

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

## SHRI PATIL'S APPREHENSIONS—I

Shri R. K. Patil is not reconciled with Vinoba's scheme of giving small plots of land to landless peasants. He has the following doubts :

(1) The area proposed to be gifted—generally five acres of dry land or one acre of wet land—is uneconomic—that is, too small to be advantageously cultivated. It is too small even for employing bullock power and other aids for the development of their land. It cannot find sufficient capital and cannot repay loans made on it. The owners will therefore again lapse into indebtedness and lose their lands to their creditors.

(2) As a consequence, the standard of cultivation will remain poor and undeveloped and production will diminish.

(3) More people than necessary will be occupied in agriculture, thus preventing diversification of employment in the rural areas. In the interest of economic prosperity, it is desirable that the number of people living on agriculture should, increasingly diminish, and that on cottage and small-scale industries should progressively increase.

Shri Patil is a member of the Planning Commission and is believed to have taken a leading part in drawing up the agricultural scheme of the Draft Five Year Plan. That Plan has recommended a particular land policy. Shri Patil naturally looks with misgivings at a scheme of distribution, which might conflict with the policy planned by the Commission. Shri Patil's objections must be examined against the background of that policy.

The policy has been explained, in Ch. IV of its Draft Five Year Plan.

It wants to reorganize agriculture as a branch of modern commerce. Hence, like any other commercial undertaking, it would regard it as efficient, if it produced maximum crops, at minimum cost and with smallest number of workers. Increase of production, reduction of cost and reduction of number of workers is to be the main aim in the reorganization of Indian agriculture.

In the achievement of this aim, it holds that small holdings are a hindrance.

"Agriculture cannot be developed as an efficient industry unless the unit of management becomes much larger than it is at present.... The application on a wide scale of scientific knowledge and increased capital investment.... (is possible) only if agriculture is organized on the basis of relatively larger units of management and production than the existing holdings." (p. 98).

Thus the main aim of the Planners is to secure convenience of management, and the reason is 'economic production'. Ensurance of equitable distribution and provision of employment are not the main concern of the Planners. This is in accordance with the goal of all types of Capitalistic systems, be it private Capitalism, institutional Capitalism (as in limited companies, so-called co-operative societies, trusts etc.) or State Capitalism.

As Vinoba's movement is more mindful of the immediate and pressing problems of unemployment and equitable distribution, there is necessarily an element of conflict, which the keen eyes of Shri Patil cannot fail to notice.

Having come to the conclusion that the aim of the land policy is to bring about "a substantial increase in the size of the unit of management", the Draft Plan discusses four methods of doing so. It rejects the idea of "nationalizing the land and making it available for collective cultivation" as also of "placing a ceiling on existing holdings," and declares in favour of the following two :

(a) "offering inducements to small farmers to become members of co-operative farming societies;" and

(b) "taking the village as a whole as the unit of co-operative management in which, while meeting the claims of ownership through an ownership dividend, the entire area is treated as a single farm and is divided for convenience of cultivation into suitable blocks."

Having set down the aim and the methods, the Plan lays down the programme of reorganization. It is divided into two parts; one the distant, for eventual realization; and the other for being pursued during the next few years, as leading towards the first.

The distant programme is "to establish a system of Co-operative Village Management", with the following "essential features":

(1) The whole village will be the unit of land management ;

(2) rights of ownership will be re-organized and compensated for by payment of dividends at each harvest ;

(3) actual workers, whether owners or labourers, will be paid remuneration for work done according to the nature of their work. To the owners this will be in addition to their share in the dividends ;

(4) whether lands should be cultivated as a single block or in separate blocks, and by individual families or groups of families, will depend upon the needs of cultivation and other local circumstances. Care will be taken to see that suitable incentives are provided to actual workers to put in their best efforts ;

(5) this system will be introduced compulsorily for the whole village if two-thirds of the owners or permanent tenants holding not less than one-half of the cultivated area of the village consent.

It will be noticed that if the number of owners is very large, it would be increasingly difficult to get a majority of two-thirds to bring about this reform. Further, if many holdings are too small, it is possible that the consenting two-thirds may not possess half of the land. Since Vinoba's *Bhoodan-Yajna* expressly aims at creating small owners Shri Patil may well apprehend that his scheme of distribution creates a hurdle in the way of the Planning Commission.

So much in regard to the ultimate end of the Commission. We shall consider next week the immediate programme contemplated by the Planning Commission for attaining the ultimate end.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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### PROGRAMME OF ORGANIZED SELF-HELP

(By Vaikunth L. Mehta)

Recently there was held in Bombay a conference of the Samchalaks of the scheme of social welfare and economic reorganization embarked upon three years ago, in rural and forest areas with the aid of the Government of Bombay. Popularly known as the Sarvodaya Scheme of Government, this was conceived shortly after Gandhiji's assassination. As was announced at the time by the Government of Bombay, they had decided that the most appropriate manner in which they could do honour to Gandhiji's memory was to promote, on a State-wide scale, all aspects of the constructive programme, particularly in backward areas and among the backward population of the State. They decided, further, that in order to ensure that the ideals of social progress for which Sarvodaya stood inspired the working out of the programme, the centres that were to be started in each of the districts of the State should be placed in charge of a tried and experienced social worker who had, in the past, been associated with constructive work.

2. The choosing of the Samchalaks (as these workers are designated), the selection of areas for locating the centres, the formulation of a general scheme of working—all these preliminaries involved a delay of about a year in the commencement of the Scheme. The majority of the centres were started sometime in the middle of 1949 and have now completed three years' working. With the merging of Indian State territory in the former Bombay Province, some new centres came to be opened a little later. No start was made in any district unless a tried social worker was available to assume responsibility. Because of the unavailability of a suitable worker, no centre has yet been started, to quote an instance, in Broach district. In two districts comprising old Indian state territory, additional centres have been started, while in two districts there are sub-centres. With each of the other districts in the State having a centre, the total number of these units is now 29. Each of these covers a compact block of 30 to 50 villages, the total number of villages now covered being a little over 1,200. The selection has been made on the basis of the backwardness of the area, where either the population is mainly drawn from the backward classes or where there is economic stagnation and underdevelopment. According to a significant interpretation of the term "Sarvodaya", the "good" to be sought has to be first, of those who are at the bottom of the social scale.

3. The programme of work was decided to be left to the Samchalaks to formulate in the light of local conditions and requirements. However, it was agreed that all plans should necessarily include certain items of work. With the recognition of education as the basis of progress, its extension and development comes first in the order of priorities. Every plan is also expected to include in its scope agriculture (including animal husbandry), cottage industries and subsidiary occupations allied to agriculture, health and hygiene, and lastly, recreation, amenities and social welfare. For the carrying out of this programme, the Samchalaks prepare detailed plans and draw up budgets for the financing of the activities. Expenditure is incurred in accordance with the budgets. The programme for the whole State is formulated by a committee, comprising three Ministers of Government and three prominent social workers. The accounts of expenditure are audited by auditors appointed by Government.

4. Apart from this, the Samchalaks have full freedom of action in drawing up their plans of work and in carrying them out. They select their own co-workers, allocate duties to such workers, and fix the terms of remuneration. Like the Samchalaks themselves, quite a number of their colleagues are also persons attracted to the work in a spirit of service. To help and advise the Samchalak and to strengthen his contact with those among whom he works, there is, everywhere, a local Sarvodaya Committee consisting solely of non-officials. Local officials of departments



of Government connected with the work of rural development are invited to attend meetings of the local committees. The administrative head of a district also keeps in touch with the work and makes himself and his subordinates available for consultation and advice. It is enjoined on all departments of Government to see that the areas covered by the Scheme take full advantage of the various items in their own programme of development and secure the necessary financial aid wherever available. But, essentially, the scheme represents unofficial efforts, sponsored and aided by Government.

5. Because of the genesis of the scheme and the Sarvodaya concept that it accepts as also on account of the personality of the Samchalaks, almost everywhere the Centre assumes the appearance of an Ashram, carrying the message of disinterested service to some of the remotest and hitherto inaccessible parts of the State. Inevitably, again, the economic activities centre round handspinning. The type of primary education that is developed is Nai Talim. The village industries sought to be promoted are those comprised in the programme of the All-India Village Industries Association and developed according to the methods popularized by that body. The collection of refuse and night-soil proceeds on what is being attempted at Wardha and Sevagram. Similarly, also, where cattle-breeding is undertaken, the lines pursued are those chalked out by the Go-Seva Sangh. Along with their co-workers, most of the Samchalaks lead a life of service, coupled with physical labour for the benefit of the community.

6. Every effort is made to inculcate the value of self-reliance and self-help. For every undertaking for the public good such as the construction of roads, the desilting of tanks, the erection of bunds or dams, the digging of compost pits, tree planting, the appeal made to the local population to provide voluntary labour has rarely gone in vain. This active association with the population served has helped in keeping down the cost of the public utilities or amenities that have been provided. It has also taught valuable lessons which stimulate other forms of joint endeavour.

7. The most fruitful field for such corporate action is provided by co-operative organization. All types of co-operative societies have come to be started in a majority of the Sarvodaya areas. The revival of old village industries and the organization of new cottage industries are usually undertaken through industrial co-operatives. For the provision of water for irrigation, co-operative lift irrigation schemes have been taken in hand in many areas. Another form of co-operation growing in popular favour is joint or collective farming or co-operative tenant farming, which is encouraged wherever conditions are favourable and the soil is ready.

8. Located as many of the centres are in forest tracts, quite a number of them have interested themselves in the formation and running of forest labourers' co-operative societies. These institutions replace the forest contractors to whose exploiting propensity forest labour is very often a prey. The forest coupes handed over to the societies are worked by them as productive units, the surplus earnings—which usually are not small—being utilized either in the payment of bonus to the workers in proportion to the labour put in or in the promotion of educational and other welfare work for the common benefit of the members. Except to the extent that they get such State aid as is ordinarily extended to these special types of societies, the institutions may well be deemed to be based on the practice of thrift, self-help and mutual aid.

9. In the regulation of their own expenditure, too, the Samchalaks observe economy and aim at reducing the dependence of the Centres on grants from Government. For some of the activities, local contributions are secured mainly in the shape of labour, the extent of monetary help available being limited since the scheme operates mainly in underdeveloped tracts. Initially, it was expected that the sum of Rs 1 crore assigned for the purpose could be spent in a period of 5 years at the rate of Rs 1 lakh per

year for each of the 20 centres in the 20 districts of the Province as then constituted. The number of districts has since increased and so has the number of centres. But so economically, by and large, has the work been carried on, that during the three years that have elapsed the aggregate expenditure, including the cost of the humble buildings provided at a majority of the centres, comes to Rs 31 lakhs, much under the sanctioned sum of Rs 50 lakhs for the entire period. As work develops, the demand for funds may increase; on the other hand, at few places, if any, will further expenditure be necessary on buildings and equipment.

10. Recently, the Government of India have entered into an agreement with the Government of the United States for the creation of an Indo-American Technical Co-operation Fund, one of the principal objects of which will be the establishment, in various parts of the country, of 50 rural-cum-urban community projects. In addition to the sum of 50 million dollars provided under this agreement, certain financial obligations will have to be assumed by the State and Central Governments. The scope of socio-economic effort as outlined in the prospectus of the project is in appearance similar to that of the Sarvodaya Scheme in operation in Bombay.

11. The main advantage of the socio-economic reorganization attempted in the rural and forest areas of Bombay appears to lie in the personnel of the agency selected to organize and inspire local effort. It seems likely to evoke greater response and be itself more responsive to local sentiment. It may thus better succeed in developing local initiative and evolving a healthy sense of responsibility. Experience gained so far indicates that the desire to keep down dependence on external aid inheres in the scheme. Hence one may hope that even if community centres spread all over India, financed out of the Indo-American Technical Co-operation Fund, that will not stand in the way of the development and extension of programmes of socio-economic reorganization of the modest but enduring type that have been launched, for instance, in Bombay with the aid of tried social workers devoted to the working out in practice, according to their humble light, of the ideals of the Sarvodaya school of social philosophy.

### Foreign Motor Companies

I wish to add my small voice in support of Shri N. Mahalingam's letter on the subject of *Manufacture of Motor Vehicles in India*, published in the *Harijan* of 19th January, 1952. Shri Mahalingam has referred to eight British and American companies, which have been permitted by our Government to "build up" (i.e. assemble) motor vehicles in India, with parts all made in foreign countries. I have some reliable information about one of these. During the year 1951, it sent remittances as follows:

For import of materials	To England over	Rs 119 lakhs
"	To Canada over	Rs 157 lakhs
For salaries of about a dozen Sahibs		Rs 9 lakhs
	Total Rs	285 lakhs

(The figures come to an average of about 24 lakhs per month).

The Company employs about 1,500 Indian workers, whose total wages come to about Rs 6 lakhs per annum. It means that 1,500 Indians get less than two-thirds of what ten or twelve foreign employees receive. The ratio works out at Indian to foreigner as 1 to 190 nearly.

These companies do not disclose such information to the public and even to Government departments concerned, and some of our Government officers have such an inferiority complex that they have not the courage to demand proper accounts from the companies.

Most of these are avoidable luxury goods and there is no reason why they should be allowed to be imported into India.

A PEDESTRIAN

## HARIJAN

May 31

1952

### SHRI VINOBA'S REPLY TO SHRI PATIL

On being questioned about the statement which Shri R. K. Patil had issued to the Press, from Delhi after his return from Sevapuri, Vinobaji said that he was happy that Shri Patil in the course of expressing his views on *Bhoodan* movement had advocated the cause of village industries. "If I had a glimpse of it in the Planning Commission Report, it would not have been necessary for me to severely criticize the report as I did. However I regard Shri Patil's discovery of the importance of village industries, though belated, as not a small gain to the country.

"As for the *Bhoodan* movement, I am grateful to Shri Patil for welcoming it as timely. But I am afraid that very likely he has failed to grasp the basic conception underlying the movement. Otherwise he would not have raised the question which had already been discussed threadbare. No doubt, I do want to give land to all those who want to earn their bread by working on land. That will be ideal. Ultimately it is from this will to honest work and honest living that Sarvodaya will rise and come into being. But for the present, as I made clear in my speech on the first day at Sevapuri, we were not going to give it to those who have already some means of earning their livelihood, such as, for instance, weavers, smiths, carpenters and others. The land from *Bhoodan-Yajna* will go to those only who are practised cultivators but are landless and have therefore to work as labourers for others, the labour again being not always available. I also made it clear that were we to observe no discrimination in the distribution of land, even our Prime Minister might ask for it as a person owning no land.

"The Sarva Seva Sangh resolution, which inspires the people to collect 25 lakh acres of land for the landless, itself declares that the problems of the country are not going to be solved by mere grant of lands. Agriculture and village industries are inseparably bound up together. For this reason, the resolution recommends the boycott of machine-processed articles of food and clothing. My formula for village industries is that the raw materials of a village should be turned into finished goods in that village itself, to meet its needs. I emphasized and explained the formula at the meeting of the Planning Commission and have put it before the people wherever I have gone. If this principle, which the Planning Commission is not yet willing to accept or accepts only

half-heartedly with conditions regarding 'efficiency and so forth', is accepted, the whole problem is solved.

"Shri Patil has again raised the question of 'economic holding' in his statement. I welcome it because frequent discussion of a thing may be of use for clarifying the issues involved. I do not distrust Shri Patil's memory. I say this because not only in the Sarvodaya Sammelan, but also in course of my discussions with Planning Commission members and subsequently at the Press Conference in Delhi, I had explained my views on this subject. The question of what does or does not constitute an economic holding is a matter of opinion. The immediate question is whether or not five acres of dry land or one acre of wet land is sufficient for a family of five. In Hyderabad it was regarded as sufficient. Here, in Uttar Pradesh, in the eastern districts, I put the question directly to the peasants and they expressed that it was possible to work and earn enough for one's living on even a half of that area. Shri Patil should be able to have his doubts answered by the land distribution programme in China and Japan. But why go far; let him visit Pavnar and see for himself how even a very small plot of land can be made to yield a very good crop.

"He has also raised the question of bullocks. Granting that a pair of bullocks will till twenty acres, it does not follow that every cultivator must have 20 acres. If he can work the miracle of granting that much land, by all means do it. But since there is not so much land in the country, the only practicable solution would be for four or five peasants to come together and jointly own a pair of bullocks. It will be a sort of partial co-operation which may be extended to other items of agricultural work such as irrigation, protection of crops from birds and wild animals etc.

"There appears to be fundamental difference between my views and those of Shri Patil. I wish that a day must come when every man whatever his station and office, the master and the servant, the teacher and the pupil, the member of the Planning Commission and his peon, the minister and the officer, will work for an hour or two on agriculture and help raise the production of the country. I hold that such loyal dedication to labour will contribute to the welfare of the country and the removal of inequality. Maybe, that for this purpose, our present cities may have to be destroyed and rebuilt on a new plan. Shri Tandonji spoke about it in his speech and I supported him and said that this was in consonance with the Vedic concept, where Indra is designated *Purandar* i.e. Destroyer of Cities. I continue to hope that some day, sooner or later, this Vedic concept is bound to materialize."

(Translated from Hindi)

D. M.



## IMMORAL LITERATURE

"Milan, (PTI-Reuter): 'Blood and sex' comics are turning the youth and adolescents of today into young ruffians and potential criminals.

"That is the conclusion reached by scientists, members of Parliament and legal experts at a conference on 'Press, radio and cinema for children', held here under the auspices of UNESCO (the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

"The delegates, who represented 24 countries, including Britain, India, Sweden, Germany, Holland, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain and the United States, were unanimously opposed to Press censorship of any kind. But all of them thought a measure of supervision necessary.

"As to films, the conference proposed the creation of a second international committee, also with branches in member countries of UNESCO, to screen all films and recommend which shall and which shall not be shown to teen-agers and children." (April, 1952).

If the Press is to be allowed to produce low type of literature in the shape of news-items, stories, advertisements, illustrations etc., how are the children to be prevented from reading them and looking at them?

Secondly, is it only the child who needs to be protected? Are grown-up persons immune from their debasing influence? If there is no doubt about their injurious nature, why should the Press and the Film-Producer be allowed to produce them? What is that "sacred" liberty of the Press, which wants to publish profane things? Surely "sacred" liberty is different from libertine licence! What is the justification for allowing the adult population to indulge in "murder, blood and sex" songs, pictures, dramas etc.?

There is room for literature, shows etc. particularly meant for teen-agers and children; but not because the other things are bad but because they are likely to be difficult and dull for them at that age. There should be nothing to be afraid of in their getting at them even at a tender age. It should be remembered that if they are not allowed to read a book or see a picture because of their age, they would be all the more tempted to get at them stealthily, and when a bad thing is acquired stealthily, it causes more harm to the developing mind than if it is witnessed publicly and as a matter of course. If a murder is attempted in your presence, you will be repelled against it and try to prevent it even at the risk of your own life. If you simply read its description or see a false picture or drama of it, instead of having a feeling of horror, you get a feeling of thrill and enjoyment. That means that you get a training in murder. The ancient Indian writers on Drama had made it a rule that war, death, murder etc. should not be represented on the stage. They might only be described. It was a good limitation.

The well-known Gujarati poet Dalpatram had pledged that he would not write anything which a father may not safely read or sing in the presence of his children or a brother in the presence of his sister. Certainly he had set a healthy rule for himself.

Wardha, 28-4-52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## NOTES

## Warning to Indian Languages

I am pained to observe that the habit of carrying on correspondence in English is increasing day by day even between persons speaking the same language. Of course, the excuse is the convenience of the stenotypist. Having regard to the nature of their occupation, they are unable to dispense with the English shorthand-writer and typewriter. And they cannot afford to keep both English and Hindi stenographers and machines. Even if they can afford they cannot easily have a competent shorthand writer of Indian languages. If they are touring, they cannot conveniently carry two machines and two assistants.

The Devnagari script requires to be reformed to suit the typewriter. Various States did establish committees to report on this subject. Their reports are published. But important people won't agree. And so, they are filed, and there is no further doing.

And, our ego cannot be reconciled to use the Roman script for writing our languages. Of course, we have to use Indian words in our English writings, and since we do it without an exact system of transliteration, the correct pronunciation of Indian words is often made doubtful to ourselves. But if we standardize the Roman script for Indian languages, there is the danger of Roman script becoming thrust upon us. So we would rather sacrifice our languages and pronunciations than standardize that script either!

Lovers of Indian languages must take this state of affairs as a warning. They must promptly come to a decision about the standard shorthand system, a common scheme of script reform and a key-board for Indian languages and have them sanctioned. Otherwise the result will be that the English language will get more and more thoroughly established for all important and formal work.

Wardha, 28-4-52

K. G. M.

## Training for Leprosy Organizers

Maharogi Seva Mandal, Wardha has started a training centre for lay workers at Dattapur Leprosy Home under the auspices of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. They are to be trained in such a way that they should be able to organize and run a Leprosy Colony with medical help if available. But in case doctors are not available, the trained lay workers should be able to run colonies on approved lines. Applications are invited for being admitted to the second team of this class, which will commence from 2nd October, 1952.

*Educational Qualifications:* Minimum qualification for admission is Inter Science, Inter Arts, or graduates of

institutions recognized by the Indian Faculty of Medicine. Rural Medical Practitioners of Madhya Pradesh will also be admitted. Exceptions can be made in suitable cases by the governing body of the Maharogi Seva Mandal.

**Age:** Between 21 and 40 years. Exceptions to the age rules in special cases.

**Other Requisites:** Candidates must have humanitarian spirit of service, sincerity, and devotion to such a type of work. The candidate may be of any sex, but must be healthy and capable of undertaking pioneering organizational work.

**Training Period:** 12 months.

**Medium of Instruction:** Medical subjects with the help of English, but non-medical subjects will be taught in Hindi or Marathi.

### Arrangements for Lodging and Boarding, Stipend Etc.

At present the number to be admitted will not be more than 10. Each candidate, selected to undergo the training, will be given free quarters and a stipend of Rs 50 to Rs 100, per month according to the needs of the individual for twelve months. Boarding charges will have to be paid by the candidate.

The candidate will have to give a binding to serve for five years after training on a salary up to Rs 150/ per month according to his merit.

Applications will have to be submitted before 15th June 1952. Hence for further details and information please apply immediately to

Dattapur Leprosy Colony  
Post : Nalwadi, Dist. Wardha

Secretary,  
Maharogi Seva Mandal

### Policy of the Harijan Sevak Sangh

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh held at Delhi under the Chairmanship of Shri G. D. Birla on the 10th May 1952 after having transacted its routine business, passed the following special resolution:

#### 1. Clarification of Policy

In view of the fact that some good and well-meaning friends in addition to our usual critics have chosen to criticize the activities of the Sangh as only ameliorative and not revolutionary in character, this Committee once again reiterates its already well-defined policy in regard to the running of its own institutions, like schools and hostels. While there is no doubt that our end and aim is the removal of untouchability, the Sangh cannot be blind to the immediate needs of these people who are in a far inferior condition because of this curse of untouchability and delay help to them, simply because they cannot get themselves admitted into the common institutions. Further these critics also ignore the fact that the Sangh in spite of its wish to see the Harijan boys and girls sharing the same amenities as the children of the other communities, cannot afford to do so on financial grounds because of the heavy expenditure involved. While therefore they do get admission for some Harijan children in the common institutions it has to run its own institutions so that they may save a good lot of money to be utilized in turn on many other needy children. In addition to this, our own institutions being run on Gandhian ideals, are much simpler in standard and best suited to the economic status of the Harijan community. Here again it should be noted that all our institutions are thrown open to the members of the other communities and in a good many of them there are even non caste-Hindu children living side by side with the Harijans.

#### 2. Budgets

The meeting also passed the budgets of the Harijan Udyogshala and Kasturba Balika Ashram amounting to Rs 96 178/- and Rs 44,000/- respectively.

K. S. SHIVAM,  
Working Secretary,  
Harijan Sevak Sangh, Delhi

### THE BOMBAY TENANCY ACT — I

The Bombay Tenancy Act has raised a storm of protest both from landlords and tenants. The landlords complain that the Act is a great encroachment on their legitimate property rights. They had enjoyed for a long time past the right to fix any rent they pleased for cultivating the lands possessed by them. This right has been taken away by the Act, which has fixed the maximum rate of rent, whether paid in cash or as a share of the crops. Again, a certain class of tenants has been recognized as "protected tenants" and they are given special rights and privileges. Other tenants have been ensured their tenancy for a period of ten years. Restrictions have also been put on the rights of transfer of land. The right to determine the reasonable price of land has been taken away from the landlords and given to Government officers. No other private property except land is subject to such restrictions. Such restrictions have naturally reduced the value of land and lowered the financial credit of the landlords. As a protest against this measure, the landlords have formed an organization called Khedut Sangh to protect and defend their rights and interests. The Bombay Government have dealt with these questions in a Gujarati booklet called *Ganotdhara Ange Samjuti* (Explanation regarding the Tenancy Act).

The main object of the Act has been declared to be the protection of the interests of tenants and cultivators who cultivate land by their own labour. This is to enable the tillers of land to enjoy the fruits of their labour so that they might take greater interest in agriculture and have an incentive for raising it from its present poor condition by instituting improvement and reforms. The official explanation of the Act says:

"The petty *khatedars* or tenants cultivating land belonging to others are also agriculturists. The interest of these persons are permanently attached with land, they have no other means of livelihood except agriculture and nowhere else to go to outside their villages. Such cultivators constitute a great number and it is the object of the Act to protect their interests. They are true agriculturists, and the Act aims at securing them that title."

This shows that the Government enacted this legislation with laudable and noble objects. But their notions of rights of property are so antiquated and outmoded that in their extreme anxiety to protect them they have laid down some provisions which, far from fulfilling the good objects, have produced the opposite results. To cite an illustration: It is provided in the Act that tenants of a certain years' standing will be regarded as "protected tenants". It is to ensure his permanent interest in land. But by another provision in the law this right has been virtually taken away because it empowers the landlord to terminate the tenancy of a 'protected tenant' by giving him one year's notice in writing stating that he wants it for cultivating it personally and



thus he can take the possession of the land cultivated by the tenant for a long period. This provision has all of a sudden created a desire in the landlords who till yesterday did not care even to know where their lands lay "to cultivate personally".

Again the definitions of "Agriculturist" and "to cultivate personally" are so defective that they defeat the fundamental object of the legislation, namely, that of restricting the rights of 'absentee landlords'. The Act defines "Agriculturists" as "a person who cultivates land personally" and "to cultivate personally" means "to cultivate on one's own account — (i) by one's own labour, or (ii) by the labour of any member of one's family, or (iii) by servants on wages payable in cash or kind but not in crop share or by hired labour under one's personal supervision or the personal supervision of any member of one's family."

In the above definition the words 'personal supervision' have, in practice been very loosely construed. Some landlords happen to own lands in three or four villages. They keep a clerk or a watchman or both in each village and they themselves or any member of their family visit the village once a while every fortnight or every month. This they call personal supervision. It is no wonder that under such personal supervision the agriculture is very poor. Many landlords who before the act used to lease their lands to tenants, have since, become 'agriculturists cultivating their lands personally' in order to avoid the restrictions of the law. This trick has not escaped the attention of the Government. For they make a mention of it in their booklet:

It says:

"This parasitic class who has no interest in land and whose means of livelihood are not limited to land only, calls themselves agriculturists. And though they deplore the Tenancy Act and criticize it that it deprives them of their proprietary rights, they do not miss to take advantage of a provision of the Act. For instance, under the pretext of cultivating land personally they dispossess tenants of the land which they have been cultivating for generations past."

But it is not surprising that it has so happened. For the Government says in the same booklet:

"Looking comparatively from the angles of both landlords and tenants, the Tenancy Act protects more the rights of landlords than the tenants' right of cultivation."

Thus the legislation wants to achieve the object of safeguarding the interests of tenants on the one hand, as also those of the absentee landlords on the other simultaneously. These mutually incompatible objects have done harm to many tenants.

From the point of view of pure justice, the important question is whether it is the tenant or the landlord who has a prior right over land? Is the tenant who has been cultivating land for generations past, and depends upon it for

earning his livelihood, or the landlord who has no attachment and taste for agriculture, and who does not depend on it for his livelihood, but is regarded as its owner by legal convention, the person deserving of protection? Common sense and equity will say that the tenant should have a superior right over land and should be fully protected. If land had tongue it would say, "I know only one person who tends me and works hard to get the milk of my breast. I know not the man whom your laws declare as owner, but who bears no relationship with me that I am aware of."

(To be continued)

(Translated from Gujarati) NARHARI PARIKH

### SHRI VINOBA AT SEVAPURI — II \*

"As I said, after Gandhiji, I was continually thinking how we could come in close contact with the people and make use of *ahimsa* for solving their problems. And I was led to three items of work. First was the *hank-offering* at the *melas* held in memory of Gandhiji. People offered hanks of self-spun yarn at appointed places as a mark of their respect. But there was no relation between the number of offerers and the number of hanks. It struck me that we should fix it at one hank per person, neither more nor less. If this rule is followed, every hank would be a vote in favour of Sarvodaya." Vinoba said he could visualize the vast potential power behind this idea. If they could explain to the people the idea of Sarvodaya, people in thousands would come forward to offer the yarn and thus help in inculcating and spreading throughout the country the love and dignity of labour. It was a vast programme. They would have on their registers the names of donors of yarn. And their workers would go to them and establish contacts with them. If there was only one contributor in a village, that person would come under their particular care. His one hank would be like the *nando-dip* (the evening lamp) fighting with its lone gleam of light the vast mass of gloom. Thus gradually but steadily they would come in close and friendly contact with the entire society with tremendous results. Gandhiji had once suggested to the Congress to take a hank of yarn instead of four annas as membership fee. But the suggestion was turned down. Meanwhile they had raised the membership fee from four annas to a rupee. Now they had again reduced it to four annas. Thus they kept raising and reducing the fee. But it did not occur to the Congress leaders that they must not give importance to money. That was not going to lead them anywhere.

They (Congressmen) talk of strengthening and purifying the Congress. But they do not stop to think that money could give them neither strength nor purification. If the Sarva Seva Sangh succeeded in convincing and inducing the people to offer yarn-hanks and in spreading the idea to the millions, Vinoba had no doubt that they would have not only initiated the people in the noble principle of personal labour, but also revolutionized their present mentality. Something had been done during the last year in that direction. Something had been achieved during the current year, but it was not enough. Probably, as has been suggested, not more could be done on account of the elections. Vinoba himself had been asked to suspend his journey for a while until the elections had passed off. But he did not like the idea. The Ganga did not stop nor did the Sun from their courses. How could he then do so? It would be different if he broke his leg and had to stop perforce. That would be God's doing. Otherwise he must continue. And he was glad to say that

\* The remaining part of Vinobaji's speech at Sevapuri on 13-4-52.

the furor of the elections notwithstanding, the people showed great interest in his work. They listened to him attentively and gave him good co-operation.

Another factor that attracted Vinoba's notice since Gandhiji's death was that Gandhiji's institutions had now passed that stage when they carried on their activities with the help of money. They should now free themselves from their dependence on money. When the Gandhi Memorial Fund was being collected, for a long time he observed silence. But when he was specifically asked about the Fund at one place, he had to express the opinion that if they wanted to perpetuate the memory of Gandhiji and further his work, money would not help them. Rather it would obstruct their progress. He saw no reason to change his opinion. He could think of some items of work, such as service of lepers, which would require money. But as a general rule Gandhiji's institutions should not utilize funds collected in his memory. They should follow the old rule: "Don't eat the food offered in memory of a deceased person." If Gandhiji's institutions carried on their activities on the strength of money donations, they would cease to grow in spirit, and fall to contribute towards the establishment of *Gram-Raj*. Therefore they should strive to free themselves as much as possible from the dependence on money. "Then alone will our work breathe new life and our villages be resuscitated. That will create its effect on Government. If we attain our objectives and yet the Government does not pay heed to it, you and I know and can consider what steps would follow. But it is unnecessary to say anything about it at this stage. I wish all our constructive institutions to apply themselves in the experiment of becoming free from money dependence and concentrate their energies on the construction of ideal-villages."

In this connection, Vinoba endorsed Shri Dhirendra Majumdar's proposal for the boycott of certain machine-made products. Vinoba said that the proposal was full of potentialities and they would be able to achieve some work, only if they put into practice these things. Otherwise their words have no effect, like wisdom which exhausts itself in advising others. "The people of India are an old and experienced people. They exacted from the *sevaks*, who profess to serve them, a very high standard of conduct, before they are prepared to hear them. Those who fail to come up to that standard,—they reject. In a way they are very conservative." But, Vinoba said, in this conservatism lay their security. Had they listened to any and every reformer, they would have perished before long. Howsoever great a reformer might be, our people would not listen to him until they had tested him. They were like the earth which sends back the rubber-ball rebounding but opens itself to the pickaxe. He was glad that the people did not accept anything on impulse. They had been hearing about *khadi* and village industries for long; but they had not yet adopted these things fully. They were still watching and testing the workers. It was therefore necessary for the success of the programme that the workers should themselves set an example of their precept and reject the machine-made products from their personal lives. This was possible through his programme of elimination of money economy.

Vinoba feared that the denomination, "Boycott of Machines" was not quite happy. It might give rise to misunderstanding and once it set in, no amount of subsequent clarification would be able to dispel it. They must therefore choose a name which might grow and expand. He gave an example how adherence to those words might breed confusion. In a particular village which had been the centre of constructive work for a number of years, someone opened a flour-mill. The constructive workers had preached for the use of *chakki* flour, and they denounced the introduction of the mill; but their protests

were of no avail. The mill got going and continued. When the fact was reported to Vinoba, he asked the workers faced as they were with the inevitable situation, why they did not open a communally-owned mill? That would have been far better than to own helplessness and let an individually-owned mill carry on. At some places, they had to make use of the engines for drawing water for irrigating the fields. If they insisted on refusing the grain so grown, they would be acting like narrow-minded sectarians. "Therefore we must choose our words cautiously; our words must be free from narrowness, words which may admit of growth and expansion in their meaning." This is why he had adopted the expression '*kanchan-mukti*' i.e. freedom from money.

(Translated from Hindi)

(Concluded)

## SHRI VINOBA'S LETTER-BOX

### 1. Produce of Undistributed Land

The gifted land that is not still distributed to the landless will remain with the donor during the ensuing season. After deducting the amount of expenditure incurred by him in tilling that land he will hand over the produce to the *Bhoodan* Committee (13-5-52).

### 2. Members of Different Political Parties

It is good that members of different political parties are on the *Bhoodan* Committee. But they are taken on it not in the capacity of representatives of their parties but in their individual capacity. We recognize men as men only without labels.

### 3. Land-donations by the Government

It is good that the Government has shown willingness to offer land. But we want to reach the target fixed by us....with the donations of the people only. That is our main task today. We do not want to include Government offer in it. After realizing our target we shall consider the offer of Governments at the time of distribution.

I have full faith that our Governments will offer complete co-operation in our work.

### 4. Expenditure

True, we have to incur some expenses in distributing land. The Government of Hyderabad had granted some amount for the purpose. We had not to incur any expense in obtaining the lands. Because we sell our books in our tour and meet our expenses from what we earn by way of commission. There are some workers deputed by the Constructive Institutions who help our work. Their salaries are paid by their respective institutions. Even then some monetary help will be required. But it is not necessary to issue a public appeal for that purpose.

Sevagram, 16-5-52  
(From Hindi)

VALLABHSWAMI,  
Joint Secretary,  
Sarva Seva Sangh

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