

The yoga of the Karmyasin Instead of the Yoga of Sanyasin

Introduction :

The word Sanyas is of great spiritual significance in the culture of the Hindu religion. That this word has come to me an all sorts of things does not detract from its greatness. The name Sanyasin and the concept governing it has been studied and interpreted by great minds in the cultural traditions of India. Even before the Buddha, there were great Sanyasins and even while he rebelled against some of the aberrations of Sanyas, he drew inspiration for himself in the relentless search for truth into which he threw his whole life with unsurpassed courage, single mindedness and devotion. Even when he turned away from the excesses of the Sanyas of his time, he himself passed through a long and pregnant period of Sanyas out of which he emerged as the enlightened one. That Enlightenment had no further need for Sanyas but had discovered the supreme validity of the middle Path. Nevertheless Buddha and his disciples i.e. the monks and nuns did practice a new type of Sanyas. The great exemplar of Sanyas was Adi Sankarcharya He was not alone on the path of Sanyas but there was an unbroken chain of Yogi and teachers who were Sanyasins. The two most modern but new type of Sanyasins we produced were Ramana Maharishi and Mahayogi Aurobindo. Keeping all this in mind, it is impossible to speak lightly of the Sanyas tradition of renunciation, austerity and meditation inherent in Sanyas. Nevertheless the spirit of man must not be allowed to stand stagnant. It should march on to new and high adventures, discovering new landscapes of the spirit and achieving new goals of realization.

A new synthesis

In the light of advancing knowledge in physical and mental sciences, it has become necessary to work out, if that is possible a new synthesis of Sanyas and life. Sanyas and life are like the waves and the ocean. They are inextricably bound together in

the total reality of the Universe. The challenge of today is that the human spirit should harness itself to the task of redemption of man from his frailties and lift him to higher levels of personal and collective living. In fact living has to occupy the centre of the picture. Prayer is of no significances without action in terms of the good, the beautiful and the true. Meditation only leads to illusion if it does not lead to the same kind of action. It is no longer a matter for discussion or dispute that our life here on earth is our greatest reality and how to live it at its highest and best is our supreme quest. The old concept of Sanyas unrelated to the challenges of living in the present and going forward to higher and better living in the future will no longer attract the human mind. I am therefore trying to reach out to a new synthesis of Yoga and living without being pulled down by the fact that I am no great teacher or Yogi or person. My mind is keen and clear and I shall use this instrument as best as I can. I therefore best it the idea of a Karmyasin instead of a Sanyasin. A Karmyasin will not be totally different from a Sanyasin but will combine renunciation with vital action every moment of his life, action to get closer to the ultimate truth, beauty and good. Action in this regard must become the essence of renunciation. Hence the new term Karmyasin, embodying the idea of Karma or action united with Sanyas. Buddha was pre eminently a Karnyasin and in our own time Mahatma Gandhi was the true Karmyasin of our age. The new synthesis therefore of the Yoga of meditation and the Yoga of action is within this concept of the Karnyasin coming out in the modern world devoted to the Yoga of Meditation and the Yoga of action.

The pathway to this achievement

This pathway is neither easy nor short. It just cannot be. The concept of Karmyasin is so vital, life-changing and onward a movement that the disciplines which will go to make a Karnyasin will have to be a combined discipline of the body and the mind acting in union. The body is no accident in evolution. The

mysteries, the forces and the self-growing mechanism locked up with the body for millions of years is as a great miracle as the miracle of the human soul. No thinker realized this in the past more than the Buddha. His philosophy of the middle path is the embodiment his idea. In our own time Maha Yogi Aurobinbo stressed the unity of matter and spirit as the one condition for the understanding of the future destiny of man. In his own words each cell within the human body embodies the wisdom, the power and the grandeur of immutable laws which are a million millions years old. Each cell holds the universe within it in microcosm. The soul or the spirit is imminent in each such cell and in its universal character holds together, guides and advances life ever upward. The concept of Karnyasin is nothing but the embodiment of this reality which is the universe and the spirit immanent in every atom of the universe. The spirit is the antharyami within every atom and also the final totality of reality.

To bring to full maturity the human body to make it the vehicle of the fully mature soul is the aim and significance of the Yoga of Karmyasin. It has often been said that man lives today only a tiny fraction of his own life, embedded within the body. The great potentiality within the body lie dormant to discover and utilize these potentialities is needed in the Yoga of the Karmyasin. Along with this we must also realize the potentialities of the mind and beyond the mind of the soul. This too is part of the Yoga of the Karmyasin. That is why I have said that the pathway for the Yoga of the karmyasin will neither be easy nor short. The goal is a tremendous one and the pathway to it also a tremendous one. In its final development the Yoga of the Karmyasin will touch the frontiers of Divinity. Man will become transformed into godhood but I am anticipating.

Coming down to earth

From the flight of intellectual and emotional imagination, let us come down to the earth of our living. Man has become stunted physically and mentally, more physically than even mentally. This will lead to a dangerous imbalance. Either the body or the mind and beyond it the soul will develop together or the one will bring down the other. What vast factors which are involved in the realization of the full potentialities of the body itself cannot be laid down without great study and effort. Adi Sankaracharya taught that man becomes what he eats. In other words man is a product of the food he consumes. That is why we have in India the tradition of sativa food which rules out all flesh food. Only the sativa food can become nutrition for realizing the potentialities of our million-million years old body. So nutrition becomes of paramount concern. Then come the Yogasananas for developing every part of the human body in complete harmony with each other. The Yogasananas are not merely physical exercises but much more than that. The aim is not mere muscular development but the development of the body to be nimble, light, quick, activist and becoming the radiant vehicle of the soul. In the eightfold noble path of the Buddha there is reference to this aspect of bodily development since the mind affects the body and vice versa mental health is part of the total health of man. Therefore again the significances of the noble eight fold path. No one can live and now properly except in the proper environment. Environment-making is therefore a part of the Yoga of the Karmsyasin. No individual however clean and pure can survive long in an unclean and impure environment. This brings at once the whole areas of social development within which alone individual development can fulfill itself. We thus see that the basis and horizons of the karmsyasin are coextensive with the entire reality of individual and collective life. Every knowledge man has gained throughout the ages on every subject has to be pressed into service in the concept and programme of the karmsyasin. We need the discoveries of the physical sciences, the mental science and social sciences in the programme of the karmsyasin. For the body to be free

from diseases and infirmities of every kind we require the service of all these three. The interdependence of the health of the mind and the health of body is more often talked about admitted but not realized. The science of psychology has made tremendous advances in recent times. These two are needed in the building up of the concept and practice of the Karmyasin.

Conclusion

What I have projected in these three pages is the barest outline depicting a Karmyasin and his Yoga of meditation and action integrated into one process. I shall continue to meditate on this subject and write more about it later. Let this be the starting point in the grace of God almighty.



THE GANDHIGRAM RURAL INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

(Brief Report covering the genesis, objectives, progress and special problems.)

I. Genesis :

This Rural Institute of Higher Education was by no means something grafted on to the parent Body, i.e., Gandhigram, from outside. After 8 years of work, during which there had come to be established several teaching, training, production and working institutions inside Gandhigram, we had ourselves arrived at a point when something like an Institute of Higher Education became inevitable. By the year 1956, which was the year when our Rural Institute of Higher Education came in, there were already the following institutions in Gandhigram :-

1. A children's Home with a Pre-Basic School.
2. A Senior Basic School.
3. A Post Basic School.
4. A Basic Teachers' Training School.
5. A Rural Extension Training Centre (Gramasevaks Training Centre).
6. A social Education Organizers' Training Centre.
7. An Institute of Women's Adult Education.
8. A production-cum-Training Centre for Khadi and Village Industries.
9. A co-operative Agricultural Bank and a Co-operative Stores.
10. The Kasturba Maternity Hospital.
11. An Auxiliary Nurses Training School.
12. A Public Affairs Study Circle.
13. A Cultural Association.

- 14.A Hindi Bhavan.
- 15.An Amateur Music Society.
- 16.A Department of Extension.
- 17.An Agricultural and Dairy Farm.
- 18.Leather Training Institute.
- 19.A Handicrafts Training School for Women.
- 20.A Shanti Sena.

The Rural Institute of Higher Education thus came as the crown of our educational work. In 1954 we had already set up a Special Committee to draw a skeleton plan for starting a Rural University. With the help of leading educationists, we had drawn up a plan, It was then that fortunately, the Shrimali Committee on Rural Higher Education came to Gandhigram and we placed before the Committee our own proposals which the Committee appreciated. From then on, we collaborated with the Union Ministry of Education in establishing one of the Rural Institute of Higher Education in Gandhigram. This was proof to us that fulfillment comes under favorable conditions in the fullness of time inn all genuine human Endeavour.

II. Objectives :

During the last ten years the main objective before Gandhigram has consistently been the reconstruction of rural society along lines broadly laid down by Mahatma Gandhi with such modifications and changes as became necessary from new conditions in India and the new challenges which kept coming up from the villages themselves. We endeavoured to touch village life at as many points as possible in order to make village life more prosperous, cleaner and healthier, happier and fuller. That is how our work generally came under four headings, i.e., education, production-cum-training, sanitation and health and extension. In the

words of Gandhiji himself, our ultimate aim was the creation of a just and peaceful social order in the rural areas to be achieved through wholly constructive and educational endeavour. At stage was there any antagonism to towns and cities. In fact our faith has been that the reconciliation between town and village must take place in national reconstruction. This could never happen, however, if towns all the time exploited the villages, taking much out of the latter and giving little in return.

We have always believed that the greatest instrument of peaceful revolution is education and, therefore, our work has been largely educational even in such fields as sanitation and public health, village industries, agriculture, co-operation, etc. But realising that education is not theory alone but practical and field work, we established centre of field work linking them with the educational programmes.

When the Rural Institute of Higher Education arrived on the scene, there was hardly any strain in accepting it and developing it. Through the Rural Institute, we can now take Higher Education, suited to rural areas to the doors of the village people living close to the soil and largely making their living out of it. Through it, we can canalize village talents and skills, capacity and intelligence in order to harness them in the task of villages re-building. The emphasis will continue to be on work-centered and life-centered education in which productive work, learning, extension and research will be closely integrated with each other.

We conceive that the success of the Rural Institute will be measured not merely by what is done or learnt inside the campus, but more by the reaction of the work inside on the life of the villages outside. Our students must take more scientific knowledge, more skills, better organizations and a higher level of culture to the villages or fail

altogether. The Institute is too young yet to register any such achievement. But it is towards such achievement that we have turned our faces and steps. We consider the Rural Institute now as the major institution in Gandhigram for achieving the over-all purpose of village re-building on sound and practical lines.

III. Progress :

This is no detailed report and leaves out many routine items. Here are some special points only:-

1. We have generally recruited the right type of students. This does not mean they are of quality above the average. They are the right type because more than 80 % come from rural areas and the lower middle class and even less. They had fought their way with extreme difficulty through the High School and the first or second year of college and had then come to a dead stop because they simply could not afford to go on. To these the Institute came as a God-Send. We are also beginning to absorb the first small stream of students coming out of Post Basic Schools in the Madras and the Kerala States. The Gandhigram Post Basic School itself will give nearly 20 students to the Institute next year. There may be more from other Post Basic Schools. This will be possible because the Gandhigram Compact Area of Basic Education has 38 Basic Schools and the Central Post Basic School is run by Gandhigram itself. There is another Compact Area of Basic Schools, not too far away, at Kallupatti, with another good Post Basic School in it.
2. We have assembled a good staff. The two Principals are highly qualified and with long teaching experience and are in charge

respectively of the Three year Diploma Course of Rural Services and the Two Year Certificate course of Agricultural Science. We call these the College of Rural Services and the College of Agricultural Science. We have also the Preparatory Course. In the College of Rural Services, apart from the core subjects, we have the following five departments, i.e. (1) Village Industries, (2) Co-operation, (3) Fine Arts (Music), (4) Administration, and (5) Home Science, The Departments of Village Industries has Shri S.B.Mandagere, M.Sc.with ten years Experience in the All India Village Industries Association and in research connected with the same. The Village Industries taught are, oil-Pressing, Hand-made Paper, Soap-Making, Cardboard work, Apiary, Handpounding of rice with new devices, carpentry and Khadi production including Ambar Charka. The Head of the Department of Co-operation is Shri N.Subramaniam, M.A., loaned by the Madras State Government and with many years experience in organising and teaching co-operation, For Music we have Shri V.V.Sadagopan, B.A., one of the well-known musicians of South India. Administration is handled by the Principal of the College of Rural Services directly and Kumari M.V.Neela, M.Sc. (Home Science) is in charge of the Department of Home Science. The two Principals are Shri P.Kochunni Panikkar, M.A.,L.T. and Shri S.V.Duraiswami, B.A., B.Sc (Ag). The first was for many years Principals of a Post Graduate Training College. The second was for many years a Lecturer in the Coimbatore Agricultural College and then directed research in Agricultural Economics in the Madras University for two years. For extension, we have Shri M.K.Selvaraj, M.A., L.T., who has had experience in village work in and around Gandhigram. For research, we have secured Shri.R.Subhramaniam, M.A., M.Litt. who has

already done some research work. Shri V.M. Chandrasekaran who is in charge of the Oil-pressing section in the Village Industries Department resigned his service under the Central Government to join the Rural Institute and Shri P. Narayanan Kutti who is in charge of the Paper section was also specially long trained in Paper-making. Since the Institute is bi-lingual having Tamil and Malayalee Students, we have two Lecturers, Shri V.Rengarajan, B.A. (Hons) teaching Tamil and Shri G.Sankara Pillai, M.A. (1st class) teaching Malayalam. Pandit S.N.Mishra, M.A., of Bihar is Lecturer in Hindi. The Executive Secretary, on the administrative side, Shri V.Krishnamurthi, B.sc.,B.T. is an Educational officer borrowed from the Madras State Government who is an expert in Basic Schools in the Faridabad Township. For three years he was Senior Lecturer in Social Education in the Social Education Organisers' Training Centre, Gandhigram.

3. The applications for admission in both the Courses and in various departments were so very heavy that it became difficult to finally select only the numbers we wanted. This shows that the Institute is already meeting a felt-need in Kerala and Madras States.
4. We are steadily developing a 50 acre farm and a Dairy Unit with 40 heads of cattle.
5. We have a growing library and a well-used reading room.
6. We have introduced the Gurukula Groups System which combines the personal care of a teacher for a group of students in their daily life with the advantages of the modern Tutorial System. A distinction should be made between what is generally called the Gurukula System of education and our Gurukula Group System. Both are not identical but have some common features.

7. Extension is in Gandhigram something natural and inherent, Therefore, even without the formalities of a separate Department being completed, our students, have been plunged in Extension work. The need now is to systematize, regularize and record the work. This is now being started. Our students have already a good grasp of village problems and how to meet them under various heads.
8. Community living and organisation are considered a vital part of practical and field work. The campus, therefore, functions as a model community of teachers and students living, working and learning together. There are no menial servants and all work from sanitation and kitchen management to cultural and recreational programmes is done by students and teachers in batches in turn. The students have their own self-government through their student-parliament and elected Ministers in charge of every item of community work. Community life is thus more in the hands of the students than of the teachers. This has helped in the cultivation of responsibility. Gasteism, communalism, languagism and provincialism are given no quarter. Gadhigram has always functioned as vigorously anti-caste and anti-communalism. Community living has been the most potent instrument in this work. When everyone becomes in turn a sweeper and a scavenger, the very bottom of caste is knocked out. We stress congregational worship which is conducted entirely on inter-religious basis. Our students receive a knowledge of the best in all the religions.
9. The Gandhigram Shanti Sena is at the centre of our community life. It stands for collective disciplines as distinct from individual disciplines, projects of Sareera-Shram, and practical services in Villages. Since Gandhigram is a campus without a compound wall, members of the Shanti Sena do Sentry duty throughout the night and day in small

groups. The students of the Rural Institute get training in Shanti Sena and participate in its work along with the students and trainees of all the other institutions in Gandhigram. Our Shanti Sena earned a good name in Cyclone Relief Work in 1956 and in the recent communal disturbances in the Ramanathapuram District.

10. We are conscious we are only on the threshold of the work of Rural Higher Education. The field of work is very vast and bristling with problems which are both mental and physical. It is for the Rural Institute to study and understand these problems and to equip our students to meet them efficiently and practically.

IV. Special Problems :

1. We have Our Oil-lingual problem, since the students come from Kerala and Madras States. The medium of instruction is, therefore, largely English. We have, however, made it clear that students can write their examinations either in English or in Malayalam or Tamil.
2. Methods of teaching have not fully changed from lecturing and notes to that of Group Studies and Discussions. It would be good to have a Seminar on methods of teaching to train the staff in the new methodology.
3. The examination system has an intimate bearing on methods of teaching and even on the substance of learning and working. It will be impossible to go on combining the old method of examinations with a revolution in the methods of teaching and contents of learning. In the Madras State we have the Example of assessment and examination changing radically for the better in all Basic Teachers Training Schools numbering nearly 100. Stress is more on cumulative records

an internal assessment than on oral and written examination. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that our methods of assessment and examination should be in harmony with the new methods of teaching and generally learning through work. If we keep the old system of examination in the Rural Institute, we shall ruin the Institute completely; we have, therefore, much work to do in this direction.

4. The academic studies are so heavy and take so much time that extension work may not get the time and attention necessary. We must more properly balance academic work with practical extension work.
5. Research has not yet started, though much stress has been laid on it in the programme. We have fully qualified person in charge of 'research'. What is now necessary is to lay down the lines of research and the methods. It is imperative that Heads of Research Departments should be given some special training without any further delay. In our Institute we would need research in agricultural production and economics, in improved tools in Village Industries, in Co-operative Farming, etc.
6. Character-building is much neglected in colleges and Universities. In fact a generation of students is growing up without spiritual and moral foundation. The Rural Institutes can help in character-building through community living, inter-religious understanding through the examples of the teachers and through bringing to the students the emotional realization of the reality of the composite culture of India. We must now bestow more thought on the subject. The big question is, "Can a Rural Institute create the environment in daily living and work in which good character is made almost without knowing it?" Good characters have to be the unity of results accruing from

innumerable factors. What are those factors and how can we surround our students with them? we must answer these questions.

Gandhigram,
20th Dec '57

G.RAMACHANDRAN,
Honorary Director,
The Gandhigram Rural Institute.



Symposium on Basic Education : 8.30 P.M., 19th January 1958.

G.Ramachandran. Director, Gandhigram.

What is BASIC EDUCATION

Answer 1

Yours is a very big question. In fact, as the Chairman of the Basic education Assessment Committee set up by the Union Ministry of Education, I and my Colleagues in the Committee took seventy closely printed pages to answer this question. But I know, what you want is, I should Pin-point the most essential considerations. Let me do so.

Point number one is the training of teachers for Basic School.

Point numbers two is that of giving the trained teachers the minimum conditions in which alone they can build up good Basic Schools. This means accommodations, equipment, garden plots, a living wage, etc.

Point number three is the problem of inspection, which must be very much less of inspection, which must be very much less of inspection and very much more of friendly and inspiring guidance on the spot from day-to-day.

And finally, point number four is the question of administration in the Education Department.

Among these four, the first, i.e., the training of teachers is going on fairly well. The second is in a very bad mess in most places, so much so that I have said, somewhat irreverently as it may appear, that even if God became a Basic teacher he will fail because of the total lack of conditions in which plight the Basic Schools are functioning today. This brings us to the Fourth point of administration. Bad administration of Basic Schools and Basic Training Schools is what I have called, enemy No. I of Basic Education. Because of bad

administration, even inspection, i.e., day-to-day guidance is not as good as it should be. The crux of the matter, therefore, is to give Basic Education the whole-hearted backing of appropriate and efficient administration. We must give effective training to the Directors of Public Instruction and to all other relevant higher officials of the Education Departments. It is only in the Madras State perhaps that this has been attempted. If nay doubt is left in the minds of these officials that the State Governments mean Basic Education and nothing but Basic Education in the entire field of Elementary Education then the game would be lost. There should be a high level Body of Officials and non-officials with adequate powers not only to help and guide the Directors of Public Instruction, but to correct them whenever necessary. We need improvements at all the four points, but it is at the point of administration that improvement is most urgent and imperative. The only other point to mention is that boys and girls passing out of Basic Schools should be put under no difficulty whatever in going up for higher education. Unfortunately even this has not been guaranteed in practice everywhere. This must be remedied fully without the slightest delay.

Answer 2 :

This is not a difficult question to answer. Many people doubted if India would attain independence at the time it did and even today are there not people who are sorry that the British left? If Basic Education is inherently the best Elementary Education for us in India today then why should we ask the question, if it would succeed? On the other hand, we must say that it shall succeed. The trouble is that even our educational authorities are hesitant. A big correction is, therefore, necessary to cast away all doubts. Equally, there is the need to educate the public mind on the excellence of Basic Education as in the case of Prohibition or Swadeshi or Food Self-sufficiency. If the authorities are

unhesitant and the people are educated to understand Basic Education, then it must succeed. I have no doubt it will succeed.

Answer 3:

The special features of Basic Education in Gandhigram are in line with those of Basic Education itself. Students and teachers form an integrated community, living, working and learning together. Community living is the back bone and, therefore, productive work and learning much through such work fits into the pattern of daily living. We insist that learning must be drawn out of not only productive work, but out of observation, study, participation in and recording of whatever is of interest and happening in the natural environment and in the social environment. We take care to realize that the social environment is never static but changing, readjusting itself continually and, therefore, dynamic the implications of these features are far-reaching and must be fully worked out. I think that sums up the answer to your third question.

**“Experiments with Education”: Broadcast from Delhi on
30th January 1956 answers to two questions by
G.Ramacharandran, Director, Gandhigram :**

Answer 1 :

You have asked me a most interesting question. I get a thrill when I remember my association with Tagore in Santiniketan and with Gandhi in Sevagram. Few people realize or care to remember that Tagore really anticipated Basic Education. Both Tagore and Gandhi were inveterate rebels against the book-centred system of education for boys and girls. The Santiniketan School was founded on uncompromising protest against bookish education. It released children from the dead weight of books and gave them education through creativity in the garden, in crafts and in the fine arts. Gandhiji stressed productivity and made productive work a vital centre of education. Tagore’s creativity and Gandhi’s productivity have certainly much in common. Creativity must produce what is beautiful and of social value. Productivity must create beauty along with utility. Tagore was realistic enough and Gandhi wanted education to come close to the natural and social environments of schools.

This does not mean there was complete identify between both. Gurudev Tagore said to me, “I approach truth through beauty and find both are one”. Gandhi said, “I can find beauty only through truth”. This difference of emphasis was not a small one. Naturally, therefore, Santiniketan grew more towards painting, music, drama and dance, even while not neglecting the farm and the workshop. Sevagram, on the other hand, steadily went towards production in the farm, workshop, school and the home but without neglecting, what are called, the fine arts.

Tagore and Gandhi undoubtedly influenced each other. Both were big enough to give and take. Tagore brought to Gandhi the call and the challenge of beauty in words, in work and in life. Tagore helped Gandhi to keep firm to the great human and international level without slipping into narrow nationalism. Gandhi brought to Tagore again and again the fiery touch of the realities of India and the world.

Tagore and Gandhi would make a happy joint family. It is their followers who kick up the just of controversy.

Answer 2 :

Basic Education is developing only slowly and hesitantly throughout India. The pattern of Basic Education cannot change before it has really emerged. Let us not forget this. The more I have travelled about and seen at first hand the efforts now going on throughout the country to build up basic Education, the more I see that Basic Education is coming closer and closer to the fundamental ideas originally enunciated by Gandhiji. This is not surprising because it is only when you work at things, that you understand it. The two major points in Basic Education are productivity and correlation. What should be done with income from productivity is a matter of detail, whereas productivity itself is fundamental. Gandhiji originally wanted the income from productivity to go to cover as far as possible the pay of the teachers. We have all now agreed that the income may go to feed and clothe the children themselves. There is nothing wrong in this. Productivity and correlation however stand. It was only a few days ago that Dr K L Shrimali, the Union Minister of State for Education stated emphatically at the Basic Education Seminar for the Directors of Public Instruction from the various States that there can be no Basic Education without adequate stress on productivity.

In regard to correlation difficulty arises from misunderstanding. Correlation is misunderstood to be only with productive work and then criticized as being unable to find lessons in different subjects. From the very beginning, however, correlation had been commissioned to link up also with the natural and social environments of the Basic Schools. Correlation with productive work is thus only about one third of the catchment area for making lessons for the children. The natural environment and the social environment furnish nearly two thirds of the remaining catchment area. If this is understood most of the difficulties about correlation must vanish.

Amendments and changes in details are necessary and must be made. For instance no one can insist that there should be only one or two basic craft like agriculture or spinning weaving throughout India. Other suitable crafts can certainly be taken up. No one also can say that the present pattern of Basic Education is the last word on the subject. There is no such thing as a last word in regard to any pattern of education.



POST BASIC EDUCATION

Just One Relevant Thought.

(G.Ramachandran)

(Text of a message sent by Sri. G.Ramachandran, Director, Gandhigram and Secretary of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Rajghat, New Delhi for the Post Basic Education Seminar held in Gandhigram on the 27, 28 and 29th of December 1958).

Everybody has agreed that every Elementary School should become a Basic School as early as Possible. This is both idea and arithmetic. I am at the moment concerned with the arithmetic. The ultimate implication of the arithmetic is that a few lakhs of Elementary schools will become Basic Schools. Naturally the next stage should be the logical outcome of Basic Education. The logical outcome means taking the ideals and methods of Basic Education accepted by all as good into the Secondary stage. At this point courage and clarity fail and all kinds of excuses are brought up. The result is that Secondary Education which is the outcome of the earlier Elementary Education which is discarded will sit on the head of Basic Education. In other words the outcome of what is being given up will dictate to and submerge what will inevitably arise from Basic Education. This is neither logic nor reason nor even good sense. It is contrary to all these. Multipurpose High Schools cannot be an alternative to Post Basic High Schools unless the present scheme of Multi-purpose High Schools undergoes certain radical Changes. The ideals of Basic Education and its methodology should find fulfillment naturally in the next stage.

Unless this is done, it would be the application of birth control to Basic Education. Just when the fruits of Basic Education are about to appear fully and vitally, abortion is attempted or worse.

If learning through productive work is given its full place in Multi-purpose High Schools and the other essential ideals of Basic Education are incorporated then the Multi-purpose High Schools will really become Post Basic Schools. Instead of this Post Basic Schools are being asked to convert themselves into Multi-purpose High Schools. One can only be amazed at this fantastic misdirection.

The future is not bright for Post Basic Education, by whatever name it may be called. We may all take on oath to give up the name if the substances will be given. If learning through productive work is good in the earlier years, it must certainly be better in later years when productive work and the process of learning reach a higher level.

Let the private agencies promoting Post Basic Education stand fast by their programme at all costs. Some day the tide will turn in their favour, if they produce real good results. May God give us the courage and the clarity of mind to achieve these results.

Education for Social Work in India

By G.Rmachandran,

Secretary, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi.

We shall make a wrong start, if we run away from the basic facts concerning this matter. One of the basic facts from which no one should run away is that the meaning and contents of social work might well mean different things in different countries. Social work in England will be different from social work in Mexico and that in the U.S.A. very different from it in Egypt. These are simply illustrations. If the meaning and contents of social work are different in different countries, surely it stands to reason that education for social work will also vary from country to country. One of the ridiculous things in India today is that education for social work is sometimes arranged on the British or American pattern. There is nothing to prevent us from learning from experience gained in England or America and to apply such knowledge carefully to Indian conditions, if necessary. But, what is of fundamental importance is that we study social conditions in India, as they are and build our social work on the basis of such understanding and train our young people to face our problems in our own way. If mere imitation is wrong in several other fields it will be fatal in the field of social work. Social work must be intimately correlated to social conditions. All this is accepted in theory, but often denied in practice, as soon as we set about social work and education for social work.

The technique of social work developed under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance and direction was always realistic. He turned the searchlight upon Indian society. He discovered the strength and the weakness of the social structure in the country. He trained workers to face up to every problem which came out of the social conditions in India. He did not train them in the artificial condition of great Institutes cut away from the life of the people. He trained students and workers

right inside the conditions which they were to study and understand. He trained village workers under village conditions to understand village problems and to help villagers to solve them. He trained village midwives under village conditions so that after training they were not afraid of settling down in villages. The secret of his method was not simply service, but identification. Identification necessarily included service and went deeper than service from without. It was essentially service from within. Moreover, Gandhi always went to the roots of a matter and faced up to fundamental issues. Institutes of Social Work, as we now have them here and there, specialize in evading the fundamental issues and simply play about with surface problems. Poverty is a basic issue. Public Health and Sanitation is ignorance yet another and we have also the problem of superstitions and evil customs and habits. Let us take for instance the caste system. Everyone accepts that it is a terrible evil in India today. Everyone wants to destroy it, root and branch, but, there is unmistakable evidence that in the last seven or eight years caste has become stronger and not weaker. The Chief Minister of one of the important States in India said to this writer that caste has become stronger because of adult franchise and the General Elections. Mahatma Gandhi, in his life time, faced up to this evil. He delivered sledge-hammer blows on untouchability and caste distinctions. He wrought great changes. But the nation is slipping back again. Which Institute of Social Work in India has taken up the study of this problem in all earnestness? Is there yet a completely truthful analysis why caste still holds the mind of India and how it can be uprooted? What are the psychological, economic and even moral factors keeping caste unbroken even today? What all must we do to destroy this evil? We look at many petty matters, pick them and work on them and are satisfied we are doing social work or training people for it, etc. Take another example, i.e., the problem of nutrition among the masses of the people. Gandhiji advocated hand-pounded rice for the rice eaters in the villages and towns. In a country without too much of good nutrition,

Message from Bakshi Gulam Mohamed, Prime Minister, Jammu & Kashmir

I have learnt with great pleasure that the Lok Kalyan Samiti will now be completing the sixth year of its existence. The work in the slums and backward areas needs special attention and I am glad that the Samiti has done useful work in this regard in Delhi and New Delhi. I am sure that its welfare activities will receive greater impetus in the coming years and the area and sphere of its activities will continue to grow wider. I wish the Samiti all success.

This was and is an important and basic issue. Which Institute of Social Work or of Training for Social Service has taken up this matter truthfully and without reservation? Take again sanitation. We have to organize sanitation among the masses who are poor in our own way. We cannot give flush latrines and underground drainage in the villages. We can only give the Wardha trenchlatrines and teach village people how to make good soak pits. How many of those trained in our Schools of Social Work can make a village surface-drain or make a real good soak-pit?

But did I not say that there is the acceptance in theory of these basic methods and approaches, but very little in practice? The acceptance in theory is largely due to the pressure of certain ideological forces created by the Gandhian Constructive Programme and now by the Programmes of National Extension Service and Community Development and the denial in practice comes generally from aversion to hard, low-down manual work in the minds of most of those who have had any education. We are too imitative and we borrow too much. We borrow not as strong people who can return the loan, but as weak people planning to evade repayment in advances. There is also a great deal of misdirection and therefore. In calculate

wastage of money, time and energy. Education for social work largely remains like the cream on the top of everything without touching the realities at the bottom.

Let me now put down very briefly and somewhat unsystematically what I consider should be the characteristics of social work in India and educations or training for such work :-

1. Careful study of the structure of Indian society from its ancient roots to its latest branches.
2. Truthful analysis of the various factors governing the present social structure.
3. Analysis of the strength and weaknesses of our social structure.
4. Study of social ideas penetrating the mind of young India including those of socialism, communism, sarvodaya. etc, and why one or the other of these make a greater or lesser appeal.
5. Formulation of a theory or ideology of social reconstruction suited to Indian conditions, acceptable to rational minds and capable of a process of implementation from here and now.
6. The correction of the tendency in the national mind towards too much individualism and too little of group-thinking and group-action.
7. Clarity of mind to make all education deep-rooted in the cultural traditions of India even while attempting to reach out to a great human culture. Let us not make imitation Europeans, Americans, or Russians, Let us make Indians who will live in harmony and cooperation with the whole world.
8. Education in social work must be closely integrated with the living conditions of our own society and not cut away from it.
9. Education must be not only of the mind, but for strengthening the will and toughening the muscles.

10. Education for social work must be in and through social and that, right inside the actual conditions of the social life of the people.
11. All social work must be at the same time ameliorative and revolutionary. It must furnish the training to make more amenities of life, but it must aim to change the outlook of the people.
12. Manual and productive work must be included as inescapable items of social work.
13. There should be no artificial divorce of social work from political and economic programmes.
14. National egoism and, therefore certainly, the lesser egoism of smaller groups and communities, must be under stressed in favour of loyalty to one world and one human society.
15. The reconciliation between scientific technology and moral and cultural values must be effected at every stage.

Social work is a tremendous responsibility. Education for social work, therefore, is even a greater responsibility. Let us hope and pray that those in charge both will realize their responsibility more and more and prevent the misdirection that is taking place today.



GANDHIAN APPROACH TO RURAL WELFARE

By G.RAMACHANDRAN

The rural community in India is not merely one among several communities in the country. It is the one major and overwhelmingly dominant community. It is not a fraction or a part of India. It is India itself, almost the whole of it.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “You may cheat God but you cannot cheat arithmetic”. Every single person will admit that 80 per cent of the people are almost the whole of the people, that what affects them will affect the whole nation, and that what does not touch them is of little consequence. No programme in our country can become a national programme if it not a rural community programmes and yet, whenever there is a programme of national improvement, there comes the unfailing tendency to concentrate it in some vivid patches in our towns and cities. Programme of public health, labour welfare, housing and education are good examples of what happens. Let it be clear beyond a shadow of doubt, therefore, that rural community welfare in India is nothing less than national welfare itself.

The truthful acceptance of such a view need never mean that towns and cities will be neglected. They cannot be neglected because the people in them are vocal, organized and even militant. On the contrary, are rural community is dumped and exploited and has stood unorganized for many centuries. It was only in the Gandhian era that the rural community awakened and stirred itself up. But even now vast tracts of the rural areas are greatly neglected and they cry out for the most elementary amenities of life.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who for the first time accepted the full validity of the rural community and placed it at the very centre of his constructive programme was

village reconstruction. Khadi, village industries, Harijan Seva, Basic Education and the Kasturba Trust work were all, one step after another, to complete the picture of village reconstruction. It was Gandhiji's unassailable thesis that the rural community must remain at the very centre of all national planning. That Gandhiji succeeded in doing this in his own life time and that he was left a legacy in this regard are the most conspicuous of his achievements. The community Projects and the National Extension service, which have now begun to cover the country. Represent undoubtedly the continuity of the force released by Gandhiji in and through the constructive programme.

PROBLEMS OF THE RURAL POPULATION

Our village people are generally hardworking and shrewd with a clear idea of what is good for them. Even if they resist for a time new ideas and methods of work, they jump at anything which they find will benefit them. Theory and talk do not generally interest them. But practical and profitable work attracts them at once. For centuries they have lived under the pressure of exploitation by innumerable forces from outside, the nature and extent of which they were unable to discover. In dealing with the rural community, therefore, we are dealing with many millions of people in the grip of needs, challenges, fears, suspicions and hopes.

While the rural community is a vast one, the problems profoundly affecting its life and growth are complex to a degree. Political, Social, Economic, Moral and Cultural factors have combined to create a situation which can stagger any thinker or reformer. There is not one single vital issue which is not complicated by innumerable other factors. Let us take, for instance, the problem of economic development. The whole of this problem is affected by the caste system, the religious and cultural traditions and the conflict of ideologies. The problem of food

and land are inextricably mixed together, making the land hunger of the landless a major issue. The problems of unemployment and village and small scale industries are interlocked, creating the challenge for a mixed economy in which industrialization and decentralized production must proceed without the one destroying the other. Public health in the rural areas has created challenge again for preventive rather than curative work. We must conduct education keeping in mind that India is a poor country and yet cannot do without the best education possible.

GANDHIAN APPROACH

The Gandhian constructive programme was a movement of the people, by the people, for the people. It is begun with the emphasis on Khadi. It became the Charkha movement. Till this movement started village reconstruction had not found its feet. People talked of village improvement and some workers went into the village but they came back quickly. Workers did not stay down in the village. For the first time the charkha movement tied workers to village life and kept them there. No one could organize charkha work in the villages and then run away from the villages. Under Gandhiji's inspiration hundreds of workers not only went into the villages but made their homes in them. The charkha could not, would not flourish in towns and cities except in a symbolic way. But it did spread and develop in the village.

The village workers doing charkha organization found it was a full time job. As he thus lived in the village, he became more and more aware of other needs and problems and he was drawn deeper and deeper into the village soil. It is interesting to remember how many of those who are Ministers in the Government at the Centre and in the States are people who in earlier days were charkha workers in villages. Shri Rajendra Prasad, the Rashtrapathi, was for many years the Khadi Chief of Bihar. That meant he lived and worked many years in the villages in

Bihar. Shri C.Rajagopalachari lived in the same manner in an out-of-the-way village in the Salem district for many years. He won fame and distinction as the Khadi chief of Tamil Nadu. Even the redoubtable Sardar Vallabhai Patel was for long a constructive worker in Gujarat. Shri Nehru himself became a spinner and khadi hawker in Uttar Pradesh. Today the All-India Spinners' Association has workers in every State and district who live and work among the people. Wherever Khadi has spread, the spirit and technique of village service have also spread. In the wake of the Khadi movement came the all-India village industries movement. This was one step deeper in to the village soil.

Thanks to this movement, the organization and improvement of village industries have now come to stay and are part of the permanent pattern of national planning. The recent setting up of the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Commission by the Government of India shows clearly that the claims of the Charkha and of village industries are no longer ignored. As Gandhiji and his co-workers got more and more involved in village work, they came up against the evil of untouchability and the caste system and so there came along the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The sangh represented a double line of advance. The first was one for developing the self-respect and the courage of the Harijans themselves. Gandhiji also undertook the extremely difficult responsibility of creating a movement for a national language and we thus have the Hindustani Prachar movement. And then came the Basic Education programme, which also is now spreading steadily thought slowly as part of the educational reconstruction undertaken by the Central and State Governments. We must also mention the great Kasturba Trust movement, which has already put into the field of rural Service more than a thousand trained women workers.

All these movements came out of the living and throbbing needs of the rural community and have grown and spread from out of the life of the people

themselves. Gandhiji never did any propaganda except through such movements themselves. There is no question that the Gandhian constructive programme has made only slow progress but it has its roots already in the hearts of the people. The programme has thus become, to the extent it has grown, a programme of the people, by the people and for the people. The workers in the constructive programme are mostly humble people coming cut of the common stock and without university or any other higher education. The bhoomidan movement itself is the fruit of the Gandhian constructive programme. In and through the bhoomidan movement, Acharya Vinoba is daily demonstrating how vital and radical changes in the mind of village India can be effected by awakening and canalizing the Sakti of the people from within.

The Gandhian constructive programme never failed to furnish a vital, moral and spiritual background to secular activities contained in it. When the khadi movement was started in 1920, it was not merely the economic aspects of it which was stressed but there grew up behind it a wave of moral idealism. To buy khadi was not only good village economics but sound national morality. Harijan emancipation was not merely a fight for the freedom of the under-dog but the moral and spiritual duty of the so-called caste Hindus from whom atonement was due to the so-called untouchables. Basic Education was not only sound education but would lead to the blossoming of the finest in the moral and spiritual traditions of India. The Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati and later Sevagram in Wardha became not only places of training but of pilgrimage. All those engaged in the constructive programme developed in larger or smaller measure a missionary zeal and at whatever point they worked, they felt the inspiration that their work was necessary in a great programme of national reconstruction. They were soldiers of the grand army of Gandhi; they were the builders of a new society and they were

the torch-bearers of a new civilization. That was the spirit and vision in side the constructive programme.

GANDHIAN INSTITUTIONS

There are in India today innumerable ashrams, and institutions which are patiently and steadfastly working out the Gandhian programme with such modifications as have become necessary. When the World Pacifist Conference met towards the end of the 1949 in Shantiniketan and in Sevagram, delegates from foreign countries who for the first time heard of the constructive programme asked to see some of the institutions carrying it out, they has, of course, visited the headquarters of the Charkha Sangh, of the All-India Village Industries Association, the Goseva Sangh and Basic Education in Wardha and they did get a glimpse of the fact that these institutions in Wardha were in touch with innumerable workers throughout India engaged in some item or other of the constructive programme. What the visitors actually saw amazed them.

The greatest need in our country today is for linking up the Gandhian constructive programme and the community Projects and the National Extension service programme. If these could come together in complete mutual understanding and co-operation, then the heart of the people could indeed be won over to peaceful methods for achieving all the radical changes that the situation calls for. If these do not come together but go on in their separate ways, there will be frustration and delay all round in the task of village reconstruction which is really national reconstruction.

SEVEN POINT PROGRAMME FOR RURAL WELFARE

The following may well be the main items in outline for lifting up the rural community as quickly as possible to a fuller and better life and on which Gandhian

constructive workers and those working in the Community Projects and the National Extension service may jointly and cooperatively concentrate. These items are balanced in such a way as to combine the material and moral implications which are necessary to build up a peaceful, prosperous and just society in India. They are:

1. More food through better agriculture and an equitable redistribution of land through peaceful methods of persuasion.
2. Better food through mass education the elementary rules of dietetics at the village level.
3. Better health through the above and through a national sanitation drive touching the life of the people on every side.
4. Improvement and organization of cottage and village industries, leading up to the maximum possible regional self-sufficiency in the rural areas linked to the philosophy and outlook of mutual service and neighborliness. This must mean the enfoldment of multi-purpose co-operation.
5. Cheap life education, self-sufficient for a universal minimum quantum of knowledge and for earning a livelihood within a maximum period of ten years. This should be available to every boy and girl. This may well be basic education with suitable changes and modifications.
6. Self-government from the bottom through panchayats.
7. Moral rearmament of the people through cultural and recreational programme deriving inspiration from the past traditions of India and going forward to link up with the best traditions of the modern world.

None of these are new items. But they must now be taken up in a new spirit. Technique must mingle with the spirit. Material improvement must mean moral rearmament. Enjoyment and recreation must elevate the cultural level instead of dragging it down to the dust as is often done now. It is not enough

to achieve a working synthesis of the many programmes of material development. It is even more necessary to achieve a working synthesis between all the programme of material improvement on the one hand and the moral rearmament of the people on the other. This is the work of all works now in the India which Gandhi created and which Nehru is sustaining. If we do not do this, India will fail in its great mission. If we succeed in doing this, we shall blaze the trail for every country and the whole world.

The rural community in India must achieve its own welfare and this point the way to the welfare of mankind. Throughout Asia there are other rural communities. There is a great one in China. The message of the synthesis of material and moral advancement must, however, go out of India, the India of Gandhi and Nehru.

PHILOSOPHY OF BHOODAN.

G.Ramachandran,
Director, Gandhi gram and Secretary, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi.

Bhoodan, which has tended to become Gramdan, is not so much a philosophy as a programme of action here and now. It is the latest expression of Karma Yoga under the Indian sky and in terms of the immemorial tradition of the Indian spirit. A modern economic challenge is being met in a new and unexpected manner through moral power. Nevertheless Bhoodan, even as a programme of action, has advanced sufficiently to show the structure of thought and aspiration on which it is founded.

The action itself came from the challenge of a basic need on the soil of India. The need was clear beyond any doubt – the need came in a rising Tempe of clamor and conflict, the clamor for elementary justice and the conflict between the owners of land who did not themselves work on the and those who worked on the land without any land of their own. Land-hunger is now something like a forest fire throughout Asia. The problem came up quickly and faced the Government and the people of India in the context of the rising tide of Communism in Andhra and elsewhere in India. The Government could do nothing except employ the forces of law and order and then slowly and laboriously start the consideration of land legislation. The police and the army in Andhra could only win an external victory over the forces of violence of landless peasants seeking to seize land forcibly under the whip of Marxian ideology. Land legislation appeared in the picture too slow, half-hearted and, therefore, largely ineffective.

The answer to the challenge, therefore, did not come quickly or adequately from the side of the Government, even of independent and democratic India pledged to Socialism in theory. In any other country in the world a terrific struggle would have developed between the people and the Government under such

circumstance. But what happened in India was something unexpected and original. The solution came from the tapasya of the living Maharishi of India and the instinctive Willingness, which is the heritage of the history of India from the Buddha to Gandhi, to listen to the gentle voice of the Maharishi to effect a revolutionary change in the mental attitude affecting a deep and age-long economic problem. Maharishi Vinoba is thus the symbol of the new revolution which is a moral revolution registering itself in terms of an economic revolution.

The facts and figure of the Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement are unchallengeable. They are now available to everyone in the publications of the Sarva Seva Sangh. No one can any longer dispute the fact that those possessing land have voluntarily gifted away millions of acres to those who have no land at all, that whole village have come forward to offer all their land to be shared in common with every member of the village community and, what is more, all this has happened without calling up and awakening the power of anger, hate and violence which are the weapons in any such revolutionary change. Even this is not all. Not even the **power of non-violence** in terms of Satyagraha was pressed into service, but only **the gentleness of non-violence**, gentle words, gentle persuasion and gentle education. Looked at this way, the Bhoodan-Gramdan revolution is an advance on the Satyagraha revolution of Mahatma Gandhi which harnessed the power of non-violence on a collective scale to put pressure on those concerned. The advance is in two directions. The first advance is from the political to the economic revolution, the economic revolution being more difficult than the political because it means a movement within the community, an internal struggle and, therefore, a deeper movement going into the conscience of the people. The second advance was in the direction of gentler and, therefore, more undiluted non-violence. The Bhoodan-Gramdan revolution is, therefore, the profound symbolism of a deepening and advancing non-violent action on a wide area of national reconstruction. It is amazing how Indian intellectual are still cynical and skeptical

about the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement. The greatest single challenge to the intellect in India today is to understand this phenomenon and its tremendous and vital significance in the context of the modern world. Is not the modern world poised on the brink of annihilation through the threatened use of the most destructive and scientific weapons yet discovered in the arsenal of human hatreds and suspicious?

Let us now get at the veins of the philosophy of Bhoodan-Gramdan. The spiritual potentiality inherent in the human community is deeper and vaster than all the oceans put together. While some measure of advance has been made in history in the realm of physical sciences, there has been for a long time a blank in discoveries in the field of the human spirit. The blank has been lit up only seldom by great flashes of light in different items and climes. We have great research, experimentation, studies and organization in relation to the physical sciences. The spiritual sciences are hardly touched at all. In our own times it was Mahatma Gandhi who generated experimentation in this neglected field in the most significant manner. Did he not call his own autobiography, "My Experiments with Truth". He was the greatest scientist of the human spirit in India after the Buddha/ He proved that the power of love could accomplish great earthly tasks more than the power of hate. He proved that love in action, i.e., non –violence could be applied to national problems involving millions of people. This was as great a discovery as that of atomic energy and involved equally chain-reactions of incalculable extent. The philosophy of the Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement is that of the potency of love to solve a most difficult economic problem affecting million of people. This is once again the ever-lasting philosophy of the truth of life itself. It is not now. It has always been there is a challenge threatening to destroy the integrity of life. There is today a terrific threat to that integrity of human life. All the many centuries of living, endeavor, culture, science, ethical and political system, all there

appear to be a vain record in the face of the peril of the corrupted human spirit symbolized in the atom and hydrogen bomb.

The war stands averted for the time being out of the reach of mutual annihilation with victory for none and death for all. This itself is the greatest risk, that the entire fabric of modern life is balanced precariously on the point of fear. Fear makes man insane and the insane man can forget fear itself in the desperate attempt to strike down the enemy first. Any such mad man can throw a match stick on the hay-stack and set fire to the world. Now can this insanity be stepped? Surely, only through the conquest of fear it can. This cannot be done through technological developments however great and however essential/ this can be done only through the rediscovery and the reorganization of the moral and spiritual power in man. Such a rediscovery and reorganization must be in relation to the material challenges of living this earthly life. Moral and spiritual powers which run away to heaven leaving the world behind will have no meaning for mankind today. Either mental or spiritual power should transform the substance of earthly life or it will be put away altogether. Bhoodan-Gramdan applies moral and spiritual influence to the remaking of the economic structure of society/ in doing so, Bhoodan-Gramdan releases once again the incalculatable potency of the moral and spiritual reality locked up inside the heart and the brain of man. That sums up the philosophy of bhoodan-Gramdan movement.



Speech delivered by Sri.G.Ramachandran, Secretary, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, at the Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha on the 3rd May 1958, the Birthday celebrations of Lord Buddha

(Let me begin with a confession. I am not going to confess my sins to you. This woman here has begun to inspire me a great deal. I have long struggled to cross the frontier of my own religion and hold out my hands to people who are outside my frontiers and receive their hands in turn without any reservation anywhere in my heart. For thirty years now I have come across with people of various religions. I have not met many people who can do this. There are many people willing to step outside their religion but they too have some reservations. I have been seeking comrades in the march. Probably in all my life I have not met more than three or four people may be five people, who have come out of their own frontiers be with me in my pursuits. This woman sitting by my side was reciting wonderful hymns. The way she resided gave us the depth of the hymns. In India we seldom recognize greatness at the right time. We are wonderful fellows to accept greatness in the wrong time. This centre where she presides today has for its ideal, Sarva Dharmee Samanathva, it., I will give reverence to all the great religious traditions of the world. The word respect is very cheap and can keep inside it great many things. But reverence is either reverence or no reverence at all. Respect has a limit, but reverence has to be wholehearted. I want to strength her in the manner in which she is thinking to build up. That is the unreserved companionship of the fellow pilgrim in the march to the white throne of mercy.

The subject today is Lord Buddha. Imagine a time in this country when this man was living in this country 2500 years ago. What was India like then? This man, a born prince, became a pilgrim. All his teachings were done during his Pad

Yatras. He said I would walk from place to place. These all 2500 years ago, the very thought if it will give us the thrill. I say he is a man, because he never claimed divinity. Right through till the end of his life he said I am only a man like you. You take the history of the culture of India. It is the history of India from Buddha to Gandhi. If somebody understands the history of this country from Buddha to Gandhi, he understands India. He said something which no one has surpassed in all the human history. He said, 'Don't believe because it is written in the Vedas. In the time in which Buddha lived, Vedas dominated the life of India. He emerged out of the Vedic traditions. He said, 'don't believe because it is written in the Vedas, don't believe because a neighbor is saying to you, and don't believe because, I the Buddha is am telling as you. Put them to the test of reasoning and if it does not suit your understanding reject what I say. Is there any greater challenge to rationalism in human thinking than this? There is one rationalism which strengthens all these things. Reason about it, meditate about it and if what I say does not appear to you to be the truth, reject it. That was the Buddha.

He walked from place to place. He walked through the Indo-Gangetic Valley. He laid down something 2500 years ago which Gandhiji laid down 2500 years afterwards when he went to Bombay. Gandhiji said don't take anything with you more than necessary while on tour. Buddhas said the same thing. No monk should receive for himself alone. Whatever you receive it should be for all people. Wash your own clothes yourself. In fact Buddha was very much concerned with rule making and he did not make any rule which he did not follow. In this he was much closer to Gandhiji. What happened two thousand five hundred years ago is being continued today. Buddha performed Pad Yatras and sat under the groves. Vinobaji is doing the same. People used to come to him and talk to him in these groves.

There is a story in one of these groves. One day after his Pad Yatra he came into one of the groves and sat down. There was a woman who lost her only child.

Suddenly she said to herself, 'Master has come and he will give me back the child'. She went to him and wept and told him how his child, the only child was lost. She said that the Master should give her the child. Buddha told her: "Go and get a handful of mustard seeds from a house where there had been no death and I shall give back you child." The mother was happy and she went into the village, went from one house to another, knocked at every door and she could not find a house without death. In one house a father was dead, in another a son was dead and in yet another someone else was dead and so in the whole of the village there was not a single house which death has not visited. She came back to Buddha and told him what happened. Then Buddha explained to her how everyone should die today or tomorrow and that why one should not lament over the death of a child. She understood the reasoning and became one of his disciples. That was the story.

2500 tears ago there was the understanding of Buddhist psychology, momentariness of phenomenon and all that is a wonderful heritage for us. The personality of the Master as he moved up and down in this country for 40 years, has delivered us the message of love, the message of passion, that evil can be conquered only by good. Hinduism before Buddha is not wholly vegetarianism. But it is the Buddha who brought this compassion for all sensual beings to us. He made a nation into vegetarianism. Hinduism after the Buddha has never been the Hinduism before the Buddha. Even today Buddhism lives more in this country without the name, than in the countries where Buddhism is reigning. Adi Sankaracharya was a Buddha. We observe a great deal of Buddhism and Hinduism of today has received more from him. There has come from Gandhi which has transformed the whole of Hindu religion.

Then there is a great story about his death. One false story.

This is the birthday of Buddha, the day of the enlightenment and the day of the Nirvanan of the Buddha. I don't see there is any magic in it. But the coincidence is amazing. At the time when Buddha attained Nirvana Ananda, one of

his disciples and Chief among them who had a sense of humor in him, said that for some time now there would be no one making laws and rules for the disciple.

A question, very interesting question came before the Buddha. Sangham is the first Church in human history. Sangham is the first order of monks. The question was whether women could be admitted into the Sangham. He said we must admit women in absolute terms of equality. Then he also said, I have admitted women. But if I do not admit women, My Sangham will live up to 5000 years, but because I have admitted women, my Sangham will stand only for perhaps one thousand years.

If there is a society which is non-violent in itself, there women will lead men. Women made more contribution to the freedom struggle.

We should keep the essence of the teaching of Buddha in our mind. Often a charge is made that Buddha had not preached God. Now there is a story about it. When somebody went and discussed the matter of divinity with him, he said, let us understand human nature first and then it will be time for us to understand the divine nature. Don't come and drag me into the nature of divinity. He has nowhere said that there is no God. He has said when mankind understands itself and human life, we understand divinity. Buddha 2500 years ago told that we must live a life that will purify. Serving each other we come nearer to God. This is not atheism, but that is religion at its height. He said that right thinking, right meditation, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right recollectedness, and righty concentration are the eight fold path of living. His teachings are enshrined in dharma panda.

When Sanskrit was at its height, he taught in the language of the people, prakrudra.

In those days animal sacrifice was in every religion. All the ancient religions had animal sacrifice. He wandered from place to place when there was sacrifice of

animals; he went to the place of sacrifice and rescued the sheep. In Bible also Jesus is called the shepherd.

We now see the renaissance of Buddhism in Ceylon, in Burma in the countries of the south west Asia and you will remember recently the Prime Minister of Burma wanted to retire from his political career and join the sangem. In southern East Asia what we are now witnessing is the rebirth of Buddhism. We celebrated the 2500 anniversary of Buddha. During one of my recent tours I had an occasion to visit a monastery dug out from the earth. The whole monastery has been very well designed. There are rooms where four people can live. When monks advance in the training and sadhanas, they are put in rooms where there can live. And as each one step in advance goes, two are put in one room marches towards God. Finally there is a place where only one man can sit. That is the highest order of attainment of a monk when he is given this small single cell room. Then the story in the monastery is that only a very few people were qualified to sit in the single cell. Of all the monks in the monastery more people were in four-member room, the number becomes less and less as the rooms become smaller and smaller. Then you go to Malatya. It is a magnificent picture and ten thousand live there. I wonder at the engineers who built those building. There is on well and every student from any floor can draw water easily and the sanitary arrangement there was perfect. The ratio of student teacher in Nalantha was 10 to 1. For every 10 students there was one teacher and every book was meant for such a union.

In the wake of Buddhism there again was an outpouring of arty and beauty. There has been this all through the history in the wake of any religion, be it Islam or Christianity or Hinduism. The greatest beauty of stone and color come in the wake of Buddhism.

The first church in the world is the Buddhist Sangha. First monastery in the history is Buddhist monastery. First monks in the world are Buddhist monks. First hospitals for animals were built by Asoka.

Finally ending up with Gandhi is an unbroken continuity of our history throughout these 2500 years.

The challenge of today is whether we will be true to ourselves. Buddhism was born here and Gandhiji was born here. Even though Gandhi did not want any 'ism' there is his philosophy and method of work. Whether we will be true Buddha and Gandhi and their teachings is the question today.

MARGARET JONES : Memories.

(G.Ramachandran.)

I

I first met Margaret Jones in Sevagram. That was more than fifteen years ago. It was Asha Devi who said to me, “Here is some one very eager to be introduced to you”. I turned round and looked into a small smiling face. It was lit up by the sunshine of some innate happiness of the mind. When she spoke, her clear voice had the thrill of a bird. She was altogether small-sized but full of vitality. We shook hands and became friends at once. I guess Margaret became friends with many people at the first touch of their hands because of her own unfailing fund of friendship for everybody. After a little while some one persuaded Margaret to sing an English song. Never in all these years have I forgotten the thrill of hearing her singing voice for the first time. It is not often Indians appreciate English or European music. But as I listened to Margaret, I did not feel the slightest difficulty to grow warm with joy and understanding. I generally take a long time befriending anybody or getting befriended by anybody. That even such a fellow and Margaret became friends at once is entirely a tribute to her genius for friendship and the friendship endured without a break till the end. In after years in Wardha, Rasulia, Adyar, Gandhigram and other places I heard her singing again and again. Next to her friendship, her singing was her simple sweet gift to men and women everywhere.

II

Some years later, Margaret and I became unexpectedly fellow-scavengers under Gandhiji in the Sevagram Ashram. We would meet in the morning, clean up a number of latrines, attend to the composting of manure with the materials from the buckets out of the latrines and then have a good wash she literally laughed her way

through the work and made scavenging the most interesting work in the world for me.

There were hard and heavy parts of the work and also simpler and easier parts of it. Within a few days, we were engaged in a silent and secret game of attempting to take away from each other the hardest and heaviest parts of the work. I tried to spare her and she tried to spare me. The next step was that we allowed each other to succeed in this attempt alternately so that even on that score we wanted to help each other. Ultimately we found out each other's carefully planned steps in the game and then sat down and had a hearty laugh together. We then solved the problem by doing the harder and easier parts of the work together. And, as we worked, she would hum an English song and I a tune or two from Kerala or Tamilnadu. We came very close to each other during those days.

III

Then once she accepted my invitation to come and stay with Soundram my wife and me at our home in Adyar near Madras. She was with us for a month. Never for one moment did the thought come to us that she was stranger from a far-away country. She was one with us in the way she dressed in her beautiful saree, as she sat cross-legged on the floor eating from Indian plates and cups without accepting even a spoon and in all our family gatherings she was the most glad-hearted of us all. It was my old mother who said, with her Indian faith, "This woman must have been an Indian in her previous birth". Margaret replied with a twinkle in her eyes, "Mother, I do not know about the past, but if there is re-birth I am certainly going to plead with God to send me to India next time".

IV

There is another unforgettable picture. It is of a little Indian hut in the old Central Provinces now re-cast into the Madhya Pradesh. She lived in that hut with an Indian family ministering constantly to the villagers round about. She cooked her own simple meals and ate them with a couple of Indian children for company. In that hut she lived like an Indian peasant woman and she thoroughly enjoyed it. More than once her health broke down. She would not however quit. Underneath her laughter and songs she had the strength to persevere in the face of any obstacle. She was no gay-hearted weak woman she was strong in her devotion to duty and her ideals. I remember the deep affection Gandhiji had for her.

V

And finally, there is the picture of her as I saw her in England along with Doctors Tandy, Odilia and Mrs. Barbara Bruce. She showed me some of the beauties of the English countryside. I had gone to England from my visit to the United States. Before I left England she asked me, "You have come back very enthusiastic about the United States and the American People. What are your thoughts of what you have seen of England and the English people?" I told her how Indian she was to ask such a question. I said, "The U.S.A. was very friendly to me and tolerant and stimulating. But when I am back in India and remember England I shall have a deep sense of nostalgia". She looked disappointed and I discovered she did not quite realize what nostalgia meant. When I explained that I shall look back to my visit to England with a genuine sense of unfulfilled longing, she looked mollified and smiled again. That was the last I saw of her.

VI

Margaret was a living vessel of human sun-shine. Her gift to her friends was her spirit of friendship and her faith in man irrespective of religion, creed, and nationality or race. To her the unity of the human family was a simple but profound reality. Her power of sympathy and understanding was astonishing. At work she could slave away at a job, big or small without respite and without a murmur. She served India with a devotion and understanding that filled my mind with wonders.

PACIFISTS TO MEET IN BEIRUT

PEACE BRIGADE TO BE FORMED

An International Peace Brigade of the World War resisters Organization will take concrete shape at a conference to be held shortly in Beirut where pacifists will assemble from all over the world.

The idea of the Brigade was mooted at a meeting of the organization in December last year at Gandhi Gram, Madras. This meeting was convened by the Gandhi Peace Foundation.

Mr RR Diwakar, Chairman of the Foundation, told a Press conference in New Delhi on Thursday that the Beirut conference would think in terms of creating an international peace force which would be ready to go to any place in the world where an international conflict arose or disturbed conditions prevailed and try to intervene and see that the problem was solved through peaceful methods. In peace time the Brigade would devote itself to constructive work and serve society in the best possible way.

Replying to a question, Mr Diwakar said Mr Jai Prakash Narain might attend the Beirut conference.

BERLIN DISPUTE

Asked if the Peace Brigade would intervene in the Berlin dispute and meet the leaders of the two power blocs, Mr Diwakar said this would depend upon what programme the Brigade adopted for itself, "but possibly this is yet to come". Just now the sponsoring organization was writing out the pledge and a constitution and making preparations for the conference.

Mr Diwakar said they had just visited the USA, U.K. and the continent to contact individuals and organizations who took an interest in Gandhian ideals of peace. On behalf of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, he had enrolled several members like Mr Martin Luther King, the Negro pastor, Mr Horace Alexander, Mr Richard Gragg and Mr Steward Nelson, Dean of Harvard University. Mr Diwakar has received very encouraging response from pacifists and war-resisters who he met during his trip abroad.

In Boston the American Friends Service Committee and Friends of Reconciliation, New York, were working on to oppose nuclear tests. They were ready to carry on an antiwar propaganda even to the extent of passive resistance.

On the national level, Mr Diwakar said, the Gandhi Peace Foundation had started cadres of workers know as Shanti Sena who were working in different areas in Kerala, Assam and Jubbulpore to bring communal harmony and remove linguistic acrimony.



Gandhi and the deepening world crisis.

“GANDHI MARG” / October 1961

The shadow of another world war has deepened over humanity. Everyone knows that such a war would drive the world into annihilation. During many years the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A have piled up deliberately weapons of destruction of incredible magnitude. Within a few days, even hours of the start of a war, either of these powers can fling upon the other nuclear explosive which can wipe out their countries turning their boasted civilizations and ways of life into scorched deserts of death. Not only that but the after effects will mean the stunting and perverting of what may be left of millions of human beings into monstrosities. There is nothing to prove that there would be anything Christian about the nuclear weapons of neither Western Democracies nor anything Socialists about those of the Communist Block. Both the great powers and their allies are playing the identical diabolic game of naked and brute violence up to the limit of their capacity.

Behind us stand uncouth centuries of human endeavor for progress, culture, civilization and peace. We know something at least of traceable history from the Buddha to Gandhi. We have had the great religions and their ethical systems. We have listened to the compassion of the Buddha, the love of Jesus, the philosophy of Vedanta, the faith of Islam and last but not least to the Invincible non violence of Gandhi. We have had great cycles of culture which have come and gone leaving their mark upon the human mind. Poets, Philosophers, architects, painters, sculptures and musicians have added to the stature of man and pulled him up to higher levels of living. Above all, the progress of science has revolutionized life. Alleviating pain and liberating man from disease and poverty. And yet, why have we come to the brink of precipice without a parallel in human history? In answer to this question there flashes into our memory something that Gandhi wrote in 1925 in the pages of “Young India”. He was almost defining the seven deadly

evils of the modern world. They were politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice. Gandhi was evidently looking at the sharpest outlines of life when he drew up this formidable list of evils gripping the world today.

The Belgrade conference of Heads of States of Uncommitted Nations could do nothing more than to plead with President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev to come together and negotiate to avoid war. By a cruel irony of fate or an equally ruthless stroke of strategy Russia had already broken the ban against further nuclear tests even before the Conference met and headily had it ended when America did the same. Here is competition in the colossal misconduct of two great powers. The horrible race is now once again on. One wonders if it is not already too late to stop the irresistible drag towards the precipice. Just as the two leading powers are unable to extricate themselves from the coils of their own Karma, the Uncommitted Nations have also given an exhibition of their helplessness. It is certainly good to plead with Russia and the United States to come together to negotiate for Peace. The Belgrade conference has done well to press for this in full strength. But this was exactly what some of the identical leaders of Uncommitted Nations tried to do at the United Nations sometime ago and nothing came of it. It is too much to hope that by simply bringing President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev to talk to each other world Peace will be brought appreciably nearer. They did meet sometime ago in Vienna and it is just that meeting that started the widening of the cleavage. We have had nothing but explosions and counter explosions of temper since then. What the Belgrade Conference should have given thought to was the question of forging the political and moral sanctions making it difficult, if not impossible, for the two great powers to plunge the world into war. The extreme urgency of the crisis was realized at Belgrade, but there was neither the moral vision nor the Political courage to warn Russia and the United States that all the

Uncommitted Nations would be compelled to treat the aggressor as the enemy of mankind and to employ every available non-violent sanction against it.

Alas: there was no Gandhi or the full and unafraid voice of Gandhi at the Belgrade Conference.

There is no doubt that the issues of disarmament and peace will come up vigorously at the next session of the United Nations. There will be strong and brilliant speeches and some little lessening of the present tension. The leaders of Uncommitted Nations might succeed in pushing away the crisis for a time, however brief. But the time is more than ripe to face up to the challenge of forging every possible sanction to make war impossible now and hereafter. The question of total disarmament can be evaded any longer only at the peril of every other measure that might be devised to bring or preserve peace. Anything else than a firm decision for total disarmament will be a cowardly evasion and a shameless betrayal. If the next session of the United Nations will not commit every participating Nation to the programme of total disarmament, it would find itself soon travelling on the same journey which led the old League of Nations to utter bankruptcy and self-defeat. The least that the Uncommitted Nations can do if the great powers do not agree to total disarmament, will be to withdraw from the United Nations and to give the call for a World Disarmament conference outside the aegis of the U.N.O. Ultimately it will not even be the Governments of the Uncommitted Nations but their peoples who will have to bank together to resist war as the greatest of all evils in the world today. If the peoples from the Uncommitted countries would sound the bugle of total resistance to war, there can be no doubt that even the peoples of the countries of the great powers will rally to their side creating a World Peoples Revolution in favour of peace. At the moment we are all like the little birds making their nests in the crater of a Volcano which might explode any moment. Let no one treat with contempt the attempts that are being made by the Pacifists and the War Resisters in Europe and America and by

those who are building up the Shanti Sena in India to awaken the common people everywhere to stand together to resist war. To treat such attempts with scorn will be tantamount to saying that the people everywhere count for nothing in the terrible gamble into which their Governments have entered in blind self-interest and ruthless competition to get the better of each other. The people count today and will count more and more with every day that passes. All power is with the people and once the people fully realize the danger of war in the present world-context they will either compel their Governments to accept the inevitability of total disarmament here and now or tear them down as obstacles to the peace of the world.

No world teacher has a more significant message for the world today than Gandhi, the invincible Captain of non-violence. In resisting the evil of war in the world today we must study once again the techniques evolved by Gandhi for uniting millions of people in a non-violent revolution to achieve world peace. We repeat that we must not rest content with asking Governments to save the world but mobilize the conscience and the will of peoples everywhere to resist war. When we attempt to do this truthfully and fearlessly we shall at once find Gandhi at the top of the columns marching nimbly and leading us to peace and liberation. Only those who knew Gandhi or have very carefully studied his life and work can share in this seemingly impossible faith. But let us remember that Gandhi during his life time marshaled millions of the common people in India in a non-violent revolution which compelled the British to withdraw from the country. He taught us scientifically the techniques for uniting masses of the people for non-violent direct action. We must now readopt them to meet the present world crisis.

We therefore wish to raise a big question for thinkers in India and outside to answer. It is the question how Gandhian techniques of non-violent direct action can be applied today in every country in the world to compel Governments to commit themselves unreservedly to total disarmament without delay and hesitation. We

cordially invite thinkers and writers to join in a symposium to answer this question. We plead for fearless and clear thinking. We shall be grateful for a response from those most deeply concerned.

6-9-1961.

(G.RAMACHANDRAN)



EDUCATION FOR PEACE

(G.RAMACHANDRAN)

WOODBROOKE – 12-2-66

It is not that I am too old or weak to stand and talk. I have always had a feeling that if you sit and talk you are more completely master of your own thoughts than if you stand and talk. I do a lot of talking in India. What else is a Parliament for except for talking? I do a great deal of talking on public platforms and when you stand up you get a little excited for nothing. But when you sit and talk you do so quietly. So I ask your forgiveness that I am sitting and talking. Please do not take that is an act of discourtesy.

It is very kind of Donald Groom to have introduced me in the affectionate manner he did. We are old fellow pilgrims of the Gandhian way in India. We have known each other for at least 20 or 25 years and that is a long time for any friendship in the world. I have seen him at work and he has seen me at work. And nothing can establish a greater comradeship between men and women that working together at something you have passionate faith/ so we have worked together in that way and when he wrote to me that there would be certain engagements for me waiting in England I said Woodbrooke should be a certainty. I missed coming here some years ago. I was returning from the States and I had met Horace in the United States. He had written to somebody here and asked me not to Miss Woodbrooke, but last time I just could not make it. This time I made up my mind that I shall make it. I get back to London tonight and tomorrow at 10 A.M. I am flying out to Germany and in London I have been kept pretty busy thanks again to Donald. He is a bad task master. So I am deeply stirred that I am sitting with you in this place.

There are two priceless memories as I think of this place and I hope I am right. One is the memory of C F Andrews. I have sometimes thought that he was the

friendliest dearest and the noblest of Englishmen who ever came out of this island to the subcontinent called India. And if the work of a single person may be assessed as an Indian I think he did more to keep the mind of India and England together in the hardest days of our political controversies than any other Englishmen of this generation. He was my professor at the Visva Bharati University at Santiniketan. He deeply loved me and I deeply revered him. He has written about me, spoken about me, kept me in front of many friends in his time. Rev C F Andrews – Mahatma Gandhi once wrote in a friendly manner of interpreting these three letters by saying “Christ’s Faithful Apostle”. This testimony to C.F. Andrews from the man, who we sometimes think was the most Christ like man of this century, was the testimony of one great man for another. So we remember Andrews in India. There is a memorial to him at the Visva Bharati University called the C F Andrews Hall of Christian Fellowship.

Then I remember Horace. I found myself the other day in London with a paper like this in my hand. The day I was to speak was there. The subject I was asked to speak about was there. But next was Horace to speak. So I deputized for him at the meeting in London. I think he is in line in the Andrews’ tradition. Great friend of India, good friend of Gandhi and knew Gandhi intimately. And it is in the confluence of the mind of Horace and Gandhi that the Fellowship of Friendship of Truth was born. I probably was one of the busy midwives who brought the child to birth in the city of Hyderabad, many years ago when the F.F.T. was born and ever since I have been very closely associated with the F.F.T.

There is only one more name I wish to recall and if I do not it would be a great dereliction of duty, the name of S.K. George who was the first Secretary of the F.F.T. He was an Indian Christian educated in Oxford, wrote a brilliant book called Gandhi’s Challenge to Christianity to which Dr Radhakrishnan, the President of the Republic of India today wrote an Introduction. He is no longer

with us. But for the first 5-6 years he was the Secretary of the Fellowship of Friends of Truth. And we have received from him an impress of his soul on this movement in India which nothing can wipe out. He and I were very dear friends. And in the last few years when he was very ill I took him to my place called Gandhigram, nursed him and he practically died in my hands at the end of six months of illness. So let us recall these fine and noble spirits leaving a great legacy to us to cherish and to hand down to other people everywhere.

Then today I see that the subject you have given me is Education and Peace; or Peace and Education. Whichever way you like. Now let us look at peace fairly and squarely. It is the biggest question mark today before human culture and civilization. We have had 2 wars and we know the incalculable losses in material and spiritual substance which mankind incurred during these 2 wars. The second one was particularly devastating and the memory of the horrors and the cruelties and the sufferings of the war are still with us. But what has happened can you tell me to the mind of man, what has happened to the soul of man and what has happened to the spirit of man? In these countries of Western Europe and Europe as a whole and in the countries of North American continent we have a rich civilization and a great culture, centuries of civilization and centuries of culture.

We have had great philosophers in Western Europe and the culture of Europe which is really the culture and Americans whatever they might say about it. Great philosophers, great thinkers and superb poets. Which Language has given the world finer poetry than the English language? Centuries and centuries of human effort were there to build up human life on a proper basis. And yet it looks as though it is not totally impossible that there might be another war. I see among men and women in these great countries of European culture and civilization and also in the more ancient countries of Asia like India, like Burma, Ceylon, Japan far war and this mighty think called China, in these counties. A total lack of the

awareness of the human soul is seen in regard to the issue of peace and war. I often compared it to the sparrows building their nests in the crater of a Volcano. They fly up and down in the crater. Build little nests; little knowing that someday the fiery Lava can burst out from within and these nests would be swept away like dead leaves in a storm. But we are not sparrows. We are human beings, inheritors of great traditions of thinking, inheritors of great culture, philosophy, religion, poetry, music; I remember one of your great poets W.B. Yeats saying somewhere how can man go to war with each other forgetting the traditions of music and poetry. If we can sing to each other and recite to each other, said W.B. Yeats, there might be no war at all and all the time we are singing, reading, writing, but complete total insane unawareness of what might happen. We have piled up instruments of destruction without a parallel in history. The Americans say we have stock piles of atomic and hydrogen weapons which can destroy the world ten times over. I kept on asking them, having destroyed it once, how do you calculate you can destroy it 9 times more again? Who will calculate, not you, because you will be destroyed also.

And the Russians are growing; but even if they cannot destroy the world 10 times over, they can compete with the United States and destroy you and me six times over. There is a button which if the President of the United States presses tomorrow something terrific and incalculable can happen in the world. Within a few seconds, hundreds and hundreds of bombers equipped with Hydrogen and atomic bomb will be over the skies of Russia and before you know where you are a 100 million to 150 million of men women and children would have died in the Communist countries of the world.

I have not had the occasion to discuss this either with President Kennedy or President Eisenhower. But I had the Privilege of discussing this with Prime Minister Khrushchev. I went to him with an Indian delegation; discussed this with

him. He said, yes, I too have a button. And if I press it, within a few seconds intercontinental ballistic missiles will rush through space at a speed of 3000 miles an hour and hit every city of the United States like a shot hitting the bulls eye, as one would say. So there are 2 nations in the world; two political systems in the world, ready and armed if necessary for mutual total destruction of the world. And what are we to do, you and I, every one of us? Just like the sparrows lying across the creator of the volcano, not realizing what can happen.

Now do our institutions of learning, Oxford University, Cambridge University, Birmingham University, seats of learning tell people the truth about the world today? I have come to a personal definition of my own about education. Education is the calculated deliberate long drawn process of hiding the truth from the boys and girls of the world. How long can this go on? I challenge men in the Universities of India about this as I am doing it here and may challenge there is even more student than here because I am sitting with friendly people, I don't want to challenge anybody. But if education does not tell the men and the women, boy and the girl in the world what is really happening in the ultimate in relation to civilization and culture, we are hiding the truth from men. And there is also the theory that you should hide the truth, otherwise, people would be terror stricken and might be incapable of action when crisis comes. But I ask what action because the crisis will leave no time for anybody to act before you know where you are, the world is destroyed.

Why don't we sit down and think about this? Why do not men and women behave like deems who can think out problems? We think out many problems. Technological problems of incalculable complexity we are facing and solving problems and terrific political problems. We apply our mind to these and the human mind is not yet proved itself to be as bankrupt as too incapable of solving any problem whatsoever. My faith is deep and great in mind for man will face this

problem. I am a pessimist. I am not a cheap optimist either. It is so easy to be a cheap optimist and say God is in heaven and all is well in the world as Pipa sang in Browning Poem. I sometimes think God is in the heaven and all is wrong with the world.

I am remembering a joke of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in India. You will enjoy the joke; Pandit Nehru came to visit Mahatma Gandhi, a little after the 2nd World War broke out tremendously agitated. He was the arch enemy of Fascism and Nazism. There was no leader of Asia who has warned the Europe about what was going to come, Nazists Storm and the fascist crisis, greatly agitated. He discussed with Gandhi what India should do and he was coming out and the Mrs Gandhi met him at the door of the beautiful mud hut, artistic and exquisite mud hut in which Gandhi lived. The moment I say mud, don't conjure up a vision of filth, uncleanliness, and insanitation. If mud could make the house that Gandhi lived in, let us all live in mud houses. So as he was coming out Mrs Gandhi, old woman, met him and they greeted each other; and as Nehru was taking leave, Mrs Gandhi said, in the traditional way of an old mother blessing the son, 'May the spirit of God go with you'. Nehru wield round quickly, looked at her and with a twinkle in his eyes said, 'What the spirit of God; God is asleep, so soundly asleep I do not know what can make him up and walked out. That was the 2nd World War: So occasionally one thinks that God almighty is asleep. But I do not think so. Personally I am a believer and I am willing to argue with any Jawaharlal Nehru anywhere in the world and prove that God never goes to sleep. That is a different matter.

Now education and peace are inseparable. And if you keep education and peace separate from each other, your education is a fraud and you peace is a myth. You need education in every single thing in the world. And India now for instance, it is an era of training. No fellow is allowed to do anything in India without some

training. Even a cook has to be trained. There are places where the cooks are trained, the servants are trained, I suppose that is an old thing with you in this country. We seem to imagine that we can make peace, establish peace, and maintain peace and sustain peace without any training of the citizens amusing bankruptcy of thinking. How can you build up a citizenship accusing to go to war for anything in the world and saying peace is absolutely necessary today for the bare survival of man on the planet? To train the citizen in that context do you think no education is necessary? Total dark bankruptcy of human thinking. Now Gandhi came to India. I realize that it is impossible for me to paint you the image of Gandhi, as he was in India. He knew something of it. My dear friend Barbara sitting there, who lived with me and worked with me in India. She knows something. Gandhi was above all an experimenter. He called his own biography; he did not say M K Gandhi—a biography: he called it the story of my experiments with truth. Deliberately, indicating of the mind of Gandhi, he called his biography 'My Experiments with Truth' the story of my experiments with truth. He was continuously experimenting with food and made a lot of us suffer occasionally including Barbara sitting there. He experimented in politics and sometime committed, in his own words, Himalayan blunder. There are his own words. He experimented with almost everything that came in his way and he was a fearless experimenter and he experimented above all with peace, nonviolence were convertible terms. There could be no peace without nonviolence and nonviolence meant anything but peace. He once said, love as an idea, love as a concept, love as God, love as everything. The moment love becomes action, inevitably, inescapably it becomes nonviolence. And he challenged the thinkers of India to prove at any time anywhere that violence could incarnate in love and then in action in nonviolence. It could not; Gandhi was not so much a theorist. I have called his philosophy, I have invented a couple of words of my own and British friends like you might dismiss it as thoroughly wrong English.—Spiritual embarrass deeply

rooted in the values of the human spirit. But all the time watching the world understanding the realities of the world scene and making his non-violence, an instrument for immediate action here and now. That was Gandhi's spirituality. He once said to us, some of us who were sitting around, how you might practice peacefully the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and then with a twinkle in his eyes you might ever practice one hundred and one commandments of Gandhi, but if when the challenge of a moral situation confronts when there is more challenge to you and you evade that issue then you commit moral and spiritual suicide. Nothing else matters. You might have carefully and faithfully fulfilled all the commandments, but if you turn away from the challenge of a moral situation evade it, go round it and get away from it then you have committed moral and spiritual suicide. So we come back to this man and the way he educated the people of India in the techniques of peaceful action. He had a two sided programme, one side was constructive work among the people and the other was nonviolent direct mass action in which million would be involved. What was constructive work? Go among the people identify yourselves with the aspiration and needs of the people and help the people in order to attain those things for which they aspired and for which there was bitter need in their life. Day to day constructive work among the people and the world constructive programme between one of the mightiest thing in India under Gandhi. He was involved in it. My friend Barabara was involved in it. I was up to my neck in it and I am up to my neck in it even today. There can be no peace, no non-violent action unless it is based on day-to-day constructive work. Now I am straight away telling you what many of us would say in those days that there could be no non-violent action without constructive work. And what was constructive work--Training in non-violence. So we used to say wherever constructive work went on it was Gandhi's academy for the non-violent soldier. You talk of military schools and military academies for the training of the soldiers Gandhi's academy for the non-violent

soldier. You talk of military schools and military academies for the training of the soldiers Gandhi covered India with net work of institutions where a millions of people were involved in what we called them constructive work and he himself would laugh if you asked him a question on the subject and said that he world say 'yes'. If you want to be a non-violent soldier, be trained in the academy of constructive work. I cannot go in the schools of constructive work into greater details. We must think of education in terms of peace on a very much wider base then school education and college education and university education. I think this is the best part of human education if you come to think about, if fully. The education of the citizens of tomorrow and the citizens devoted to peace a mortal enemy of war. That education is something very much wider and deeper than the education in schools and colleges. But even into the schools and colleges this education not going in? What can be a constructive programme for England upon which you can train your people in the art of non-violent in the science of non-violence, I do not know. If I were one of you living here for the next 20 year I can produce your constructive programme. But may be Donald knows and may be many of you know what is a constructive programme in a country like this. Primarily it is the turning of the mind towards the values of peace as against the values of war. If this initial baptism of the soul does not take place then nothing fellows. And initial turning of the mind towards the radiance of love and a working hypothesis with which you began that, that power of love can be harnessed into dynamic action. If that faith is not there and we don't start with that faith then we get nowhere. When will that faith come from? Only the great God can answer. But may be we all have that faith in us. Only we do not know. We do not remove away from our souls and look into this truth which is hidden inside the heart and mind of man. So the first thing is to turn the mind towards the radiant of love and to say to yourself to myself that power is the greatest power on the face of the earth and it can be harnessed to programmes of retentive action. If you start with that then step

by step you build up what one might call education for peace – constructive work. It was not that Gandhi theorized about this or dreamt about this or wrote about this. He put this thing in the life of millions of people. Let me give you one little instance. I do not know how much time I should take. I shall cover my ground quickly and then let us have question and answers. There is a Taluk in Gujarat when Gandhi was born. It is now the State of Gujarat in India. And there was Taluk or small area inside Gujarat Taluk is something like you country or smaller. It was called Bardoli ‘BARDOLI’ and the second great non-violent revolution in India was going on. It was called the Salt Satyagraha movements. Some people have heard about it; some people have not heard about it. When Gandhi started talking about Salt Satyagraha there was great laughter at him. Gandhi was going to break the Salt Law and the rulers in Delhi and Simla said “yet. Let him break all the salt laws he likes” and they added with cruel criticism let him eat all the salt he manufactures. That was how it started. But as the Salt Satyagraha movement developed India began to shake from end to end and the reverberation of that struggle went far beyond the frontiers of India. It was during that struggle that this incident happened Gandhi was shut up in prison; Nehru was shut up in prison; Sardar Patel was in prison. Every authentic leader of India was in prison. Because prison going became a part of the game in India. In those great days of our history. Indira Gandhi, the present Prime Minister of India was in prison, her father was in prison, and her mother was in prison and so on. But even if all the leaders of India were in prison the movement was developing and growing masses of the people leading on to non-payment of taxes. If you refuse to pay taxes to you Government, millions and millions refused to pay and will not be coerced to pay; then you penalize the Government. So in this area of Bardoli there was a proposal that non-payment of taxes must be given. The British got very upset and when you are upset you become very angry. When you are angry you hit out for all your work. A meeting was programmed in Bardoli. Who called the meeting not the men of

India of Bardoli, because all the organizers were in prison. The woman of India called a meeting. And they said “at 3 P.M. tomorrow such and such a place a meeting will be held and what for – to organize more and more support for the mass movement. As soon as the British knew that there would be a meeting a prohibitory order was served that for the next 10 days no meeting should be held in the whole area of Bardoli. This was the technique of the struggle. We would say we are going to do something. They will say no we would not let you do something. Then we say ‘yes’ we are going to do that something and we start doing that; then prison, bullets, lathi charges and so on. So at 3 P.M. the meeting was to be held. And there was a woman called Ganga Behn. Gang is the name of river of Ganges in the Indian language Ganga – beloved name in India. I found out in Russia when I went there they called Volga Mother Volga. Even under the Communist the Motherhood of Volga has not been abolished. And so Ganga is the mother. So Ganga Behn. Behn means sister. She had been trained by Gandhi in his Ashram. She went round from house to house saying tomorrow at 3 P.M. we shall held a meeting and there is a prohibitory order. How many of you will come. One woman said I will come, I will come, I will come and about 300 to 400 woman agreed to come to the meeting, mind you not men. So at 3’o clock a little before 3’o clock from the distance there arose a magic of the song of the non-violent revolution, not a political song, not a song of violent revolution. “Raghupathi Raghava Rajaram, and Patheetha Pavan Seetharam” taking the name of the God. So the song came and then police knew that the satyagrahies were coming. So the police truck drew out and the policemen armed with lathies jumped out to deal with the situation. Procession came, took their place in the pointed spot where the meeting was to be held and Ganga Behn stood up to make her speech in Gujarat. So the Inspector of Police marched up to her and said “stop this meeting”. He took out a watch and said “I give you 5 minutes to disperse; if you do not disperse I will break up the meeting by force”. So we had a wonderful technique of meeting such

situation. So Ganga Behn said “sit down” and 400 women sat down. No standing up. It is far more difficult to break the head of a person sitting than the head of a person standing. So the 400 people sat. Minutes were ticking away. Again the Inspector of Police stepped up and said “You have two minutes more. Will you step the meeting and disperse?” So Ganga Behn turned him and cracked a joke “Have you brought order for the dispersal of the meeting from Mahatma Gandhi. Then I shall disperse”. That enraged the policemen and within a few minutes there was a brutal charge on the women. They had an instrument called the lathi – strong bamboo and at one end a big knob of brass and they deal with it to the right and left. And the story is that half the women at that meeting had their sarees drenched with their own blood, but not one would stand up or run away. Then they were dragged into the trucks and taken into the police lockup. But 3 days the news of this was not allowed to be given to any paper of India. But we had our own underground postage of the non-violent revolution and so the things went from mouth to mouth and mouth to mouth that this had happened in Bardoli creating a terrific stir in India. Lord Irwin was upset. He was the Viceroy of India. I am not going into the sequence of the whole story. But this woman Ganga Behn had been trained by Gandhiji and he had trained the women of that area. So there is such a thing as the teaching of non-violence just as there is a technique of violence of war you train the soldier. It is a laborious programme. Equally there is the training of the non-violent soldier. It is possible it has been done and it has been bound to be irresistible when it begins to operate. Then what can we do? Friends like you should sit down and plan out the education in non-violence. And just as you release the incalculable power from within an atom and then subject it to a chain reaction with the one and is the atom and at the other end is the most explosive power in the world. Equally release the power from the minds of man. Just anybody suggests that atom contains something more than the human soul can contain. Release the incalculable power of the human spirit from every individual mind and soul. Link

them together harness them together, train them to act together and there is nothing in the world which can resist the power of such organized love when it begins to operate. This means a complete revolution in education. Who is a revolutionary in this country? In my country, I have one Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the land gift, leader who has collected 500 million acres of land in India from those who have too much for those who have nothing the Bhoodan movement. But even he, it is not adequate for this world revolution for which we are waiting. And this world revolution in education has come not from one country. It must rise in a crescendo from one country of the world. Because those who will suffer in a war are you and me, the men and the women, children of the world, common men, millions and millions of common people will be the sufferers. So to turn the mind towards peace would be a very revolutionary programme and I am not satisfied at all that neither you nor me, you in the country nor me in my country alone and all my co-workers are sufficiently aware of the challenge of history to us today. We want peace and you cannot have peace without education. There is no other instrument for the bringing of peace than education and in any ultimate remedy there is nothing more revolutionary in the world than education. Every other revolution will have finally come to the door of education to become stable and purposeful. So let us plan out, think out. Don't come to wood brook for a nice time, a little meditation, a little contemplation, and little discussion. The challenge is far more serious. The challenge is to everything, man has created through uncounted centuries in terms of moral and spiritual values. They can all be swept away in a flood of blood and violence if there is another war. We must not allow this to happen. If we allow a third War to come then we are finished, and with us the whole of civilization would have been finished. Let us take time by the fore lookers as one would say and that something come out of wood brook which will have a message for the whole of England and perhaps even for my country. If that does not happen then the whole of this is in vain here. And all that I am doing is in vain at the other end,

because it is this test above all tests, whether we shall let culture and civilization and the rose itself to perish in an utterly insane programme and process to which we seem to be drifting daily, daily, daily. Terror is not going to be a sufficiently good deterrent. Terror has always been with us before every war broke out. Terror can hold us back for a little time. But it cannot hold us back for all time. And somebody said a mad man can light a match box and throw it into a haystack and the world will go up in flames. Anything can happen. Let us pull out. Let us pull out. Don't be indifferent about the supreme issue. Let each one talk to the other; let us all plan together the biggest and the most constructive and at the same time the most revolutionary programme of peace education.

My Foundation in India, the Gandhi Peace Foundation is at this job now. Progress is very slow. But I am confident that the message of the Gandhi Peace Foundation is soaking slowly into the minds of the people of India. Stretch out your hands from here and we will stretch out our hands from there and let us hold our hands together, that England and India together. In the history of providence might work out something far better than we have known till now in civilization and culture. Now thank you ladies and gentleman.

I have done nothing except to pose the problem. It is not for me to give the final answers. I see the danger which is indescribable. I see the possibility of averting that danger. I deeply believe that man will avert that danger, because there is something in man whichever recedes from a challenge, in a final analysis at anytime. But I don't want to become complacent. We have seen two world wars. What can prevent a 3rd world war? Not cheap optimism. But education for peace and peace and education becoming indivisible in the programme of human regeneration. Let us go deeper into this matter and let us now make this into a kind of study group looking at this problem. Thank you very much.

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**A note of discussion with Vinobaji on the 20th and 31st May,
1961, at North Lekhimpur (Assam).**

I spent a few hours with Vinobaji on the 30th and 31st May at North Lakhimpur in Assam. I found him in excellent health. After years, he has started taking some cereals. He walks long distance in heat, sold and pouring rains. We discussed the following points:-

1) Pad Yatra

I raised the question as to how long did he intend to continue his Pad Yatra. I told him the conditions in the country were such that a more mobile Vinobaji would be of greater use. With great feeling he replied that sometimes people forget his main mission. His main mission was the satisfactory solution of land problem not in a limited sense but in the broad context or re-organization of Indian economy. He said that unless that was satisfactorily done he could not give up his Pad Yatra. He said that land constituted and would constitute for some time to come a major sources of livelihood for the rural people. This was realized by many. But realization was no solution unless concentrated efforts were made. There was not much evidence of such a conscious effort to provide land to the landless. Their number was not small. Their conditions were pretty bad. It was a genuinely human problem. Whereas many others were simply created.

2) National Integration :

I apprised Vinobaji of the discussions that we had in the Working Committee and in the A.I.C.C. I also apprised him of our approach and the possible solution. We discussed the attitude of the Press. He narrated how the newspaper in Assam and West Bengal were behaving even towards a person who was not directly involved in politics. Some Bengali people met him in the form of a deputation. He advised them that it was not proper for Bengali to create an impression that they could not carry on with their neighbors whether on the east or the west. Those were merely a piece of advice, more meant as a hint than any criticism. His words were twisted by the Bengali Press and he was accused of so many things. Similarly, once he advised the Assamese people that they had become “More of babus than babus themselves”, and they should accustom themselves to physical labour. There was an impression that they were shunning it. According to him this was the root cause of the problem. If a barber was required he should either come from Bengal or Bihar. If a labourer was required or a Dhobi was required that too come from outside. This was also twisted by the Assamese Press and he was taken to task.

He felt that the Press in India should have been a source of strength to those who were functioning at a constructive level. But it was unconsciously or consciously nursing the elements of disruption. He realized that Congress could do very little in this matter because it would be misunderstood. He felt that in the present mood, he did not know if anyone could be so influential to divert the energies of the two Presses to constructive channels. The best thing according to him was to approach the people directly and it was only when the people realized the dangerous consequences of the present attitude of the Press that the Press will come round.

3) National Integration:

Hindu-Muslim Problem: He felt that the problem of National Integration-Hindu-Muslim relationship was not a simple problem. As far as Hindu-Muslim relationship was concerned, our relations with Pakistan were a constant source of irritation and even distract amongst the members of the two communities. He enquired if there was any possibility of any turn in relations between India and Pakistan. I told him that Pakistan has staked everything upon the Kashmir issue: its approach to the Kashmir issue was apart from being harmful to India, not realization. Pakistan does not realize the consequences of change in the status quo in Kashmir. India will turn into a furnace. Neither Panditji, nor the Government of India nor the Congress can stop the resulting consequences upon the Muslim minorities in India. This is not a question of treating the Muslims as hostages or issuing any threat. There is something like 'temper' of the people. The people's temper today so far as the Kashmir issue is concerned is clearer. If on an issue like Beriberi there was so much of heart burning, if on the question like Leganum there are so many difficulties, we have to imagine the consequence that will follow if we were to deal with the Kashmir on another basis than that of a status-quo.

He enquired if Mr.Brchi had any proposals to make to India. He felt that Pakistan would not have sent Mr.Brohi unless he had some such proposals. I told him that I did not know about this matter, but in the background of what I had explained I said, so far as the Kashmir issue is concerned neither Pakistan can touch the occupied Kashmir side nor India can touch the Jammu and Kashmir area.

He then told me that discussing this question with some foreigners he had suggested a scheme/ the scheme was that by a treaty, India, Pakistan and Kashmir could have a common defense, a common communications systems and a common foreign policy. I told him that in the given situation it is

difficult to take up any such proposal for consideration, because the basis of foreign policy and of defense in the two countries was fundamentally different. It may be at some future date these questions may be considered. But even for that there should be a return to normal atmosphere.

Vinobaji then said that so long as this question was not settled, it could continue to exercise a deleterious effect on the relationship of the two communities.

Coming to the question of representation in the Services and other economic advantages flowing from a common citizenship, he was not sure whether it would be possible to fulfill that ideal in the Police and the Military howsoever much one might take it. This was also a reflex of the prevailing climate between India and Pakistan.

4) Integration:

Approach to the People: we then discussed the question of creating proper atmosphere in the Country. I conveyed my suggestion that I had made to Panditji that a few leading personalities in the Nation may meet together and think about this problem at a national level. I also suggested to him that in case such a thing were to become possible, it would be desirable if he also attended the meeting. While he agreed that holding of such a meeting in Assam would not be desirable from many points of view, he felt that he would not like to go out of his way to attend any such meeting. This should happen in the normal manner.

He asked me if other people would not give it a political colour? I told him that the presence of Dr.Rajendra Prasadji, Dr.Radhakrishnanji and the presence of men like him who were not directly concerned with politics would be a deterrent against any such impression being created. He nevertheless gave caption that if such a meeting were held it should be done

in a normal manner without allowing any room for suspicion that the Congress was trying to draw support from non-Congress elements.

He asked if any agenda was prepared? I told him this idea was mooted only a few hours before.

He thought that it would be good if this programme of integration was implemented through some constructive work. According to him merely an intellectual approach without continuous contact with the masses and persistent effort to change their approach would not be possible except through the medium of some kind of a constructive activity. I tried to find out from him if he had any programme in mind. It appeared he was thinking of two items. One was basic education and the other was Panchayati Raj. He wanted us to try to change the psychology of younger men and women by proper education. Then we could have at least built up a protective wall against the present tendencies being passed on to a younger generation. This was possible only through basic education. He was trying to do it in his own way through younger men and younger women. Though no ostensible result followed, he saw that slowly the younger people were beginning to think in a different way. There was a new slant in their thinking.

As regards Panchayati Raj, he felt that if this institution is to be useful at all, the Congress should accept two conditions. It should avoid participation in elections as a political party and secondly it should encourage to the best of its ability the principles of near unanimity in elections. He felt that but for these the conditions will be much worse than what they are now and it would be difficult to cope up with the consequence that would follow. He felt that if the Congress accepted these two things in course of time other parties will have to follow suit and we shall have affected the thinking of elderly people. He gave the instance of Indore Municipality where he had suggested the same thing. The Congress

President had written to them. This was, however, a question which required to be followed up.

He then referred to the question whether at any such meeting an effort will be made to induce Rajaji or Kripalaniji to participate in it. I told him that there was no detailed discussion about this question. But I was not looking at the question from the angle of an all Parties Conference. I was looking at the question from the broad national angle.

Vinobaji said that he would be available for consultation on this question whenever it was felt necessary, but it would not be possible for him to make any change in the present routine.

5) Chinese Violations:

Vinobaji himself raised the question of Shri Jai Prakash Narayan's suggestion about settling the border question with China. I told him that China was trying to complicate the matter by entering in to negotiations with Pakistan. In the context, any question of negotiation much less arbitration becomes unthinkable. Again, consent of the Government of India for reference of the matter to arbitration may also be construed as endorsing the Chinese view that there was a pending dispute between the two countries over the border question, whereas so far as India was concerned, India was clear that these areas belong to India. We have tried to establish this position through the documents produced at the time of the officials meeting. Vinobaji then put it to me "supposing Chinese withdrew to their original positions, would the Government of India agree to refer the matter to arbitration?" I said that it was a hypothetical question and this was a matter of such great importance that it should not be treated on a hypothetical basis.

He then enquired of the existing position. I said that so far as violations were concerned, the Chinese have not encroached upon any

further area as far as my information want. Our effort was to keep this issue out of the cold-war zone. We were watching the developing conditions. As a result of the officials discussion between the two countries, we have been able to place the relevant material before our people and the world. It has gone a long way in clearing the air in India about the genuineness of our case. There is a marked shift in world opinion also which was previously doubtful about the merits thereof.

Vinobaji felt that this problem was of a character which required to be patiently handles and he was glad that the necessary patience was being exhibited.

6) Assamese-Bengalese Issue:

We then discussed the Assamese,, Bengalese issue. I apprised him of our present approach to the problem. I told him that we felt that if we approach the either side with a formula howsoever reasonable that formula might be, there was the ghost of a change of its acceptance. We were, however, throwing out hints as to the way both the sides should approach the problem and were helping the process of normalization. For instance we are clear on the Mohakama Parishad issue. That clause should go as soon as possible and we have made it clear to the members of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committees as well as the Chief Minister of Assam that the earlier it goes, the better for both the sides. On the issue of Bengali as an official language for the whole State along with Assamese we were similarly throwing out hint to the Bengali people will not be able to fulfill in any case and they should be satisfied with Bengali language for the Cachar area. This is not a moment when we could issue a mandage or a directive because both the sides were function under immense pressures generated by people who want disruption in that area.

Vinobaji agreed with this line.. He thought that nothing could be done unless tempest cooled down a little. But he was clear that any formula that would be evolved would have to be on the basis of Assamese as the single official language for the whole State though Bengali may be an official language for Cachar and hill languages for hill regions. Any other basis would result in upsetting the conditions in the entire area for he was feeling that the people in Assam were convinced that they had better six districts formed into a State with Assamese as the single official language than have a bigger State with two languages. They would not accept any such position.

He also felt that any other solution imposed on Assamese people would result in creating confusion also.

He drew my attention to another problem which was likely to create difficulties for the Assam Government. That was the problem of infiltration of East Pakistani Muslims. He said that while the Government of Assam had denied that there was any infiltration on a large scale, he felt that the Assam public opinion was getting restive on this point. According to him the East Pakistani Muslims came as relatives of the Assamese Muslims. After a time they purchased lands from plain-tribal's or occupied aluvial lands on the Brahmaputra banks. In the meeting of the District Congress Committee also this point was raised by a tribal though a Muslim of the District Congress Committee furiously protested against it.

He next referred to the order of the Assam Government by which Sanskrit and Arabic were treated as optional second languages. He did not agree with this view because in his opinion that would go to accentuate the differences further. Assamese Muslims and the Bengali Muslims knew Assamese and Bengali and to create a change in the existing situation could neither give satisfaction to them nor work for integration. He was clear that it was not also in the interest of Muslim minority to get involved in the

language agitation either for Assamese or for Bengali because this would facilitate giving a communal turn to the entire language agitation and convert it in to a communal warfare.

According to him the root cause of the whole trouble in Assam was that Assamese were not prepared to perform manual labour. They had therefore to depend upon outsiders which again they did not like. He gave an instance of Assamese reaction to the Shanti Sena workers coming from outside. Such was the reaction that Vinobaji had to send back the non-Assamese Shanti Sena Workers to their own places. This has created a problem for him. Though he has received a large number of Gram Dan Villages. While he could get lady workers from Assam, he could not get any male workers and he could not also invite workers from outside. He was at a loss to understand how to function in the midst of this contradiction.

7) Obscene Posters:

He enquired about the posters campaign and the legislation that he was told was being considered. I did not know about it. He explained that while he would not like to be deflected from his main work, he attached importance to this campaign because it was having a terribly bad effect upon the minds of younger people. He had styled this exhibition of sensuality as free compulsory primary education. He drew a distinction between the exhibition of films in the Cinema houses and the exhibition of posters outside. So far as the films were concerned only those who were prepared to pay would see them and one could infer that they belonged to that class who saw no objection to those films. But so far as posters were concerned they hurt not only one's eyes, but one's whole conception of human relationship especially the relationship between the males and the females. He said that sometimes these posters contained matter which had been rejected by the

Censor and sometimes they are imaginary. In Indore, according to him, the actress who was shown on the poster herself denied having given any such pose.

8) Chambal Ghati Accused:

We then discussed the problem of Chambal Ghati accused. I showed him the note which I had addressed to Shastriji on the subject. He said that if the local leaders were satisfied he was satisfied too.

9) Third Plan:

We discussed the Third Five Year Plan. He was waiting for Shrimanji. He laid great emphasis up on employment orientated industries in the context of the rising population.

10) Emphasis on Spiritual Aspect :

He finally touched up on the subject of spiritual vacuum that has been caused in the country. He said that unless we emphasize the spiritual aspect as distinguished from the religious aspect side by side with material development, he was afraid that people would forget that there was a man like Gandhi or he had anything useful to recommend to them that would serve their interest. He was unhappy about the campaign against Panditji. He felt keenly about it. He suggested that there should be a continuous discussion with the people with a view to enable them to understand the realities of the situation so that they might not get affected by this campaign of vilification.

I have taken up this self-suffering for:

(1) Finding more trust and compassion : and

(2) Sincerity in work.

To me sincerity is God himself. For, it is the need of the time. I have always striven for that and whatever I am today is due to this persistent pursuit of it. And whatever doubts I encounter in this, I feel I should purify myself to discover it clearer. Gandhi Nidhi work, I took as another opportunity to apply and realize 'sincerity'. There can be false steps in this task. But that is only due to personal weakness. Hence the purification.

I have always felt and experienced trust in others and compassion in our approach are very necessary and pay rich dividends in the long non though immediate results may not be very satisfactory. By the present standards perhaps such approaches may seemingly create certain sings of indiscipline and inefficiency. Let us not all run after efficiency to the cost of compassion. I understand Gandhi Smarak Nidhi has certain rules and regulations to protect its money. However, I have never considered the money as more important than man. It will be a strange ascertains that man have to be regulated and left undeveloped for the sake of accounts and procedures. Money is an aid to develop man and not vice versa. When wrong emphasis is laid on money, results are bound to be unhealthy. To a certain extent the revolutionary spirit among workers has been extinguished but the increasing tendency to protect money and forget man.

Let us all workers of the Nidhi feel we are compatibles and co-workers in a noble cause. Let us help each other with whatever capacities we have. Instead of ridiculing and bossing over, let us like true friends cooperate; let us mistakes and wrong slips taken be pointed out in a friendly spirit and if possible let experience suffer for the novice. That will yield great result. Let not the older boss over the young. Mutual

understanding and guidance can inspire a new spirit for real Gandhian work. I appreciate hard work but not without compassion. Let not Ravana be created by Karma. Let there be Raman through our compassionate work efficiency, too much emphasized, will create machines and not man. And that was the least Gandhiji desired.

I also am alive to the need of good work by Gandhi Nidhi, Delhi, as it is too much time-lighted by its very position. But let not haste over a good work gradually done by workers who are not all perfect. Let there be greater trust in the workers and let their little faults be looked upon with greater compassion.

From the heart can come a spirit which will destroy all wrangling that obstructs the work at present. It will definitely involve some bit of sacrifice for the present but this should not be claimed as inefficiency or inability. It is a loosening for a more united pull. Let not such mistakes be amplified and let them not be large strikes to best everyone.

Vinobaji has always emphasized the need for compassion in all over work. If his sacrificial walk for ten long years has not evoked that spirit in Gandhi Nidhi workers, then it definitely means money has attained sovereignty over man. Let us all change this state.

I have generalized and avoided all particular individuals and incidents so that with a better perspective we can appreciate everything. Particularizing often leads to complicated deviations. I have nothing against individuals but I have felt there is need for a better outlook in our work. Trust, compassion and sincerity can really add immensely to the large amount of money of the Nidhi. While material money will one day exhaust, the rich fund of human feelings created by the Nidhi will only add to the original fund initiated in memory of Mahatma Gandhi.

GANDHI MARG” – July 61 issue

THE RISING TIDE OF SARVODAYA

If there is one thing clearer about Sarvodaya than anything else it is that Sarvodaya has come more and more to represent the ideals and practices which came from Gandhi. No one can run away from this truth of the matter. Sarvodaya may be good, bad or indifferent, but the concept and practice embedded in it are nearer to Gandhi than anything else we know. This alone gives Sarvodaya tremendous importance and the character of a supreme challenge. Almost everything that Gandhi stood for had something revolutionary about it and even so his ideals and methods had to pass through the stages of ridicule, indifference, criticism, opposition, acceptance, rejection and reacceptance. Even the colossal stature of his personality did not bring him exemption from these inescapable stages of travail. Sarvodaya also will have to face the same long process of birth and growth. Today Sarvodaya appears to have survived the stage of indifference and ridicule. It is now facing criticism which is a good thing. It is slowly gathering momentum in the minds of the people. Vinoba and Jaiprakash, more than most others have put Sarvodaya on the map.

The Bhoodan-Graman movement brought a new dimension to the earlier Gandhian Constructive programme and brought the concept of Sarvodaya into focus. The world received an astonishing lesson in the application of non-violence in an area of economic revolution. But no one looks up on Vinoba as a politician even though it can be shown that he is hammering away at fundamental politics, the politics of Lok Shakthi. Jaiprakash, on the contrary, is the intellectual exponent of the politics of Sarvodaya. The more he has moved away from power politics, the more

immersed he is in the politics of Sarvodaya. He has always been a politician and he is one more than ever today. This is in his favour because this is the era of politics and Sarvodaya cannot do without a brilliant and outstanding political spoken. Like Nehru in the earlier days Jayaprakash also has the advantage of having behind him a legend of mystery, personality and being above all personal and petty conflicts and intrigues. And just as Nehru, more than any other leader of India has put socialism without orthodoxies before the people, so has Jaiprakash expounded Sarvodaya as an up on minded and elastic creed.

In his Presidential address at the 13th All India Sarvodaya Sammelan held in Andhra Pradesh, Jayaprakash Narayan has presented a fuller and a more coherent picture of Sarvodaya with many of its implications than perhaps he has even done before. We have the advantage of having his thoughts in cold print. It is good to have this clear exposition of Sarvodaya in the present Indian and world context because so many people are interpreting Sarvodaya in so many ways, again as in the case of Socialism that people are apt to be confused. Critics thus get something tangible to attack and camp followers so much to quote.

Jayaprakash's voice proclaiming Sarvodaya may not exactly be a voice crying in the wilderness, but it is certainly something very near to it. Newspaper and journals published only scanty extract from his Presidential address and there were hardly any editorial comments. Here we come up across a strange phenomenon in our country. away from the big cities and the big people in them, under the surface of daily life and events, low down where the rural masses live, a vast deal of Sarvodaya literature is circulating and spreading in the many languages of India. There are books, pamphlets, weeklies and notices slowly and steadily carrying the message of Sarvodaya to innumerable people in every part of India. Hundreds of meetings are

being held in the rural areas in many States without even a ripple of publicity appearing in the bigger newspaper and cities. There are thousands of dedicated workers who are at work taking the name of Gandhi and Vinoba and their message once again to the people. It is therefore likely that while Jayaprakash's Presidential address has created no stir whatever in the cities. It has reached more people in the smaller towns and villages than one is apt to believe.

There are certain basic ideas which have emerged clearly in Jayaprakash Narayan's thesis at the Sarvodaya Sammelan. It would be worthwhile to look at some of them.

To begin with it is now crystal clear that Sarvodaya is not running away from politics either in a panic or in disdain. Even while it is not indulging in power politics it is seeking to reach down to the depth "where live the poorest, the lowliest and the lost". To the extent it succeeds in the will carry the masses with it.

The emphasis is not on Rajya Shakti but on Lok Shakti, not on the Government and Governmental action but on the people and people's action. Rajya Shakthi is but the reflection of Lok Shakti and those who run after Rajya Shakthi neglecting Lok Shakti are chasing a Chimera. This again is the utter reality of the politics of democracy.

Sarvodaya must ceaselessly aim at developing Lok Shakti in such manner as befits Indian conditions. This has several vital implications.

Sarvodaya should not be confined only to dedicated individuals or groups working here and there. It should find fulfillment in a mass movement, i.e. a movement of the people and for the people. It is not simply a question of linking all the centre of worker, together but taking up issues which affecting the masses and which will unite them throughout the country in common programme of action aiming at their self-redemption.

Lok Shakti is the immediate challenge for creating Lok Shakti. Conceived aright and executed on a nation wide scale a great movement of Lok Shiksha can bring the masses up to the pitch. This is not being done and must be done as early as possible.

The human instruments through which Lok Shiksha should flood the country can well be Shanti Sainiks. The Shanti Sena must therefore be organized extensively and fully to become the instrument for the marshalling of Lok Shakti. Without the Shanti Sena there can be no genuine Lok Shakti and therefore no Sarvodaya.

Panchayati Raj, under which ever auspices it is organised, must be taken up by every one and made into a great national reality. In Panchayati Raj the people have now something in which they can take the first great step in a constructive revolution.

National Planning is not alien to Sarvodaya but very much a part of it. It is absurd to say that Sarvodaya and National Planning are contradictory. National Planning today under Government aegis shows considerable imbalance and a certain measure of misdirection and consequent unreality. Sarvodaya planning will have to be from below and large scale and small scale industries should be developed without either undermining the other. Small scale industries in India conditions ought not to be treated as a temporary adjunct to prop up large scales industries, but as a vital and distinct part of long range increase of national production.

Gandhi's teaching that if Sarvodaya workers will take care of the voters the voters will take care of the Nation. **Must be taken seriously.** Today the voters are exposed to innumerable evils and temptations and they have hardly any real voice in selecting the candidates who will represent them in the Parliament and State Legislatures. They have simply the choice of voting for one or the other of a few candidates imposed on them from above by the

party system and once somebody is elected the voters have hardly any control or even touch with their representatives. Therefore, the proposal is put forwards for setting up Voters Councils for the selections of candidates and for keeping close contact with representatives once elected. This is considered to be a programme of great significances and potentiality.

Then above all Sarvodaya is for the whole world and for mankind everywhere. It is no narrow nationalism. Its nationalism will fit in with the broadcast internationalism because it aims at the elimination of competition, domination and violence as between nations. On its flag is inscribed not “Jai Hindu” but “Jai Jagat”.

Not one of these ideas expanded by Jayaprakash can be dismissed with a wave of the hand in the India which still remembers Gandhi and which still have a Vinoba. Even so it is not enough to formulate ideas. Some one must formulate the appropriate and adjust programme which will lead to the accomplishment of the ideas. It is at this point that Jayaprakash Narayan’s thesis at the recent Sarvodaya Sammelan is weak and urgent. Jayaprakash wants for instance a mass movement to realise the ideals of Sarvodaya. He himself has clearly admitted that the great wave of the Bhoodan revolution has receded and it is not possible to recall that wave again. If Jayaprakash’s thesis is sound, it looks like it, then the Sarva Seve Sangh should find out from the people themselves what are the most urgent issues upon which they are all willing to unite and for which they are willing to produce a mass movement of non-violent action. Even a people’s movement will require commensurate leadership at every level. Is that leadership available? If it is argued that a people’s movement will find its own leadership as it goes along, is there that faith in Vinoba or Jayaprakash that such leadership will be found? This is the faith that made Gandhi and threw the whole of India in to his frail but mighty hands. If Jayaprakash

stops with merely giving India a new thesis, however good, without going further forward by evolving a programme, he will have achieved a little.

New Delhi:

(G.RAMACHANDRAN)

26-6-1961.

TAGORE AND GANDHI :

EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTIONARIES

(G. RAMACHANDRAN)

Tagore and Gandhi were great in many ways. Each was a many sided genius in life, thought and action. Tagore was not simply a poet and Gandhi not merely a saint. The poet was a philosopher who climbed the Everest of thought. He was a story writer and novelist of almost unrivalled distinction. He was a superb dramatist and literary critic. He was a social reformer who attacked the roots of many evils in the social structure which surrounded him. He was a patriot who understood and deeply loved his country. He was at the same time the noblest internationalist of his day. He became a painter and created in colours and forms something of what he had created earlier in spoken and written words. Above all, he was a complete human person who had grown fully as a man and looked at life as a whole. Gandhi the Saint was an unerring thinker. He saw through the problems that surrounded him with crystal clear analysis. He revolutionized the society of his time with far reaching consequences. He was also a master of the spoken and written word and many passages from him will remain classic as long as human memory continues. He was matchless political leader. As an economist he faced realities and suggested and carried out practical solutions. Great patriot and

freedom fighter, he was above all humanist and peace maker. He particularly specialized in village reconstruction and made it the centre of nation building. He was the discoverer of the most powerful weapon in the arsenal of direct action which even the weakest could wield against the strongest. Viz, Satyagraha. And, like Rabindranath Tagore, he was greatest as a human person. A complete study of these two personalities, very different from each other and at the same time very similar to each other, will be one of the most fascinating adventures for any student concerned with the Renaissance in India.

There have been many persons who have thoroughly drawn out the differences between these two great persons in the recent history of India. Few of us can dispute the validity of the difference. Only few persons have equally carefully affinities between them. In terms of language it would be absurd to say that no two great leaders differed more than they and even so resembled each other more than they and yet there is no other way of describing the truth of this matter.

This brief thesis is no attempt at all to list or explain the many fundamental similarities and affinities between Tagore and Gandhi. That would be a very big task and completely beyond the scope of this paper. It will, however, seek to discover, what is perhaps the closest affinity between the two, i.e, their role as educational revolutionaries. As the years pass their revolutionary contributions to educational reconstruction in India will loom larger than even today. And yet it is in regard to this very affinity that there are persons who find out the biggest differences. We must not quarrel with them. Nevertheless, a deep search for affinity at this point will yield a rich treasure of discoveries.

Rabindranath Tagore was the first educationalist in India to fearlessly reject a book-centered system of education for boys and girls. During the years the

present writer was a student in the Visva Bharati at Santiniketan this protest against text books and the book-centered system of education came from Gurudev again and again. Those were days, the earliest after the creation of Visva Bharati, when Gurudev himself taught students, young and old. The first thing he would say as boys and girls came to sit round him was to ask them to put away their text books and note books. He would say, listen to me, ask me questions, let us talk to each other, let us argue and let us understand. He would add, we can understand very little sitting here, let us enter into the heart of nature, let us walk in to the villages and meet people face to face and thus let us learn. There is plenty one can quote from Gurudev's writings. Let that be done by others who want to. But the writer of this falls back entirely on his own experience as a student, 40 years ago in Santiniketan. Gurudev loved books and wanted us all to read books and love them as he did. But there was to be no acceptance of a text-book centered system of education for boys and girls. To pin the minds of boys and girls to prescribed text book would simply encourage memorizing instead of learning. A text book limited the growing mind and the expanding sense of enquiry.

Gurudev was again the first among out educationists to insist that the fingers should keep pace with the brain in education. He wanted creative work through which the hands would produce beautiful and useful articles. He pointed to the vital importance of handicrafts like pottery, carpentry, hand loom weaving, leather work etc in the general programme of education of boys and girls. His allegiance to those crafts was not simply an expression of the swadeshi movement of his time. It was his acceptance of handicrafts as instruments of education. As the finger developed their marvelous skills in relation to the handicrafts, the intellect also became enriched and the personality of the student became fuller. He certainly did not attempt to

work out the scientific and systematic correlation between the development of the skills of the fingers and that of the intellect and personality of to students. He was a poet and an artist and he wanted that this inter-relation should develop spontance and under conditions of freedom and elasticity. But was fundamentally a rebel against a text-book carried system of education and he was the first in India to plead strongly for establishing genuine correlation between the finger and the brain.

Gurudev ever accepted that the object of education was simply the accumulation of knowledge. The acquiring of knowledge as essential but it was only one of the many strings in the Veena of education. He unhesitatingly proclaimed the truth that education should give the all-round development the human personality in which the physical, the intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual growth would be harmonized in one integrated process. He therefore emphasized freedom and joy as of basic importance in the education of boys and girls. This meant the elimination of physical punishment, police man's examinations and therefore of fear and every humiliating restriction from the Santiniketan system or pattern of education. Gurudev was the most under promising prophet of the freedom of the human mind modern India and he stood sentianal over this freedom with tenacity and courage without parallel in our history he wanted boys and girls to be fearless, free and minded, self-reliant, full of the spirit of enquired self-criticism with their roots deep in the soil of India but reaching out to the whole world in understand in neighborliness, cooperation and material and spiritual progress. What could be a greater objective in any education and what could be nobler methods of achieving is objective than the ones indicated by Gurudev.

Side by side with Santiniketan and Visva Bharati gurudev experimented with new methods in rural reconstruction and built up

Sriniketan. At the heart of Sriniketan was Gurudev's firm conviction that villages cannot be rebuilt merely with strength borrowed from outside but only from strength rediscovered within the village itself and harnessed to clear new creative purposes. Every village development activity must aim at the growth of the initiative and self-reliance of village people themselves. Village reconstruction must be an integrated programme in which the physical, material, mental and spiritual elements should be fully balanced with each other. Gurudev was perhaps the first thinker and leader in modern India who gave us the vision of samagra-Grama-Seva. Sriniketan was not separate and out away from Santiniketan and Visva Bharati. Sriniketan was an integral part of Visva Bharati so that intellectual, academic and aesthetic growth will be extended to identification with the life of village people and to the service of the village without conceit or patronage or any imposition from above.

We thus see that Gurudev's concept and programme of education were all comprehensive taking in the whole of life and touching life on every side. When Gurudev gave new shape and impetus to education in India he stood out as the first great educational revolutionary of our time. To the extent the Visva Bharati remains true to this radiant and full blooded concept and programme of education, it will reflect the life, thought and genius of Gurudev. Otherwise, this great Institution will simply become a caricature of what Gurudev stood for.

While Tagore was steadily carrying out his programme of educational revolution at Santiniketan, history was shaping the character and genius of Gandhi in far away South Africa. Gandhi's supreme discovery in that discovery in that distant land was Satyagraha. Satyagraha may be defined as the science and art of harnessing the power of love to revolutionary mass action in pursuit of freedom and justice. In Satyagraha Gandhi found the

weapon which the weakest could wield against the strongest and pull down the most powerful tyrant without surrender and without violence. After the birth of Satyagraha the world is no longer divided into the strong who will dominate and the weak who must surrender and suffer. Satyagraha thus marks a new epoch in the history of the world. Some day the world might well call it the Satyagraha Era in human history. To wield this mighty new weapon of love needed a new education and a new training of the people. It is in this context that the Gandhian concept and methods of education are born.

There is thus the tale of history surrounding Gandhi's revolutionary contribution to educational reconstruction. The aim of Satyagraha is freedom and justice. Through collective non-violent action in which non-violence becomes the dynamic expression of love. Suffering without surrender and retaliation become the badge of the satyagrahi and at the same time the undefeatable instrument of his battle. Now this requires training and education. Inevitably such education has to be through life, for life and through life. Unless generations of men and women grow up holding fast to certain ideals and disciplines touching life on all sides, they cannot become satyagrahis, i.e., human instruments of love in action without fear and without hate. It also becomes essential for a satyagrahi to function effectively that there should be created the social conditions enabling him to do so. Educational revolution under Gandhi thus sought to fit the individual for a new society and to create a new society in which the individual could function effectively. Keeping this as the background the salient features of Gandhi's concept and practices of education may now be studied very briefly.

Nai Talim was the name Gandhi gave to education as he conceived it. This means new education. Leaving aside all the trappings and details, very

necessary and relevant as they are the following may be considered as representing the core of Nai Talim:-

- (1) Education must set before itself not only the creation of a totally just, democratic and peaceful social order based on non-violent sanctions but also indicate clearly and precisely the methods of achieving such an objective.
- (2) Such education must begin with the earliest years of childhood and run on throughout life.
- (3) The school should help in developing the full personality of the student, drawing out all his talents and bringing them in to harmony with each other.
- (4) This means education of the mind and the intellect concurrently with that of every physical and bodily skill. Gandhi used poetic words in this connection when he said that he wanted in his education not only thinking brain but thinking fingers. All culture and civilization arose from the confluents of the brain and the finger of man. This leads to the rejection of any book-centered system of education and the acceptance of a creative and life-centered system. Life and work are coeval. Life ends where work ends.
- (5) In a country like India a creative and life-centered system of education must keep productive work at the centre and much productive work must be carefully regulated from year to year in consonance with the aptitude and capacity of the growing child.

Handicrafts producing useful and beautiful articles thus occupy the center of the educational process for boys and girls in Nai Talim. Books are not discarded but kept in their proper place.
- (6) But the aim of Nai Talim is never simply the production of articles, however useful or beautiful. Productive work is only the means to the

end which is the complete education of the child and the full development of its personality.

- (7) Education is drawn from three main sources constituting the catchment area of learning, i.e., the natural environment, the social environment and processes of productive work, each one of these three sources being of equal importance. The child thus grows in harmony with nature, properly integrated with society and taking delight and pride in productive work because all such work is transmuted in to the substances of learning. The child puts its roots into its own soil and then reaches out to an ever expanding vision of life, its purpose and duties.
- (8) The development of the sense of freedom, initiative and responsibility should be achieved through the school government and self-help of children inside the school community. Therefore, every school has its parliament and its chosen cabinet of ministers in charge of sanitation, punctuality, internal disciplines, making the school happy and bright and cultural and recreational programme. The abolition of police man's examinations must follow as a matter of course. Such examinations should be replaced by the continuous assessment of the achievements of children throughout the year including a measure of self-assessment.
- (9) The school must be closely linked with the community and vice versa. This means extension in the best sense of the word.
- (10) Children growing up in the love and pride of productive work, learning through kinship with nature and the social environment, getting trained in self-help and self-government and even self-assessment progressively become the free and cooperative citizens of a democratic society in which there will be no high and low, no distinctions of caste and class and standing for justice and peace. The schools thus become the starting point of a non-violent revolution for a new social order.

A careful comparison of the concepts and practices of education which came from Tagore and Gandhi will show how, starting from different points, they converge very close to each other in the end. The approaches appear different but both faced common problems and challenges and offered solutions in regard to which there is a broad area of agreement. Like Gurudev Tagore who kept Sriniketan and Santiniketan close together within the circumstance of a broad based educational programme, Gandhi wanted the school to be the starting point of a creative revolution inside the village.

There is education in India who sometimes challenges the claim of Tagore and Gandhi to be educationists at all. We must not quarrel with them. We must not at the same time hesitate to proclaim that Tagore and Gandhi were the most outstanding educational revolutionaries of our time in India who have both left imperishable marks on the whole process of educational reconstruction in the country. We have not properly assessed this startling contribution of both of them to national reconstruction. But today on the occasion of the Centenary of Rabindranath Tagore, may we have the understanding, the loyalty and devotion to this giant of India's history whose name will always be linked in our minds for all time to come with the other giant of India's history between whom there were indissoluble bonds of personal affection and natural reverence and profound affinities in the substance of their thoughts and work for India and the world.

New Delhi, 28 – 4 – 1961.

THE WHY AND THE HOW OF

THE ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

The “why” of the Orientation programme is imperative and the “How” inescapable if Basic Education is at any time in the far escapable future to take the place of the present elementary education in India. The Union and the State Governments are solemnly pledged to implement the Basic Education programme in the entire field of elementary education. There can be no going back on this and this is accepted by everyone concerned with educational reconstruction in India. Without good, efficient and practical Basic education at the bottom all the superstructure of High School, University and even Technical Education will rest on a weak foundation which might crumble any day. And it is equally clear that without implementing the orientation programme here and now as an emergent one Basic Education itself will be held up and frustrated.

Here is the answer to the question “Why” of this programme. There are certain facts from which no one can run away. The first is Basic Education has come to stay and is spreading in the different States with the full support of the Union Government. Equally, the pace of the growth of Basic Education is so slow that there is the real danger of the vast area of ordinary elementary education which still persists choking the growth of Basic Education due to the dual existence simultaneously of both the systems for a long time. Basic Education appears to be remaining still in quarantine and the remaining big area of elementary education appears to be struggling hard to go on unaffected by the Basic system. This is the power of conservatism operating strongly against a new and revolutionary reform. Keeping these two indisputable facts in the situation, the All India Basic Education Assessment Committee which studied the whole problem in the whole country and submitted a valuable report projected the idea of

the Orientation programme. This programme has been enthusiastically welcomed by the Union Government and the State Governments as one of building up here and now a solid half-way house to the goal of Basic Education.

The aim of the Orientation programme is very simple. Converting every ordinary elementary school into a fully fledged basic school will mean immediately more initial expenditure and an army of full trained Basic Teachers. It would also mean producing and distributing a vast quantity of craft equipment and raw materials and making arrangements for the marketing or the consumption of products which may not be first rate for years to come. There are problems attaching to the conversion of ordinary elementary schools into full-fledged schools and must be faced earlier than later. But even so this will take time and too much hurry might spoil the whole programme. Therefore a parallel movement of two developments becomes inescapable. The first is the steady and systematic but slow conversion of a proportion of elementary schools fully to Basic Education from year to year in a phased plan. This is the rock-bottom. But while such a programme is moving up slowly we must get hold of every elementary school everywhere and turn it here and now effectively in the direction of Basic Education. The terrible isolation between the vast area of ordinary elementary education and the small though growing area of Basic Education must be overcome at once. This can be done by introducing into every elementary school here and now such elements of Basic Education which do not require extra expenditure or fully trained basic teachers. Here are such items as community work inside the schools and community service outside the school, student self-government, and organization of cultural and recreational programmes by the children themselves and some training of the finger in some easy productive work or other which can be introduced straight away in every elementary school. In fact, some of these things are already in many schools of India. We have only to make

this programme whole-scale and better organized and deliberately linked to the concept and practices of Basic Education. If this is done a wave of reality will touch every elementary school and every head master and teacher and student will know that they are preparing to receive Basic Education. Easy and not costly craft work of some kind suited to the locality must come in. but will be apart from such work being used for the correlated method of teaching which is essential in Basic Education. Correlation has proved to be somewhat difficult in Basic Education and therefore this need not be attempted in the organization programme except where the ordinary teachers can link activities to learning in an easy and unpremeditated manner.

We have had regional seminar and a national seminar to work out the details of the how of this programme and there are valuable reports on the subjects already available to all those concerned. There will not therefore be any dearth of material to guide those who take up the orientation programme.

But the whole crux of the matter is that this Orientation programme which is an emergent and preparatory one should be completed in 2 years at the most. Otherwise its whole purpose will be lost. If this half-way house to full Basic Education is itself delayed then both the Orientation programme and Basic Education will be lost.

New Delhi:

G RAMACHADRAN.

8-1-1962.

Already in thoughts and talks of GR

GOA; A PORTENT AND A CHALLENGE:

The annexation of Goa was swift and decisive. The whole matter is now a fait accompli. In several countries of Africa, Middle East and Asia there has been much rejoicing that the antiquated, crude and miserable colonialism of Portugal has been given a hard kick and that particularly by India. The Indonesian Government has drawn inspiration from the Goa Incident and suddenly announced that it would take steps to annex West Indian by force, if necessary and, may be, before this appears in print, a new situation might confront the world in this connection. There is a new and accentuated impatience with colonialism wherever it still lingers. Evidently India has struck a blow, the reverberations of which might echo throughout the world from some time to come. Inside India also there are millions of people who are jubilant over the annexation of Goa and who believe that the minimum violence that was employed was not only fully justified but had become utterly inescapable. After all, the Indian people are neither very different from others nor are they in every situation particularly more non-violent. And surely, the Government of India even while it has all along pressed for peaceful methods to solve international conflicts had never once taken the view that military action was ruled out altogether in dealing with every aggression, old or new. India has regained a few thousand square miles of territory which had been taken away from her and not returned even after India became independent as had happened in the case of French possessions inside the country. India thus may well have the satisfaction that at least no part of her territories is any longer under the control of an alien Government. This suits national pride and self-respect. It may even be said that the annexation of Goa is Nehru's gift to African countries still held under the cruel heels of colonialism and that it is a fitting reply to the horrible tyranny of

Portugal in Angola and elsewhere. Such countries might draw strength from the fact that even the most peaceful Prime Minister of a State in the World today had reached the point when it was impossible for him to tolerate any longer colonialism on the soil of India. World attention is thus focused not only on the reality of colonialism but even more on the imperative need to end it here and now everywhere in the world. Colonialism itself, it can be argued represents the quintessence of violence and its repudiation in practice totality by India today is itself a blow for peace in the world.

All these are legitimate views and thoughts arising from the annexation of Goa at the present time by the government of India. But if that were all, the matter would end there. The grim fact, however, is that it is not all. There is something more to be said about it. No one in recent years has taught the people of India more emphatically than Nehru that the political body of the international world is one and indivisible and that military force or violence applied at any point on that body would affect the whole of it. To be fair to Nehru it must be repeated that he never foreswore military action in every situation and at all times. Nehru is not a private gentleman. He is the head of a State and a State always implies military sanctions against aggression from without or violent revolt from within. This is a fact from which no one can run away so long as one subscribes to the validity of a national State. The issue is therefore not one of non-violence versus violence. That is a much larger issue which the great statesman and leader of the world are continually evading. The precise issue now is different. Here again, it is Nehru, more than any other statesman, who has stressed with the utmost conviction and even passion that war solves no problems and that every international conflict must be resolved only through peaceful methods of negotiation. Challenged on the floor of the Indian Parliament by some of those impatient of his policy of patience over Chinese aggression in Ladakh and elsewhere, Nehru reiterated vehemently that he

would go on and on negotiating in the manner and spirit of Gandhi. The issue is therefore not whether Nehru accepts non-violence as the only code of conduct but whether he has given up the idea that international conflicts must be solved only by negotiation or peaceful approaches. There are some critics who say openly that the Government of India has won somewhat cheap applause over Goa while lacking in courage to face up to the far bigger and more recent military aggression by China.

There is no question that the prestige of India has gone up considerably in Africa and in vital parts of Asia, but equally, there is no question, India can no longer stand before the world as a national firmly committed to the methods of peace and negotiation for solving international disputes. India has already set in motion a chain reaction which is likely to lead to exclusions of violence against colonial powers and possessions. The might be good for the liquidation of colonialism but bad for world peace. At the Belgrade Conference of non-aligned nations Nehru had stood firmly by his conviction, which so much annoyed some Africa nations, that the problem of war and peace was a far more urgent and crucial one than even that of colonialism but bad for world peace. At the Belgrade Conference of non-aligned nations Nehru had stood firmly by his conviction, which so much annoyed some African nations, that the problem of war and peace was a far more urgent and crucial, that the problem of war and peace was a far more urgent and crucial one than even that of colonialism, even if the latter was undoubtedly one of the burning issues in the modern world. The effect of the annexation of Goa by force will now be to reverse the priority so brilliantly expounded by Nehru at Belgrade. All over the world colonies will be attacked without much thought of negotiation or peaceful methods of settlement because Goa-has thrown up that challenge to everybody concerned. Thus indirectly and even perhaps directly violence and war have received added sanction as legitimate weapons for the solution of international conflicts. Whatever may be the motives

of England, France or the U.S.A., they have all now a plausible sticks to beat India with. Even if Adlai Stevenson was caught in a mood of exaggeration and emotional imbalance when he said that the United Nations itself might now be destroyed, it will not be for India to look horrified. Every time a nation takes the law in to its own hands outside the United Nations, whatever be the provocation, it would mean a nail driven into what might becomes the coffin of that great international organization. The biggest hypocrisy may be what is now becoming manifest in England over Goa. But this will furnish no excuse to India at all. From now on India must be content to remain in the common ranks of all the nations who protest, may be sincerely, that they stand for peace and at the same time resort to military action when it suits them, we have now becomes one of the many. We have no special claim to advocate peaceful methods before anybody. It would be idle to plead that Goa had refused to negotiate at all. That was why there was in international dispute. But India settled it by the use of superior forces. If china refuses to negotiate in regard to the withdrawal of aggression, what shall we do? Till now our declared policy of settling international disputes by negotiation and peaceful methods justified our conduct. We have, however, broken that policy and we shall not have any justification hereafter for inaction because of our policy.

Throughout this brief review of the situation we have looked at Nehru as the Prime Minister of India. Speaking recently at a gathering of the Shanti Sena from Bihar, Nehru confessed that his heart went with the Shanti Sainiks but his head refused to do so. He was referring to practical difficulties. Such difficulties were inherent in the very concept and structure of a national State. The world would today Judge Nehru's action only as that of a Prime Minister, whatever be the limitations attaching to that exalted position. No other Prime Minister in the world would have come to a meeting of the Shanti Sena to give this good wishes and blessings to it. And yet even the Prime Minister of India gave up the Principles of

negotiation and a peaceful approach in relation to Goa. It was clearly the failure of the peaceful approach in an international dispute. This is the crux of the matter. Peace makers everywhere must now reckon with what has happened?

There is then a special word needed for all of us in India who talk so much about non-violence and the Shanti Sena. The non-violent followers of Gandhi and Vinoba had no solution for Goa except pious and futile words and proposals of ineffective action. Up till now no word has come from Acharya Vinoba himself. There is nothing he can now say to alter the course of events that have already happened. Shri Jai Prakash Narayan has issued a statement rejoicing at the liberation of Goa and at the same time sorrowing over the use of force. His attitude appears to be in no way different from that of people who are congratulating Nehru, because who will not readily agree that it would have been better if a settlement had come through peaceful negotiation.

When will it be realized that non-violence must face and be ready to take incalculable risks before it can neutralize violence and become a force to be reckoned with even among nations? We shall need more patience, unity, training, disciplines and above all more courage than that of armed soldiers if non-violence is to get even a sporting in this terribly confused world.

The non-violent man in India has no moral right to throw a stone at Nehru. He can throw that stone only at himself. This, of course, cannot be the final answer to the portent or the challenge that is Goa today.

GANDHI SMARAK NIDHI

G.RAMACHADRAN

Secretary

Date:21/1/61

Kshila Bapur

Ramachadrajai derived you may please so though the article and do any verbal correction, before publishing the same.

Please return early

Thanking you

KASTURBA GANDHI; Personal memories.

(G.Ramachandran)

Some 35 years have rolled away since I met Ba for the first time. And yet my memories of her are as clear as day light. When I close my eyes and recall her to my mind what is the vision that comes to me? Now only the physical it is a vital and vibrant spark of humanity, small in size, quick-footed, big and kindly eyed, a round soft face, but the voice is clear and firm. The mental picture is aso gentle but inflexible. Ba comes back as a strong brave woman speaking the truth, doing the truth and challenging everybody to do the same. This full picture of the great and beloved woman can bring inspiration to each one of us as we take our place humbly in the long and interminable queue still marching behind the footsteps of the Master. She was not educated, not an intellect, not a genius, nor specially gifted in any way and yet lifted herself and innumerable other women to the biggest

heights of womanhood known in any country. unlettered, she become wise; timid, she became valiant; humble, she became great, just because she saw the truth and then held on to it with all her heart and all her strength. She became thus the symbol of what every woman can become, the least among them.

I first met Ba during Bapu's Hindu-Muslim-Unity fast in Delhi in 1924. My Professor, the late C.F. Andrews had taken me with him to help him as he was playing the role of chowkidar at the door of the fasting Mahatma. They were days of extreme anxiety and agony for Ba. I had the privilege of cooking for her or taking the food to her from time to time. I did so with awe and reverence. But Ba put me at my ease with her kind words and looks. She lived practically on fruits and milk during those days except for wheat look up and says a word to two about Bapu's health as he lay fasting and then the tears would come to her eyes. She was a wonderful nurse to Bapu in his physical weakness arising from the fast. My heart went out to Ba as she endured her agony without a murmur. One day I was giving her hot coffee in the afternoon. She asked me whether I liked coffee and when I said yes she asked again if I had my cup and when I said no she quickly got up, fetched another cup, filled it and asked me to sit down with her on the floor and to share the coffee with her. Andrews who came along presently smiled and said that Ba should not spoil his student from Shantiniketan whom he wanted should earn a good name in Bapu's camp. When Bapu broke his fast at least Ba was smiling and shedding tears at the same time and how everyone went and congratulated her on the occasion. Bapu took up the fiery cross again and again in his life for a cause. But Ba took up her cross simply to share in Bapu's sorrows and penance. No one can say who bore the greater burden, the great field Marshal of non-violence as he led his people in one peaceful revolution after another and living in a continuous blaze of publicity or the meek and indomitable woman who lived in the shadows

and wept in silence. I have an idea that Ba bore greater burden throughout her life than Bapu and that without a murmur.

I spent the whole of 1925 as a member of Ba's community Kitchen in the Satyagraha Ashram in Sabarmathi. The house was Bapu's, but his writ did not run in the kitchen! It was Ba who ruled it. There were some 20 Ashramites eating in her kitchen including some grand-children. It was a motley crowd of people from different parts of India. There was a Telugu doctor who swallowed chilies in secret and one or two others who slipped away occasionally to eat other food in the city of Ahmadabad. But Ba ruled the kitchen with a measure of stern discipline and a larger measure of maternal love. We were three or four of us helping Ba in cooking and serving. She was a hard taskmaster and particularly to herself. It was not as though Ba was simply supervising the little community kitchen. How many of us are not merely supervisors those days? But she cooked and cleaned and swept and served like rest of us working with her. She demanded punctuality, scrupulous cleanliness, good manners and participation in some work or other from everyone eating in her kitchen. She worked with them and they say her work and so everybody worked. Ours was thus a happy little kitchen community.

But it had its own problems. And the biggest problem was that of sudden guests arriving to see Bapu from here, there and everywhere. The lunch would be over and everything washed up and put away and Ba would be resting and we her cooking assistants would be in different parts of the Ashram doing other work and then suddenly some guests would arrive. I distinctly remember the day when Pandit Motilal Nehru arrived with a number of friends unexpectedly one afternoon after lunch was over. Lunch had to be prepared again. Bapu did not call for Ba who was lying down for her short afternoon nap. He called me and asked me to call one of the others who was then on the kitchen staff. He asked us to start the cooking and let Ba know only when she woke up from her nap. But Ba heard

the noises in the kitchen and woke up earlier and found out what was going on. She then went straight to Bapu asking why she was not called and if Bapu thought she was such a lazy old person! Bapu apologized very diplomatically. Back in the kitchen Ba asked me why I had not called her earlier and I took shelter under Bapu's words. Ba's English was always very pleasant to hear and what she said on the present occasion was particularly nice. She said, "Bapu call you. Why you not call me? Why you open kitchen without permission?" I apologized humbly. The next moment Ba made she busy and Motilalji and his friends were served a splendid not lunch in record time. When Motilalji complimented her she beamed with delight.

I have had my education in more than one places and under a few great Gurus. But my education under Ba stands out as something very special. My daily routine under Ba had in it the genuine elements of Basic education long before Bapu expounded Nai Talim. I said my namaste to Ba at 4-30 A.M. at the door of the little community kitchen every day. If i was late by a minute she would say, "Why you late, Go hurry and bring milk?" that meant I had to run with three big pots to the Ashram dairy without another word and bring back the morning supply of milk. Two pots will be cow's milk and the 3rd small pot would contain Bapu's goat-milk. Then I would light two coal stoves and boil the milk. Ba would be watching and herself busy preparing part of the breakfast. Breakfast was served at 6-30 A.M. and Ba was a great one for insisting on everybody eating a good breakfast. She would particularly insist that no one shirked eating a piece of red gur with the cold chapatties left over from the previous evening. White sagar was taboo. If she saw any one rejecting the gur she would come up quickly and see that the delinquent swallowed it without further ado. She had the good-bad habit of the Indian mother forcing more food upon the children. Lunch-time and a couple of hours before would be full of work and bustle in the kitchen. Fires would be

burning, vegetables boiling, chapatties rolling with Ba presiding at the very centre of the picture. With what speed she could roll the chapatties, roast them over the live coal and then toss them on to a plate for smearing ghee on them. Ba gave some work or the other to every member of the kitchen community to do. The evening meal was another occasion for quick work and then cleaning up. Ba always took her food after the others had finished and it was her particular delight to make her assistants sit down with her and ply them with food. If you did not eat well, her quick question would come, “You not well? Why not eating well?” she had no respect for weak stomachs though she would be very sympathetic. She would take motherly care if anyone was ill. But she always looked happy when someone sitting with her ate a good meal. I have already mentioned her fondness for coffee and I won my first spurs with her by making good South Indian coffee for her. She did not fully approve of Bapu coming into the kitchen and meddling with food arrangements. She would herself prepare Bapu’s own food with meticulous care, but that was another matter. Bapu knew Ba’s mind very well and seldom put his foot into the kitchen.

What I learnt under Ba in that little kitchen at the Satyagraha Ashram were lessons in strict punctuality, spotless cleanliness, unflinching good conduct, cooperativeness and strict obedience to rules. These lessons have helped me considerably throughout my life. Years later I was prisoner at the Central jail in Vellore. Rajaji once came to see me in my cell from another part of the same prison where he was in the A Class. I was in the B class. He paused at the door of my cell and hesitated to come in and said “your cell is so spotlessly class, so do not want to come in and bring any mud or sand into it”. He was bringing cynical and friendly at the same time. I told him, “I learnt this from Ba” and then I related how Ba would not tolerate one dirty spot in her kitchen. Ba never tolerated any unnecessary argument. All work was a duty and no one should argue about duties

to be performed. Her whole life was one long saga of duties performed without arguments and without hesitation.

Bapu has put his imprint on the history of India and the world. But inside that imprint and at its very heart will remain the image and memory of Ba. Bapu and Ba were inseparable; each strengthened the other. Each was completed by the other. One without the other would not have reached the height to which Bapu and Ba climbed atlast, leaving a radiant legacy for India and the world.

New Delhi,

G RAMACHANDRAN

20-11-1961

Memories of Ba

Some 25 years have rolled away. And yet, my memories of Ba are as clear as day light. In 1925 I stayed with her as a member of her community kitchen at the Satyagraha Ashram in Sabarmathi. The house was Bapu's, but the kitchen belonged to a community of some 20 people for whom Ba and Kusum behn and I cooked and served for a full year. For me it was a complete programme of education in punctuality, cleanliness, disciplines, nutrition and humility under Ba. She was a severe task master and when I left her at the end of the year to take up the place of a Lecturer in the Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi, I left a better and more chastened human being. I met Ba several times spending a few days each time with her particularly after my sister's daughter Saraswathy married her grandson Kantilal. When she passed away in the Aga Khan Palace as a prisoner of the British Government in India, I was the Editor of the Indian Express in Madras and wrote a leading article entitled "The moving finger writes to..." which enraged the Governor of Madras so much that he threatened to smash the paper. My article was

a real and terrific attack on Lord Wavel who was then the Viceroy of India for being afraid, great soldier as he was claimed to be, of releasing an ailing old woman on the point of death from the prison in to which he had cast her.

Ba's life was an epic of suffering, steadfastness, courage and loyalty to her great husband and even more to the God of her conscience. In spite of all her humility and outward meekness, she had something of Jone of Arc about her and literally during the Rajkot Satyagraha she was nothing less than a Jone of Arc of Non-violence. The ultimate memory of her is undoubtedly something like a flaming torch in the hand of India's history when we were battling for our life and our freedom under Gandhi.

But here are more ordinary memories and therefore sweeter and dearer memories.

I said namaste to Ba at 4-30 A.M. at the door of her little community kitchen in Bapu's house. If I was late by a minute she would say you are late, hurry up with the milk pots. That meant I have to take the pots to the Ashram dairy without another word and bring back two big pots full of milk. On the way back there would be a bucket of coal also to be brought along. There is an old photograph which somebody took of me once in the early morning light in this predicament. I have lost it and would give any price to recover it. Coming back I lighted two coal fires and boiled the milk etc. Ba would be watching and herself busy with other kitchen work. Breakfast was served to more than 20 people at 6-30 A.M. Ba was a great one for insisting on everybody eating a piece of red gur with the cold chapathies left over from the previous evening. If she saw someone rejecting his or her share of the gur she would come up and smile at the delinquent and see that piece of the gur was accepted. She had the good-bad habit of an Indian mother forcing more food upon the children.

Lunch time and before would be full of work and excitement in Ba's kitchen. Fires would be burning, chapatties rolling, vegetables boiling and Ba moving up and down quickly giving instructions and doing her full share of the work. She never shirked any work and what was more never allowed one of us to shirk either. If any one was lazy she would simply say you go away, I don't what you tomorrow. Ba's English in which she indulged for my sake in the kitchen was an endless source of respectful amusement. Here are a few samples: "you Late" "Why tell", "You put salt? No? Now do".....

There was another Tamilian with me who had volunteered to help Ba in the kitchen. He used to talk loudly. He was also not always punctual. Ba disapproved of this person. Another day he came late. Ba snapped at him, "You are late, I no want you in kitchen, you tell Bapu". That finishes the matter. This fellow Tamilian was never allowed to come back to the kitchen.

Ba was intensely humour. She was strict, but very kind. She would never eat until she had made all of us who helped her sit down and start eating. She would pile food on the plate. She would give compliments to those who had worked hard. Her piece of gur for such a person would be unusually big.

She never allowed nor liked Bapu in the kitchen. She thought he was a meddler. She would say to him "You tell what you want, I do what you want". One day Pandit Motilal Nehru arrived with a number of friends unexpectedly after lunch was finished. Bapu wanted lunch again for his guests. He cared not go direct to Ba who was lying down for a short afternoon nap. He called some or us and asked us to start proceedings in the kitchen and let Ba know only when everything was half ready. But Ba woke up and round out. She marched up to Bapu. Asking why she was not called and if Bapu thought if she was such a lazy old person. Bapu very diplomatically apologized and said that Ramachadhran and Kusum

would be very glad if she went and helped at that stage. Ba retorted there was no need for him to tell her that as she was certainly now going to take charge so Bapu smiled and Ba marched away with her head up. She did give Motilalji and his friends a splendid good hot lunch in record time and when Motilalji complimented her she became with delight.

Another day the Sabarmathi was in floods. There was great excitement in the Ashram. Everybody had run out to watch the floods rising every moment. I was at my post in the kitchen. Ba too had gone out and returned quickly. She at once said now you go and look at the floods. You can take 15 minutes, I here do everything. So I too rushed out, thankful that Ba had remembered that I should also get few minutes to go and watch the Swollen River. Ba always remembered those working with her and took care of them.

When at last I was leaving the Satyagraha Ashram and I want to take leave of her she said. "I sorry you leave, come back", and she blessed me.

Later after my niece married Ba's grandson I met her again in Sevagram. She was very fond of her grandson kantial. She gave me coffee knowing the weakness of a South Indian for that beverages. She asked me, "Coffee good"? I replied, Madras coffee was better. She laughed and said, you come and make my coffee tomorrow which I did. She did agree Madrasies know how to make good coffee. She was anxious about the future of Kanti.

G.Ramachandran,

Secretary.

23-10-61

I had known him before and met him here and there as a Constructive worker under Gandhi. But he was a pucca Hindiwala and I was an incorrigible English speaking sinner from Madras. So we had remained apart though both of us were in the Gandhian army of Constructive work. It was, however, in the “Quit India” movement that we came close to each other and worked together for a time. And curiously, our meetings were then underground. After the first and tremendous upsurge of the “Quit India” movement the British sought to control the situation through ruthless repression. Any head showing up anywhere in the open rebellion was beaten down and we retaliated by a vast underground movement of non-violent resistance. I am quite aware of the Pandits who would say that non-violence and secrecy are contradictory. Whatever be the theory of it, thousands of us then found nothing incompatible between non-violence and our underground preparations for non-violent battles. Preparations were secret in order to prevent the Government from smashing a battle before it was begun.

And then one day Baba Raghavadas appeared in Madras. He wanted to meet me. Both of us were underground. A doctor friend, who was not in politics at all, arranged for us to meet at his house. I waited for him. He suddenly walked in. He looked just like a Sadhu from Kashi going to Rameswaram. It was not merely the dress, but the face itself that belonged to the typical pilgrim. He had a beautiful face with a lovely beard and he looked like an innocent baby. Which C.I.D could ever mistake him for an underground but non-violent revolutionary? I welcomed him and closed the door. From the window I kept an eye on the road outside. Not a crow stirred. We were perfectly safe. He brought letters from smt. Sucheta Kripalani and others. There was going to be a meeting of underground workers somewhere in Calcutta. I offered him tea, thinking he was a North Indian. I offered him coffee thinking he was in South India. He said no to both and took only a glass of water. We must have talked together for nearly an hour. I gave him copies of a

bulletin we were then publishing entitled 'Non-violent revolution'. He took charge of a few hundred copies for distribution in Bombay, Allahabad, Banaras and Patna. His voice was gentle. But one sensed his dedication to the cause. You knew atones, he was one of those who would bear his chest to a bullet with a smile or march to the gallows with a prayer. We came close to each other in spirit. He spoke in Hindi and I stuck to my English. But we managed. Language is no barrier except between the stupid and the wicked. We parted to meet again.

Alas! He is now no more. But one cannot forget him. What were his most outstanding qualities which made him what he was, a true disciple of Gandhi, valiant soldier of non-violence, a life-long constructive worker and above all a most lovable human person. May I list them for what it is worth:-

- (1) He was gentle but firm and tenacious.
- (2) He was not intellectual but he had deep convictions.
- (3) He did not care to argue too much, he thought the truths in which he believed were self-evident.
- (4) He believed in spreading friendliness and when some one differed sharply he kept silent and made disagreement itself something natural and wholesome.
- (5) He could work hard, wander about ceaselessly and put up with privations and insults.
- (6) He believed Gandhi was an avatar and it was the greatest privilege of his life to follow such a Master.
- (7) He did not care for money or wealth, but was very scrupulous with public funds entrusted to him.
- (8) He was a deeply religious Hindu, but accepted Gandiji's doctrine of Sarva Dharma Samanthwa. He would have gladly given his life to save a Muslim or Christian.

(9) He did not care to look far ahead; one good step was enough for him.

(10) He passionately believed in the Shanti Sena and thought that the Shanti Sena was the crown of the Constructive Programme.

he was such a man with such a faith. He was a great pilgrim of life and truth. He has left behind a fragrance and alight which will long remain in the hearts of those who knew him.

(G.Ramachandran)

“GANDHI MARG” / October 1961

Gandhi and the deepening world crisis.

The shadow of another world war has deepened over humanity. Everyone knows that such a war would drive the world in to annihilation. During many years the U.S.S.R and the U.S.A have piled up deliberately weapons of destruction of incredible magnitude. Within a few days, even hours of the start of a war, either of these powers can fling up on the other nuclear explosive which can wipe out their countries turning their boasted civilizations and ways of life into scorched deserts of death. Not only that but the after effects will mean the stunting and perverting of what may be left of millions of human beings in to monstrosities. There is nothing to prove that there would be neither anything Christian about the nuclear weapons of Western Democracies nor anything Socialist adapt those of the Communist Block. Both the great powers and their allies are playing the identical diabolic game of necked and brute violence up to the limit of their capacity.

Behind us stand uncouneted centuries of human endeavor for progress, culture, civilization and peace. We know something at least of traceable history

from the Buddha to Gandhi. We have had the great religions and their ethical systems. We have listened to the compassion of the Buddha, the love of Jesus, the philosophy of Vedanta, the faith of Islam and last but not least to the invincible non-violence of Gandhi. We have had great cycles of culture which have come and gone leaving their mark up on the human mind. Poets, philosophers, architects, painters, sculptures and musicians have added to the stature of man and pulled him up to higher levels of living. Above all, the progress of science has revolutionized life, alleviating pain and liberating man from disease and poverty. And yet, why have we come to the brink of a precipice without a parallel in human history? In answer to this question there flashes in to our memory something that Gandhi wrote in 1925 in the pages of 'Young India'. He was almost defining the seven deadly evils of the modern world. They were politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice. Gandhi was evidently looking at the sharpest outlines of life when he drew up this formidable list of evils gripping the world today.

The Belgrade Conference of Heads of States of Uncommitted Nations could do nothing more than to plead with President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev to come together and negotiate to avoid war. By a cruel irony of fate or an equally ruthless stroke of strategy Russia had already broken the ban against further nuclear tests even before the Conference met and hardly had it ended when America did the same. Here is competition in the closed misconduct of two great powers. The horrible race is now once again on. One wonders if it is not already too late to stop the irresistible drag towards the precipice. Just as the two leading powers are unable to extricate themselves from the coils of their own Karma, the Uncommitted Nations have also given an exhibition of their helplessness. It is certainly good to plead with Russia and the United States to come together to

negotiate for Peace. The Belgrade Conference has done well to press for this in full strength. But this was exactly what some of the identical leaders of Uncommitted Nations tried to do at the United Nations sometime ago and nothing came of it. It is too much to hope that by simply bringing President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev to talk to each other world Peace will be brought appreciably nearer. They did meet some time ago in Vienna and it is just that meeting that started the widening of the cleavage. We have had nothing but explosions and counter explosions of temper since then. What the Belgrade conference should have given thought to be the question of forging the political and moral sanctions making it difficult, if not impossible, for the two great powers to plunge the world into war. The extreme urgency of the crisis was realized at Belgrade, but there was neither the moral vision nor the political courage to warn Russia and the United States that all the Uncommitted Nations would be compelled to treat the aggressor as the enemy of mankind and to employ every available non-violent sanction against it.

Alas! There was no Gandhi or the full and unafraid voice of Gandhi at the Belgrade Conference.

There is no doubt that the issues of disarmament and peace will come up vigorously at the next session of the United Nations. There will be strong and brilliant speeches and some little lessening of the present tension. The leaders of Uncommitted Nations might succeed in pushing away the crisis for a time, however brief. But the time is more than ripe to face up to the challenge of forging every possible sanction to make war impossible now and hereafter. The question of total disarmament can be evaded any longer only at the peril of every other measure that might be devised to bring or preserve peace. Anything else that a firm decision for total disarmament will be a cowardly evasion and a shameless betrayal. If the next session of the United Nations will not commit every participating Nation to the programme of total disarmament, it would find

itself soon traveling on the same journey which led the old League of Nations to utter bankruptcy and self-defeat. The least that the Uncommitted Nations can do if the great powers do not agree to total disarmament will be to withdraw from the United Nations and to give the call for a World Disarmament Conference outside the aegis of the U.N.O. ultimately it will not even be the Governments of the Uncommitted Nations but their peoples who will have to band together to resist war as the greatest of all evils in the world today. If the peoples from the uncommitted countries would sound the bugle of total resistance to war, there can be no doubt that even the peoples of the countries of the great powers will really to their side creating a World Peoples Revolution in favour of peace. At the moment we are all like the little birds making their nest, in the crater of a volcano which might explode any moment. Let no one treat with contempt the attempts that area being made by the Pacifists and the War Resisters in Europe and America and by those who area building up the Shanti Sena in India to awaken the common people everywhere to stand together to resist war. To treat such attempts with scorn will be tantamount to saying that the people everywhere count for nothing in the terrible gamble into which their Governments have entered in blind self-interest and ruthless competition to get the better of each other. The people count today and will count more and more with every day that passes. All power is with the people and once the people fully realize the danger of war in the present world-context they will either compel their disarmament here and now or tear them down as obstacles to the peace of the world.

No world teacher has a more significant message for the world today than Gandhi, the invincible Captain of non-violence. In resisting the evil of war in the world today we must study once again the techniques evolved by Gandhi for uniting millions of people in a non-violent revolution to achieve world peace. We repeat that we must not rest content with asking Governments to save the world but mobilize the conscience and the will of peoples everywhere to resist war.

When we attempt to do this truthfully and fearlessly we shall atone find Gandhi at the top of the columns marching nimbly and leading us to peace and liberations. Only those who knew Gandhi or have very carefully studied his life and work can share in this seemingly impossible faith. But let us remember that Gandhi during his life time marshaled millions of the common people in India in a non-violent revolution which compelled the British to withdraw from the country. he taught us scientifically the techniques for uniting masses of the people for non-violent direct action. We must now readopt them to meet the present world crisis.

We therefore wish to raise a big question for thinkers in India and outside to answer. It is the question how Gandhian techniques of non-violent direct action can be applied today in every country in the world to compel Government to commit themselves unreservedly to toil disarmament without delay and hesitation. We cordially invite thinkers and writers to join in a symposium to answer this question. We plead for fearless and clear thinking. We shall be grateful for a response from those most deeply concerned.

6-9-1961.

(G.RAMACHANDRAN).

MASS POLITICAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Madurai,

11th Jan, 1940.

Inaugural Speech by Sri. G. Ramachadran

“The Satyagraha movement has to be studied against the background of Indian history, just as Bolshevism has to be studied against the background of Russian and European history. It would be absurd to exchange the historical backgrounds in a study of either Satyagraha or Bolshevism. The emergence of the concept and practice of Satyagraha is as much a product of Indian history as the emergence of Communism in Russia is the product of European history. Socialists and Communists who believe in the inescapable force of history cannot acclaim history in Russia and deny it at the same time in India. Mahatma Gandhi is as much the instrument of history in India as Lenin was the instrument of history in Russia”, said Sri.G.Ramachandran Travancore State Congress leader in inaugurating the Mass Political Education Campaign in Madura at a public meeting held yesterday evening at eh Krishnarayar maidan under the president ship of Sri. A.Vaidyanatha Iyer. M.L.K Bharathi translated Mr. Ramachandran’s speech. The meeting was arranged under the auspices of the Constructive programme sub Committee of the Madura District Congress Committee.

Sri.G. Ramachandran said that the concept Satyagraha has become the most dynamic concept in the world to-day and owned its birth to the genius of Mahatma Gandhi who saw in it the mighty instrument of a mass revolution in India, based entirely on non-violence and directed towards political emancipation and social and economic justice. There was no doubt that there were tremendous injustice calling insistently for redress. To employ violence for the redress of injustice had landed the world in the crisis which was threatening today to blow up Europe into ashes and smoke. “What is astounding”, said the speaker “was not that the people

disbelieved in non-violence as taught by Mahatma Gandhi but that they still believed in the efficacy of violence to right wrongs inspired by the overwhelming evidence furnished by history that violence leads to violence and that the circle of violence once started goes round interminably. Only the sharp sword of non-violence can cut the vicious circle. It is not sentiment nor religious fervor which point the way to Satyagraha, but downright reason and the force of Indian history". Sri.G.Ramachandran pointed out now due to historical reasons an armed mass revolt had become impossible in India and now the sporadic violence of the Revolutionary party had been proved to be hopelessly inadequate to secure National freedom. The only way out for India was through Satyagraha. There was an absurd comparison being constantly made between communism and Satyagraha. But while Communism emphasized certain objectives, Satyagraha emphasized the method of action open to the India masses to secure freedom and justice. So long as everybody is agreed that non-violence alone could be the basis of mass action in India-and even Sri. Subash Chandra Bose agreed with that proposition. Then was it not merely wisdom that the country should accept Mahatma Gandhi's lead as that of the founder and greatest living expert of Satyagraha. But even while everybody was agreed that non-violence was alright there was an attempt to ridicule the constructive programme. But the usefulness of the constructive programme lay in this that it created in this vast country the right conditions for the effective functioning of Satyagraha. It was from long and intimate experience that Mahatma Gandhi discovered that there was an essential relations between Satyagraha and the constructive programme. Gandhiji was like a professor of Satyagraha with an M.A. degree whereas most of the critics of his methods were merely like matriculates in the art. No wonder then that except a few high-browed or impracticable critics the nations had come to accept Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. Concluding Sri G Ramachandran said, 'In terms of Indian history and Indian conditions Satyagraha alone was India's war of independence

and the constitute programme was the inevitable course of training for it. Any attempt to discredit the constrictive programme would therefore ultimately be an act of sabotage against India's strung is for independence". Mr.A.Vaidyanatha Iyer in brimming the proceeding to a conclusion appealed to the people to wear nothing but khaddar and to put the spinning wheel into every home.