

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

MAHADEV DESAI AND BAPU

November 10, '42

During his morning walk Bapu said, "Mahadev should have been my heir. But it has fallen on me to become his. Mirabehn does not approve of my visits to his shrine, but it has become quite natural to me. I feel uncomfortable if I don't. I do not wish to do anything in that place, I don't want to give even my time to it. It is sufficient if I just go and return. If I live, I shall request the Aga Khan to give me that plot. It is possible that he may not. But some day India is bound to become independent, and then this place will become a place of pilgrimage. I go there in order to remember his great qualities, and to absorb them in me. I don't want to forget his memory. And his having died here, my loyalty to him, and to his wife and son, also requires of me that I should visit it regularly. It is possible that this place may not be secured during my lifetime and I may not see with my own eyes this place become a place of pilgrimage.* But I know this much that it will be so some day. Whatever I do (since his death), I do it as *his* work, and if I go out, there too I shall do it as *his* work.

February 6, '43

During the evening talk, Bapu said to Bhai (Pyarelalji): "In case I don't survive the impending fast (from 10th Feb. '43), I want you to understand what I expect of you all. I am never tired of praising Mahadev's virtues. But my mind has a complaint also against him. His example must not be regarded as perfect or ideal. He died with the anxiety incessantly present before him, "How shall I be able to do anything after Bapu? I wish I die before Bapu." Really he should have said, "No, I want to live and do Bapu's work." It is possible that a strong will like that might have prevented his death. If I die during the next fast, my message will remain incomplete. I have not yet been able to place before the people a complete science of Satyagraha. Who will convey my message to the people after my death? Will it be done by those who have not lived with and

* The place where Mahadevbhai and Kasturba were cremated has been secured as desired by Gandhiji — Ed.

known me or will it be done by you people? I believe that that duty falls on you. It will not be proper for you to say, "What can we do?" If you have faith in God, He will give you the strength to fulfil my message. What I want to say is that you should practice in your life the way in which I have done my work, the principles which I have placed before the world, and which I put into action. Thereby the way will open itself before you. Both you and Sushila must prepare yourselves for this. You once asked me, why it was that Satyagrahis looked so unintelligent. Remember the answer I gave. They won't remain unintelligent after my death. As long as a guide is available, every one looks to him for directions; but they stand upon their own legs when one is not there. And when our people will begin to stand upon their own legs, God will show them the next step. It is unnecessary to worry about it from today."

(Translated from the Gujarati edition of Dr. Sushila Nayyar's Jail Diary)

REMARKS ON THE FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN

I

(By J. C. Kumarappa)

Agriculture

The agricultural sector should be divided into two parts: one dealing with the production of raw materials for mills, such as long-staple cotton, jute, tobacco and sugar-cane and the other section dealing with the production of food material. Even the expenditure indicated in the schedule does not give any idea as to the amount of finances which go to help these mills as against finances available for strictly pure agriculture. It should be remembered that the help rendered in research, connected with production of raw materials for mills is in a way, an unseen subsidy to the mills. No account is taken of this help which is hidden away from public notice. Nevertheless, it is a real help and to that extent pure agriculture connected with food production is deprived of governmental help.

Similarly also a good deal of the expenditures on communications, power, housing etc. are indirect aids to Big Business. And they are not visible on the surface.

No notice has been taken of the depredations caused by wild animals. This is a serious

handicap for the farmers. Monkeys, *nilgais*, and wild pigs cause a tremendous loss to food production. No plan can be complete without suggesting ways and means of dealing with this problem.

It has been suggested that the village councils may be made responsible for crop planning. It is not clear what will be the sanction to enable them get the plan implemented. There will always be vested interests who may not be controllable. Some farmers would want to take to commercial crops which do not come under procurement and would be better paying propositions. It seems to me there must be some guiding principle which should make it possible to lay down definite rules; for instance, if we aim at regional self-sufficiency, it would be possible to arrive at what is needed for the locality and distribute that production amongst the farmers rateably.

Every surplus should be an ascertained surplus before the procurement officers can lay claim to it. Before arriving at a surplus, it should be necessary to allow for at least one year's reserve of food grains. At the present state of affairs, this may appear rather high. But unless we make such a definite provision, it would never be possible to ward off famines.

Land Utilization must take into consideration certain priorities. Production for export should stand down yielding place to local needs. Similarly, when the needed *gur* and sugar can be produced from palm trees, there should be no sugar-cane cultivation on good soil. Even at the present time, there is a case for transferring sugar-cane crops from U. P. and Bihar on the question of efficiency. The Sugar Industry has become the spoilt child of the Government. If rationalization is to be applied to agriculture, this industry will have to be dealt with strictly on its merits. Sugar is not a poor man's food and sugar that is taken in tea and such other drinks is not fully assimilated and therefore it is a national waste. This tea-drinking habit has created a demand for sugar also. In the interests of national economy many such questions will have to be dealt with from a wholly detached point of view.

As regards procurement, it must be accompanied by certain conditions: (1) Receiving of revenue in kind; (2) The farmers should obtain the value of the grain taken in consumer goods; otherwise the Government takes the grain at their own fixed prices and leaves the farmer in the lurch to fend for himself in the matter of procuring his other necessities in the black market which lands him in a loss.

It is not clear what will be the incentive for the farmers to produce food crops, when they are all the time attracted by commercial crops which pay heavy dividends.

The Draft Plan does not harness the military to food production during their off-duty periods. In India our agricultural seasons are mainly limited to certain months and during

those months the men of the forces who largely come from agricultural families can be made to produce their requirements. To some extent this is being done even now. But it requires intensification. Incidentally this will lessen the Government's military budget, and if the forces are stationed at remote places and the army equipment is used to bring marginal land under cultivation, it will also help in the production of more food.

Landless Labour

A considerable amount of thought and space has been devoted to the question of industrial labour, which is barely 1/10th in strength of the landless labour. Comparatively landless labour has received hardly any help from the public and therefore there is all the more reason that its problems should receive much greater attention. Some of the agricultural labour still live under near-serf, near-slave conditions and their housing is very insecure.

Irrigation

While grandiose schemes have been put forward for raising big dams and river control, hardly anything has been suggested to meet the ever present problem of soil erosion, top-soil washing off and other local problems connected with the wasting of our land resources. Though each item is small, yet the aggregate will be bigger than all the big schemes put together. There should be innumerable schemes for bunding *nallas* and hill streams at short intervals. This will not only break the speed of the current but will also gather the silt at short intervals and conserve water and raise the water level.

The plan has not taken into consideration the effect of spending large amounts on the different schemes which will be for a long time unproductive. These huge expenditures without corresponding production will intensify inflation and create maldistribution of wealth.

When irrigation is made available water rates should be taken not at the time of watering, but at the time of the harvest as a share of the produce.

Transport

An elaborate scheme for laying down roads has been provided. But it would be interesting to note whom these roads benefit. The hard metal roads is a menace to the unshod bullock. If the motorist needs that road, it should be provided for out of the funds collected from the motorists. Besides, for a distance of about four furlongs on either side of the village, the roads should be tarred or provided with some other hard surface to keep down the dust and this expensive surfacing should also be met from the motorists' fund. Where there are no such hard-surface roads near the village or through the village, the speed limit must not exceed five miles an hour. One would welcome such a speed limit also in small towns which have not got such hard-surface roads. Such rules if made should be strictly enforced in the interest of public

health. As has been already pointed out earlier, the road programmes are also heavily weighted in favour of Big Industry.

Civil Aviation

Keen interest is evinced in the development of civil aviation. We must remember that while we are opening up the country to international air-routes by providing elaborate aerodromes etc. there is also the lurking danger of foreign air attacks. There appear to be no adequate provisions against this danger. Of course, a Defence Plan may not be made public in a document of this kind. But this important factor should not be overlooked. While we make our schemes it is necessary for us to keep in mind the resources available here. Aviation needs large supplies of petrol which our country does not possess; therefore, an over-development of aviation may land us in great complications and leave us in the lurch at the critical moment.

Forests

The development of forests has been influenced hitherto by a revenue policy. In future we should look upon forests as a Service Department. From this point of view many things that have hitherto been done and were accepted as axiomatic will have to be reversed. It is necessary in the interests of the public that all timber that leaves the forest should be properly seasoned. There should be a well-considered Forest Plan which will take adequate notice of the minor forest products which form an important source of raw materials for many industries of importance.

(To be concluded)

'SAVE THE CHILDREN'

[Under the above caption in the *Anti-Vivisectionist* of May-June Shri Peter Turner has given some account of a bulletin of the World Health Organization dealing with 6,500,000 vaccinations with B. C. G. throughout continental Europe, and parts of Asia including India. — V. G. D.]

The vaccine gets its name from the two Frenchmen, Calmette and Guerin who together share the doubtful honour of having first made it (B. C. G. = Bacille-Calmette-Guerin). It consists of the living bacilli of tuberculosis but in a non-violent form; the difference between violence and non-violence being apparently a matter of degree only. It is supposed that tragedies like those at Madrid or Luback took place because by some terrible accident the vaccine had become virulent; and this danger of a sudden and undetected change in the vaccine is ever before those responsible for making it. Another W.H.O. publication describes the elaborate precautions which are to be taken but admits that 'in the present state of our knowledge it is unfortunately unavoidable that vaccination with B. C. G. should have to be performed on human subjects before all the necessary precautionary testing of the vaccine has been completed. . . . Contamination with other micro-organisms may take place at any stage in the process of preparation.' The 'precautionary testing' includes inoculation into guinea-pigs, but we are rather surprisingly told that 'the potency of the vaccine should be compared with the results obtained in children.'

Although the notion of vaccinating all and sundry has its advocates, the method employed by the W.H.O. is first to give a skin-test in order to select those who

are liable to infection with tuberculosis and therefore need protection. Unfortunately this test is not a simple matter; there are various techniques, and these techniques do not agree. There is a majority of cases which will be included in all the tests; but there is also a margin of doubt. This means that some who are suffering from or incubating tuberculosis may get vaccinated by mistake; and it is by no means certain that this will not do them grave harm.

All the various tests have their advocates, the majority preferring the Mantoux test; but this can be given with a widely differing test-dose of tuberculin, and different doctors use different amounts. Moreover the 'reading' of the tests, i.e. the decision about what constitutes a 'reaction', upon which the whole decision to vaccinate or not to vaccinate depends, is still a matter for differences of opinion—about how large the weal must be or how large the area of induration.

Indeed sensitivity to tuberculin is not in any case an infallible test. As Dr Ustvedt puts it 'No method is as yet known whereby men may be divided with absolute accuracy into infected and non-infected individuals.' And the result is that 'one has to choose between, on the one hand, vaccinating "too many" and disregarding the possible harm done to some potential reactors, to high doses of tuberculin and, on the other, vaccinating "too few" and thus disregarding the fact that a certain proportion of the population which needs vaccination will not get it.'

This preliminary test, let alone the actual vaccination, may have undesirable after-effects, ranging from inflammation, swelling and abscesses to involvements of the glands: 'lymphangitis, lymphadenitis and fever.' Oddly, anxiety about these side effects seems to arise from a fear that they may discredit the campaign.

The actual vaccination is said to produce what Dr Ustvedt calls 'normal B. C. G.-itis.'

'The "normal course" of the primary tuberculous infection produced by intradermal injection of B. C. G. will be: multiplication of the bacilli at the site of the injection with the development of a local pathological process, early propagation of the bacilli to the regional group of lymph-glands, with development of a pathological process in one or more glands, and dissemination of the B. C. G. through the blood to the entire organism probably with the creation of very small foci in different organs. . . . and finally with development of allergy' (i.e. tuberculin-sensitivity). 'This is what might be called "normal B. C. G.-itis." From an anatomopathological point of view it certainly represents a disease even though in most cases it is hardly perceptible to the individual concerned.'

Apart from the occurrence of stronger reactions than usual, the phenomena which are to be expected and recorded include 'erythema, induration, pustule, ulcer, scab, abscess, sear.' These may persist for anything from 4 months upward. But 'the registration cards have spaces for entries on "infiltration," "ulceration," and "complications," and 'the cases of suppurating glands are of the greatest importance.' 'The interval between the appearance of the adenitis, and the abscess formation varied between 1 and 15 months. The time between the vaccination and the finding of the adenitis ranged from 1 to 24 months, but in most cases was less than 6 months.'

Dr Ustvedt is concerned to exculpate the vaccination so far as possible from a causal relation with serious and even fatal results. The lay reader will doubt if he succeeds. Even though, as is stated, 'complications' occur only in from .1 to .5 per cent of cases ('though the number in some groups is perhaps a little higher'), the total number cannot be small out of six and a half millions. But to Dr Ustvedt this 'cannot be said to be discouraging.'

Prof. J. McIntosh said, in connection with vaccination against smallpox.

'Scientifically it cannot be disputed that from every point of view the injection of virus capable of multiplying in the body of the individual is bad. When multiplication of the virus occurs, there is no possibility of estimating the dose to which the patient has been subjected. Thus the effect cannot be controlled, and in susceptible individuals this may lead to unforeseen results.'

B.C.G. and smallpox vaccines are the only ones which contain *living* organisms; and we have seen that multiplication of the bacilli in the blood is an essential feature of B.C.C. vaccination. The long term results of this mass experiment cannot yet be known. What is so disquieting is that a process in which every step is uncertain and attended by grave danger should be pressed forward on such a scale. Were the candidates, for vaccination—or their parents—shown the photographs of 'lovely arms' which appear in this report; were they warned of the permanent possibility of another Luback or were they led to believe that B.C.G. vaccination is 'safe and simple'? What is certain is that a study of this report (*Bulletin of the W.H.O.* II-3, 1950) would considerably reduce those million-strong queues; and it is upto us to do what we can to disseminate the facts, and leave the theories to those who care for them. Let us save the children.

HARIJAN

August 11

1951

CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS AND ELECTIONS

The reader will find in another column the views and policy of the Sarva Seva Sangh. I hope all constructive workers, whatever political leanings they might have, will find them sufficiently clear, adequate and satisfactory. They exhort constructive workers affiliated to political parties to see that their parties give tickets to men of character and ability, and free from communal spirit and violent methods. Crores of voters cannot understand the difference between the ideologies and programmes of one party and another. But they can be expected to know the personal character of the candidates in their constituency. There is no reason to ask them to vote for the man of a particular party irrespective of the worth of the candidate set up by it. They should vote for the man they can put their trust upon, and not for any one of a celebrated party. It used to be said once that the Congress was greater than any X or Y, however great he might be. That might be true within an organization. So far as the good of the country is concerned, the intrinsic worth of X or Y is more important than any political party, however eminent.

However, one point, already referred to above, has to be guarded against in this context. Unfortunately, our country is torn with religions and caste factions and conflicting views about the philosophy of non-violence, and it so happens that men with deep learning, of a very

devout and unquestionable character, and free from greed, selfishness and violent temperament, nevertheless hold that most reprehensible methods may be employed in politics and public affairs to achieve a cherished religious, cultural, social or economic end. Although personally they would not kill even a rat and be proof against temptations of money, drink or sex, they would allow the employment of all such means to ensure a political victory. The personal purity of character in such cases is very deceptive and dangerous to the peace and prosperity of a people. They would excite people to crucify Jesus, stone Mansur and shoot Gandhi for their end. Voters should not fall into the snare of voting for candidates who have a good reputation for character, but have a narrow and perverse view of life.

Directions cannot be given in too great a detail. For instance, a correspondent asks what should be done if all candidates were equally honourable or equally unreliable. The only answer can be that he should use his own discretion or think it out with his friends and decide. It does not matter if he committed a mistake, and it is better that he should take the risk of committing a mistake than depend upon the counsel of others at every stage.

Another question asked is: Shall we who are pacifists believing in 'no war' not ask candidates to abjure violence in the shape of war? This would be a pertinent advice to voters in favour of any pacifist political organization or independent pacifist candidate. But in the absence of any party, which forswears war in every case, the point is one, which every worker or voter should decide for himself.

And thus a number of questions might be raised, which are not covered by the Sarva Seva Sangh's instructions. If they are so important as to need further clarification, I believe the Sangh would do it. But it should be understood that neither instructions can be so drawn as to make them error-proof, nor should they be so drawn as to dispense with personal thinking by workers and voters.

Wardha, 31-7-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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GUIDANCE TO CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS AND VOTERS

[A meeting of the Sarva Seva Sangh held on 29th July 1951 at Wardha, adopted the following resolution regarding its views and policy on the subject of the forthcoming elections: — Vallabhswami]

Whereas the ultimate aim of all constructive activities is *Sarvodaya*, i.e. the establishment of a non-violent, non-exploiting order of society, based on truth, non-violence and universal well-being; and

whereas, in view of the forthcoming elections, programmes and manifestos, which are not very dissimilar from one another, and to a certain extent speak the language of *Sarvodaya*, are being issued by various political parties; and

whereas many constructive workers are desirous of clear guidance from the Sarva Seva Sangh,

the Sarva Seva Sangh takes this opportunity of stating its views and policy on these matters as follows:

1. The Sarva Seva Sangh does not find any of these programmes and manifestos of the various political parties adequate for the establishment of *Sarvodaya*. Neither does it feel confident that even these programmes will be adequately and effectively implemented by them on the attainment of power. Hence the Sangh cannot adopt any of the running political parties as its own.

2. The Sangh believes that by abjuring power and devoting itself to the pure selfless service of the voters, it would be possible to generate political power and so guide and influence the voters as to ensure that men of the right type are voted to power.

3. The question of the constructive workers taking up direct responsibility of running the Government would arise only when the people themselves feel and say that they want constructive workers — and no one else — to wield power. But this is a thing for the future.

4. All the same, it is necessary to bear in mind that in the modern set-up, Legislatures and Governments touch the life of the people on every side, and shape national reconstruction at every stage and level; and that Governments composed of parties believing in a set-up of political, social and economic order, not conducive to the *Sarvodaya* ideal, present and set up a great hindrance to the working of the constructive programme. Hence, while constructive workers must carry on their activities without a break, they must regard them as a part of their all-round constructive service — समग्र सेवा (*samagra seva*) — to take an intelligent interest in politics and in the right governance of the country; and to this end, they must undertake the duty of educating the voters so that they may be conscious of the sanctity

and power of their vote, and learn to exercise it in an intelligent and disinterested manner, for the good of the people and the purity of public life. This does not mean that every constructive worker need necessarily be a member of any political party. In fact, it would be better if the majority of them were not.

5. On the question whether members of the Sarva Seva Sangh should take active part in politics, elections etc. or stand as candidates, the Sangh reaffirms its resolution of 11th and 12th October 1950, namely,

“Office-bearers and full-time workers, whether salaried or not, of the Sarva Seva Sangh, shall not stand as candidates for any elective post in any political organization or Government or Local Government; neither shall they accept such a place even if returned unopposed. They shall not take an active part in an election campaign.”

It is clear that the above ban does not apply to members who do not fall in the category mentioned above. They are free to take part in politics as they deem fit, in their individual capacities, subject of course to the rules of the particular constructive institution, if any, to which they might happen to belong. They are expected to further the cause of the constructive programme to the best of their ability; and yet they may not claim to represent the Sarva Seva Sangh.

Indeed, the participation by a few efficient constructive workers in politics, either as ‘independents’ or as members of a political party, may be desirable in the interest of the constructive programme itself. Occasions may also arise when every constructive worker may have to plunge into a political movement in defence of the fundamental faith in the constructive work. But this question does not arise at present.

6. Under the circumstances, it is not desirable for the Sarva Seva Sangh to function as a political party. But the Sangh desires that those constructive workers who are members of any political organization, should exert their influence on their parties for getting such people alone to be set up as are incorruptible, unselfish and capable. Thus alone can we raise the moral height of our legislators and those who are responsible for good government; and its advice to the voters generally is that they should refuse to vote for a candidate, who does not in their opinion come up to the required standard of purity in public life, even when he is set up by a party for which the voter has a personal predilection. They should also remember that voting for a candidate who is communally minded or believes in the use of violent methods to secure his ends is out of the question being antagonistic to the principles of *Sarvodaya*.

GAS AND MANURE COW-DUNG

(By S. B. Mandagere)

[Doubts having been raised about the advisability of encouraging the preparation of gas from cow-dung from the point of view of village economy, the following note by a worker of the A. I. V. I. A., Maganwadi, Wardha, will be read with interest. — K. G. M.]

It is long known that organic waste matter can be fermented to give a combustible gas and a good manure. From 1940 onwards, systematic attempts are being made in India by a number of people to ferment cow-dung, an organic waste material and make the recovery of the gas an economic proposition. The difficulty has been in designing a cheap gas plant which will be large enough to produce the gas needed for cooking and lighting purposes of a family. After a number of trials by various people it has now been possible to construct a plant (for a family of 5 persons) with a modest expenditure of Rs 500/-. Two or three families living in close vicinity or a small village can start co-operatively a gas plant and reduce the capital expenditure per family by a further amount. They can share the manure according to a mutually arranged agreement.

The smallest plant will consume the daily droppings of three to four cattle. Its working is very simple. It does not have any parts which require frequent renewals or repairs. The running cost is very little. All the parts can be manufactured in a small town like Wardha.

There are many potentialities of this plant. Cheap gas will become available for our kitchens. The residue obtained from the plant is found by chemical analysis to be an excellent manure. Not a bit of the manurial value of the dung is lost during fermentation. A few small-scale trials at Delhi have indicated that this manure is superior to ordinary farm-yard manure. This requires confirmation by large-scale field trials under varying conditions in different parts of the country. But this much is certain that this manure is definitely harmless to the bacteria or earthworms present in the soil. Being an organic manure it will not harm the soil by repeated application as artificial manures do.

If a large number of these plants spring up in the country there will be considerable reduction in the demand for fuel. Further at present, at least 20 per cent of the total dung is lost due to being scattered over large areas and some 30 per cent is burnt up as fuel and thus nearly 50 per cent of the total is lost to our agriculture-centred country. These plants can save a large proportion of this waste. Even the dungs of other animals, like the elephant, the horse, the goat, the sheep and the donkey, can become good manures when treated in the plant along with cow-dung.

The plant can be constructed with local talent, which will mean employment to village blacksmiths, masons and potters. The import of kerosene into the villages can be reduced by burning the gas in lamps. Kitchens using this gas will be clean and free from smoke trouble. Dairies and *goshalas* can easily get this gas practically free.

Theoretically, the gas can be made a source of power to run engines and motors. But at the present rates at which other gas-fuels are available, the proposition is not likely to prove economical for commercial purposes. Further, at least for a long time to come chances of this plant becoming a centralized industry are slender. The cost of the cow-dung will be a major factor; the problem of transport of raw cow-dung and liquid manure will have to be successfully solved before any attempt is made to turn it into an industry.

For the present, night-soil should not be fermented in these small plants because, so far as I know, the question of proper treatment of the night-soil to destroy the disease-carrying germs present in it has not yet been fully investigated.

The manure from the plant is liquid. In the dry season it can be spread into the field, or the yard or put into a pit where the earth will absorb the water. Its disposal during monsoons is a problem and will have to be solved. During the monsoon, the droppings of cattle are often watery and are not easily gathered and deposited in the dung-hill system. A great part is washed away by rains.

Some people feel that it is dangerous to leave explosive gases in the hands of the villagers. The chances of accidents are very small in these plants. The villagers can be trained easily to properly handle this new fuel. Moreover this gas is not poisonous like coal gas, which is supplied to the cities. If in a rather rare circumstance, an accident does take place it should be remembered that ordinary fire too, even in the hands of educated people, destroys every year a large number of industrial plants and houses and yet no one thinks of giving up the use of fire in them.

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SHRI VINOBA AT SHIVARAMPALLI

IX

April 11, '51 — morning: Maharashtra workers.

Service to Maharashtra

After a few introductory remarks explaining the purpose of his invitation to the workers of Maharashtra to the meeting, Vinoba said that a charge had been laid against him that he did not pay sufficient attention to Maharashtra, having always toured through provinces other than Maharashtra. Vinoba admitted that Maharashtra had a greater claim on him than other provinces, but he denied that he did not fully discharge his duties towards it. He reminded them that it was in Marathi that he wrote (and was writing) all his serious and thoughtful writings. He claimed that he had thereby sufficiently discharged his obligations to Maharashtra. Not that he was deliberately partial to Marathi in doing so. But the reason was that except Sanskrit he had not studied any other language as seriously as Marathi. Though he knew a dozen languages, his knowledge of them was very limited. The vehicle of his thinking-process was Marathi. Since reflective articles manifested the heart of a man, and, in his case, Marathi did it, Vinoba asked them whether he had not discharged his obligations to the province of his birth. Moreover, they should remember that the field of his activities for the last thirty years had also been Maharashtra. Here too, he pointed out that the selection was not deliberate, but came in a natural and unpremeditated manner.

"Forgive and Forget" attitude

If the people of Maharashtra entertained feelings of particular love and pride for their own co-provincialists, they must equally be prepared to accept the responsibility for their drawbacks. There was some misunderstanding in the minds of the people of other provinces about Maharashtra, and they were accused of some shortcomings on a provincial level. It was possible that some of the accusations might not be true, but with regard to those which were so, Maharashtris ought to be even more conscious of them than others. Vinoba believed that, on the whole, the people of India were of a forgiving nature and prone to forget the faults of others. In the absence of this proneness to forget, the sin of Gandhiji's murder would have surely been pricking the minds of the people of other provinces, as was the case in Europe, where the hatred against the Jews persisted even after two thousand years since the crucifixion of Jesus. In India, however, they could see that the indignation against Maharashtra for the murder of Gandhiji had considerably waned in the course of time, and after some time the people might completely forget the assassin's caste or province, and just put him in the class of insanes.

A similar thing had happened in the people's attitude towards the Britishers. Their rule was tyrannical enough, and India had achieved her freedom after a long and strenuous struggle with them. Even then the people did not harbour any particular hatred or ill-will in their hearts towards the British people. Conceding that Gandhiji's teaching was one of the reasons for this large-heartedness, Vinoba held that the main reason was that the capacity of forgetting the sins of others was highly developed in the people of India. Vinoba believed that this development was the result of the vast experience that the people had gathered through the ages. The people took every step with discrimination. They did not lose their head easily nor did they take to changes hastily. They would not remember with any particular regard or pride the memories of even powerful monarchs, but they treasured the memories of saints, great and small, with reverence.

Internationalism

Vinoba then changed the topic of his talks. He felt convinced that agriculture was originally discovered in India. It was on account of this discovery that India came to be regarded a sacred land. So, too, in politics, even before history began to be recorded, there was a

system of federal government in this country. Indian nationalism, therefore, always took the pattern of internationalism; that is, their outlook and sentiments were liberal and broad-based. But in actual practice the people did not rise as high as their outlook. Hence, foreign subjugation did not prick them intensely.

Politics in the present times had penetrated life so completely that one could not leave it off if one wanted to survive. Hence, even if good men did not care to actively participate in it, they were duty bound to watch and deliberate on political events, and possess the necessary firmness to effectively influence them. The people had several complaints against the present government, but that did not mean that they had no regard for it. Lakhs of people crowded to see Jawaharlal Nehru wherever he went, and were ready to carry out his instructions. Still it was true, Vinoba said, that our people were not prone to over-enthusiasm in any matter. This slowness in action was born of age-long experience.

Intellectualism

Vinoba also felt that no other country could claim to possess as many clear- and level-headed men as India. It was a good augury. It was due to it, that the country did not have too many movements. It was like the wide sky which did not vibrate itself, but provided space for others to vibrate. As opposed to this, the air in a wind-pipe, due to its narrowness, caused intense vibrations. The mind of the people of India had become broad and expansive on account of their age-long experience. If someone spoke to the villagers both in terms of the world and of the nation he would find that they appreciated the world outlook rather than the national one. The thing that the people needed was to create activity in them by making their breadth of view pass through a wind-pipe.

Superficial Thinking

"For the last three or four centuries, in Maharashtra," Vinoba said, "with the exception of the masses almost all others have fallen into the habit of thinking very superficially. When thought becomes superficial it is like thinking about a tree without its roots. Such thinking fails to be perfect. We are unable to bear the depth of the *Dnyaneshwari*. We fear that too deep thinking might make us inactive. Hence, there has been growing increasingly among our people a tendency to imitate the shallow thinking of the West. Of course, I am aware that the *Gita* is being studied in Maharashtra to a larger extent than in any other province. That due to Gandhiji, the study of the *Gita* is on the increase in Gujarat nowadays, is a different thing. But at the same time we have been interpreting the *Gita* very superficially. To take only one illustration: Nobody had till now regarded that the verse 'ये यदा मां प्रपद्यन्ते' signifies the law of tit for tat. None had interpreted that way; because that would mean giving our initiative into the hands of another person. I must copy his manners and methods, and if he is crooked, I must also become so. But even then the verse is now being interpreted to mean the law of tit for tat." Assuming that such meaning then suggested itself to us on account of our political dependence which we hated, it is a matter of great concern that the same meaning is even now appreciated by radicals and moderates both. As a matter of fact that verse gives us the proper outlook about how man should behave with man. The suggestion therein is that God grants to his servant all that he desires.

When the middle-class people of Maharashtra spoke of "our culture" they were not reminded so much of Dnyaneshwar and Eknath as of the Peshwas. Those who said that *ahimsa* was not in their blood, did not recognize their forefathers. As a matter of fact, Dnyaneshwar was very much persecuted by the people of his time. He was even boycotted. But there was not a single instance throughout the writings of Dnyaneshwar in which one could point out a single harsh word about all that he had to suffer. Even the writings of Mahatma Gandhi, the prince among the interpreters of *ahimsa*, as also those

of Tolstoy, contained now and then bitter expressions. Even Jesus Christ spoke bitterly about his persecutors; but there was not a single bitter term in the literature of Dnyaneshwar. It was Vinobaji's contention, therefore, that the Maharashtris had received far greater training and heritage in non-violence than even the Christians. They had, as it were, been nourished upon the milk of their own mother. Similarly Eknath had also presented one of the best examples of a Satyagrahi in his life. Neither truth nor non-violence were new to them, the saints of Maharashtra having already taught them these before.

Vinoba was pained to find that even some of the great leaders of Maharashtra took to shallow thinking. Shri Aney once observed that Shri Ravindranath might be asked about the how and why of marriage, and the emotions and sentiments underlying it and its spiritual import. Although they did not know the philosophy of marriage, they had still performed them for generations. Shri Aney seemed to suggest that it was not necessary to consider the deep significance of marriage. Vinoba said that he considered this as a "realistic" or superficial approach. They would never be able to do anything great if they confined themselves to superficial thinking.

The conclusion was, that only if they abandoned such superficiality, Maharashtra would be able to achieve something important. When they spoke of *ahimsa*, they would speak of it as 'Gandhiji's *ahimsa*'. But *ahimsa* was not a monopoly of Gandhiji. It belonged to every one who would think of it and practise it. It did not require a majority on its side for practising *ahimsa*. They must carry on their efforts, and not bother about a majority. There was no reason to feel ashamed that one was in a minority, and there need be no haste to win a majority. Vinoba wanted to tell the workers that when the world got tired and exhausted, leadership would go to those who had developed non-violence.

"We must have the faith in us that if we nourish this non-violence, permanent leadership of the world is sure to come to us even though it may take some time. Of what avail is that momentary leadership which is acquired easily and lost quickly? You often wish that many people should follow you. Does your stress lie on "many" or on "people" in the phrase *many people*? If you want only "many" to follow, you might have a flock of sheep to follow; but if you want "people" to follow you will have to work patiently. It is futile to hanker after cheap leadership. Let us fully realize that violence can never bring good, and begin to tread the path of non-violence. All the stars in the heaven have got to disappear, the moment the sun rises. Let us therefore make ourselves ready for the sunrise. Instead of getting elected today only to be kicked off tomorrow, let us create circumstances so that there will be no need of fresh elections after we are elected. As a physical object, the Sarvodaya Samaj is not a great institution; but even people from distant countries expect guidance from it. The meaning is clear. The whole world is moving towards one ideal. The ideal may be too great for our heads to conceive it, yet our feet are turned towards it. And this is no small matter for satisfaction."

Planless Government

Then after referring to the short-sighted and planless functioning of the present government, Vinobaji continued: "Just see, two world wars have been over and if the third is not going to be averted what preparations have you made against it? Can it be said that we are quite prepared because our army is prepared? If the doorkeeper is ready, it does not mean that the owner also is. Our machines have deteriorated. From seventeen yards we have come down to twelve. Now, suppose the third world war breaks. Are you going to make spinning compulsory in the same way as conscription? But nobody has the leisure to ponder over this. All your schemes are dependent on the availability

of petrol. Do you ever think as to what you should do in the absence of petrol?

Population Problem

Vinoba said that their rulers advised them not to allow the population to increase. People might tell them that ministers had not been placed in the office, in order to give them sermons on the necessity of decreasing the population. It was their responsibility to provide food and cloth to as many people as might be in the country.

Do you think that Mother Earth felt the people that lived on her back as a burden? If she felt so, she knew how to deal with it. She was known to bring about a change through a violent quake. But it is not the number, but the sins of the people that fall as a burden upon her. Let people therefore think of the means of diminishing the sins. Men born of virtue would become virtuous. They were not a burden to the earth. God had planned so perfectly that with the birth of every mouth, two hands also came into existence simultaneously. Should people complain that the population had gone up to 36 crores and that there were more mouths to be fed, or should they rejoice that 72 crores of hands were now available for doing work? Let them imagine what would have happened if there had been only one hand with two mouths instead! This speculation should relieve them of the anxiety that has overtaken them by the increase of population. He desired the workers not to worry about the increase of population. They should possess the necessary talent to feed their families. The population that was increasing indiscriminately at present was due to a vicious system of life. If that sin was eliminated, there would be no reason to get afraid of the population.

Misinterpreted Self-restraint

Some people preached self-restraint as a means of birth-control. That was not a proper appreciation of self-restraint. Restraint had its own value which was absolute. It was not to be thought of as just a measure for reducing population. Moreover, the number of children was no index to the degree of self-restraint. A couple might meet only once in a year and find themselves having procreated. Such a couple need not therefore be considered as lacking in self-restraint. Thus a father of twenty children might be more abstemious than the one of two. But restraint brought a peculiar satisfaction and joy to one who practised it; and people should be asked to lead the life of self-restraint for that purpose. Do not talk to them of self-restraint in terms of material advantages and disadvantages. "Be devoted to your children. Regard them as your duties. Then alone will you be able to resolve this problem."

"Does not Markandeya swim all alone when the whole universe is covered with deluge? Such is the idea of non-violence. Let our minds be moulded accordingly. If there is anything in the *Gita* that can support and nourish this ideology of *ahimsa*, then alone will it stay. Let it be realized that the *Gita* itself is being weighed in the scales today."

D. M.

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