

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

"REDEEM OLD PLEDGES"

(By Gandhiji)

[The text of Gandhiji's "Instrument of Instructions" to the Interim Government of 1946 was reproduced in the issue of the last week. Gandhiji explained his "Instructions" at length in the post-prayer speech that evening. The following is the relevant part of it as reported in *Harijan* of 8th Sept. 1946.]

Free Salt

What was the first duty of the Ministers, he next asked and replied that their first act should be to remember the Salt Satyagraha and remove the Salt Tax. It was on that issue that the country had given such a noble fight in 1930. It was the Dandi March that had electrified the whole country and brought women to the fore. It symbolized the Congress pledge to win freedom for the toiling masses. India's womanhood reached the high water-mark during the Salt Satyagraha and extorted the admiration of the whole world. It was now time to redeem that pledge and make the poor man's salt as free as water and air. It was not the quantum of taxation but the fact of salt being free or not that made all the difference to the poor. Removal of the Salt Tax would take the message of Swaraj into the huts of the poorest without distinction of Hindu or Muslim, caste or outcaste and serve as an earnest of early termination of all oppression under which the masses have been groaning.

Communal Unity

The second task before the Ministers was early realization of communal unity. That could not be done by a Government notification. The Ministers would have to live for it and die for it. If he had his way, remarked Gandhiji, he would declare that hereafter the military would not be used for the preservation of internal peace. Personally he would like to see even the use of the police banned for that purpose. People must find other means to prevent the communities from flying at each other's throat. If the worst came to the worst, they must have the guts to fight it out among themselves without external aid. He ventured to say that so long as they needed the help of British arms for their security, their slavery would continue.

Eradication of Untouchability

Then there was the total eradication of untouchability. As early as 1920-21, the Congress had declared untouchability to be a blot on Hinduism. They were pledged to remove it root

and branch. The conditions of life in the sweepers' quarters in all the big cities of India was a shame. Before this, he used to appeal to the Viceroy to improve them. Now it was the responsibility of the Interim Government and they could call the Ministers to account for it.

Khadi

Lastly there was the pledge of Khadi to be redeemed to provide clothing to the poor villagers. The Congress by a resolution in 1920 had resolved that all of India's inhabitants must be clothed in hand-spun and hand-woven cloth to the exclusion of all other. The Congress was still pledged to it. They had not yet carried out that resolution. Instead, people grumbled that they could not produce yarn which was required for the purchase of Khadi under the new A. I. S. A. regulations. Wherefrom was the Khadi to come if people did not spin? asked the speaker. They could not get yarn spun for wages owing to an abnormal inflation of wages all round. They must spin for themselves. There was no other way. It was the solemn duty of the members of the Interim Government to redeem the pledge about Khadi and to see that nothing but Khaddar was used in their homes or in their offices. As for yarn required to purchase Khadi, he made them a sporting offer. The new A. I. S. A. rules allowed them to present yarn spun by friends for the purchase of Khadi but not yarn spun for wages. As their friend, he would, out of yarn presented to him by the people, undertake to provide them with all the yarn that they might require for the purchase of Khadi. There was no doubt a dearth of Khadi in the Khadi Bhandars, but he would try his best to carry out their orders. He, however, warned that it might be only coarse for the present and they would have to be satisfied with that. He could not guarantee to provide them with fine Andhra Khadi. For that, they must wait till India was completely independent.

(India has become completely independent. But whither Khadi? — K. G. M.)

By Mahatma Gandhi

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SHRI VINOBA AT SEVAPURI—I

[The concluding portion of the first speech of Vinoba at the Sevapuri Sammelan was published in the issue of the 10th May. The following is the first part of the speech.]

Obstinacy of Vinoba

At the outset Vinoba expressed his regret over the inconvenience which might have been caused to the visitors because of the change of the venue of the Conference. Upon his own suggestion, it had been decided at Shivarampalli to hold the Conference this year at Sevagram. But in the meanwhile he set out on this tour and did not like the idea of interrupting his *bhoo-dan*-work in Uttar Pradesh for attending the Conference. Vinoba confessed that there was in him an element of obstinacy and, though he felt sorry that for his sake the conveners and the visitors should have been put to so much inconvenience, his nature prevailed, and he stuck to his scheduled programme. So it was that eventually the conference was held at Sevapuri in Uttar Pradesh. This obstinacy, Vinoba said, appeared even when Jawaharlalji invited him to Delhi for discussing the draft plan of the Planning Commission. He decided to obey his summons, but he was averse to go by train. So, he set out on a walking tour to Delhi to meet Jawaharlalji. Though the long delay must have annoyed Jawaharlalji, he very generously forgave him. When he reached Delhi after two months, Jawaharlalji was busy with the elections and had little time to spare for him. Yet he managed to have discussions with him during three sittings. It was really very kind of Jawaharlalji.

Was this obstinacy justifiable? he has often asked himself. He felt that there was in it something good too. Generally whatever a man does has both its good and bad points and it is difficult to analyse them, and disentangle the good from the bad and assess the true worth of a particular act. Be that as it may, generally he did not like to leave off a work he might have commenced. And he found support for it in the *Gita* which says "Do not give up a *karma* (action) natural to you, even if it has defects."

"But," Vinoba continued, "generally such obstinacy is dictated by circumstances which leave no alternative. My present obstinacy was dictated by an important idea. I had set out on a definite mission which was great and good, and until it took a definite shape, I could not think of diverting my attention to other matters. It is not even within my capacity to attend to more things than one at a time. No deity can be pleased without single-minded devotion; be it the deity of literature, politics or philosophy. This was the reason for my refusal to return to Sevagram for the Conference with the result that the venue had to be changed with such an amount of inconvenience to you all. I am deeply grateful to you for your generosity."

Am I Changed?

A friend had remarked that he was glad that he (Vinoba) had now abandoned his abode in the sky and come down to earth. Vinoba denied that there was any change in the state of his mind which continued to be what it was. He had always been a servant of the villagers... The only change that had taken place after Gandhiji's death was that the area of work had enlarged. During Gandhiji's life-time he was content, under his beneficent guardianship, to silently carry on village work around Wardha. If Gandhiji had been alive, he would have still continued doing scavenging or weaving, the two branches of constructive work which most attracted him. Gandhiji's death had compelled him to enlarge the sphere of his work.

The Genesis of the Walking Tour

"On Bapu's departure, I was faced with the problem of finding my duty under the changed situation. I did not ask myself what Bapu wanted of me. That is not

how I think. I prefer to wait for an inspiration from within rather than a suggestion from outside.

"In the meantime the constructive workers from all over the country met in a Conference at Sevagram. This Conference led to the formation of the Sarvodaya Samaj. The country was then faced with the problem of rehabilitating the refugees. I was asked to apply myself to this task. I agreed and left Wardha to do my bit of the work. I got an opportunity in rendering some service to the Meos. Ever since then began also my quest of the way through present distressing plight of the society. I travelled through the country for more than a year. I came to the conclusion that if we wanted to change our society and the present mode of our life through non-violent means, it was incumbent on us to come into close and direct relationship with the villagers. For this it was necessary to tour the country on foot. My decision had been made, though it had not been made public. When I was pressed to attend the Shivarampalli Conference, I put my decision into practice and set out for the place on foot. I may tell you that I could not have seen and known our country as well as I did in the course of this journey, had I remained fixed at one place and just intellectually reflected about it.

"On my way back to Wardha, I naturally chose a different route from the one I had gone by. Conditions in Telangana just then were very troublesome. The people were groaning under the tyranny of the Communists. Crores of rupees were being spent on the police and military forces posted there, but to no effect. And I decided to travel through Telangana. Of course, we went unarmed and unprepared as was consistent with non-violence. It had a good effect. It is unnecessary to recapitulate that story. After my return to Wardha I had the invitation from Pandit Nehru to go to Delhi. So began the North India tour."

The Delhi Parleys

Thereafter Vinoba gave the gist of his parleys with the members of the Planning Commission at Delhi. "My attempt throughout the talks was to get to a plan on which we could agree. I explained my view-point to them at considerable length and they gave me a patient hearing." It will be recalled that previous to his tour towards Delhi, Shri R. K. Patil of the Commission had met Vinoba at Wardha to know his reactions to the Draft Plan and Vinoba had severely criticized it. "I reiterated the criticism at the Delhi parleys in the presence of Panditji. What had pained me most was the fact that Pandit Nehru had gone behind his promise which he had announced that there would be no more import of foodgrains after 1952. The Planning Commission made not only no mention of self-sufficiency in food, it actually declared that for an indefinite number of years we would be required to import 3 million tons of foodgrains every year, and this year they wanted to import 5 million tons. When Panditji had declared his policy, I was touring. And whenever I was questioned I used to say that Panditji would certainly keep his promise. Hence, I felt that this was a breach of pledge, and I expressed my sorrow on this account quite unreservedly. I had hoped, and rightly, that the Commission would be asked to produce a plan designed to fulfil the objective of self-sufficiency in food within a specified period of time.

"So we discussed this aspect of the problem for three days. At the end of the talks, they promised to convey their decision to me in writing. This they did. But the meaning was not clear to me. Now Nandajji has explained it. It means that, conditions remaining normal, the Government promise not to import food-grains after five years.

"It is a happy decision and it has pleased me. I hope it will please you also. Though there might be differences of approach, the men in the government are after all our people. They take Gandhiji's name. They are led by our beloved brother Jawaharlalji for whom I confess I have some partiality. He too tried to understand my views,

During those talks it was my endeavour to reconcile our different view-points and find out common meeting ground between us."

Another point at issue was, Vinoba said, that no national planning was worth the name unless it undertook to provide full work to each and everyone. They could not imagine a family the head of which took care of only eight or ten out of its twelve members. He was bound to provide work and food to all its members. Even so a national plan must proceed on the basic principle that it had the responsibility to provide food and employment to everyone. If it did not accept that responsibility it was not national planning, and there was no use of making recommendations. The only way of discharging the obligation was by providing everyone with the implements of work and by proper distribution of the produce.

The plea of efficiency had been advanced in reply to this. Vinoba too desired efficiency. But before he would speak of efficiency, he would provide work and food to everyone. He had to start with minimum efficiency. If he failed to give work and food even to a few, it ceased to be national. One of the members of the Commission had suggested that it might be regarded 'partial planning'. To that Vinoba replied that in that case, their partiality must be shown towards the poor. And the Planners should tell the people that they were not planning for the whole nation. In fine, Vinoba pleaded that the Planners should realize their responsibility for the country as a whole and the best way under the present circumstances for discharging that responsibility was to ensure conditions which would enable the villages to convert their raw produce into finished articles locally in the villages. This was what he called self-sufficiency for the villages. But he would not fight for a name. If they considered that the ideal of self-sufficiency was Utopian, and they would not go after Utopias, he would not insist on the word 'self-sufficiency', provided they undertook to provide work for all. Vinoba went to the length of saying that he would have no objection if they could achieve that end even through mechanized industries. But if they were unable to do that, they must adopt his simple *charkha*. They need have no hesitation in adopting it because it was so humble that it would not refuse to boil their cup of milk when they had no more use for it and accept its disappearance without grumbling. But there was no point in rejecting village industries and implements until they were able to provide their machines. But the Commission looked at it from a different angle, and that made all the difference. They did not promise to give work to all; but talked of giving it only to a sufficient number of people. And they said that they would adopt village industries only if they found that they were helpful from their standard. These were the differences of opinion between Vinoba and the Planning Commission. "But," Vinoba said, "I have patience enough to wait."

(To be concluded)

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SARVA SEVA SANGH PROCEEDINGS

There was a general meeting of the Sarva Seva Sangh on 29-4-52 at Bajajwadi, Wardha. The following are items of general interest from its proceedings.

1. Bhoodan Committees

At the Sevapuri Conference the Sarva Seva Sangh undertook the responsibility of organizing the work of *Bhoodan* throughout the country and made a resolve to collect 25 lakh acres of land in *Bhoodan*. Following this resolve province-wise small committees were appointed with the concurrence of Shri Vinoba at Sevapuri for some of the provinces. The Sangh took a formal note of these. The Sangh will take early steps to appoint *Bhoodan* Committees in consultation with Vinoba for the remaining provinces.

2. Boycott of Centralized Industries

In order to implement that part of the Sevapuri Resolution which pertains to the boycott of Centralized Industries, the Sangh drew up the form of Pledge given below. It was decided to print on the back of the form of the Pledge the relevant part of the Resolution to enable the signatory to understand the Pledge in its proper background.

Pledge to Boycott Articles of Centralized Industries of Food and Wear

I hereby pledge that I will use only the following articles in my food and wear:

Article	Pledge will be observed			
	by me alone	by the whole family	in my home	at every place.
1. Cloth (Khadi) (by self-sufficiency certified by A. I. S. A.)				
2. Hand-pounded rice				
3. Flour ground by hand-mill or animal power				
4. Ghani-oil				
5. Gramodyog sugar and gud				
6. Leather goods of Village Industries.				

2. It was laid down that it will be incumbent upon every worker of the Sangh and of the constructive institutions affiliated to it to take the full Pledge at least for himself personally while at home. (The form of the Pledge will be available from the office of Sarva Seva Sangh, Sevagram).

3. The budgets of Sangh's two *vibhags*—Gram Udyog and Krishi Goseva and its affiliated Sanghs—Talimi Sangh and Hindustani Prachar Sabha—for the financial year 1952-1953 were discussed and passed.

4. In view of his health and the burden of work on him, the resignation of Shri Krishnadas Gandhi as a member of the Sangh was accepted.

5. Shri Annasaheb Sahasrabudhe (Secretary, A.S.I.A.) was taken as a member of the Sangh.

VALLABHSWAMI,
Secretary,
Sarva Seva Sangh

(From Hindi)

HARIJAN

May 24

1952

TO SARVODAYA WORKERS

Dear Friend,

You are aware, that we resolved at Sevapuri to obtain gifts of 25 lakhs (25 million) acres of land in the course of the next two years. On the day following this resolution, we proceeded to take two steps.

The first was to appoint a Committee for every Province. In choosing its members, our effort was to appoint only such people who had a moral influence upon the people of their province and enjoyed their confidence, and who would perform this duty with a pure motive. For convenient and easy disposal of work, the Committees are generally small ones, consisting of only 5 to 7 members each. The resolution directed that the Committees shall be appointed with the approval of Shri Vinoba. For such of the Provinces for which it had not been possible at Sevapuri to appoint a Committee or all the members for it, the Sarva Seva Sangh was authorized to do so with the approval of Shri Vinoba. So far Committees have been appointed for all the Provinces except Andhra, Kerala, City of Bombay and Mysore.

The other step was to fix a target for each Province for the fulfilment of the total target of 25 lakh acres. Such targets have been fixed for all the Provinces except Assam, Orissa, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Bombay City, Mysore and Saurashtra.

Immediately after returning from Sevapuri to your own Province, you were required to do two things: (i) to appoint a Convener of your Committee; and (ii) to convene a Conference of such people of your Province as sympathized with this mission, and were expected to give their hearty co-operation to it. The principal object of such Conference is to obtain the consent and co-operation of the people of the Province to the resolution made at Sevapuri. A general programme and division of work among the members and friends for carrying out the mission throughout the Province should also be decided upon in this Conference. Responsibility for carrying out each item of the work should be entrusted to definite individuals.

There are two main items of work which have to be carried out under the Sevapuri Resolution: namely, (i) to obtain land-gifts and distribute them to the landless, and (ii) to encourage village industries. Both of them are to be carried out mainly in villages. But that does not mean that there is nothing to be done in urban areas. There are so many people in towns and cities, who own lands in villages, or who, even if they do not possess their own lands, can purchase them

from those who have and make a gift of them for this cause. They should be approached and appealed to for doing so. Further, they can also contribute in cash or kind for providing the resourceless recipients of land-gifts with implements, tools, wells and the like to enable them to cultivate their lands advantageously. This part of the *Bhoodan-Yajna* is well adapted for urban areas, and should be attended to.

The altar of the *Bhoodan-Yajna* is in the villages. Hence the plan of our work must be so laid that we shall come into direct touch with the people, and convey to every village the message of the *Bhoodan-Yajna*, which is a gospel for awakening the sense of social equity of the people. Even as hundreds of lights might be kindled from one lighted torch, so it must be with the propagation of a moral message. The other torches are kindled by being brought into close contact with the lighted one. Similarly in order to carry this message, we must meet the people directly. Accordingly, Vinobaji has adopted the method of the walking tour in order to propagate his message. And even as the lighted torch touches the unlighted one very gently, our appeal to the people must be made with great humility and love in order to touch their cords. This is the best and most effective method and *sevak*s and workers should follow it as fully as possible. With this object, I had suggested at Sevapuri that every member of the Committee for each Province and every *sevak* should select a definite region for himself and carry out this work therein in accordance with Vinobaji's method. Every worker should so arrange his programme that within these two years he can expect to visit every little village of his region at least once and personally deliver the message to the people there.

It was decided at Mathura on 1st November, 1951 to collect 5 lakh acres of land from Uttar Pradesh. Vinobaji has been touring the Province for reaching this target. He will be touring for about 2½ months more in that Province after the Conference. Thereafter he will stay in U.P. at one place for about 2½ months of the rainy season. He expects that the U.P. target will be reached by that time. After the end of monsoon, he proposes to enter Bihar and tour through it till the next Sarvodaya Conference which is expected to be held somewhere in that Province in February, 1953. The Bihar workers have expressed their intention to obtain 4 lakh acres of land from their Province by that time. We should all concentrate upon this work in our respective Provinces also according to the same method, and should hope rather to overreach the target fixed for that Province than keep under it before the date of the next Conference.

I myself propose to walk in parts of every Province, except U.P. and Bihar, during the period. I earnestly hope that I shall get the co-operation of all my countrymen in this work.

30-4-52

SHANKARRAO DEO

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SEVAPURI

(By Damodardas Mundada)

Vinobaji desired that before the date of the Sarvodaya Conference he should be able to collect at least one lakh of acres of land from Uttar Pradesh. The daily post and telegrams and the workers from the districts already covered by Vinobaji also brought hundreds of acres. There were some workers (for instance, of Gonda and Kanpur) who refused to come to Sevapuri before completing their quota. Even their absence was inspiring for the rest of the workers. However, as we reached Sevapuri, about 8 thousand acres were still wanted to complete one lakh. But there came the letter of the Maharaja of Kashi donating seven and half thousand acres with a promise to gift 2½ thousand more. Thus the total exceeded one lakh. Vinoba's desire was fulfilled.

The Maharaja had written to Vinoba:

"It is difficult to describe in words the sentiments which have inspired you to undertake this difficult mission and to tread the whole country on foot without being least disturbed by the seasonal changes for its fulfilment. You are your ideals incarnate. Your very *darshan* (sight) brings home to the people the significance of your mission. People have begun to feel that an order based in accordance with the Indian culture and traditions and intended for the welfare and happiness of the people is about to come into being. By the blessings of Baba Vishwanath (the Presiding Deity of Kashi) may your efforts bear fruit!

सर्वेभ्य सुखिनः सन्तु, सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, मा करिन्द दुःखान् भवेत् ॥

(May all creatures here be happy; may all be free from disease; may all find welfare; may none suffer from pain.)

To this Vinobaji replied:

"I am in receipt of your land-gift given so affectionately, as also your promise to supplement it by a further quota. I beg one more thing of you. Even as you have given your own contribution to this sacrifice, please also ask your friends to do so. Thus this mission will easily grow and spread.

"I am particularly grateful to you for invoking Baba Vishwanath to bless my mission. This, indeed, is your very great help. It is His hand alone that is working behind this cause and it is He alone who can fulfil this great task. I am but the dust beneath His feet."

Till now Vinobaji had carried on this work alone. But now the Conference is going to join and play its part in fulfilling the mission. On 13th April, the last day of the National Week, the Conference resolved to collect 25 lakhs of acres during the next two years.

The *Bhoomidan-Yajna* was discussed in great detail during the three days of the Conference. It had so caught the imagination of the workers that some of them sought permission to launch Satyagraha for its fulfilment. It reminded the audience of the exciting days of the Satyagraha movement of 1930 and 1942. Vinobaji with due respect to the sentiments of those who had made the suggestion of Satyagraha explained the place and form of Satyagraha in such movement. "The life of one dedicated to Truth is itself Satyagraha," he said. "A Satyagrahi does not plan the next step when he is taking one. This is a part of the Satyagraha spirit. Whatever step he takes he does it with absolute faith." He illustrated this with a convincing analogy. A mother who is nursing her ailing child does so with an unflinching faith that it should recover. It is possible that it might die. But that does not make the mother think of making arrangements for its funeral simultaneously with its nursing. It is with such faith that a Satyagrahi works:

It was this faith that had brought about the miracle. Otherwise what other power did Vinobaji possess to create the land-gift spirit?

I have referred to the 1942 movement. The British did not respond then to Gandhiji's demand to 'Quit India'. But they had to do so five years later. Indeed they had to fix a date for their departure and actually left before it. It should not be strange if those in possession of land voluntarily part with it similarly. PEPSU has already made a beginning.

Objects of Bhoodan-Yajna

It should be remembered that the object of the Bhoodan-Yajna is not merely distribution of land to the landless. Vinobaji has explained repeatedly that this is but the beginning, the first step of the movement, namely, renouncing the right of ownership in land. It is the only step which is feasible today. The ultimate goal is the transformation of every village into a Gokul, that is, a family owning all the land of the village jointly and collectively, and laying down its plans accordingly. The ultimate solution of the land problem lies in that direction. Indeed, necessary precautions have to be taken to see that no one would sell the land thus received. Accordingly, Vinoba insists that the recipient of the land shall not sell it for ten years. It is hoped that by that time laws will have been enacted prohibiting sales of land. Such prohibition exists in Uttar Pradesh even now.

The first achievement of Sevapuri was that the Conference decided to collect 25 lakh acres. The movement became an all-India one and the idea achieved international importance.

In addition to this basic resolution, and as a fitting compliment to it was the second part of the resolution, calling upon the *sevaks* of Sarvodaya Samaj to eliminate the consumption of machine-made products in articles of food and cloth. This simple-looking resolution is full of great potentialities. It has both positive and negative aspects touching the life of the people. Though it touches only the individual at present, it will go a long way in creating the conditions for self-sufficiency, elimination of money economy and the establishment of a non-violent society. This therefore was another important achievement of the Conference.

The third achievement was the assurance given by the Government regarding food self-sufficiency. Although Pandit Nehru could not personally attend the Conference, he had deputed Shri Nanda and Shri Patil. In a personal letter to Vinobaji he also expressed his goodwill and sympathy for the work of the Conference. Shri Nanda discussed with Vinobaji the possible changes in the report of the Planning Commission against the background of the discussions held in Delhi. Vinobaji, as is now well known, had severely criticized the report for its failure to stick to the pledge that was given to the country regarding food self-sufficiency. He had felt that it was a breach of promise. At Sevapuri Nandaji assured Vinobaji that it was intended to make the country self-sufficient in food during the coming five years. It was an announcement of very great national importance and when Vinobaji conveyed it to the Conference a wave of joy filled the air. Shri Nanda also assured Vinobaji that so far as education was concerned, Basic Education alone shall be the State policy. Vinobaji welcomed the decision, but expressed his fears regarding the shape of the Basic Education Government would organize. The example of U.P. was before Vinobaji's eyes. He made no secret of his opinion that he regarded the U.P. Basic Education a hoax.

The fourth important decision was personal to Vinobaji. There was no province which did not invite him. Each pressed its claim. Ultimately the choice had to be made between Bihar and Tamil Nad. Vinobaji himself wanted to proceed to the South, and sooner or later he will do so. But the Bihar workers were very

persistent. They had offered to collect two lakhs of acres from their 70 thousand villages. They raised the offer to 4 lakhs if Vinobaji would go to Bihar. The offer was accepted and that decided the tour.

The organization of the Sevapuri Conference itself was an achievement, which needs to be appreciated. Though the workers of the Gandhi Ashram applied themselves wholeheartedly to the work, they had to face great difficulties. There was scarcity of water and not enough trees to give protection from the sun. Financial help was not forthcoming because of the sudden fall in the markets. Man-power was lacking, because the workers of the Gandhi Ashram were all busy with the *bhoodan* work. The inviters insisted that every volunteer should be a wearer of *khadi*, that all guests should be fed with hand or bullock-ground flour, hand-pounded rice, cow-milk and ghee, and *ghani*-pressed oil. Water was made available only a couple of days before the Conference, tube-wells coming to the rescue. Visitors accommodated themselves in tents. Twice they came down on account of dust-storms. Seventy maunds of wheat flour was ground on ordinary and bullock *chakkis* every day in the surrounding villages. An equal quantity of rice was hand-pounded. All the milk and ghee that were served were cow's. It was this achievement of Shri Dhirendra Mazumdar which entitled him to propose the resolution relating to the boycott of machine-produced food and cloth.

Sevapuri is the Samagra Grama-Seva Centre of Gandhi Ashram, Meerut. Work in *khadi*, Gram Udyog, Tanning, Co-Seva, Co-operative movement, Pre-Basic and Basic Education is carried on at Sevapuri under the direction of Shri Dhirendra Mazumdar, the President of the A. I. S. A. There are about 25 devoted workers staying with their families at the Ashram.

It is a part of the wide work that is going on in this province on behalf of the Gandhi Ashram, Meerut, which has become in U.P. the synonym for constructive work. This institution founded by Acharya Kripalanji has played a very important part in the public life of U.P. Among his colleagues may be counted devoted and hard-working workers of renown like Dhirendra Mazumdar, Vichitra Narayan Sharma, Rajaram Bhai, Kalika Prasad and several others. The total number comes to about 700 workers. Their affection, respect, faith, sacrifice and loyalty for 'Dada' (as Kripalanji is addressed) know no bounds. I have not seen a closer brotherhood elsewhere in the country.

As usual Vinobaji had separate discussions with workers of different provinces. Almost all the regions were represented, except the Andhras who were absent except for a few individuals.

The workers from Kashmir presented their problems. They belonged to the border province. They had to face constantly many difficulties. They wanted Vinobaji's message for guidance. Vinoba said that those who worked or stayed on the border should imbibe feelings of non-enmity for all. At times even brothers might do harm, and still they do not cease to be brothers. Similarly, they must recognize everyone as their brother. That is not only the best principle, but also the best policy. "The whole atmosphere changes for worse as soon as you imbibe feeling of enmity towards others. Passions rise high and hatred is created. Are there not friends on both the sides? If we maintain the feelings of friendship, the feelings of enmity will get no footing and Kashmir will play the part of bridging the gulf when the two countries will meet again, which they will do tomorrow if not today."

In reply to questions regarding achievement of social unity, Vinobaji said that unity must spring from within. "Do not you see that in spite of branches, fruits, leaves, and several other parts, we feel the unity of organism in

a tree? We have our hands and feet and eyes and ears. But the feeling is that we are men. It is therefore the internal unity that has to be realized. Otherwise, if you go on differentiating, the white will be differentiated from the black and the black from the white. Let me tell you that this is no differentiation. The real difference is of the starving and the overfed. It is this difference that we want to eliminate. Discrimination is different from differentiation. There can be difference in distribution of bread according to needs; an old man like me may need more milk. But that is discrimination, and it is the beauty of our life."

NAI TALIM BHAVAN CONVOCATION

The Convocation ceremony of the outgoing students of the Nai Talim Bhavan (Teachers' Training Department) was held on Sunday, April 6. Forty-four students (13 women and 31 men) successfully completed the regular 9½ months' course which began in July 1951, and received their preliminary certificates. These students represent almost every State and every major linguistic region in India; about 30 per cent had been deputed by State Governments, 30 per cent by the Ministry of Rehabilitation, the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, and 40 per cent represented private educational enterprises or had applied for training on their own initiative. 20 have studied agriculture as their basic craft, 9 have taken cloth-craft with fly-shuttle loom weaving, and 15 have completed their course in cloth-craft with Assamese loom weaving. A special feature of the year's course has been the study of the value of the simple Assamese bamboo loom as a means to self-sufficiency and a practical method of utilizing all yarn produced in basic schools even by beginners.

We are grateful to the Wardha Janapad Sabha for its co-operation with the Hindustani Talim Sangh, by which the latter has undertaken the introduction of Basic Education in 20 schools in the area. A demonstration of the possibilities of the Assamese bamboo loom formed a special feature of the programme of utilization of yarn in these schools, and aroused keen interest in the villages.

The students of the Nai Talim Bhavan, the majority of whom knew none of the processes of cloth manufacture when admitted, have obtained the following results during the 9 months' course. Sufficient cotton for 65 persons' clothing has been grown and harvested in a ½ acre field; 2,175 hanks of yarn, sufficient for cloth for 24 persons, have been produced during the period; and about 190 square yards of cloth, representing 9 persons' needs, have been woven. The average strength of the producing group was 45."

The Convocation function was presided over by Smt. Shantabai Narulkar, M.L.A. and the certificates were presented by Smt. Prabhavati Jakatdar, M.L.A., Deputy Minister. Smt. Prabhavati in her address emphasized the need to keep close to essentials. The real touchstone of success, she reminded her audience, was not the possession of a paper certificate but the growth of good village schools in the areas where they were to work. They would be tested in life by their ability to mingle with the people as friends and equals, not as workers coming from outside. The talk was much appreciated by the students present.

64-52

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'THE HINDU CODE BILL'

The agitation against the Hindu Code Bill has fairly subsided now. To that extent it may be justly surmised that it was more a symptom of the election fever than any real or well thought out opposition. That apart, one may well say that the time for a dispassionate discussion of the provisions of the Bill and necessary atmosphere for it is restored, and we may well avail of it now. In this connection the reader's attention is drawn towards a very valuable contribution that Justice Gajendragadkar of the Bombay High Court has made through his extension lectures * under the auspices of the Karnatak University last year. The learned judge takes a judicial view of the whole question of Hindu reform through the ages and adjudges the chief provisions of the Bill in that light. As he says in his introductory remarks :

"The questions posed by the Hindu Code are of great importance to millions of Hindus in this country and it is necessary that they should be considered in their proper perspective in the spirit of scientific inquiry. Dogmatic assertiveness would be clearly inconsistent with the spirit of scientific inquiry."

The results of such an inquiry undertaken by the learned judge might better be seen by going through this small brochure of 52 pages. The merit of the discussion lies in the fact that it is not in an ultra legal or technical manner that the writer approaches his theme, but presents the question to a common citizen, who is expected to care for arriving at the truth of the matter in a dispassionate and scientific manner. I may here merely quote the main conclusion to which the author comes as a result of his inquiry.

He takes up the following four important changes that the Code Bill proposes :

1. Divorce and judicial separation ;
2. Survivorship ;
3. Daughter's share ;
4. Woman's right over property ;

and says that :

"I have taken these four topics for special consideration because I wish to emphasize the fact that the departures introduced by the Hindu Code on these four points cannot be condemned as being absolutely inconsistent with all the texts of Hindu Law. Indeed, the principal point which I wish to emphasize is that the Hindu Code should be considered rationally and scientifically on its own merits. I have endeavoured to show that it is an illusion to entertain the belief that Hindu Law has never changed or that it is of divine origin. Hindu Law has changed from time to time, though the method adopted in introducing these changes was somewhat unusual. I have also endeavoured to show that during the British rule Hindu Law tended to be static and by reason of the infirmity from which the Courts suffered its further growth was inevitably arrested. Attempts were made from time to time to meet the crying need for reform on some special parts of Hindu Law ; but the time has now come when the problem must be attacked boldly and fearlessly and the whole of the Hindu Law must be put on a rational basis."

* *The Hindu Code Bill*. By Justice Gajendragadkar, Price Rs 2/-, published by the Registrar, Karnatak University, Dharwar.

And he gives his opinion that :

"It seems to me that it is the peremptory requirement of the present age that we must have a Hindu Code which is based on absolute equality amongst all Hindus, irrespective of their caste, creed or sex. The only feasible way of bringing about this urgent reform is to legislate and if you legislate you must legislate on an all-India basis on such an important topic. I venture to suggest that the days when texts had the final voice in such matters have long gone by, never to return. It would be totally unscientific and unreasonable to go back to these ancient texts to find out how we should regulate our daily life today."

To those who object to the Bill on the plea of having a common Civil Law for all India he replies :

"I think it would be very unwise not to support the Hindu Code on the idealistic ground that its provisions do not embrace all citizens alike. I apprehend this attitude may not expedite the final unification of all civil laws in the country, but would merely postpone even the unification of Hindu Law."

And he concludes his argument with the following words :

"It is no exaggeration to say that... (the proposals contained in the Hindu Code) affect all of us fundamentally and it is our duty to consider them dispassionately and without entering into any heated or acrimonious controversies."

I recommend to the reader this able plea of the learned judge for a dispassionate and scientific inquiry of the Hindu Code Bill.

13-4-52

M. P. DESAI

HINDUSTANI TALIMI SANGH RESOLUTIONS

Appreciation: The Hindustani Talimi Sangh at its meeting on April 27 recorded a minute welcoming the statement on Basic Education made by the Central Advisory Board of Education at its meeting on March 15. The Central Advisory Board has recorded that "a system of education cannot be considered as Basic Education in the real sense unless :

- (a) it provides an integrated course including both the junior and the senior stages ;
- (b) it places adequate emphasis upon craft work in both its educational and its productive aspects.

The Talimi Sangh has maintained from the beginning that the 7 or 8 years of Basic Education must be regarded as one whole, and that the interests of good productive work and of educational efficiency are not opposed but are complementary to each other. The proceedings of the Advisory Board should strengthen the hands of those who are working to establish Basic Education on right lines.

New Magazines: The Sangh has also resolved to resume publication of its Hindi monthly magazine for teachers *Nai Talim* from July 1, 1952, and to start a new English quarterly journal from October 1st which may serve as a forum for those interested in Basic Education, in English-speaking circles both in India and abroad. The Hindi magazine will be largely concerned with the professional and technical problems of the teacher, and it is intended that the Sangh should continue to use *Sarvodaya* for the exposition of its principles and for articles of general interest.

Eighth Conference: The dates of the next (eighth) All India Basic Education Conference have been fixed as October 30 to November 1, 1952. The Conference will be preceded by a Teachers' Conference on October 28 and 29. The Conference will take place at Sevagram.

E. W. ARYANAYAKAM,
Secretary,
Hindustani Talimi Sangh

INDIAN CHRISTIANS ON BASIC EDUCATION

[The following findings were adopted by the All India Christian Conference on Basic Education held at Sevagram on March 4-6, '52, under the auspices of the National Christian Council.]

We are thankful to God for the experience of this Conference where we have been able not only to consult together but also see in action the important aspects of Basic Education. We appreciate the kind welcome given to us by the Sevagram community and all that they did to make our stay comfortable and happy. We are deeply impressed by the atmosphere of the place, and the life and fellowship of the community. We recognize that the life and work here constitutes a challenge not only to our educational methods but to the whole of our Christian life and witness.

We understand by the term 'Basic Education', education of which the following are the chief characteristics:

(a) Useful productive work which meets the primary needs of the individual and the community at the centre of the school programme.

(b) Training in life as a citizen of a community and the development of self-reliance, co-operation and a social sense.

(c) A religious spirit permeating all activities and relationships.

We are convinced that this system of education meets the educational needs of the nation.

We believe that Basic Education is in line with the Christian concept of education which involves a harmonious development of the whole personality through constructive and creative activity and training in the art of living together.

We believe that through Basic Education not only can the Christian faith be maintained but also a larger opportunity for Christian service and Christian witness is opened up to us.

We desire to say to Churches and Missions that the time has now come for them to launch out on a programme of converting their schools, including training schools, into Basic Schools and recommend that new educational work be planned on the lines of Basic Education. We urge all Christian Schools to get teachers trained in Basic Education.

It should be borne in mind:

(1) that the object of Basic Education is the harmonious development of personality, and care should be taken to see that undue emphasis is not placed on any one aspect, to the detriment of others.

(2) that the successful working of Basic Education does not involve any compromise or watering down of our Christian faith and witness.

(3) that the adoption of Basic Education does not involve the slavish imitation of any institution already in existence, but that each school has the freedom and the duty to develop its Basic programme according to the needs of the locality.

We recommend to the National Christian Council that steps be taken (a) to organize Conferences on Basic Education in the different Provincial Council areas; (b) to set up a small advisory body on Basic Education.

J. W. SADIQ

Dr. Maria Montessori

Dr. Maria Montessori, whose death was announced last week, made a revolution in the field of education. Less than half a century ago, the school was looked upon by children as a branch of the jail department, and the teacher as a hard-hearted cruel warder. Parents had to spend a lot of time and to use various methods to coerce or induce their children to go to the school. Punishment was held to be the most efficient method of imparting knowledge.

Not that there was no love between the teacher and the pupil, or that the pupil harboured dislike of the school throughout its school life. But crude theories of education and discipline made even loving teachers think that it was their duty to use the rod unsparingly in the interest of the child.

It was given to Dr. Montessori to make the school even a happier place than the average home. She banished punishment, and even threat of punishment and compulsion in the sphere of training.

I believe Dr. Montessori received a warmer welcome in India than in Europe. Her method of training is eminently fitted to build a non-violent social order. Countries which want to prepare their youth for war, bloodshed and torture, it seems, did not give her much encouragement.

The Montessori outlook has come to stay in India. In Gujrat particularly, the late Shri Gijubhai Badheka, Shrimati Tarabai Modak and Shrimati Sarladevi Sarabhai have established it on a firm footing with suitable modifications. The pre-basic *Nai Talim* also accepts the Montessori outlook, but with different external implements. Though physically Dr. Montessori is dead, she will rank among the immortal benefactors of mankind.

Wardha, 13-5-'52

K. G. M.

CONTENTS	PAGE
"REDEEM OLD PLEDGES" .. Gandhiji	105
SHRI VINOBÀ AT SEVAPURI—I ..	106
SARVA SEVA SANGH	
PROCEEDINGS .. Vallabhwami	107
TO SARVODAYA WORKERS .. Shankarrao Deo	108
THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SEVAPURI .. Damodardas Mundada	109
NAI TALIM BHAVAN	
CONVOCATION .. Marjorie Sykes	110
'THE HINDU CODE BILL' .. M. P. Desai	111
HINDUSTANI TALIMI SANGH	
RESOLUTIONS .. E. W. Aryanayakam	111
INDIAN CHRISTIANS ON BASIC EDUCATION .. J. W. Sadiq	112
NOTE	
DR. MARIA MONTESSORI .. K. G. M.	112