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ACHARYA VINOBA







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The Gramdan Movement (14)

THE Bhodan Movement has now logically culminated into a Gramdan movement. Ideologically liberation of land from private ownership was in the back-ground. But it was developing as a mass movement for satisfying the land-hunger of the landless tillers. Over six lakhs of donors offered about 42 lakhs of acres for sharing with the landless and have thus created a moral sanction of the people.

It was given to Orissa to give a lead in the mass renunciation of private property when the people in hundreds of villages surrendered their title to land in favour of village community in 1955. They gladly accepted the share of land that was allotted to them for cultivation to meet the needs of their families. This is a marvellous combination of the non-violent technique in individual and mass action. Today Orissa leads with 1610 Gramdan villages.

Vinobaji has been stressing more on Gramdan during the last one year. Immediately after Orissa there was fairly a good response in Andhra. Vinobaji entered Tamilnad, the land of temples, with great hope, but it took some time for it to respond. Madura district rose to the occasion and offered about eighty villages in December, '56. Today the number has gone to 180 villages. It has given a new wave of hope and enthusiasm among the workers who are now working hard for Talukdan. In the meanwhile surprising news was brought by Sri Aryanayakamji, that a Firkadan had already materialised in Maharashtra. During Vinobaji's yatra in Tanjore district messages were frequently received announcing new Gramdans in Madura district and in other States. Though individual land-gifts here and there are being received, all attention is now focussed on Gramdan only.

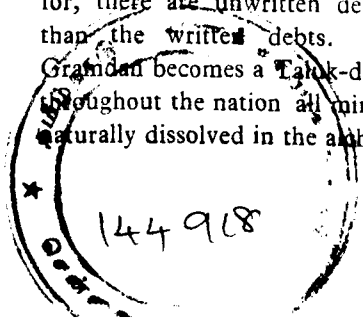
The latest available figures of Gramdans will show how the movement is spreading throughout the country. Orissa 1,610; Maharashtra 193; Tamilnad 175; Bihar 53; Andhra 56; Assam 12; Madhya Bharat 10; Rajasthan 9; U. P. 9; Bengal 7; Hyderabad 4; Gujarat 1; Karnatak 1; Total 2,140.

The whole Tamilnad is looking now to Madura District where all the representatives of constructive institutions are striving hard for declaring a Taluk-dan before April next.

The Tamilnad Sarvodaya Mandal met for a second time at Tirupathur on the 17th February in the presence of Vinobaji. Sri Jagannathan, Sri Guruswami and others spoke about the progress of Taluk-dan work and various difficulties. One of the major difficulties that confronted them was the problems of clearance of the debts of the villagers. The second was the distraction of elections and the third was want of sufficient workers.

Vinobaji in his inimitable sweet and logical way said that the problems of clearance of debts did not weigh much in his mind. He gave a brilliant exposition of the ethical and social implications of debts in the light of our ideology. The debts seem to assume importance only when looked in terms of money. Who can value in terms of money the service that a mother renders to her boy? All debts that one owes to the living, the dead and the Gods are said to be discharged when one surrenders his self entirely to God. Similarly when one surrenders all his sense of private ownership to the community all his debts can be said to have been liquidated.

In Gramdan village we are not only aiming to abolish the private ownership of land only but we aim also to bring about a total revolution in the social and economic values. In the newly transformed life that we envisage, the money lender and all others who have helped the villagers in different ways cannot escape the influence of the surging wave of new life. To doubt their good nature to favourably respond to the new situation will be doing injustice to them. By our faith in human goodness we assume that no one can escape being a donor at some stage or other. The non-donors of today are bound to be the donors of to-morrow. To think otherwise is a denial of our faith. Therefore every creditor to whom the villager is indebted for something or other is bound to give his share of contribution to him who had already surrendered his sense of possession. No one can escape his debt for, there are unwritten debts which are infinitely more sacred than the written debts. When the non-violent revolution of Gramdan becomes a Taluk-dan and District-Dan and thus spreads throughout the nation all minor problems like debts etc., will get naturally dissolved in the anathemy of love and compassion.



Equal Distribution

MAHATMA GANDHI

This is an extract from the latest book, "Economic And Industrial Life And Relations" Vol. I, compiled and edited by V. B. Kher, published by the Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. This article written by Mahatma Gandhi in August 1940 has in it the roots of the present Sampatti-Dan Movement and anticipates the 'seemingly impossible discoveries' that Vinobaji is making today in the field of non-violence.*

INDEED at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must lie that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for the superfluous wealth possessed by them. For according to the doctrine they may not possess a rupee more than their neighbours. How is this to be brought about? Non-violently? or should the wealthy be dispossessed of their possession? To do this we would naturally have to resort to violence. This violent action cannot benefit society. Society will be the poorer, for it will lose the gifts of a man who knows how to accumulate wealth. Therefore the non-violent way is evidently superior. The rich man will be left in possession of his wealth, of which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for society. In this argument honesty on the part of the trustee is assumed.

As soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its benefit, then purity enters into his earnings and there is Ahimsa in his venture. Moreover, if men's minds turn towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in society, and that without any bitterness.

It may be asked whether history at any time records such a change in human nature. Such changes have certainly taken place in individuals. One may not perhaps be able to point to them in a whole society. But this only means that up till now there has never been an experiment on a large scale on non-violence. Somehow or other the wrong belief has taken possession of us that Ahimsa is pre-eminently a weapon for individuals and its use should, therefore, be limited to that sphere. In fact this is not the case. Ahimsa is definitely an attribute of society. To convince

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people of this truth is at once my effort and my experiment. In this age of wonders no one will say that a thing or idea is worthless because it is new. To say it is impossible because it is difficult, is again not in consonance with the spirit of the age. Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence. The history of religion is full of such examples. To try to root out religion itself from society is a wild-goose chase. And were such an attempt to succeed, it would mean the destruction of society. Supersitition, evil customs and other imperfections creep in from age to age and mar religion for the time being. They come and go. But religion itself remains, because the existence of the world in a broad sense depends on religion. The ultimate definition of religion may be said to be obedience to the law of God. God and His law are synonymous terms. Therefore God signifies an unchanging and living law. No one has ever really found Him. But *avatars* and prophets have, by means of their *tapasya*, given to mankind a faint glimpse of the eternal law.

If, however, in spite of the utmost efforts the rich do not become guardians of the poor in the true sense of the term and the latter are more and more crushed and die of hunger, what is to be done? In trying to find the solution to this riddle I have lighted on non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means. The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society. Man has been conversant with violence from the beginning, for he has inherited this strength from the animal in his nature. It was only when he rose from the state of a quadruped (animal) to that of a biped (man) that the knowledge of the strength of Ahimsa entered into his soul. This knowledge has grown within him slowly but surely. If this knowledge were to penetrate to and spread amongst the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of nonviolence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation.

—*Harijan*, 25-8-'40.

God's Ways of Grace

VINOBAJI passed through a critical time in his health on 11th February at his camp in Arantangi. Vinobaji's yatra in Tanjore district was more strenuous than in other districts. Instead of double camps on certain days when he had to cover long distances Vinobaji insisted on a single camp and walking at a stretch even long distances of over ten miles.

Vinobaji was evidently feeling some physical unrest when he began to address the usual prayer meeting at 5 P. M. He concluded his speech within 15 minutes though the subject he began was a weighty one requiring an hour. He retired to his room immediately where he signed his name in some copies of Geethai Peruraigal. The pain possibly due to his chronic duodenal ulcer became more acute. He gave up then even the signing of books waiting in large number. The pain became more and more acute. The sight of Vinobaji's suffering acutely was unbearable to the associates. The D. M. O. of Tanjore was contacted on the phone, but he could come late at night. In the meanwhile Vinobaji vomitted which gave him some relief. He called an associate who was in tears of anxiety to his side, and inquired whether the next day's camp was not at Manickavachagar's shrine. Chanting a Tamil song from Manickavachagar's Thiruvachakam he retired to rest at the usual hour of 8 P.M.

Vinobaji got up exhausted early next morning and had the usual prayers at 3-30 A. M. Shri Aryanayakamji and others suggested postponement of the yatra and complete rest for the day. But Vinobaji had already made up his mind to walk leaving himself in the hands of God with Whose grace "even the lame can climb the hill and the dumb can speak". Even though the D. M. O. who examined him advised to take rest for 24 hours, Vinobaji started on exactly at 4-30 A.M. It is a wonder how he managed to walk over 9 miles to Avadayarkoil in that condition of health. At the evening meeting of Avadayarkoil he said that he was himself doubtful whether he could reach the spot on 12th. On the 13th again he walked over 9 miles to Embal under greater strain. Those who were with Vinobaji were moved with tears of joy at the way God's grace saved him from the crisis.

Liberate Education from State Control

ACHARYA VINOBA

I have been walking in Tamilnad for the last eight months. I was looking forward to visiting Kumbakonam. I was keen that we should spend a day here. Like Kashi in the north, Kumbakonam has been known as a great centre of learning. Kashi has lost the old tradition and so has probably Kumbakonam. After Swaraj, a new renaissance should have started in our country. One hoped that a new spurt would be given to learning. Swaraj cannot fulfil itself without an intellectual renaissance.

This ancient country of ours has been in bondage for centuries. Opportunity of creative effort was denied to us. There was no scope for growth. English education created a hiatus between the townsman and the villager, the literate and the illiterate. A small percentage took advantage of the new learning but the vast majority of our countrymen remained illiterate. Learning came to fetch a market value; the B. A's. and M. A's. were bought and sold as a commodity. The English educated population did not experience freedom but were happy to remain in gilded cages. The idea that a person deserves a higher salary because he possesses a higher university degree is absurd. It ought to be just the opposite. In fact a learned person should have very few wants. But our English educated degree-holders got high salaries and began to live in comfort and luxury. No wonder their education could be of no value to society.

Last year when there was a great talk of linguistic redistribution of States, the question of the inclusion of Telengana in Vishal-Andhra was being discussed. The language of both the areas is Telugu but people in Telengana were hesitating if they should join Vishal-Andhra. They were afraid that since they were not as advanced in education as the people of the other districts of Telengana, they may be discriminated against and their interests may suffer. They were afraid of the educated people. That means that there was fear about the educated and advanced classes. In fact, if a person is really educated, he should inspire confidence and love. But English education became a market-commodity and it

could not inspire any confidence. Educated bridegrooms auctioned themselves as pedigree horses and bullocks in the market.

Learning can save a person or it can destroy him. In ancient India great kings had to go to the forest and stand reverently before men of learning. In Raghuvamsa we see that the great king Dilip who went to the Ashram of Vasishta had to tend the cow for some days. There is a story of king Alexander. He had conquered the then known world and had come to India. He had conquered the Punjab and he was returning back. On the way, he saw a fakir sitting by the road side. He went to him and said, 'Don't you know who I am?' He said, 'No, I don't care to know who you are'. The King asked him who he was and the fakir answered 'I am the emperor of the world'; King Alexander said to him, 'You look to be a mad man. Don't you know that I am the King of the world?' The fakir looked at him and laughed. He said, 'Would an emperor go about like this, night and day for conquering something that he has not? If you want to know how a real king looks, look at me.' The King stood quietly and gazed at him in amazement. A learned man had such independence of mind and was not afraid and could not be tempted by anything. If we want real learning to be revived in our land, education must be freed from governmental control and cease to be a market commodity.

I have come to Kumbakonam because I wanted to put my ideas before you. Learning must never become a hand-maid of any power. We honour Learning. We worship Saraswati. She is the Goddess of learning. Ravindranath has said that in this land was heard for the first time, the 'sonorous accents of Sama Veda.' Ancient India became famous because of her learning. India had wealth but her glory and greatness lay in her learning. The Tamil language, for instance, is 2000 years old. There is an unbroken tradition of learning and culture. In our country learning and education must be free. Government or any other power must have no control over it. The wise men in the land must be in charge of national education. There must be a school in every village. They must have their own text books.

Once a king went to Euclid and said to him 'My son wants to learn geometry. Will you teach him?' He said, 'Most certainly.' 'In which class would you admit him?' asked the King. 'In the

same class where all the other students are learning' replied Euclid. 'How can a prince learn with other students?' said the king. 'There is no royal-road to geometry,' answered Euclid. Unfortunately we have been contaminated with modern ideas of education and lost all the ideal of the Ashrams and the atmosphere that was in them. The tribe of the learned has almost become extinct. We talk of Socialism and Communism but our education continues to be essentially a class education. Governmental control over education is dangerous. No Government, whatever may be its political philosophy, should ever be allowed to control education. We had real intellectual freedom in ancient India. Education was not controlled. Today teachers have become a category of public servants. There is no real relationship between the teacher and the taught. They never go to the teachers for advice. Student-teacher relationship has come to an end. Unless we have a system of education which is free from the control of Government, there can be no real opposition. Today the difference between the party in power and the party in opposition is one of degree. Fundamentally they have much in common.

Bhoodan want peace and love to become the dominant values in society. All problems ought to be solved by negotiations in a spirit of friendliness. The state of things where half a dozen men at the summit have all authority in their hands is tragic. It can never create real peace in the world. Bhoodan is a way of creating a new self-reliant strength in the people and build up a new society of the free and equal with the consent of all. Gramdan is an attempt to build a new order of society in every village. People in the village will live as one family and share all the power and responsibility. People can be strong and enjoy real security only when they learn the art of co-operation and begin to produce their basic need by working together. This is a new experiment in Democracy. That is why people from distant lands are being attracted to it. I hope people of Kumbakonam will open their hearts and understand the new thought.

From Bhoodan (27-1-'57)

Vinoba's Approach is Right

LEON HIRSCH

Mr. Leon Hirsch, an American graduate in philosophy and M. B. A. has been in India under the Research Fellowship of Ford Foundation. Before returning to U. S. A. he wanted to study Bhoodan movement. He was with Vinobaji's yatra for a few days and here is his spontaneous reaction to what he saw and heard about Vinobaji's non-violent technique of mass action.

RECENTLY I walked, ate, and slept with Vinoba and a group of about twenty Bhoodan workers for several days. In this short time, even I, not an Indian, but an American student of economics, could see the tremendous merit of Bhavé's way.

I am not "against" development. Far from it. I could not be called a Gandhian, Why then am I so enthused about Vinoba and the way he has pointed out?

You cannot speak Telegu to a Punjabi and expect him to understand, at least not until he learns the language. In a similar way, you must speak to villagers in terms that they understand. Instead of seeking to impose solutions from above, Vinoba approaches the villagers in familiar ways; he talks to them so that they understand him. Vinoba does not try to put into effect a pre-arranged solution to "uplift the masses". He seeks to prepare them so that they themselves can arrange their own lives to their best benefits. The seeds for a full and meaningful life are there in India's half-million villages. Vinoba is readying the ground so that these seeds might grow and bear fruit.

Vinoba feels that laws, without a change in people's hearts are not very effective. He cites the fact that though there is a law forbidding discrimination against Harijans, still it continues. We in America have this same difficulty with regard to giving the Negro his equal rights. Vinobaji's approach is to first cause a revolution in people's hearts, and then concern himself about legislation. Similarly you cannot create full meaningful lives by plans and programs, without first preparing the groundwork through direct sympathetic contact with the villagers—and this is Vinoba's way.

The cornerstone of Vinoba's whole programme is flexibility. Just as he inspires the village folk, they inspire him. This mutual process is what is so outstanding about his approach. The evolution of Bhoodan into Gramdan, and all the other "dans" has been a natural one. Although Vinoba firmly believes in village co-operation, he does not prescribe the particular structure of this co-operation, but leaves this to the villages. Here is his great strength.

I do not feel that Vinoba is "against" industrialization. He himself has stated this many times. Once the groundwork is laid enabling villagers to decide for themselves how they hope to realize full lives, then they can choose how much and what forms of industrialization they find most suitable to their needs as they see them. So Vinoba is not "against" anything. He is for helping people realize themselves in ways that they think are best.

Some say that although they sympathize with Vinoba, the ideas of appealing directly to villagers in unworkable and Utopian. But couldn't this have been said about that earlier manifestation of Indian genius, Gandhi's non-violent approach to independence?

Each morning when thou dost awaken, say unto thyself, "This day in my heart shall the Christ be reborn."; and then do ye live that day, all of its moments, all of its hours, as would one who knows beyond a doubting that this *is so*. He who lives, consciously lives with the Christ Presence ever in his heart, ever in his soul can never be heedless of, can never be unkind to man nor creature; for to such an one all men are his brethren and all creatures are his dependents, and over them all falleth the mantle of his love.

If the power-mad and the greedy of the market place could but know, far greater would be *their* joy, far higher would be *their* accomplishment, if only they would turn from their evil ways of self-acquiring, of self-aggrandizement to the kindly simplicities of the Christ-way.

New Orientation of Khadi Work

DHIRENDRA MAZUMDAR
(President, Sarva Seva Sangh)

AFTER his release from the Aga Khan Palace in 1944 while addressing the constructive workers Gandhiji had said, "Spinning and Weaving cannot be carried on now as a relief programme". Production of khadi must be looked upon as a means of creating a new society which will be free from exploitation. He had therefore advised the All India Spinners' Association to decentralise itself in seven lakh villages of India and change the entire objective and method of its work. The All India Spinners' Association has been attempting to adjust its policy to the new line. After the emergence of the Bhoodan movement the A. I. S. A. merged itself in the Sarva Seva Sangh which is dedicated to the ideal of Sarvodaya.

Spinning and weaving that is the production of handspun and woven cloth has always been an important item of the constructive Programme. Naturally there has been a great discussion about its place and policy in the altered conditions. The Khadi and Gramodyoga Samiti of the A. B. S. S. Sangh discussed the subject in all its details and passed the following resolution in their meeting held on the 14th and 15th of January 1957.

"To Gandhiji khaddar was the symbol of a non-violent society. Production of khaddar was not a commercial effort of producing and selling handspun and hand-woven cloth. It had a meaning only if it was carried on with a view to create a non-exploitative and self-governing and self-reliant society.

"Unless khadi-work is integrated with other activities meant to foster the development and rehabilitation of village society it could have no foundation and would not prosper.

"The responsibility of all those who are engaged in Constructive Programme like khadi has increased since the skeleton organization of the Bhoodan movement has been dissolved and the responsibility of carrying on the movement has been put on the people. It is necessary now for all who are engaged in the

Constructive Programme to co-operate and help the work of Gramodaya or building a new society in Gramdan villages. Khadi work must be carried on with a view to make the village self-sufficient in cloth. Gramodaya committees should be formed in every village and an atmosphere should be created wherein all land of the village will be pooled together and redistributed.

“The following are the main points in the new policy:—

(1) A spinner and a weaver should first use the handmade cloth for themselves and their families and sell only the surplus.

(2) Khadi should, as far as possible, be sold in the place where it is produced. Only the surplus should be sent to cities or other places.

(3) Arrangements should be made to get the yarn spun by villagers woven into cloth without any cost, to create the habit of wearing clothes made out of self-spun yarn. The Khadi Gramodyog Board gives a subsidy of 75% on self sufficiency in cloth. If the responsibility of paying the remaining 25% cost is borne by some institution arrangements can be made to get the self-spun yarn woven without any additional payment and thus conditions of self-sufficiency can be created.

“To begin with 12 yards should be the maximum limit to free weaving.”

The resolution is timely. All Khadi workers will welcome it. The Bhoodan movement has underlined the importance and urgency of this work. I hope the constructive workers will reorient their policy and change the method of work and co-operate fully in the Bhoodan revolution that is spreading in the country.

The need of creating Gramodaya Committees in every village which will work for Gramdan should be specially noted. We shall then fulfil Gandhiji's wish of decentralising A. I. S. A. in the five lakh villages of India.

In the Foot-steps of Saint Ramdas

VINOBAJI

THE city of Tanjore is famous in Maratha history. I had heard the name of this city when I was at school and it has stuck in my memory. After 62 years, I am having an opportunity to see it. There is a difference between hearing and seeing. Shri Ramdas who was the teacher of the great king Shivaji had visited this city twice; once he stayed here for nearly three months. It seems that there were some very good sculptors in this city in those days. He had one or two idols made here. Shri Ramdas moved through most of the provinces in India at a time when there were no easy means of communication. He must have mostly walked on foot. He established ashrams in many places. The central ashram was in Tanjore. The institutions he founded depended on gifts. He actually went out and begged for help. He used to take only a handful from each household; if anything more was given, he did not accept it. His mission depended on the charity he got. Mahavir and Buddha founded missions which were also maintained by gifts. Jain and Buddhist thought has influenced early Tamil and Kannada literature. Buddhism and Jainism had their origin in Bihar but their influence spread all over the country. Afterwards Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhvacharya started from the South and travelled to the North and other parts of India. The missions they founded depended on gifts they received from the people.

When you give in the measure you receive, it becomes a trade. When you take more and give less, it is like thieving. In these days this has become an approved method of payment to men of ability and talent. The so-called “services” come under this category. They receive more and give less. The missions founded by men like Ramdas or Shankara followed the opposite path. They took very little and gave very much. I am trying to follow in their footsteps. About 6 lakhs of people have given us over 40 lakh acres, but I am still hungry. I want ownership in land to disappear completely in the whole of this country. I want to convey the message of Bhoodan to you.

Whatever God has given us is meant to be used for the service of all. When a householder earns anything, he never uses it selfishly for himself but feels happy when he shares it whole family. Likewise I want the family feeling to be extended to the whole village. Everyone must consider the village as his family. There are people in our country who have no employment, who have no land of their own. They have children in the house as we have in ours. Should they not have food and clothes as our children have? Just as the air and light is for all, so should land belong to all. There should be no private ownership in land. All this is so simple. Even a child can understand and appreciate it.

In Tanjore, which is blessed by the river Cauveri, one would expect people to have generosity of heart. How can people be miserly when they are living on the banks of a river which is so generous? I have heard that some land-owners here have formed a separate association of Mirasdars. They are panicky and are afraid that their land will be taken away from them. So they have formed an association for protecting their interests. Have we ever heard fathers and mothers forming an association because of the fear of their children? If a son demands a share in the estate the father would give away the whole estate to him. He would not deserve to be a father if he does not do so. Mirasdars are like fathers to the tenants. The sons had not come of age so far, the father therefore held the land in trust for them. Now they have grown up and are demanding a share in it. Why should the land owners be afraid? To be afraid of the tenants and the landless is like being afraid of one's own shadow. Meet them without any fear with friendliness of heart and the response will be friendly. Land is a thing to be given out of love. As a father gives his daughter in marriage so must the landlord give his land to those who want to till it. Can the interests of the right and the left hand be different? It is only by co-operating that both will help one another. Human intelligence consists in learning to co-operate. Sarvodaya believe that God pervades the whole Universe, Man can be happy when he learns to live in peaceful co-operation with all.

Elections are approaching fast. Unfortunately election propaganda consists mainly in boosting one's own party, denouncing the opponents and making reckless statements. It deliberately

attempts to create ill-will. We are copying this from the West. It is a common saying in India that if 5 speak with one voice, it should be understood as the word of God, that is, our ancients believed in working with the consent of all. Today a proposition is carried by a majority of votes; it creates a conflict between the majority and the minority. Our social life is fragmented by divisions of caste, colour and political parties. There are different schools of thought in the world. In a large country like ours, with its intricate problems, there are bound to be differences of view. It is quite natural that people should hold different views. But does that mean that there is no common factor amongst all those who differ? All can work together on points that are common. For instance, our villages need better sanitation; all the villagers, whatever party they may belong to, must come forward and co-operate in this work. A programme of common work should be formulated and then there should be no controversy in carrying it out. We must learn to act unitedly in things on which we agree and then we can certainly have our own difference of opinion. Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhvacharya differed in their interpretation of Vedanta; each had his own special emphasis. But they also spoke with one voice, and with equal emphasis and fervour on the need for truthfulness, compassion, cleanliness and self-control. They gave religion to the people. If, on the contrary, they had projected their theoretical differences, they could not have helped the people to acquire moral qualities. There is so much common between all the political parties in India today. If they emphasize this and encourage to work in co-operation, they would do a great national service but to day they are emphasizing their differences and encouraging the habit of verbal criticism.

India will not know peace and stability till Gramdan becomes universal. India's voice cannot become compelling till she has solved the problem of the landless. Unless we succeed in achieving real social equality in our country, our message of peace cannot have much effect on the world.

Gramdan is the answer to the challenge of the times. The food is offered to the God and then all in the family participate in it. Similarly we should first offer our land to the village and then get back whatever remains after it is properly redistributed. The Gita says that "those wicked people who prepare food for their own

sake... verily they eat their sin." Is it not safer to keep money with the people than to keep it in a bank? Kabir has put it very beautifully. He says that water should never be allowed to get into the boat. It should only be in the river. So all treasure should be with the people. No individual should ever store it with himself. If a thief comes to the house, he should find nothing there except milk, fruit, butter, vegetable, spinning wheel and things of that kind. If he comes in the night, we should tell him to come by the day and then teach him to work. It is bad for the village to allow money to accumulate in any one place. Nothing should be allowed to get accumulated in one place. It begins to stink. Things must circulate and must be ever in movement. Then they can remain fresh and healthy. If theft is a sin, accumulation is a greater sin. The Vedas have always coupled (*asthaya*) non-stealing with (*aparigraha*) non-accumulating. Today we send the thief to the prison and honour the person who accumulates. Please understand all this. It is so simple. I hope that Bhoodan will spread all over in Tamilnad and men will respond to it and give with a full heart.

(23rd January 1957)

The spirit of renunciation should rule all the activities of our life. A householder does not cease to be one, if he regards life as a duty rather than as an indulgence. A merchant, who operates in the sacrificial spirit, will have crores passing through his hands, but he will, if he follows the law, use his abilities for service. He will therefore not cheat or speculate, will lead a simple life, will not injure a living soul and will lose millions rather than harm anybody. Let no one run away with the idea, that this type of merchant exists only in my imagination. Fortunately for the world, it does exist in the West as well as in the East. It is true such merchants may be counted on one's fingers' ends, but the type ceases to be imaginary, as soon as even one living specimen can be found to it.

M. K. Gandhi

Mrs. Chester Bowles' Interview with Vinoba

DAMODARADAS MUNDADA

MRS. CHESTER BOWLES, friend of India, and one of the signatories to the '*Kup Dan yagna*' (Well Fund Mission) in England and America called upon Vinobaji the other day at a small village—Koradacheri—in Tanjore District.

Long before her arrival, she had already written to him about her proposed visit. She had seen him suffering from throat trouble when she met him last in Utkal. "Have you any sore throat now?" was therefore the first question she asked after they greeted each other.

Thanking her for the kind query, Vinobaji offered her a seat to his right. "I am hard of hearing" said he pointing to his left ear.

"I am too: Do you hear me now?" Asked Mrs. Bowles, taking the provided seat.

And as he nodded the talk proceeded. Mrs. Bowles apologised for her husband's inability to come and see him in the South. "He is so glad to see your programme progressing especially the Gramdan side of it" she added.

She then referred to the Community Project villages which she had visited last time. "Are these villages making any progress, Vinobaji?" she asked.

"They are progressing in their own way"—he replied; "but they can't make any progress until the problem of poverty is solved. Mr. Dey told me how the poor in the villages were unable to avail of any substantial help from the scheme, and how it were the more able alone who extracted it. Mr. Dey made no secret of his experience and confessed that they were not able to reach the poorest. That is their difficulty. They are working from above."

"Did you say that to Mr. Dey?"

"Yes. And he agreed with my views!"

"What is your solution, Vinobaji?"

"My solution obviously is Gramdan!"

"Certainly, And then alone the Development programme may progress in the right direction!"

"Yes. It is so!". And narrating his experience in Madura District, Vinobaji pointed out how the Development officers in the district were interested in the Gramdan Movement.

Mr. Harris, who accompanied Mrs. Bowles as her Secretary, wanted to know from Vinobaji if the idea of Bhoodan could be related to countries outside India in bridging the gulf between the rich and the poor.

"I have said many a time that Bhoodan is not limited to any particular area! It is related to world problems and can be applied according to the circumstances. Did I not refer to Japan and Australia and plead that Australia should be ready to welcome the Japanese. It is my firm conviction that Land is the Lord's and does not belong to any individual or nation. It belongs to humanity at large.

"And what about Sampathidan?"

"It is not so important, because after all money has no real value. It is only a conception. You may have any money in your pocket but it may prove valueless if it failed to fetch any article of use in return. Your money has some value because I want to sell my produce for one reason or other. But it is not so with land. It is an essential means of production. It has its own intrinsic, absolute value.

"But" intervened Mrs. Bowles "while some countries are rich in raw materials and other natural resources, others are comparatively very poor. May the principle of free exchange be applied there?"

Vinoba: "Of course! There must be free exchange of raw materials and natural resources. Articles of primary necessities however should be manufactured locally in the village itself. The question of exchange should arise for the secondary needs only.

Mr. Harris referred to the co-operative movement in China and Israel and wanted to know if India had any lesson to learn from such countries.

Appreciating these efforts and expressing his readiness to accept the good points therein, such as the Japanese method of paddy

cultivation etc., Vinobaji pointed out how every country had its own habits and conventions and so far as cooperation was concerned, India may not accept these in the same form. There may be differences in conditions in Israel and those in India and you will have to take all these factors into consideration."

"But the India Government is proposing to start a lakh of producers, co-operatives in this country and we would like to know if you approve the proposal?"

"Without Gramdan, the Scheme will neither be feasible nor useful. It will prove helpful only on the basis of Gramdan."

At this Mrs. Bowles wanted to know if there was any administrative change in the Gramdan villages, after the Gramdan was effected and if so, what was its nature!

Said Vinobaji: "Gramdan meant a change in the very psychology of the people which can transform the whole life to suit the new context. Today X requires money for the marriage celebration of Y and borrows it from Z. But in a Gramdan village there will be no difficulty whatsoever because the marriage, there is a community affair and the question of raising a personal loan would not arise at all!"

Mrs. Bowles, who happened to meet Shri Cherian Thomas of the All India Padyatra, at New Delhi, informed Vinobaji how Sri Cherian was dreaming of the day when the Nation may meet to make a declaration of the liquidation of personal proprietorship in land.

At this, Mrs. Bowles was informed how the beginning was already made on Taluka basis and how the Tirumangalam Taluka had pledged on the eve of the Independence Day to offer Taluka Dan within a period of three months. She was also greatly impressed with the form of the pledge which the representatives of the Taluka took on the occasion.

And Sri Aryanayakamji who had just returned from Sevagram brought the news as to how Maharashtra has already stolen an advance in Firkadan by donating 52 villages in Kolhapur District in Azra Mahal. In spite of the fact that this had happened a week earlier, the news had only just appeared in a Bombay Marathi daily, and this was read out to Vinobaji. At this, the visitors expressed their surprise and said that if even ten villages would

surrender their ownership in this way in America, the whole nation would wonder at the miracle, and the news would appear on the front page with full page headlines.

Pointing to another news item in the same paper, appearing in two columns bold type head lines, regarding the arrest of a man alleged to have been involved in some murder case, Vinobaji said how even this news of Firkadan would have appeared in Big Bold type and full page head lines had it taken place through violent means, for then it would have been considered as a revolution! Evidently, the visitors were surprised at the apathy of the press in educating the public in this great and unique revolutionary process of voluntary liquidation of ownership. Vinobaji however did not seem to depend at all on these modern methods of publicity, for, according to him, revolutions worked silently in their own way and the world knew them only after their accomplishment.

Mrs. Bowles then informed Vinobaji, how the Negro leader Mr. King, who successfully fought for the Negroes' right of travelling in the American Buses, on non-segregation basis, was coming to India to meet him and walk with him during his trek. "As a lawyer" Mr. Harris pointed out "I must confess that the movement was taken up by the "Ministers" preaching in church and not by the lawyers practising in the courts."

"That is a very good news" exclaimed Vinobaji.

"It is the first spark of light, as such a thing had never happened in America before" exclaimed Mrs. Bowles! "Now they have begun to use the buses on non-segregation basis". Mrs. Bowles wanted to know, if these sparks appearing all over the world including South Africa, and America be combined, and how! "God will do that through individuals like you" assured Vinobaji. "That would be one of your missions of carrying good news from here to there and from there to here."

The visitors wanted to know the reason why the educated people felt shy of responding to Bhoodan.

"It is very strange indeed that the intellectual class does not know how to avail of this great awakening". Mrs. Bowles expressed her feelings. "But the children will show them the path" she added. Obviously she was referring to the unanimous vote of the

children in the prayer meeting, who, on being asked by Vinobaji about their views on Gramdan had raised their hands to manifest their support to the proposal. (The prayer meeting was going on when Mrs. Bowles arrived and she had joined the meeting before she had talked to Vinobaji. She was also greatly impressed by the five minutes silence at the end of the meeting, especially by the children quietly participating in it.) Referring to the conditions in her own country and in other countries also, Mrs. Bowles pointed out how the people there followed those leaders who made only speeches. "But Bhoodan has indeed now created a new dimension in the political life!" She added!

Referring again to the Negro Movement in America Mrs. Bowles asked:— "What place do you see, Vinobaji, for that kind of Satyagraha in the present democratic set up of India?"

Vinobaji: "The Satyagraha of the old type which we practised in the days of Gandhiji was rather of a negative type. Quit India he said to the British. This was but natural in the circumstances. But now, after Swaraj and when so called Democracy is functioning, the Satyagraha should be of a positive and constructive type. I am hoping that Gramdan will show the way to that sort of Satyagraha. But that people will slowly know what is conversion and what is compulsion and they will soon realise that there was no necessity for compulsion. In a Democratic country the Satyagraha should be a positive and an elevating force. We can't say mend or end. We will have to mend only and there can be no question of ending. The old experience we have with us, and the new method of positive Satyagraha will emerge out of it. Our negative Satyagraha was able to secure freedom for us, but it has not been able to generate positive and effective non-violent force. People do not yet feel that there is a positive force such as love before which all kinds of evil will melt away. That kind of conviction is wanting. We have to cultivate that faith and conviction in the potency of Love and non-violence."

Mrs. Bowles wanted some more elucidation on the form of Satyagraha. "To fight an unjust Legislation", said Vinobaji. "Our action should not be negative, i. e., there should not be want of love. The force of action should be positive love. That I do not hate you is not enough. I must love you also, notwithstanding your faults, because I am also not faultless. I must be ever ready

to love you. That will create a positive force. It exists in every heart and requires but to be manifested. From times immemorial, we had spent our time, energy and resources to develop the power of violence. It won't even take as much time to develop non-violence."

"How could the Scientists who were responsible for the various inventions, prevent the abuse of their discoveries?"

"They can certainly resist non-violently the use of their discoveries for violent actions" was the prompt remedy prescribed.

"What part were the landless to play in this Bhoodan? was the next question"

"The landless people should know that their power to work is the greatest power in the world. They should therefore come forward to offer Shramdan i. e., labour gifts. They will thus create a moral force. They should not be under the impression that they are only to receive. They are able to give and they should do so in the form of labour and that too through love".

Last but not least, Mrs. Bowles wanted to know if the United Nations Organisation could be the agency through which the ideas of Bhoodan could work on the international plane.

"I wish it could," replied Vinobaji. "But I am not very optimistic about this organisation of the United Nations. No doubt they sit round the table but still they do not trust one another. They meet each other with suspicion".

And while the talk concluded and Vinobaji thanked them for their visit, Mrs. Bowles exclaimed "It is so charming to hear you speak English."

Technique of Non-violent Revolution

J. B. KRIPALANI

GANDHIJI, in pursuance of his new ideas, elaborated a technique of non-violent non-cooperation or Satyagraha as he called it. But he was not thinking only in terms of national and political liberty. On the basis of political independence he wanted to build a new social order based upon political liberty and economic and social equality free from exploitation. However, he did not enunciate a rigid theory, dogma or ideology for this double revolution. He, of course, indicated in rough outline the new social order he contemplated for India, but for the rest he laid down certain basic moral principles which were to guide revolutionary zeal and action. These moral principles are truth and non-violence.

A revolution based upon truth and non-violence, if true to its principles, cannot subordinate means to ends. Gandhiji therefore insisted upon purity of means. He held that the success that is achieved by using doubtful means is no real success. In the end it turns to bitter fruit. For him liberty achieved through violence would be no liberty. It would ultimately enslave the people. One must have faith that no evil can befall those who use moral means to achieve their high ends. By adherence to truth and non-violence Gandhiji saved the Indian revolutionary struggle from the wanton cruelty and bloodshed that has characterised violent revolutions in history.

How does non-violent revolution work? For this Gandhiji suggested the strategy of non-co-operation or civil disobedience. He held that the foreign domination in India was made possible through Indian co-operation. If this co-operation is withdrawn it would not be able to function. In this new revolutionary technique suggested by Gandhiji there could be no place for secret conspiratorial activity. This eliminates fear of the saboteur and fifth columnist, real or fancied, who have to be eliminated through violence. This makes for confidence and trust among colleagues and comrades in the movement. There are no temptations for betrayal for any consideration simply because there are no secrets to betray. Everything is open and above board.

Gandhiji, as we have said, had no rigid revolutionary theory, dogma or ideology which he had been commissioned by God or history to work out for the benefit of mankind. He therefore did not consider himself infallible. As a human being he held he was

liable to make mistakes. He was therefore full of humility. Whenever he realised that he had made a mistake he freely admitted it and made ample amends. He insisted upon his colleagues and co-workers to do likewise. In his own case he even exaggerated his shortcomings, which others could not see. He did not consider that those who differed from him were his enemies. He approved every man and woman of goodwill however they may differ from him. All those who in any way tried to alleviate human poverty, misery and suffering were serving the good cause, each according to the light vouchsafed to him. He considered them as fellow travellers. He was therefore not only willing to take counsel with those who differed from him but benefit by their advice and experience. Except for his basic principles of truth and non-violence he was always ready for compromise. He was therefore patient with those who differed from him.

Above all, he distinguished an evil system from the men who, whether willingly or through force of circumstances, are obliged to work it or serve under it. He says: "Our non-cooperation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our non-cooperation is with the system the English have established with the material civilisation and its attendant greed and the exploitation of the weak." Therefore, while Gandhiji hated an evil system and was impatient to destroy it he did not hate human beings who were responsible for its working. He did not want to destroy them, he wanted them to realise their error and tried to work for their conversion.

Gandhiji was no worshipper of power. He was suspicious of it. He says. "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life." Again, he says: "I look upon the increase of power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind, by destroying individuality which is at the root of all progress. The individual has a soul but the State is a soulless machine."

Gandhiji was therefore a great believer in democracy. He approved of all the safeguards against the centralisation of power, whether in the hands of an individual, a coterie or a single organ of the government. These safeguards were, as we have said, the

recognition of fundamental rights, separation of powers, providing necessary checks and balances between the different organs of the government, universal adult vote, periodical elections. To these he added his original ideas. One of these was that there must be one set of political workers engaged in the task of governance and another engaged in more or less voluntary philanthropic service. The leadership of the latter must rest in the hands of individuals as eminent as those working in the narrow political field. Therefore, as soon as national independence was achieved, he advised the leaders who had gone into the government not to make the Congress organisation which was a national organisation serve the purposes of a political party but to turn it, as an organ of voluntary service, into a Lok Sevak Sangh. For political purposes the leaders could form separate political parties. Even earlier, when the names for the provisional government were being selected by the Congress Working Committee, Gandhiji's advice was that while Shri Jawaharlal should head the new government Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel should head the Congress. His advice could not be followed because Shri Jawaharlal did not feel that unaided by the Sardar he could shoulder the new responsibilities.

Another thing that Gandhiji had put before the nation for years to check the growing power of the State was his proposal to break it up. In accordance with the genius of his people and their democratic traditions he wanted the revival of the old village self-government through elected panchayats. Each village or a convenient urban area was to be a kind of semi-independent republic, discharging all the functions of local self-government, including the administration of local justice and keeping the peace. The central government was to perform functions of an all-Indian concern and of co-ordinating the work of self-governing local units.

Gandhiji knew the intimate relations between economics and politics. He understood that devolution of political power could not be possible or effective without decentralised industry. An impoverished village living merely on agriculture could not be a centre of light and life, justifying a semi-independent status. Gandhiji, therefore, placed before the nation his scheme of decentralised industry, making cloth production as its centre.

If we look at the development of democracy in the West, we find, to begin with a vigorous local self-government. This lost its

vigour because of the centralising influence of capitalist industry. As a cure we have the Communist conception where political and economic power are concentrated in a totalitarian dictatorship of the one or the few. Gandhiji's scheme of decentralised industry combined with devolution of political power saves us from the perils of concentration of power as in capitalist democracy or communist totalitarianism.

Further, Gandhiji did not conceive, like Marx, of a total revolution. He did not believe that all moral values, customs, laws and institutions, including the family, the church and the state were bourgeois creations devised by the capitalist class to serve their class interest. Every institution was to be judged on its merits. The part that had overgrown its utility, in terms of service to the masses, must be eliminated. No institution that could be reformed need be destroyed. All institutions are not of fortuitous growth or designed by evil persons for their own selfish ends. Many of them performed some social purpose. If they have ceased to perform that purpose they must be reformed and again made the vehicles of social purpose under the altered circumstances of today. Only such as are absolutely evil must be eliminated. For instance, Gandhiji did not reject Hinduism because it seemed to sanction the cruel and inhuman custom of untouchability. This must be abolished without abolishing the Hindu religion based upon the high philosophy of the Upanishads and the Gita. Gandhiji did not want to make a clean sweep of a whole phase of human culture as evil. He did not want to destroy this "sorry scheme of things entire and rebuild it to our heart's desire" as was Communist attempt whose result was that after needless destruction, involving the lives and happiness of millions of people, they had to reintroduce not only many of the good institutions of the past but along with them some of its evils, as jingoist nationalism and imperial expansion.

[From a paper on "The Philosophical Basis of Social Revolution" read at the 31st Indian Philosophical Congress, Annamalaiagar—Dec., 1956.]

The Unrest of Abundance

WILFRED WELLOCK

I have only recently returned from my latest lecture tour in the United States. You asked me to write some of my impressions for Sarvodaya readers and this I now do. Lecture tour programmes in America are so crowded that there is no time to think carefully over all one's experiences and to give a faithful account of what one really feels about a country. Having by this time given much thought to what I have experienced I venture to give you some of its results.

One thing stands out fairly prominently in my mind, and it is a strange unrest which one perceives almost everywhere. I say strange because it is the unrest of abundance. Such an unrest could occur on a large scale in no other country, because no other country is nearly so wealthy as the United States.

Here, then, is something new in the modern world: the insufficiency of abundance. About that abundance there can be no doubt. American living standards are double those of any other country, including Britain, and from twenty to thirty times greater than those of most Eastern countries, including India. And they are still rising. The national total output of goods and services has doubled in the ten years since 1946. The new target is a further increase of 20%. And, of course, consumption must keep pace with production or the national economy would break down in a catastrophic slump.

Yet in spite of these facts there is everywhere a shortage of dollars. No section of the community has enough. Family indebtedness is growing, a large number of men are taking on two jobs, an evening job in addition to the ordinary daytime job, and large numbers of married women are going out to work in order to supplement the family income.

Hence it is quite clear that unless spending is controlled by a philosophy, or a religion,—that is, by a concept of the good life which sets a limit to the amount of money that should be spent on food, clothing, household goods, etc., there is no limit to the amount of money one may spend on goods and services.

In watching the workings of this economy or way of life in the United States, one discovers that it is a form of fever. It gets into the blood. People become enslaved by the advertisers. They must have every gadget that is going. This, and that, are time-savers, they are told, whereas very often they are not. But time is not every thing. It is what you do with it that matters.

Then one thing leads to another. A family is persuaded to buy a deep freeze, in addition to the refrigerator. It will hold a large quantity of fresh food, fresh flesh of all kinds, seasonal fruits and vegetables for out-of-season use. Provision dealers will fill these deep-freezes with a most attractive list of foods, on payment of weekly or monthly instalments. I was told that it often happens that the food is consumed long before it is paid for, and so more debt is piled up.

There then emerges a new problem. The eating of too much rich food leads to illness and to drug taking, both of which appreciably increase a family's disabilities. It should be added that the drug habit is rapidly growing in the United States, and that even the drug industry is becoming alarmed at the rapidly rising consumption of drugs. One cannot walk about the streets in American towns without being struck by the large number of drug stores one encounters, and also by the fact that that almost every drug store sells soft drinks, ice creams and all manner of syrupy, sugary concoctions on a large scale—material that is scarcely conducive to a healthy blood stream!

One of the problems I failed to solve was precisely how a weekly wage of eighty or a hundred dollars is spent. In most cases a goodly portion of it has to go in quite a number of instalment dues for the house, the motor car, television, major gadgets and furniture, etc. Central heating is also costly in fuel and most of the gadgets in electricity. But always there are so very many things which people like myself do not esteem, but consider to be dispensable luxuries. In America they have become necessities. Family dining out, e. g., is a growing habit, but it runs away with the dollars.

Besides is it necessary or natural, or good to want a machine to do everything that has to be done? When it becomes a crime or at least an indignity to use one's hands or one's legs because there

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Service Civil International in Gramdan Area

AFTER the war of 1914—1918, many people were concerned to find ways of building up international understanding, and at a Conference of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, at Bilthoven in Holland, in 1920 the idea of a voluntary, international service was put forward.

It attracted a Swiss Engineer—Pierra Ceresole—who translated it into action, and gathered a number of volunteers—French, German, English, Dutch, Swiss—ex-enemies and neutrals—to work in some of the war devastated villages of northern France, to rebuild houses and moreover, to restore the bond of friendship and human feeling amongst the people.

This was the first 'service' of the organisation now known as 'Service Civil International'. It was followed by yearly services such as clearance after natural catastrophes—floods, avalanches, earthquake and relief work after 1945 in Europe. Reconstruction work of general usefulness to refugees and other under-privileged communities in Europe, North Africa, India, Pakistan and Labanon. There are now nine branches in Europe, one in Algeria, and this year, one in India.

An ounce of practice is better than a pound of theory. Therefore, if we want International understanding we should be able to live with others, sharing their thoughts, respecting their attitudes towards different aspects of life and appreciating their different

(Continued from page 278)

are gadgets and motor cars, life is reduced to absurdity. It is good to walk, even long distances, and it is good to make one's dishes and even to grow one's vegetables in one's garden. But the American asks why grow vegetables when you can buy them canned? But why are Americans as restless and so basically unsatisfied?

Indeed, why eat at all, when all the nutrition you require can be compressed into a tablet? Or why live when one can die so easily and have a long, long sleep? In other words, has not the time come to ask what is life? and to consider in what the good life consists?

approaches in solving the problems of human life. Thus we can help to bring about a real peace and solidarity based on human friendship and co-operation.

In 1934 the S. C. I. first came to India, when Pierra Ceresole with a small team of four European volunteers worked until 1937 in the earthquake area of Bihar. The village of Shantipur stands now as an abiding achievement of International co-operation based on human love and sympathy.

In 1949, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, with whom Pierra Ceresole had worked in Bihar, invited a team to work with the refugees who were building their own new homes in the township of Faridabad, and since then, an S. C. I. team has been working in India carrying out projects in almost every part of the country.

Altogether thirty projects have been completed—including the work in Faridabad; building for schools in the earthquake region of Assam and for Leprosy Dispensary in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills; for a refugee and harijan colony in Ahmedabad; for students' hostels in Hassan Vidyapith and Sevagram; for the Leprosy Colony at Warora—Specially significant as helping to break down the fear and prejudice against sufferers from this disease; canolisation to bring drinking water to a village in Himachal Pradesh; road-making for a sanatorium also in Himachal Pradesh and for an isolated fishing village near Madras; land-clearance in Hyderabad State and for young colonists in Travancore-Cochin as well as other constructive work.

We are now planning for 1957. Many of us have heard of Bhoodan and Gramdan as a nation-wide movement which the whole country is observing with interest. Many villages have been given as Gramdan in Orissa, there is a great deal of work to do in order to establish a sound and healthy community life. The Sarva Seva Sangh is launching a plan for all round development of the entire "Gramdan area," and it is in the Koraput district that we are planning to work in co-operation with Shri Annasahab Sahasrabudhe, Secretary of Sarva Seva Sangh.

The S. C. I. international team—with volunteers from America, Holland and Japan (probably some others also) together Indian friends is welcomed, not only for the material contribution it can make but also, and especially for the wider contacts, the fresh

ideas and encouragement they can bring to this primitive—isolated area. The work project, undertaken in co-operation with the villagers, will be the digging of an irrigation canal and land reclamation, and will run from March 15 to April 28. Special attention will be given to the evening programme both for the villagers and the team itself, so that the service may be as valuable as possible. This is an opportunity for service of a particularly interesting nature—and we give a very cordial invitation to our Indian friends to join us. It is important that the enrolment of members should be completed as soon as possible so that clear plan could be made for the whole period. Please write without delay to : The Secretary, S. C. I. Centre, Mehrauli, New Delhi.

S. C. I. India,
Mehrauli, Delhi
22nd Jan., 1957

Parashiva Murthy,
Asst. Secretary.

Democracy and Violence

"ONE thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in—history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious.

"THERE is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications.

"DEMOCRACY and violence can ill go together.

"THE States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent.

"It is blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals".

Nov. 12, 1938

Mohandas K. Gandhi

Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh

BHOODAN FIGURES

Name of Province.	Upto (Date)	Land Collection (Acres)	No. of Donors.	Land Distribution (Acres)	No. of Families benefited.
Assam	30—4—56	5000	—	42	—
Andhra	30—9—56	69593	6857	684	372
Uttar Pradesh	31—8—56	586009	26182	76305*	38326
Utkal	30—11—56	343198	102695	94196	17515
Karnatak	30—11—56	4500	1105	699	245
Kerala	31—10—56	29021	4663	2126	1274
Gujarat	30—11—56	47486	11309	11527	3529
Tamilnad	30—11—56	70823	21790	4584	1749
Delhi	31—5—56	396	175	157	95
Nag-vidarbh	31—12—56	81072	16093	30063	4448
Punjab-Pepsu	31—12—56	16668	4135	1378	337
Bengal	31—12—56	12210	7994	2823	2394
Bombay	30—6—56	674	—	Nil	Nil
Bihar	30—11—56	2156513	297473	157394	73548
Mahakoshal	31—12—56	95950	37769	24498	5801
Madhya Bharat	30—9—56	61946	9090	3094	917
Maharashtra	31—12—56	40991	6614	5973	1374
Mysore	30—11—56	9648	3694	400	73
Rajasthan	31—12—56	409677	7412	31851	5106
Vindya Pradesh	31—10—56	10867	2486	19921	541
Sourashtra	31—10—56	31237	9330	8185	1107
Himachal Pradesh	31—5—56	1568	121	21	8
Hyderabad	31—10—56	179492	10972	47411	10835
Total		4264539	587959	515332	169594

Krishnaraj
Office Secretary.

— Reports not received.

* In U.P. 47,077 acres of land have been settled as village common land.

SARVODAYA

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THE REGISTRAR OF BOOKS

SARVODAYA PRACHURALAYA

TANJORE (SOUTH INDIA)

Akan

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JANUARY 1957

14498 THE YEAR OF
FULFILMENT

THE month of January reminds us with the sacred memories of the Mahatma and his martyrdom for the peace

of humanity. He has bequeathed to us the rich legacy of the Sarvodaya mantra. It symbolises the ends of Truth and the means of Non-violence. He struggled to perfect the technique of Non-violence—the weapon of the strong—till the last second of his mortal existence.

India has still to attain the 'social, moral and economic independence for her five hundred thousand villages as distinguished from her few cities', which was expressed by the Mahatma in his last will. Fortunately, during the last six years the nation is in the midst of a non-violent revolution under the leadership of Acharya Vinoba, the Mahatma's spiritual successor. He is walking in the footsteps of the Master daily exploring and revealing the dynamics of non-violence as a positive force for direct action to establish a non-violent social order.

The only organisation that has been carrying on the Bhoodan movement is disbanded from 1-1-1957 as per Vinobaji's advice. In accordance with the Mahatma's last testament of 1948 Vinobaji has now created a small band of Satyagrahi Lok Sevak to complete the non-violent revolution, who command no power other than their own soul force.

The year 1957 is a year of trial. Hundred years ago in 1857 India rose up to assert her freedom from the British yoke. This is the year 1957 to declare the social and economic independence of the nation through the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements. 'Do or Die' is the call that the nation hears with the dawn of the year 1957. This is the year to meet the world's challenge to non-violence. This is really a crucial year. A mighty experiment demonstrating the dynamics of non-violence through Gramdan for Gram-Swaraj is before us beckoning to do our best. Who can resist the moving call of the nation?

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The Direct Action in Non-violence

A Talk with Mahatma Gandhi



"IS non-violence from your point of view a form of direct action?" inquired Dr. Thurman.

"It is not one form, it is the only form," said Gandhiji. "I do not of course confine the words 'direct action' to their technical meaning. But without a direct active expression of it, non-violence to my mind is meaningless. It is the greatest and the activist force in the world. One cannot be passively non-violent. In fact 'non-violence' is a term I had to coin in order to bring out the root meaning of *ahimsa*. In spite of the negative particle 'non', it is no negative force. Superficially we are surrounded in life by strife and bloodshed, life living upon life. But some great seer, who ages ago penetrated the centre of truth, said: It is not through strife and violence but through non-violence that man can fulfil his destiny and his duty to his fellow creatures. It is a force which is more positive than electricity, and more powerful than even ether. At the centre of non-violence is a force which is self-acting. *Ahimsa* means 'love' in the Pauline sense, and yet something more than the 'love' defined by St. Paul, although I know St. Paul's beautiful definition is good enough for all practical purposes. *Ahimsa* includes the whole creation, and not only human. Besides 'love' in the English language has other connotations, and so I was compelled to use the negative word. But it does not, as I have told you, express a negative force, but a force superior to all the forces put together. One person who can express *ahimsa* in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality.

Q. And is it possible for any individual to achieve this?

Gandhiji: Certainly. If there was any exclusiveness about it, I should reject it at once.

Q. Is any idea of possession foreign to it?

Gandhiji: Yes. It possesses nothing, therefore it possesses everything.

Q. Is it possible for a single human being to resist the persistent invasion of the quality successfully?

Gandhiji: It is possible. Perhaps your question is more universal than you mean. Isn't it possible, you mean to ask, for one single Indian, for instance, to resist the exploitation of 300 million Indians? Or do you mean the onslaught of the whole world against a single individual personally?

Dr. Thurman: Yes, that is one half of the question. I wanted to know if one man can hold the whole violence at bay.

Gandhiji: If he cannot, you must take it that he is not a true representative of *ahimsa*. Supposing I cannot produce a single instance in life of a man who truly converted his adversary, I would then say that it is because no one had yet been found to express *ahimsa* in its fulness.

Q. Then it overrides all other forces?

Gandhiji: Yes, it is the only true force in life.

"Forgive now the weakness of this question", said Dr. Thurman, who was absolutely absorbed in the discussion. "Forgive the weakness, but may I ask how are we to train individuals or communities in this difficult art?"

Gandhiji: There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course, the expression in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities. If for mastering of the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes? For, if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you. The Kingdom of Heaven is *ahimsa*.—M. D.

(*Non-Violence in Peace and War—Vol. I—page 113-15*
Navajivan Publication.)

My Experience at Sabarmati

ACHARYA VINOBA

WHEN I ran away from home in 1916 I had two ideas in my mind. One was to go to the Himalayas and the other was to go to Bengal. So I first went to Kashi and stayed there for some days. I had, in those days, great admiration for the terrorist revolutionaries of Bengal. In those days the five men for whom I had highest respect and admiration were all Bengalis: Ram Mohan Roy, Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore. I tried to cultivate some Bengali friends in Kashi and through them established contact with some of the terrorists. Secrecy was essential for their work. But that had made the workers very suspicious. Every one seemed to suspect another. Some of them thought that I was an agent of the secret police! When Bapu said afterwards that secrecy must be taboo in an organisation that aspires to become a people's movement I immediately understood its significance. The Vedas have also said that one must never hesitate to speak out freely.

'No work can grow in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion. When a mother shows the moon to her little child he trusts her and thus grows in knowledge. If he doubts his mother she will not be able to help him. I feel the terrorist movement became ineffective and disintegrated because of secrecy. Strength can come only by truth....I gave up the idea of going to Bengal when I was at Kashi.' I was deeply impressed by Gandhiji's writings which I was reading in papers in those days. I wrote a long letter to him. He answered me briefly, saying that discussion on such philosophic questions cannot be carried on through letters. He suggested that I should go and stay at Sabarmati, see the work that was being done there and discuss the questions with him personally. So I gave up the idea of going to the Himalayas also. I went to Sabarmati instead. I experienced the peace of the Himalayas and the intense activity of Bengali revolutionaries in the spirit of the Sabarmati Ashram. To-day I am going about giving the message of creative revolution which means I am on a mission of peaceful conversion which will result in building up a new society of Free and Equal.

(Bhoodan—Dec. 19, '56)

Truth And Non-violence

An Interview with Vinoba

Vinobaji is attracting a large number of foreigners who put to him interesting questions. Vinobaji used to answer in Hindi which was translated in English. But recently he answers straight away in the most forcible, delightful and precise words in clear voice in English, without the interpreter. Here is a report of an interview with an American Professor of Philosophy of Wisconsin University of U.S.A. who is already studying the philosophical aspect of Bhoodan movement for a thesis. We are indebted to Shri Nirmala Deshpande for her accurate report.

Q. 1. Would the practice of non-violence as a method and a belief in the ideals of Bhoodan be consistent with a naturalistic (non-theistic) Philosophy?

Vinobaji: I am not very much concerned with God, because God is very much concerned with me. If a child forgets his mother, it doesn't matter very much. But if the mother forgets her child, it is a loss to both of them. God takes care of the whole world. We can dispense with the name of God because when we express the word 'God' it is not God of our belief but of our expression. We can see God with our own eyes. That is the experience of mystics of Europe and India. He is in the innermost corner of our hearts, still we are putting him in the farthest corner of the heaven. Love, Truth, Mercy—all this is tantamount to faith in God.

Q. 2. Does non-violence as a method presuppose devotion to Truth in the Gandhian sense? Does it also presuppose non-possession?

Vinobaji: Non-violence cannot be conceived as something apart from Truth. Whatever is conceived apart from Truth, is false. So non-violence conceived apart from Truth is also false and not true non-violence. Truth is a quality which gives existence to all. Non-violence to be true, must have truth as its basis. Truth is of two kinds—moral Truth, Truth of the world. Non-violence requires moral truth as its basis. We have not grasped fully the Truth of the world. So we must be ready to change our view with

regard to it when a certain aspect of Truth is revealed. My conception of truth may be wrong. So I should be truthful to myself to accept that it was wrong and be ready to accept that which is revealed.

Instead of saying non-possession, say possession by all. I may possess this watch but I may not exclusively claim its ownership. If I need it, I will keep it with me, when I am not using it, it should be free for others' use. Anybody should be free to ask for it and I should be free to give it. There should be no exclusive ownership.

Q. 3. Are "Truth" and "God" and "Being" interchangeable terms in your philosophy?

Vinobaji: The Word "Being" is too philosophical to be introduced in a moral talk. I don't understand what 'Being' means. I know I am. This consciousness of my existence is sufficient for me. We can't discuss anything unless we take for granted that we are, otherwise it becomes too philosophical.

Our Truth is something which we understand. We can't conceive that we are being protected by that portion of truth which we don't understand. Truth can be our best guide as much as we understand it. God is conceived as protector of all who takes care of us, without our knowing it, as a child in the mother's womb doesn't know that he is getting sustenance from mother. Whether you know the mother or you don't know, you get sustenance from the mother. You may know Him or you may not know Him, God is there, protecting us. He takes care of us without our understanding it. He is the only entity. He alone exists. Truth has no capacity to protect us without our understanding it. But if by Truth, you mean absolute Truth, cosmic Truth, Truth at the basis of the world, then it may be tantamount to God. Still we conceive God as our mother and father. We are not able to conceive Truth as mother or father. Truth can be a guiding star. A guiding star is one which actually guides me, which I don't see. 'God is Love'—this is the best definition of God which man can conceive.

Q. 4. In the west, applications of modern scientific technologies have led to competition and violence; and to very large scale inter-dependent communities in which life for the individual citizen has

become mechanized and a sense of individual purpose and achievement lost. How are the benefits of scientific technology to be brought to the village without these consequences?

Vinobaji: There is nothing wrong with science at all. What is wrong is with application of science. You can use atom for destruction as well as for construction. Atom does not say, 'use me for Bomb'. If we apply science to sanitation, which would result in health, there will be no competition. Competition is rather unhealthy.

Machinery is not to be blamed. Take care of your economics. You can apply science to big machines, as well as to small machines. Small machines require as much science, as big machines. We are not unscientific because we use small machines. Wrist-watch is a small machine, but it requires science. When fire was invented, people used to worship it. Now you can use fire for cooking or you can set fire to houses. If you set fire to houses, there is nothing wrong with the fire. So also there is nothing wrong with electricity. A knife can be used for mercy for operation, and it can also be used for cutting throats. I am not afraid of science but afraid of the wrong application of science. Our economic theories are wrong. If we change them science will be put to better use.

(The American intervened and asked, 'is progress of science possible in any other society except technological society as we have today')

Vinobaji: There is no technological society as such. There is only one society. i.e., human society. Either you feel joy in this technology or you are distressed. If distressed, change it. If you are happy, go on increasing it. You can put science to any use you like.

You can take village as a unit or country as a unit. I don't understand what East and West means. I understand what a village means. People live there. They can make the whole village a family and be happy. You say that big organisations are being formed. If you feel happy over it, retain it otherwise destroy it. What we can build then, we can also destroy. If I have sown poisonous seed and find its tree growing I can destroy it with my own hands. I am its creator so I can be its destroyer. Humanity

can create any kind of society it likes. The world has no separate existence apart from our mental conception. Nature is not against man. It says, reap as you sow. We have to decide whether we are happy in this technological organization. If you are happy you should go ahead with it because you have got the key to happiness. But if you are unhappy, find out what is wrong with it. Some say that there is something wrong with science, with electricity. But what has electricity done? Even if electricity is there I can have darkness at night in my house, if I want; but if I want day light in the night against the wish of God, I can have electricity and then if it makes me blind, it is not to be blamed, but I myself am to be blamed.

PSYCHOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

To bring about peace in the world, to stop all wars, there must be a revolution in the individual, in you and me. Economic revolution without this inward revolution is meaningless, for hunger is the result of the maladjustment of economic conditions produced by our psychological states—greed, envy, ill-will and possessiveness. To put an end to sorrow, to hunger, to war, there must be a psychological revolution and few of us are willing to face that. We will discuss peace, plan legislation, create new leagues, the United Nations and so on and on; but we will not win peace because we will not give up our position, our authority, our money, our properties, our stupid lives. To rely on others is utterly futile; others cannot bring us peace. No leader is going to give us peace, no government, no army, no country. What will bring peace is inward transformation which will lead to outward action. Inward transformation is not isolation, is not a withdrawal from outward action. On the contrary, there can be right action only when there is right thinking and there is no right thinking when there is no self-knowledge. Without knowing yourself, there is no peace.

J. Krishnamurti,
(The First and Last Freedom)

The Ideal of Gramdan

ACHARYA VINOBA

THE modern democracy is only a rule by the majority. We cannot say that this is completely different from that of autocracy. The rule of democracy is 51 persons trying to impose their will on the other 49. We cannot say that what the majority says can be fully right. Neither can we say that the majority alone will be intelligent and the minority un-intelligent. In autocracy the king wants to impose his will on his subjects by the force of arms. In democracy we see the same picture that the majority wants to impose their decision on the minority with the help of force. Therefore both autocracy and democracy ultimately rely upon their military power. Herein comes the difficulty. Anybody who wants to impose anything on others will naturally rely upon force. That is why Bhoodan says that it will not impose the ideas on others. We can only suggest and if it is suggested correctly the people will pay heed to what we say.

We must educate the people's mind in the manner we want them to move forward. Deepavali is an accepted festival in this country. Holy is another festival. Government has not imposed that these festivals shall be observed. Still people observe these. Hindus do not kill cows and eat them though given free, for this is repugnant to their conviction. The society also as such will have such a conviction. Every village will decide for itself about their pattern of society. This cannot be imposed either from Delhi or Madras.

The village can have collective farming, co-operative farming, individual farming, whichever suits the locality, bearing in mind that there is no individual ownership of land. Their main aim will be improving the wealth of the community in the village without prejudice to the neighbour. They will have complete authority to control the imports and exports of their village raj. This cannot be considered to be a parallel Government; nor it be understood as a rival Government. It has got its own place, a rightful place, in the present Governmental system. The village Government will have all the authority as far as the village unit is concerned. Several

such village units will form a State Government and several State Governments form the Government of a country.

Gramdan is the basis of Gramraj. In Gramdan all lands will be distributed equally to all the members in the village according to their necessity. Thereby all kinds of differences are eliminated. They will work together as a joint family and decide unanimously their programme or plan which they want to execute in their unit (23—12—56).

THE TREBLE SIGNIFICANCE

Religion teaches the people to be happy with their neighbours and to share their distress. Gramdan gives us now a chance of sharing our happiness and distress alike.

Economic improvement can be achieved by concentrating all power which is now scattered here and there. It is only with the co-operation based on love and equality that people will strive hard to produce more. The petty selfishness will not give us encouragement either to work hard or to produce more. Therefore Gramdan will be the lever for the uplift of the village.

Under scientific improvement the nations are brought nearer and nearer to each other. No nation can exist by itself. Neither a province nor a village can have any independent existence without the co-operation of the neighbouring province or the village. Likewise any house cannot exist by itself. The happiness of the house depends upon the co-operation of all the other houses in the village. Therefore villagers can exist only when they live united as one family. People must realize the three aspects of Gramdan and try to get the benefits from all sources. Unity and love of neighbour is the fundamental strength of Gramdan. If that is realized all other problems will be solved by common understanding, goodwill and hard work (18—12—56).

UNIVERSAL PEACE

The present age requires people to come together disregarding the barriers like the frontiers of a country, language and race. In fact, the entire space between the North and the South poles should become one country bound by love. This requires a broader outlook of the heart. Science has made us conscious of one world. But our heart is still narrow. We must cast off the old tradition

and think in terms of the needs of the day by uniting the whole of the human race.

The present-day warfare is scientific unlike that of the ancient days. The peoples at war do not have the hatred as of the ancient days. It is only a few people at the helm of affairs of the country who decide to declare war against another country and all kinds of people are conscripted for the purpose. It is only the decision of the few that compels the people to take to arms. They never take individual responsibility for their participation in war. Every nation tries to throw the responsibility for war on the other nation and affirm their loyalty to the world.

India has a special role to play and therefore the world expects a right message from this country. Bhoodan movement is a step in this direction. Bhoodan not only solves the land problem of this country through peaceful means but also shows a clear way to the world at large, as to how all kinds of problems, be they political, economical, social or otherwise can be solved by love and understanding of each other. This is what attracts the people of other nations to come over here and see personally for themselves this movement actually in action. Therefore I appeal to you not to rest content with the mere Bhoodan or Gramdan but to try to achieve a Taluk-dan where there will be no individual ownership. (7—12—56)

FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

This movement is for the good of all. The poor people feel that the Bhoodan movement is for their benefit. I would like to tell you that this is equally beneficial to the rich. Today rich men and the merchants are condemned by one and all. There cannot be any satisfaction to any one in life under these conditions. The rich are not happy today and they are afraid of thieves and dacoits, the Government, the Communists and the worst of all, their own brothers and sons. They are afraid of Vinoba also now. I do not know where they can have shelter under these circumstances. Bhoodan movement is the easiest process through which people may bring about the revolution without feeling the burden of the change.

Every village in Tamilnad is having a temple with the ideal that the villagers were living together around the temple only to

(Continued on page 226)

After Dissolution of Bhoodan Organisation

"YOU may now distribute the lands on the spot," he declared. Vinobaji was addressing the Tamilnad Bhoodan workers, at Gandhigram on Decr. 5 who had come to seek his guidance and blessings on the new and revolutionary step they were now contemplating to take under his inspiration.

It was a great thing indeed. Till now, we all used to collect only the Dan-patras and the distribution was delayed due to various formalities resulting in the piling of these Dan-Patras in the Bhoodan Offices. But now, as the organisation itself was to be dissolved he gave us the 'magna charta'. Since Palani, his mind was actively working in the successful execution of the new resolve.

"Do as you like", he added. "Remove all burden from your minds. Execute all your plans!" Obviously, he wanted them to have full freedom of action. No institution or individual will hinder their course.

(Continued from page 225)

serve God. It is clear that the Tamil literature did not accept any individual ownership of land. It came into existence only after the advent of the British rule in this country. To eliminate this system, Bhoodan is the easiest and the cheapest way. (14-12-56)

THE FIRE OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

Private ownership on land is the fire burning one's own house. Nobody will be seeing his own house in fire without doing any attempt to put out the fire. Be it a mansion or a hut, the owner will run away in terror. Therefore even the small peasants should be ready to give up their ownership on their small bit of land first. The bigger land-ownership today exists only on the basic strength of small ownership of land-holdings. If the small land-owners sacrifice their ownership the bigger land-owners cannot but follow. I am happy to see the villages entering a new era of Gramdan and I appeal to the villagers to work for the establishment of Gramrajya and to spread the message to the neighbouring villages. If all the villages of a zone become Gramdan villages many of the problems which confront them today will be automatically solved. (2-1-57)

He thus gave them both, the 'magna charta,' and also the warning. For, said he, "If you now fail, not only the movement will suffer, your own public life will be damaged. You would be nowhere in public life."

Of course, they could derive, from the Sarva Seva Sangh as also from Vinobaji himself, the benefit of advice and guidance from time to time. But they had to stand on their own and make the whole movement the people's movement.

The suggestion of disbanding the organisation and making the mission free of central funds was not new. At Bezwada, when they had met in December last, Vinobaji had made the same proposal, "Which, if it had been accepted, there would have been a world of difference in our strength today. Some problems demand prompt decision and delay was always dangerous," he added. "Unless we dissolve ourselves we shall not know how to proceed. This one right step would itself will lead us to the next".

Referring to the district representative whom he called Lok-Sevak, said he, "He will go round like a lion; No bonds and no supporter except the Lord, the Omnipresent."

He will not do anything. He will provide the stimulation, will remain as a zero. For him there was none whom he could reject. He will work in co-operation with all and without being attached to any particular party. May be at times, even ex-communication might be his lot. But then he will be nearer and nearer to God. He was very particular about keeping one's linen clean of any party affiliations.

Vinobaji gave his threefold reasons :

- (1) There were some who believed in service through power.
- (2) There were others who thought service was a medium for capturing power.
- (3) But there were the Sevaks whose mission was to liquidate power through service. While the first two were but the two sides of the same coin, ours was altogether a different motto; it was service to abolish power through service. Thus would peoples' authority manifest itself."

He made it quite clear again that the Sevak would not receive any remuneration from the centre. And he did not hesitate to discuss the implications.

"What would be the result?" He continued, "Either the whole movement will die or every one in the country would become active and take up the cause. God alone has the power to do either of the two. There is a third alternative also. It is possible that the spirit of the constructive workers is awakened and that they become all active."

Illustrating, he asked if Gandhigram could remain a silent observer, any more? Till now they could afford to rely on the Bhoodan Samithy. If they now feel free of their responsibilities because the organisation has been disbanded, the very cause and basis of constructive work will vanish. They will certainly become all active and make this cause their own. So would do the Talimi Sangh? Did not both of them, Smt. Ashadevi and Sri Aryanayakamji follow him in his yatra? They will now instruct all their branches to take up the cause in all seriousness. And what would the Khadi department of the Sarva Seva Sangh do? Have they not realised that their Khadi stands or falls with Bhoodan? Khadi has come to stay these days only because the Sarvodaya ideology which has an appeal to the whole world, through Bhoodan, has come to stay. With the failure of Bhoodan the aid that was coming from Government would also disappear."

He, therefore, has not the slightest doubt that in the present context, those who had faith in Gandhian ideology would surely rise to the occasion.

There were a few doubts to be dispelled. "How will the Sevaks maintain themselves? What should they do if the donor who contributed for the maintenance of the Sevak tried to influence the latter? What will happen to the juniors who will not be able to mobilise local help? Should they give up Bhoodan work?"

"The reply is in the affirmative!" he declared. "For, those who cannot stand on their own legs and cannot mobilise local resources should take to other constructive activities. There is the Khadi work, the sale of literature and so on. So far as Bhoodan is concerned it must be very clear, beyond all doubts, that it is no

more any committee's affair anywhere, but has become the people's movement with all its implications".

Referring to the fear that some influence might come from the donor on the recipient, Vinoba said, "The very basis of the approach is wrong. How can we accept any donation from one who has some ulterior motive? The donor should feel grateful that his contribution is accepted and there is some one to act on his behalf although he cannot participate in the movement directly. But now the charity will begin at home. The Sevak will first consult his wife, and his children. He may undertake a Padayatra with his family members, will seek co-operation of his friends. And his every new step will release new forces. They have to proceed with faith in themselves and in God over head!"

"Shall we not have some pledge to be signed by the Sevak?" Sri Jagannathan enquired. And he dictated the pledge for the 'Satyagrahi Lok-Sevak' and the friends who were there signed the pledge and placed it in Vinobaji's hands.

THE PLEDGE FOR THE LOK-SEVAK

- (1) I have firm faith in Truth, Non-violence and Non-boarding; and I shall endeavour to my best to lead my life accordingly.
- (2) It is my faith that with the establishment of Lok-Niti alone can real freedom dawn in the world. Therefore, I shall not participate in any activity connected either with party politics or power politics.
- (3) I shall dedicate all my service to the people with a sense of sacrifice and without expectation of any return.
- (4) I have resolved to eradicate all differences of caste, class and creed.
- (5) I shall devote, most of my time, and all my thought, to the ideal of Sarvodaya, i.e., the Non-violent revolution based on Bhoodan with the village industries as mainstay.

D. M.

Bhoodan Received and Distributed in the Provinces

Name of Province	Upto (Date)	Land Collec- tion (acres)	No. of donors	Land distribu- tion (acres)	No. of families benefited
Assam	30- 4-56	5,000	—	42	—
Andhra	30- 9-56	69,593	6,857	684	372
Uttar Pradesh	31- 8-56	5,86,009	26,182	76,305 *	38,326
Utkal	30- 9-56	3,13,305	99,353	94,196	17,515
Karnatak	31-10-56	4,424	1,038	699	245
Kerala	31-10-56	29,021	4,637	2,126	1,274
Gujarath	30-11-56	47,486	11,309	11,527	3,529
Tamilnad	31-10-56	67,883	20,995	4,584	1,749
Delhi	31- 5-56	396	175	157	95
Nag-Vidarbha	30- 9-56	78,311	14,126	29,484	3,416
Punjab-Pepsu	30- 9-56	16,133	3,914	1,383	337
Bengal	30-11-56	12,192	7,959	2,812	2,353
Bombay	30- 6-56	674	—	nil	nil
Bihar	31-10-56	21,54,189	2,96,402	1,55,405	72,227
Mahakoshal	31-10-56	90,519	35,196	21,835	5,354
Madhya Bharat	30- 9-56	61,946	9,090	3,094	917
Maharashtra	31-10-56	41,103	6,615	5,174	1,210
Mysore	31-11-56	9,648	3,694	400	73
Rajasthan	30- 9-56	3,93,347	7,073	26,834	4,511
Vindya Pradesh	31-10-56	10,867	2,486	1,992	541
Saurashtra	31-10-56	31,237	9,330	8,185	1,107
Himachal Pradesh	31- 5-56	1,568	121	21	8
Hyderabad	31-10-56	1,79,492	10,972	47,411	10,835
Total		42,04,343	5,77,524	4,94,350	1,65,994

— Reports not received.

* In U. P. 47,007 acres of land have been settled as village common land.

Sarva Seva Sangh, }
GAYA
15-12-1956 }

Krishnaraj,
Office Secretary.

The Ideology of Basic Education

“J. C. KUMARAPPA”

YOU must all have been in touch with the Suez Canal problem and the Ariyalur Railway Disaster. The Suez Canal issue and the Railway disasters are in the same position as Basic Education today. I will look upon the three parties who are involved in the Suez Canal issue, Sir Anthony Eden, on the one side, Nassar on another and the U. N. O. on the third are all working for selfish reasons. Similarly in Basic Education also we find groups looking for their own personal benefits. Parents are looking for Basic Education to train up their children so that they may earn after their “education” is over. This is not what Basic Education stands for. Basic Education is not like departmental examinations leading to increments in salaries. The main purpose is character, training the child for citizenship. The reasons for Suez Canal problem also are to be found in the self-centredness of all the parties.

I was surprised that an Assessment Committee appointed by the Government tried to assess Basic Education as compared to the present system of education. I cannot see how the two are comparable to one another. Basic Education is for character-building, whereas the present-day education is based purely on money considerations. Gandhiji used the terms ‘Matriculation minus Education’ only to make his ideas clear to us as to what Basic Education is. But these words cannot be compared as they are as different as chalk from cheese. Therefore, when the Heads of Education Departments and various other educational officers tried to compare Basic Education with the existing system, it was clear they were not qualified at all for such an assessment. The children trained in Basic Education are not to be gauged from the point of view of how much a boy will earn after his education in a Basic school. Men clad in mill cloth cannot propagate Khadi or men who use milled rice cannot advocate hand-pounded rice, nor can men who send their own children to traditional academic schools sit in judgement over the attainment through Basic Education. A correct assessment of Basic Education is in noticing the character

of the children, the new outlook it brings in making them realise that they are but a small part of the Society.

If you have all come here to ponder over Basic Education, you must identify yourselves with the truth underlying Basic Education. You must have that faith in Basic Education, that is, you cannot think about Basic Education, when you are clad in mill-cloth, or when you are not prepared to send your children into basic schools. If any of you smoke or earn princely salaries, you have no place in this Seminar on Basic Education. How can you think of Basic Education at all, when you are working purely with money considerations? Therefore, all assessment committees with material welfare as the standard will not serve any useful purpose.

Basic Education is a thing by itself. When Gandhiji presented his ideas to us he had to use terms, which we knew. That is the thing we have to understand now. After all these years, we should have known something about Basic Education. It is mainly concerned with the Character-formation of the children and there are no questions of money consideration motivating it.

The Suez Canal issue and the Railway disasters will take place so long as character is not built up. Each partly seeks its own interest. Britain wants to build up its industries. Nassar wants to build his dam and everybody wants to feather their own nests. The engineers and contractors find ways and means of adulterating materials and so the structures put up by them collapse when the stress and strain comes. We need men with abnegation who will find satisfaction in service of Society. Basic Education should produce such men with ideals of service to general humanity.

Basic Education builds up citizens for an ideal society. The Railway disasters are results of bribery and corruption that have crept into the administration. The contractors and engineers, whose one aim is to make money out of their jobs, are not fit for Society. All such people must be sieved out. I do not say we should massacre them, but be segregated in the Andaman Islands as unfit for Society. Any amount of the enquiry being conducted into it, by even High Court judges examining the issue, will not do. If a man is taking up a road contract for Rs. 10,000/- and lays a road with only mud and tar on top of it and makes away with a huge portion of public money, then he has to be sent out of the country.

If such steps are taken against half-a-dozen people, then immediately things will be set right. There is no character in them. Basic Education is to build the character of the man, and thus make him ready for selfless service of humanity in general.

The Hydrogen bomb and the Atom bomb are results of greed for power and material wealth, prevailing all over the world to-day. Basic Education should check up these conditions and should seek to solve the basic causes from the very foundation.

We cannot measure character by a yard-stick. The assessment, the Committee has made, is like looking into the mouth of a man to judge his attainments, as they do in the case of horses to find their age. It would be as absurd to measure Basic Education with the same yard-stick as is used for the present day education. Basic Education is a thing quite apart. As long as we do not realise this difference, we will only be making a cheap edition of Basic Education.

The Feudal lords wanted to take hold of fresh domains and possessions and sent their troops through the Suez Canal. Then the capitalist imperialists exported raw materials from those countries later on and brought back finished goods to those countries and captured their markets. Thus the Suez Canal became the means of exploitation. That is what is happening with Basic Education also today. Unless this is remedied, all the loud talk will become futile.

At first, we must sieve out men who have no faith in Khadi and have no belief in the new way of life. We cannot talk about hand-pounding, so long as we do not give up using milled rice. In the same way, we must have unstinted faith in non-violence and equalitarian society, the cause for which it stands. Then only we can aim at laying the foundations for a new Society based on Truth and Non-violence. Otherwise, we will make Basic Education a new play thing for debators.

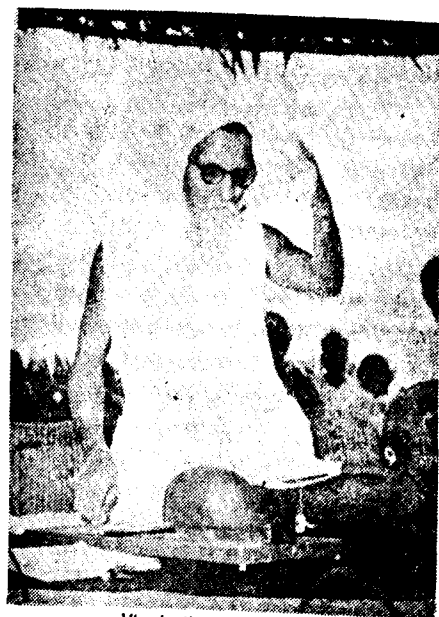
Therefore, We must change our very mentality altogether. We must all accept the Basic Education standard of life and try to live a non-violent co-operative life. In such a system working towards non-violence where is the place for military training under the N. C. C.?

We talk about correlating various subjects. But do we really correlate life with Education? I was told that some of the boys in

this basic school are from the regular academic schools and they are not able to work for 3 or 4 hours continuously in the sun, as they get a head-ache. They would require an umbrella held by somebody else when they work. Such things are undesirable in Basic Education. Therefore a thorough re-orientation of the ideals of Basic Education is necessary.

All that we do, should seek to modify the correct foundation of the Society. A man brought up in Basic Education should be a man of strong character. We should not mind even if we have only a ragged shirt on our back, but we should have a strong character.

I hope your discussions will centre round this aspect of Basic Education. Many of you present here may have University degrees. But I trust, forgetting your degrees, you will identify yourselves with this truth of Basic Education as a nation building programme. I am glad to have been with you this morning and to have given you what I thought you should consider at this Seminar.



Vinobaji at the wheel.

An American with Vinoba

A young American Friend who spent two days with Vinobaji, had an interesting discussion with him. A report of his questions and Vinobaji's answers is given below :—

Q. 1. During the early days of Bhoodan, you thought that the important thing was to change mens' hearts. But now with Gramdan and even District-dan, it would appear likely that men might give land from social pressure, rather than from a genuine change of heart; and that the end of land-reform may become more important than the means. Do you think these are real dangers?

Vinobaji: It is a very good question. We must distinguish between force of violence, and social pressure. Social pressure is of two types (1) One falls almost in the category of violent force (2) moral force. Man after all is a social being. We can't keep apart from society. Man's mind gets impressed by so many things. Mind after all is a product of circumstances. Human mind stands between the two, inward soul and outward society. It has connections with both of them. Naturally human heart changes from inspiration within and by change in circumstances. Suppose my son dies. This event has a great potentiality of changing my mind. We have seen people's minds changed by death of son, mother or father and those persons disposed to evil, changed after such events. Circumstantial change corresponds to change of heart. So long as we stick to persuasion, there is no danger, as you say. Had we allowed violent force, the danger would have been there. Generally a good man gives lead by renouncing his property and then people follow him in faith, without thinking much about the implications of their action. It is also a change of heart. One way is that you change your heart by inner inspiration and the other way is that you follow good men in faith. Man of faith is as strong of heart, as man of reason is. Masses generally work in faith. All religions are called faiths? We don't say 'Hindu Reason', although reason is there, the main force is faith. Here too, faith is working. It is not easy to ask for Gramdan and to give Gramdan. Gramdan is a total conversion. A part of those who give Gramdan by reason, others by faith. It is a double movement, so it gives a

complete picture. In our body, the mind thinks, the hand follows. The hand does not think, it has full faith in the mind. A part of our body acts with reason, another part with faith. It is the same in society, there is no such social pressure tantamount to violence in this movement.

Q. 2. What sort of help and guidance, do you think these villages will need after they decide on Gramdan? Where do you think such guidance should come?

Vinobaji: Such guidance should come from three sources:—
(1) Firstly, it will come from the collective mind of the village itself. In India, the cities are modern, but the villages are ancient and perhaps our ancient fore-fathers will not miss the old pattern, if they come here today. Their conscience is intact, it is deep-rooted in the soil. A village conscience is built for the last thousands of years. So you get guidance from the collective mind of the village. Now our planners are trying to supply doctors for the village, but, these villages are carrying on without doctors for thousands of years.
(2) Secondly, guidance should come from constructive workers like us. Sarva Seva Sangh is such an organisation which has its branches all over India.
(3) I should expect the Government to help Gramdan villages because when villages come forward to give Gramdan, every Government, it may be a Socialist State, Communist State or a Welfare State, will be interested in it. These villages need material and scientific help. India is very backward so far as science is concerned. We do not have enough Engineers. Help is needed for agriculture research, digging of wells etc. Guidance will surely be given by Government. Gramdan is not a small event to be neglected by Government or by institutions; it will be taken note of.

Q. 3. In a society where decisions are reached unanimously by several hundred people, is there much chance for dissent? How can dissent be voiced?

Vinobaji: You feel that where decisions are taken by majority, there is much scope of people voicing their differences, but as a matter of fact it is not so. When you accept the principle of unanimity, it means that each and every individual is free to express his opinions, and reconcile with others' opinions; because a single individual can veto any decision. So, a good man can check democracy going wrong. There is also a possibility of a bad man

obstructing, but, the greater possibility is that of a good man influencing others because people are generally guided by good men, in a principle of unanimity. In majority decisions, they merely count heads.

American: "I am a Quaker and Quakers follow the principle of unanimity but they are few, so they can do that. It requires patience. But I have found that in People's China, decisions in village councils are arrived unanimously, but people there, are afraid to express their opinions."

Vinobaji: You must bear in mind that the experiment in China was preceeded by terrorising and violence. So, that kind of unanimity is not free. In a non-violent society, there is free expression. The more the number of persons, the more difficulty in its working. All these principles work in a decentralized society. Villages in India are not very big. Suppose the village consists of hundred families then each family will be represented by one person and hundred persons will form the general body of the village. It will meet once in a month. But those hundred persons will choose 10 to 15 persons, unanimously who will constitute a committee which will meet constantly. So, the working will be in a way, indirect. It is impossible for all hundred persons to meet and discuss every day. The decisions of the committee of 10 will be ratified by the general body in the monthly meeting.

Q. 4. People say that the absentee-landlords of a Gramdan village, who have not given their land, will be forced by circumstances to give land. Is it not a kind of pressure?

Vinobaji: It is a moral pressure. People are sure that the absentee land-lords cannot do their work without the help of village people. When all the people of the village give their land and come together, they create a moral force which has its effects on others. The absentee land-lords will be 'impelled' and not 'compelled'. Do you follow the difference between these two words?

HOUR OF TRIAL

DAMODARDAS MUNDADA

A PROPS the decision of the Sarva Seva Sangh at Palani to appoint but one representative per district, a friend who attended the conference writes to know if election instead of nomination of such representative could not be a better way? According to him the people of the district should have the freedom to choose their representative.

"Where does the question of election arise?" asked Vinobaji. "Is our Sevak, whom I call a Satyagrahi Lok-Sevak, going with any power, or authority, or any sanction, except that of selfless service? He is going there in all humility, keeping himself aloof from all party politics and with full faith in Lokniti. Do you elect the Sun who comes to your door every day? Did the Ganges face any elections before it started serving humanity? Do you elect your mother? Although our men talk of Shasan Mukti they have not yet been able to free their minds of methods which ultimately lead to "Shasan." They still think in terms of election. It is just like deputing a member of the family for the service of every district. Have I not so often claimed the services of at least one member per family for this work? Sarva Seva Sangh also is a family spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Many more, nay even lakhs could be added to the list, if only the innumerable constructive institutions and the various social and political organisations take it to their mind."

But there was an old associate of Sevagram Ashram who called upon Vinobaji the other day, and was much perturbed to hear him saying that he was not sure of his own programme after December 1956. "Are you thinking of taking any radical step after December like the one Bapu took in 1942, when he gave the "Do or Die" programme to the Nation? "May we not know what is going on in your mind?"

"You have every right to" he once responded, "The time ahead is the hour of trial for all those who believe or claim to believe in Gandhiji's ideals. The sooner we realised this the better for us all. I know they are doing very useful work through their respective constructive institutions. But is not the whole mankind

doing equally useful work by looking after their children and family affairs? Your constructive activities will lose all lustre if these do not symbolise the emotions of the people and if our workers fail to be at the front when their presence would be most needed, more so, when all along they have been preparing for that crucial moment. I, therefore, wish the constructive workers rise to the occasion. That will not only increase their self-confidence, will not only influence the national mind, but will have far-reaching results all over the world. Land problem is not limited to India alone. It is an international problem. It exists in Pakistan, in Ceylon, in Nepal and in so many other countries. The non-violent solution at home will surely inspire and stimulate people abroad to solve their own problems through the method of Bhoodan which in turn is sure to influence their own politics. My plan for 1957 is, therefore, to create an army of Satyagrahi Lok-Sevaks throughout the length and breadth of the country."

And while he was explaining the fivefold qualifications, the *Pancha sheela* of the Satyagrahi, the post bag brought the message of 24th November from Shri Aravind's Ashram. It is a happy coincidence that the message should have synchronised with the Palani Decision. Thus runs the message.

"Without care for time, without fear for space, surging out purified from the flames of the ordeal, we shall fly without stop towards the realisation of our goal..."

SOME OF OUR BHOODAN BOOKLETS

	Rs. As.
1. Principles and Philosophy of Bhoodan	o 6
2. Bhoodan to Gramdan	o 6
3. On World Peace	o 2
4. Vinoba's Voice in Madras City	o 3
5. The Voice of Vinoba	o 4
6. A picture of Sarvodaya Social order	o 4
7. Jeevandan	o 4

(POSTAGE IS EXTRA)

SARVODAYA PRACHURALAYA, TANJORE

Vinobaji, Our Psychiatrist

DR. M. ARAMVALARTHAN

THE following is an unforgettable experience. It happened in the United States of America. I was then studying at the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

One weekend I went to an American home as a guest. I had previously known of the devotion entertained by the lady of the house for Mahatma Gandhi. So I took with me a large picture book on his life published by the Government of India. It portrayed sequentially the various phases of Gandhiji's life, from birth to his martyrdom.

After dinner we sat in the drawing room and talked. The conversation came to Gandhiji. We thought that was the time to see the book. The American lady evinced great interest in the pictures. The house in which Gandhi was born, his parents and relatives, his picture as a school boy the picture of young Gandhi all dressed up in the Western Style "aping the Englishman", as he called it, while studying law in London,.....Satyagraha in South Africa,.....salt march and the fight for freedom,.....his solitary peace mission in Noakhali,.....there the last day of his earthly sojourn, the scene of his dead body kept in Birla house for darshan by the people,.....

The American lady slowly thumbed through the last sheets of the volume. On seeing one picture, she stopped. It looked as if she was wondering about something. The picture showed a very huge crowd on both sides of a wide Delhi street in the middle of which was to be seen a vehicle carrying the dead body of Gandhiji.

She asked :

"Isn't this a military vehicle?"

"Yes."

".....and those in front of the vehicle are military men?"

"Yes. I think so"

"Well," she said, "Isn't this strange—that the body of Mahatma Gandhi, apostle of non-violence, should be carried on a military vehicle?"

These words surprised me. I had not thought of this contradiction before. How did this escape my notice. I wondered.

"Yes, it is strange". I agreed. "It doesn't seem appropriate. The Government of India have done this in order to honour the Father of the Nation."

* *

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The above was an unforgettable experience. Those words of the American lady could not be easily forgotten. "*Isn't this strange—the body of Mahatma Gandhi, apostle of non-violence, should be carried by a military vehicle?*"

This is certainly strange. Still we, the people of India, and our Government took the Mahatma's body in procession on a military carrier. On it were seated near the body Prime Minister Nehru, Deputy Prime Minister Patel and Defence Minister Baldev Singh. Uniformed men from the Army, Navy and Air Force pulled the vehicle.

Why did we do this? Why did we place the body of the Mahatma, apostle of non-violence, on the military vehicle, symbol of violence. The reason is that our national psyche is split, not whole. On the pedestal of our heart are seated two gods—Violence and Non-violence. We suffer from schizophrenia of the first magnitude.

This split in our national psyche is a grievous one. If allowed to worsen, it may spell the ruination of our culture. Fortunately for us we have now with us one who may make "whole" our split psyche and cure the schizophrenia in our national spirit. Acharya Vinobá Bhave is our psychiatrist.

The Sarvodaya Mandal of Tamilnad

TAMILNAD has been leading in Khadi work in the country. It is being carried on mainly by the Sarva Seva Sangh. The Government also is doing khadi work. Both produce about a crore of rupees worth a month. There are other constructive institutions like the Gandhi Ashram founded by Rajaji at Tiruchengode, Gandhi Niketan of Kallupatti, Gandhi Gram, Kanyagurukulam at Vedaranyam, Gandhi Ashram at Chidambaram, Gandhi Vidyalayam, at Tiruchitrambalam and Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya at Periyanaikanpalayam. Tamilnad has been also leading in prohibition, temple entry for Harijans, Basic Education, Kasthurba service for woman etc. It can claim to have an army of constructive workers. But still a keen observer will notice the lack of co-ordination and integration of these varied activities. Probably this accounts for the slow progress during the first stage of Vinobaji's yatra.

At the last meeting of the executive of the Sarva Seva Sangh at Palani on 21st Nov. 56 our editorial in the Tamil Sarvodayam formed the basis for a review of the progress of Bhoodan work in T. Nad initiated by Shri. E. W. Aryanayakam who is following Vinobaji in T. Nad yatra. During the discussion that ensued it was suggested that the transference of the khadi work, a major activity in the constructive field that has been run under the Head office of the Sarva Seva Sangh, to a local organisation as in U.P., Bihar, Orissa, will be conducive to an atmosphere of co-ordinated activity towards the Bhoodan ideology. This will help in bringing together and creating a homogenous body of workers for consolidating the *Lok Niti*. The trend of the discussion was later conveyed to Vinobaji for his opinion.

Vinobaji who has been keenly studying the special conditions in Tamilnad desired to talk to the principal workers who were invited at Bodi on 5th Dec. at his camp. But many did not turn up. After a detailed review of the situation and analysing its causes Vinobaji suggested the formation of a Sarvodaya Mandal consisting of those who would pledge themselves to dedicated service for *Lok Niti* instead of forming an institution with funds and executive responsibility. This Mandal would wield only moral influence in guiding the institutions and their work. It would concern itself purely with the ideologies and their application to actual work. The Mandal will have a special responsibility in the shaping of the

Gramdan villages by suggesting to the various institutions to jointly work to arouse the local *jana-shakti*. Vinobaji suggested a pledge for a Sevak of the Mandal as the earlier one for the district Sevak for Bhoodan work.

There was again another meeting at Madura on the 30th and 31st Dec. to consider the matter. Under the inspiring guidance of Vinobaji the workers deliberated for two days and decided to form the Council of the Mandal selected from among the seventy who had signed the pledge of the Satyagrahi Lok Sevak. Some of the elders are reconsidering as they have been directly or indirectly connected with the elections or are in Government service. The Council of the Mandal will consist of 15 persons representing the constructive institutions and other individuals. The following eight persons would immediately constitute the Council and the rest of seven seats will be filled in due course:—Shri. G. Ramachandran of Gandhigram, Shri. R. Guruswami of Kallupatti Gandhi Niketan, Shri. V. Ramachandran of Sarva Seva Sangh, Tirupur, Shri. S. Jagannathan, Shri. G. Subramaniam, Shri. Amrita Ramasubramaniam, Shri. E. W. Aryanayakam, and Shri. N. Ramaswami. The Mandal immediately met after its formation and decided upon a programme to survey the Gramdan villages and prepare a programme of integrated development through the various institutions and with the local initiative besides intensive propaganda through literature. It was also decided to enlist at least a thousand members for the Mandal.

Ever since the idea of integrating the All India constructive institutions into the Sarva Seva Sangh was mooted in 1948 Tamilnad has also been trying to create a similar organisation but could not succeed. It is due to the marvellous spiritual and moral influence of Vinobaji that this could be achieved in an ideal way without the inherent limitations of an organisation with funds and executive responsibility and solely relying on the moral sanction and influence of the members pledged to Sarvodaya ideal. Their faith in truth, non-violence and non-possession is their only asset and their dedicated service without any attachment or reward is their only qualification. May the Mandal prove its real worth in guiding for the establishment of Gram-rajya in the Gramdan villages and set an example to others.

Gramdan in Tamilnad

AS Vinobaji entered into the border of Madurai District after the Palani decision to dissolve the Bhoodan organisation, the movement gained a remarkable momentum. Madurai district suddenly sprang a surprise with repeated announcements of Gramdan almost daily. It exceeded 50 on the 31st Dec., 56 and it has reached 78 villages till 4th January 57. Concentrated efforts have been made for obtaining Gramdans by the leading men of the district and the workers of constructive institutions. Gandhigram workers evinced great interest in intensive propaganda around Gandhigram. Shri. W. B. A. R. Chandrasekharan, the district Bhoodan convener, Shri. G. Ramachandran and Dr. Soundaram Ramachandran of Gandhigram, Shri. Jagannathan, Shri. Varadhan and many have been exerting their best to secure a minimum of a hundred villages in Madurai District. The high hopes that Vinobaji had in Tamilnad when he entered it in last May are thus being gradually realised.

Vinobaji was greatly impressed with the turn that the movement has taken since his entry into Madurai. The kind of Gramdans obtained in Tamilnad is different from the humderds of Gramdans of Orissa though, the attachment to land of every one, whether in the hills or plains, is the same. Still there is the difference between them in some respects as Vinobaji referred to in his talk to the workers at Madurai. The offer of a large numbers of these Graman villages is a challenges to Sravodaya workers. Vinobaji could leave Orissa last year with a sense of relief only when the Sarva Seva Sangh deputed Shri. Anna Saheb Sabasrabudhe to take up the up-hill task of organising the Gramdan villages of Orissa. To whom will Vinobaji now leave the follow-up work in the Gramdan villages of Tamilnad? This was engaging his serious attention. Fortunately there was the consummation of the Sarvodaya Mandal on 31-12-56 with the blessings of Vinobaji. He considered the first charge and responsibility of the reconstruction of the Gramdan villages will rest with the non-official Sarvodaya Mandal. It is really non-official in the sense that it has no relation with the Government nor in the executive work of constructive institutions. It is gratifying to note that the Government of Madras also have promptly come forward to give all necessary help to these Gramdan villages. A full-time officer is already appointed to study their needs.

A German Student with Vinoba

Question. 1. With Gramdan, individual initiative will be lost, and idle people won't work.

Vinobaji: After Gramdan, there will not be collective farm in that village but every family will get a plot of land to cultivate. They will earn their bread and it will be supplemented by village community. So individual initiative will be there plus advantages of socialisation. We are not killing individual initiative. You will get the benefit of society's help provided you help yourself. Today even if one labours hard he gets no help from society but in Gandhian society he will get such help. After Gramdan there will be no ownership of land.

Question. 2. Do you find any change in India?

Vinobaji: Yes, there is an enormous change, lakhs of people have given land gifts. Now people are giving Gramdan. It means, all people in a village are renouncing individual ownership. This is change of heart. There is no pressure, except pressure of love. It is very wonderful. What is happening in Madura is very creditable. Our workers tell the people that you help your poor brothers and share all that you have with them; there will be no poverty. Renounce your ownership. It can't happen without change of heart.

Question : 3. What do you think about the role of India and Asia in the World?

Vinobaji: I won't bracket India and Asia together. India is one thing, Asia is another. India's role would be, what it was in ancient times i. e., spreading peace, establishing commonwealth of the whole world, sharing weals and woes of each other, complete freedom for every individual for every society, for every nation. We believe that interests do not clash with each other. By establishing that kind of society, India will influence the world.

Question. 4. What do you think about the future of Europe?

Vinobaji: I am not interested in idle thinking. I believe that small nationalities based on languages, which exist in Europe should go. I can't understand why Belgium and Denmark or Norway and

Sweden cannot be provinces of one state. Europe should develop as a joint State with full powers not only to every nation but to every village.

Question. 5. There is materialism in Europe. Is spiritual development possible there?

Vinobaji: I don't think Europe is devoid of spiritual urges although there is materialism in Europe. There is no difference between an Indian's heart and an European's heart. Human mind is the same everywhere. I find European friends disgusted with materialism. So I don't think that they will lag behind in spiritual development.

Nirmala Deshpande

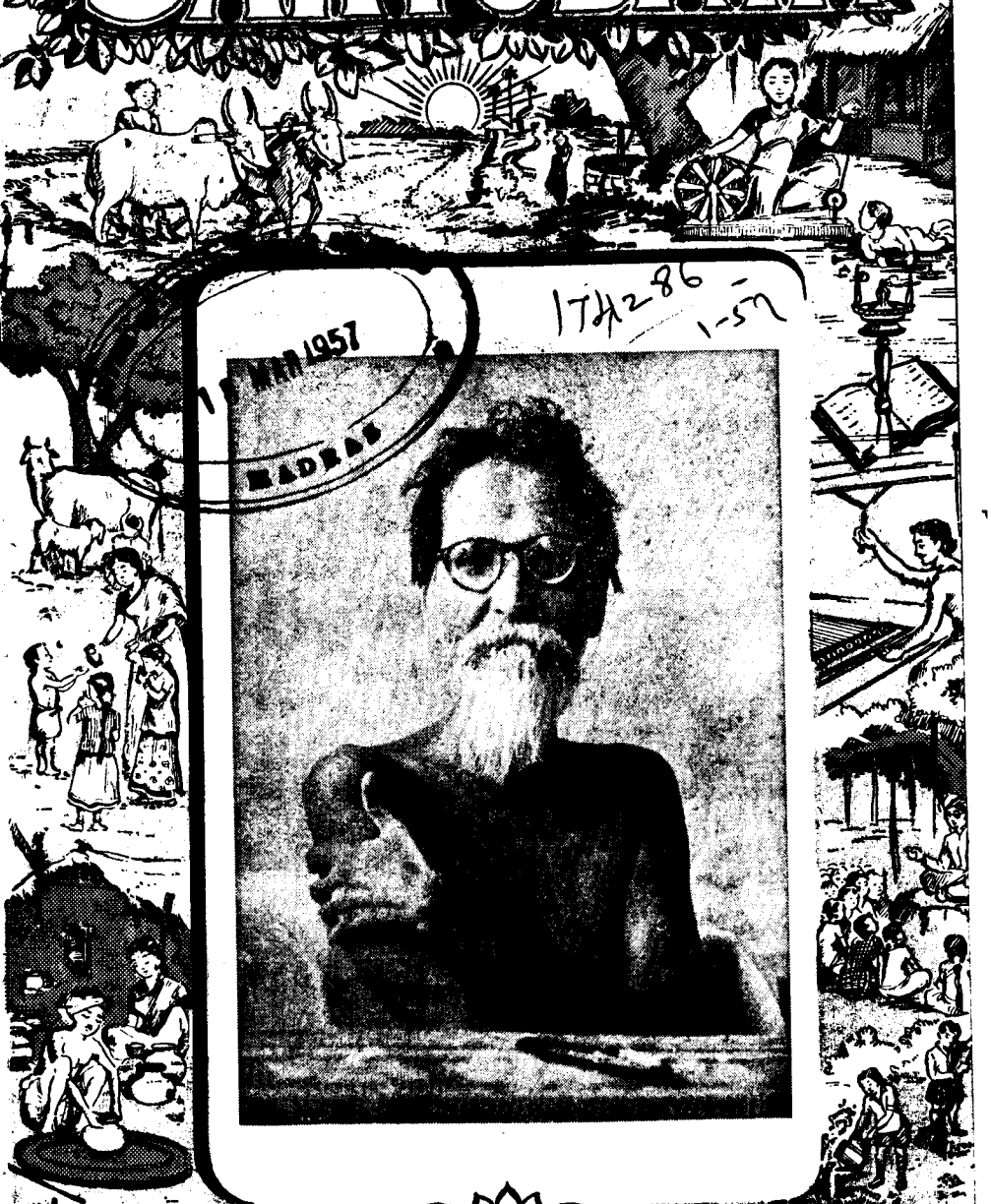
BHOODAN LITERATURE IN TAMIL

Ever since Vinobaji entered Tamilnad in May 1956 the Sarvodaya Prachuralaya (Publications) has been endeavouring to publish Gita Peruraigal and Bhoodan literature in Tamil as much as possible at cheap prices. Vinobaji always describes this literature as the 'ammunitions' for the non-violent movement. The following comparative figures will indicate the normal work of our publications in the previous years and the progress during the last 8 months in 1956.

Sales value of Books published		
From May 1953 to April 1954	Rs.	11,128
„ 1954 to „ 1955	Rs.	7,200
„ 1955 to „ 1956	Rs.	23,969
„ 1956 to Dec. 1956	Rs.	1,12,436 (8 months)

The sales have been fairly satisfactory during Vinobaji's yatra route and in the adjoining areas. Gita Peruraigal has been the largest seller among the books. Everywhere people buy copies and throng to the dais at the evening prayer for Vinobaji's signature. At Madurai on 31st December, Vinobaji who usually retires at 8 p. m. was signing the books till 9—15 p. m. The total number of copies that he signed on the 30th and 31st December alone was 1850. Vinobaji said that this was the record sale in the whole of his yatra.

SARVODAYA



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SARVODAYA PRACHURALAYA

TANJORE (SOUTH INDIA)

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Real Value of Education

MAHATMA GANDHI

Navajivan has published an abridged English edition of “My Childhood with Gandhiji” by Prabhudas Gandhi who had the fortune of having been brought up by Mahatma, his grand uncle. This is a valuable supplement to Gandhiji’s books “Satyagraha in South Africa” and “The Story of My Experiments with Truth.” This extract from Gandhiji’s letter to Manilal Gandhi from Pretoria Prison on 25-3-1909 lays down the highest values of real education long before he conceived of Basic Education.

“NOW I have read a great deal in the prison. I have been reading Emerson, Ruskin, Mazzini. I have also been reading the *Upanishads*. All confirm the view that education does not mean a knowledge of letters but it means character building. It means a knowledge of duty. Our own word (*kelvani*) literally means training. If this be the true view, and is to my mind the only true view, you are receiving the best education—training—possible. What can be better than that you should have the opportunity of nursing mother and cheerfully bearing her ill-temper, or than looking after Chanchi (wife of Harilal Gandhi) and anticipating her wants, and behaving to her so as not to make her feel the want of Harilal (then in goal as a passive resister) or again than being *guardian* to Ramdas and Devadas? If you succeed in doing this well, you have received more than half your education. I was much struck by Nathuramji’s introduction to the *Upanishad*. He says that the *Brahmacharya* stage i.e. the first stage is like the last that is the *sanyasin* stage. This is true. Amusement only continues during the age of innocence that is up to 12 years only. As soon as a boy reaches the age of discretion he is taught to realize his responsibility. Every boy from such age onward should practise continence in thought and deed, truth and the not taking of any life. This to him must not be an irksome learning and practice but it should be his enjoyment. I can recall to my mind several such boys in Rajkot. Let me tell you that when I was younger than you are, my keenest enjoyment was to nurse my father. Of amusement, after I was 12 I had little or none. If you



practise the three virtues, if they become part of your life, so far as I am concerned, you will have completed your education—your training. Armed with them, believe me, you will earn your bread in any part of the world, and you will have paved the way to acquire a true knowledge of the soul, yourself and God. This does not mean that you should not receive instructions in letters. That you should and you are doing. But it is a thing over which you should not fret yourself. You have plenty of time for it, and after all you are to receive such instruction in order that your training may be of use to others.

“Remember please, that henceforth our lot is poverty. The more I think of it, the more I feel that it is more blessed to be poor than to be rich. The uses of poverty are sweeter than those of riches.”

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TANJORE, 1-3-'57

(Sd.) N. Ramaswami
Signature of Publisher.

Vinobaji in Tanjore District

AFTER ten days' yatra in Trichinopoly district Vinobaji entered Tanjore district on 20th Jan. Though he wanted to give only 19 days for the district he actually spent 25 days till 12th February walking 230 miles. He had to walk even 13 miles on some days at a stretch on bad roads. He had an acute attack of stomach pain on the 11th Feb. which caused great anxiety. But he stood the strain and tided over the crisis by God's grace. Important places like Tiruvayaru, Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Tiruvarur, Vedaranyam, and Avadayarkoil were included in the yatra as desired by Vinobaji. There was hearty reception everywhere. Thousands attended the prayer meetings. Thousands of people had darshan as he walked through. At many meetings the audience consisted more of women and children than men. At every place there was a long queue of men and women waiting for his signature in the Tamil edition of Gita Pravachane. The results in the yatra were not materially considerable. About 635 acres of land were received from individuals. One rich donor who had already promised 250 acres during Shri. Deo's yatra two years ago offered to convert it as partial Gramdan in one of his villages. Another Sri R. Vedantam offered part of a village in which he had 62 acres as partial Gramdan. Therefore no Gramdan as such was received here though frequent advices of Gramdan in Madura district were being received by Vinobaji during his yatra. The total sales of literature amounted to about Rs. 10,000 including Gitai Peruraigal.

Vinobaji knew about the special conditions of Tanjore district. Three years earlier Sri Jayaprakash visited the district when 423 acres were received. Later during Shri. Deo's yatra for 18 days 717 acres were received. Land was distributed on two occasions by Shri. Shankarrao Deo and Sri. C. Rajagopalachari. But no continuous work was done during the last two years for want of workers. The Sarvodaya Prachuralaya which was transferred here from Tirupur had to give greater attention to the publication programme as the demand for literature was ever growing. There was not much of preparatory work done before Vinobaji's visit. Further it was the harvest time when Vinobaji was in the district. The storm of election had begun. There was the unrest

and demur of the landowners against the new Fair Rent Bill. The few available workers could not even contact them easily for Bhoodan or Gramdan. Therefor there could not be any collection even during the yatra.

Vinobaji did not evidently mind the lack of immediate response. For he believes that every one is a donor or prospective donor. He who does not give today will give tomorrow. At one place he said with a challenging optimism that there will be the district-dan of Tanjore district at some time. He was greatly impressed by the Tanjore district, the granary of Tamilnad and the land of temples. He saw even in small villages big temples the like of which are not even in big cities of north India. There had grown the traditional community life around the temples as common children of God sharing everything as God's gift. There was deep devotion among the people. About one-fourth of the good land of the district had been endowed for the temples for their maintenance and charities. Vinobaji often quoted from Tirukural, the classic of 2,000 years and from Thiruvachakam of Manichavachagar to the bewilderment of the hearers in the public meetings and personal conversations. He was immersed in the Tamil classics. He has made the educated people of Tamilnad realise the rich treasures of the Tamil literature. He was visibly touched by the large audience of women at his meetings. At Grand Anicut on the day of his entry into the district he was wondering at the sight of thousands of men and women sitting together irrespective of sex and he said that it would require about 25 years' efforts and a Satyagraha to have such a sight in North India. He wondered how there can be difference in economic life when there was no feeling in difference among men and women. He felt that the people should be as generous as the river Cauvery, unlike other rivers of India, who was giving away all her waters to the people with practically nothing to carry to the sea.

On the first day Vinobaji quoted from the *Bhagavatam* in which it was said that *bhakti* would persist in the *Dravida Desa* even when it had disappeared in all other places and said that he believed the words to be true as they came from the author who was absolutely devoid of ego. At one place he appealed to the landowners to come forward and voluntarily give the land to the tillers as a father would give to his sons when they have attained the majority. The days of *dasya bhakti* or the love between the

master and servant are gone and in the days of democracy the *Sakya-bhakti* or the love between equals as between Krishna and Arjuna would alone succeed now. He advised the land-owners to see the writing on the wall and not be indifferent to the suffering around them. He pointed out that it was ill-advised on their part to form a political party for fighting the elections at a time when the ownership is being voluntarily surrendered in favour of the village community in the Gramdan villages all over India. He felt happy to come to Tanjore after 62 years as he had heard about it in his young days. At the Tanjore meeting he referred to the three classes in society. The first gives more than it receives; the second gives as much as it receives. The third gives little or nothing in return to what it takes; but this claims to be the service class and what is done by this class is nothing but theft. In the special conference of Basic Education teachers and students at Tanjore, he quoted from Tirukural and said that the first two chapters will serve as an authority for basic education. He asserted that while basic education is the foundation of life, Gramdan is the foundation of Basic Education itself. This was amply demonstrated by the fact that Shri. Aryanayakamji, Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh has been walking with Vinobaji during his yatra in Tamilnad.

At Kumbakonam, Vinobaji devoted the whole of his speech in analysing the true values of the ancient free and independent education and the material money values that are attached to the present-day State controlled education. The powers of the State can never be controlled by the opposition parties inside the Parliament or the Assembly, he said. But it can be checked only by independent free thinkers who are not subservient to the State and who are free from the lure of money values that are attached to the education now. The real opposition will develop when education is liberated from the control of the State and the educated are freed from the present slavery to money values and jobbery. Vinobaji said that he had come of his own accord to this ancient city of culture which is as famous as Banaras in the North and made a special appeal to them to give a lead in upholding the freedom of education to our ancient level when our ancestors could write the six *Darsanas* (philosophy) with absolute freedom of thought. The speech at Kumbakonam is one of the best of his speeches in the District which should be published in all the languages of India.

Vinobaji visited the temple of Thiyagaraja, at Tiruvarur, on the Sarvodaya Day. In the prayer speech inside the temple he was over-whelmed with feeling while referring to Gandhiji. He said that Gandhiji was already in prayer while walking to the ground as he was late by a few minutes and met his end in that state at the hands of his own countryman even as Jesus twenty centuries ago. Vinobaji said that not all the elections, the power of the State and scientific advancement could save the nation but it is the compassion of the people that can save nations and the world. It is in the footsteps of Gandhiji that Vinobaji was walking from village to village for Gramdan, which is the movement of bhakti and compassion. On the last day of the yatra on 12th Feb. at Avadayarkoil, Vinobaji spoke about the different forms of bhakti that prevailed in various times. True bhakti requires the surrender of 'I' and 'mine'. Is it not true bhakti in the case of thousands of land-owners who have voluntarily surrendered now their 'mine', the sense of possession in over 2000 villages of Orissa and 200 villages of Madura Dt. and 250 villages of Maharashtra and elsewhere? In this age bhakti should naturally take the form of compassion as preached by Buddha and Manickavachagar and others and by living in brotherhood through a life of sharing with all. Everywhere Vinobaji spread the cult of true bhakti and compassion. Every speech was concluded in an appeal to Gramdan. Land or no land, everywhere he appealed to the audience to think deeply over what he said and to read the literature that was being sold.

The effect of Vinobaji's yatra in the district cannot be measured in terms of lands received. Just like seeds of plants are sown in the ground the seeds of ideas for silent peaceful revolution are sown in the hearts and minds of the people. These seeds of dynamic peaceful revolution sown by Vinobaji will not take much time to sprout and bear fruit. His own astounding optimism declaring that Tanjore will not be mere Gramdan or Taluk-dan but will one day come forward as a District-dan, is indeed prophetic. Let hundreds of workers come forward and strive to make Vinobaji's words a reality in the near future.

Sarvodaya Literature and Sampattidan

THE Sampattidan Yagna is the natural concomitant of the Bhoodan yagna. The basic principle of Bhoodan is that land, the basic means of production and subsistence for man, should be as free as the other elements of nature like air, water, etc., without any individual ownership. All wealth, thus which is the result of direct and indirect service of the members of society, belongs to the society as a whole. Everyone should therefore, share a part of his earning with the society. On these two accepted principles the Sampattidan movement has been progressing along with Bhoodan movement. So far 80,000 danapatras for about Rs. thirteen lakhs have been promised all over India. This is the aggregate amount of the monthly instalments for varying periods ranging from 5 years. Some have undertaken to pay a portion of their monthly earning till the end of their lives.

The peculiar procedure in Sampattidan unlike other donations is that the donor simply signs a danapatra undertaking to pay a portion or a specified amount of the monthly income for a fixed period and does not immediately part with the amount. He or she keeps the amount in a bank and spends for purposes mentioned by Vinobaji and submits statements to him or others authorised by him. The donor has to simply satisfy his or her conscience about the payment and the proper spending. In this way, the donor takes continuous interest in the cause and also propagates the ideology. Such conscious identification with the movement may influence the donor's life itself to a large extent. He will be scrupulous about the means of his earnings and consider himself as the trustee of his surplus earnings. This is the total transformation in the individual and society that is implied in the Sampattidan yagna.

Vinobaji and the Sarva Seva Sangh have specified three purposes for which the Sampattidan are to be utilised by the donors. The first is the maintenance of Bhoodan workers. The second is for the dissemination of cheap literature on Bhoodan ideology. The third is for the agricultural implements and accessories etc., for those to whom the Bhoodan land is distributed as well as for Gramdan villages.

Wherever land is being distributed, the Sampat-donors have been already helping out of their promised monthly instalments. Gramdan villages like Vayalur in Madras State have also been getting financial help from them. As the Bhoodan organisations

which were maintaining workers through the funds received from the Gandhi Memorial Nidhi have been dissolved from 1st January 1957 the maintenance of the workers would now naturally be the first charge on the Sampattidan donors.

Vinobaji has been attaching great importance to the dissemination of basic and authentic literature on Bhoodan ideology. The Prakashan department of the Sarva Seva Sangh has been publishing several attractive cheap books in Hindi on a mass scale from Banares. Vinobaji has been watching the progress of Tamil publications of the Sarvodaya Prachuralaya, the southern branch of the Sarva Seva Sangh Publications. During the last ten months during Vinobaji's yatra in Tamilnad about Rs. 1,50,000 worth of books have been published and about a lakh of rupees worth have been sold. This is more than four times that of the normal turnover of the Prachuralaya. There is immense possibility for increased publication and sale. But the resources of the Prachuralaya are very limited and it is working already under great financial strain. Vinobaji has suggested to some of the Sampattidan donors of Madras, Kumbakonam and Madura to make use of their donations for stocking and selling the Sarvodaya Publications as part of their work. Any loss that may result in the sales can be met as a charge on the Sampattidan. In this way the business talent and zeal for ideology of the sampatdan donors will be available to propagate the Sarvodaya literature which will pave the way for the fulfilment of the revolution in 1957.

The proposal has been accepted by some of the Sampattidan donors of Madras. Shri Siddharaj Dhadda, Joint Secretary, Sarva Seva Sangh who convened a meeting of donors at Madras on 1—2—57 explained Vinobaji's suggestion to them. Shri Nanalal Bhatt, Shri Krishna Jhaver and others have taken the initiative in collecting the necessary money from the donors of the Madras City. They have formed the Madras City Sarvodaya Sahitya Prachar Samiti and have already paid some substantial sum. They have thus set an example.

The Sampattidan donors thus coming forward to directly participate in spreading Bhoodan literature, will result in giving greater encouragement and enthusiasm to the field workers all over. Effective countrywide sales organisations of Bhoodan and Gramdan literature is the urgent work which will lead to the realization of the objective by the end of 1957 that Vinobaji has placed before the nation.

Ramakrishna and Gandhi

(Speech at Ramakrishna Kudil, Trichi Dist.)

ACHARYA VINOBA

THIS institution is named after a great saint. Shri. Ramakrishna was born in a village in Bengal far away from here. He was not a very learned man but he had knowledge of the supreme soul. He preached love for all men in the world. He taught people to see and recognize God in every human being. He said that to realize that God dwells in every human being is real knowledge and that all else in *avidya*, or ignorance. There were many learned men among his disciples. They felt that they ought to devote themselves to the service of the poor. That is how the Ramakrishna Mission came into being. It has been rendering valuable service to people all over the country for more than fifty years.

The philosophy of *advaita* which Shri Ramakrishna preached was not new to India. Shri Shankaracharya had also preached the philosophy of *advaita*. But Shri Ramakrishna combined it with the service of the poor. This unique blending of Vedanta with service was made by the disciples of Shri Ramakrishna for the first time in India. Service of the people has been an essential part of Christianity. In India the path of devotion had a great hold over the minds of the people but it had nothing to do with social service. It very often lost itself in formal worship and lifeless ritual. To realise the solidarity of all life and to perceive the infinite within all finite forms was the essence of Vedanta. Though meditation was thought essential to Vedanta, service had no place in it. Love was the essence of path of devotion but it also did not find expression in selfless service. Devotion came to mean only the worship of some one of the numerous idols. Christianity attaches great importance to service but it is not associated with the *advaita* philosophy. It was in the thought of Shri Ramakrishna that we find *advaita* and selfless service coming together. When these two are united a tremendous amount of physical energy is liberated.

A basic school has been opened here today. Shri Ramakrishna and Mahatma Gandhi have been two of the great men of India in recent times and will be remembered when others have been forgotten. You have brought these two men together. You will

benefit from the moral force that is created by the association of two such holy names.

Gandhiji believed in *advaita* and the path of devotion. But he was chiefly a man of action—*karmayogi*. His action was based on *advaita* (monism) and *bhakti* (devotion) in the realm of thought. *Advaita* and *bhakti* find their fulfilment in daily life in Gandhiji's *karmayoga* (the path of action). The path of action includes both service and productive work. The Ramakrishna Mission spread the thought of service. Gandhiji further developed this thought and spread it all over the country. Service is but one part of action, the other part being productive work done by a labourer. So, everyone should participate in some kind of bread labour. This was Gandhiji's contribution to the path of action and his message reached the remotest parts of the country.

Great men like Shankaracharya preached *advaita*. Manikya-vachakar and Nammalwar taught devotion. Dnyanadeva and Tulsidas taught the same doctrine to the people in Maharashtra and northern India. Shri Ramakrishna brought together Shankaracharya's *advaita*, the path of devotion trodden by the saints and social service. Gandhiji added to this the path of action by stressing the importance of bread labour. By opening a basic school here you have made a synthesis of all the three, *advaita*, *bhakti*, and *karma*. This synthesis is the high water mark of Indian thought. Where there is service there is also compassion, which constitutes the essence of Buddha's teachings. Non-violence as taught by Mahavira is a part of *advaita*. You have assumed a heavy responsibility on your shoulders and you must work hard and conscientiously to discharge it.

You know that I am walking through the country for Bhoodan. The solution of the land problem is only one aspect of it. Buddha in his time also had to undertake a similar task. He preached compassion and love. In those days people practised the inhuman custom of killing goats and other animals as a sacrificial offering to God. Buddha walked through the country persuading people to stop these brutal killings. He realised that if he wanted to spread compassion and love he must relate them to some problem in his immediate environment. So he raised his voice against animal sacrifice. Likewise I have taken up the problem of land as a symbol but my mission is to propagate compassion, the abolition of

ownership, in short, *advaita*. *Advaita* combined with compassion is the essence of Bhoodan. This is the synthesis which Bhoodan aims at and the redistribution of lands is its path of action.

Today there is inequality around us. People fiercely cling to whatever they have and become callous towards the poverty and misery of their neighbours. Sometimes they take pity on them and give away some trifles in charity. But they do not strike at the root of this misery. Inequality and ownership are the root cause of much of the evil in our society. We are out to attack both inequality and ownership and as a symbol have chosen the problem of land redistribution. The movement will continue so long as inequality and ownership have not been done away with.

Since the beginning of this year the organisation for doing Bhoodan work has been disbanded. A child needs spoon-feeding but when it grows up the practice is discontinued. Now the people must take up the work themselves. What type of men will do such work voluntarily? Only those who believe in *advaita*, who are compassionate, who want to serve and practise *karmayoga* and whose hearts are full of devotion, will take it up. I hope that your institution which has brought together Shri Ramakrishna and Gandhiji will become a centre of the Bhoodan movement.

(BHOODAN, January 30, 1957.)

Castes and Ashrams in Gramdan

ACHARYA VINOBA

I have made an aphorism about the structure of the four castes and Ashrams in the Gramdan villages. I have described them in four simple words. One who possesses these four qualities combines in him the virtues of the four castes and the ashrams. All these four are very sacred. We are wrong when we consider any caste as lower or higher than the others. The Gita says, "A man who is intent on his own work attains perfection".

Sama or peace in one's mind is the characteristic of the Brahmin. I want peace in the Gramdan villages. Let our minds be peaceful. But do we have peace in our village or in our country? We all desire peace but pursue the path of conflict.

Peace comes only when our minds are free from distress. A common cause for the wide-spread unrest is the want of bare necessities of life. There is also another cause for unrest in others. It is the surfeit that also destroys their peace of mind.

One who wields a weapon is a kshatriya. They and their weapons are today increasing. The world was never so much in the grip of fear of destruction as now. But the kshatriya is also known for his freedom from fear. This never comes through weapons. We must inculcate *dama* or the restraint of the brave for securing this freedom. In the absence of self-restraint the need for restraint from outside arises. Therefore self-restraint will prevail in a greater degree in Gramdan villages than anywhere else. There will be no desire to deprive others of their possession, for all will belong to the community. All land will be owned by the village. Ownership will have been dissolved and every person will rule over himself. I call this as the establishment of the kshatriya caste.

Next comes the Vaishya or the trading caste. The distinctive mark of Vaishya can be best described in one word as *daya* or charity. The Vaishyas have avoided meat in a greater measure than the brahmins. The duty of the Vaishya is to protect the poor and storing commodity for them. The vaishya character of charity and compassion are indispensable in a Gramdan village.

The chief characteristic of the shudras is devotion or *shraddha*. Without faith and devotion there can be no service. In villages the minds of the children will turn to devotion. Today the children of the landless and the poor are like orphans and have to be taken care of by philanthropic persons. This would be the responsibility of the village community. In a Gramdan village there will be no need of an orphanage. It is not necessary to bring together in one place orphans from everywhere. The orphan gets the whole village as its parents. Children will be nurtured by the common virtues of love and compassion.

Thus four virtues of peace (*shama*) restraint (*dama*) charity (*daya*) and devotion (*shraddha*) are well established in a society.

The four ashrams in a Gramdan village are *Sanyashrama* or the life of the recluse. The second is *Vanaprasthashrama*. The third is the *Grihasthashrama*. The fourth is the *Brahmacharya*.

Society is in great need of a sanyasi. In him the society gets a social worker for whom it has to pay nothing. He will go every-

where as a vehicle of knowledge and a symbol of peace. Through Gramdan we have to bring about peace of which Sanyasa is symbol.

Dama or restraint of the self represents *Vanaprasthashrama*. One must control the senses and prepare oneself for total renunciation through penance and meditation.

The *Grihasthashram* is characterised by charity through life in the family. Tirukural (the Tamil classic) states that the essential virtues of a *grihasthi* are charity, compassion and love.

Devotion is the mark of brahmacharyashram. In a Gramdan village these ashrams will be necessary for the cultivation of self-restraint, peace, charity and devotion.

These four words, *Sama*, *dama*, *daya*, and *shraddha* are the aphorisms of Gramdan. I do not doubt that if the Gramdan villages are formed in this way, there will be a veritable resurrection of *dharma* in our lives. God has blessed all of us with some measure of *dharma*. We should respond to it and serve through this mission of Gramdan.



What is Gramdan?

VINOBA

LET us be clear about what we mean when we talk of Gramdan. So far each individual has more or less isolated himself from the social life of the village. Even in villages which are small and in which there are barely a hundred families, there is no social cohesion or comradeship.

Each one lives for himself and all of them are exploited ruthlessly by the trader, money-lender, lawyer and doctor from the town. They also exploit one another when they can. Isolation corrodes the human feeling in man. Like the erosion of the soil there is a deterioration in the quality of human beings. The coming in of the money economy had made things worse. There is litigation between father and son. Marriages in the family add substantially to the indebtedness of the

house-holder. All this has reduced man to the position of a beast. He has lost all sense of human dignity.

In a Gramdan village all this will change. Man will live in happy union with society around him. The whole village will be one family. Private ownership in land will end. Land will belong to all. No debts will be incurred for a marriage in the family. The whole village will contribute towards the expenses. There will be one shop in the village. Every householder will have his "labour-hours" entered into an account book. That will be the credit side of his balance. He will not be exploited by the trader from town. People will learn to live together in happy co-operation. If we explain all this to the people living in villages, one after another all villages would be given in Gramdan. There are 58 villages in this *firka* out of which only 25 have so far acceded for Gramdan. I wonder why the rest have not been already given. This process must be speeded up. Then the government will have to wake up and take note of this phenomenal development. They will have to come forward and help such villages in every possible way.

(BHOODAN, March 6, '57)



Vinoba with J. C. Kumarappa at Gandhi-Niketan—Kallupatti

Eighth Sarvodaya Sammelan

VINOBAJI entered Tamilnad in May 1956. He has been saying of having given a blank cheque to Tamilnad about the time of his stay here. Now it is just ten months and Tamilnad could not be covered fully. He has to go to Kerala and Karnatak. The northern provinces are anxious to have him early. Maharashtra which has been slow in Bhoodan work has suddenly shown remarkable progress in Gramdan. The Sarva Seva Sangh also has requested Vinobaji to complete his southern tour early so that he can visit all the other provinces in 1957.

Vinobaji has been kind enough to give Tamilnad sufficient time though we could not fully avail of his presence. Only recently Madura district has sprung a great surprise with large number of Gramdans. Vinobaji is now in Madura district for the second time where there is concentrated effort for a Taluk-dan with about 750 villages. It is now decided that Vinobaji will cross Tamilnad border on 18th April 1957 to enter Kerala.

The question of the venue of the next Sarvodaya Sammelan has been engaging the attention of the Sarva Seva Sangh and others. Karnatak had great hope in having it in Mysore. But it would be difficult as the rains will set in by the time Vinobaji goes there. In the meanwhile there was a suggestion to have it at Cape Comorin which was very much welcomed by Vinobaji. This would have been the most appropriate place indeed for the declaration of the consummation of the revolution of 1957 and also to deliver the message to the world across the three oceans that meet at the Cape. On preliminary survey it was found the acute water scarcity has made it impossible to hold the Sammelan. Unfortunately Cape Comorin is out of the picture now. The next place that is finally decided is Kaladi in Kerala, the sacred birth place of Jagat Guru Shri Sankaracharya. The whole of Kerala heartily welcomes the Sammelan. Kaladi has an enchanting natural setting on the banks of the river Alwaye with the Ramakrishna Mission Ahram and the newly constructed Sankaracharya college under the inspiring guidance of Shri Agamananda Swamikal.

The Duty of Workers

ACHARYA VINOBA

WORKERS must carry out the triple programme ceaselessly. They must meditate on Bhoodan and work out for themselves all its implications. They must explain the idea very clearly and in simple terms to the people. The idea has a power of its own. It provides the dynamics of action. If we are able to convey the new thought to the people we need never bother about results.

The workers must keep a close watch on themselves. They must find out what change is taking place within themselves because of the new idea of this movement. One has to change oneself first. One must search if one is clinging to the idea of ownership in one form or another. Our words can carry conviction only if they have the sanction of personal example behind them. We must ever strive to purify our heart and mind. Hundreds of our workers have given up their normal work and family life, and wandering about in the cause of Bhoodan. People know that our workers are serious and therefore listen to the new message. Workers must grow every day. A new awakening is coming over in all fields of national activity. They are realising that unless a worker is able to shed his egoism and other shortcomings his work is bound to create disharmony and conflict. A worker must exert himself to gain control over the senses and free himself completely from personal ambition.

The third thing that our workers must do is to approach everyone with great humility. They must be able to see God residing in every human heart. Service of man, they must realise, is the highest form of devotion. They must be kind and gentle. They must never be angry or get irritated. They must explain patiently the new idea to the people. As a devotee sings his morning prayers to awaken his deity so must the worker sing the song of Bhoodan and awaken the people to its urgency. Our duty is to put the idea before the people. If they do not act the fault is not theirs. We must approach them again and again and explain the idea to them without any anger or illwill. A worker should be happy to serve. Service is its own reward. Hundreds of villages can be obtained as Gramdan if our workers are active and alert.

Pioneers of the New Path

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

"THE news of one thousand to twelve hundred villages, offered in Gramdan in the Koraput District has spread throughout the country and travelled on to the world as well. The significance of what you have done is perhaps not fully known to you. But by giving the Gramdan you have shown a new path to our nation and the world full of strifes, conflicts and tensions caused by the selfishness of man, whether literate or illiterate. Urge to possess has become the driving force in modern life. In this hot battle to possess, only 10% win, either through tact, physical force or fraud. The rest are vanquished and are forced to a life of misery. But if we live by mutually sharing our weal and woe human happiness will be an accomplished fact. This is what Vinoba is preaching to the war-weary world where the land owner vainly asserts that land belongs to him and the rich vainly reserve all rights over riches. In fact the land belongs to God and riches are the result of social effort where so many participate.

If all the villages follow your example and everywhere the wealth goes under the ownership of society all misery will end; old order will be ripped down and a new era will dawn. That is why I have called you the pioneers of a new path which is equally an eye opener for Russia and America.

Misery in the world is not due to shortage of provision and amenities which science can multiply to any extent but due to the narrowness and possessiveness of man.

Friends, I have sung your praise for your accomplishments in Gramdan but the struggle for producing more through the crafts and cultivation starts from now onward. We have to produce almost all our needs in our village. I am happy to see so many people devoted to your service. Led by Anna Sahib they want to pull you up for a life of plenty but it is you who have to be the architects of a real Gram Rajya. I have every hope that the work begun by you will spread throughout Orissa and India where all will join to build up a new Bharat.

The poor people alone are revolutionary in the modern age. If the poor come forward with the banner of revolution all, whether rich or reluctant, will surely follow. I assure you that you are the leaders of the society of today and have affected the minds of millionaires in the towns."

(From a speech at the Village Burja on 25-11-'56)

The New Approach Through Gramdan

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

GRAMDAN is the culmination of Vinoba's movement; it has simplified the approach to problems more than Bhoodan and Sampattidan could. I have come to speak about this new movement to you and will try to put it in my own way.

You might have noticed the happenings in Egypt where world war has been averted by a narrow margin. The situation in Hungary is equally fraught with dangers. In spite of talk about peace there is unrest everywhere. It is a strange *tamasha* that in spite of inherent craving in man for peace, equally and sincerely desired by both Russia and America, there are vigorous preparations for war. Such new weapons are being manufactured as can write off the human race. People presume that the problems of the modern world are economic or political and hence go on with the political activities and economic development but the fact remains that the problem in fact is moral.

Due to the progress of science there is speedy development in the techniques of industry and agriculture. Wealth is daily multiplying, standards of living are rising. Vast majority of the people in Europe and America are well off but still there is no peace. Horrible weapons are being devised by the best brains in the World of Science. There are Scientists who regret their participation in this inhuman adventure but still most of the civilized people are in the race.

What is the culture of the advanced countries? America prides in her sky scrapers. There is one car for every 4 Americans. Even the labourer earns 800 to one thousand rupees a month. They say they are the richest people. Half the wealth of the world is amassed in America. But the best presentation of their culture is in producing the best weapon to kill the maximum number of people. In the primitive period of human history men used to kill and eat each other. None calls that a period of civilization. The difference in the civilized people of today is that Adam had a stick in his hand and the modern man has a hydrogen bomb. The thirst for the fellow-brothers' blood is the same as in the primitive man. Russia and America have a huge armed force. Both are equally bent on the massacre of man. This sort of civilization is going to wipe out the human race.

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There is another side of the picture, however. Scientific progress has brought such achievements for men that he can solve all his problems. There are ninety per cent people in misery and only ten per cent are happy who have got food, shelter, clothing, medical aid and education. The percentage in Orissa will be still less; in Bihar only 5 per cent are well off. The Basic needs of the people are not met with. There are few people in America without good house, without electricity or sanitation. Leaving a few countries in the world there are poor people in all the countries.

There is misery in the world not because the resources are meagre. The Canadian sister with us was just telling us that in spite of huge godowns in Canada storing million of tons of wheat people starve. Increased production results in fall of prices. Surplus is either thrown into the sea, set on fire or stored in godowns. There is misery not because there is no production but that the man is self-centred and doesn't think of others. This sort of life results in preparation for war. It is painful indeed!

What necessitated the invasion on Egypt? Big Capitalists have invested their capital there and want profits out of it. They care hell about the plight of Egypt. British are not in the least concerned about the interests of Egypt.

The village producing more doesn't help the other producing less. One family with a surplus doesn't share with the other family.

It is no fault of England, Russia or America. Values are such that we have to live like that. Wherein lies the contradiction?

Man is a social being by nature. He lives and dies in Society. Man is the making of the Society rather. Every species has an instinctive behaviour to react to a common danger. How to sacrifice for each other is not given to instinct but to intellect—a gift only with man by which he may redeem or destroy himself. We have received the language and literature from Society. Doctors and lawyers having received their education through social resources live through their patients and clients. But we are so self-centered that we neglect the society. In this conflicting behaviour man will perish. In previous wars man progressed but now there is no escape since such devastating weapons have been devised. Every Scientist is pointing at that. All roads to safety having been closed it is the right time for man to learn the human religion, and stop

behaving in an animal manner which is hostile to society. With misery around there are a few islands of happiness in the ocean of life. The individual is doing all sorts of frauds, fabrications and murders for his selfish ends, which lead straight to the total annihilation.

Now let us presume that there is some magic by which all people wake up one morning with their hearts pure, free from greed and selfishness. What will be the result? There will be no attacks on Egypt, no repression in Hungary. If there is a change of heart and man behaves like man free from all greed, malice and contradictory behaviour, all the misery will end.

Let us believe that America recognized the share of all the nations in her wealth. If she spares for the world 1/10th of her expenses on A-Bombs and arms all conflicts will come to an end.

Russia claims to be a Communist Country. If so she should declare her entire wealth belonging to mankind. Let the Russian labourer sacrifice so that his Indian comrade is saved from starvation.

All this proves that the problems seemingly political are in fact moral. The possessive instinct has to be weeded out by all. Rich and poor alike are victims of the craving of acquiring wealth, both adore the same values. Everybody wants to loot and squeeze if chance is there. That brings us to the necessity of change of heart which alone provides the key to all our problems which people vainly think can be solved by Delhi or Cuttack. It is a sheer illusion.

There was a revolution in Russia some 40 years back. Farms, factories and banks were looted by the poor. Collectivization, nationalization and Socialization were introduced on a national scale. In spite of that lakhs were murdered and hanged. Krushchev's disclosures about Stalin's deeds deserve a close study by everybody. Overthrow of Capitalism made a beginning of mutual bloodshed there. Mr. Bulganin has revealed "it could never be known whether one will survive after seeing Stalin or be killed." It is only after Stalin that they have started talking; the rope has been relaxed a little. They had no freedom so far. In India Pandit Nehru although not omnipotent holds great power. But all can say that he be dethroned. Nehru was opposed in elections by Prabhu Dutt. This is freedom. But can any one oppose Krushchev? Lakhs had been sacked to Siberia. Was that the object of a revolution?

Taking the case of economic equality, Lenin said the highest officers will be paid a little more than the labour. The conditions today are revealed by Mr. Mikhoyan's statement before our Planning Commission which disclosed that the difference of pay is 40 times in Russia. Stalin the strongest dictator the world had soon to compromise with the selfish motives of the workers and the Engineers who had to be appeased by offers of piece rates and Bungalows respectively, for boosting up production, but that has been the failure of Communism; since production and not the needs decided the payscales. People feel that legislation in Delhi can herald a better social order. Never! Sword can never solve the human problems; it can't change the human nature. In case Nehru introduces a bill to ban falsehood, will it set in the era of truth? Lawyers are there to teach tax evasion and other escapes from Law. That is not the solution anyway.

Shri Nav Krishan Choudhry was the Chief Minister of Orissa. He used to think and plan about the possibilities of developing the State. He held that post and left it, bringing glory to India. He realised that development could be done not through capital but through the people alone.

In the American revolution the British were defeated and Washington rose to power. After the Russian Revolution Lenin became the dictator. But what a wonderful country is India? India gained independence in 1947 but Gandhiji didn't hold any power. Why? Because Gandhi's job was not to make laws, but to bring up a new man. This movement is just to create a new man, usher in a new society, a new humanity.

Let us play our role well by discarding selfishness to bring about peace on earth. Selfishness is not for Saints alone to practise, all of us are the forms of God, everyone of us can be as great as Buddha or Gandhi. But don't start abruptly. Gandhiji devised a moral technique by which lakhs could be raised to the spiritual heights. He laid down "Give an idea to a man and show him one step to move." We have to reach the Sun of Sarvodaya by giving our all to Society and living on what the Society gives us. It is difficult to practise it right today but there is a ladder by which the whole human society can reach the heights touched by Tensingh and Hillary. Vinoba says, "I have given you an idea to take a step forward. Put your individual share in the fire of this human Yagna."

Give a pice out of every rupee, a fraction of your land, labour and intelligence. That will build up a new force, a new moral strength. Then another step, again another step till we bestride the Himalayan heights and complete our uphill journey.

(*From a Speech at Geypore at Orissa*)

The Gramdan Movement in Orissa

MANMOHAM CHOUDHURI

THE renunciation of private property in land on a mass scale through Gramdans is the latest and most significant development of the Bhoodan movement that is attracting widespread attention. Though the Gramdan movement began as far back as 1952 with the rather unexpected and spontaneous action of the villagers of Mangroth in U. P., it was only during and after Vinobaji's foot-march through Orissa, that the movement assumed mass proportions.

The average population of a village in Orissa is a little more than three hundred. The villages received in Gramdan are generally the smaller ones, with an average population of one hundred and twenty. It is but natural that villages with a homogenous population of peasants, labourers and artisans habituated to physical labour should be the first to offer themselves in Gramdan. The larger villages with high-caste families of sub-letting land-owners, money lenders etc. are at present holding back. Kharka in Koraput district is the largest Gramdan village with a population of 900 while the smallest hamlet has a population of eight. The total population of all the villages is estimated at two lakhs.

Most of the villages in the Koraput district and elsewhere are Adivasi in character, each village being generally inhabited by a single tribe. This circumstance is doubtless one of the major predisposing factors, but there is a considerable number of villages with non-Adivasi and mixed populations. The number of such villages in Koraput exceeds 150 and is 80 in the Balesore district. All the villages in Sambalpur are non-Adivasi in character.

Gramdan on such a vast scale opens up the most exhilarating possibilities of social reconstruction and economic upliftment, of building up a new social order based on equality and co-operation. The voluntary renunciation of private property and eager acceptance

of the new way of life of 'getting along together', unleashes undreamt of reservoirs of constructive social energy, repressed under the deadweight of an outmodel, exploitive and competitive social system. It is coming to be more and more generally recognised that popular enthusiasm and participation is an essential ingredient for the success of economic planning. Some of the spectacular results achieved in New China in recent years have been attributed, no doubt rightly, to the above causes. In any society this energy is generated on a considerable scale only when the under dogs, the underprivileged classes, get a feeling that they are getting a fair deal, that they are real participants in the rebuilding of a new order, not merely so many 'hands' employed in renovating the old.

This has happened to a certain extent after the communist revolution in China, but while the latter has succeeded in liberating the energies of the underprivileged masses, it has also, in the process of doing so, generated conflict and hostility on a considerable scale, the repercussions of which are being felt throughout the world to-day. It has brought into being forces that have complicated the problem of world peace.

Here the reader may pertinently ask, to what extent is the success of the movement due to the real psychological changes wrought in the minds of the people and how far due to the circumstances peculiar to the areas? Is it not a fact that the movement has made considerable headway only among the backward Adivasis, and had demonstrably failed to catch on in the more advanced districts? Is not land plentiful and cheap in the sparsely populated district of Koraput? Have not the Adivasis very little attachment for land, and are in the habit of shifting cultivation?

It is a fact that the movement has had more success among the Adivasis, who have a strong tradition of social cohesiveness. But this merely underlines the fact that even the backward classes in India have some valuable social traits highly useful for a new Sarvodaya or socialist order and the Gramdan movement is helping to preserve and canalise them. As a matter of fact, as we have noted earlier, quite a large number of villages with mixed and non-Adivasi populations have opted for Gramdan.

Another predisposing factor in Koraput was the awakened consciousness of the people due to their participation in the

national freedom struggle since the early thirties and the subsequent intensive constructive activities carried on there by a band of determined and selfless workers. Thus the psychological ground was being slowly prepared for more than two decades. In a way the psychological preparation has been going on in India since centuries, where numerous saints and social reformers have preached against untrammelled individualism and Vinobaji's movement is a flowering of that long historical process, a culmination.

(From a book "The Gramdan Movement.")

The Duty of the Landless

Some complain that there is no active role for the landless in this movement: its appeal is mainly to the land-lords and wealthy. We must go to them and explain to them the meaning of Bhoodan. They will then become conscious of their duty. This is not a movement for grabbing something from someone else. It is mainly for giving oneself. Everyone in society has to offer his share. People use their talent and wealth for themselves and their family. They have now to use it for the good of the whole village. Everyone has to bring about an inner change in his mind and heart. The poor have the capacity of hard work: and hard work is the goddess of wealth. They can offer their work which will create wealth for the whole village. Ideas of class war and conflict have no place in our movement. There is no intention of scoring a victory over any group or class. If there is satyagraha in this it would be of a sublimated type. It would be another name for the working of universal love. I hope to give my whole life to this glorious experiment. I feel such joy and enthusiasm when I think of all this. I feel that there can be no end to this work. It is timeless and therefore even the thought gives new strength.

Vinoba.

Vinobaji at Gandhigram

DAMODARDAS MUNDADA

Started seven years ago, Gandhigram has grown into a mighty banyan tree of constructive institution in Tamilnad under the leadership of Shri G. Ramachandran and Dr. Soundaram. This centre attracts workers from all parts and all sections of officials and non-officials to know something of Gandhian ideology in theory and see it in applied programmes. Vinobaji's stay here for two days in November last was almost a turning point in his Tamilnad Yatra. The homely atmosphere and frank talk with the brilliant young men and women of Gandhigram made Vinobaji answer some of the old objections of Shri J. C. Kumarappa and Mirabeau against Bhoodan which were often repeated by others. Vinobaji was in a reminiscent mood and his discussions are specially important. These set the ground in a way for the intensive drive for Gramdan in Madura Dt. We are only sorry for the belated publication of this interesting report of Shri Damodardas Bhai.

SITUATED at the foot of the beautiful Sirumalai Hills, Gandhigram worthy of its name, offered its most hearty welcome to Vinobaji. The affection of Shri G. Ramachandran and Dr. T. Soundaram had so much won his heart that he had to yield to all devotional formalities at the gate. We were escorted to the open space under the blue sky where a big gathering of well disciplined *Shanti Sena* (Peace Army) awaited us. Dressed in simple white, with Gandhi caps on all heads including those of sisters, the assembly presented an impressive sight. The *Sena* was the only one of its kind we witnessed during the last over five years of pada-yatra.

Addressing the assembly Vinobaji pointed out, how, though all constructive activities aimed at peace, the idea of *Shanti Sena* was significant. The place was indeed one of pilgrimage in the South. He said that he felt quite at home in the institution with which the name of Gandhi was rightly associated.

Addressing the Gandhigram workers who included many like Mr. Richard Gregg, Vinobaji, pointed out how forty years back he came into contact with Gandhiji, as one of his several hundreds of

followers and how, he, since then, had tried to walk in the footsteps of the master. He recalled his acquaintance with Mr. Gregg and others at Sabarmati. He confessed how his way of life, devoted more to village service and contemplation did not bring him into more contact with the other members of the world-wide Gandhi family. He also said that he would have hardly come out of his seclusion if Gandhiji were alive. To him the spiritual contact was more intimate and though one is not expected to know all the people of the world, one could certainly experience the unity of heart with them, the unity born of love, service and sacrifice.

Referring to Gandhigram which he had visited seven years ago, he recalled, how the institution which was then in the formation had now grown into a huge Banyan tree. This was natural because the seed that was sown had inherent vitality. Vinobaji recalled the ancient seat of learning as Nalanda where 2,500 years ago Lord Buddha had sown the seed of love and compassion. The sacrifice and the tapas of Buddha was unique, and God had blessed the country recently with great personalities like Gandhi, Ramakrishna, Sri Arvind. Friends and admirers all over the world visited their institutions. Such places including Gandhigram would act as unifying force for the world.

Referring to Bhoodan, Vinobaji said its beginning was indeed a divine gift. Even the smallest could rise high when there is God's hand behind it. Gandhiji's ideas, he said, could not have spread by any other way as they did through Bhoodan. Explaining the latest development in the Bhoodan movement regarding the dissolution of the organisational structure, Vinobaji pointed out how an organisation standing between the people and the cause would retard at some stage the cause becoming the mission of the people themselves. He said that the ideal should be allowed to propagate itself and make its straight appeal to the hearts of humanity. Any other process will circumscribe its potentialities. Whoever has the faith in the goodness of man can carry the flag of Bhoodan. Today legislation had usurped the place of God. The responsibility, therefore, of those who believed in Gandhiji's ideology was greater. For himself, he repeated that so long as there was strength in his feet and spark in his ideas and power in the tongue he would go on his mission unhampered.

Agreeing to the proposal of Dr. Soundaram to extend his yatra in the district to four weeks Vinobaji said "I have no house of my own that I should be in a hurry to return". He added "I have faith in your capacity to work. Consider me as one of your colleagues in the work you have undertaken here with devotion and I have not the slightest doubt of your whole hearted co-operation in the cause of Bhoodan."

During his two days stay at Gandhigram Vinobaji met several people and addressed no less than a dozen gatherings. In his talks with the Basic Education officers, he presented a graphic picture of his idea of the Cabinet at the centre. "Imagine our Ministers" said he, "working in the fields and occasionally squatting under the nearby mango tree to discuss the Middle-east or the Hungarian situation, giving their advice to the countrymen, who have the freedom to accept or reject it. Pandit Nehru who had to work hard for 16 to 18 hours daily cannot think of retirement; Compare the state of affairs with the decentralised order established by Lord Almighty who is sleeping in the milk ocean, free from all anxieties, of course, with everything going on well. Intellectual development can be at its best only when intellectual work is combined with manual labour. He was speaking from his own experience. Nai Talim was based on such principles of knowledge and action".

In his last speech at the second day's prayer meeting he opened his heart to the inmates of the Ashram by answering a few points raised by them against Bhoodan. They wanted him to first carry on experiments in good farming, train an experienced personnel and then handle the land problem. Vinobaji confessed that this argument could not influence him, though it came from near and dear colleagues like Kumarappa and Mirabeau. The enthusiasm that was evinced through out the length and the breadth of the country for Bhoodan was unique. The Sarvodaya workers have regained the confidence they had lost and they are full of life now. Vinobaji declared in a very unambiguous way that he was not going to pin himself any more to the experimentation of better farming. His mission was to go ahead spreading the spark of the Bhoodan idea. Did not the people of India know farming? And could the revolution wait till all the workers are trained in farming? And of what avail if the scientists, constructive workers and the Government itself if their services could not be made available to

the people for such purposes of training. He asked, "I fully agree about the desirability of experimenting in good farming. But elimination of ownership is a revolutionary event. If we have to choose between the increase in production and the liquidation of ownership evidently we will choose the latter, for it implies change of spiritual values and changing spiritual values is indeed revolutionising life itself. People ask me about the desirability of accepting more Gramdan without arranging for follow-up work. I will not hesitate to accept lakhs of Gramdan without caring for the follow-up work, which I am sure, will be taken by the social workers and others including those of the State. What is their function if they do not see this revolution happening before them and hasten to seize the opportunity for immediate reconstruction work."

Concluding, he asked if they still advised him to stay at one place and carry on mere experiment in farming. Did he not do all such experimentation at his Ashram in spite of his weak constitution? He had put in 8 hours of physical work daily in digging the well, by driving the water wheel for watering the fields. He valued such work. But would it be beneficial for the country now for him to shut himself in one place instead of moving from place to place and collecting Bhoodan and Gramdan as he was doing then. He had not come there to discuss economic values. His mission was to change the spiritual values and he was devoting his energies towards that.

He did not forget to appreciate the work done by Gandhigram in this connection. There were Shri G. Ramachandran and Dr. Soundaram who had dedicated all that they possessed to the institution and had nothing left that they did not part for its sake. He was sure that he was carrying their good wishes with him, he said.

And the next morning, when the whole family gathered to see him off and when the sky was filled with *Ram-dhun* Shri G. R. evidently moved at the departure and unable to express himself due to emotion, presented at the gate a note which, while promising his services to Vinobaji, said "You had won my heart long ago. You have won now my head also. I place both at your feet now."

"Render Unto Caesar"

J. C. KUMARAPPA

The author gives here a strikingly original and rational interpretation to the Biblical saying that is often misinterpreted. This was in reply to Bishop Westcott, Metropolitan for India, quoted in a very interesting biographical sketch of Shri Kumarappa by Shri M. Vinaik recently published by the Navajivan, Ahmedabad.

"**R**ENDER unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" is much understood as it is torn from context. It is proper to remind ourselves of the circumstances under which this was uttered. It is recorded that "the chief priests and the scribes watched him and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men that might take hold of his words so that they might deliver him into the power and authority of the governor. These men asked, 'Master, is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar or no?'. But he perceived their craftiness and said unto them, 'Why tempt ye me?' and then made this statement.

He cleverly got out of the net. The Jews were under a Roman Governor then; so public opinion would have gone against him if he had given a direct positive answer and if the reply had been a simple negative, as they presumed it would be, he would have been accused of treason by the foreign government. He was thus placed in a dilemma. So he answered the question by a conundrum which when analysed would mean, 'The universe and all that in it has been created by God including Cæsar himself. Therefore all belongs to God. Cæsar himself is a creation, like any other worm, and so even he belongs to God. Hence if you render unto God the things that are God's what is left? — Nothing. So nothing goes to Cæsar. Hence Cæsar gets nothing.' 'The question fired at Jesus makes no mention of God. But Jesus in his answer, drags Him in to protect himself. And the record says, "And they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer and held their peace." This discloses that the inference that the present day churches wish to draw from this statement in support of the State is wholly wrong. In short it means, "Our loyalty to the State is subject to our devotion to God."

A Call to Students for Gramdan Revolution

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

THERE are hundreds of Gramdan villages in Orissa and other parts of India. What a tremendous revolution has been going on right before your eyes? Have you realised its significance? Suppose the landless had risen against the landed people, that event would have resounded throughout the world. "London Times", "Manchester Guardian" and other famous dailies of England would have filled their columns. But a silent voluntary sort of revolution based on noble idea has gone unnoticed. Now because it has been going on silently what is its impact on the students in towns? Very little. You go to your classes as usual as if nothing has happened. If there were bloodshed you would have run to denounce exploiters, landlords etc., but this does not stir you or has no attraction for you. This is indeed a depressing state of affairs.

I feel that it is our fault. Our children are like clay out of which the potter may make anything. We are responsible for creating false values among young men. You will come forward to accept jobs but how many of you will be prepared to rally to the side of Mother India who is calling her sons for love and selfless sacrifice for the people? Let us not say you should run like us on the call of Bapu for Satyagraha in those days. After Swaraj it is not enjoyment that we should be after. There is a great deal to do now, even more than the days of the struggle for freedom demanded. Reconstruction is a much bigger job which will take many lives—nay generations. Ask yourself if you are upto it.

You are indebted to the society for the education you are receiving. You are expected to do honest service to the country. If you do not do it, will the little urchin in the street or the illiterate do it? I invite you to a hard life, a life of suffering, sacrifice and service. If you understand your obligations you will enjoy suffering itself. Five lakhs of villages require five lakhs of workers fit enough to do hard work. Universities do not teach you how to do this. You must place yourselves at the disposal of those experts who are already at the helm of the Gramdan movement and the reconstruction work.

There is a programme which you can immediately follow. Sampattidan is a movement of sharing freedom and equality with

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others. I expect every young man and woman in the college to join it. During my college days I polished boots, worked in hotels, on farms, in gardens and did teaching. What I learnt from labourers was more than I learnt from my professors. Formation of my character has been through that labour than through University. Poor students living on charity if asked to sweep, do gardening, farming and scavenging would refuse, I know. Not earning anything by your own labour you meet your expenses out of your parents' money. You must take out of it a pice for every rupee as a token of the fact that you have accepted your obligation to the society and the ideal of sharing with others. It has a deeper significance. Behind this is the acceptance of the new values of life. Even after passing out of college you will have to continue sharing. You should be free to do with the amount as you like when you will come face to face with poverty, unemployment and vagrancy. Try it. This will be an active participation in the movement.

In the coming vacation give one month to men like Sri Nava Babu Chaudhry, Sri Anna Saheb Sahasrabudhe for Gramdan work. Mind you, you will do good to yourself more than to others. You will gain from it more than your books can give. After that, coming back to your college you will begin to look at things with new eyes—a mental eye has developed, you will find. If one thousand students give one month it will have a tremendous effect in each State.

Vinobaji in the meeting of the Sarva Seva Sangh in last November took a drastic step; we never thought he will take a decision so soon. Bhoodan movement was financed by Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. From January 1957 not a pie has been accepted: all the State and district Bhoodan Samitis are disbanded. Vinoba says revolution cannot be confined to an organisation. It must be unbound like the Sea and must rest with the people who will carry on the work.

The year 1957 is looked upon as a year of destiny by the people all over India. Vinoba is also talking in terms of 1957. He wants the first phase to be completed by liberation of land from the individual ownership. Vinoba is a great man. He is a man of vision looking first into the future. Who else could have the courage to take such a bold step? Yes. There are people who pluck stars from the skies and bring heaven to earth!

I expect all young men to go to villages by leaving the colleges. No head of the institution would come to this decision. You must come forward and say "alright we give 1957 entirely to Bhoodan and Gramdan". What happens in war time? In Universities like Oxford, Cambridge, Chicago etc. students close their books and go to war to defend their country and its cause. You can also say "we are now out for the nation and give 1957 for Gramdan". Faith, I believe, can move mountains. If only there is the will, there is the way.

(Adapted from a speech in Orissa reported in Gramdan Bulletin)

Christian Church and Gramdan

"BELIEVING that the Sarvodaya and the Bhoodan movements in particular are the most effective movements in India for the creation of a new atmosphere in which the great social processes of reconciliation may work we urge our members and all seekers of the way of love and truth to study, understand and to participate in the movements.

"We draw attention especially to the fact of the giving of whole villages (Gramdan) and areas for a more intense co-operative living. There is a great need for each of us to enter such areas of co-operation to give our fullest assistance in the development of a welfare society in which the basic needs of each is the concern of all.

"We urge the Churches to render more effective co-operation to the Sarvodaya movement and especially appeal to the heads of Churches in Kerala to take steps to make the visit of Vinobaji to Kerala a success."

(This is one of the findings of the Convention of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (India) held at Alwaye in the last week of Dec. '56. This is specially commendable as it is made to prepare the atmosphere for Vinobaji who is expected to enter Kerala on 18th April '57)

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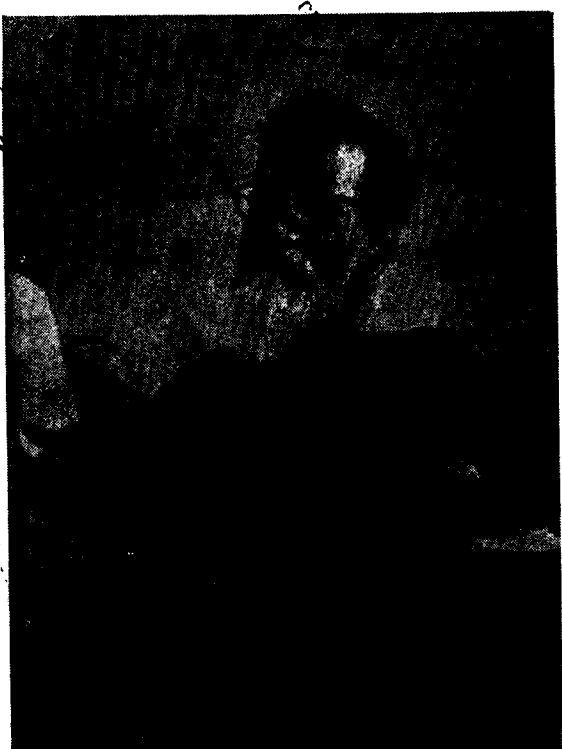


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TANJORE (SOUTH INDIA)

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TO OUR READERS		
The next issue of Sarvodaya will be published as a Special Sarvodaya Sammelan Number on the 1st of May 1957 and the June number will appear on the 10th of June as usual.		
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Telangana to Kaladi 174

WE congratulate Kerala for having invited the ninth Sarvodaya Sammelan at the sacred place of Kaladi, the birth place of Shri Sankaracharya. The ninth Sammelan has the greatest significance as it is held in the year 1957, the year of our destiny in our pilgrimage towards Sarvodaya. This Sammelan will not be merely deliberative but will be declaring the finale of the revolution which will reverberate throughout the nation and will carry the message of peace to the world.

It was in Telangana, immediately after the third Sarvodaya Sammelan at Sivarampalli near Hyderabad, that Vinobaji had the revelation of the message of Bhoodan. During the last six years the movement had grown from strength to strength without the sanction of State power or authority. It is pure love and persuasion through non-violence that have won the heart and mind of the people. The only sanction for the movement is the spontaneous acceptance of the basic principle and the ideology behind the movement by the people. Over six lakhs of land-owners have parted with their over 40 lakhs of acres of land without any return. Several thousands of villagers in over 2,200 villages have entirely surrendered their ownership of land in favour of the village community. Several thousands have offered Sampathi-dan. The whole of Bihar which collected over 20 lakhs of acres which would well nigh solve the problem of the landless in the State has pledged to distribute all the land on 18th April, the sixth anniversary day of Bhoodan Movement.

Bhoodan has now grown into full-fledged Gramdans. Isolated villages of Gramdan will not be enough to sustain themselves. They have now developed into firka-dans of about fifty contiguous villages. Even firka-dan has outgrown into Taluk-dans for which serious efforts are being made in Madurai District.

Gramdan is the nearest to Gram-raj which will be the perfect economic democracy. It will lead to the decentralisation of the concentrated political power and authority. The real power and sanction for the maintenance of the peace and happiness of the nation and of the world will ultimately vest with these villages and federation of villages. We are on the brink of realisation of the Gram-raj through Bhoodan. The universal acceptance of this by the Nation will be the actual fulfilment of the revolution of 1957.

The Art of Work for Sarvodaya

ACHARYA VINOBA

BHOODAN workers are now trying to get firkadan and taluk-dan with confidence. The election fever will soon subside and more workers will be available to us. Let us be very clear about our objectives. What is the source of our strength and our inspiration? No doubt we need more workers. We have disbanded the skeleton organisation that had come into existence in the early years of the movement. But the number of workers is steadily increasing. No doubt we want very many more workers who are really devoted to this cause. But remember that the strength of the movement is not in its numbers. Our strength is in the two great forces that are sustaining the movement.

First we have the strength of truth. Bhoodan is rooted in truth. There is no alloy or make-believe in it. Man cannot be the owner of land. There cannot be peace on earth as long as individual ownership in land remains. In this world of science no one can live in isolation. Social groups and nations can survive only if they learn to live together in happy co-operation. Individual ownership is against the precepts of religion. When religion asks us to give up the attachment of our own body how can we justify our greed and attachment to property? Gramdan is bound to increase the yield of the land. Thus Bhoodan is a wholly truth-full idea. The truth of the idea is one source of our strength.

Love is the second. People often resort to force and violence for what they consider to be true. But in Bhoodan persuasion is our only remedy. We shall all meet together and discuss our problems in a spirit of friendliness and mutual sympathy. Truth can prevail only when there is love.

Our workers must understand this very clearly. Gramdan and talukadan are bound to come but we can develop them only if we have imbibed the art of co-operation. We shall have to develop gramdan into gramraj, that is, develop a village or a taluk republic. Without a capacity to work in co-operation we shall never succeed in building up a New Order. Workers must sit down and discuss together their ideas about the shape and pattern they propose to

develop. There are bound to be differences of opinion. We should welcome them. It is not easy to work together in happy co-operation when there are differences of view-points. We have to cultivate this art. If we find it difficult to make up our differences we should experiment separately without any ill-will. We are forming Sarvodaya societies in every area. Men who have deeply pondered on the ideals of Sarvodaya and who are trying to practise it in their every day life will be members of such a society. This society will have no executive power in its hands. Its function will be to give advice when asked for. It will study the various aspects of Sarvodaya. The difficulty is of putting all this into practice. Without vigorous and independent thinking a movement cannot pulsate with life. But independent thinking creates difference of view point and the moment we see a difference we become cold and indifferent to one another and this often leads to enmity. The art of working in co-operation with whom we differ must be learnt. Love and non-violence have no meaning if we do not master this art.

In a group each one has his own faults. No one can be perfect. But how many of us have the capacity of forgiving? We are willing to excuse our own faults, however glaring they may be. But we are so intolerant and hard with others. We have also a tendency to impute motives to others. They are always imaginary. We are not willing to give even the benefit of doubt to others. If workers do not have real tolerance and good-will to one another how can they ever create a non-violent strength? So I would ask you to be wide awake and cultivate three virtues: (1) to work in co-operation even when you differ, (2) to be tolerant about the shortcomings of others, and (3) never impute motives to your colleagues. Without these united effort will be impossible. No constructive work can succeed if workers have not these three qualities. Yesterday we heard a song composed by Manikyavachakar. It says, 'O Lord, give us the capacity to live and work in happy co-operation. Show us the road which will take us to it.' Love is as important as truth. Our strength lies in them. Let us pray that we may have the capacity of co-operation.

[7—3—57, Saptur] (Bhoodan)

Vinobaji in Madurai District

THE district of Madurai rose up even as Koraput in Orissa with a tremendous response to Vinobaji's appeal for Gramdan after Vinobaji's 8 months yatra in Tamil Nad. It had its own far-reaching effect in Maharashtra which did not show much progress in Bhoodan till then. The beam of light thrown from Madurai had its magical effect on other parts of the country. Vinobaji expected just a hundred villages, but the actual number of Gramdan exceeded it. Vinobaji was never contented with any arithmetical progression. He is ever hungering for a revolutionary turn at every stage of the movement. Gramdans, though in the hills of Koraput, marked a revolution. More than a hundred villages in the fertile plains of Madurai district offered as Gramdan signalled another revolutionary turn. Firka-dan of 50 villages was announced in the meanwhile in Maharashtra. Therefore nothing short of a Talukdan of about 700 villages would appear to be a revolution to Vinobaji. The workers of Madurai felt over-enthused with the new target and began to apply themselves to it. Gandhigram, Gandhi-Niketan, Sarva Seva Sangh, Kasthur Ba Trust, all combined and concentrated on Thirumangalam Taluk. Shri. G. Venkatachalapathy, the founder of Gandhi Niketan and now the Asst. Commissioner for Development in Madras State, saw in Gramdan the easy fulfillment of Gramraj, the ideal of Gandhi-Niketan and took keen interest in Talukdan. Under his advice a special officer was deputed to survey the Gramdan Villages and to study what urgent help could be given to them from the Government level. A new tempo and climate of hope was raised in all the Gramdan villages and around them. At a Gramdan convention which met at Gandhi-Niketan on 25-1-'57 about 500 representatives from villages took a solemn pledge to fulfill the Talukdan before April. Vinobaji agreed to give three more weeks for yatra in the Taluk to give a fillip to the movement.

Unfortunately in the meanwhile the elections intervened and marred the conditions created by the Bhoodan workers. The election propaganda created caste and class bitterness. It divided the people to group themselves in partisan blocks against each other. Vinobaji spent three weeks going round the taluk. But no immediate result could be achieved and the Talukdan could not be fulfilled. Just about a hundred alone out of 700 villages could be secured. There was of course dis-

appointment and frustration among the workers who met at Nedungulam on 25-3-'57.

Vinobaji's talk to the workers at Nedungulam in the morning of 25-3-57 was at the exalted height of a spiritual sermon. His mind went back to the same 25th day of March in 1916 when he left his home in pursuit of *atma-darshan* or self-realisation. In whatever activity he was engaged in or wherever he was, it was all in pursuit of *atma-darshan*, he said. His passion for self-realisation was the same now as it was when he left home though he found perfect peace always in his mind. The Bhoodan or Gramdan, he said, is but a small means which came in the way for self-realisation. Bhoodan is not a movement, he emphasised, but it is a sadhana for spiritual ascension. He said that he was reminded of the days when they were digging the well in the Paunar ashram. It took them several months of hard toil to see the spring. Similarly he felt that after breaking the rocks after about eight month's yatra in Tamilnad he could discover the springs which to him are the faith and hope that he found in the minds of the workers.

He said that the identification of the body was the real illusion. The man who seeks enjoyment thinks that the body is the soul while he who seeks spiritual peace also confines his spiritual experience to his own self. Unless both feel liberation from the sense of the personal physical conditions of life no real *atma-darshnam* would be possible, he asserted.

Referring to the conception that private property is sacred he said that it is an erroneous notion that should be given up. But it can be removed only by reason and persuasion and not through violence. Physical transference of property from one by violent appropriation will never abolish the sense of ownership of property. Some fear that with the emergence of gramdan the existence of individual families will disappear from society. He argued that this fear is baseless as each individual family will then enlarge to the extent of the village itself through affection and love and function as a 'Tharavad', so familiar in Kerala.

Lastly he quoted Christ's last appeal to his disciples "to love one another" as it is more important than the other two of his earlier commandments of 'love thy neighbour' and 'love thine enemy' as these may be probably easier than the former. Some of those who heard this inspiring speech would treasure this as the sermon on the Mount to guide their life.

The Laboratory of Reconstruction

THE hilly district of Koraput in Orissa Province of India has suddenly emerged with a glory and importance with its offer of 1800 villages as Gramdan. It is strange that it was given to the unsophisticated Adivasis of this district to give a new lead to the country in the art of collective renunciation through Gramdan. This is spreading to the more advanced parts of the country. Maharashtra and Tamilnad are leading next to Orissa. The other States are striving. Mrs. Chester Bowles who saw Vinobaji in January last was amazed to know about the new turn of the Bhoodan movement. The "Times of India" saw 'new horizons' in this and wrote an editorial under that caption on 9th March '57 which is reproduced in this number.

Vinobaji's daily prayer speeches invariably end with a vigorous appeal for Gramdan as it alone takes us nearest to Gramraj and solves all the root problems of the villages. It would pave the way for total reconstruction. The vacuum created by the voluntary renunciation of the individual title to land in the village invites a rush of the collective energy for a more sympathetic redistribution and sharing among themselves and a vigorous planning and collective activity for rebuilding. It is both a call and challenge to all constructive workers to apply their general and special programmes on an intensive scale. It offers the fittest field for directing all the development schemes at the Government level.

Under the advice of Vinobaji the Sarva Seva Sangh has been carrying on an intensive development work of a colossal nature in the Koraput district during the last one year. Shri. Annasaheb Sahasrabudhe with a band of self-less workers is in charge of this work of varied nature among these hill-tribes in Orissa who are said to be backward in every way. There was a seminar in the first week of March at Koraput when the members of the Sarva Seva Sangh and the leading workers met to review and assess the progress of work. There was frank discussion and criticism without reservation or self-complacency about the stupendous experiments in the great laboratory of Gramdan reconstruction. Shri. Annasaheb's brief summary of the varied problems and his proposals show his rich experience as well as his foresight and daring in this big adventure of a non-official agency for securing the full freedom and welfare of every village citizen of this country.

Toward a More Democratic Social Order

THE above is the title of a recent thought-provoking book by Mr. Wendell Thomas, published by Exposition Press, New York. The author, an American and a regular reader of "Sarvodaya", in a letter to us says that "the book written from the standpoint of Vedanta and liberal Christianity sets forth a programme for the world similar to that of Vinoba Bhave." The Social Order pictured here "is neither to depict a Utopia nor to follow the line of any political party, but to construct a religious philosophy from the ground up" in the words of the author. Instead of a review in the conventional way we are giving a few excerpts which reflect and corroborate many of the basic concepts of Bhoodan-Gramdan movement of Acharya Vinoba. He lays down clearly the philosophic basis of the socio-individualistic life, emphasising the right of everyone over God's land to toil and to the fruit thereof under the control of small community life, and thirdly labour-based money system and lastly the creative application of the capital resources for the welfare of humanity under a new world federation bound by fellowship of nations.

"God's will for us is the establishment on earth of "the kingdom of God", a realm of natural beauty, social justice, and personal joy. The process is one of "self-realisation", or self-actualisation, in which the self is recognised as embracing the world and society. In the midst of chaos and conflict, in the midst of the interaction of organisms, the divine self aims at itself, at active peace, and so actualizes creative harmonies. Man's good is to love the divine through loving his neighbour, beating his swords into plowshares, and causing the desert to blossom as the rose." (p.10).

"From the standpoint of non-sectarian religion, every community of goodwill is itself a kind of church. The church, in my opinion, should be the joyous fellowship of those who consciously endeavour to experience God, or indivisible Nature, through creating beauty on earth." (p. 20).

"The prime economic need of a residential community is land (p.21). "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof". God owns the land; we are stewards. We should put the land to God's use, that is, to good use. God's control of the land can be exercised chiefly through the local intentional community; God's use, through the productive individual or family. (p. 29).

"In a true democracy the people of a local community would themselves, in town-meeting fashion, govern themselves. It is supported by Aristotle's perception that government normally originates in the social nature of man which may lead first to family life, and then in a continuous development to wider and wider forms of community." (p. 17). "For everyone we need an economy in which land ownership will come neither from seizure nor from purchase, but will be granted for good use of the land as judged by a responsible community." (p. 34).

"When a man works on his own land he should have the right, we say, to own what he makes. And in a decentralist society there would likely be more self-employment, more pride in workmanship, more individual free enterprise than at present." (p. 35).

"The concept of a work standard of money is, of course, revolutionary, as is that of landholding based on private good use and community control" (p. 35). "Since commodities come from the land, any unfairness in land distribution involves unfairness in the distribution of money" (p. 38). "Work-based money would stabilize exchange, reduce privilege, eliminate middleman banking profits, and abolish overhead government control." (p. 49).

"The achievement of a world government, with sovereignty restricted to keeping the peace, involves a social religious experience, a changed attitude on the part of the nations' rulers, of the ruling classes and of the masses including you and me, who follow and support them. It involves an honest, objective view, self-examination and repentance, humility, sympathy and imagination, patient resistance to what is wrong and persistent co-operation with what is right." (p. 61).

"Political and economic democracy, I believe, requires a residential landholding community, broadly religious, as a foundation. It requires the assignment of land to individual owners for good use, plus a system of money based on labour, and a way of protecting the consumer from exploitation while using capital creatively in a world fellowship of nations." (p. 64).

Co-ordinated Cyclic Order of Development

J. C. KUMARAPPA

I have been repeatedly asked what are my views in regard to the developmental schemes and community projects in the light of actual practice. Friends know that I have been very strongly opposed to these schemes from the very beginning, viewing them from political and economic standpoints. I wish now to place my views in the light of experience.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT ?

We call these "developmental schemes", but we rarely know what we mean by "development". Is the mere outward appearance in the use of lip-stick developing womanhood? Or is the habit of smoking the development of manhood? If we use the term development to denote such superficial conditions, then these schemes we are now considering, may be rightly called "development". Some of us attribute to this term a deeper meaning with an everlasting goal. In the context of the present world conditions any attempted development must work towards bringing about world peace. Gandhiji's constructive programmes were all directed towards development of a non-violent society in which all human life would live under peaceful conditions. But the present life, even in a city like Delhi, has been described by Jawaharlal himself as the life of the jungle. This means an unplanned and unco-ordinated purposeless living. This can be applied to our present project schemes.

OUR NEEDS

Our projects have to be scientific in the sense that the needs of our people and the resources at our disposal should be co-ordinated with the restrictions under which nature has placed us. We require an all round consideration if we wish to have our developments follow lines obtaining in India. Under the present prevailing conditions India needs great frugality and a well co-ordinated cyclic order which will take advantage of every ounce of effort put out by us.

Our culture and traditions have followed these lines. Our immediate requirements are small tanks and wells for irrigation,

canals for retaining and distributing the water supply and also for providing transport, as in our vast country long distance cannot be conquered by power supplied by petroleum which is not a national product. Therefore, India in the past developed on the basis of self-sufficiency which alone will guarantee peace. In India agriculture has been carried on for purposes of nutritional needs of the people and has been developed as an occupation if not as a way of life itself.

OUR WAYS

Our method has been a co-ordinated cycle of the earth, animal and man, and our needs were produced by these means and with such industries as we had, based on the foundations for processing and finishing the products. For instance when the earth yields her corn bountifully, we eat the grain, the animal eats the leaves and stalks, and we and the animal return to the earth our refuse in the form of manure to start the cycle all over again. If we build a road, we sink along with it a well or dig a tank to provide the road material. Thus our plans are well co-ordinated. On the other hand, when a tractor run on crude oil, is used there is no complementary cycle. The waste gases go into the air to pollute it. The tractor is not connected organically with the earth or man. It stands apart. This is patchwork and does not form a cycle. Similarly, our conception of Dharma relates us to the animal kingdom and vegetation and to the soil. This brings in considerations of moral values in our every day dealings. Bereft of such relation and holding to material considerations only, man in America stands as an outside exploiter of the rest of his fellow creatures—sentient or otherwise. Therefore our present development plan to be assimilated has to be in our traditional lines.

OUR INSTRUCTORS

Unfortunately, we have brought in as our guides persons who are completely foreign to the qualifications we have indicated above. America is almost diametrically the opposite of India in its environmental conditions. Hence the people, culturally and traditionally, have developed methods and a way of life which are antagonistic to our needs. While we require frugality, American methods are extravagant; while we need well co-ordinated cyclic order, American methods follow the patchwork. America looks upon agriculture as an industry to exploit the wealth of the soil.

They can use tractors, artificial manure etc., as the methods are intended to follow a short term policy. Agriculture with them is like any other industry linked on to commerce as a wealth producer. It seeks outside markets and follows the ruthless principles of foreign trade. Hence to bring people who have been brought up in totally different conditions and entrust them with mission which is foreign to them and to our nature, is not to do justice either to their qualifications or to our cause. They cannot think in terms of the poor people. Like Queen Antoinette of France, they will ask our people to eat cake if they have no bread! Even a distinguished experienced constructive worker like Dr. A. E. Morgan, the ex-chairman of the T. V. A. advises us to go from village to village by aeroplane rather than make roads for bullock-carts! We cannot bring the two cultures of India and America together without causing violence to both. To bring American guides to India is to guarantee failure in the long run. India needs ways which depend on self-control, renunciation and simplicity, while American ways are indulgent, wasteful and based on a multiplicity of wants. These differences stand out prominently in the project schemes in which Americans have had a leading hand.

THEIR EXAMPLE

It is not possible in this short note to give examples of the extravagant ways of the Americans which they have followed in the past in building up their own country, how they have burnt forests and built roads and wasted their lands with short term agricultural methods and passed on from place to place to seek pastures new. We cannot use such persons as our guides and yet hope to succeed. The sooner India turns to her own genius and relies on her own strength and resources for development the better it will be for herself and her message of peace to the world.

Courtesy "The Friendly Way"

Six Months of Bhoodan Yatra

DONALD B. GROOM

Mr. Donald Groom is a well-known British Quaker who has been serving India as a Gandhian constructive worker through the Ashram in Rasulia, (M. P.) during the last 15 years. After walking for about six months on Bhoodan yatra covering 1,400 miles in (M. P.) he recently spent two weeks with Vinobaji in Tanjore district. He will be leaving for England to spread the message of Bhoodan with special reference to world problems. Here is his experience in his yatra given to the readers of the "The Friendly Way" which we share with our readers.

I have travelled on foot for over 1500 miles and visited about 400 villages. Time goes slowly—everyday brings new experiences and every day a new world is opened before me. Where we are going to sleep what and where we are going to eat are unknown factors daily. But although we depend entirely on the village hospitality there is never any doubt that there will be place to sleep, and adequate provision within the means of the village for our bodily needs. What success we are receiving is no doubt a question on the readers' minds; I can't make a generalisation, but I would like to describe a few incidents.

In one village 35 small cultivators gave a total of 125 acres, one donor giving five out of his ten acres. In one small town over 200 Harijans filled in Sampattidan forms pledging a portion of their small income for the next five years. One participant in a special land collection effort in the Narsingpur district collected over 500 acres in five days. In Sagar district village after village sent us away without a single acre, and we seriously considered whether we should refuse to take food if no land were received. We later discovered that in that area there had been a definite anti-Bhoodan movement under the false impression that Vinoba Bhave was making anti-Ramayana statements.

We do not measure the success of the tour by the amount of land we receive, as our main aim is to pass on the message of Bhoodan to as many people as possible. I participate fully in this task and find that people all over are very interested in the fact

that an Englishman is one of the Bhoodan 'batch'. It seems to them that I am making a great sacrifice, but that is not true; I am sharing in a great movement and the experience is invaluable. If anyone is making a sacrifice it is Erica and the children.

When I started on the walk I was fully convinced of the need for the movement in India, and indeed in the world, but I was not sure that the organisation was sufficient to carry forward such a movement and fulfil its aims. Now, after six months, I am more than ever convinced of the importance of the movement and have a feeling that in spite of all weaknesses it will achieve its objective. I think that Vinoba Bhave is giving an inspired message, not occasionally, but daily, and it is of utmost importance that people in India and abroad should read and understand the real significance of this message. I feel sure that Friends will agree that Vinoba is giving the true Quaker message for this day and generation.

Reconstruction of Koraput Gramdan Villages

ANNASAHEB SAHASRABUDHE

General Secretary, Akhila Bharath Sarva Seva Sangh.

THIS is the first time that a private agency like ours has taken in hand a development programme like this. We have no blue-print. We are not following any approved pattern or imitating any other country. Let us be humble and accept that no one has found a panacea for the development of an industrially backward people. Neither the government nor the Gandhian workers have an unfailing remedy. We are all groping and trying to find out a way out. The gramdan villages are a challenge to us. With the best effort we have been able to start some work in about 300 villages. How can we mobilise local resources in men and labour power is our first problem. In the beginning we had to establish a few centres and start the work. Now we have a feeling that preference should be given to the villages which show some positive token of their readiness to embark on a new experiment of collective effort. Giving one's own land is not a

small thing. But that is not enough. I would, for instance, ask every village to agree to keep one-fifth of the total land for collective agriculture at the time of redistributing the land. The produce from such land can be used as capital for a co-operative shop or other welfare activities.

We have also come to the conclusion that isolated hamlets consisting of ten to fifteen families will never succeed in putting an end to their exploitation unless they combine with eight or ten other hamlets. It is only then that a marketing section can be started.

The problems of this area are peculiar. We have first to concentrate our efforts on increasing the productivity of the soil. Intensive cultivation can increase production at least three times. The cattle here are of poor quality. A pair of bullocks can work only for three hours in a day. And they survive only for about five years. Cows hardly give any milk. They are yoked sometimes to a plough. Adivasis have now stopped butchering cows and bullocks. They live literally from hand to mouth. Providing for a bad day or storing grain and fodder for future is something unknown to them. We have to take up the work of improving the breed of bullocks side by side with the improvement of land.

We are developing a special department of engineering. We have been fortunate in getting an expert like Shri Datye. He is in charge of the engineering section. We have started the work of ridging and bunding the plots on the slopes. This is a hilly tract. It has a dense jungle and much mineral wealth. We propose to start five or ten big demonstrative farms. The hamlets are very near the jungle. In some regions development of jungles will have to be considered as the main occupation of the adivasis. Agriculture would be for them a secondary or a side industry. We propose to develop a big nursery and distribute five or six lakhs of plants for afforestation.

So (1) demonstration farms, (2) nursery, (3) training centres, and (4) a rural university are the four main items we want to develop. Four or five lakh acres lying fallow can be brought under plough immediately without extra expenditure.

We are anxious to see that inequality does not increase because of the development we are doing. It is a serious problem. For

instance, in the village of Garanda there are 31 families. Fourteen gave their land. Seventeen did not. Now only those who owned land took advantage of the help we were giving. I remember that when I was working in the A. I. Spinner's Association, I found that even in the famine-stricken tracts the lowest person did not take up the charkha. A person in a little better condition took advantage of it. The last in the rung or 'Unto this last' is an ideal which we are struggling to realise. But we have no readymade solution for that. If we realise this clearly we shall not be so hyper-critical of the welfare activities of the government. Let us admit that neither they nor we have found out the answer.

We need immediately 2000 agricultural experts. It is not an easy task. We want to make an appeal to the agricultural graduates who are undergoing training in the various agricultural colleges in the country to come and work here for a couple of years. Unfortunately, till recently, Orissa did not have an agricultural college. We get two or three experts from basic education centres. They are helping us at present.

If the Adivasis are to be freed from the clutches of the money-lender and the trader, there must be a co-operative marketing agency. We have decided to spend four lakh rupees for marketing programme this year. We bought paddy in the villages worth about two lakhs of rupees. The rest we bought in the open market. We propose to build cheap warehouses. In some places we shall have big earthen pots made by local potters for storing grain. Handpounded rice, here, we found is a rupee cheaper than mill-pounded rice even without the subsidy of the Khadi Board. So a storing agency is necessary.

Then the question of getting loans repaid is also somewhat difficult. We have a philanthropic attitude. We are too soft and do not like to be harsh to the poor adivasi.

There is also a need to study carefully the Bhoodan acts passed by the state governments. There is a confusion about the exact legal meaning of the word 'revenue village'. Gramdan has created new problems. The law needs urgent revision and amendment'.

Courtesy: "Bhoodan"

The All India Bhoodan Padayatra

A batch of workers under the leadership of Shri Cherian Thomas started on an all-India Bhoodan padayatra from Cape Comorin on 2nd February, 1956. Their idea is to walk through all the States and reach Sevagram Ashram on the 2nd October, 1957 to declare the fulfilment of the Bhoodan revolution. The yatra was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Dr. Sushila Nayyar joins the party now and then. The party consists of ten persons. Local workers join them in the various States. They observe a comprehensive programme daily. Besides spreading the message of Bhoodan and the ideal of Sarvodaya they actually demonstrate the working of some items of the village industries, village cleaning, adult education etc.

It is interesting to know that the party has covered now about 4,000 miles by foot. It has walked through Kerala, Madras, Andhra, Mysore, Hyderabad, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi and Punjab States. In Punjab it is having an intensive programme for over two months. The party is expected to reach Sevagram on 2nd Oct. after visiting Himachal Pradesh, U. P. and M. P. States.

The party includes the following persons now. Shri Cherian Thomas, Sri Kant Apte, Miss. Gladys Owen (English) Sri. Purnachandra, Sri Sivasankaran, Sri Ramanathan, Sri Kurien Paul, Sri Tulasidas B. Mehete, Mrs. Thana Laxmi Behn.

Some of our Bhoodan Booklets

	Rs.	As.
1. Principles and Philosophy of Bhoodan	0	6
2. Bhoodan to Gramdan	0	6
3. On World Peace	0	2
4. Vinoba's Voice in Madras City	0	3
5. The Voice of Vinoba	0	4
6. A picture of Sarvodaya Social Order	0	4
7. Jeevandan	0	4

(POSTAGE IS EXTRA)

SARVODAYA PRACHURALAYA, TANJORE

The Importance of the Individual

ESME-WYNNE-TYSON (Sussex, England)

IN his tribute entitled VINOBA BHAVE—THE UNIVERSALIST reprinted in SARVODAYA (Oct. 1956) R. R. Diwakar hailed Vinobaji as a Universalist, going on to say that this term “implies that no individual has any chance of evolving by himself or of achieving any ideal, except progressively along with and through humanity as a whole and as an integral part of it”; and that “though an individual today is normally ego-centric, his progress and evolution lies in his becoming increasingly humanity-centric. He must transcend his ego-consciousness and march to humanity consciousness.”

This may be the Governor of Bihar's personal idea of evolution, but surely he is wrong in concluding that “this, in a sense, is the basic faith of Vinobaji, born of spiritual experience”, for it is, in fact, the faith of the Marxists and other materialists, and it is incredible that Vinobaji should have so far departed from the teachings of Tolstoi and Gandhiji which have also been the teachings of the great Rishis and Seers throughout the ages, that only through the individual is true evolution possible, and that it can never be achieved ‘en masse’.

Tolstoi likened the position of social man to a swarm of bees that can never progress in any direction until each bee discovers that it has a pair of wings which will enable it to fly. Only thus can the swarm ever move. He taught—and we know how wholly Gandhiji was in agreement with him—that there were three views of life, three life-conceptions: first, the personal or animal man; second, the social or pagan, and, thirdly, the universal or Divine, and that it was man's refusal to evolve from the social to the Divine which was the cause of all his unhappiness. Human solidarity was like the swarm of bees; it could get nowhere. Only the individual could fly.

The acceptance of this premise is essential if the belief in the importance of the individual, and therefore of the sanctity of life is to be maintained; and this is the only effective answer to materialism which teaches the subjugation of the individual to the

State or community, and leads directly to the termitary concept of life in which man is reduced to a mere worker-cell, reverting to the insect world instead of evolving to the stature of the Divine Man. This is not to lose the self in the Self as taught by Vedanta, for that Self is Brahm or Pure Consciousness, whereas the communal, Marxist mind is entirely utilitarian and far from pure, being based on the belief that man is wholly material.

In order to evolve, therefore, man must become, not as R. R. Diwaker tells us, humanity-centric, but God-centric, Perfection-centric. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,... soul,... mind and strength" was said by the Mystic of Galilee to be the greatest of all commandments, and only when this is obeyed do we know how to love our neighbour as ourselves, how to recognize the *Atman*, or Christ in him, which is the divine image within all men, and alone merits our love. If we try to love or excuse the evil either in ourselves or in others, we shall perpetuate that evil—hence the unregenerate state of modern social man who caters only for the human, animalistic needs of his fellows, and denies, or ignores, their spiritual nature.

But the soul of man hungers for spiritual food, for the assurance of his essential immortality, and longs to obey Gandhiji's admonition to put off his animalism and become a whole, or holy man. This cannot be done by focusing our attention on humanity, but by concentrating on the Perfect Man who is the likeness of that ultimate perfection we call God or Brahm, and endeavouring to bring our thoughts and actions into line with those of our Model.

As the distinguished modern French Scientist, Lecomte de Nouy put it in his book *Human Destiny*: "The struggle for life out of which has finally emerged the human form.... changes now into a fight of Man against what remains in him of the animal. But from now on, and because of the reaction of his conscience, the individual alone counts, and no longer the species." For only by individual effort can man ever evolve to a purer and more harmless type of man. External pressure may make him conform to some conventional pattern but it cannot bring about that inner transformation which is evolution.

"Until now," de Nouy writes, "man's first concern has been the domination of the universe. In the future he must needs learn to dominate himself. In order to achieve this end, he will have to overcome both his lowest instincts and the habits created by the rapid progress of mechanical arts."

Like Tolstoi, Gandhiji and the Rishis of old, de Nouy teaches that the destiny of humanity is to evolve to a higher species, and from this premise he defines good and evil in the words :

"Anything which opposes this evolution in the moral and spiritual realm, anything which tends to bring about a regression towards the animal, to replace man under the dictature of the body is contrary to the directing Will and represents absolute Evil. On the contrary, anything which tends to deepen the chasm between man and beast, anything which tends to make man evolve spiritually is Good."

We know from his teachings that Gandhiji was in 100% agreement with such views, which stress the all-importance of the individual since on him alone depends the possibility of the evolution of man as a species. And it is only by remembering the importance of the individual that we can maintain that reverence for life so lacking in this scientific age and yet so essential, as Dr. Schweitzer has pointed out, if humanity is to survive.

Therefore it is impossible to accept the impression apparently formed by the Governor of Bihar that Vinobaji believes that "no individual has any chance of evolving by himself", for that would be to deny his own experience, since both he and Gandhiji are obvious examples of 'evolved men'.

A Revolution in True Sense

DAVID GRAHAM AND IAN DIXON

WE joined Vinobaji and his group at Vanjinagaram at 4 p. m. on January 7, and were bade welcome by the Bhoodan workers. Among them were Gladys Owen, an English lady from the Quaker Centre at Delhi, and a young American Quaker, Louise Evans, who had come to India on a grant from the Fulbright College. She was studying sociology and had worked in Mexico assisting in rehabilitation work.

All Vinobaji's meetings are called 'Prayer Meetings.' We were just in time for the 5 p. m. prayer. This was to be held in the village square.

We took our place with the assembled villagers before the bench where Vinobaji was to sit. We noted that Vinobaji had no objection to the incorporation of modern scientific equipment in his retinue.

There were two loudspeakers, two mikes (one for the interpreter) and a tape recorder. All this equipment is transported by jeeps, usually about three are present. Luggage is also transported in the jeeps.

The chatter and hum of the congregation ceased. At 5 p. m. precisely, Vinobaji appeared. We had our first view of this man of whom the whole world is aware. He made his way to the low bench, a frail man wearing dark spectacles and a shawl over his head to protect him from the still hot sun.

As he passed by, we glanced at the faces of the audience. We realised then that to them Vinobaji was no 'man', he was the messenger of God who had come to prevent them from living the lives of beggars.

He is their messenger of hope—to them he is a Sainr. In their eyes were reflected their hopes as they folded their hands in fervent salutation. Some looked awed, even frightened.

As he walks on his mission an old man at work in the field touched his companion on the shoulder, "Look Gandhiji is approaching."

His compatriot replies, "Refresh your memory, old man. Gandhi has been dead many a year."

The old man responds, "My son, Gandhiji never died, walking there is his spirit. Gandhi still lives!"

We have no doubt that many in Vinoba's audience have similar thoughts about him.

Quietly he took place on the bench beside the interpreter. Vinobaji speaks 18 languages, amongst them Tamil, the tongue of Tamilnad, the State where he is touring. But Vinobaji speaks "high Tamil" not the dialect, so he addresses them in Hindi, and it is interpreted.

His voice is quiet, but it has great spirit and strength. At the beginning he is extremely passive. After half an hour, he shows some emotion and becomes extremely eloquent and fluent. Although we could follow nothing of his speech, we were fascinated by his hand gestures.

In every respect he is non-violent, yet he exudes positive power. His gesticulations are urgent and distinct—full of energy. It is difficult to put into writing the atmosphere which surrounds him.

He spoke for one hour. After his speech we sat with him for some time. We told him of our work at "Anandavan" and of the health of Mr. Amte.

What struck us plain was his quietness, his simplicity. He is humble, he does no more than to ask for the love of all people. But the one thing which Vinobaji does not desire is to be 'sanctified'. We wished him "namasthe" and left.

Everyone is up at 3—30 a. m. for communal prayers. When we reached his room, Vinobaji was reading (we find this is so every morning) and the book is generally a religious one. He has read most of the religious scriptures. He learned Arabic especially to read the Koran in the original.

We sat with the others cross-legged on the floor. The lanterns were dimmed the chant started—it continues for about twenty minutes. Whether or not one is "religious" in the narrow sense of the word is unimportant. At that hour of the morning it is quiet and peaceful, it is good to sit quietly, we feel that it is of great benefit.

At 5—45 a. m., Vinobaji is on his way. The next village where we are to stop and make camp is Kottampatti, seven miles away. He sets off at a cracking pace and hardly falters for the full distance.

We are young, Vinobaji is old—but we wouldn't like to challenge him to a walking race—this frail old man!

The only halt is when he takes his curds and buttermilk in the early morning after the commencement of the walk. He can take only non-solids because he has a stomach ulcer.

In every village through which we passed, people had erected arches with "Welcome" on them. Streamers had been strung from tree to tree along side the road. Even before we reached a village people would be waiting by the roadside to welcome us.

The number of escorts were about 25, but the group varied in size from scores to hundreds. As we approached a village the children would sing or drums would beat. The song would be about Vinobaji and how he is doing work of God, how he goes on foot from village to village bringing hope and joy.

The jeeps have arrived before us and people have prepared the sleeping quarters for the night, the loudspeakers have been prepared. All the food and the petrol for the jeeps are found by the villagers.

Previously this was paid for by the Gandhi Nidhi Fund. But Bhoodan has broken all ties with outside organisations. It is dependent entirely upon the people.

After the 'crusade' which varies from five to ten miles all are ready for the breakfast. The food is always excellent—there is no doubt that the people give of their very best.

After breakfast, time is free. But we, the two Englishmen and the young man from Japan are never free of the curiosity of the village folk. We have only to stand around a few moments for a large crowd to gather. They want to know about us.

We told where we came from and why, then we invited questions. Fast and furiously they came. We felt that here was a good opportunity for us all to get to know each other. What a variety of questions! "Is there caste system in England?" "Do you need Bhoodan in England?" Their thirst for knowledge was insatiable.

We had to bring the meeting to a close in order to hear Vinobaji's speech at 5 p. m.

We listened to Vinobaji's speech, one of his secretaries interpreted for us. His illustrations and analogies are profound and simple, they go straight to the heart. He is not an intellectual who makes complexities. He tells how things should be and why they are not.

"Unhappiness is not natural, man has created unhappiness." There can be no contradiction to his talks—he speaks pure and simple truth. He rejects politicians and Governments, he rejects might and violence, he rejects pomp and ceremony.

For his Bhoodan—land gift—he does no more than to ask those who have to give to those who have not. "Take me in as a member of your family, let the whole village become one family."

As we walk with Vinobaji and his Bhoodan workers we share their happiness. Wherever they go they carry with them the spirit of brotherhood—the message of a new life to be.

We feel that we are fortunate to be here in India witnessing a miracle, a miracle which has happened almost overnight. But we must not forget that Vinobaji is building on the foundation that Gandhiji laid. Vinobaji is taking the philosophy of Gandhiji one step further, a step no doubt which Gandhi himself would have taken had he lived.

A revolution is occurring, but this is a revolution in the true sense—a change of heart—not just a change of government. To change the hearts of people will take longer than to merely to replace administrators, but slowly it will succeed. Land-owners are donating land; many workers are giving a proportion of their income to those who through no fault of their own, are unable to earn a living. Bhoodan workers are dedicating their lives.

Bhoodan is like a snowball starting to roll from a mountain top. It will gather more snow until it becomes a roaring avalanche. Bhoodan must cross the borders of India—in Sarvodaya lies new hope for the world.

Courtesy: "Sunday Standard" March 17, 1957

Vinoba's Answers to my Three Questions

ANDREW MILLS

Mr. Mills is an young American sent to India by the Congregational Churches of the U. S. A. for studying the village development along economic and social lines under the auspices of the Madura-Ramnad diocese of the Church of South India. He has spent almost a year in India studying Tamil and the conditions in rural India. He is giving here Vinobaji's answers to his three interesting questions on religion that he raised during his recent meeting with Vinobaji.

VINOBA first explained to me why he asks questions to be written out and given to him. Then he inquired about myself, my family, my work and intention in staying in India. After this he proceeded to answer my questions.

My first question was "What relation do you believe exists between the kingdom to which you are giving your life and the kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed was being ushered in almost 2000 years ago?"

Vinoba began by saying that Buddha, before Jesus' time, had proclaimed a similar kingdom, but that still today the kingdom was unfulfilled. Men tend to believe that their existence is limited to that within their own particular bodies. But the philosophy basic to Indian traditions contradicts this belief. It says that men also have their life in other persons, in all humanity. Vinoba said that he in his humble way is trying to bring this truth to people and change their hearts. Thus, they will begin to realize that their bodies are only the means of service to other humans. Food, he said, is really not to be enjoyed, but is to keep the human machine functioning well in service of others. He said, that the kingdom of God will come through God alone. To prepare the peoples hearts to be able to receive Him then is his given task, Vinobaji believes.

My second question was:—"What do you believe to be the greatest weakness of the Christian Church, or Christians, in India?"

Vinoba, in answer said that he disliked criticism, but he felt that the greatest weakness of Christians was their exclusiveness.

He said Christians forget what Jesus said about "In my house are many mansions". Undoubtedly he said Christ was a saint who suffered and died for his teachings from God. But there have been other saints in other lands. As God showers down rain in places all over the world, so He has revealed Himself through different saints living in different places at different times. Religion, said Vinoba, should build up society, and not divide it by being exclusive. No religion has any business to divide society. Likewise, no one who is a Hindu should object to being a Christian and Muslim at the same time. So, Christians should also take truths from the other religions. They should not draw lines and say 'we will do everything together but will not pray together'. Vinobaji said he receives many letters from sincere persons in England and the West commending him for doing this noble work, but pointing out to him verses in the Bible which make belief only on the Lord Jesus Christ as the means to salvation. Vinobaji feels that very often it is not the individual who brings about such exclusiveness, but the development of rigid ritual and institutional forms. Vinoba said he feels each religion has its foundation in mystical experience. And for one such as Christian to want to share his experience of God and salvation is natural and good. But at the same time he should be willing to include in his experience the religious experience of others.

My last question was:—"What good, if any, do you feel the Christian Church has produced (or stimulated) in India?"

First, of all he felt that no 'Church' or developed organization in any religion has done any good. 'Churches' as such have only made for narrow minds. But he said, he was sure that individual Christians, missionaries and Indians, have done much good in India. Especially as they have served the poor and underprivileged. Such work as among the lepers was first established by Christians. If the additional motive of proselytizing had been absent even better work would have been done by Christians. But before Christians began this kind of work, the ideal of service was sadly only latent in Hinduism. Through this Christian initiative, Vinobaji feels, the ideal of service was surely planted in the Hindu faith.

Bitter Memories of Elections

BY SURESH RAM

THE elections have come to a close. But in their trail, they have left bitter memories in the common mind.

On 25th February, polling started in Uttar Pradesh. Meja and Karchana tehsils of the Allahabad district went to polls on that day. For more than a month earlier, we, the Bhoodan workers of the district, were on our feet in those tehsils. What we saw there was at once sad and dangerous.

(1)

We reached a village in the noon. We stopped at the first house on our way. The householder asked us (we were three) to have our meal. I expressed a desire to have a bath first. He called upon his son to accompany me to the tank in the locality.

After walking more than a furlong, I asked my youthful friend, "Where is the tank after all?"

"Just a few yards away."

It lay behind a garden. It was visible at last. I found several women bathing there. I inquired of my friend whether there was one separate tank for men.

There is another tank adjacent to it, said he. "Formerly women went to that tank only."

"Then why this change?"

A little abashed, he replied, "Ever since the fever of elections has spread over, those favourably inclined to the P. S. P. go to that tank, while we of the Congress have occupied this one."

Elections connote a partition of tanks!

(2)

The sun had set. We reached the Harijan locality of a village. Children were playing. A companion of mine shouted

"Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!", "Sant Vinoba ki Jai!" Children ran to us. But we noticed that the elders were rather taken aback. They took us to be election agents of some party.

We assured them that we were not attached to any party and that we had come there with a new message of the need of voluntary abdication of individual ownership of land and of distributing it equitably among the village people unanimously. They wondered whether it could ever be possible. We reiterated that this dream would become a reality within 1957 itself.

Meanwhile, a companion of ours whispered to a friend that we would be staying there for the night. This seemed to paralyse him. The Harijan began to shudder. We were all surprised. We quietly told him, "In case there be any inconvenience to you, we will go elsewhere."

"Oh! What a privilege to have you as our guest! But..."

And tears rolled down his cheeks.

He added in a trembling voice, "But we are all landless labourers working for the zamindar of the locality. We are his subjects. He is a Congressite and has ordered us to vote for Congress. If any stranger comes to us the zamindar gets suspicious that we might vote against Congress. Later he maltreats us, rebukes us!"

With folded hands, he closed, "Yours is a divine message. It is our duty to serve you as much as we can. But we are helpless until the elections are over. If we keep you even for one night, severe cruelties will be showered upon us."

So saying, he wept and wept.

Elections imply a regimentation of the landless poor.

(3)

Yet one more scene.

We addressed a Bhoodan meeting at a village one afternoon. A college teacher, a Shastri, accompanied us. We were asked by a local resident to have breakfast at his home. I requested Shastriji to accompany me. He refused. I repeated my request but in vain. Rather in anger, Shastriji left our Company too. We went for the breakfast without him.

On reaching the place, I inquired why Shastriji did not join us.

An old man laughed saying: "This house belongs to Shastriji's father-in-law."

In amazement, I said, "So strange, that Shastriji did not join us in the *nashta*!"

Another man added, "The reason is that Shastriji is a Congressman, while his brother-in-law has turned Praja Socialist. This has enraged Shastriji and he has stopped visiting this house."

Elections mean the creation of a rift between blood relations.

These illustrations suffice to show that elections have given rise to a bitter fire, an ill-will in which the intelligentsia, the public workers, the big or small leaders—all prominent people have plunged themselves. This fire leads to dividing hearts and fanning unhappy feelings.

New Horizons

EDITORIAL IN "*The Times of India*"—BOMBAY

WHATEVER sceptics may say about the efficacy of the Bhoodan idea, the idea itself continues to spread. The concept of bhoodan has been enlarged in recent years into one of gramdan. Already as many as 2,000 villages have been donated including 1,575 in Koraput, 138 in Madura District and over a 100 in Maharashtra. Kolhapur has gone even further and wants to strive for the *dan* of entire taluqas. It is this new emphasis of the movement which holds the greatest promise for the future. The donation of a few acres of land in a village helps at best a few families. It does not change the tenor of life in the village nor does it widen the horizons of those who live in it. But where

the entire land of the village is given in donation, new and existing opportunities are created for an experiment in co-operative living. As Acharya Vinoba Bhave has himself put it, under the present system of rural economy, "isolation corrodes "human feeling in man", and "like the erosion of the soil there is a deterioration" of quality in human "beings." In a gramdan village where the land belongs to all, this isolation ends, and the villagers, in the very nature of things, begin to plan and live their lives as members of one large family. They begin to search for new ways of living and new values. But this is more easily said than done. Old habits die hard and the mere pooling of the land in the village into one co-operative farm does not by itself bring about the social cohesion which will make a success of this enterprise. The challenge of co-operative living demands a new approach to every problem. If the experiment is to succeed and enrich the life of the village, the villagers will have to be helped in the first few years in the solution of these problems and taught how co-operation can be made most fruitful.

To start with, there is the problem of redistribution of the land. Is the entire land to be run as one giant farm or parcelled out into small plots? Or is a part of the land to be set apart for collective farming and the rest divided between all the families? It will be perhaps unrealistic to hope or strive for complete equality immediately. It is but natural that in many of the gramdan villages the ex-land-owners have received somewhat larger shares of the redistributed land than others. The land that is to be run as a co-operative farm raises a different set of problems. How much will each villager contribute to the enterprise by way of his labour? And what will be his share in the total produce? Will the share be determined by the number of working hands in a family or by the number of dependants? What will be the criterion to measure the different kinds of labour—say, of the man who milks the cow, the person who ploughs the field and the teacher who runs the village school? The first few months will be the most crucial, for initial gains can alone fortify the villagers' faith in co-operation.

To guide the villagers in this initial period is a challenge as much to the planners at the Centre and in the States as to the bhoodan workers. The Planning Commission is committed to the setting up of pilot projects in co-operative farming in each

district. There is no reason why the planning machinery should not make use of the gramdan villages for pilot projects and for the proposed programme for training in co-operative farming. There is the need to set up a co-operative store in each gramdan village to put an end to the exploitation by the trader and the money-lender. Often the villagers cannot collect enough capital for the store. It is here that State Governments can easily come to their help. Acharya Vinoba Bhave for his part is full of hope. He has drawn a happy picture of the gramdan village in which no debt will be incurred by any family and there will be no exploitation. "If we explain 'to the people living in the villages', he contends, 'one after another all the villages will be given in gramdan'. But it is not merely a question of explaining the idea to the villagers in the abstract. They must see for themselves how the idea works. It will be tragic if the idea suffers in practice for lack of adequate guidance and help from the planners.

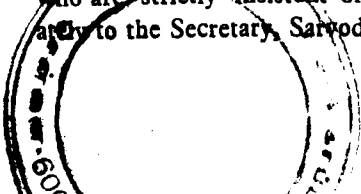
— Courtesy : *The Times of India*

The Ninth Sarvodaya Sammelan at Kaladi

THE Ninth Sarvodaya Sammelan will be held at Kaladi in Kerala, on the 9th and 10th May 1957. On 11th and 12th May there will be a Shibir (Seminar) for the Lok-Sevak Satyagrahis. Acharya Vinoba will reach Kaladi on the 8th May.

Kaladi is four miles from the Angamali Ry. station on the Shoranur-Cochin line of the Southern Railway. Railway concessions at single fare for double journey will be available to intending visitors. Certificates to avail of the concession will be issued to those who apply with Rs. 3/- each by M. O. as the lodging fees to the Secretary, A. B. Sarva Seva Sangh, Khadigram, Monghyr Dt., Bihar. Khadi Vastralayas of the Sarva Seva Sangh at Madras, Trichinopoly, Madurai, Palghat, Bangalore and the Sahitya Prachar Samithi, Hyderabad have been authorised to receive lodging fees of Rs. 3/- from each of the visitors from the South. Certificates for concession will be issued to them in due course.

Hand-pounded rice and other Gram Udyog articles of food will not be supplied to all at this Sammelan. Therefore those who are strictly insistent on them are requested to write immediately to the Secretary, Sarvodaya Sammelan, Kaladi (T. C. State).



15.5.57
N.S.S. 15.5.57

THE SARVODAYA SAMAJ

After the demise of Mahatma Gandhi the constructive workers met in a conference in March, 1948 at Sevagram, Wardha, and decided to form a free world organisation, known as The Sarvodaya Samaj. But it is not an organisation as generally understood with rules of membership, executive, office-bearers and binding decisions. But it is a Samaj of free voluntary brotherhood with the simple obligation to themselves to strive towards the uplift of all in the world through truth and non-violence as the means. The following will give an idea of the objective and work of the Sarvodaya Samaj.

OBJECT

To strive towards a social order based on Truth and Non-Violence, in which there will be no distinction of class or creed, no exploitation of any kind and offering full scope for the development of the individuals as well as groups.

BASIC PRINCIPLE

Insistence of the purity of the Means as that of the Ends.

PROGRAMME

For the achievement on the aim, the following programme will be followed :

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Communal harmony (fellowship between followers of different faiths and sects) | 7. Basic Education |
| 2. Removal of untouchability | 8. Equality of status and rights for both men and women |
| 3. Abolition of class distinctions | 9. Health and hygiene |
| 4. Prohibition | 10. Development of provincial languages |
| 5. Promotion of khadi and other home industries | 11. Removal of provincialism |
| 6. Village sanitation | 12. Hindustani as the national language |

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 13. Economic equality | 18. Service of leprosy patients |
| 14. Development of Agriculture | 19. Relief-work |
| 15. Organization of labour | 20. Cow protection |
| 16. Welfare of aboriginals | 21. Naturopathy |
| 17. Organization of students | 22. Other similar activities |

BROTHERHOOD

Whoever accepts the above object and its basic principles and endeavours to follow them is eligible for the brotherhood of the Samaj. On sending his or her name and address to the Secretary of the Sarvodaya Samaj, Khadigram P. O., Monghyr Dt., Bihar State, India he or she will be registered as a "Sevak".

SARVODAYA DAY

The 30th January of every year when Mahatma Gandhi passed away will be observed at all places as the Sarvodaya Day.

SARVODAYA MELA OR FAIRS

On 12th February, every year Fairs will be organized at places where Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed.

ANNUAL SARVODAYA SAMMELAN

To facilitate mutual contact and exchange of views among the Sevaks there will be an annual conference in March or April (or May) at some place in India.

FUNCTION

The deliberations of the Samaj will be of advisory nature and not mandatory in any way.

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SARVODAYA- A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

★

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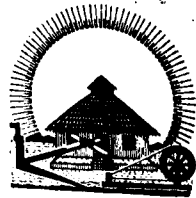
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