

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

GANDHI, NEHRU AND VINOBA

सर्वभूतहिते रताः ।

[Devoted to the welfare of all beings]

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

In an article in the English monthly the *Encounter* of December, 1954, the grandson of the poet Lord Tennyson has discussed Gandhiji and Vinoba together. He had personally met both of them. He proposes now to write a book about Shri Vinoba.

The article reveals vital appreciation and is thought-provoking. The author has named it *A Dynasty of Saints*. We in India are familiar with dynasties of kings and their rule; the writer seems to indicate a 'dynasty of saints' or saints as rulers. In any case the caption seems to imply such an innuendo. For a people who believe in *avatars* and *gurus* it is not altogether wrong.

Some statements and observations by Hallam Tennyson, the author of the article, are really interesting. "What is going to happen to the leadership of India after Gandhiji's departure from this world?" he asks. "What kind of successor was one to expect for Mahatma Gandhi — would he be succeeded by a politician exploiting the aura of his saintliness, or a saint turned temporarily politician?"

While our country has reached the stage of being exercised over the question as to who will succeed Jawaharlal the author of the article in the eighth year after the departure of Gandhiji is prompted to pose the question as to who will succeed Gandhiji! Both the questions are in a way equally suggestive and significant. To a people bred in the traditions of rule by kings and also rule by elders such questions occur naturally. But here the question strikes a foreigner who is bred in different traditions and he is inclined to ask as to who will succeed Gandhiji. He himself goes on to answer the question, from the course of events in India during the past five or six years. His observation in short boils down to the following:

Let us have a look at the politicians first. They were already in the public eye and they had known and worked with the Mahatma for many years. But Nehru's passion for modernization gave his reverence for the world's foremost opponent of industrialism (Gandhiji) a somewhat

sentimental air, while Dr. Rajendraprasad's honest home-spun figure sank into insignificance under the trappings of high office. The "pure" Gandhian village constructive workers scattered up and down the countryside seemed "spiritless and defeated". Under these conditions Shri Vinoba emerged and thus saintliness has entered politics.

After this statement regarding his observation of events in India Hallam Tennyson introducing Shri Vinoba goes on to say that the latter is intellectual and scholarly by temperament and loves seclusion. His eyes evince a quality of humour and mirth which are repressed by the gravity becoming a saint. He has no anxieties and is at peace with himself. The writer also takes notice of Shri Vinoba's gift of the simple trenchant phrase. With all these gifts of heart and head he has emerged on the scene of Indian public affairs with his mission of Bhoodan. And he is following his mission with rare single-mindedness without being tempted into any deviation from his course.

But Tennyson here raises a question. He observes that the Bhoodan movement has not developed its own organization, nor has it raised its own administrative machinery. Shri Vinoba contents himself by merely repeating his thesis of a change of heart. Tennyson asks how long could the movement last at this stage? According to him the movement will have to become successor to a "fast-declining Congress". That will be the signal for Vinoba to withdraw from it, says Tennyson, because he is not like Gandhiji a politician-saint but is a saint temporarily pushed on to the fringe of politics.

After all these observations the author of the article concludes with the significant statement: "Gandhi the politician needed no successor. That is why Vinoba sticks to the changing of hearts."

2

But we in India know of Gandhiji himself having said that Jawaharlal would be his successor. Most probably Gandhiji made a statement to this effect in the session of the Gandhi Seva Sangha held in 1938(?). He was immediately asked what his saying so meant. If a great man like him threw his weight in favour of some particular individual in this manner it would thwart

the growth of democracy, it was felt. How could there be a succession in leadership in public work?

Gandhiji was quick in perceiving the criticism implied in the question and promptly replied that the statement he had made had no meaning. What he felt, he explained, was that Jawaharlal would possibly carry on the work of the nation in the sense and manner in which he himself was doing. He emphasized that his statement in no sense implied that he was nominating a successor. Since this rare occasion Gandhiji hardly ever talked on the subject in the language he had allowed himself to use.

Mr Hallam Tennyson does not seem to have knowledge of the incident. But he has recorded the fact of Gandhiji having on more than one occasion said that Shri Vinoba understood his philosophy even better than he himself did. We also know that at the time of the individual Satyagraha movement in the year 1940 Gandhiji had selected Shri Vinoba as the first Satyagrahi who would break the law.

Do we not feel that when these two incidents are put together Gandhiji, possibly inadvertently, divided his wealth of genius into two parts and indicated two different successors one for each? He seems to point to Jawaharlal as successor to his political and Shri Vinoba as successor to his spiritual or philosophical genius! Or we had better say that on account of the pressure of circumstances and events in India the power that was Gandhiji polarized itself into two after his departure? Are we not able to see such distinction between Shri Vinoba and Jawaharlal?

3

I remember how Jawaharlalji, when he had discussions with Gandhiji after 1930, used to arrive at a crucial point when he would ask him the question: 'Has the coercive power of the State any place in the Swaraj of your imagination and if so what kind of place?'

And another difference which used to crop up between them was about God. I remember Jawaharlal having publicly declared on one occasion that he could not in the least understand the meaning of the word 'God' used by Bapu. While Gandhiji on his side used to express himself in the same way about a word often used by Jawaharlal. Gandhiji used to say that the word 'ideology' did not suit him in the least!

Now observe that Shri Vinoba is today ceaselessly pursuing the coercive power of the State with a big stick! Why, he has raised the campaign to the status of a cause or a mission! And recently he has started speaking in the language of a messiah. For instance, he declared at the Puri Sammelan, 'I see that God is making me His instrument in the establishment of a non-violent social order', that is an order free of the coercive power and rule of the State. It seems as if the

complex which has been described by writers on psychology in English as the 'messiah-complex' is fast developing in Shri Vinoba.

On the other side, Jawaharlal has undertaken the cause or mission of establishing peace in the world with a passion which equals Shri Vinoba's. It is true however that a messiah-complex is not in evidence in him. Gandhiji, too, had not fallen a victim to the complex. To the last he maintained the humility of a democratic leader of men. When during a controversy regarding some topic he was challenged by a man like Tagore, he said that although he believed his message of Khadi and the spinning wheel was for the whole world, he was a modest worker and therefore would not say it in so many words. Or take another instance. When invited by America for the propagation of his message he humbly refused the invitation by saying, "My work lies here in India; if I do not succeed here what is the good of my running about the world?"

And Jawaharlal today taking hold of the coercive power of the State endeavours to forge it into a democratic mould. By temperament he is an 'intellectual aristocrat' pinning his faith in the rational mind and science; but along with such a personality the English democratic tradition is deeply ingrained in his make-up. Like Shri Vinoba he, too, is a scholarly intellectual; besides he is deeply artistic. He can also wield the power that is language. But all the strength he derives from this conglomeration of gifts he is utilizing to achieve his aim of establishing peace in the world through the State power of India under Swaraj.

4

But Jawaharlal is certainly not a saint, nor a *sadhu*. He does not know the language of God and spirituality; in any case it does not come naturally to him. On the other hand Shri Vinoba cannot but speak in the language of God and spirituality and on occasions revels in similes from Hindu mythology and the *Puranas*.

Another point. Jawaharlal has never experienced poverty. He used to blame Gandhiji by saying that the latter raised poverty to the status of a virtue for spiritual reasons. Gandhiji avoided countering the blame but remained content by expressing his firm opinion that economic poverty had to be removed; that for the man who was starving bread was God in the first instance; that he can think of God only after his physical hunger was satisfied with adequate food; and that, therefore, God had to be presented to him concretely in the form of bread. And these were the reasons, he further argued, why he was devoting himself to the spinning wheel, village industries, Khadi etc.

The truth of the matter is that the madly passionate race for raising the standard of living of their people in which the nations of the West

are engaged today is not only the fruit of ignorance but also of arrogance. The miseries of the modern world are due to this ignorant and arrogant philosophy of raising the standard of living. It has driven the nations of the world to give up the virtue of endeavouring for the removal of the miseries of others, and has given birth to the brutal religion of nationalism with colonialism and imperialism in its wake. Drunk with the philosophy the Western nations have harnessed the machine to raise the standard of living of their people. On the strength of the machine they enslaved other weaker nations of the world economically and politically. They could not but do so, for how otherwise could they gainfully dispose of the overproduction of goods and articles the machine yielded to them? Before the advancing tide of the success of this philosophy poverty began to be considered not only a vice but a crime. Individuals began to believe that the pursuit of economic and material advancement was a virtue. The virtues of contentment and self-control about things material and worldly began to hide themselves in such an atmosphere. Now, really speaking, these are not spiritual virtues; at best they have their utility in spiritual endeavour. But their primary utility is in the affairs of the world. If nations lack these virtues wars would be an inevitable feature of the life of man on earth and the larger part of humanity would be condemned to starvation. Cannon-fodder or the food of the God of war can grow and ripen in the soil which lacks these qualities. For these reasons poverty assumes the status of a virtue for human society and nations. Gandhiji repeatedly emphasized this aspect of poverty. But Jawaharlal born with a silver spoon in his mouth would hardly be expected to understand what Gandhiji meant because of the ideas he imbibed during his upbringing. It is also true that as he was brought up and received his education in the Western world his mind was imbued with the ideas of that world. It is a great misfortune that this prejudice rooted in the mind of Jawaharlal is proving a veritable hindrance to the establishment of a new non-violent economic order in India.

Shri Vinoba's upbringing is entirely different. He has imbibed and holds values quite the reverse of these. By temperament he loves austerities, is inclined to renunciation and also possesses a sharp intellect; but he has great inclination to faith in the power of austerities than in that of the intellect. Though temperamentally depending on knowledge he has cultivated love for *bhakti*. Thus he is a *jnani-bhakta*. He is therefore naturally devoted to the virtues of poverty which in our culture is invariably associated with the Brahminical tradition. He also knows the social value of *aparigraha* i.e. non-possession. Gandhiji also had a natural attraction for these virtues, but was not able to practise them to his heart's content. This lack of them led him to have exaggerated respect for those who had them.

Do we not know that he had, perhaps on this account, said that Vinoba understood his philosophy of life even better than he himself did? And Shri Vinoba used also to remark half in joke and half seriously, 'Beware friends, Gandhiji is the son of a prime minister of a State and we cannot afford to follow his definition of *aparigraha* — non-possession!' Shri Vinoba fully realizes the economic and social power of the virtue of self-reliant simplicity of life primarily based on labour. But Jawaharlal, with his faith on mechanized industries and science, could hardly be expected to co-operate freely in building such an order because his mind would be repulsed and condemn it as the vice or crime of poverty. In this matter Shri Vinoba, and not Jawaharlal, is Gandhiji's true successor.

5

Gandhiji had seen the Western world also. Jawaharlal saw it when he was younger than when Gandhiji did. But the latter's experience of it was not any the lesser on that account. Vinoba saw that world not with his own eyes but indirectly through the eyes of others and never took its colour. On the contrary he lived and had his being in the world of the Sanskrit language, the Vedas and the Upanishads. The people of India not only understand what such life means but are also attracted by it. Indeed, they worship such life. That was the reason why they were attracted to Gandhiji also.

In spite of this superficial likeness there is a difference between the two. The Indian people look up to Shri Vinoba in the way they look up to Jnanadev, Tukaram, Ramadas and other older saints. Because the people have an attraction for Shri Vinoba and worship him in this manner a psychological process of proneness towards what I have named *sant-cracy* or *rishi-cracy* (something like the Platonic idea of philosopher-king) is induced in them. Towards Gandhiji the nation had the love and feelings as towards a father. He carried on his work and took it from the people by a process in which elders are respected and rule. On account of his nurture in older traditions Gandhiji possibly liked to work that way. But as he had a liberal outlook he did not allow the establishment of a rule by elders; he took work through and from the Congress in a purely democratic way. And he always believed that the Congress was greater than he. Whenever he saw the Congress taking a course towards ideas different from his own he withdrew himself from it but was careful to help it in its work even then and gave all credit of greatness to it for whatever was achieved. There was a solid reason behind this attitude. Gandhiji believed that the organization is greater than the individual. Shri Vinoba seems to be differently inclined and holding a different view in this connection.

The greatness or importance of an individual is a social phenomenon. If an individual appears

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LIMITATIONS OF LAW

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Since the establishment of Swaraj two things are being insisted upon especially in Uttar Pradesh: (i) That Hindi be introduced all over the country as the language of the State, and (ii) that cow-slaughter be prohibited by law. These two matters are of vital importance to the development of our national life, so much so that they have deserved mention in our Constitution.

About language the Constitution includes a provision that Hindi shall be the language of the administration of the Union. A further provision lays down that unless the President ordered in a manner specified in the Constitution the removal of English earlier, it shall continue in use till the year 1965 A.D.

Regarding cow-slaughter the Constitution provides that the State shall take steps to put a stop to the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle.

We also know that there has been a sharp difference of opinion and bitter controversy in our country from a fairly long time regarding these two subjects. The difference and the controversy continue even today. The cause for the difference and the controversy was religious communalism. Relations between the Hindus and the Muslims used to be strained to the limit on occasions on account of their respective attitudes regarding these two matters. These two topics of public interest have continuously spoiled the relations between the communities living in the country.

What form shall Hindi be? What is Hindustani? What place will Urdu have? Will there be unity between Hindi and Urdu which are two styles of one and the same language? The Hindus though they believed that Hindi and Urdu were two forms of the same speech brought into vogue Sanskritized Hindi and began to call it their language; the Muslims insisted on Arabicizing and Persianizing Urdu and said that it was their language. Our religious differences were thus extended to the secular field of speech also.

After Swaraj this difference assumed a new shape though the original sentiment persisted. As the language of the administration of the State was named *Hindi* in the Constitution a slogan was set going that Sanskritized or pure unadulterated Hindi should now be the language of the administration and that Urdu should now have no place anywhere. This trend went so far that the State Government of Uttar Pradesh gave no place to Urdu in their scheme of education! Side

by side the cry was raised that Hindi be forthwith made the language of intercourse in the offices of the Central Government; that candidates for public services be recruited on the standard of their knowledge of Hindi and so on. Things went so far that there came about an atmosphere in which it was held impossible for non-Hindi public servants to be in Delhi! The Hindi region further declared and propagated the opinion that the universities in the country should now begin to adopt Hindi as their medium of instruction and begin their work on the lines immediately. These movements and tendencies not only savour of Hindu communalism but also of provincialism which had their evil effect on the normal work of propagation of Hindi all over the country.

It was believed essential that we as a nation and the non-Hindi-speaking people of the country in particular should begin learning Hindi so that we could ultimately establish Hindi as the language of the Union and of inter-provincial intercourse. It was because of this that the idea found a place in the Constitution. But to insist that Hindi be at once given this status by force of law is quite a different thing. The directive in the Constitution indicates constructive activity for the propagation of Hindi and reaching a certain stage in the matter within fifteen years. With this end in view having a planned programme of work for the purpose is nothing improper. But that things should be hustled by legislative measures with an eye on public service jobs and that too not by non-Hindi regions but by the Hindi-speaking people of North India is something really sinister.

Let us now have a look about the work regarding cow-slaughter. Here too the same blemish is to be seen that an agitation has been set afoot not for the service of the cow but for prohibiting cow-slaughter by law. The Jana Sangha, the Hindu Mahasabha and such other communal-political organizations took the lead in the agitation. A law prohibiting cow-slaughter was enacted in the State of Uttar Pradesh. And a Congressman like Sheth Govind Das proposed a resolution in the Parliament that it should also enact a measure of the same type. We all know that men with a feeling of communal antagonism have been in the Congress from days past. Someone had gone to the length of remarking in this connection that if an average Congressman was scratched one would find a communally-minded Hindu with his antagonism against the Mussalman concealed under the outer skin. This was true also of those who professed to be nationalist Muslims.

Now after Pakistan has separated itself from India the Hindus have come to feel that they could get cow-slaughter prohibited by law. Some political parties have gone to the length of making it a slogan of their programme. We have arrived at such an unfortunate stage in connec-

tion with the two vital subjects of Hindi and cow-slaughter.

It is obvious that our old history is persisting through these two problems. Hindu communalism manifests itself to us on these two counts in a new shape. It indicates that the public declaration made by Shri Mirabehn that the agitation for prohibition of cow-slaughter is a communal one and that it is not being carried on out of a feeling of service of the cow is not incorrect. But what is particularly revealed by the agitation is that we cannot hope to save the cow by law, and that she and we ourselves also can be saved only by our serving her in the true way. But the men and women who have come together to stop cow-slaughter do not propagate the ideal of constructive service of the cow; they send men to the slaughter-houses to offer 'Satyagraha'!

A friend argued that if drink could be prohibited by law why could not cow-slaughter be also prohibited in the same manner. The comparison is as misleading as it is odious. Liquor booths were being run by Government; besides, liquor is not a normal article of food or drink, in fact it is a thing which kills the mind and soul of man. A comparison, therefore, between beef and liquor would be entirely misleading. Besides, Government does not in any way encourage the use of beef. On the contrary, every State has its own prohibitive acts against slaughter of animals and we could also enact measures for prohibition of slaughter of animals applying them to the whole of society even now if considered necessary from the economic point of view. The religious view of everyone of us is not the same in this connection. The view that the Hindus have adopted is one of service of the cow. They should of course perform their religious duty of serving the cow and ask for necessary aid from Government for the purpose. The directive in the Constitution lays down a duty for the State to improve the breed of the cow. But what we hear and see is the Hindus sending to the slaughter-houses most of the cattle who die by the butcher's knife. This will certainly have to be stopped. But the way to stop it is the way of the service of the cow. By such service we will have milk and ghee in plenty as also animal power in the form of bullocks and would also develop the capacity to reduce cow-slaughter to the minimum. Government will not be able to achieve this end.

A word to those communities which use beef as food would not be out of place. Hardly anyone has to eat beef as a religious duty; those who use it are of course at liberty to do so. Such people would do well, however, to appreciate the sentiment of their neighbouring communities and to give up using beef as food gradually in consideration of the sentiment. Beef is not eaten by the Hindus, but some do use other kinds of meat. And they sometimes eat beef as medical food. If this be true it is of course very improper. One

does not know how far those Hindus, who travel in foreign lands, are able to avoid the use of beef as food. What I wish to point out is that the best way to prevent cow-slaughter is to protect her and her offspring, that is, serve them in the most scientific way. Gandhiji, by starting the Go Seva Sangha, did his best to show how to do it. But we have till now failed to make it a success. Now under Swaraj we can achieve a great deal in the field by quickening our steps. But merely to raise a cry for prohibition of cow-slaughter by law would not be of much advantage to us in serving the cow.

30-4-55

(From Hindi)

Textile Industry and Lancashire

The wheel of time is revolving very fast indeed! In order to give some relief to Lancashire cloth trade the Government of India is reducing the import duty on it! Compare the days of the year 1920 and the present ones of 1955! And on the other side the textile magnates of India are seeking favourable opportunities to export the produce of their factories!

While discussing this curious turn of events the Finance Minister of the Government of India, Shri C. D. Deshmukh assured us that the reduction was not going to have any adverse effect on the industries of our country. Before the reduction was declared the magnates of the textile industry in Lancashire and those from our country (the Japanese ones were taken for granted) had met in a conference and arrived at some understanding. As the reduction seems to have been effected according to the understanding, even if Indian industrialists of cloth may be inwardly grumbling a little, they would not be quite vocal in their opposition to it.

It is good that the step is taken in order to relieve the difficulties of Lancashire; but there is one consideration pertaining to the event which cannot be ignored. There is also a third party in this deal. The Government does not seem to note it, nor do the local textile industrialists care for it. That is the interest of the Indian peasant and the Indian weaver, — shortly speaking, the interest of the Khadi and village industries. If the Government were mindful of his prosperity it should make it plain to the textile industry owners of both the countries that in order to make it possible for the masses of the peasants and weavers of India they may ultimately be ready to wind up their business in favour of and for the good of the latter.

7-5-55

(From Gujarat)

M. P.

By Mahatma Gandhi
BASIC EDUCATION

Pages viii+114 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As. 6

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SHRI VINOBA IN ORISSA—IV

On entering Orissa Vinoba adopted two programmes which have drawn the hearts of the people to him. By undertaking a study of Bhagavata in the Udiya language he has entered the hearts of the common people and by starting a movement for the reform of the Udiya alphabet he has drawn the attention of the intellectual class to himself. In every homestead in the villages of Orissa men and women have begun to discuss the topic of Vinoba's having begun a study of their favourite Bhagavata in the Udiya speech and everyone of the learned men who come to see him discusses with him the problem of reforming the alphabet. The Education Minister of the Orissa Government, the Vice-Chancellor of the Orissa University and many other men of letters have by now had talks with him on the subject. All of them have recognized the scientific basis of the *lok-nagari* alphabet and have promised to give special attention to the suggestions Shri Vinoba has proposed for the reform of the Udiya typewriter.

A deputation of the Christian residents of Katak headed by Shri Lal Mohan Patnayak, once Speaker of the Orissa Assembly, waited on Vinoba. He presented a copy of the translation of the New Testament in the Udiya speech to Vinoba and assured him of their belief that the work he was carrying on was according to the tenets of Jesus Christ.

He had an interesting discussion with some Muslim friends. One of them inquired of him if religions would be allowed under a Sarvodaya order. Vinoba pointed out to him that as it was the different religions were being destroyed. Under a Sarvodaya order religions would certainly have a place as they were after all different ways of worshipping and reaching God or the ultimate Truth.

The Muslim friend's second problem was whether or not in the villages where all the land was donated in Bhoodan if there was a Hindu majority the village would be having a Hindu temple and if a Muslim majority, a mosque. Vinoba explained to him that his fear would be true under a democratic order* but not under a Sarvodaya one, because all decisions under the latter would be taken not by a majority vote but by a unanimous vote.

Another friend wanted to know what was going to happen to the cities in a Sarvodaya society. Shri Vinoba said in reply that in a Sarvodaya social order the cities and villages would supplement one another. The raw materials to be had in the villages would be converted into finished goods and articles in the villages themselves but things and articles like fountain-pens and thermometers would be manufactured in the cities. The industries in the cities would undertake the responsibility of stopping the import of goods from foreign countries.

A third friend wanted to know whether as their religion commanded the faithful follower to set apart the fourth part of his income for religious purposes and if the Muslims donated the sixth of their wealth in Sampattidan would their *jakat* be allowed to be reckoned as part of the *dan*? Shri Vinoba replied in the affirmative.

In the afternoon they had a meeting of the womenfolk. Looking at the sisters who had come together to hear him Shri Vinoba humorously remarked that they did not seem to wear ornaments. He went on to point out, 'The sisters who wore ornaments were usually timid. Therefore, whenever I have occasion to talk to sisters I ask them to give up their ornaments because thereby they will help the poor as also free themselves from fear. Such sacrifice on your part would generate such power in you as to enable you

to take your society forward.' Thus in his short speech Shri Vinoba exhorted the women to give a lead to their men in serving society and further gave them a programme to carry the spinning wheel to every home in Katak.

Members and President of the World Peace Council met Vinoba. They explained that they had drafted a programme for world peace and for giving up the use of atom and hydrogen bombs. They were moving about to take signatures from people on the programme. They expected Vinoba to put his signature to it and to add some remarks of his own. But Vinoba said to them, 'Though I am not averse to your programme I feel that taking signatures on it from the people is not going to help you achieve your end. I believe you should devote yourselves to some concrete act of service to the people.'

One of the members was thereupon prompted to ask if Vinoba's taking signatures on gift-deeds of Bhoodan and Sampattidan was any concrete advantage. Vinoba replied, 'Do you not see the difference? Along with those signatures I take from the signatories land as well as wealth. I would suggest that if you too were to take from those who gave you their signatures a sixth part of the land or wealth in their possession you would be achieving something definite. Is it not our experience that all people do crave for peace in the world but do not wish to part with anything they possess in order to give to society—all of them wish there should be no war in the world but also wish that they should not be made to part with a single pie they call their own?'

The friends of the World Peace Council asked Vinoba's opinion regarding the talks Pandit Nehru had with the Prime Minister of China Shri Chou En Lie on the principles of Pancha Sheela. Vinoba said 'I take the name of God and have faith in Him only. I do not bother myself with any other name. I therefore do not feel any responsibility to express any opinion. But somehow people these days have come to have faith in names of individual men. But I wonder how Chou En Lie could do anything to establish peace in the world when he is not able to take care of things in his own country! How could one who had pains in his own stomach save the world from his pains?' The discussion went on for a long time and in course of it Vinoba finally said that he was asking his own people and his own country to do what he thought they should. He went on to explain that his desire was to see that power of non-violence manifested itself in his country and that the problems facing it were solved by the method of non-violence and love.

The speech Vinoba delivered before the vast gathering in the evening will remain a significant event in the history of the land revolution in Orissa. He never tires of reminding the people of Orissa that theirs was the land which taught emperor Ashoka to dedicate his life to non-violence.

Concluding his speech he declared that the world has not produced a man greater than the Buddha, nor an emperor greater than Ashoka and that it was in the hands of the people of Orissa to prove that there could not be a land in the world greater than their own.

14-3'55

Fulnakhra (Orissa)
(From Hindi)

K. D.

By Vinoba Bhave
BHOODAN YAJNA
[Land-Gifts Mission]

Pages viii + 134 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As.5

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* I do not think it would be so. A true democratic order will allow the freedom of worship to all; hence there will be both the temple and the mosque, if wanted by the respective communities. — Ed.

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GANDHI, NEHRU AND VINOBA

great it is originally on account of the society in which he functions. If we thought of persons as individuals alone it has ultimately but one meaning that all individuals are one on account of the soul and also equal ; there is no question of one man being great and another small there !
 एकमेवाद्वितीयम् । There is only one and none other. The life of the world creates the differences.

Aims and ideals in society cannot be achieved unless you have organizations or institutions suited to them. Individuals have to operate and work through them. But society should be careful not to set up organizations or institutions on the lines of *mathas* wherein individuals are raised to the status of *mahants* who have the final say and the sole authority. In order that organizations or institutions find their own proper leaders they should function as living entities, individuals should join them with the pure aim of serving society through them and should never be attracted to them for love of power. Unless individuals cultivated this tendency while functioning through organizations all their progress would be killed ; and democracy too would ultimately be utterly destroyed.

The history of the world shows that the goodness of saintly lives is a power. Instances of Saint Francis, Guru Nanak, Guru Govindsingh, Gandhiji and many others can be pointed out to illustrate the truth. But the goodness manifested needs an organizer to be effective in society. For instance, Saint Francis had the Pope and the Cardinal. For another familiar instance Gandhiji had Sardar Vallabhbhai.

Shri Vinoba also cannot escape the logic of this process. It would have been a different matter if he were a mere propounder of the lessons of the Gita. He seeks, however, to bring about a revolution through Bhoodan. But what about the organization for it ? The reply offered to the question by Hallam Tennyson is correct to a certain extent. He says that the Bhoodan movement will have an organization of its own and that it will take the place of the Indian National Congress in Indian social life. The first part of the reply is correct ; the latter part if not incomplete and incorrect the truth of it is certainly questionable.

6

We already observe the organization of the Bhoodan movement taking shape. The Sarva Seva Sangh is gradually being transformed into it. The machinery of the Sangh set up in the year 1948 for comprehensive or total constructive service is before our very eyes becoming the institutional machinery of the Bhoodan idea. Not only that. It has started being critical of the Congress. Shri Vinoba expressed his feeling before the Puri Sarvodaya Samaj Sammelan in this connection.

He declared that the Congress was proving a hindrance to the establishment of a non-violent social order and that some remedy had to be found for the solution of the difficulty. He had also some bitter words to say about the democratic way adopted by the Congress.

The organizational machinery through which Jawaharlal functions is the Congress. He has sustained it as the most powerful institution in the country. It is indisputably proving itself as such when compared with other organizations. Is the strength and power that it has built up proving a hindrance to the progress of non-violence ? — the question has been posed before the country in all seriousness by the Sarvodaya Parishad.

Tennyson has given the final reply that the fast declining Congress will be replaced by the power that is Bhoodan. He clarifies his statement by adding that Shri Vinoba could not form part of this institutional power ; he begs the question by making a significant statement that Shri Vinoba will go on repeating his formula of a change of heart. Who then will build up this Bhoodan organization ? And who will be the persons or what will be the elements of which it will be composed ?

The Sarvodaya Parishad taking its cue from the suggestion of setting up a Lok Sevak Sangh made by Gandhiji declares its feeling that as the Congress has failed to convert itself into such a league for the service of the people the task of building up an institution mainly depending on its own moral strength devolves upon itself. That Shri Vinoba should have made such a declaration against his normal temperament seems curious. But it surely indicates his unconsciously accepting the need of an organizational machinery to achieve a new ideal by making it socially effective ; and now in devotional expectation that God will create it he exhorts all sorts of people to concentrate on the work of Bhoodan.

Whenever the power of goodness has manifested itself through a saintly life wise and intelligent men have devoted themselves to the mission of service in order to make the power socially effective. It is like adding zeroes to the figure one to multiply its value. Tennyson is of the opinion that in the absence of Ganunji who was the positive figure one Shri Vinoba succeeds him in the dynasty of saints. But if Shri Vinoba refuses to be bound in an institutional set-up he cannot take fully the place of the figure one in it. That eventuality would lead to a substitute taking his place. Who will be the substitute ? And how will he emerge ?

7

There is not much love lost between the Congress and many of the leading men who have thrown themselves in the Bhoodan movement. Some of them are disgruntled Congressmen who are now opposing the Congress. Shri Vinoba has formulated in words this smouldering sense of

frustration by declaring that the Congress is proving a hindrance to the establishment of a non-violent society. But what does the Congress believe? What reply has it to offer to Shri Vinoba's charge? It resolves to aid the Bhoodan activity and proceeds on its way.

Even Government is eager to help Bhoodan. They are prepared to give away in Bhoodan lakhs of acres of land in their possession. But Shri Vinoba nursing a strong prejudice against the very institution of the State refuses the gift. Is the refusal proper? The Parishad held at Puri does not seem to have applied its mind to this aspect of the Bhoodan.

Government machinery can be of immense help in solving the difficulty of distributing the land collected in Bhoodan. Government can easily improve and level waste land by putting to work the engineering department of the army and the machines at its disposal. Government can also provide for the necessary Samptiddan or finance through their development plans for the landless who need it to work on the land to be given to them. In fact the finance provided for Government planning could well be utilized in this manner. And if Government planning took this turn it should be welcomed by Bhoodan workers as, if they like, a necessary evil! But is not the personal prejudice of Shri Vinoba coming in the way of Government help of this kind? Truly viewed, taking the Bhoodan movement forward in this manner should be the commonly accepted direction of its progress.

But leaders of the Bhoodan activity like Shri Jayaprakash Narayan would not perhaps like their movement taking such a turn; they may not allow it to do so; they may not like the Congress coming into their picture; they may be aiming at building up separate institutional strength of their own. They hope Bhoodan to effect the revolution of their dreams. They seem to have realized that the genius of Shri Vinoba would serve their purpose. We know that the Socialists of India have been expecting a person of Gandhiji's calibre and status to lead them to a successful revolution of their conception. Let us grant that the immense popularity of Shri Vinoba is utilized for the purpose. But will that bring about the revolution which they so earnestly desire?

8

Revolution is not born of the difference between one individual and another. Its birth is the natural consequence of a difference in values. There is hardly an issue which the Bhoodan activity wants to tackle and which the Congress does not want to. True, the Congress may be slow in the direction of its aim and the Bhoodan institution may go very fast. But a difference in the intensity of wish or speed does not become a

difference in values. If the Bhoodan movement now gives a secondary place to its original aim of collecting five crores of acres of land and resolves to progress on the lines of the principle of all land belonging to God alone with change of heart as its principal aim, it may add to the content of its goodness; but what about the activity for making it effective in society? As Tennyson says about the Congress, will not such a course lead the Bhoodan movement to replace inspiration by mere piety? Revolution comes about only when the *sattvik* strength of goodness is made effective in society which is essentially *rajasik*. To that end the quality of *sattva* has to put on the livery of *rajas*; even goodness cannot escape the law of the process of revolution.

Gandhiji had a full grasp of the working of this law. About Shri Vinoba we have yet to find out how far he accepts the validity of that law. Jawaharlalji may be able to understand the power of saintliness. He may even recognize it as such if compelled to do so. But it is something which is foreign to him. That is why he would show a pious liking for Khadi, Village Industries etc. but his love will always be for modern industrialism and urban culture and urban ways of life. And yet he hopes to establish peace in the world! As Shri J. C. Kumarappa says there is no possibility for peace in the world unless all nations based their economic structures on principles laid down and to a certain extent worked out by Gandhiji. One may hope Jawaharlal to be converted to this view of world peace sometime. But it will surely take time. Shri Vinoba has a faith which is quite the reverse of it. He may not deny the utility of science and scientific achievements, but he cannot be expected to take to its exaggerated or blind worship.

Such then is the state of the leadership of our country. The way out of the confusion lies in the direction of taking resort to true democracy. Only true democracy could bring Shri Vinoba and Jawaharlal together. Only then could the Bhoodan idea work with speed with the help of Government and only then could Jawaharlal be made to appreciate what a great thing the village industries programme is and what immense potentialities for the good of our people whom he loves so dearly, it contains. Without such a transformation democracy and peace in India are but empty dreams. And there is no other way to put a stop to war as Jawaharlalji so much wants to do.

29-4-'55

(From the original in Gujarati)

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