

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

Vol. XVIII. No. 28 AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1954.

TWO ANNAS

BAPU'S GREATEST FOLLOWER

(By Mahadev Desai)

The people may not appreciate his (Vinoba's) greatness now, but will do so in the course of time. . . . He is a *Naishtik Brahmachari* (life-long celibate); there might be many such *Naishtik Brahmacharis*. He is a profound scholar; there might be many such scholars. He is wedded to simplicity of life; there are several among Gandhiji's followers who surpass him in it. He is an advocate of constructive work and remains buried in it day and night; there might be several followers of Gandhiji who do so. There are many who share his intellectual brilliance. But there are certain things in him which are wanting in every one else. Immediately a resolve is made and a principle grasped, he starts his practice of it from the very moment. This is his highest virtue. His second virtue is his continuous self-development. There is hardly any among us who can confidently say that he is growing every moment of his life. Barring Gandhiji it is in Vinoba alone that I have seen this quality. It was on account of this quality that he learnt at the age of 46 a difficult language like Arabic, studied the *Koran* in the original and became almost its scholar. There are Bapu's many followers who wield a great influence on the people. But hardly will there be any follower of Bapu, who has trained as many votaries of Truth and Non-violence, and devoted and sincere workers as Vinoba has.

'Proficiency in work is Yoga.*' In this sense Vinoba is a true Yogi. Very few workers have Vinoba's harmony of thought, word and deed. His life is a melodious music. Such followers are a glory to Gandhiji and Satyagraha.

25-11-40

(From a preface to Vinoba's book, *Madhukar* in Gujarati)

* योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् — Gita 2-50.

THE DIARY OF MAHADEV DESAI

Vol. I

Translated from the Gujarati and edited

By Valji Govindji Desai

Pages, viii+335 Price Rs. 5-0-0 Postage etc. As. 12
NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
P.O. NAVAJIVAN, AHMEDABAD - 14

INDIA'S SOUL IS ASTIR

(By Swami Anand)

[The following is an extract from a letter written to an American friend in reply to his query. He is deeply interested in Gandhiji, and is also conducting a journal to promote international understanding and goodwill.]

Bhoodan is the crowning conception for fulfilling Gandhiji's life-work. Nothing hitherto achieved or attempted in the constructive field of Gandhian planning by Indian leaders can compare with Bhoodan. It has gripped the imagination of the millions and moves them without effort. For it is in tune with the genius of the race.

India's soul is astir indeed. And her millions have come to know of it, as if by instinct. The Muscovite is discomfited. The Red slogan of class conflict and hatred may succeed with a few thousand industrial workers in cities; it shall not succeed with the millions. Even the demagogic politician 'the licensed high-priest of democracy' is finding his vocation escaping him. He finds the atmosphere surcharged with Bhoodan, bows low and humbly takes up the tune—that he may not lose caste with his clients. But the folks, humble that they are, know 'the tares among the wheat' and will make no mistake.]

"By far the greatest experiment in the Gandhian way of tackling the countrywide economic and social problem in India today is the Bhoodan (Land-Gifts) Movement. It is an attempt to usher in economic and social equality by calling upon owners of land (also property) to relinquish it and share it with the landless 'have-nots' of the community on a voluntary basis and without recourse to legislation, which may follow in order to regularize what has been already accomplished.

"The Movement has been initiated by Shri Vinoba Bhave, the foremost surviving disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Originally an unorthodox monk steeped in Hindu lore, he has made a reverential study of world religions and their systems of ethics. Through years of intensive self-discipline and manual bread-labour he has slowly developed into a saint almost as tall in moral and spiritual stature as the Mahatma himself. His ultimate aim is Reconstruction of Man through applied non-violence in human relations, and doing away with all inequalities, economic or social, the world over. The Bhoodan or Landgifts Campaign in India is its local expression.

"India, like America, is an agricultural country, over 80 per cent of her 360,000,000 people having to subsist on land. Ours thus is an

agricultural economy mainly. Vinobaji, therefore, has been calling upon all landowners in the country to share land voluntarily with the landless in every village without compulsion from society or State, and by turning their villages into self-reliant self-governing communes to establish the millennium.

"In three years since the launching of the Movement, Vinobaji has succeeded in securing over 3,300,000 acres from 3,00,000 donors besides cash, implements and draught animals, which are being distributed among the landless. His target is to secure 50 million acres by way of these voluntary gifts before the year 1957 is out. His principal lieutenant in the campaign is Shri J. P. Narain, the great socialist leader of India, who is holding out a fair promise of becoming St. Paul of the New Faith.

"The message is being delivered by the Saint himself walking from village to village, holding prayer meetings, calling upon the 'haves' to recognize the 'sixth brother' and to welcome him in the 'joint family' with honour and status by conceding him land as his birth-right. The millions who witness these walking tours and listen to his words see in him Gandhi resurrected, having come back in their midst once more to fulfil his interrupted life-mission of reinstalling the 'disinherited of the earth'.

"Thousands of social workers, engaged in various constructive services of the Gandhian programme, have caught the spark of the New Faith and are carrying the flame to every nook and corner of India. At a recent convention held at Bodh-Gaya—the hallowed spot of Buddha's Enlightenment—and attended by the tallest in the land in the spirit of a pilgrimage, over 500 seasoned workers of both sexes responded to Shri J. P. Narain's call and solemnly pledged themselves to dedicate their lives to the great Cause of man's reconstruction by raising a class-free state-free society on foundations of Non-violence. Their number has increased considerably since.

"These harbingers, in their turn, walk the villages 'carrying neither scrip, nor shoes, nor yet staves', chanting hymns of prayer and of hope, and assuring the millions of the millennium being at hand.

"It is a unique phenomenon—these walking tours of the New Gossellers. The village folks,—both masters and men, the exploiters as well as the exploited,—hail them as apostles of the millennium. Without much persuasion and as if they were waiting simply to be approached,—the 'haves' part with their lands. They give with a joyous heart. They vie with one another. Often they give their all. The land gift is often accompanied by seed, implements even stores and provision for the duration till the beneficiary is able to raise his 'own' crop and harvest it.

"While many big Zamindars owning vast acreage have bowed willingly, divesting them-

selves of a thousand or a hundred thousand acres apiece, the great bulk of 3,00,000 donors hitherto registered are humble working folks holding a few acres or less each. Whole villages have come forward, donating every inch within their village bounds and turning into co-operating fraternities. India's soul is astir. And her millions, have come to know of it.

"The Movement with its ideology is generating an unprecedented climate of goodwill and understanding throughout the country,—a revolution in human values discarding all violence, exploitation and inequalities on the part of the individual, society or state,—a revolution which may in its ultimate results react powerfully on the strained relationships among the nations of the world, to their lasting benefit."

GOD'S GOOD DEVOTEE

(By A. V. Barve)

Acharya Vinoba Bhavne's sixtieth birthday falls on the 11th September 1954.

Rashttrapati, Babu Rajendra Prasad, was once described as 'God's good man'. Similarly, Vinoba Bhavne can aptly be described as 'God's good devotee'. The family in which he was born bears a surname which literally means 'devotion'. Devotion is woven in his very texture. From his very childhood he showed signs of great precocity and promise of early childhood was more than fulfilled in his later life.

Like Ramdas fleeing from the meshes of nuptial life, Vinoba fled from his Inter. Arts examination, in search of a political and spiritual guru. It is passing strange but true, that the great Lokamanya Tilak who was then the uncrowned king of India, could not attract him as a follower. Says the poet,

भ्रमन्वान्ते नवमञ्जरीदु । न वट्पदो गंधकलीमजिघ्रत् ॥

(सा किं न रम्या स च किं न रस्ता । बलीयसी केवलमीश्वरेच्छा ॥)
(The bee, while wandering in a forest, was not attracted by the bud of the Champaka flower. How can this be explained? It can only be explained as God's wish.) It was Mahatma Gandhi, who was destined to be Tilak's political successor, was also to be the spiritual and political father to Vinoba.

Under Gandhiji's paternal guidance Vinoba quickly grasped the discipline of the Sabarmati Ashram and in 1942 Gandhiji chose him as the first individual Satyagrahi, bringing him into limelight, which he had so long purposely avoided.

There are many facets to Vinoba's interesting and loving personality. Can you visualize a Socrates, a Christ, a Faraday, a Wilberforce and a John Bunyan all rolled into one? Well, Vinoba is all that and something to spare.

Like Socrates, he is fond of imparting knowledge by questions and counter-questions. Having mastered the science of logic, he can very ably point out the fallacies and lacunae in the arguments of his questioners. And then he expounds his theme. He has written books which make a

small library by themselves. How and when he found time for that is a mystery to the uninitiated. Like Christ, he preaches love of God and man. He preaches and literally practised, when recently he was violently attacked in Bihar, the turning of the other cheek to the smiter if you are smitten on one, like Jesus Christ.

Like Faraday, the great scientist who gave us electricity, Vinoba has revolutionized the technique of the production of hand-made Khaddar, by his inventive genius.

Like Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, Vinoba has given us his famous *Gita*. He is a man of prayer who prays twice a day and sings songs of devotion to the Lord of the Universe with such intense fervour that the audience is carried off its legs to a higher level where it is 'in tune with the Infinite'.

Last but not least like Wilberforce crusading in pursuit of the abolition of slavery, Vinoba is stalking throughout the length and breadth of Bihar collecting land for the landless millions of India. By 1957 he hopes to rehabilitate India's ten million landless labourers. We can go on describing his attainments almost *ad infinitum*. But want of space prevents this.

On the occasion of his attaining the age of sixty the whole of Bharat with one voice could wish speedy success to Vinoba in his Herculean task.

VINOBA AT THE BIHAR JIWANDAN WORKERS' CAMP — II

(By "Dadu")

On the morning of the 28th Vinoba walked down from Sarvodayagram to the Tirhut Academy (a distance of two miles). To the teachers and students assembled there he addressed dwelling on the necessity of right thought, productive physical work and continuous study and meditation.

The Programme

At nine, those workers who were invited the previous night reassembled before Vinoba. They placed their respective decisions and promised to execute them faithfully. Reserving his main remarks for the afternoon meeting, Vinoba just made a few observations. First, land-distribution rules (as framed by Vinoba) should be strictly and sincerely carried out. Secondly, everybody above four years of age could spin and offer his or her hank as *sootanjali* on every 12th February in memory of the Father of the Nation. "It is not a mere hank," spoke Vinoba, "but a symbol of our resistance to the process of wealth-collection on the basis of mill-industry. It is an emblem of our opposition to centralized industry. It is an expression of the Sarvodaya thought." Thirdly, cities could not be ignored in the progress of our non-violent revolution. There should, therefore, be separate schemes for the cities and attempts should be made to approach every home through Khadi, Ghani-oil, Gur, etc., as also through Bhoodan or Sarvodaya literature. The Sampattidan work must also be taken up there.

The Closing Speech

In the afternoon, at the closing function of the Camp, Vinoba gave a very touching and inspired speech, the like of which was very rarely heard these days. Asking the workers to commence their work with a large heart and broad outlook, he called upon them to contact the big landholders as also to tackle eviction cases gently, obtain land from every landholder in Bihar and thus amass at least 30 lakhs of *dan-patras*, and initiate the Sampattidan programme which was not only an indi-

pensable part of Bhoodan but also had the potentialities to transform the socio-economic order and reshape the society.

Next, he dwelt on the religious aspect of Sampattidan which was meant to infuse religious spirit, righteous spirit in the people. Vinoba affirmed that the religious aspect played the largest part far outweighing the legal and social parts, in our daily functionings. The spiritual aspect is at the root of all human endeavour. When he began dilating upon this theme in rather some detail thrice—when he referred to Bapu's remarks about the Himalayas as being made up not of stones and rocks but of the penance of saints and *rishis*, to the anxiousness of the Indian masses to have a dip in the Ganga at the Kumbh because countless souls had undergone penance by its banks, and to the fact of every Muslim bridegroom, though illiterate, being presented with a copy of the Koran at marriage—his throat choked. With effort, he tried to proceed further and giving instances from the lives of Tolstoy and Ramana Maharshi, he added, "Why does a man sacrifice his life for the sake of a puny piece of cloth called flag? Why should he insist on keeping that straight and high? What is all this? These are feelings and emotions leading to spiritualism which makes life possible. If we turn towards that with faith we can achieve maximum results."..... So saying, Vinoba's voice drowned. And with folded hands he left his seat. Amidst such momentous and exalted scenes, the Bihar Jiwandan Workers' Camp came to a close.

For most of the time on 29th and 30th of July Vinoba was busy in the meeting of the Executive Committee of Sarva Seva Sangh. In the afternoon of the 30th, many leading Congress workers of Muzaffarpur district gathered at Sarvodayagram in Vinoba's presence. Vinoba dwelt in detail on the various implications of the Bhoodan movement and described it as the most essential and practical programme before the country.

To Students

Early in the morning of the 31st July Vinoba left Sarvodayagram after a stay of full eight days. We were bound for Turkli, a small town as also a railway station.

On his way, he met the students of the Ramdayalu College. He told them not to forget the impoverished millions who paid for their education, though themselves illiterate, in sweat and toil. Turkli is a well-known basic education centre of North Bihar. So Vinoba called the teachers and students of the place and took a class lasting for an hour and three-quarter, in which he explained the essentials of his Loka-Nagari script in great detail. They were surprised at the learning and wit of this land-beggar and looked at him with amazement. They did not know that he had been a teacher all his life.

At Vaishali

At five in the evening, Vinoba inaugurated the Vaishali Shiksha Mandal which is running an educational scheme covering about four hundred villages in the locality. Vaishali is a great name in ancient Indian education. Vaishali, Bodhi-Gaya, Nalanda, Taxila, Kashi and Saranath are memorable names which attracted people from distant lands and all climes once upon a time.

In his post-prayer address, Vinoba remarked that with Vaishali one remembered the immortal name of Bhagwan Mahavir who gave India the lesson of non-violence. He insisted on an impartial outlook and taught us to search for non-violence without attachment. Bhoodan Yajna was an humble effort to tackle problems in the same way. Vinoba expressed the hope that the education imparted at Vaishali Mandal would be an education for life leading to broad vision and large heart. He felt sure that the message of Bhoodan would be carried to every village there and liberal contributions to Bhoodan, Sampattidan and Shramdan, etc. would follow.

Thus came to a close the awfully busy week. We had to spend one more week in Muzaffarpur district in this round.

HARIJAN

Sept. 11

1954

THE CONGRESS DIRECTIVE RE. VANASPATI

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

In the course of a debate in the Parliament — our Rashtra Sabha, on the Bill to check food adulteration, the following points were made by some members :

1. It was a matter of regret that in spite of a resolution passed by the A.-I. C. C. in 1951, recommending a ban on the manufacture of 'Vanaspatti Ghee' which has become a very cheap and fruitful adulterant of pure Ghee, the Government had not taken any step ;

2. As a second best, they had not also been able to give it a permanent colour so as to make it distinguishable from pure Ghee.

As can be gathered from the press report of the debate, while the Government replied to the latter, it was, queerly enough, silent on the first point. Regarding colouration of Vanaspatti the Minister in charge replied that the Government had tried its best to get a suitable colouring matter but had not succeeded till now. The experts had told, " We did our level best, but we have not been able to find a suitable colour."

And the Minister hinted that as far as the Bill went, it was not concerned with the manufacture of Vanaspatti but only with the adulteration of foodstuffs.

Surely Ghee is an article of our food and it is abundantly clear now that it is profusely adulterated with Vanaspatti. Even if it is conceded that Vanaspatti is not bad for health, surely it is bad to mix it with Ghee, which should be stopped. And as such, it does come under the purview of the proposed Bill.

And there are two ways known to us at present to stop this adulteration : 1. Stop or control the manufacture of the known adulterant ; 2. Or so colour it as to make adulteration with it visible and easy to detect. If the latter remedy is impossible in spite of all the science we have and the national laboratories we have established, the obvious course to do is to take up the other alternative of control.

Of course, there is the third and the best way also to achieve the object, and that is for the industrialists to manufacture only as much Vanaspatti as is necessary for non-edible purposes of industry, and not to produce the edible stuff. Or those who use it as the adulterant may cease to do so, as it is a sin to cheat or injure anybody in this manner. It is only, where this last remedy fails, that the State has to come in, on behalf of the community. Otherwise it stands

to be misunderstood as, if not "hand in glove with big business", at least not heeding to the genuine demand of the people for reasons not quite clear to the popular mind.

The Minister in charge further replied to an allegation of the following sort : It was hinted by a speaker that evils of adulteration had increased, because Government had given 'a long rope' to big mill-owners who could manufacture anything they liked without caring for the larger interests of the country. To which, the reply, as reported, was, its forthright refutation, which helped the problem no way either. The question remains, will Government implement the decision or the directive of the A.-I. C. C., if it is clear that science has failed till now to give us effective colouring material ? It is no use waiting for it to come, as we do not know when it may come, if ever at all.

31-8-54

RELIGIONS IN HISTORY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Among the few major passions that drive mankind to war and dissension, conflict and estrangement, surely, religion is one. Let it not be said that it was so in the middle ages and has gradually died away, its strength having decreased with the passage of time and the growth of science and rationalism ; for it would not be historically true to say so. Albeit, the nature and the influence of the religious sentiment have changed in course of the centuries, but it can scarcely be maintained that the sentiment has been transformed or sublimated into a larger and broader conception of one world sentiment — into a sort of a world religion inspiring our common humanity. Rather, the middle ages continue to abide with us as a subconscious force, almost elemental in its potency, awaiting to be canalized into some wider vision of ourselves and of the purpose of our earthly existence. I may illustrate the point.

The reader must have seen the article 'Christian Attitude Toward Other Faiths' (*Harijan*, 28-8-54, p. 208). It is a significant statement from a student of religions. He points out why religion, which should rather unite man, divides him. This is so because it makes us 'fall into an idiomatic rut' driving us to be 'evangelist or apologist' of certain religious panacea inducing 'dogmatic slumbers' over the whole groups of people. It gets interwoven with the culture of the people, almost making itself the spirit of the race and the essence of its progress and culture. Thus behaving, it does not allow us to possess the rightful and noble attitude of the honest inquirer, — of a seeker of the truth of our being, which is the only true and worthwhile status on earth of each one of us, whatever religious label we may be heir to or may own or acquire.

Examined as a group force, as a very virile leaven crystalizing human beings into groups or communities; it divides mankind into religious communities; and as Ross says, "the resurgence of tribalism or nationalism is but one more evidence of this profound disease." In times of widespread unrest and basic insecurity, in which we are at present, it is natural that man should look to his past,—to the subconscious of the race or the community. It is thus that history lives in us. And it is not bad; it is as it would be. As Ross says, "this is healthy in so far as the persons doing this are mindful of the necessity to incorporate insights so gained in the living present. Since the past holds us in its embrace we need to understand it." But the trouble is that very often, almost always as a group, "we cling to (that past) or glory in it," thus reviving old animosities, racial or national, and tribal taboos as revised editions.

And if we look at history we find that those religious groups that might have succeeded to vanquish and hold sway over others begin to feel a sort of innate superiority for themselves, such as, for example, the 'chosen people', the 'blessed of the Lord or Allah' etc. The worldly success is then unknowingly attributed to the superior virtue of their own creed or religious formula; and as a consequence there is an end to honest inquiry or search for truth. In our arrogant ignorance, we forget that "there is no truth that does not include all truth", and "linger too long in shadow of the wayside shrines of the past." The teachability or learnability of the human mind ends and we no more have an open mind; arrogance seizes us putting an end to progressive advancement. The Aryans or the Hindus, when they began to be invaded by Islam from the N. W. frontier, had such pride; Mohammedans had it in their days of glory; the Christian peoples of modern times have it at present. And it is to the last groups that Ross addresses, "I personally do not look for the conversion of great numbers of the adherents of the other religious traditions to some form of Christian sectarianism." And we can see that this pride of superiority has assumed the form of colonialism and 'Malanist' racialism in the political field. A spirit of co-existence must be infused in world's religious communities as well, not only political. And a way of life in keeping with that spirit must be devised and cultivated by the modern world. We must learn that mere word and ritual killeth, creating a dogmatic rut or breeding an insulting arrogance; their meaning and significance provoking in us the spirit of humble curiosity, wonder and reverence fulfilment and makes us whole by nourishing our inner being with the manna which only sustains us.

AWARDS AND TITLES

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

It was good that there was some discussion in the Parliament as to the propriety of the conferment of awards and titles and the Government took the opportunity to clarify its position in this regard. It helps us to understand to a certain extent why they have chosen to revive this practice, albeit in an altered form.

Shri Nehru pointed out in his reply that no country in the world was so fond of public recognition of merit in one form or another, especially in the form of awarding honorifics, as we. We have been using such honorific epithets, beginning from Gandhiji, for countless people almost from village to village. Gandhiji continued to be addressed as Mahatma even though he disapproved of the practice more than once. There were many who were called the Gandhi or the Jawahar of this or that city or province. Shri Vallabhbhai Patel was the 'Sardar'. Deshbhakta, Deshodharak, Lokamanya and many other such epithets were in vogue for particular persons. The process still continues.

This was the way our simple and unsophisticated people expressed their love and gratitude to their leaders. At times it was also used as good-humoured banter for making fun of the wiseacres. Indeed the tendency has been so marked and so continuous that it may well be said to have become a habit with us. But the Government are in a different position and it will not do for them to imitate the people in this respect. It would be wrong for them to grant any such awards and invoke this habit as a justification for their action.

A distinction has been sought to be made between awards and titles. It was said that our Constitution debars titles but not the awards, therefore granting of these awards did not militate against the provisions of the Constitution on this subject.* But this does not mean that awards are therefore good and must be granted nor does it warrant a distinction between the spirit behind the conferment of titles and the grant of awards. It is true that mere non-conferment of these awards etc. by itself would not promote equality or eliminate the class feeling. But it is equally true that it does not strengthen our resolve to establish such equality and is likely to orient the mind of the people in an opposite direction.

It is said that we must recognize special merit in the field of social service, art, literature etc. It will introduce, it is argued, a desirable incentive in the social life. Just as we recognize

* It is interesting to note here the following from *Freedom First* of September 1954:

"... (one) may take it into his head to test the constitutional validity of this practice of conferring titles.... Many of the present awards quite clearly have nothing whatsoever to do with military valour or learning and are a flagrant breach of the Constitution of the Republic. The article, if invoked in court, may spoil the fun both for those who confer titles and those who receive them."

merit in the field of education, even so this is a form of the recognition of social service in other fields. The argument could be accepted in a way. But it is one thing to do so at the right moment and in respect of a particular case, but quite another to make a sort of selection and publish a whole list of such awards regularly at appointed dates. The fault lies in institutionalizing the thing. That our people like it hardly provides any justification for its introduction. We have to encourage only such tendencies of our people as are good and consistent with our declared aims and objects and not those which work against them. The State at least must carefully keep away from actively helping those latter tendencies. Granting of awards is not in any way an inescapable or even a necessary duty of the State. Nor was its absence going to hinder or spoil any of our work. Besides, it puts into its hands, that is, in the hands of those in charge of the administration a power which becomes afterwards a source of much embarrassment to them and which tends to produce in the people an urge for unhealthy competition. We have had enough experience of it during the British rule. Creation of such vested interests does hurt the true spirit of democracy while it does no good to anybody.

It will be well, therefore, while introducing this seemingly innocent, but in its effects deeply obnoxious, practice as a regular feature of our national life, to weigh up all these considerations and arrive at the right decision. The Constitution debar conferring titles. If titles are different from awards, though I do not see any fundamental difference between them from the point of view of their effects on the life and the psychology of the people, the relevant provision can be suitably amended to debar such awards also. It is hardly necessary to encourage and thus actively promote a tendency of our people which the Prime Minister himself does not view with favour and considers fit for railery.

1-9-54

(From the original in Hindi)

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VINOBA IN MUZAFFARPUR

(By "Dadu")

North Bihar is in the grip of unprecedented floods. On Sunday, 1st August, Tilak Day, we were at Kurahni. On account of the rains the prayer was held all standing. Referring to Lokamanya's immortal place in the annals of the country, Vinoba observed in his post-prayer address: "We can derive true benefit by remembering the great leader only if we complete the task before us. As Tilak said 'Swaraj is my birthright', so also land is the birthright of the tiller. This is *Zait-geet* (Yug-Dharma). And we should not rest content until there be a single landless in India."

Donate and Enjoy

Next day, we were joined at Sondhon by a young Gujarati, Shri Dahyabhai Motibhai Patel (worker of the Congress Seva Dal) who is touring the country on cycle. Having left his home in Baroda in November 1953, he has covered Maharashtra, Karnatak, Mysore, Kerala, Tamilnad, Andhra, Orissa and south Bihar.

Addressing the assemblage gathered for the evening prayer, Vinoba said that at times of difficulties like floods etc., we must share each other's woe and do what we can for others. *Tyag* (sacrifice) is the main characteristic of man. "Donate one-sixth," admonished Vinoba, "and enjoy the remaining five-sixths. Then there would be no misery and people would flourish and be happy. But today those who are happy care little for the unhappy. Consequently they too get unhappy later."

Bhoodan and Politics

While walking from Sondhon to Mahua on the morning of the third, a Congress worker had a talk with Vinoba on the condition of the Congress as a whole. Vinoba asked him how it was that Bihar Congressmen were not carrying out the mandate of their own State Congress Committee, e.g., the one about fulfilling the Bhoodan quota of 32 lakhs. He added that if they had any vision they could see that Bhoodan would endear them to the masses whence they could have a comparatively smooth sailing in the next elections. Then he remained silent. Vinoba said, "Your silence means that you are thinking on different lines. You people feel that your chances continue to be bright for no other Party is doing the Bhoodan work actively or contacting the masses otherwise, and that if the people have to make a choice between the two evils they would choose you again." The worker confessed that it was the truth. Vinoba described this attitude as a portent of the in-coming disaster to their organization.

Why Jiwandan?

In his post-prayer speech, Vinoba remarked that Bhoodan sought to establish a kingdom of love. "To do this work," said he, "new men with new fervour would have to come. A soldier rarely serves in two battles. Of course, there are exceptions. But they only prove the general rule. And why does God send new persons on this earth? To turn new thought into practice. Otherwise, He could have removed us for there was no fresh work for us in store. The motto should be: New generation, new work. That is why Jiwandan issued forth from Bhoodan. I call upon those who are young at heart, even old in age, to join the march."

Desolation through Greed

We encamped at Chakumar, a small village, on the 4th. Those days we were passing through some of the most fertile land of north Bihar, rather of north India, now unfortunately used for growing the money crop of tobacco. Also there were palm trees on our route. Some of them were quite dry, having been mercilessly squeezed for toddy. Their uncouth appearance, in glaring contrast to others in sound health, pained Vinoba who recounted the words of Jain Sadhus going so far in Ahimsa as to disallow the use of all seed-bearing products as food. Proceeding, he said that the sight of those trees, dead as they were, reminded him of Tolstoy's famous story, 'The Three Deaths', which he related.

In his speech after the prayer that day, Vinoba regretted that they had not realized the promises made to the masses during the alien rule. "The poor," said he, "are awaiting their fulfilment. This is scarcely possible that in successive elections, held after every five years, you should go on making promises, continue not to fulfil them and yet expect the people to go on keeping faith in you."

As Vinoba's address was coming to a close there was some hubbub in a corner. Nine young Americans (including four girls) reached the spot by taxi. Most of them were students. In the lot there were two Negroes one of each sex. On behalf of the Adult Youth Council of the U. S. A. they were going to Singapore to attend World Assembly of Youth. Next morning they walked with us all the way to Janadaha, a distance of about ten miles.

Village Industries

We reached Janadaha at 7-45 a.m. Vinoba gave fifteen minutes to the American students. They asked him some questions. In the course of his reply Vinoba said that Bhoodan wanted to change not only the society altogether but also the outlook and mind of man. As regards the place of large-scale industries in Bhoodan, Vinoba remarked: "In a big country like India, there is scope both for large-scale and village industries. But their spheres should be clearly demarcated. I want that some industries should be reserved for villages, specially those for which raw material was there in the villages, e.g., cotton. My submission to the State is that cloth should be made in the villages. If we demarcate like this, there can be some big industries in cities. But what happens these days, in the scheme of modern thinkers is that they think that agriculture should be the main industry of the villages. They ask us to produce, say, cane, sell it and purchase mill-made sugar. I regard it as mere waste. In that case I don't think villages can survive longer." He added, "My weight lies with the people. I don't consider Government as an important factor. It is merely an expression of public opinion. If public opinion can be thus created and people be persuaded to make it a law of their own not to purchase things they can make in the villages themselves, it would mean a lot." The American friends left in the noon after an interesting lunch in Indian style.

Regarding Land-evictions

In his post-prayer speech, Vinoba made a passionate plea for the stoppage of land-evictions, and forcefully appealed to peasant-labourers to hold up undaunted. He said, "I have always been impressing on the cultivators to refuse to get evicted and suffer all tortures cheerfully. If the landless labourers pick up a little courage and gather self-confidence, all the manoeuvrings of the rich landholders would come to naught." He declared that in the India of tomorrow there would only be one Lord, the Lord of the Universe. Vinoba advised the tiller to stand firm. "You may break but you should not bend. Also you must not lose your temper. You must not inflict any pain on others. You must suffer willingly, come what may. And the victory is yours. For God is with you."

Sin to Grow Tobacco

Sixth August, our last day in Muzaffarpur district in this round. We were encamping at the High School in Chamraha, near Manhar Road Railway Station. To the people gathered at a village on the way, Vinoba said warning them of the great sin they were committing by harvesting such a harmful crop as that of tobacco in lure of money.

Revolution and Swaraj

In the workers' meeting in the afternoon, somebody remarked that now that we had achieved the revolution and were free there was little to do further by way of revolution. Perhaps the speaker himself did not know what he was saying. It touched Vinoba deeply, very deeply. He suppressed his feelings at the moment, only to voice them forcefully before his huge evening audience. "I am not among those," said he, "who feel that they have nothing

to do by way of revolution now. I believe that Swaraj has not brought about any revolution. It has been merely a change of masters in India. This is not, to belittle the value of Swaraj. I know that it is after a lapse of two thousand years that we have obtained the opportunity to build our country on the basis of *Lok-shakti* or popular strength of the people. Nevertheless I maintain that there has been no revolution as yet. Those who talked of revolution until yesterday talk of development today. I welcome development. But I ask what should be its basis. Should official power continue to serve as the basis, that would fail to do away with our ills? What is required is to change the standing values. The social structure has to be recast. From the President down to the scavenger, all services must be regarded of the same class. I worry little what you pay them. But I insist that the same moral value be accorded to the standard work of the two. This is not happening in our country today. I ask what the value of Swaraj is to a scavenger who enjoys no prestige in Swaraj. And, again, what is the prestige of people like us who make them work under inhuman and degrading conditions? Both the scavenger and we have fallen down. In the scale of moral values both of us are almost nil. I do not believe that such Swaraj has any moral standing. This is a hard statement to make. But that is the bare truth, the hard truth. In law, i.e., on paper a Harijan enjoys the same rights as a non-Harijan. Again, on paper, a woman enjoys the same rights as man. But what is the reality in practice? How shall those differences be removed? Who shall work to that end? Only *Lok-shakti* or self-reliant power of the people can accomplish all this."

Also he laid stress on the need of swift action and of changing old values, specially with regard to land. He asked the rich to donate liberally and his advice to the poor was: "If you vest the ownership of your land to the village it will generate a formidable strength with which you will be able to solve every problem yourselves."

At the week-end, we entered the district of Darbhanga and encamped at Shahpur-Patori in the Mohuddinagar thana.

21-8-54

FIVEFOLD PROGRAMME FOR GRAM PANCHAYATS

(By Vinoba)

1. Every Panchayat should organize a study-circle which will acquaint the people of the village with new ideas and important developments taking place in the national and international fields. The circle will especially provide for the study of the Gandhian and other Sarvodaya literature. Selected writings from such literature should be read out and explained to the people.

2. The Panchayats should undertake to bring about an increase in production as one of their primary responsibilities. So long as production does not increase and the vast unemployment to be found in the villages is not liquidated, villagers are not likely to feel the urge for offering their co-operation to any developmental activity. Why should the villagers build roads when it is their exploiters, the city-dwellers who are likely to derive greater benefit from them?

3. The Panchayats should consider it their duty to see that no person within their area remains unemployed or goes hungry. Just as the boycott of foreign goods helped the attainment of Swaraj, so would the boycott of mill goods help bring about the village-raja.

4. Since land is the basic factor of all production, the village land must be distributed to

all. The ownership of land should belong to the village and there should be no one without land.

5. The real power of the Panchayats is the people's support. The Panchayats should therefore follow their will and act under their control. They should not care whether the Government recognizes them or not. The people must always rely on their own strength and go forward.

The Panchayats should carry out these five functions. Then only will it be possible to establish Rama-rajya in our villages.

(From Hindi)

WAR AND ATOMIC WEAPONS

I

To

The Editor, *Harijan*

Sir,

You could not have published the two resolutions of the World Pacifist Conference held in Japan during April 1954, in your issue of August 14, 1954 unless you subscribed to some of their clauses. It is necessary to analyse these resolutions since a lot of confusion seems to have been created.

First, I am unable to understand as to why atomic weapons alone should be prohibited, and outlawed. Surely it is a moonshine to think that wars can be stopped and peace established by banning the atomic weapons alone. There have been bloody and terrible wars in the past, and they were fought without atomic weapons. If wars have to be prevented all the factories manufacturing weapons of war should be scrapped. An effective International Commission with full powers to inspect is the first requisite in this connection.

Secondly, the acceptance of these resolutions would put the democracies in a very vulnerable and weak position vis-a-vis "peoples democracies". If the first clause of the second resolution is accepted it will mean that Canada, U. S. A. or for the matter of that any country will not be able to use atomic weapons which it may possess even for the purpose of repulsing an aggression from the red countries which have superiority in land and naval forces. No more funny situation can be imagined. I submit, Sir, that the resolutions though innocent-looking are frightfully dangerous.

The scourge of wars can be prevented only if we, the peoples of the world, sincerely follow the Gandhian path of toleration, racial equality and true brotherhood. As long as these virtues are not cultivated by the neighbouring nations, it is folly to relax in military preparedness for nothing tempts an invader more than the weakness and incapacity of a nation to defend herself.

19-8-'54

R. G. Bajpai

II

To

The Editor, *Harijan*

Sir,

I have seen the letter written to you by Prof. R. G. Bajpai regarding the two resolutions on atomic weapons passed by the World Pacifist Conference in Japan last April, and published under the heading "Ban All Atomic Weapons"

in your issue of 14-8-'54. As I had a hand in drafting those resolutions, perhaps I may be permitted to reply to him.

First, he asks why atomic weapons alone should have been prohibited by the Conference, and not all weapons of war. The two resolutions were passed in response to urgent representations made at two places, one at the session in Tokyo and the other in Hiroshima, regarding the havoc wrought by atom bombs in Japan. So they deal specifically with that problem alone.

Moreover, asking that such bombs should be banned, without raising the question of other weapons of war, was not improper, in view of the deadly effect of these bombs on non-combatant people and food resources. We have banned, for instance, the use of poison gas and germ warfare, even though we have not banned all other weapons of war. Even in days of old, civilized men had always thus laid down certain humane conventions which are to be observed by both parties to the conflict. So there was nothing inconsistent in the Conference protesting only against the use of atom bombs.

The Conference, however, did not stop merely with banning atom bombs. In summing up its views on topics discussed at its various sessions, it stated in its final Declaration, which was reproduced in your issue of May 29, 1954, that it appealed, "To all Governments, acting through the United Nations or other channels, to abolish the manufacture and use of atomic weapons as a first step to total disarmament", which means that the Conference was opposed to all weapons of war, even as your correspondent is, but was anxious to start, realistically enough, with the worst and most inhuman of these weapons as a first measure.

Secondly, the correspondent argues that the acceptance of such prohibition of atom bombs would put the democracies in a vulnerable and weak position as against the Communist powers. The obvious reply to this is that the resolution of the Conference was not directed to this or that group of powers, but to all powers, in fact to the United Nations primarily, where both the U.S.A. and Russia are represented. If it is accepted by the United Nations, then surely neither group of powers will be affected adversely as both would have to abstain from the use of atomic weapons.

1-9-'54	Bharatan Kumarappa
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