

EKTA PARISHAD

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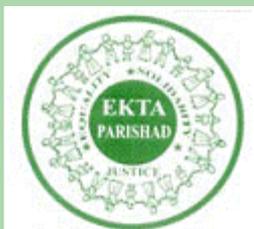
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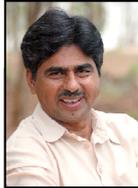
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Jan Satyagraha News

DECEMBER 2009



Happy New Year!

Dear All,

Jai Jagat!

We are entering into a new year. On this occasion, I would like to thank everyone for all the work that has been done. I want to thank every activist in India who is working very hard every day, every partner dispersed all over the world who is supporting the cause of the landless people and every person who has come to visit and support us in the field.

In a world where there are so many inequalities and injustices, we need a strong solidarity between North and South. We need to act all together to have a chance to change this world into one where we can concretely observe "the well being of the last for the well being of all".

Many people have no chance to celebrate this New Year because for them there is no "new". They are struggling every day and they do not see any changes. But, they have the right to celebrate a new year, at least a hope for a new day. It is our responsibility.

Many years have been lost as well as many opportunities. With the support of everyone, in India, in Europe, in the Americas, in Africa and in Asia, 2010 will be a year marked by positive changes and not a one more lost year.

In the name of Ekta Parishad, I wish you a very Happy New Year 2010!

Rajagopal P.V.
Président

Maja Koene Award 2009 celebrated in Madurai



The Maja Koene Award honors social activists and journalists who have done a very important work in the field of awareness building in order to remove injustice and poverty. This peace award is conferred on people working for the promotion of the agenda of peace and non-violence in any part of the world. It has been jointly instituted by CESC India and CESC foundation

Switzerland. Maja Koene was a well known photo journalist and this award is given in her memory. The award ceremony for the year 2009 was held at CESC, in Madurai, on the 24th of November. The chief guest of this function was Mr. S.V. Prabhath .I.A.S., Chairperson of the NCRI in Hyderabad and the annual lecture has been delivered by Ms. Margrit Hugentobler from Switzerland. This year the awardees were: Mr. Ajay Pande, social activist from Uttar Pradesh; Ms. Surjo, social activist from Chhattisgarh; Dr. Chunkath Thomas, journalist from Kerala; Mr. Vijay Vidhyarti, also journalist Uttar Pradesh and Mr. T. Thayaparan, peace activist from Sri Lanka.

Elodie Kergresse

Event : International Conference Towards a Non Violent Economy in Bhopal

From the 30th of January to the 3rd of February 2010, will be held in Bhopal, the first edition of a cycle of International meetings, co-organized by Gandhi International, Ekta Parishad and the South Asia Peace Alliance.

Outline of the ins and outs of the event:

Why did we choose to explore this topic?

Poverty has always been the most ordinary condition on all continents. However, the capacity of the human being for solidarity and autonomy has enabled them to overcome poverty with vivacity, singing, music and a true culture of the beautiful.

Modern society, and particularly the present neo-liberal economy, has transformed this dignified state of poverty/subsistence into an obsession. By labeling autonomous peoples as “poor”, this society has enclosed them in a lawless enclave and has deprived them from their means of subsistence, autonomy and therefore solidarity. In this way, as several authors¹ have demonstrated, ordinary poverty has been driven out by destitution.

So, it is urgent to imagine other answers to the exclusion the loss of dignity than the ones proposed by the state organizations and the multinational groups.

Why speak about a “non-violent” economy?

We do not want to limit the reflection to an analysis of the Gandhian thought. Nevertheless, Gandhi formulated general principles, once free from the contextual cover of the pre-independent India, that seem to us pertinent and timeless.

Gandhi was not an economist, but his economic vision is enriched by an understanding of the dynamics behind economic processes and of human and social realities. Of particular interest are the creative alternatives he proposes.

For the father of Indian independence, the beginning and end of economic development is not material wealth, but human dignity.

Three important principles guide his thoughts about this topic :

- Economic independence (« swaraj »), whose basis is the satisfaction of needs, and not the abundance created by mass production: *“The earth produces enough for every man’s need, but not for every man’s greed.”*
- Local self-sufficiency (“swadeshi”), small scale domestic production which respects life (animals in particular) and the environment
- Trusteeship (economics as a means to ethical and spiritual good)

The words “non-violent economy” reflects for us the idea that the current process – the human being in the service of the economic phenomenon, the violent economy that exploits and kills – is not a fatality and can be inverted to become “non-violent” – the economy in the service of the human being to bring him greater welfare and ways of autonomy and independence.

The economy is closely linked with the dignity and freedom. Very often it is the first condition.

To recover economic independence is like recovering dignity. Without being subjected to external factors and pressures for his daily subsis-

tence, the human being recovers his/her liberty of action, choice, expression and politic. So, the Conference will not dissociate these two fundamental questions:

- ⇒ Is a non-violent economy possible? What are its foundations, principles, modalities, examples?
- ⇒ What can be done to empower the powerless and how can they get back their essential rights and dignity as democratic rights?

The event: sequence and methodology

Everywhere on the earth, groups or individuals are experiencing in their daily life kinds of economic and social organization respecting the individual and the community.

The reflection process adopted for this Conference will be to revisit the three founding principles of Gandhian economic thought in the light of the 21st century, relying on a large range of successful experiments coming from the whole world.

An outline of different very concrete practices will be proposed and presented by the men/women/organizations who implemented them.

Some examples:

- To prioritize organic and food-producing agriculture as a basis of a viable economy and society (with emphasis on food, health, land maintenance and man’s relationship to nature) (Presentation by José Bové, European deputy - France / to be confirmed)
- To ensure self-sufficiency of every village, region and country in meeting basic needs (Presentation by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President Founder of the *Sarvodaya Shramadana movement* - Sri-Lanka)
- To reverse rural exodus, eliminate slums and marginalized neighborhoods, encourage the return to rural areas where labor will be needed (Jean-Pierre Dardaud, President of *Frères des Hommes* - France)
- To anticipate and confront diminishing petroleum resources and develop renewable energy (Vinita Gopal, *Greenpeace* Climate and Energy Campaigner – India / to be confirmed)
- To put machines in the service of the human being so that the human being does not become aslave to machines, to avoid mass production and promote production by the masses (Rajagopal P.V., Ekta Parishad - India)
- To cap wealth and denounce greed and speculation through education and law, to reduce disparities of revenue (Ana Juanche, Coordinator of the *SERPJA* - Uruguay)
- To put finance in the service of the common good, notably the poorest, and to favor alternative forms of savings and credit (Jacky Blanc, Director of *La NEF*, Cooperative of united finances – France)

Relying on these concrete and feasible examples, the afternoons will be dedicated to workshops where economists and practitioners will dialogue, to broaden the practices and try to find and elaborate models of application.

Participants

About forty Indian delegates, made up of activists, economists, from Ekta Parishad or other organizations.

Confirmed attendees: Radha Bhatt (Gandhi Peace Foundation), Dr. Radhakrishnan (Indian Council of Gandhian Studies), S.C Behar, Jacob Pulican, Rajagopal P.V., Rita Roy (SAPA Secretary), ...

To be confirmed: Aruna Roy, Jean Drèze, Anand Gokani, Arundathi Roy, Prakash Amte, ...

About thirty international delegates, coming from the 4 continents will be also present :

Confirmed attendees : Jean-Pierre Dardaud (Frères de Hommes, France), Aye-Aye Win (Dignity International, Birmania), Dr. Aryaratne (Sarvodaya, Sri-Lanka), Light Aganwa (SONAD, Sudan), Jean-Pierre Elong M'Bassi (United Cities and Local Governments of Africa), Yves Berthelot (President of the French Committee of International Solidarity, President of the OMCT), Jean-Joseph Boillot (economist specialized in India and China), Ali Serhrouchni (Director of the school of High Studies in Management of Rabat, Morocco), Sylvain Ropital (project officer of the CCFD), Jacky Blanc (President of the NEF, savings cooperative)...

Jansatyagraha 2012

The foot march « Jansatyagraha 2012 » seems to us to be an historical event. Its scale, its duration and its impact are going to point the at-

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tention of a lot of people toward the major problems of the XXI century: access to the land, forests and drinking water, and the land accumulations by the multinational enterprises (regardless of the negative impact on population). These problems are affecting all the continents, firstly the countries of the South, but also the countries already industrialized where more and more difficulties are appearing. This globalization of the aggression against the poorest also calls for a global answer.

We propose to seize opportunity of the action « Jansatyagraha 2012 » to internationalize non-violent actions, to consolidate the networks of non-violent movements, and to organize a maximum number of simultaneous actions for the arrival of the march in Delhi in October 2012.

The morning of the 3rd of February will be dedicated to the presentation of the actions already scheduled, and to imagine new ones: presentation of the SERPAJ's calendar in Latin America, for the «2012 Objective » (actions scheduled in Europe and Africa) by Gandhi International, and of course of Jansatyagraha 2012 by Ekta Parishad.

We welcome all kind of support for this Conference (financial, logistical, artistic...)

For further information, please contact Jeanne Brisson : bhopal2010@gmail.com / +91 (0)9 685 741 329

Switzerland: India Forum to support Jansatyagraha 2012

The India Forum, sponsored by CESC will take place from the 14th to the 31st of January in Berne, Switzerland.

This event is the first step of a 3-year program to make people in Switzerland aware of Ekta Parishad and Jansatyagraha 2012. It will be held every year until 2012. Each year, the event will be organized around a different topic. This year, the topic is: "The human right to adequate food".

The program includes:

- Rice Show "OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN ALL THE WORLD", an art installation and performance by the Stan's Cafe Theatre Company, Birmingham, which utilizes barrels of rice to represent the world's population,
- Presentation of Ekta Parishad and Jansatyagraha 2012,
- Discussion roundtable about "The human right to adequate food" with representatives from different sponsors of the event and Jean Ziegler (UN Special Envoy on the Right to Food 2000-2008),
- Indian music concert and Indian dance evening,
- Movie night "The long journey to their own land", Janadesh 2007,
- Tasting of Indian cuisine.

For further information, please contact Carmen at: carmen.zurbruggen@post.ch

With a simple clic!

Rajagopal seen by José Bové:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXI81cLbm98&feature=Playlist&p=AB873EFE65F909C1&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=2

Interview of Rajagopal on the Sunday India

www.thesundayindian.com/21092008/storyd.asp?sid=5614&pageno=1

English class for the activists of Ekta Parishad

From the 27th of December to the 2nd of January 14 activists will follow a course of improvement in English, at Tilda, Chhattisgarh. It is organized by Maureen from Action Village India, a British organization, a partner of Ekta Parishad. The objective of this formation is to improve the English level of the participants in order to facilitate their exchanges at national and international level.



A large event like Jansatyagraha 2012 needs different kinds of support of organizations and people at national and international level. CESCO, the Center for Experiencing Socio-Cultural Interaction, based in Madurai (see the newsletter of October 09), and which organizes theatre festivals for the last ten years on different themes in order to support Jansatyagraha 2012, held a National Music Workshop and Festival, from the 24th of November to the 3rd of December.

During this period, 40 young activists coming from Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, participated at this festival.

Starting every morning at 5.30 am, singing "Jai Jagat", the emblematic song of Janadesh 2007, the participants were following different workshops in order to learn how to use folk music as a powerful instrument for change. Moreover, every night was animated by the performances of different artists of folk music, theatre, dances, accompanied by traditional instruments as tabla, keyboard, tape double bongos,...

After the training in CESCO, this group will travel to different states of India to mobilize people and also to raise financial support for Jansatyagraha 2012.



During the training program, the group was practicing old songs, writing new texts, and also tuning their songs with the help of local musical instruments. Resource people with many years of experience were in

CESCI to help them. On the last day there was a public performance and also the launch of a CD of folk songs produced during the workshop.

The previous efforts in terms of theatre and film festivals have had very positive results and one more time, the main objective of this event is to give voice to the voiceless and justice to the oppressed.

The beginning of a beautiful story with Ekta Parishad?



Sathish, Ram, Silpa, Jaya and Muthukumar are 5 young students of the University of Pondicherry. Next year, they will graduate a Master degree in social work.

Last month, they went to villages in the rural areas of the Narapathinam District in

Tamil Nadu, in order to hold a social economic survey. They discovered the way of life of the people living there but also the movement of Ekta Parishad. After that experience they decided to go further and to know more about non violent actions and mass mobilization. "We are discovering Ekta Parishad and CESCO, we would like to know more about it, how do they work, what are their purposes,..." Silpa added: "It is the first time I see a group like this. There is so much energy."

Today, in the center of CESCO in Madurai, they will learn with others 20 young people, how to use music and songs to mobilize and motivate people.

Elodie Kergresse

Bhopal: 25 years later...

The past 3rd of December marked the 25th Anniversary of the World's Worst Chemical Disaster in Bhopal, India, where noxious white clouds of methyl isocyanate gas killed thousands within the days following the explosion of the Union Carbide plant. More than two decades later, Hospital records show that 20,000 people died and almost 600,000 people were left with irreparable physical damage but justice was not served yet.

A ceremony has been held in the Gandhi Bhawan, Bhopal in order to remember this tragedy, support the demands that the people responsible for tens of thousands of deaths be finally brought to justice and in order to ensure that "no more Bhopals" happen anywhere in the world.

For further information:

<http://studentsforbhopal.org/learn>

[http://www.google.co.in/search?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-](http://www.google.co.in/search?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&rlz=1T4SKPB_enIN350IN350&q=bhopal+25th+anniversary)

[8&rlz=1T4SKPB_enIN350IN350&q=bhopal+25th+a](http://www.google.co.in/search?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&rlz=1T4SKPB_enIN350IN350&q=bhopal+25th+anniversary)

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Where is Rajagopal?

JANUARY 2010

1-15	Kerala
16-20	CESCI, Madurai – Tamil Nadu
22-25	Ahmadabad - Gujarat
26-3	Bhopal – Madhya Pradesh



Questions or commentaries?

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