity of rags available. Moreover, the rags required to be washed, bleached or dyed and otherwise treated. It became cheaper to buy pieces of new cloth, for after all the amount of cloth needed for a doll was trivial. And so from an industry using waste material, it turned into an industry which turned good material into waste and then dressed it up for purposes of commerce. The skill of the artist and her initial activity of making use of the waste was certainly admirable; but when turned into an instrument of commerce, it became a luxury, which wasted a useful material.

A dozen similar examples might be given. Shri Chandrashankar Shukla used to describe some of them in *Harijan*, some years ago. They showed that the investigation into emergency foods, their processing, the preparation of concentrated foods, the methods of artificial colorization, the so-called improved cooking methods, and the study of problems relating to food industry etc. are subjects for which Mirabehn very properly entertains misgivings.

Dr Bhatnagar is a reputed scientist. But he does not speak like one when he ridicules those food-reformers, who in the name of science itself, strongly recommend that food should be taken as far as possible in its natural state. Instead of simply sniffing at them, he ought to have said that as a scientist with a reputation to lose, he joined issue with them and had no hesitation in affirming that it is a perfectly healthy and wholesome practice to prefer food which was processed to those made without salting, washing, boiling, baking, sugaring etc. Dr Bhatnagar has said in the course of his speech:

"Animals have been found to retain the ability to choose a nutritionally correct diet to a much greater extent than man. By smelling or licking the animals can choose their foods".

So, in the Research Institute a very good animal house has been provided. The intelligence of these creatures will guide the learned doctors, in selecting foods for men, they themselves having lost that capacity. And yet he seems to say,

"Let people take food in what manner they please; we of the Research Institute here are ready to supply them with artificial substitutes and correctives to rectify the errors in their diet, with the help of our Animal House."

I submit that this is not the attitude of a votary of science, but that of an advertising agent of an industrialist.

Nevertheless, let me repeat that I do not condemn this or similar institutes. As I have said in my previous article:

"It is one which should be maintained, and whatever drawbacks one might feel in its approach towards investigations from the point of the *Sarvodaya* order should be remedied by reasoned persuasion and appropriate directives."

Technological research is good, but it must have a proper goal and perspective to work after. Wardha, 14-5-51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## EAT TO LIVE

In these days of national scarcity, it is a sin to eat more than what is required and a virtue to reduce our intake of food to the absolute minimum.

I think, it was Gladstone, who observed the golden rule of giving thirty-two bites to each mouthful. Some wag remarked that he gave exactly thirty-two bites, so that each of the thirty-two teeth should be given equal chance to do its duty.

Neither claiming to belong to Gladstone's category, nor being a meat-eater like him, I have varied the rule, in my own case, so that I bite every morsel of food about 20 to 25 times. I have been following this rule for the last few years, and find that the intake of food is reduced to less than three-fourths of the original. In these days of reduced rations, if my fellow countrymen will follow this simple rule, they will find that the reduced ration supply will last for more time. We have to try and grow more food on a nationwide scale and eat less food on the same scale, and I suggest that through mastication of each morsel of food by every one will reduce the amount of food required by about  $\frac{1}{4}$ th if my own experience for the last five or six years should count.

Thorough mastication of food is not only useful in reducing the amount of food intake, but has got other advantages also. It reduces the craving for chilli powder and other condiments. The ptyalin in the saliva, mixing more freely with the food, makes digestion and assimilation easier. And it is a well-known medical maxim that it is not what you eat that matters, but what you assimilate. That is so very true.

Of course, your family doctor may be rather displeased because if the whole of your family observe this good rule, his bill will be considerably reduced. Again, the time required for the meal is increased by about 15 minutes for each meal. Thus whereas I formerly required altogether about less than 30 minutes for the two principal meals, I now require about 55 minutes. But whereas I formerly simply gulped down my food, forcing the stomach to do the work of the teeth, I now *enjoy* my food for so much more time. And in this respect, Indians should not be hustlers like the Americans. If someone says that he cannot spare the additional half-hour, being very busy, I may retort, 'Well, you cannot possibly be busier than Gladstone.'

Eat to live and don't live to eat, is a moral precept worthy of being followed.

In short, grow more food when and where you can, eat less and thoroughly chew and masticate, so as to be able to digest and assimilate and you will not only help yourself, but you will help the nation to tide over the period of scarcity.

A. V. BARVE



### UNHOLY HOLI

*Holi* is the unholy of Hindu holidays. It is a festival which has come down to us through, perhaps, several centuries. But, however ancient it might be, it is a holiday which deserves to be condemned and discouraged by all decent people.

In Hinduism anything written in Sanskrit is often put forth as scriptural text. And *pandits* have not been wanting to compose texts, which tell the people that it is one's duty to indulge in indecent words, songs and gestures during *Holi* days. The result has been that men, otherwise of pure character and self-restrained and decent in daily life, speak and participate in acts which would suggest to a stranger who saw them only that day that they must be debauchees of a very low order indeed. They encourage also their women and children to participate in such acts in quite a ceremonious manner. I understand that in some of the towns of Rajasthan there are big statues of a god of shamelessness, who is worshipped with ceremony on that day.

Unlike South and West India, where there have been reform movements against this festival, in North India and among people of those provinces living in other parts of India, the festival still retains its hold even on people of high education, culture and status. Some North Indian newspapers publish special issues on the occasion in which the light vein is not light but gross. The degree to which it finds favour among the ordinary people might be imagined.

Besides indulgence in physical, vocal and mental filth, the festival often becomes the occasion of communal, caste and street clashes. One group of festival-makers comes into clash with another, and a free fight ensues. If there have been old jealousies or hostilities, such a clash is intentionally provoked, so that the quarrel might be fought out with virulence under the sanction of the mob law prevailing during the festival.

For instance, Shri A. G. Ansari, M.L.A., U.P., reports a serious communal outbreak, which took place at Kesarpur, District Bareilly, during the last festival. The following is a condensation of his account:

"The trouble arose over the throwing of colour over the Muslims during the last *Holi*, i.e. on the 23rd March, 1951. The altercation was originally confined to a few people on both sides which was even hushed up in the first instance. Some of the residents, however, sent word to the people in the neighbouring villages and a mass attack was made on the Muslims on such a large scale, that excepting few, practically every house belonging to the Muslims has been burnt and all property including wearing apparel and utensils was either looted, burnt or damaged. It is only some four houses adjacent to the houses of the Hindus that were not burnt, apparently to avoid damage to the Hindu locality, and one other house, where the Muslims had collected for shelter and from where they tried to resist the attackers. The attackers sprinkled petrol on the wooden framework on which the tiled roof rested and set fire to them with the

result that the roofs came down. The number of houses burnt down is over a hundred and the damage caused to house property alone must be somewhere between two and three lacs, exclusive of the loss on account of the destruction of other assets, grain, clothes, utensils etc.

"A number of people were shot at, speared or beaten, and if they could not escape and fell, they were burnt down, then and there, dead or alive. According to the communique issued by the District Magistrate, the number of persons killed is seven. There are, however, some who are untraced. A considerable number of people escaped with injuries.

"It is a sad commentary on our national character that not one individual in the village, or in the neighbourhood, could intervene during the carnage or give succour to the sufferers.....

("It fell upon) Shrikrishna Murarilal Asar of Bareilly and his socialist workers (to rush) help to the village as soon as they were informed of the tragedy and to inspire confidence among the sufferers.

"The Government have sanctioned two thousand rupees.....The District Magistrate has already sent some *poolas* (straw) and *ballis* (timber) etc. He will try to give some compensation also. But due to financial difficulties, (they) will not be able to do a great deal in this direction. It is, therefore, necessary for philanthropic persons to rise to the occasion and render such help to the sufferers as they can. I understand that a relief committee has been formed at Bareilly for this purpose.

"It is also high time that the leaders of thought in the country, took up this matter in right earnest and did everything possible to make the recurrence of such gruesome tragedies impossible; for, apart from everything else, the country cannot advance one step forward, in the right direction, with a mentality and character such as we are developing."

Similarly the Secretary of the Rajasthan Harijan Sevak Sangh reports from Bhilwara to the following effect:

"During *Holi* festival on *Dhuleti*, some leading citizens and workers paid a visit to the Harijans in the vicinity to greet them—a sign of their customary greetings to others. It was a goodwill mission, that the Harijans may understand and feel they are fraternized on equal footing with others and are really enjoying the benefits of the present Constitution.

"But this aroused the reactionaries who carried on sinister propaganda, planned reactionary measures also involving economic sanctions; and as a first step to this on the 6th instant burnt the coffins with the dead lest the Harijans make use of the bamboos etc. costing about Rs 200. (According to the custom, the coffin is given away to Harijans who make use of the materials and in return render certain services at the cemetery and elsewhere.)

"This reactionary step, specially as it involves economic sanction, has hurt Harijan feelings, and they are planning retaliatory measures.

"This incident raises certain issues of fundamental importance. This is not only a reactionary attitude but a social tyranny, which will seriously affect amity and town sanitation."

The all-round well-being of the people requires that the *Holi* festival, as indulged in at present particularly in North India, must be discouraged and decent people should not participate in it. The so-called scriptural texts or traditions which are supposed to support the dirty and immoral indulgences on this occasion, should be repudiated unhesitatingly.

Wardha, 12-4-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA



## HARIJAN

May 26

1951

### WHAT IS A SECULAR GOVERNMENT ?

Shri Hariprasad Vyas writes :

"Since we have declared ourselves to have formed a Secular State, doubts have often been expressed whether Government can encourage religious activities, provide religious education in schools, help such institutions with money, and do this or that thing, if it has any bearing upon a particular religion. In this article I have made an humble attempt to think aloud the meaning and implications of the Secular character of India.

"I feel that a Secular State should be understood here in the sense that India has no particular State religion. It will not make distinctions between citizens on the basis of their religion. It does not, and should not, in my opinion, mean, as is regarded by a good many educated men, that a Secular State should not bother itself at all about religion, which according to them should be a personal matter of every individual, and must be looked after by him and his co-religionists as their own concern — unaided as well as unhindered by the State.

"This is absolutely a negation of religion, and I believe if this is the interpretation of the Secular State, this policy is bound to fail in India. It will be spiritual bankruptcy. No State whose population is deeply sensitive to religion can afford to neglect it without causing serious repercussions on the life of the nation.

"If it is the duty of the Government to raise the standard of living and establish a Welfare State it should equally be the duty of the State to provide proper religious instruction to the nation. Man does not live by bread alone.

"Gandhiji has observed :

"...I was somewhat pained to observe that even the students of Mysore had no religious instruction in the State schools....But if India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction." (*Hindu Dharma*, p. 288).

"I think merely the negative attitude towards religion is not correct. The Secular State of India must follow a positive constructive approach towards Religion. We must specifically declare that the secularity of the State of India consists not in the disregard for every religion, but in equal regard for all religions (सर्वधर्मसमभाव) and it must encourage such institutions which give a total view of Religion, as distinguished from a denominational religion. Even in institutions conducted by or meant for the followers of a particular religion only, it should help with money and guidance only such institutions as provide religious education or other benefits to all people irrespective of caste or creed, and inculcate equal regard for other religions also. To illustrate the point, the Ramakrishna Mission is open to all people belonging to any religion. There should be no objection if the State helps such institutions. Similarly if a Muslim masjid or *anjuman* is open to all and the Quran is taught to all people, without asking them to be Muslims, and also essential features of other religions in a reverential spirit, it should be helped. Similarly Hindu *mandirs*, Christian Missions etc. should teach their scriptures to all who desire to study them supplemented with the essential teachings of other religions in a reverential spirit. The

criterion for the right of the institution to State aid should be that it should be open to all people, should not altogether neglect other religions and should inculcate equal regard for all religions, even though it specializes in a particular religion. If the State gives a lead by establishing such activities, communal poison will also vanish and feelings of fraternity between different communities will develop.

"In this connection I invite the attention of readers to the views expressed by Dr Rajendraprasad at the Somnath installation ceremony. (Vide elsewhere in these columns).

"*Nai Talim* should prepare a syllabus in which religious instruction common for all is provided. A denominational institution might supplement this with particular teachings of its own, taking care to see that it does not try to inculcate hatred for other religions therein. Naturally, such special teaching must be on lines generally approved by the State.

"Secondly, a Secular State does not cease to be so, if it abolishes personal laws such as Hindu law, Mohammedan Law etc. To me it seems it is more in consonance with its secularity to remove such laws which recognize people on the basis of religion only. There should be a uniform law for all citizens in respect of marriage, inheritance, etc.

"The Secular State should also be deemed entitled to interfere with religious institutions if they encourage immoral activities or mislead people or spread communal hatred.

"In short, a Secular State of India should adopt equal regard for all religions (सर्वधर्मसमभाव) as its ideal and encourage correct religious activities and should consider it as one of its important functions."

I endorse Shri Hariprasad Vyas's views and Dr Rajendraprasad's attitude as the only practical course which can be adopted in a democracy constituted of people belonging to scores of religions and sub-religions. Personally, I would wish to discard all religious labels in the same way as political and caste-labels. But in the realm of religion, the label-less religion might itself become a distinct label, and there might arise also a dozen varieties of it. Hence there would again arise the necessity of tolerating them with equal regard.

Equal respect for all religions does not conflict with an attempt to introduce reforms or to denounce the evils and untruths in any or all of them. A heterodox religion is also a religion and entitled to equal respect. Some of the reforms might be so radical and widely accepted that in course of time they might change the form of an orthodox religion or of all religions beyond recognition. That might render some of the old institutions useless and antiquated. Thereafter they would become simply historical records or monuments of a bygone age, like, for instance, the tales of Roman, Greek and Vedic gods. It is perhaps better that religious changes should take place in this manner than through violent crusades and iconoclastic movements. Revivalism and reactionaryism result when reforms, however good and rational, are forced by violence. No one in Arabia ever tried to reinstate in the mosque of Mecca the idols, which Muhammad destroyed after every Arab's conversion to Islam. At the same time, let it be remembered that he could not remove the Caaba. He had to



respect the sentiment around it. It was democratic of him to do so, even if not consistent with reason. But his fanatic followers used the power of the sword to destroy the temples etc. of non-converts to Islam. Hence, the urge to re-establish the old idols when a suitable opportunity arrived lived buried in the hearts of the defeated people, and was transmitted from generation to generation in all conquered territories. Like the seeds of plants and insects, which seem to be non-existent in summer but multiply themselves in abundance with the bursting of the monsoon, the buried urge burst forth with great intensity as soon as the political subjugation ended. We are passing through a stage of this kind at present. It has to a certain extent thrown our minds out of gear. There is a desire to revive institutions, for which we have not much faith left. After a while we shall get tired of them, and then shall discard them through sheer neglect. Let it be so. No doubt, it entails too much cost of wealth and energy. But it cannot be helped. The reformer should not despair. If what he seeks to propagate through the reform movement is intrinsically sound and good, the revivalist spirit will wither away as soon as its season is over.

Wardha, 16-5-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

#### TWO CITIES IN ONE

".....the philosopher Plato.....said that most cities were not really one city but two—the city of the rich and the city of the poor. In the last century a Conservative Prime Minister of Britain wrote a novel under the sub-title, "The Two Nations"—the rich and the poor. History suggests that wherever a community is too sharply divided between rich and poor, one of two things happens: either the "city of the poor" rises and overthrows the other "city" or this other city imposes order by force on the city of the poor. If our generation were to set up a common government for the world community, before it moved aggressively to revive the world's economy, one of these two fates would surely threaten it. In contemporary terms, the world government would be under heavy pressure to go Communist or to go Fascist.

"The city of the rich, based largely on the economy of the United States, sees this problem less clearly than does the city of the poor—the hungry, half-naked, diseased, and mostly coloured millions. If Americans propose to them a common government "to keep law and order" in the world-wide City of Man, to control, "the bomb", and let us all enjoy life in peace, then those who are not enjoying life and who fear the bomb much less than they fear famine may well be unmoved. There is a lot of ease and abundance in America for a bomb to destroy, so we go to bed at night asking, "How can we sleep?" But they ask, "When do we eat?" Those questions measure a yawning gulf between the two cities—cities that really do need one government. It is true that man shall not live by bread alone, but should this particular statement by Jesus Christ be quoted between meals to those who had no meal at all?

"Another way to state the problem of the two cities is to say that though law and order have to be enforced in human communities by means of government, no government enforces them for long that does not bother about justice. Today the City of the Poor might well wish to know whether the City of the Rich really cares, before setting up political housekeeping with it. Nothing would reassure it more quickly or surely than a frontal assault by the whole City on the unspeakable misery of most of its inhabitants."

(From Stringfellow Barr's *Let's Join the Human Race*)

#### EQUAL RESPECT FOR ALL RELIGIONS \*

In our country particularly there is a very great necessity that each one of us should realize that the best course for him is to act with a sense of respect and equality towards every community and creed. For it is only in this that the welfare of our whole nation and country and of every one of us lies. It is because of this faith and conviction that our Union has adopted the policy of secularism and has given an assurance that every sect and individual of this country would not be subject to any discrimination on grounds of religion and would be provided the same opportunities as are enjoyed by others. In conformity with this ideal I have respect and affection for all the faiths.

Even though I am a Sanatanist Hindu by faith and daily practice and ordinarily worship and pray to my God according to the rites of the Sanatanist creed, yet I believe that every man of religion can reach God by worshipping Him according to the dictates of his own faith. So, not only have I respect for all religions and their places of worship but I also go to them to show my respect whenever an opportunity offers itself. Whenever there is an opportunity I go to the Dargah and the Masjid, the Church and the Gurudwara, with the same feeling of respect with which I go to the temples of my faith.

RAJENDRAPRASAD

#### "VYAVAHAR SHUDDHI MANDAL"

(A SOCIETY FOR HONEST LIFE)

#### An Appeal

Much of our cherished aspirations and hopes of material and moral improvements have been bitterly belied by the progress of events during the past three years and more. Many are the reasons advanced to explain away the sorry plight to which our country and we have been reduced. Essentially, however, this is due to our lack of social consciousness. We have so far placed our personal interests above all other considerations. The true concept of a corporate social life has not yet dawned upon us. This has unfortunately been our attitude on life for the past many years and we are yet on the same downward track.

It is however our good fortune that there are amongst us some people working in the various spheres of life—social, political and spiritual—whose main mission is service of humanity. They are greatly pained and worried over this sad state of society. All such right thinking people are unanimous over this—that there is no way out of this situation until the moral stature of individuals is raised.

Our freedom is dead sea fruit if it does not raise our moral calibre. A society can prosper only if its members have character and are self-disciplined. Religion is incompatible with a lack of morality and integrity.

The first step towards the attainment of this goal is self-purification. Not one of our deeds and thoughts must seek to escape equity, honesty and sincerity. That is our prime duty.

Towards this end the Vyavahar Shuddhi

\* Extract from the speech delivered after the Somnath installation ceremony as reported in *Nagpur Times*, May 12, '51.



Mandal has been endeavouring during the past two years. The Mandal conveys this message to all. Its mission is to awaken the social consciousness in every one of us.

As a part of its activities the Mandal has decided to observe "A self-purification Week" from Monday 28th May to Sunday 3rd June, 1951.

I earnestly appeal on behalf of the Mandal to all those who believe in the absolute need of purity in individual as well as in social life to associate themselves with the activities of the Mandal.

Bachubai Building,  
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KEDARNATH

### PEACE, UNITY AND EQUALITY THROUGH LABOUR

(INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMPS IN INDIA)

Some readers of *Harijan* may know of the work of the International Voluntary Service for Peace, otherwise known by its French name of Service Civil International. This organization was started in Switzerland soon after the first World War and it has two main aspects. First of all it is intended as a demonstration in countries where military conscription is the law, to show that men who, on grounds of conscience, refuse to fight or to be trained for fighting, are prepared to undergo strict discipline and hard manual work, not for war, but for peace. They refuse to accept the forced discipline of the State, but they impose their own discipline on themselves and it must be no less rigorous than the discipline imposed by the State. Secondly, every team of SCI must be an international team, including wherever possible men from countries whose governments have been or are hostile to each other, as a means of breaking down such hostility and of showing that all men are brothers when it comes to honest manual work for the good of all.

The SCI has worked in many European countries, year after year, for thirty years. Volunteers, often students in their vacation times, went to places which had suffered from natural catastrophes or to such places as some of the mining districts of England and Wales, where the people were suffering from economic distress, and they tried to bring fresh hope and vitality to the victims, working alongside them with pick and shovel, to rebuild what had been broken down or destroyed.

After the Bihar earthquake in 1934, the leader of the movement, Pierre Ceresole, got in touch with C. F. Andrews and asked him if he thought a team would be welcome in Bihar. C. F. Andrews strongly encouraged the SCI to come to India and funds were raised for this purpose. In the end, however, only Pierre and one or two others came from Europe as a gesture of goodwill, and most of the funds raised in Europe were spent in paying wages to the stricken people of Bihar, thereby helping them to rebuild their own villages. Pierre Ceresole however spent three winters in India and became a close friend of Gandhiji and of Dr Rajendraprasad. When the village of Shantigram, which the SCI had helped to build, was completed and Pierre left India he expressed his conviction that this was only a beginning and that SCI would in course of time forge further links with Asia.

Since 1945 a number of Indian students studying in England or France have spent their summer holidays taking part in SCI work camps in many parts of Europe and they soon began to press the SCI to come again to India. Finally, Dr Rajendraprasad, at that time Chairman of the Faridabad Development Board, invited SCI to send half a dozen European workers to work on the new refugee township at Faridabad. The first group arrived at the beginning of 1950 and they quickly got busy, work-

ing side by side with the refugees on such hard tasks as stone-quarrying, road-making, brick-making and house-building. At a time when the Faridabad authorities were trying to induce the shopkeepers and professional men from the Frontier to see that hard manual labour was not beneath their dignity, the presence of these half-dozen middle-class Europeans from Switzerland, Germany and England, who took off their shirts and blistered their hands as they worked through the heat of the day with pick and shovel, must have made some impression. Since then several other men and women have come from the West and work has been undertaken not only in Faridabad, but also in Chamba State, where a water channel has been constructed to bring fresh water to a mountain village, and now recently some have been working in the earthquake-stricken area of Assam.

In Assam the SCI teams have been joined by a number of Indians, especially students. In the course of his report for March, 1951, the Swiss leader writes:

"Our camp life was greatly enriched by the active participation of Indian volunteers. It is a source of joy and encouragement to welcome new members in our group and slowly to see our movement adapting itself to the Indian way of life, trying to keep the fundamental principles of the Service Civil International....Of the ten volunteers at Pathalipam two only are from the West and here at Talahi we are thirteen with 9 Indian members."

It is worth while also to quote what some of the Indian volunteers say about the work they are doing. For instance three young men write:

"Here in Telani our camp is formed of volunteers from Denmark, England, Switzerland, U.S.A., a local *mistri* and students from Darrang College, Government High School and Town M.E. School. We were helped also by teachers appointed by the School Board and by some villagers....."

"Max Parker guides us in the construction of the building.....We are trying our best to follow the rules and regulations of the Camp based mainly on an internal discipline."

"Our Western friends are taking their meals with us on the floor following the Indian custom. Our diet consists of rice, *chira*, milk and fish, *gur* instead of sugar."

"We live in the camp as if we were all brothers and sisters."

Another Indian volunteer comments on the way in which some of the Assam tribes-people visit the camp. He writes:

"One Saturday we had seven visitors from the Sarak Hills. One of them had his lunch with us.... they were very pleased with us....."

These quotations perhaps show as well as anything can do the nature of this humble service to mankind.

The latest bulletin of the Service received from Paris records work done in the following countries during 1950, namely, Algeria, Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Holland, Italy, India, Saar, Switzerland.

Let me conclude with one other quotation from this same bulletin. One of the members writes:

"We are convinced that we are in the long run more realistic than the man who wants peace by defeating his enemy. For, firstly, may he not himself be defeated? — most unrealistic of all; secondly, if he wins, doesn't his enemy remain his enemy or become even more his enemy and want to fight again as soon as possible? — Still unrealistic. The only thing left to do is to take away your enemy's enmity beforehand — a most reasonable policy. And this in plain terms is the idealism of SCI."

How soon, I wonder, will there be a SCI camp including young men and women from India and Pakistan working side by side?

(Slightly abridged)

HORACE ALEXANDER



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

## IX

March 25, Armur (Eighteenth Halt, 12 miles)

Armur and the next halt, Nizamabad, were not included in the original itinerary as they did not lie on the way. But the invitation from the people of Nizamabad was so pressing that Vinoba could not resist it. Hence, from Balkonda we deviated our course towards Nizamabad, and this made a halt at Armur unavoidable. There are 12 *bidi* factories and six rice-mills here. The two together have attracted labourers from neighbouring villages, thus adversely affecting farm labour there. In his post-prayer speech Vinoba referred to these conditions, as also to the drink evil. Such evils were responsible for the slavery of the people. The people had complained, Vinoba said, that though the Sun of Swaraj had risen they saw no light. They saw no difference in their condition. Vinoba said that they did not experience the achievement of Swaraj, because there was no difference between the present manner of a change in the Government, and the manner in which such things used to take place in pre-British times, when one ruler defeated another and established his government in the latter's area. The people had not brought about the change by their own effort. There was only a change of hands. What they took to be the light of the sun at daybreak was only the light of a lamp. It could not change night into day. It was only the light of the sun, which could do it.

During his talk with the workers, Vinoba exhorted them to pledge themselves to some work, and organize village industries. Ten of them promised that they would thereafter use only *khaddar*. But they pleaded that they should be allowed to use the mill-cloth that was in their possession until it was exhausted.

The question was not, Vinoba said, of not purchasing mill-cloth hereafter, but of changing one's way of life, turning over a new leaf. Those who would purchase *khaddar* after their stock of mill-cloth was exhausted, did not know who was going to be exhausted first, the wearer or the cloth! He did not advise them to destroy their mill-made clothes, but they could give them away to those who were not prepared for the change over to *khadi*. They themselves should take to village industries as an immediate step.

Vinoba wanted the workers to study the literature on village industries. The Socialists, the Communists and also the R.S.S. had their respective philosophies which they followed with ardour. But Vinoba did not know what philosophy was followed by Congressmen. He put it to them that it was the philosophy of the village industries, which could take them further. But they did not hesitate to use mill-cloth instead of *khadi* and sugar instead of *gur*. This could not take them forward. If the Congress had no such programme to give to the people it would not survive long.

Vinoba also referred to the political situation of the country. What was the reason, he asked, that for the last 600 years people had been kept in bondage in Hyderabad? There must be some inherent defect in the people themselves. In his opinion it was the evils of drink, idleness and the like which had deprived them of all manly qualities and killed their valour unlike the people in Maharashtra and Karnatak. How was it that no Shivaji was produced in Hyderabad? Swaraj could be achieved by those who fought for it. Some of them had said that Swaraj had come a bit too early. Did they mean to say that the period of six hundred years of slavery was not enough?

Vinoba reminded them that Armur was a town with twelve thousand inhabitants. He asked them, whether there was any activity, which they carried out together as joint work. Did they manage their self-defence? their education? or the production and distribution of their cloth, or oil or anything else? He knew that they manufactured *bidis* and exported them to Bombay and earned

some money out of that. But it could not help them. His view of Swaraj was that every village or township should itself manage all its affairs, and produce all its essential wants, and the Government should simply act as a helping agency. According to him Swaraj meant rise in the character of the people. If the experience was that the character of the people had deteriorated, it could not be Swaraj. Since that was their common experience, they must understand that they had not yet attained Swaraj. Hence they must work for it with vigour, even as they did before the Police Action or before the retirement of the British.

Vinoba also advised them to learn Hindi as quickly as possible. Every citizen must know at least two languages—the mother-tongue and Hindi. He found that on account of the insufficient knowledge of Hindi, his speech was not properly interpreted that day. Thus they had understood only a part of what he said to them, and perhaps in a distorted manner.

Replying to the question whether the present form of democratic Government in India, especially in the Hyderabad State, was to be desired, Vinobaji said that people must be trained to distinguish between good and bad people and to choose the former. That was not so at present. Those who wanted to capture power could do so with the help of money. So it was money that ruled and not merit. People must be trained not to recognize caste, community, relation, friendship or money in public work.

Replying to a question on Communism, Vinobaji said that Communism would meet its own death unless the Communists changed their policy of violence. On account of the indiscriminate and meaningless violence indulged in by the Communists, Communism came to be mixed up or identified with professional *goondaism*. People and the Communists both would soon get tired of violence. No party could expect to win popular support through a programme of violence and *goondaism*. India being very poor, a party that would serve the poor could alone get their blessings. The Communists had a field of service if they gave up violence and approached the masses with a programme that could ameliorate their economic condition.

On being asked to clarify his *idea* about the economic programme, Vinobaji said that unless agriculture was supplemented with small-scale cottage industries, mere land redistribution could not solve the problem although its place in national planning was beyond question. There was hardly 7/10 of an acre of land per head. It was therefore necessary to concentrate on intense agriculture for increased production and to persuade the people to manufacture the articles necessary for life from the raw materials that they produced. This would revolutionize the present agrarian economy and free the rural population from the money menace. But then the Communists felt that to do so would be following Vinoba's programme. Vinoba did not understand why there should exist any complex about that. Let them accept the programme on its merit and carry it out or let them show an alternative.

Unless that programme was implemented, no improvement in the Communist situation could be expected. Whichever party did it would come out successful. Continuation of the present policy of violence by the Communists would result in their losing the sympathy of the masses. There would then not be even the ghost of a chance for the Communists to come out successful at the polls.

*Khadi* workers had arrived there from Metapalli. With them had come an old lady aged sixty. Her son is a teacher. She has been spinning for the last ten years, not for her own use, but for her son's! Vinobaji looked at her, accepted her hank, and with a smile asked her in Telugu why she did not use only *khadi* for her own clothing. "Yes, from today I shall use only *khadi*"—came the reply. She thus unconsciously set an example to the Armur workers who also took the pledge, but



hesitated to implement it at once, as they did not know what to do with their mill-cloth.

**March 26, Nizamabad (Nineteenth Halt, 17 miles)**

At Nizamabad, the enthusiasm of the public knew no bounds. In fact, the reception was overdone. Vinobaji warned the public not to bring *niranjans*, purchase garlands, and spend money over these things. If they themselves prepared garlands, from flowers plucked by themselves or relatives that was different. Otherwise yarn *malas* only should be offered. I asked Presidents of District Congress Committees to issue circulars accordingly. But to my surprise garlands did not disappear at Dichpali, Kalwaral, Kamareddy and several other places. Everywhere I was told that the garlands had been prepared at home and according to instructions. That means that flower garlands are still easier to make than yarn ones.

The post-prayer meeting at Nizamabad was exceptionally big, and exceptionally peaceful. Every day after the prayers and the speech, Vinobaji asks the people to observe complete silence for two minutes. He instructs them how they should, within these two minutes, meditate upon the Lord and try to identify themselves with the universe. People follow his instructions but in spite of their wish to observe complete silence, some child cries, or some aged person coughs. At Nizamabad, there was remarkable silence. (The speech at Nizamabad will be reported separately).

After the prayers, several workers met Vinobaji. One of them asked, "You have been speaking about the village industries. But don't you think the village industries are slowly decaying?"

**Vinoba:** Yes, because the city people are using all their courage and energy not in stopping the import of foreign articles, but in snatching the village industries from the poor villagers. They won't encourage *khadi* but will start textile mills. They will start oil-crushers and stab the village *ghani*. They will use sugar and destroy the *gur* industry. And they themselves are being looted by the foreign traders. They will have to face a critical situation, when they will be on the one side, thoroughly exploited by the foreign manufacturers and attacked by the villagers when they will have lost everything.

**Question:** Should not the Government take necessary steps to stop this?

**Vinoba:** This is exactly the sign of slavery. In every small or big affair you look to the Government which has neither the time nor the resources for such matters. You yourselves want that the Government should be ever-ready to meet Pak aggression. The Pak Government also thinks in the same way. All the money therefore has got to be spent over the military. Adult education, according to Government reports, suffers for want of sufficient supply of kerosene oil. What do you expect from a Government which has no resources even to carry out their plan of adult education?

The Government is not going to help us if we don't help ourselves. In Hyderabad, thirteen crores out of a total income of thirty crores come from Excise. Government will therefore encourage toddy. It is helpless due to many reasons. As a matter of fact it is the Government that is badly in need of our help. The Government have reserved many a piece of work for us. Should not the Congress workers in Madras and Bombay help the Government in making prohibition a success? But they are conspicuous by their absence.

**Question:** The Hyderabad State Congress is but a child of ten years, whereas the Indian Congress is sixty years old. Are not our drawbacks due to our inexperience?

**Vinoba:** You have missed the point. To the sixty years of the Congress, add ten years of yours, and that makes seventy which is your age. Why should you not take

advantage of the experience of the mother institution? That is what happens everywhere and should happen here too! Did the woman in India require to organize any movement for her franchise? The Suffragette movement in England had paved the way for the right of the Indian women.

**Question:** Maybe that we did not learn from the experience of the mother Congress?

**Vinoba:** Then you are the loser.

**Question:** After the Police Action, we do not feel like Swaraj, but like the Police Raj.

**Vinoba:** Exactly, because it is not you who won your Swaraj but it was the Police who did it. So the Swaraj will be of the quality of the Police. If the army of Rama is addicted to drink, what service will it render to the people? That is why, the *Gita* has said that we have to be our own friends.

**Question:** Formerly the Hindus and Muslims did not live with mutual love, because the Government was foreign. Why should the same thing persist today even after Swaraj?

**Vinoba:** The basic cause is that the Mussalmans have not come from Arabia. They are all converted from amongst the depressed classes. Thus God has taken revenge upon us. Do the Hindus even now behave with mutual love? Do they treat their Harijan brothers with affection? How is it that the Christian missionaries find a vast field for service in Telangana even today? Because we have been even now neglecting our backward brothers. The Hindus accede to the request of the Muslims, give them facilities, not wholeheartedly and willingly but under pressure. Hindus and Muslims still have their mental reservations about each other. Is not the Pakistan the result of Hindu mentality? Muslims do not believe in limiting themselves to a particular territory or nation. According to them, the whole world is theirs. But the Muslims of India being converts have accepted a particular territory as their country. They may call it Pakistan but it is only Hindustan No. 2.

**Question:** How can matters improve?

**Vinoba:** By honest effort, by mutual understanding, by studying the cultural literature of the other communities by training our minds to see only unity in diversity.

The time was already over and we had to stop.

D. M.

#### Mahilashram, Wardha

The Mahilashram Vidyalyaya will reopen for the next session on 21st June, 1951. The syllabus and the teaching will be along *Nai Talim* lines, and will be correlated with domestic sciences (including spinning, weaving and kitchen-gardening). The medium of instruction will be Hindi. Admission will be restricted to such girls of 11 to 15 years of age as have completed at least the first four classes (primary or basic) in their own mother-tongue. For further particulars please write to Acharya, Mahilashram, Wardha, M.P. with five-annas stamps.

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Subscription Rates—Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14s. or \$2.  
Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajiven Press, Ahmedabad 9.