

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Permanent Address :

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CAMP

Patna

April 3, 1970.

Dear Friend:

I am writing to seek your cooperation and support to a National Appeal to raise a Gram Swaraj Fund of one crore of rupees to be presented to Acharya Vinoba Bhave when he completes 75 years of his life on September 11 this year. A copy of the proposed appeal is enclosed herewith which will speak for itself. The Fund is being sponsored by the Sarva Seva Sangh who have appointed me its Chairman and it is in that capacity that I am writing this. The President of India, Shri V.V. Giri, has agreed to be the Patron of the Fund. The Sarva Seva Sangh and I personally and the Committee of the Fund shall be deeply obliged to you if you kindly agree to be a signatory to the Appeal.

Yours sincerely,

Jayaprakash
(Jayaprakash Narayan)

Shri M.R. Masani,
2, Tughlaq Road,
New Delhi - 11

N.B. : Kindly address your reply:-

C/o Gandhi Peace Foundation,
223, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg,
New Delhi - 1

A NATIONAL APPEAL

For One Crore Rupees Gram Swaraj Fund to be presented to
Acharya Vinoba Bhave on his 75th Birthday on September 11, 1970

Acharya Vinoba Bhave will be 75 on September 11, 1970. His entire life has been filled with intense spiritual seeking, intellectual discipline, selfless social service and seminal experiments in non-violent social action. Recognised by Gandhiji himself, as far back as 1941, as the first and finest Satyagrahi, he has taken further and developed creatively that sovereign science of Satyagraha to which mankind must turn if it is to save itself from falling back into barbarism.

A man of God, a savant of deep insights; a profound scholar and thinker, endowed with a razor-edge mind and a fabulous memory; a facile linguist, a writer of great distinction; a born teacher and original educationist; a leader and moulder of men; a revolutionary activist on a nation-wide scale; a bāl-brahmachārī - his is indeed a personality of the rarest quality. His contributions to spiritual science, philosophy, social science and social engineering have an original and refreshing quality that is bound to be appreciated more and more as the present backneyed habits of thought yield to fresh questioning and reasoning. To use traditional Indian concepts, he is a rare blend of a Jñāna-yogin, a Bhakti-yogin and a Karma-yogin.

The Bhoodān, Gramdān and the Shanti Sena movements launched and led by Vinobaji have attracted world-wide attention. Between them they constitute the first steps towards non-violent social change and the reconstruction of Indian society. In that sense they have carried forward Gandhiji's unfinished work, namely, the work of building a non-violent social order.

Bhoodān was the thin end of the wedge of non-violent revolution driven into the heart of the extant feudal-cum-capitalist social order. In a country where the land problem is acute and the land-man ratio so unfavourable, nearly 42 lakhs of acres of land were obtained by voluntary donations of which about 12 lakhs acres have already been distributed to over 4 lakhs and 60 thousand landless families throughout the country.

Gramdān carried forward the process of non-violent social transformation inasmuch as it entails (a) conversion of private ownership of land into community ownership; (b) sharing within the village community of a small part of land, produce, income and labour, as a regular way of life; and (c) observance of the principle of consensus in all decision-making. In this manner Gramdān is attempting to integrate the community and generate community cooperation and participation at the grass-root level, and thus to lay the psycho-social foundation necessary for the establishment of true Gramraj or Gramswaraj of Gandhiji's and Vinobaji's conception.

Though Gramdān, for the most part, is still in its initial stage of obtaining signed pledges from the people to the principles and conditions of Gramdān, the number of villages in the whole country that have pledged themselves to Gramdān exceeds the spectacular figure of a hundred and fifty

thousand, or more than 25 per cent of the total number of villages in India, there are at the same time hundreds of Gramdan villages in the country that have registered considerable moral and material progress: Gram Sabhas have been functioning; community funds amounting to thousands of rupees have been established; production has been doubled, or even trebled; land disputes minimised or eliminated; and the spirit of mutual cooperation created.

While the work of obtaining Gramdan pledges continues to be the main thrust of the movement, in several States, such as Bihar, Tamilnadu, Orissa, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, it is entering the second and crucial stage of implementation of the pledges made. Development-economic, social and political - and building from the village outwards, is the next stage. In view of the country's languid pace of growth, this ^{hope of} voluntary community effort in hundreds of thousands of villages is invaluable. This is a challenging task requiring a large band of voluntary workers; a good deal of organisation, planning and training; and last but not least, a great deal of money.

Keeping these needs of the movement in mind, and also with a view to honouring the father of this movement and expressing our deep sense of gratitude for all that he has done for the regeneration and reconstruction of this country, particularly for the poor and down-trodden, the Sarva Seva Sangh has decided to raise a fund to be called the Gram Swaraj Fund of Rupees One Crore to be presented to Acharya Vinoba Bhave on the 11th of September next, when he will be completing 75 years of his life.

We the undersigned take pleasure in endorsing this Appeal and urge every one, rich and poor, to contribute his mite to the Fund. We are happy that the President of India, Shri V. V. Giri, has agreed to be the Patron of this fund.
