

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

## THE GUJARAT VIDYAPITH

### Its Work and Activities

[The following is from the Report of Shri Maganbhai P. Desai, the Registrar of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, which he read to the Convocation meeting held on 14-11-'54, under the presidency of its Chancellor, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. It is a sequel to the speech of the Vice-Chancellor, which was reproduced in the previous issue, as "The Idea of a Rural University."

22-11-'54

M. P.]

Shri Kulapati, since your previous visit to this place in March 1952, three batches of Snatakas have passed out of the institution. They were waiting for the time when you would come and confer on them the degree for which they had qualified themselves. We know it is difficult for you to find time from your onerous responsibilities and come here every year, nor indeed can we expect you to do so. And yet we do hope that you would find it possible to be with us and give us every alternate year. That you very kindly found time to come here this year is a matter of great delight to us, for which we are very grateful to you.

The annual reports and the accounts of the two intervening years have been published. The report for 1953-54, just published, has been distributed in the meeting. I would not, therefore, take up your valuable time by reading it out before you. In order to give a visual idea of work and activities of the Vidyapith, we have put up an exhibition which you have just declared open and seen. I will, therefore, limit myself only to a few essentials.

As Shri Kulanayak has just remarked, the Gujarat Vidyapith has evolved on the lines of what we today call a 'rural university'. We have devised our fourteen year course of teaching in that manner:

1. From standard 1 to 7: The Gujarat Kumar Mandir for the Basic Education course.
2. From standard 8 to 11: The Gujarat Vinaya Mandir or the High School for the Post-Basic Education course.
3. The three years' degree course in sociology, at Shri Mahadev Desai Samaj Seva Mahavidyalaya.
4. And a Udyog Adhyapan Mandir for the training of teachers.

The students in the Kumar Mandir are generally of 6 to 12 or 13 years of age. Total number of students at present is 196.

The Vinaya Mandir was restarted in 1950. A class was added every year so that it now provides for the full Vinita or the S.S.C.E. standard course. The total number of students in this section is 55, out of which 18 are girls.

The first seven year course of Basic Education has gradually been striking roots in the society. The work of the Post-Basic Education is comparatively new. Whence the number of students in the Vinaya Mandir is rather small. However, now that the Government is going to

start multi-purpose schools, the society will soon come to realize the value of the experiment being carried in the Vinaya Mandir section of the Vidyapith. It is to be hoped that these multi-purpose schools will not confine themselves to urbanized industries and will give due place to village industries.

The curriculum planned for the M. D. Mahavidyalaya is of three years. It is aimed at training social workers of the graduate standard. The minimum qualification for admission to this course is the Vinita of the Vidyapith or the S.S.C. Examination. Besides, the candidates are also required to pass our own admission test. The Mahavidyalaya works at the rate of 6½ hours daily for 225 days in the year divided into two terms. Thus actually the total working hours in three years are more than those of four years in the present universities. Total number of students in the Mahavidyalaya section is 51 out of which 13 are girls.

In the Udyog Adhyapan Mandir teachers of the primary and specially of the secondary schools receive training in carding, spinning, and weaving from the point of view of Basic Education. At present 54 teachers are undergoing training in this section.

Thus there are in all 355 students studying in the Vidyapith, of which 61 live in the hostel. The number of workers engaged in these and other activities is 52. Our policy is that they should all live on the Vidyapith campus. Of these 33 families live here at present. We have not yet been able to give this facility to the remaining. However construction of more houses so that all may live on the campus is under consideration.

Among the educational activities of the Vidyapith going on outside Ahmedabad, the principal one is the Vallabh Vidyalaya at Bochasan. We are glad to say that gradually we have now been able to develop that centre satisfactorily well. You had visited it when you came here in 1952. Since then, along with the increase in its needs, there have been many additions. New buildings have been put up for the students and teachers. A proposal for constructing a Go-shala (Dairy) has been taken up. Our village dispensary is also doing good work there. We have received donations for developing it further.

Total number of students in the Bochasan Vidyalaya is 102 and that of the workers 13. For the last three years the Vidyalaya has also been doing the work of training primary school teachers in Nal Talim. 185 teachers have already received training. At present there are 66 teachers receiving such training.

A few months back, we received from Shri Dahyabhai Kunwarji of Navsari 200 bighas of land for starting a similar centre in the Pardi-Dharampur area of the Surat District. A worker has been appointed and the work started there. It is hoped that for this purpose we will receive help from the Adiwasi Seva (Backward Classes Welfare) Department of the Government.

Among other activities of the Vidyapith may be mentioned the following:

1. Publication of books,
2. Compilation and publication of dictionaries,

3. Research in Ancient lore and its publication,
4. Library Movement,
5. Propagation of national language,
6. Preparation of scientific terms in Gujarati.

The Vidyapith has so far published about 190 books on different subjects. About two and a half lakhs of rupees remain invested in this undertaking every year. Among those publications the most important is a series of eight school readers called the Vidyapith Vanchanmala. They are being used in a great many schools of Gujarat. The new edition of these books is due to be published tomorrow. I humbly beg to present to you a set of these readers.

Next comes the compilation and publication of dictionaries. A new edition of our well-known *Jodani Kosh* specially adapted for use in schools has been published this year.

In the last two years we have launched a few more projects in this respect:

1. A revised and enlarged (third) edition of the Hindi-Gujarati Dictionary is in the press. It will be out by March next.

2. There is need also for a Gujarati-Hindi dictionary. Work on it has been proceeding for the last one year.

3. The students also need a Sanskrit-Gujarati dictionary. Work on it is proceeding and it is hoped will be over by the next year.

4. Besides, we have also taken up the preparation of a Gujarati Encyclopedia. This would need an expenditure of about 4 to 5 lakhs of rupees. We hope that we will be able to get all this money from the Government and the public.

For bringing about a real awakening in the people, it is necessary to recover from the past all that is of value in it and revive it among the people. Such research in the past is also a necessary part of the people's education. The Vidyapith has been alive to this need from its inception. Care is taken to see that work in this regard should not be one of mere scholastic interest but be of use to the people. Important books from Buddhist, Jain, Brahmanic and Islamic literatures are selected and presented in Gujarati. In all we have published 51 books of this type which are on view in the exhibition.

The Gujarat Vidyapith Library is a great speciality of the Vidyapith. It has 41,697 books which are used for research-work and study by writers, scholars, and by students both of the higher and lower classes.

In appreciation of its excellent work, the Bombay Government has entrusted to our library all its stock of the Gujarati copyright books for safe keeping. Thus the entire literature of the Gujarati language can now be got here collected at one place. In the same way efforts are made to have all the Gandhian literature collected here. A list of such books named the *Gandhiana* was published a few years ago. Besides, periodically we also hold classes for training in librarianship.

As regards work for the propagation of the national language, the Vidyapith has been doing it from the beginning. It has now greatly advanced. For this we are conducting five graded examinations. We now intend to start a sixth one of the graduate standard. Thousands are annually appearing in these examinations and profiting by them. We have published about 22 books for this purpose.

The Vidyapith has always attached great importance to the preparation of scientific terms in Gujarati so that sciences may be easily taught through the mother-tongue. Such terms for Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Economics and Politics have already been prepared. And we are glad to say they have been well received in Gujarat.

In the last two or three years, we have completed preparing such terms for Biology and Botany. We are also preparing and publishing useful scientific booklets in order that these terms may gain currency in the Gujarati literature. Six such books have been published so far.

Shri Kulanayak has referred to the place of the handicraft in education. Here it is compulsory from the first to the last standard. At present we teach agriculture, spinning and weaving, and carpentry.

It is often alleged by the opponents of this idea that the introduction of crafts makes education expensive. Our experience here and at other places belies this allegation.

On the basis of statistics for the previous year, I submit, sir, that young boys and girls of the Kumar Mandir make a net earning of two and a half pias per hour per pupil.

At the Bochasan Vidyalaya they earn even more, that is, four and a half pias per hour per pupil. Thus 29.4 per cent of the total expenses of the school are met by the earnings from the craft.

These experiments prove how true was Gandhiji's view that the universalization of education in India could be carried out only through Basic Education.

Lastly a word about the recognition of the examinations and the degree of the Vidyapith. On the occasion of the last convocation two years ago, the Kulanayak had discussed this question at sufficient length. It is therefore necessary to point out the present position in this regard.

The Gujarat University has recognized the Vidyapith certificates and degrees awarded before 1947 as equivalent to its own. Those, therefore, who want to study further may now do so. Thus, for example, an old Snatak of the Vidyapith could get a Ph.D. degree of the Gujarat University this year. The Gujarat University has now accepted to adopt the Gujarati medium. We therefore hope that it will also now see its way to recognize in a suitable manner our Vinit examination and the Snatak degree.

The Bombay Government has passed a resolution to recognize for some purposes our Vinit examination as equivalent to its own S.S.C. Examination and our Snatak degree to the graduate degree of statutory universities.

Finally, I may say something about the expenditure. The report for 1953-54 which has been published today will show that the total expenditure for that year has come to about 3 lakhs of rupees. The report also gives the budget for the new year which shows a deficit of about thirty-four thousand rupees. As Shri Kulanayak has pointed out, the increasing needs of our work will demand an increasing amount of money. We hope that both the Government and the public will give us every help in that respect.

(From Gujarati)

## CONVERSION

[The Fellowship of Friends of Truth at its Fourth Annual General Meeting, held in Delhi, on September 11 and 12, agreed on the following statement on *Conversion* which we received from Shri S. K. George, Secretary F. F. T., Wardha, 16-9-54.]

The Fellowship of Friends of Truth, at its Fourth Annual General Meeting, held in Delhi, gave considerable thought to the subject of conversion, as it is a problem perplexing the minds of many in the country at the present time. India has the privilege of being a country in which almost all the living religions of the world have met. The working out of right relations between the peoples of these faiths, and also with those who do not profess any faith, is of the utmost importance for the development of the nation.

The Indian tradition is one of immense generosity of spirit, and of reverence for all men of God; yet in the country today there is a growth of suspicion, intolerance, irreverence and hostility within and between religious groups, which can only jeopardize that great tradition and retard India's contribution to the world. If in the political field it is necessary to find a basis for co-existence for differing ideologies, how much greater is the need and the



possibility of finding such a basis for co-existence in the religious field? Nay, there must be a basis on which the great religions can, not only co-exist, but be able to contribute, from their great insights and heritages, to the common growth of man to a fuller and richer life.

Religion must serve to purify the lives of men and women everywhere, and raise them to a level where the essential unity of man is experienced and realized. Our call to men and women of every faith at this hour, therefore, is to re-examine the tenets and practices of their faiths, to see to what extent they fulfil the deepest needs of man and further the development of his sense of oneness. Our experience in this Fellowship leads us to commend to all the search for 'That of God' within every man, in the knowledge that in the deeper places of the spirit the true unity of all is discovered and the things that divide us from one another appear unimportant.

We realize that the attitude toward the question of conversion is one of the vital matters upon which there is need for a new and deeper understanding. Misunderstandings and wrong presumptions about others' attitudes, as well as wrong attitudes in ourselves, have led to much of the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion, irreverence, intolerance and hostility in the country today.

True conversion is the need of us all, and to many it is a continuing process. But such conversions do not ordinarily call for any change in religious affiliation. In fact, the uprooting of individuals and groups from their ancestral traditions often has disastrous consequences. Real spiritual conversion might in some cases involve a change of religion and this might well represent a step forward in the path of life, drawing man into a deeper consciousness of God and a closer communion with fellow-believers. Such conversions can occur in any religion, and there should be the fullest freedom to exercise this basic right of man. But the attempt to draw people from one religion, or of no religion, to another, merely for the sake of increasing the nominal strength of the latter, has its sanction neither in true religion nor in common sense; for it not only does not serve the ends of true religion, but creates social conditions fraught with immense danger. Some there are who believe that a nominal acceptance of another religion by individuals and groups brings them under a new influence and atmosphere which may lead to true salvation. There should be nothing to prevent such nominal acceptance with such a hope, but in such cases the use of coercive methods and material inducements should be banned; for it is in the use of such unholy methods that there lie the seeds of conflict which no society can tolerate.

Our attitude is not one of opposition to conversions as such, but ours is a plea for a new approach to religion, by which all will appreciate the great contributions made by the different religious traditions in all ages and climes, contributions which they continue to make. We plead for a continuing quest for a deeper fellowship beyond the barriers which the different religions have tended to set up between themselves. Our plea is for a new reverence for all religions, and for the opening of windows all round, so that the light from each may shine upon all, helping man to a complete understanding of the Truth within and guiding us all together to a fuller realization of the Life Abundant.

We abhor all conflicts and antagonism in the name of religion, from whatever cause they may arise. We abhor any attempt to exert external force or pressure on the conduct of religious groups; for we believe that a truly constructive approach to this problem will encourage people of all faiths to strive for a purification from within of each religious group. Our prayers and sympathies are for all who feel concerned to raise this problem of conversion to the deeper level of true religion, and who strive for its right solution through an inner purification within the group to which he or she belongs.

## B. C. G. VACCINATION

### III

*The protective value of B.C.G. vaccine is a matter of dispute among the highest medical authorities.*

That its protective value is a matter of widespread doubt is shown by the confession of the British Ministry of Health in its Memorandum issued November 5, 1953:

"In spite of the vast number of vaccinations that have been performed... during the past 20 years, there is no scientific evidence of its true value."

Dr. H. D. Chalke in his NAPT prize essay, 1952, declared:

"Despite the stupendous extent to which B.C.G. is being given, it has to be regarded for sometime longer in the experimental stage, awaiting properly controlled investigation. Medical literature is packed with records of comparative mortality of the vaccinated and unvaccinated groups, which appear to favour the former; yet many assert that the control groups are not strictly comparable. Drolet and Lowell show that where B.C.G. has not been included in the preventive scheme the mortality from tuberculosis in children has diminished as much even more than in places where it has been used. Wangenstein goes further, voicing the belief that there is not a particle of evidence that B.C.G. gives an acquired immunity."

In Norway Dr. Nils Wangenstein had ample opportunities for observing the large-scale administration of B.C.G. and he held that an enormous number of people harboured the bacillus of tuberculosis and that B.C.G. had no power to protect if and when the latent disease flared up but it was actually a poison calculated to accelerate this dangerous process.

Levine and Sackett in the *American Review of Tuberculosis* state the results of an experiment in which 566 children vaccinated with B.C.G. were compared with 528 control children who received no vaccine... It was found that tuberculosis deaths among the vaccinated were 8 (1.41 p.c.) and among the controls also 8 (1.51 p.c.).

Dr. Medlar of New York, commenting on the mass vaccination of 15 million children with B.C.G. under the W.H.O. Scheme wrote:

"These programmes gain lay support, simply because of their magnitude, from those without a clear understanding of the problem of tuberculosis." He then continued:

"Effective control of the disease cannot be obtained without a major attack on the source from which tuberculosis is spread. Vaccination with B.C.G. does not touch this problem and it would appear illogical to anticipate that artificial vaccination could succeed where natural vaccination has failed.

"In adults over 40 deaths from tuberculosis are caused in large part by re-infection after a previous infection had healed. In spite of natural vaccination with virulent bacilli, a new progressive disease may develop. The disease cannot be controlled effectively until the problem of re-infection has been met. Therefore prophylactic vaccination against tuberculosis would seem to be rather a puny weapon.

"It is difficult to obtain decisive results in any programme of such vaccination. It is extremely doubtful that artificial vaccination can produce results superior to natural vaccination, and yet natural vaccination fails to control the disease."

V. G. D.

(To be continued)

# HARIJAN

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1954

## REHABILITATING THE PEASANTRY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

How much land should be considered an economic holding, sufficient to maintain a peasant family is a question that is fast becoming very pertinent in our country. In answering this vital question, there are one or two important considerations which cannot be missed by us, without committing a grievous error which will be fatal for our people's progress.

Marxism holds that agriculture also should be organized like other big industries. That is because it believes in the doctrine of maximum production in the shortest time and with the least of labour. The way to do it is to nationalize land and resort to collective farming for a large-scale production and with the use of machines.

So far as this method of economic reconstruction is concerned, Marxism, Industrial Capitalism, and I fear Democratic Socialism also hold identical views. I came across a casual reference to this idea and belief in large-scale agriculture and collective farming in a pamphlet, *Labour Control*,\* wherein the author rightly remarks as follows:

"The Communists believed, quite wrongly, that large-scale production must have the same advantages in agriculture as in urban industries. Actually, as experience has proved, the most efficient method on the land is intensive farming by owner-occupiers of small and medium-sized units—not extensive cultivation of huge collectives or State-combines consisting of many farms."

This question faces us today. We are sometimes called the 'blotting paper' of Western civilization. How shall we behave here? It is highly imperative now to answer the question. The Bhoodan movement has spot-lighted it, bringing out the urgency for its solution.

If land is the only basis for our village economy, then surely it will have to be exploited, like other large-scale industries, in a similar and mechanized manner. It will then be an industry which, obviously, all cannot ply. What the peasant needs today is subsistence-agriculture. If that is not given to him and large-scale collectives become the law of the new order, many who at present live on land will be rendered unemployed, or shall have to be agricultural labourers like their counterpart—the industrial labour. Neither is desirable. What then should be

done? The ages-old way is to have intensive farming with cattle-breeding and dairying and village-cum-home industries as its integral part. This way was unsettled and put out of gear with the advent of Imperialism and the Industrial Age, which gave birth to a State and an economic order which made money and its mechanism the basic idea. As a result, the peasant was dethroned from his place of pride as the giver of food and plenty to society. It is interesting to read about such a tragic change in Europe described by David Mitrany in his book, *Marx Against the Peasant*:

"The peasant was losing the much-needed supplementary income which he had derived from his domestic industry; the enclosures and the usurpation of common land were depriving him of his second standby—cheap means of keeping animals. As he had sunk his small capital into the purchase of land, he had to borrow for cultivation, so that his life as an autonomous producer was being squeezed out between the forefinger of the tax-collector and the thumb of the usurer. In the market he could not meet the competition of the 'plantation or large-scale producer'; above all, there was the natural superiority of capitalist production.... Capitalism, Science, the course of events, and the interests of society all combined to 'condemn small-scale peasant farming to gradual extinction, without appeal and without mercy.'"

"If the peasant could yet hold his head above the capitalist flood, it was because of his peculiar economic position. He was owner and capitalist and worker in one and therefore could content himself with only 'wages' as a reward for his enterprise..... The peasant survived 'by super-human labour and sub-human life'". (pp. 23-24)

At the present time when we are now called upon to rehabilitate our peasantry on a sound and self-respectful basis, we cannot shut our eyes to this dismal picture. We have limited acreage of land in our country. The economic holding that we decide for us must be on the basic condition that home industries and cattle-breeding go inseparably with agriculture, to make it an economic whole.

This contains a deep meaning for our new education also. It is therefore that Gandhiji's idea of Basic Education holds the field in the educational reconstruction of our country. This fact must be noted by our education ministries also, along with the ministries of industries. The latter are therefore now required to see that mechanized large-scale industries do not compete with the village industries in producing such of our basic needs of life as cloth, food, oil, gur, etc.

We know that the Bhoodan movement has accepted this principle. It is a matter of rehabilitating and reconstructing the life of our masses. Therefore, it is necessary that Government probes deep into the question of deciding the extent of an economic holding.

10-11-54

(From the original in Gujarati)

\* By Hugh Sutherland, Casement Booklet No. 17, Bombay.



## WHY BASIC EDUCATION

(By Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

[From his speech at the All-India Basic Education Conference at Sanosra (Saurashtra) on November 12, 1954.]

It will be agreed that the system of education right from the first primary to the highest university class, which we are following today is the same as introduced by the British Government in this country. We have not been able to introduce any fundamental change in that policy even after the attainment of Independence. It is pointless to blame anyone for it, because the peaceful manner in which the transfer of power took place made it inevitable that along with the governmental machinery and other things, the system of education should also come to us as a heritage of the old regime.

It is now our duty to give thought to each one of these problems and decide in the light of the present-day conditions how far it is necessary to modify them, and then to act upon what we have decided.

There is no doubt that in introducing this system of education, the principal motive of the British Government was to secure as much advantage as possible for establishing itself in this country. Apart from this, the Britishers also thought that as compared to their own culture and literature there was nothing much in Indian culture and literature which might be said to be worth preserving. There is no doubt in course of time their views underwent some change, but it was not fundamental. The progress of science in Europe meanwhile confirmed them in their view that scientific education could be imparted only through the medium of English. Consequently, partly for the sake of administrative convenience and partly to propagate their own language and culture they stuck to their own system of education which they introduced in this country. There is no doubt that the education received by our earlier generations was based on this very system. Those people knew little of Indian literature or culture and hardly felt drawn towards it, although a few Indian scholars who were inspired by English education did study Indian literature and wrote a good deal in praise of it.

Thus we find two schools of thought in this country. The followers of one school believe that our own language alone can be the medium of education and until that is done, education is bound to remain confined to a small section of society and will never spread among the masses. The other school of thought thinks that in this scientific age our country cannot cut itself adrift from European thought and that at least higher education should continue to be imparted through the medium of English. If that is not done, they argue, we shall fail to pull our weight and lag behind other nations in the race for material progress. These views, as a matter of fact, apply not only to the medium of instruction but actually to the whole system of education.

Our people have responded more and more to the call of education during the last 50 years, and this is evident from the phenomenal increase in the number of educational institutions. In 1911-12, when Burma and Pakistan were also parts of India, there were 183 Universities and colleges in India, as compared with 537 in 1948-49 though Burma and Pakistan had separated, leaving India smaller in area and population. The number of secondary schools in 1911-12 was 6,370 whereas the corresponding figure for 1948-49 was 14,342. Again, while in 1911-12 the total number of students studying for Intermediate, B.A. and B.Sc. was 31,974, the number of M.A. and M.Sc. students alone in 1948-49 went up to 2,14,677, out of whom 23,078 were girls. As many as 62,495 students graduated from Indian Universities in 1951-52. In the years which followed, I think, this number went up still higher.

It is clear from these figures that there is a wide-spread demand for educational facilities. This demand is no longer confined to towns alone but is evident among people of the rural areas also. One result of this spread

of education is that lots of educated people find themselves unemployed. Government jobs and service in private undertakings offer limited openings for the educated. Only a small fraction of successful scholars can be absorbed in them. A large majority of the educated are such as are averse to taking up their parental occupations. As a result of their education, they have lost the capacity to take up those occupations without having been equipped to follow any other. The only result of this process has been increasing unemployment and subsequent discontent, indifference and a pessimistic attitude towards life. This is a dangerous trend for the country. Let us therefore, discuss today how far the present system of education, which is spreading at such a speed, on which we are spending so much and which is turning out such a large number of "educated" boys and girls, is useful and capable of meeting the challenge of present-day conditions.

Mahatma Gandhi, who had anticipated all this, thought that this system of education would not do, because of its being too expensive, if education was to be brought within the reach of every Indian, rich and poor. It was because of this difficulty that he thought of a new system of education, that has come to be known as Basic Education, which Indian and foreign educational experts have declared to be highly useful.

According to Gandhiji, as far as I understood him, there are two basic merits in this new system. Firstly, education in it is imparted not merely through books but through some kind of practical work so that the knowledge which children acquire is not the result of mere memorizing but of actual experience. He thought and some of the leading educationists were at one with him, that knowledge acquired in this way created a sort of consciousness, efficiency and a feeling of self-reliance, all of which should come handy to one at the time of actual struggle in life. The other merit, according to Gandhiji, in this system is that it brings education for all within the pale of practical possibility, because the handicrafts on which children would be working would bring some return in terms of money, which would go, at least in part, to meet the expenses of their education. He was convinced that unless young scholars made this contribution towards their own education, universal education in India would never be possible.

The result of all the discussions and experimentations in the field of education done during the last 16 or 17 years is, in my opinion, the same that we arrived at in our discussions in the first Conference held at Wardha. Educationists had admitted the utility of the new system but considered children's contribution towards their education as not only impossible but undesirable. Our experience, on the other hand, has demonstrated both the utility as well as the practicability of the system. My remarks are essentially with reference to primary and secondary education. Little has been done so far to apply this system to higher education. It is not, therefore, possible to say anything about it on the basis of experience.

In spite of all that has been done in this field so far, it is a pity that this system has not received the encouragement which it deserved and which we could have given it after achieving Independence. As far as I can say, the reason is that although the utility of the new system has been proved, our faith in the old system of education remains unshaken. That is also why most of those who are engaged in the work of education have not given much thought to the new system. All that we can say is that even today the new system has not gone beyond the experimental stage. Our Government has not decided to popularize it as a part of its constructive programme, let alone doing anything practical for it. I know that in the various conferences we have had so far, resolutions have been adopted in favour of it and Government agreed that the new system should be adopted, but actually it has not been done. As a consequence of it educational institutions of the old type are daily increasing and whatever budgetary provision Government makes under the

head "Education", is spent mainly on keeping the old system of education intact. Naturally, the new system has received little encouragement. My own view is that unless fundamental changes are made in the current system, the sad state of affairs that we see today will become sadder. The feeling of discontent among the educated and utter dissatisfaction with life will continue to grow. I would, therefore, urge that all those concerned with the education of children—our educationists, the universities and the governing bodies of colleges and schools, education ministers, etc., give not only theoretical consideration to this problem, but do something practical to change the present system of education. Unless this is done the problem would become more and more complicated.

Mahatma Gandhi did not put all his beliefs at one place in book-form, but undoubtedly there was a sort of universality which characterized them. Education had a top place in his thoughts, since it is through education that ignorance and backwardness in India and the world can be removed. My appeal to you, therefore, is that you should continue your efforts in spite of all the handicaps and discouragements and wait for the day when the practical superiority of this system will be recognized and it will be accepted and established throughout the country.

## VINOBA IN KOSI AREA—II

(By "Dadu")

### The Kosi Project

"What are your suggestions for the effective execution of the Kosi Project?" This question was put to Vinoba by Shri Lalit Narain Misra (the Congress M.P. from the Kosi area) on Sunday, October 10th, when we reached Pipra Bazar, after covering ten miles from Ganpatganj.

Vinoba had very definite proposals in reply: (i) the daily wages of the labourers working in the Project should be Rs 1-8-0, not less; (ii) the work must start in no case later than the next Sankranti, i.e., January 14, '55; (iii) the work should be done on a non-party basis and attempts be made to secure the co-operation of all the parties; (iv) right compensation should be given to the population to be displaced, so that the poor may not bewail against the Project or take ill of it; (v) all work accomplished should be *pucca* and correct, whence efficient supervision is required. Vinoba told him that the supervisors must leave nothing wanting in the work, but they must also be courteous in their behaviour. He also held that the bodily labour gift (Shramdan) made by the rich people if they so chose, should be welcome by all means. But no money gifts ought to be accepted in any case. Further, he observed that small landholders must be given land for land.

"But how can they offer land? They can only give money," said Shri Misra.

"It means a high increase in the population of the landless in the locality. In other words, you will be creating new problems."

"That cannot be helped."

"You need not be so helpless. I am prepared to give land to the new landless of the Kosi as also to the old. But, for that you and your friends would have to work. Please fulfil the Bhoodan quota of these three districts (Darbhanga, one and a half lakhs of acres; Saharsa, one and a quarter lakhs; Purnea, three lakhs) and give me some more. I assure you to provide land to every landless or small landholder of the Kosi area. That land together with the money you give in compensation will help them to settle peacefully and happily."

Our friend nodded in assent. After a pause, Vinoba added, "I am very much interested in this Project. I want the people to do it. It would mean Swaraj."

Referring to the said talks in his post-prayer address Vinoba remarked, "I want you to offer me land with a large and open heart. The Kosi Project would then turn into a blessing. Narrow heart and big things don't go

together. Please give me liberally so that all the landless may be settled on land comfortably."

### "Simply Staggering"

The workers' meeting was held at night. There were local Congress dignitaries also. Somebody gave out that since they had not contributed one-sixth of their land they could not dare ask others for it. That was God's truth. Then Vinoba requested all of them to stand up and say, one by one, the total land of their family as also the donation made so far, and the reason of not completing one-sixth. It was a very pleasant surprise. The one who got up first had thirty acres out of which he had donated three acres. He agreed to offer the remaining two. And thus the door was opened. One after another, they got up and fulfilled their quota. Only one of them was helpless to do it, running short by one acre. Then rose up a warm-hearted friend saying, "I am willing to offer an additional acre to complete my friend's quota." Verily such meetings are rare Satsangs (good company), as Vinoba calls them. An Anglo-Indian fair visitor who was present throughout told me at its close, "Had I not been a witness to this, I would have never believed it. It is simply staggering."

Next day we were at Morha. An unhappy event marred the day. Some of the local Congress workers had removed a gate set up by P. S. P. workers in Vinoba's welcome. It was named after Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. The event was certainly regrettable. Senior Congressmen, however, expressed their regret for it. Some zamindars of the locality saw Vinoba in the afternoon. One of them asked him, "In case we give you one-sixth now, won't you no more invade us in future?"

Vinoba smiled and said, "Once you give your daughter to somebody, does it mean closing down all future connections with her?" They all rocked with laughter. Then he added, "Surely, if one-sixth does not suffice for all the landless in the country, more will be asked. Mine is a religious call whose depth you must grasp."

### "A Painful Incident"

In his evening speech, Vinoba referred to the morning incident. He appealed to them all to observe decorum and a non-party attitude. "When we want to work," said he, "for the emancipation of a country as big as India, there is no scope for the variety of differences born of caste, creed, colour, language or party. A painful incident came to my notice. Of the various gates erected this morning one was named after Shri Jayaprakash Babu. Congressmen did not like it. Whence they removed it root and branch, which was very much resented by Socialists. It is a very unhappy event. The fact is that I do not want gates or anything else in welcome but land gifts. Yet, I wonder what stopped Congressmen from having a gate after their well-known leaders. To bring down a gate is certainly miserable. It breaks hearts. Our history bears out how much we have suffered for this evil in our body politic. Hence I must emphasize that you all have to work unitedly with an above-party spirit and in a brotherly fashion."

### The value of Honest Business

We encamped at Tribeniganj on Tuesday. Local businessmen met Vinoba in the noon. He told them that not long ago (and even now) a businessman was called 'mahajan' in India i.e. a great man. It was held that 'mahajans' always followed the path of religion and were the leaders of the society. But if they took to looting, exploiting and cheating, others would behave accordingly and the whole country would go down. Hence their responsibility was great. They must do business and do it honestly. There was, therefore, no need for them to keep lands with them. They could not serve two masters at the same time. They agreed.

Vinoba referred to it in his post-prayer address. He said, "Today some businessmen came to see me. I told them the best way to achieve success in business. You know that no man can ride on two horses at the same time. In case he wants to do well, he must ride on one



horse. So also the businessmen should do only one thing—either business or agriculture. They must donate all land they have. Either they can be businessmen or cultivators. When I asked them whether they agreed with my proposition they replied in the affirmative. It is, therefore, with their permission that I say that all businessmen should cast off the ownership of land in the interest of their business. Besides, they must give up telling a lie—No dishonesty to be tolerated in business. The Quran says that among the most wonderful things invented by God, scale (or balance) is unique. It asks us to be just and balanced. Hence the businessmen must give up land and falsehood in order to succeed and prosper."

As we walked to Koriapatti on the 13th, we crossed small streams seven times, both by boat and on foot.

#### The Revolution We Need

The post-prayer address was very thought-provoking. Vinoba pointed out, "Bhoo-dan does not consist in offering a few acres of land, but in bringing about fundamental changes in the behaviour of man in the society. It calls upon all to cast off the feeling of 'my-mine' and 'thy-thine'. The saints also stressed upon the idea. But what happened was that those who practised it were cut off from the society. They did a lot of penance and sacrifice. But few as they were, those who had given up all attachment, i.e., the 'mamatarahit' became a class by themselves. Thus there came into being two classes in the society, viz. 'mamatarahit' and 'mamatayukta' i.e. those who had cast off attachment and those who had not. The former commanded social esteem but they were supported and maintained by the latter. Whence no change could be effected in the life of our masses as such. Our social order was also left untouched. It is clear, therefore, that when I insist on an abandonment of the feeling of 'my-mine' and 'thy-thine' it is not a mere echo of the past. What is significant is that nobody is to quit the society. They have to cast off the attachment and yet remain in the society. Bhagavan Krishna in the Gita asks Arjuna to fight with detachment. Gita does not at all encourage the two classes, viz., those who work with attachment and those with detachment. Gita preaches a uniform life with balance and non-attachment. The time has now come to shape life according to such a pattern. We have to build up 'mamatarahit' cum 'vyavaharik' (detached and practical) society. We have to work for a life better and more comfortable than the one at present."

He went on, "The need for utterly selfless souls is as great today as ever. But they have to face their ordeal in the society itself. Suppose there is an ounce of curd. In case it is left untouched, it will get rotten. But if it is added to milk, the latter also turns into curd. So also when some people lead a selfless life outside the bounds of the society, they include some hypocrites too, far worse than the ordinary householders. Hence the experiment of selfless life is to be conducted within the society. Non-possession would be the guiding star. Productive physical labour would be the order of the day. Every house would be a bank and everybody would pride in giving rather than in taking. All this is to be built up on the basis of 'Vyapak Vairagya' (extended stoicism).

"In the capitalistic society, human virtues like capital came to be privately owned. Stoicism was associated with the Sadhu, truth with the Rishi and non-violence with the Yogi. Unfortunately, they established ownership in the domain of virtues too. Now this ownership has also to be cast off and these qualities are to be made the property of the whole society. What does the Brahmana do? He will bathe fifty times and yet touch others not. He will make filth but never clean it. He has owned the virtue of cleanliness but refuses to clean. What about the Kshatriyas? They will protect but not equip others to protect themselves. Thus we find the sad spectacle of capitalization of human virtues in the capitalistic order. None worries to build up the whole society on these virtues. This is, however, the task to be done now."

Vinoba concluded, "For this task must come forward people who donate their life. From every village must come two or three or more people impregnated with this spirit and ready to plunge themselves to build up the new society. The whole society is to be turned into that of Jivandans. Therein everybody would live and work, not for the sake of self but for that of the society. Today it is just the reverse. The real servants go unacknowledged while those who draw huge salaries, like a thousand or more, are regarded as 'servants' and as members of 'services'. We have Government service, military service etc., as also bus-services. Those who depend on others are hailed as servants while not so those who stand on their own feet. All this has to be changed, root and branch. Gita would then be the book of the people, while at present the Penal Code occupies that position. Today few are Parmarthi or philanthropic people while the rest, larger in number, are greedy and worthless. This is capitalistic distinction, which must needs be eliminated. Could you grasp this truth and live it in practice, you will be able to usher in a revolution in the shortest possible time. Mere slipshod work from without is no revolution."

Chatapur was the next halt. Very little work was done in that area. Workers met him at noon. Vinoba regretted their indolence. He said, "While the public is flood-affected, you are inertia-affected." And when one of them asked him the question, 'Now that the Government is fixing a ceiling of 30 acres, how can land be obtained?' Vinoba was pained at his ignorance and remarked, "That means that Bhoo-dan is impossible here." All of them, however, promised to work thereafter.

In his post-prayer address, Vinoba observed, "Man differs from animal in that he is not satisfied merely with meeting the demands of the body. There is the urge in him to get rid of social bonds and identify himself with the whole world. This is the thirst of his soul. Thus there are two urges in the man: of the body and of the soul. In case the two are satisfied together, there would be peace and amity in the society. For social tranquility it is, therefore, essential that the calls, of both the body and the soul, must be met simultaneously. So far man has been treating them as one cut off from the other. The trader tells lie and cheats in business but offers gifts occasionally. This will not contribute to social tranquility. For its restoration, the same work should meet the urges of both the body and the soul. That is, he should behave in such a manner as may be in keeping with the demands of the soul."

He went on, "It is my attempt to extend the practice of *dan* (or gift) and make it a universal social act. Shankaracharya has defined *dan* as दानं सन्निधत्तः i.e., a gift is that which renders equal distribution. Hence my insistence on daily and ceaseless *dan*. In other words, we must treat the neighbour in the same manner as we treat our own kith and kin." He closed with the words, "Dharma or religion is much talked about in our country. But true Dharma would flourish only when every act of man satisfies the yearnings both of his body and his soul. Only then will real peace and tranquility reign in the society."

#### To the Workers

On Saturday, October 16th, we were at Balua Bazar, our last halt in Saharsa district. It was Vinoba's last day in the Kosi area. Workers' meeting was held at eleven o'clock. They pointed out that they could not find much time for Bhoo-dan for they had to attend to several and manifold activities. Realizing their difficulty, Vinoba remarked:

"I know that none of you remains without work. None can, except, as the Gita says, the yogis or the like. Mine is not to provide an additional engagement for you. But you must appreciate the significance of what you do. You must evaluate their worth. Bhoo-dan symbolizes the call of the times. It echoes the Dharma of the age. No doubt, you regard it an important work. But the real thing is how many of you regard it as the chief work, above everything

else, above every other programme. Only such amongst you can work in it."

He continued, "In the Congress or P. S. P., there are all sorts of people. You are a mixed body in which you cannot distinguish there the cuckoo from the crow. Communists do not work like that. They *purge* off the unwanted elements. It keeps their organization intact. Though I do not regard this technique as Kalyankarak (soothing), yet there is some force in it. The Congress has to answer the question: whether it will continue to be a mixed body? When Gandhiji was alive, he, from time to time, gave such programmes as demanded sacrifice and forbearance. That helped it to grow. There is nothing like that now. Being the ruling body, everybody is ready to join it." He went on to add, "It is very likely that capitalists may capture the Congress. They may turn it into a fascist body and control the election-machinery. You would then have no say at all. The issue before you is of purifying your organization." Further, "There is Pandit Nehru who is presently holding the flood. But how long can he do it? Who could stop the flow of the Ganga? After all, does he carry more weight than Gandhiji did? And Gandhiji was one day quietly removed from our midst. What I mean to say is that everything should not rest on one man. These organizations should not succumb to others." Thereafter they chalked out some scheme of work in the district.

#### Idea of a Policy of Service

Addressing the post-prayer meeting, Vinoba observed, "For about a century past, the experiment of democracy is being tried in the world. Now there are different schools of thought in this: some are called rightists and other leftists. Thus the thinkers and statesmen of the world are divided into different parties, groups or isms. Difference in views is a healthy sign and I regard it as a necessary thing too. But when parties are formed on the basis of different views, they are then less concerned with thought than with organization, discipline and propaganda. Consequently, we find a lot of confusion in the world today. Had the political field been a small one, it would have mattered little. But it touches all aspects of life, and covers a very wide field. And because there is a conflict of conduct whenever there is a churning of views, it blocks the progress of the evolution of man. Hence it is my endeavour to found such a band of workers as bears no label on its head. It must be above all sects, castes, parties, groups or isms. It would be a body of servants devoted to the service of man as man."

He continued, "Already in the society, there are some people given to humanitarian service. They are kindly people rendering aid and relief to the oppressed humanity. They are a separate class by themselves. But that does not satisfy me. For, it does not take into account all aspects of the human life. But the band which I have in view would render not only kindly relief but also attempt to transform the current power-politics (Rajnitil) into people's polity (Lokniti). It will put before the people the faults of the ruling and other parties. It will also recognize their good points. It will try to eliminate party differences. Its endeavour will be to rest 'samaj-vyavastha' (social set-up) on 'pakshataeta-lokniti' (beyond party-people's polity). The 'samaj-vyavastha' will include 'raj-vyavastha' or administrative set-up. What is called power would be decentralized to the utmost and would ultimately wither away. This decentralization must begin from today, i.e., the right of administration will accrue to every man. He would be both his ruler and the ruled. And all would live as brothers or comrades. This does not mean that there would be no differences of views. It only means that intellectual differences there may be but not those of the heart."

He concluded, "Even today we meet people who have nothing to do with political groups. But they have not the power to purify them, to bring them near each other or to let them be merged in one another. I suggest that there should be one such band at least in India and specially so in Bihar whose soil is very much fitted for the same. I have used the word 'band', for a word has to be used. But it would be free from the shortcomings of the public institutions, parties, or societies in vogue these days. Those of that band would not cramp themselves up in any rigid system or frame nor allow themselves to be circumscribed in any way. I trust that from the sacred soil of Bihar would emerge such servants of people as would not be hedged in by any restrictions and would by their selfless services in all departments of life, transform the whole society. I value less the land that I obtain from day to day than the number of new workers who can dedicate their lives in the great mission."

Next week Vinoba enters the Purnea district.

10-11-54

#### Science and Ethics

There is no human good that may not be dangerous if applied in the wrong place, at the wrong time, for the wrong purpose. There are occasions when food may be a poison and sunlight may produce a highly toxic effect. This does not mean that one should shun sunlight or food. All that it implies is that one should not imagine that they are absolute and unconditional goods. What I have criticized is the tendency, not only on the part of the scientist, but on the part of most people today, to assume that science is in fact an absolute good, and that its truths are exempt from the judgments one must apply to all other goods.

The very fact that scientific advances have brought such a rich harvest of human rewards in every part of society has, during the last century, made us unwary of equal potentialities for imposing penalties. What is more, we assume that this whole immense apparatus of research, though originally the product of human decision, has now escaped finally beyond human control. If that is true, knowledge no longer brings power but impotence. Just because I regard the methodology of science as one of the great achievements of the human race, I would like it to save itself from this life-negating automatism. The feverish prosperity of the physical sciences today will prove delusive if the final outcome is the bankruptcy — indeed the total destruction — of our civilization.

LEWIS MUMFORD

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