

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

VINOBAJI IN DELHI

A detailed report of Vinoba's arrival in Delhi has already appeared in the daily Press. I give here just a brief outline.

Shri Vinoba reached Delhi on the morning of the 13th November. The people of the Capital accorded a warm welcome to him. He went straight to Rajghat and offered prayers at Gandhiji's *samadhi*. He will live at Rajghat during his stay.

Vinoba's work of collecting land-gifts began in Delhi on the 13th with an announcement by President Dr. Rajendraprasad, who had already through correspondence declared his desire to donate from his lands in Bihar. He formally offered them to Vinoba, and asked Baba Raghavadas to visit his lands in Bihar and choose as much as he liked. Vinobaji has received during his tour donations of land as under :

Madhya Pradesh	..	6,700	acres
Vindhya Pradesh	..	1,000	"
Madhya Bharat	..	500	"
Rajasthan	..	400	"
Uttar Pradesh	..	10,836	"
Total	..	19,436	"

This along with about 16,000 acres of Telangana makes 35,000 acres.

At Shahdara, the place where he halted immediately before arriving at Delhi, Vinoba was presented with hanks of hand-spun yarn, and an application by a member of the so-called Criminal Tribes urging Vinoba to put in his word in favour of the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act. The Act has already been repealed in Bombay and a few other States. The demand is perfectly just, and Vinoba promised the applicant to speak to the authorities in the matter. Personally, I have no doubt that the Act must go.

Earlier Vinobaji had issued the following appeal to the people of Delhi to donate liberally to *bhoomidan-yajna*.

"I am on my way to Delhi propagating the ideal of *Bhoomidan-Yajna*. Delhi is the capital of our country. Important people from all over the country live there. Apart from all this it has become a sacred place for us as the *samadhi* of the Father of the Nation is located there. We are camping at a place near the *samadhi*.

"I appeal to the people of Delhi, those who are its permanent inhabitants as well

as others, to liberally donate land for the landless. They should regard them as members of their family with a legitimate claim over the land. It is not necessary that the land should be located in Delhi State, it may be anywhere in India. Those who have money but no land can buy it and then donate it.

"People should remember that I am not asking for alms but want it as a matter of right and am initiating them into the tenets of a new ideal."

Wardha, 16-11-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

PS. It is reported that the Government of India has decided to abrogate the Criminal Tribes Act in Delhi. Vinoba has advised the Minister in charge to get it repealed in other parts of the country.

K. G. M.

NOTES

Shri Shoorji Vallabhdas

I regret to take notice of the death of Shri Shoorji Vallabhdas, who breathed his last in Bombay on Wednesday, the 14th November at the age of 64. He was associated with the old All India Village Industries Association, Wardha from its inception, and was a member of its Managing Board. He took interest in Goseva also.

Having been lodged together in the same barrack in the Nasik Central Prison in 1932-'33, I had an opportunity to know him at close quarters. His courteous behaviour, sense of humour, regular and clean habits and kindly disposition, together with his keen business acumen, judgment of men, and capacity to detect sharp practice, were pleasing and often amazing.

He was a devoted follower of the Arya Samaj and its generous patron.

About a week ago, he sent me a sum of Rs 12,600/- and odd which was lying with him to be utilized for helping constructive workers in distress. The amount has been credited with the A.I.S.A. for being administered according to his instructions.

In the Sarva Seva Sangh, the Village Industries Department in particular, has lost a valuable friend in him.

Wardha, 16-11-'51

"Choosing Your Legislators"

This is the title of a booklet published by Shri Sri Ram Sharma, on behalf of the Institute of Public Administration, Sholapur. It gives valuable information and guidance to voters in 60 small paragraphs. I hope it has not been issued in English only. The instructions which it gives are simple and wholesome, and even generally well-informed persons will find that it contains information which they did not know. It has been priced four annas. I wish it was made available at not more than one anna and in Indian languages.

Wardha, 16-11-'51

K. G. M.

To Waverers

"53. Do not be a cynic and console yourself by the thought that as no party and no programme has your *entire* support you need not declare yourself at election. Your abstention from voting cannot have the effect you desire to produce. You are still helping in the creation of a government if you do not vote, by decreasing the opposition to the programme you dislike most. You owe it to yourself and to the democratic constitution of your country to keep out the party programme you dislike most. This you can do by giving your vote to the party you like most or dislike least.

"54. Do not think you are wasting your vote, by casting it, if you are so inclined, for a candidate who may not succeed or for a party that will not have majority enough to form a government. Creating an 'opposition' is almost as necessary a job as creating a government. Recording that there is an alternative way to the one being pursued by the majority, restrains the majority and keeps democracy alive."

(From *Choosing Your Legislators* by Sri Ram Sharma).

SHRI VINOBA'S NORTHERN TOUR

V

First Appearance in U. P.

Birdha

It was about 5 a.m. when we entered the limits of Uttar Pradesh on the 8th October. About three to four hundred people stood awaiting our arrival on the road. Constructive workers from all over the province were present. Evidently they had realized the significance and the implications of the mission, and were filled with a new hope and cheer. *Ramadhun* filled the air.

Within a few minutes we arrived at a temple at the foot of a hill, called Amjhara Ghat. One landholder gave 84 acres in *bhoodan*; another 46. There was promptness in the act, which was remarkable. They seemed, as it were, conscious of the value of time and did not want to waste a single minute.

Vinoba was much impressed by this auspicious beginning of Uttar Pradesh tour in the early hours of the day. The landscape was also inspiring. The thick forest, the beautiful hillocks, the blue sky, the shining stars and the promising children,—every thing, Vinoba said, was enchanting. The children, when they grow old, would remember how their parents gave away their lands to a *fakir* for the use of the landless. It might inspire them later on to sacrifice their all for the sake of humanity.

They had given him some thousands of acres of land. But the problem was grave and even the thousands could not solve it. Vinobaji wished that five crore acres should be gifted away by the present land-holders to the landless millions. If that took place, the whole world would look with hope towards India. In the land of Buddha and Gandhi, such a miracle should not be impossible.

At 6 a.m. he took his breakfast near a mile-stone. About a hundred gathered here again. The members of the party also have their breakfast with him. There are always a few more and we gladly share our food with them. But today the number was very great. I was anxious to share with them whatever little we had. How could the small quantity suffice all?

Moses climbed the Rock and struck it with his Rod. God gave bread and water to Moses' men. Will He not repeat his performance here? Indian mythology knows about Draupadi's inexhaustible plate. Moses' men had to gather two days' provision for the Sabbath day. We have no Sabbath day, and we require to store nothing. Every morning introduces us to new hosts. The affection and regard manifested therein cannot be properly expressed. A small parcel of fruits received but yesterday from the house of one of the party members, came to our rescue, and everyone got a share.

In this connection, I must not forget to mention how often Vinoba warns us: "Beware of the hospitality, lest you may get more hospitality and less land!" He means that workers whose every minute should be devoted towards making *bhoodan* a success, should not waste their time over hospitality.

Diwan Hanmant Singh, who had but a few minutes previously donated 84 acres at the Amjhara Ghat, came to Vinobaji and begged of him to be allowed to say a few words. "Surely" came the reply. And the Diwan said, "Please allow me to give 200 acres more." He could not speak more. He was so much impressed with Vinobaji's morning sermon.

And there were also a few friends from Madhya Pradesh which we had just left behind. A friend thought, he must not see Vinobaji off empty-handed; he stood and offered a couple of acres as the parting offering on behalf of his province.

Amjhara to Birdha, our first halt, a distance of about twelve miles, was marked by *bhoodan* and *Ramadhun* throughout. It seemed as if the workers, conscious and active and awake, had informed the villagers about Vinoba and his mission. That is why he received *bhoodan* at Narhat, Gona, and Patauwa. Besides elderly people, who came with their musical instruments, even children in twos, threes, fours, and so on were seen singing *Ramadhun* in their own places, either on the field or on the roadside. They offered modest and mute *pranams* to him and their faces expressed their gratitude to their benefactor. The whole atmosphere was so full of life.

In the course of his prayer speech, Vinoba asked: "Can God be ever expected to hand over to a few the ownership over air and water? How can He then approve of the ownership of land to vest in a few hands?"

Vinoba illustrated God's method of decentralized administration. "Look, how does the Lord manage! He has created us, and given us nose to breathe freely. He created the child, and with it provided a perfect dairy arrangement. How can He tolerate that land should be possessed by only a few?"

He clarified that *Bhoodan-Yajna* did not mean equal distribution of land. It was but a token. He believed that his idea, if properly assimilated, was sure to grow and would never die. If they understood his idea, his presence would be unnecessary. Land-holders themselves would look out for the landless, as a father does for a bridegroom for his daughter. He was not in a hurry for the spreading of his ideas. It might take its own time.

If, in spite of his efforts, a bloody revolution was inevitable, as was contemplated by the Communists and not

dismissed even by the Socialists, he could not help it and was not in the least disturbed. At the time of Narsinha *avatar*, even devotees like Narad were shocked and benumbed. Even the fingers of Narad that had never before stopped playing the *veena* did so at that moment. But Prahlad was not disturbed in the least. So would he remain undisturbed. "Naham bibhemi नाहं विभेमि। Afraid, I am not," said Prahlad. Similarly Vinoba would say, "I am not afraid. Let the world-wars come. They will only pave the path to non-violence."

"And if I depart, while I am trying my best to convince people and educating them in non-violence, I will go with the conviction that my thought will grow in a thousand forms."

Lalitpur

The next day, on the 9th, Vinobaji arrived at Lalitpur. Speaking to the workers, he opened his heart. He had no desire to go out on any mission, not certainly for any propaganda work. But after Bapu's death it came to his lot and he realized his responsibility. Experience revealed to him that foot journey was the only way to non-violent revolution. He traced the history of the growth of non-violence in India. This was repeated in the post-prayer speech and may be read in that connection.

Vinobaji said that the appearance of Gandhiji was a historical necessity in view of the total disarmament in India. With Gandhiji therefore, came the weapon of non-violence. Though the weapon was employed by the people as far as possible, they had not the faith therein which was so essential. His nearest friends forsook him. And a foolish youth relieved him of his perishable flesh.

Vinoba pointed out how the development of non-violence took place in India. He wanted them to see this with his eyes. His experience had revealed to him that the strength of non-violence would not be manifested by the so-called educated people. Did they follow Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus or Shivaji? But ordinary men responded to the call and wielded the weapon.

Then he referred to the new experiment of elimination of money economy, which he had started at Paramdham. He explained how he was the friend of both, the haves and the have-nots. To him, all of them were but forms of the Lord. He would, therefore, not feel disappointed if the rich did not give him lands today. They would do so tomorrow, if not today. He was, therefore, anxious to convey his ideas to them.

He made it clear that he was not connected with any party whatsoever. Love and Service was the only party to which he belonged. The people were his masters, and he was their servant. They might belong to any party, his path was the path of love. It was, however, significant that like the stars, which fade away after the sunrise all the paths lose their splendour after the rise of the path of love.

About a hundred participated in collective spinning. The same evening, Shri Ganesh Varni, the celebrated Jain Sadhu, came to meet Vinobaji. Vinobaji had read his biography and had a great regard for him. Shri Varniji promised every support to the cause of the Land-Gifts-Mission.

Vinoba's post-prayer speech which was full of significance has been reported in the previous issue.

Khitwans and Maharoni

Khitwans and Maharoni were two more villages in Uttar Pradesh which Vinobaji visited next. At Khitwans, they had cleaned the whole village for two days. The enthusiasm of the villagers was indescribable. They gave lands amounting to 221 acres. At Maharoni, Vinobaji received a little less than 700 acres. The three days in the Uttar Pradesh revealed that the people there were awakened and had realized the importance and the significance of the mission which carried within it the seeds of a revolution.

D. M.

A FALSE STANDARD

Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of the fifty-seventh session of the Indian National Congress held at Satyawatinagar, New Delhi, last week, was the want of an exhibition which was regarded for some time past as an integral part of the session itself. Want of time, rather than indifference of those concerned, may be held responsible for this deficiency. But what attracted the eye of a casual visitor was the exhibition of a few giant sign-boards. But alas! they displayed not *khadi* or village industries or anything else of the type, but the films running in the theatres of the Indian capital and the notorious beverage coca-cola. I failed to understand whether the prominence they enjoyed was due to the high additions they made into the till of the Reception Committee, or to 'a new approach' in the Congress outlook. And the fear lurked in my mind.

The Subjects Committee met for two days, the 17th and 18th October, in the morning. After the official resolutions were adopted by it, the President, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, took up the non-official resolutions. However, he summarily disposed them off in a few minutes. Unfortunately no Press agency has cared to reproduce Panditji's remarks on the ill-fated resolutions. Among them was one about banning *vanaspati*. The President said that there was no need for this resolution since the A. I. C. C. had already passed one on the subject and that the Government had appointed a Committee to go into the matter! Thereafter he added (I write from memory) that he wanted to tell the House that resolutions sought to be brought for consideration before such an august assembly as a Congress session must deal with certain standard subjects. Then he passed on to the next resolution. I wonder whether the Congress President would have us believe that oil, *ghee* etc. are small things not worth discussion by a great organization like the National Congress. If *vanaspati*, which is so devastatingly connected with our health and economy, is not a standard subject, an attempt to soothe the suffering of an almost starving people with a discourse on national and international politics is bound to fail in creating any interest. There could be no greater proof, if one was still required, of the wide gulf separating the Indian rulers from their subjects.

SURESH RAMABHAI

(Note: Shri Suresh Ramabhai is unnecessarily shocked by finding or failing to find in the Congress certain things against his expectations. The fault lies with his false expectations. He should realize that the Congress cannot have both Nehru as its leader and a non-Nehru policy in its operations. The *Sarvodaya* insistence on the prohibition or restriction of liquor, coca-cola, *vanaspati*, sugar, textile industries etc., or on the policy of food self-sufficiency, *khadi*, village industries etc. must not be

expected in the present Congress set-up. For the present, the Congress mind is set on winning elections, and it has briefed Nehru for the purpose. He demands his fee in the shape of certain plans and policies. It is no use now complaining that Nehru did this or did not do that. It must accept the situation gracefully, for better, for worse.

— K. G. M.)

25-10-'51

HARIJAN

Nov. 24

1951

CONGRESS & CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS

Shri Lakshmi Narayan of the Bihar Charkha Sangh, and some of his colleagues have circulated a letter in Hindi. I give it below in a slightly abridged form :

The Congress has issued its manifesto for the first general elections to be held after obtaining independence. It is an important document. While carrying on its struggle for freedom the Congress had accepted some fundamental principles (enumerated later herein) regarding the future social and economic order that it envisaged. There were several persons who had no interest in party politics, but who were interested in those principles. They joined hands with the Congress, because of that interest. The present manifesto must be taken to indicate the attitude of the Congress regarding those fundamentals. That the policy of the present Congress-dominated Government has not been very encouraging is well known, but the manifesto makes it now plain that the Congress has now radically altered its attitude towards those principles.

Every institution or individual has a right to abandon its previous principles or view-points in the light of the experiences gained in carrying on an administration. We have no complaint on that count, but we feel that the time has come when we should reconsider our relations with the Congress in the light of their new manifesto.

In the beginning of the manifesto a reference is made to the policy and method of work of Gandhiji. In our opinion Gandhiji's name need not have been dragged into the manifesto at all, because it has refused to recognize the fundamentals of the Gandhian Congress.

It is stated in the manifesto that even while the fight for independence was going on, it was not only the freedom from foreign domination that was aimed at but even freedom from want and exploitation of the masses. But the manifesto does not state anywhere how it proposes to attain that objective in the context of their previous policy, rather, it has now undergone a considerable change. To begin with, Gandhiji had conceived a village to be the unit of Swaraj. He wanted Swaraj to take root in the villages by making them self-contained with regard to the basic needs. Hence he put *khadi* and village industries in the forefront and made them the foremost items of his programme for the fight for independence.

The manifesto under reference does not envisage any such thing. On the contrary the idea they advocate is diametrically opposed to this. It is stated that farming on co-operative lines be undertaken, but nowhere has any mention been made how far do they advocate the use of tractors imported from abroad and run on petrol or crude oil with the aid

of artificial fertilizers and what their policy will be about bullocks and farm-yard manure and daily refuse of the village. Complete silence of the manifesto on these is ominous.

In the same way village industries have not been favoured with a place in the manifesto. What are mentioned are 'small-scale and cottage industries'. No one need be told the difference between small-scale or cottage industries and village industries. Village industries are those industries which supply the basic needs of the village and on which the self-sufficiency of the village depends. A well-to-do village without them will be just like a jail obtaining all its requirements from outside. As against these, cottage industries and small-scale industries can only become a means of helping people to get together some money. The manifesto clearly says, "The burden on the land of too many people subsisting on it has to be reduced by the diversion of part of this population to other vocations. Some of these can be absorbed in large industries, but in the main the source of absorption will come through small-scale and cottage industries."

This is also followed by a warning that whatever small-scale or cottage industries are undertaken should be carried on under the best technique, so that they are very efficient and helpful economically. Will this not lead to the same results as those of the British policy? Cottage industry, that is, hand-pounding of paddy will be dubbed as inefficient and rice mills will be started, the place of *ghani*-oil will be taken by mill-oil and *vanaspathi*, and to fight unemployment Japanese toy-making machines will be introduced in villages and attempts will be made to make the people economically happy. The basic idea of village industries was to fulfil the basic requirements of villagers, in the villages under the inspiration of the villagers themselves, with whatever motive power, talent or personnel were available in the villages. Has this not been given a go-by even after invoking Gandhiji's name?

Lest people may have any doubt left in them, *khadi* has been replaced by the *Handloom Industry*. It is said that the handloom is our main cottage industry and it can legitimately claim all sorts of help from the Government. So far this industry was adversely affected for want of enough supply of yarn, so the Government should make adequate quantities of it available to the handlooms. The Congress is now declaring from the housetops that handlooms run on mill yarn is our main cottage industry! This was the very thing the Britishers wanted us to accept and against which the Charkha Sangh, under the leadership of Gandhiji, put up such a long fight.

Whatever it may be, we are grateful to the author of this manifesto for making the Congress policy of today crystal clear. We have now a clear idea that under the Congress regime the villages will be dependent on cities carrying on large-scale industries however well-fed or well-clothed they may be.

This is the fundamental difference which has led to the unnecessary expansion of the *vanaspathi* industry destroying the cattle wealth of the country. It is this difference which has killed the hand-pounding industry, laid the *ghani* industry low, put bans on production of *gur* and dug the graves of various other village industries. What a fall from the high ideals for which Gandhiji had started his Satyagraha! There is one more instance to substantiate our statement. This long manifesto does not contain a word about *prohibition*. Indeed, during the discussion on it the author of the manifesto and the only powerful man who carries the Congress with him, viz. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, explained that they could not jeopardize their economy by hastily introducing prohibition. Are the steps taken by the Bombay and other States in this direction to be regarded financially wrong and

therefore to be retraced? Can the uplift of the backward classes be ever effected without prohibition? It is taken for granted that the uplift of the backward classes is a special charge on the Government. But according to the ideas of the Congress the funds for their cultural and economic uplift can be had only by making them first drink! Is this the policy of the Congress in consonance with the two principles of Gandhiji, by which it swears in the beginning of the manifesto, viz. "The means we adopt ultimately shape the end" and "To value the moral and ethical basis of National Life."

During its four years regime the Congress has thrown its principles to the winds. Not only the old ones but even the new ones are made conspicuous by their being flouted. That we are a secular State is repeated often *ad nauseam*, but we see that the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ram Rajya Parishad are given a political status and allowed to fight the elections as political parties. In a secular State the "Hindu Sabha" or the "Muslim Jamait" obtaining *locus standi* in politics and in elections is something beyond the comprehension of ordinary talent. In the world today political parties are formed on the basis of some economic or social principles. But here, while swearing by a secular State, such parties based on religion are allowed to exist. The communal spirit in the different sections of the Congress may be ignored as being non-governmental, but how can we explain away such policies of the Government?

Much has been said about the emancipation of women, and the substance of it will be put to the test in the next elections. But it should never be forgotten that the brunt of the ill-effects of drink will have to be borne by the women of the land.

We do not want to criticize each and every item of the manifesto. What we want to point out is that Gandhiji's name has been invoked at the beginning only to ward off impending troubles and to obtain a 'line clear' for the new path struck by the Congress. That is why we have stated before that it would have been better if Gandhiji's name were not dragged into it. When the basic principles of *khadi* and village industries are ruthlessly killed it is sheer mockery to say that we will carry on the administration of the country on the Gandhian moral lines. Self-sufficient and moral life is the base on which a non-violent society can be created. When that is denied how can it be claimed that we are aiming at creating a non-violent society? Therefore we feel that for those who believe in the above idea of Gandhiji, there is no place in the Congress. The time has now come when those who believe in the ideal of creating a non-violent society by adopting *khadi*, village industries and prohibition etc. as the means to attain it, should strike a new path.

I generally agree with Shri Lakshmi Babu's criticism of the manifesto consistently with my general want of vehemence in expressing it. But two of his charges are unfair. The first is that the Congress Government allows communal organizations to function as political parties. It seems to me that under the Constitution this cannot be prevented. If the people do not approve of such bodies, they will not support them. But if people want them, a democratic government cannot ban them, as long as they function in a constitutional manner. The same would apply to the Communist party.

The second is Shri Lakshmi Babu's insistence that those who disagree with this manifesto must necessarily leave the Congress. It is possible that some Congressmen, though in agreement

with Shri Lakshmi Babu on the economic programme, feel that if they stayed in and worked through the Congress, by and by they might be able to form their own majority, and bring about a change in the present Congress policy. This is a legitimate optimism, even if it is not shared by all. They believe in political work, and in the absence of any other political organization adopted by constructive workers or dedicated completely to what are called 'Gandhian Ideals', it cannot be said that by staying in the Congress, such members obstruct the success of the other. If they are honest and do not suppress their opinion whenever it has to be expressed, their stay in the Congress need not be resented by constructive workers. After all all constructive workers have hitherto spent a long time of their life in working with or in the Congress, and though the organization may have become disappointing since, the old prepossession in its favour is bound to persist. Constructive workers must not therefore be impatient with those, who stay in the Congress, though it is not up to their expectations.

Wardha, 27-10-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

"MAKE ME THY SERVANT, MY LORD"
(By Shrikrishnadas Jaju)

This is the refrain of a well-known song of Mirabai. She asks Krishna, her Beloved, to employ her as a *chaakar*, that is a menial domestic servant doing every kind of physical labour. The song goes on to recount the numerous jobs with which she would like to occupy herself. The song has significance for the constructive workers, and it came to me with the force of a revelation as I reflected over a recent resolution of the Charkha Sangh, which calls upon its workers to give twenty-four hours every month to the performance of wage-labour, in order to achieve identity with the labouring class. The constructive workers too have got to do fruitful service to their Lord, the Community, which is His visible form, with the same ardour and in the same spirit as Mirabai.

The resolution consists of two parts. The first sets forth the ideological background of constructive work, while the second lays down the programme in order to implement the ideology. The resolution is addressed to the Charkha Sangh workers, but is worthy of serious consideration and adoption by all constructive workers.

The resolution insists on two points: performance of twenty-four hours of manual labour in a month, and secondly, the obligation to do it on a wage-basis in the manner of a day labourer.

It may be presumed that an able-bodied man can put in six to eight hours of daily labour. This means that the twenty-four hours of labour which the resolution enjoins can be gone through ordinarily in four days. But there need be no rigidity about it. Since the workers of the intellectual class are not used to hard physical labour they may not be able to go beyond four hours in a day. They may, then, require more days to accomplish

their allotted amount of work. It is a matter of convenience and should be adjusted between the worker and his employer. There should be no difficulty regarding the availability of work, because there is no dearth of it. There is a great demand for labour in the villages for the various agricultural operations which spring up seasonally. Similarly, in the cities, in the construction of houses, the laying out of roads, and some type of factory labour, there is enough scope for employment for those who seek it. Discrimination would have to be used in the choice of work, e.g. work in villages might be preferable to work in cities, while work in factories which are opposed to the Sarvodaya order of things may have to be avoided. But we need not go into that aspect of the question at present. Then, it may not be possible for these workers to do the work of skilled artisans. That too should present no difficulty; for in all these operations, there is always a residue which involves simple physical labour, and which, therefore, can be done by all.

The next point is that the labour must be on a wage basis, and after the manner of a day labourer, it has to be rendered to an outside employer. Workers in constructive institutions are used to physical labour, they take part in *safai* work at home or in the neighbourhood and in the agricultural work which a good few of the institutions now carry on. They also participate quite prominently in public service activities like the village *safai*, improvement of village-roads, sinking of manure-pits etc. This is welcome, so far as it goes. However the importance of the programme held out by this resolution goes further than this.

Of the various class differences with which our society is afflicted, the one between the manual and the intellectual is the most deep-rooted. The intellectual worker is regarded as superior to manual workers. There is something in our cultural traditions which has stamped a stigma on manual labour. This is peculiar to our country, for nowhere else do they look down on it as disparagingly as we do. Whatever the reasons, the evil is there. Even the poor who earn their living by manual work do it only under compulsion and would fain give it up if there was an opportunity. Of course, this is due to the general social attitude towards labour and the marked difference between the income of the intellectual worker and that of the manual worker. It is really amazing that those who produce all the wealth and wherewithal of life are driven to wallow in hunger and misery, while the indolent rich enjoy themselves on the fruits of their labour and usurp every kind of social honour and prestige. Certainly, this state of affairs is most reprehensible and requires to be ended at the earliest moment. There is crying need for a revolution in our social theory and practice which will rehabilitate manual work in its due position of honour, which should be higher than that of intellectual work. One of the most effective ways

for this consummation, from the point of view of *ahimsa*, would be for the intellectual workers to adopt the life of the manual worker, in however small a measure.

It will surely revolutionize the prevailing social attitude and behaviour. It will eradicate the prevailing reluctance to earn one's living with the sweat of one's brow. High prices and scarcity of goods have produced a most devastating effect on the life of the middle class people, which has been put completely out of gear. The small traders are also suffering a similar predicament on account of the controls. Many of them are virtually out of employment. On the other side, for many jobs entailing manual labour there are not enough workers forthcoming. And yet the former are precluded from taking to this type of work because of the social stigma attached to it. Take the case of our students. Even those boys who come from the labouring class abandon their family occupation and hanker after getting into some intellectual profession. There are a number of students who are poor and seek scholarships and other forms of help. But even they are not willing to take to manual work in their vocations, when they can easily do it, and add to their insufficient resources. In America and some other countries, the students make up for a part of their expenses by working in the fields and factories, and it is regarded as quite honourable for them to do so. Why could it not be so in our country? We have to bridge the gulf between the intellectual and manual work and that, both in regard to prestige and the money income. This resolution is well calculated to do away with the social and monetary disparities between these two types of work.

It will also provide an incentive to manual workers to work more efficiently. Today, they work perfunctorily, and even when their wages are substantially increased, there is no appreciable increase in their output of work. How can there be any increase in production, no matter how loud the clamour we make for it, so long as these conditions last? Here is the way out. Let the wise among the intellectuals work like manual workers, and the outlook of the latter would change and they will not only learn to work willingly and honestly but also proudly.

The resolution says that such work should be on a wage-basis. The intention is that the worker should work fully and to the satisfaction of the employer. It will also introduce a sense of reality into the work, and make for the banishment of the idea that there is anything humiliating about earning one's living in this way.

Let us hope that the constructive workers everywhere will give whole-hearted co-operation in this most well-meaning programme and realize in whatever degree they can the revolution which it envisages to the lasting good of our society.

Sevagram, 22-10-'51

(Abridged and adapted from Hindi)

SHRI VINOBA'S TELANGANA TOUR VIII

April 20, Sarvail (Sixth Halt, 8 miles)

Shri Narayan Reddi opened a Sarvodaya centre in Sarvail last year on the occasion of the Buddha Jayanti. Items of constructive work, such as spinning, weaving, *tadgud* etc., were added to medical service, which was already carried on before. A Kasturba centre also functions there.

We reached the village at 7-30 a.m. After the usual receptions were over, Vinoba went for a round in the village. He first visited the Kasturba centre. Two lady workers carry on the activities of the centre. Children both of pre-basic and basic stages attend the classes. Adult education work is also carried on. Vinoba saw the children's work and heard their recitations and stories.

Usually we go out to see the village under the guidance of local workers who chalk out a plan and guide us accordingly. But that day Vinoba desired to see the village as he liked. He therefore turned to any side he liked.

Vinobaji went to the houses of Harijans and weavers. The houses were clean and decorated. We saw two sets of weavers—one of those who lived upon the quota of mill yarn and were unemployed for three weeks in a month, and the other of those who wove hand-spun yarn and were throughout busy. The former presented a sad picture of anxiety and worry; the latter that of contentment. Let economists who advocate mill textile industry, and import of foreign staple cotton see and study for themselves the conditions of these villagers of India.

We have walked till now fifty miles in Telangana. Every place which we visited had its sorry tale of severe or slight Communist atrocities. But we were agreeably surprised to be told by the people of Sarvail that they were saved from the Communist terrors. Vinoba took no time to find out the reason for this. Shri Narayan Reddi has dedicated himself to the service of the people for the past several years. He had distributed to the landless more than 200 acres from the land which he had received from his father-in-law. This prevented the Communist invasion. Explaining the real road of nipping in the bud the Communist problem, Vinoba said in the post-prayer speech, "The place which is sanctified by the service of the people has no room left for the Communists to occupy."

Referring to the activities of the Communists, Vinoba said:

"That they move about among the poor, and suffer hardships is a matter which delights me. But their method of working is wrong. They have adopted the way of violence. They do not seem to know the culture of India. This land is so vast and ancient that those who desire to work in disregard of its culture will meet with defeat in their task. Foreign countries know only the way of violence, and have been waging world wars one after another. If we followed that way it would spell the destruction of India.

"When people were terror-stricken during the oppressive regime of the Nizam and the Razakars, it is possible that the Communists might have awakened them and comforted them. But after the attainment of Independence, their persistence in resorting to violence is wrong."

Vinoba expressed the hope that at least responsible Communists will not refuse to think on this question, as some of them he met had done. Vinoba explained that the refusal to think was a sign of mental inertness, but added that the correct remedy to bring the Communists to the right way was for the constructive workers to engage themselves in the service of the people. Vinoba was glad that some friends had adopted that way.

Vinoba laid down thereafter three tests for constructive workers. First, the *tadgud* work should culminate in total prohibition. The nectar of these trees must not be allowed to be turned into poison. Secondly, all villages should become *khadi*-minded, and thirdly, nobody in the villages should remain without work and without food. "These are the three papers I have set for you. You will have to pass in them."

Emphasizing the importance of creating a band of workers, Vinoba said, "It should not be understood that the service of the people is a job for a few persons, and the rest are only their masters. Several workers from the village should come forward and join the workers of the Ashram."

In this context, Vinoba explained the *vanaprastha-ashram* system. He said, "In ancient times there was a practice with the Hindus to be *vanaprasthi* (forest-dwellers) and dedicate themselves to the service of the people. The practice is now dead. They enter the *grihastha* order by marriage and remain immersed in private life till death. "The right way is that after serving the family for a few years, they should engage themselves in the service of society. *Vanaprastha-ashram* is one of the four *ashrams*, it means that one out of every four persons is engaged in the service of the society. Since your village has a population of 1,200 men it should produce 300 workers. I therefore desire that persons above 40 to 45, both men and women among you, should resolve to be free from lust and dedicate the rest of your life to the service of the people. What a great army of social workers the Hindu Dharma has conceived? But we pay only lip-sympathy to religion and ignore its spirit. Human birth is the result of a great many meritorious deeds. If you realize this, you will attempt to curb lust and engage yourselves in the service of the people."

While laying the foundation-stone of the *ashram*, Vinoba emphasized the responsibility of the *ashram* workers and said, "Now if workers of institutions like this *ashram* depend upon money for their requirements they will not be able to bring about a revolution. They should meet their requirements with their own labour. Food, cloth, vegetables, fruits, milk, education and health should be provided by the *ashram* itself."

(Adapted from *Sarvodaya*, Sept. '51)

D. M.

TRIBAL WELFARE IN MADHYA PRADESH — I

(By 'Mahitgar')

1. The three merged districts of Madhya Pradesh cover an area of 30,000 square miles and have a population of 25 lakhs, or about 85 persons per square mile. Most of the people are scheduled as aboriginals and their backwardness is a challenge to our conscience. The common features are: lack of communications, extreme poverty, chronic drunkenness, high incidence of VD and yaws, and a tribal system of internal government. On certain days in the week, whole groups of villages, including even children, get intoxicated out of their senses. Nudity is common in several parts and many people subsist on a diet of roots and raw meat.

2. The development of this region, comprised in the three districts of Raigarh, Surguja and Bastar, has now become the concern of the Madhya Pradesh Government. In spite of their potential forest and mineral resources, these districts are at present completely unproductive; and although the Madhya Pradesh Government gets a subvention of Rs 45 lakhs from the Union Government, it is incurring a revenue loss on them.

3. Nevertheless the Madhya Pradesh Government is doing its best. A system of metalled roads is being built up and several bridges have been constructed. Schemes for schools, uplift centres and medical aid are taking shape.

4. There is however no definite plan of development and much of the work is on the traditional lines of the more advanced districts.

There are too many inexperienced officers in the field; and too much red-tape and contradictory orders from Nagpur. And what is worse, there is too much interference with the people and their customs. In the past these people were left severely alone by their Rulers and outside interference was not permitted.

5. This has changed and a new class of officer has arisen. He has no understanding of the people and no knowledge of their language and institutions. Either he is too excessively reformist or too frustrated. The result, as far as the people are concerned, is the same. They are being fast uprooted from their past without anything new coming their way. Our legal system and police methods are making them nervous and therefore dishonest. They do not trust us, because we do not understand them; and the local politician and the *goondas*, supported by liquor contractors are inclined to make trouble for them. This can do no good to the people and will prejudice the more systematic long-term plans which may later be made.

6. The Madhya Pradesh Government cannot by themselves solve the problem. Their resources must be supplemented by outside help in the form of finance, expert knowledge and technique, and trained personnel. For the problem of tribal development is an all-India problem and national resources must be pooled for it.

7. In addition to the provision of increased funds for roads, public health and education, the Union Government must establish a school for Backward Area Administration. The school will be staffed by Indian and foreign experts and can perhaps receive financial and other aid from the United Nations. An expert cadre of the I.A.S., I.P.S., and Forest and Engineering Services can then be created with the privileges attaching to an expert post. While the school is getting into its stride, some all-India service officers should be trained in England, where training facilities are available.

8. Also, the Madhya Pradesh Government must overhaul its own administration in these districts. The people here are used to the rough but ready justice of the ex-Rulers and expect our officers to give spot decisions. In order to gain prestige and influence, our officers must be equipped with more powers than they would ordinarily possess.

9. This presupposes that the officers are specially selected and possess a high level of moral integrity and competence. As it happens however, postings in these merged districts have a penal character about them; and officers smarting under such punishment are disgruntled and disappointed. The cost of living is about 40 per cent higher than in other districts; housing is of the most primitive kind; and there are few school and hospital facilities. There is nevertheless no compensatory allowance attached to service in these districts and the main business of officers is to seek a transfer as early as possible.

The average stay of an officer here does not exceed six months, within which he learns nothing and does little. There certainly is no zeal or imagination required for pioneering work.

10. All this can be changed at comparatively small expense. Assuming that the best officers are sent here and are provided with the amenities lacking at present, it would still be necessary to have a unified policy of development.

11. A post of an officer of the rank and seniority of a Commissioner is therefore necessary. He will supervise the work of the three district officers, select and train his personnel, co-ordinate the various activities and take quick decisions on behalf of the Government. Although this Commissioner should be administratively responsible to the Madhya Pradesh Government his appointment should be approved by the Central Government and his salary paid in part by the Centre, because one of his main duties should be to establish a closer contact between Delhi and Nagpur in this field than exists at present. He will scrutinize the expenditure and secure grants from Delhi. He will be responsible to Delhi for the Central Government schemes.

12. Similar officers could also be appointed in other States. The cost will be small compared with the supervision and control which these officers will ensure. They will also prevent some of the present wastage of money and manpower.

13. There is no dearth of good officers in our country and there should be no dearth of finances for tribal development. What is needed is a proper system of planning and proper management.

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CONTENTS	PAGE
VINOBAJI IN DELHI .. K. G. Mashruwala	329
SHRI VINOBA'S NORTHERN TOUR—V .. D. M.	330
A FALSE STANDARD .. Suresh Ramabhai	331
CONGRESS & CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS .. K. G. Mashruwala	332
"MAKE ME THY SERVANT, MY LORD" .. Shrikrishnadas Jaju	333
SHRI VINOBA'S TELANGANA TOUR—VIII .. D. M.	335
TRIBAL WELFARE IN MADHYA PRADESH—I .. 'Mahitgar'	335
NOTES:	
SHRI SHOORJI VALLABHDAS .. K. G. M.	329
"CHOOSING YOUR LEGISLATORS" .. K. G. M.	330
TO WAVERERS .. Sri Ram Sharma	330

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