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## AN ALTERNATIVE TO DEMOCRACY

### Sarvodaya Leaders Begin Talks On Narain's Thesis

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BANARAS, Jan 2.—Mr Jai Prakash Narain yesterday told leaders and thinkers who have gathered here to discuss his "plea for reconstruction of Indian policy" to take it up as a national programme if they found in it a better alternative to parliamentary democracy.

Mr Narain said his thesis was the result of the request made by the all-party Sarvodaya conference at Yellol in 1957.

Sarvodaya leaders and others yesterday began consideration of the thesis at a 6-day seminar organized by Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh at its headquarters here. The participants include Mr M. R. Masani, Dada Dharam-adhikari, Mr Sriman Narayan, Mr Achyut Patwardhan, Mr Pyarelal, Mr R. K. Patil, Mr Gangsaran Sinha and Mr Sankararao Deo. Acharya Kripalani and Mr Asoka Mehta are expected to join them later.

On the fifth day of the seminar the Executive of the Sarva Seva Sangh will enter the discussion to decide if it could sponsor the programme as a practical proposition. Acharya Vinoba Bhave is reported to have expressed his agreement with the thesis.

Encouraging response to the thesis is said to have come from foreign thinkers. At Oxford University a three-day seminar on it is reported to have been held recently.

In his thesis Mr Narain makes a search for "forms of social life, particularly political life, that would assure preservation of human values, about which there is hardly any dispute in the world today". He claims that

his approach has been non-partisan and non-sectarian.

Mr Narain's objection to parliamentary democracy, which he calls "democratic oligarchy", is that in it people do not feel the glow and satisfaction of self-government. What is needed is "a more satisfying participating democracy". His plan is for "communitarian society" in which there shall be greater decentralization of economic and political power.

The problem of present-day civilization, he says, is social integration—to put man in touch with man so that they may live together in meaningful, understandable, controllable relationships. "The problem is to recreate human community".

Mr Narain thinks the country best suited for experimenting in this reconstruction of community is India, where the process of "atomization of society has not gone very far" and where the physical basis on which to found a community still exists in its villages. Broad outlines of the political and economic institutions for future society are provided in the thesis.

One of the basic ideas of Mr Narain is that for man to really enjoy liberty and freedom and practise self-government it is necessary to voluntarily limit his wants.

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