

Random Thoughts

Vol. II



Ministry of Community Development
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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PREFACE

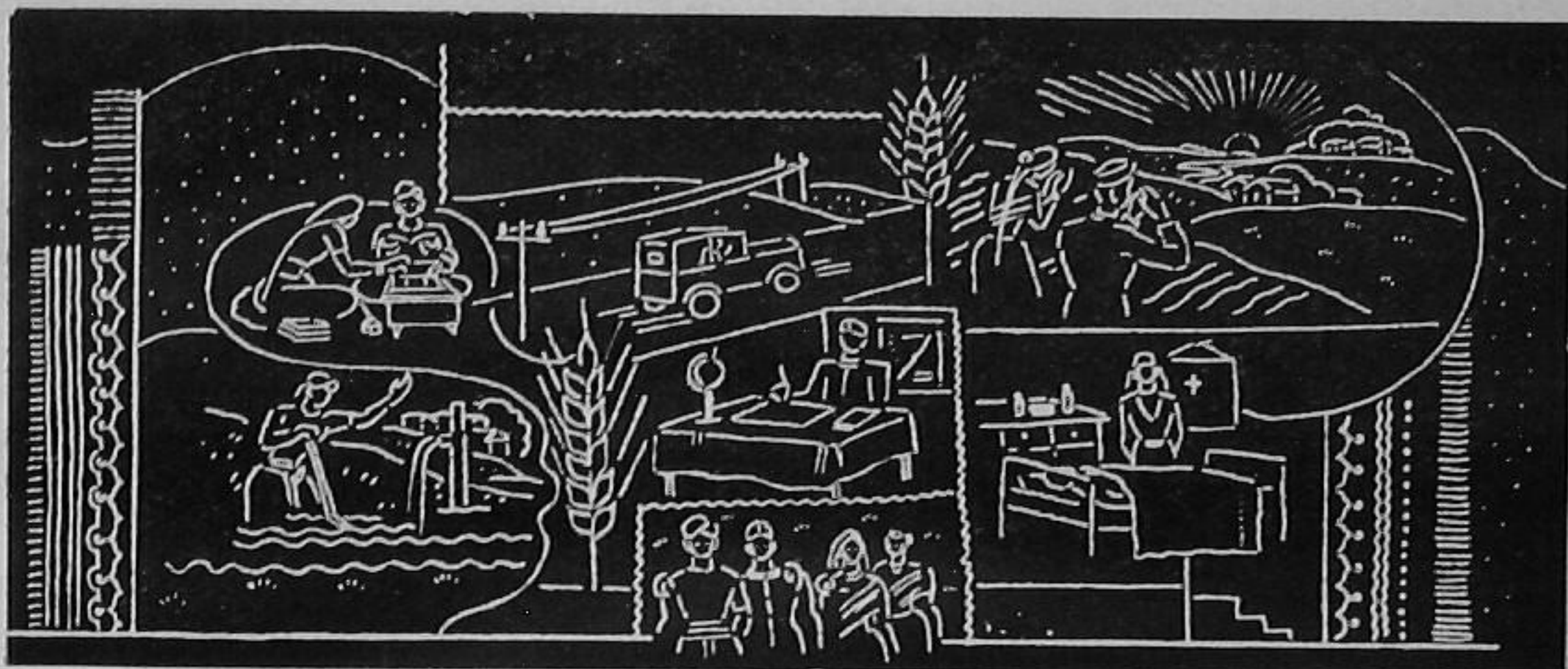
Random Thoughts, Vol. II, is a continuation of Vol. I, which ended with the Administrator's monthly letter of December, 1955. As in the case of earlier volume, no attempt has been made to edit the letters nor any portions have been left out. The letters, complete up to the end of 1956, have been published chronologically.

Ministry of Community Development

CD 137/1

I

January 1, 1956



DEAR COMRADE,

The NEW YEAR DAY—another point on the wheel of time in eternal gyration. Yet, it is not quite so, for, so far as we are concerned, it is a vital land-mark for the "Tomorrow" we are at last getting ready to plunge in.

The past eight years, as I look back at my ownself, will appear to have been one of stock-taking and at best a rehearsal for the battle which should really begin. The First Five-Year Plan will soon be over. You know as much as I do as to how we stand at home and in relation to the world outdoors.

TOWARDS THE NEW KUMBH MELA

I had in my office yesterday 45 farmers who hailed from an NES Block adjoining the Hyderabad City. I had met some of them during my recent visit to the area. They are out with their Project Officer on a sight-seeing tour of other projects in India. You will have read of two batches of 450 farmers each who have been out on a similar excursion from the Bombay State. In fact, it is Bombay which showed the way for this new pilgrimage and they deserve high compliments from all of us on this innovation.

The 45 farmers, who sat in my office for more than an hour, are part of a phenomenon which will take us yet some time fully to appraise. The change in the outlook of these naive sons of the soil, who had never before been out of their small circle, their sense of wonderment at the size and greatness of India, and the way they have begun to assess the relative value of their all-India citizenship *vis-a-vis* the citizenship of a village or at best an individual State, are features which signify an unmistakable revolution already in the making. Like excursions by farmers from many other States are already in the process, and I know the movement is spreading something like a wild fire which we cannot resist even if we wish to.

IN RETROSPECT

The Community Development Programme, from whichever angle we may look at it, has been the most potent movement of people since we won our Independence, and assuredly is the most important contribution

of the First Five-Year Plan. We have received compliments and congratulations on the programme universally from all quarters. We have also had unremitting experiences of a grind which perhaps is without a precedent. The Government agency suspected heretofore in the eyes of many, has acquired a new stature and dignity. The people in the countryside, who were considered the last strong-hold of inertia and superstition, have also given an account of themselves exceeding by far the wildest of our own expectations. People's representatives, who were aloof and critical, have also begun to take interest in the movement in increasing measures.

The First Five-Year Plan, so far as this movement is concerned, has meant concentration on Agriculture, Education, Public Health and Communications. On the organizational side, it has brought understanding of the programme and the requisite tempo of the spirit, by and large, in all workers. There has also been better appreciation by others in the Government machinery of what the programme involves, although much yet remains, so far as the active participation of departments is concerned.

THE PROSPECT

The Second Five-Year Plan, which stares us round the corner, has been programmed to an irrevocable coverage of the country as a whole. It logically means that the success of the movement hereafter can only be to the extent that others in the Government are playing their part in the Second Five-Year Plan which has been carefully designed to be dovetailed into this programme in every phase of it.

Briefly, therefore, our emphasis hereafter will have to shift to new fields. We come straight to administrative co-ordination. Here, it is not enough that Collectors are already in the picture. The departments have to take their due responsibilities, and co-ordination at the ministerial level through the State Development Committees will have to be a regular feature hereafter. The organization handling the Community Development Programme should have no other role except that of co-ordination.

We next come to the level of performance. It is quite obvious that there will hardly be in future a Project Officer who by himself will be able to exceed the performances in the top project of today. We invariably fall back, therefore, to the basic principle of extension, which we should begin to apply now to our own personnel—I mean inter-project and inter-State visits by our staff, with a view to sharing the pooled experiences of the country and raising the level of the weakest link to approximate in strength to the strongest. Inter-State Seminars, and inter-project and inter-State visits by our staff will have to be introduced as a regular feature of our programme in all fields, be it in the projects, in the Training Centre or in other institutions directly connected with our programme. Higher level of thinking will sprout, as it inevitably must, from the ground through the free will of our people for whom all we need do is to clear the road for a free movement forward and then to watch and offer the opportunity for sharing the experiences between all participants.

On the programme side, our emphasis has now to shift to village industries, co-operation, Panchayats and the movement of women and children. The day of stock-taking in the year 1960-61 will measure us inevitably by the extent to which we have succeeded in creating additional

employment and providing relief for under-employment and the institutional patterns we have developed to take care of the administrative, economic and cultural needs of people, which can be organically controlled from the village up to the Centre.

FROM BANARAS TO KANYA KUMARI

Last week, I was in the Travancore-Cochin State. I had there the first glimpse on the ground of the vision we all had when we began this programme three years ago. The vision of a surging torrent of humanity shocked out of their chronic apathy and inertia and seeking an outlet for the elemental force which this programme has unwittingly "unleashed".

As I saw the women and children in that State in their mass upsurge and the men-folk also caught equally inextricably, I just had a fright as to how far the machinery of Government, which we are controlling, will succeed in responding to the situation. Our comrades in the Travancore-Cochin, who were witness to this drama, shared my electric shock and anxieties equally. I have seen this upsurge almost universally in all the States in India, but nowhere in the wild magnitude such as I faced this time in Travancore-Cochin.

If we can guide this movement promptly and intelligently enough, and I do not see how we can run the programme without it, it seems as though we are about to open a new chapter of a people's democracy based on the principles of the *Panchshila* we have been advocating as a nation to the world without. Indeed our profession in the international field would have little meaning if we could not practise what we preach abroad, with our own people at home. You need not, therefore, feel shocked if you discover sooner than you are ready to recognise now that India has given a new definition to the word "Democracy", which we have so far tried to practise but as a borrowed craft.

I cannot, for instance, understand why it should not be possible for us to have an entirely non-political organization of women, children and youths rising as units co-terminus with our Panchayats and federating ultimately at the national level, the only term of reference for the organization being work of reconstruction and the maintenance and evolution of our social standards and values, leaving politics with the new meaning in the new context to be handled by elected institutions such as the Panchayat at the village level ending in the Parliament at the Centre.

From Banaras where I went during the middle of the month, and Kanya Kumari—the land's end (or shall we call it the land's beginning?) where I spent the X-mas day searching for an answer out of the confluence of the oceans, I come back to headquarters revitalized with an unflinching faith that we have wrested an answer—a key to the door for "Tomorrow". I am having my own ideas checked up with my friends about me and I hope I shall be able to send you a blue-print of the new Kumbh Mela in the making, in which you and I have the good fortune to act the vanguards.

You will have noted, incidentally, that the Congress Working Committee recently has taken a definite decision to build up a new structure within the organization, which will be designed only for constructive work such as Gandhiji had dreamt about. The Community Development Programme logically will be the main venue for these activities. In the

forthcoming session of the Indian National Congress it is expected that there will be a special Section that will deal with this question. It is needless to mention that I shall participate closely in all these deliberations. I have no doubt, that once a lead has been given by the premier party in power others also will follow.

Today, the New Year Day, I came to the office with the sole intent of having this brief communion with you on this eventful day, as I feel convinced that we are on the threshold of a new era for India, and in this we as an organization, are destined to play the most significant role for "Tomorrow". I had many more things as random thoughts to convey to you. I am abstaining, as I thought I should for once send you greetings without adding to the already heavy burden of your thoughts and activities.

We have left already a mark on the sands of time which can never be lost. The landmark hereafter will have to take increasingly the shape of a landslide which will overtake us in spite of ourselves. I send these lines to you today but as a fore-warning and a greeting on the cross-road from which we turn now to a new chapter. Will you kindly convey my affectionate greetings to all our friends and comrades fighting in the dusts?

P. S. I am sending you separately a copy of the 'Kurukshetra—A Symposium' issued by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting on our behalf and Shri M. S. Randhawa's book on 'National Extension Service and Community Projects in Punjab' which I hope you will find of use and interest.



II

February 15, 1956



“As I would not be a slave
So I would not be a master.
This expresses my idea of
democracy—whatever differs
from this, to the extent of
the difference, is not democracy—”

DEAR COMRADE,

The above motto I quote here from the greatest American that ever lived—Abraham Lincoln, who paid perhaps the highest price of all men recorded by history for his defence of freedom against human slavery. In this programme of ours, as we have been discussing between ourselves from time to time, we have plunged unwittingly yet perhaps very characteristically to the objective that this programme will be a continuation of the unfinished battle for freedom following our release from the clutches of colonial rule.

Freedom as a basic concept is totally indivisible. It logically follows, therefore, that there can be no real freedom unless it is shared by all alike. In the democracy as can endure in the context of today and more so tomorrow, we have three clear categories of citizens. They are the people, the people's representatives and the people's servants. (We must bear in mind that in the new context a servant is a servant for specific purposes only. His profession as a servant does not and should not deprive him of the freedom he should claim as a citizen in a democracy.)

Our programme, as you know through your own nerves, is moving fast and is developing by its own momentum in depth as also in space. While I delight in seeing this happening, I see also the beginning of a crisis which continues to deepen and pose thereby a challenge fraught with serious implications not merely for the programme but for the very concept of freedom which is our objective. I would go a bit in retrospect and do some analysis of our position today. I would like you to correct me if I am wrong in my thesis. It is imperative that you help me in doing this if I am to avoid pushing many in totally wrong directions.

Our people in India provided the sinews of war against colonial rule. The colonisers suffered defeat and beat in hasty retreat for good. The

vacuum that followed had to be filled by the people through their chosen representatives. This had to take place at all levels from the ground to the top. The Government agency which formerly was an instrument for repression in the hands of the colonial ruler had to be harnessed to the service of the people as the people's own instrument.

To the extent, and where, the transformation has taken place in the Government agency, and the organic link has been successfully established between the people and their representatives there is no problem. Not merely in this programme but in fact in all affairs of life, these are forging ahead with a chorus. Where this has not taken place, and as a result the Government agency and the people's representatives, real or so-called, are vying with each other for filling the void there is trouble, and we see it happening right before our eyes. What is worse, the bitterness of the struggle threatens to be on the increase.

Curiously enough I find that a number of non-officials who should have had sympathy for the problems with which the Government agency is faced in the turbulent transition of today seem really to be even jealous of the influences exerted by the Government servant on the people around him. In like manner I find a sad allergy on the part of many an official towards non-official representatives. Being caught in between the two fires I try to understand, as best as I can, the psychology of both with their strength as well as weakness. The clear complex of inferiority which leads to these symptoms has to have a remedy. I continue searching for it. I realise, I hope you will correct me if I am wrong, that there is no future unless the officials and the non-official representatives of people have a clear understanding of each other's role and are prepared to accommodate each other as leaders and instruments of action in our growing democracy.

As I have indicated to you in my previous letters, I have been struggling for several months to bring about better understanding on this score. I attended the constructive workers' session that preceded the All-India Congress Session at Amritsar recently. I would continue my pleading in the non-official camps regardless of parties or politics, as to me, and I believe it will be to you also, it is a matter of faith that in this programme of ours there is room only for common understanding and common action. There is no scope for politics as we have known it heretofore or for group rivalries between categories of our own citizens.

As time goes on, we certainly will have wider opportunities to promote this understanding and the common action on the common front, and in this the Government agency being a disciplined, intelligent and well-informed cadre of our citizens in India will have a progressively increasing role to play if it is to succeed in imparting the understanding and the spirit of loyalty to a cause which are the main characteristics that distinguish the Government agency from others. We shall have to have more concrete thinking on this line, so that we may be able to formulate a more concrete action programme on this behalf, during the forthcoming Development Commissioners' Conference. Coming now to concrete action points for today.

"WHERE THOUGHT AND ACTION COMBINE STRENGTH FOLLOWS"

This was uttered by some one most casually when I was travelling in a project in some far off corner of India. The idea never left my mind and I thought I should share it with you.

STRENGTH IS ALSO HORIZONTAL

Strength on the vertical line is significant. But it will be in unstable equilibrium unless it has deeper and wider roots. Our strength necessarily will derive from the extent to which nourishment is also drawn horizontally from roots which spread out in space. I am mentioning this parable of the tree in nature, because I find that there is yet inadequate understanding in our workers that the stability of their strength lies in the strength of the technical departments as also of the others who are linked with us horizontally. The future of this programme, I can declare boldly, will be determined by the strength of all these horizontal agencies of which the administrative agency is expected to act as the nucleus. Wherever we may be placed, this is a point that we can ignore only to our undoing. Our friends, the Collectors and the Block Development Officers have a special role to play on this behalf to see that deliberate effort is made to build up and give appropriate credit to the technical and other agencies who alone can add content to the conflagration we have set apace.

OUR FRIENDS FROM ABROAD

Our Indonesian friends, the 15 strong, have completed their survey of the Indian programme and have gone back to Indonesia. The enthusiasm in their face and the transformation that they have undergone from individual to a team outlook was really an inspiration. Six prominent women from Indonesia are soon to arrive in India for an intensive study of our programme. It all goes to indicate that the programme will strike roots in that strategic land of our friends and neighbours.

The Afghan team which came sometime ago, has also gone back after a similar programme. There is one other team going through the various parts of the country from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Middle-East countries. We have also had visits during recent days from a number of high dignitaries from the United Nations. The programme of ours has caused wide-spread interest, and I have reasons to feel convinced that we shall also have the opportunity soon to learn from many of our neighbours. It is all to the good, as a wider fraternity based on common action for the common man seems at last to be in the making despite the ominous rumbling of the atomic shells on the other side. I know what all these visitors mean to you. We are deeply grateful for all that you are doing to meet these demands we are imposing on your already over-strained resources.

INTER-STATE VISITS BY STAFF AND PEOPLE

I believe I had indicated in one of my letters to you recently that there is very little the Government agency can promote beyond some of the outstanding features accomplished in the 1952-53 projects and at best the 1953-54 NES and CDP Blocks. The further march of the programme, so far as depth is concerned will depend primarily on the extent to which the technical staff can grow to provide increasing content to this expanding programme, and the people can push it still deeper with their own momentum. But, Government agency has yet a most important role to play, namely in the equalization of the outstanding features and spreading it out in space. Inter-State visits by project staff and the people constitute the most important measure to promote this objective. The special trains of farmers running round the country have shown a new way. This sort of a pilgrimage is something that comes naturally to our simple folks in the countryside.

CPA CENTRES RUN SHORT OF TRAINEES WHILE PROJECTS CRY FOR TRAINED WORKERS

I have a complaint which I wish to register, and I hope you will not mind. Both the BDO and SEO Training Centres are running short of their capacity, and this happens despite the crying need of trained staff in the field. Is it because of any disability on our side, namely timely intimation of the seats allotted, etc. ? If so, I would like to correct the position here. Could you let me have a word ? The Centres have now been reorganized with increased complement of staff and accommodation for trainees. It will be a pity if these are not to be fully availed of because of reasons which are avoidable.

WOMEN SEOS AT LONG LAST

Women have begun to gather force and I find that the percentage of women SEOs has been progressively on the increase. May I offer you my congratulations? May I reiterate again that woman is the mother of the universe? We can perhaps afford to give furlough to the father, but existence itself will be at stake without the mother.

"SHRAMDAN" AS TRAINING IN DISCIPLINE AND METHOD IN MADNESS

"Shramdan" now is an integral feature of development in India. I am afraid, however, that this work is not being done with the method that the madness calls for. Shramdan work, for instance, must be conducted with the discipline and methods employed, for instance by fire-fighters, if I may give this extreme example, in quenching a fire. There is tremendous wastage of labour by people because of the lack of methods. This is something that will have to be looked into. I am asking our BDO and SEO Training Centres to include this as an integral feature of the practicals in their curriculum. But, it will also have to be done in the Gram Sevak Extension Training Centres. I would have even liked a manual attempted on this subject. But probably you are already swamped by the plethora of our Manuals! I have perforce to be on my guard. Discipline in Shramdan, if I may mention, is again something which will be indivisible in its impact on other spheres of life even apart from Shramdan. If as a nation, we suffer from any chronic maladies, these are lack of discipline and unity in action. Could we not help through this programme?



“JANA GANA MANA” AND “JAI HIND”

The song “Jana Gana Mana” and the shout “Jai Hind” in our projects are really a parody of what these should be. We have today gramophone records available in the market which carry authorised version of this song with the tunes all properly set. I would strongly recommend every Block to be provided with at least one gramophone record, if not more, and the Social Education Organizer should take care of its adequate dissemination down the line. I am also asking our BDO and SEO Training Centres to take care of this during the training period. The same holds good for “Jai Hind”. A full-throated shout of “Jai Hind” by a large mass of people has a merit all its own. This, again, has to be cultivated in a deliberate way. The Social Education Organizer, however, will appear to be the defaulter. We shall see what can be done from our side. Public meetings, specially those which attract large masses of people who are not very infrequent in our projects now, are not organized as these should be. Here, again, there is an opportunity for imparting training in discipline to our workers and also of methods in madness, so that passion does not degrade into a lunacy.

COLLECTORS’ INSPECTION OF PROJECTS

I have seen some Collectors initiating the same standards and methods as apply to inspection of Treasury or Tehsildar’s Offices, in the inspection of NES and CDP Blocks. Here, again, I believe, there is scope for standardization of procedure. If at all possible, I would like you to bring up a draft procedure which we may finalize during the forthcoming Development Conference.

“PROJECTS CLOSING” : SAYS P. E. O. WITH A WRY FACE

As the 1952-53 projects approach the dead-line date for their closure, I see gloom and misgivings writ large in the face of many of our co-workers in the field. While it is, no doubt, a very serious matter and will require a good deal of thinking by us at the forthcoming Development Commissioners’ Conference as to how to maintain the tempo of work by the people, development being a continuing process our having scratched merely the surface by now, I am glad this is also an opportunity for doing some real heart-searching and discovering from practical lessons from a four-year ordeal whether or not we did succeed in emphasising the educative aspect of the programme and the development of people’s own institutions to carry on as successors, or we emphasized only the physical aspect of the programme. In a programme of this nature, we can afford some mistakes, and mistakes there are bound to be in spite of all the precautions and fore-thinking we may adopt. But mistakes will serve their purpose only if we are prepared to learn from them. I would not like to be foolish enough to say that we have committed no mistakes. Let us, therefore, do some fresh thinking with neither fear nor bias. We shall find the answer. The next Development Commissioners’ Conference may very well be a revolution in thinking, if we can take the pains from now on to recapitulate objectively the steps that we have followed since we began the long march early 1952 and learn the lessons of the road and adjust the style and pace of our journey further ahead.

Forgive me for the breakneck style of this communication. I am being rushed by events beyond my limits. I do not know when there can be leisure again to dream and for its transmutation.

JAI HIND.

March 31, 1956



DEAR COMRADE,

We meet again after long. But then, I have been busy moving continually. It is bad. One should have time to do thinking. I shall cease to be a thinking man if I continue like this. It is bad for any one, much more so for a person who holds a responsibility such as mine. But then, what can one do ?

In a few hours the First Five-Year Plan will be over, and we shall plunge straight into the Second. The Second Plan is a revolution both in thinking as also in action, if its objective is even to be approached. With the firm decision to cover the whole country with National Extension Service and at least 40% with the intensive programme, our work acquires a new horizon and a new character.

In fact, the Community Development Programme becomes more or less synonymous with the total Five-Year Plan minus, perhaps, only the large-scale industries, transport, and multi-purpose schemes at source, all other schemes especially of the State Governments being interwoven with the skeleton provided under the NES and Community Development Programme. The upshot of it all is that there will be no room whatsoever in the Second Plan for isolated functioning of departments. Administrative co-ordination will acquire a newer significance constituting an integral base to the whole structure of Government.

We have had disquieting reports from different parts of the country, and I have seen things myself on the ground, to the effect that in most areas under the 1952 Community Development Projects there is a sense of finality in the programme, both in the staff and the people; and since finality in development, if at all, should arise only in about 50 to 100 years from now, there is a visible sense of frustration and anxiety all round.

This, as you will readily see, is based on wholesale misunderstanding. To clarify matters, a letter had been issued by the CPA sometime ago (*vide* No. CPA/31(18)/P/56, dated the 13th March, 1956), explaining the position in the 1952 Community Project areas. As you will have noted, there is no question of the programme being wound up in these areas. In fact, the expiry of the period of 4 years marks only the end of the first

phase to be followed immediately by a new one where resources of Government, both of the Central Ministries and of the State Departments, will be concentrated with a priority in these areas, as the people and the Government agency in these, will have been made specially receptive to programmes of development based on universal self-help. How this is to be brought about and whether or not the provision of a nominal nuclear budget per year with the Development Commissioner for this purpose will be of advantage, is expected to be discussed during the forthcoming Development Commissioners' Conference. I have no doubt that we shall evolve some formula satisfactory to all concerned. You will do well to bring understanding on this matter to all those who stand in need of it. It is necessary that this be done forthwith, if temporary setbacks to the programme are to be avoided.

A WEEK AS A GRAM SEVAK

During the last Development Commissioners' Conference at Simla I had undertaken to try the experiment of working as a Gram Sevak on a Gram Sevak's charge for a short period. The main difficulty was to find an area where I could work completely in cognito and free from disturbances from the Press and other inquisitive minds. I did succeed at last in getting the opportunity for a week in a 1952 project in a State. A week of work in the role of an additional Gram Sevak attached to the existing man confined only to six villages, brought me face to face with the real character of this programme and its impact on the ground after 3½ years of strenuous effort. The experiences have been a revelation and in many ways a confirmation of much of my instinctive hopes and misgivings. The experiences are gradually sinking in my mind, and I hope by the time I meet you at the Development Commissioners' Conference I shall have fully assimilated the lessons so as to be able to give you a first-hand picture of what I saw and felt.

The only features I can mention to you at this stage are that the Government organization working on the ground has undergone a transformation even beyond my own expectation. There is a devotion to work which can hardly be rivalled. The accomplishment on the ground also has been substantial. But there is a lot more to be said which I would much rather defer till we meet in person.

LISTEN TO THE PEDESTRIAN WHILE ON THE GROUND

While we can learn a lot on this programme from statistics and charts maintained at the Block, State or Central Headquarters, as also from personal discussions with members of the Government agency engaged in this programme, I find that a lot more and especially things which are really vital can only be learnt, if we listen to the pedestrians while we are passing through a project area. In fact, the common man in India, and may be this applies equally to all other countries in the world, has a fund of wisdom which is quite staggering, if only one cares to tap the surface and call for the sap from within. Our visits to projects will be much richer if we can pay attention to what the pedestrian says and feels concerning what we are about.

ROOF CAN ENDURE ONLY ON A FOUNDATION

This is, no doubt, common sense, and yet common sense happens to be the most uncommon commodity in the world we live in today. No superstructure can endure unless it stands on a solid foundation. How we ignore this vital concept when we go all out to do things based on a

handful of rich and influential people in a village who make the bulk contribution to people's participation out of their own or from others through their influences? If a programme in a village is to endure, it is obvious that it will have to be broad based and everyone will have to be a willing party to the programme. We come back naturally to social education and we find that this programme acquires increasingly the function of extension and social education as opposed to one of public works. May be, the mad drive we have so far conducted for accomplishment under the Head of Expenditure has more to do with the phenomenon I have described than all other factors combined. Here, again, it is obvious we shall have to do some real heart-searching when we meet next.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME *vis-a-vis* MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

In a maintenance programme, pressure comes from the ground for essential repairs to and maintenance of things and structures which are undergoing wear and tear. For administration on the top it is one of agreeing to the programme or of amending it. In a development programme, however, the situation is just the opposite because in this the pressure for the overall programme has to continue flowing to the ground till the general structure on the ground has been up as planned by the master architect. It is only thereafter that the other phase, namely one of maintenance and routine expansion, can begin. The period under the NES and the Community Development Programme as set out under the official plan, is intended to be the phase of construction. Whether or not the programme is one of development or of maintenance, will necessarily be determined by the direction of the pressure—from top down to the ground or from the ground up to the top. It is obvious that this programme with which we have been charged, will demand continuous pressure from the top downwards.

LOAD MUST BE SHARED

If the mounting pressure on the top executive and his immediate colleagues is not to crush them with the sheer weight of the undertaking, it is obvious, the load has to be shared with others. The co-sharers are the Heads of Departments and their staff down the line as also the people's representatives in adequate institutions of their own.

The forthcoming Development Commissioners' Conference is expected to evolve an approach to Local Self-Government Institutions at village and intermediary levels, both economic and civic, such as can be attractive enough to promise dignity and expression to the representatives of people growing organically from the ground. The sector for load sharing that will be the direct charge of the administrative agency, will be the technical departments of Government. Technical departments will not share the initiative unless they can be inspired with the same mission as the administrative agency is. The administrative agency, as we have discussed many a time in the past, can at best carry the initial message and ease the burden enroute by putting hurdles off the track. It can go no farther. The content, which will have to be ever growing in this programme both in depth and space, can only be provided by growing technical competence in our technical functionaries. No man has been big enough to carry the burden of a people single-handed. We have the whole procession of tragedies from Alexander to Marshall Stalin, if examples were needed at all.

The administrative agency of Government since Independence, has given an outstanding account of itself, especially so in this programme, which in its present size and scope has already grown to be the marvel for

many a nation abroad. The new task that faces the administrative agency, as I can see it broadly, is of a two-fold character—how to share the burden of the mission with the technical agencies and how to pass on the initiative that now rests uneasily on the shoulder of Government servants, to those of the institutions of people's representatives which can be organically linked up in a nation-wide network.

STUDY CIRCLE FOR BLOCK STAFF

Both CPA at the Centre and the organizations in the States have been producing and pushing out enormous volumes of literature on all aspects of the programme. But production of knowledge, howsoever palatable, is one matter and its consumption by others for whom this is meant, is another. I have seen in the Ramakrishna Mission the inmates of the Ashram getting together every evening, and more fully on a particular evening in a week, reading and discussing together on common subjects of study. Could we not do this for our Block staff as also for staff at the District and State levels? I am advocating nothing other than the practice, the validity of which we never question in the Church, the Mosque, or the Temple where we meet for a common congregation. The Government staff today is engaged in a no lesser sacrament. The method, therefore, will have to be identical, if the past is to be any guide to the future.

If we can begin this practice in right earnest, it is but inevitable that the practice will spread to other areas also. We saw the beginning of this in a Seminar of Members of Parliament, which was organized sometime ago in Delhi. May be, we shall also soon have the opportunity of participating in study circles for Parliamentarians and Legislators in the States. But, couldn't we begin ourselves, say, at the Block level?

LITERATURE CONCURRENT WITH ALLOTMENT

I have issued instructions in the CPA that in future complete sets of literature issued by the CPA should, in adequate quantities, be despatched to State Governments for immediate distribution to staff in new blocks under fresh allotment. I shall be grateful if you can introduce a routine whereby your office can call on the CPA wherever the CPA has failed to carry this out in practice.

VILLAGE SCHOOL—THE NERVE CENTRE OF RURAL CULTURE

There is great demand universally for Community Centres in the villages. Community Centres cannot be housed in a building alone. The Centre is where the community is. If there is a community in the village which is totally free from the poison of caste, creed and political rivalries, it is the community of schoolchildren. Is it not logical then that we should aim to make the village school the Community Centre and try to build it up both physically and morally to be representative of the morality, the culture and the wealth of the village? Such a development will bring about an immediate change in our whole outlook to the village school, and we may find that sooner than we are now ready to believe, we shall have established a village stage, a village garden, a village nursery and a village playground and many other features besides, adjoining the school to which the young and old alike can join in a common festival of Holi.

Here, again, CPA is working out a new scheme whereby village teachers, numbering about 70,000 during the Second Plan, can be trained for the new dispensation, the resources for the training being provided mostly by the Centre, the other side of the resources, namely land and the activities

associated with the new Community Centre, being left to the initiative of the village people themselves.

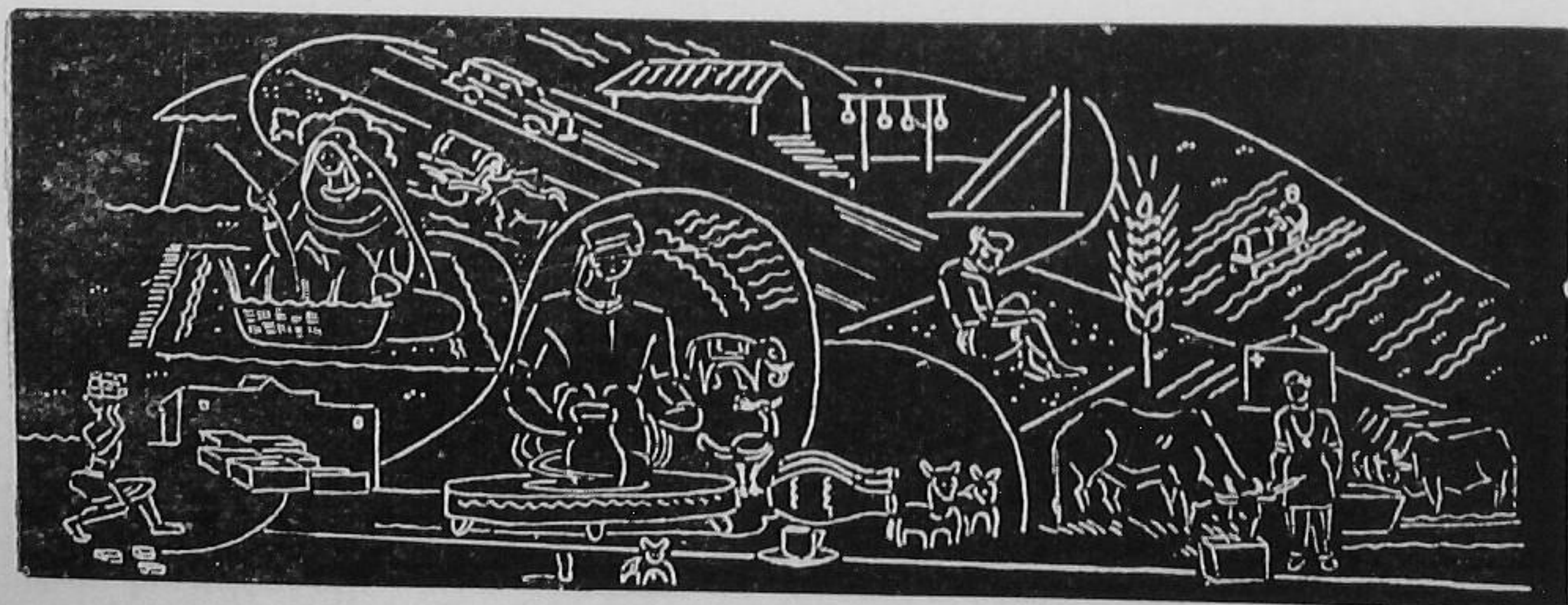
SPSA—SYNCHRONIZED PROMOTION OF SEASONAL ACTIVITIES

These are the days of slogans. Slogans appear to have a readier acceptance. I, therefore, have chosen reluctantly to add one more to the long list.

This country through its long history of trials and errors in community life, evolved certain patterns according to which certain matters of importance in the village, especially the ones relating to production and sanitation both of which are intimately related to the life of the inmates of the village, were taken care of symbolically as community festivals in particular seasons. Could we not phase the various facets of the programme according to the seasons? Believe me, if this programme is promising to take root at a fast growing pace, it is because we have unwittingly fitted it into the emotional life of our village people. Would it not help if we went a little farther along the line and fitted the programme seasonally instead of attempting all facets of the programme at one time which, at any rate, is a physical impossibility?

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES EXTENSION SERVICE

One thing seems fairly clear. By now there has been appreciable increase in the standard of agricultural production under the impact of this programme. Of course, we have scratched only the surface and a long distance yet remains to be covered. But the momentum is there, and there should be no relaxation if the Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry can continue playing the part they are determined to. The Second Five-Year Plan is directed towards intensification of effort in this direction. However, agricultural activities benefit primarily the people who are land-owners. The landless remain more or less where they were except for some of the civic amenities, such as drinking water wells, roads, lanes, schools, etc. If wages for landless labour are to go up corresponding to the increase in agricultural production, it is inevitable that there has to be the promise of an alternative employment to the landless proletariat in the countryside. This can only take the shape of village industries, and in this, despite the original apathy many of us had, we have no other recourse except Khadi and Village Industries and the production of building materials in rural areas, if mass employment is to be the imperative objective. Establishment of industries in rural areas is indicated for other reasons also. The landowner, who secures a higher purchasing power,



must have an outlet for healthy spending, or else in the present context where expansion in land holding is proving increasingly unattractive because of various governmental measures in prospect, the surplus purchasing power will only end in creating more feuds in villages with the concomitant addition to the carbuncle in the big cities.

From all that we have initiated during recent months in the direction of village industries, it will appear that we are working for the establishment of a Village Industries Extension Service. This, again, is something which will require careful study and deliberations during the forthcoming Conference.

“HAND POUNDED RICE IS INDIGESTIBLE” ?

Life has been so adulterated under the city and slum ridden conditions, that pure ghee, pure oil, whole wheat and whole rice, cause indigestion to many of us. The phrase I have cited above is actual. The representation was made, I understand, in one of our Training Centres. How can we propagate the idea of Khadi and Village Industries, including Palm Gur and Khandsari, whole rice and whole wheat, unless we have acquired the habit and the strength to digest and assimilate these commodities ourselves? Here, again, “Physician heal thyself” is the first step before we proceed to heal others. Are we sure that the staff in our Training Centres run both by the CPA and the State Governments is really imbued with the honesty of purpose and practice? This is fundamental. No one can transmit what he does not have himself, and faith the least.

SEMINAR ON ADMINISTRATIVE INTELLIGENCE

We completed last week the long-looked for seminar on Administrative Intelligence. I had the occasion to attend it for the first two days. I was deeply impressed by the galaxy of technical talents from States who gathered at the seminar. As I listened to the delegates from the States, I saw how eager all were only to be called upon to serve. The seminar has been as much of a success as a first seminar on a controversial matter could be. I have a feeling that it has even been a greater success than we could have expected. It is obvious, that this will have to be repeated every year, if Administrative Intelligence is to develop as a technique to aid the Administrator.

But the consensus of opinion, as I gathered, was that the responsibilities for Administrative Intelligence on our programme should be vested in the State Directors of Statistics. I could not look for a healthier attitude. The Department of Statistics in a State should, for all intents and purposes, function as all other Development Departments in this programme with the only qualification that in the initial stages the department may have the cell under its control but attached to the Development Commissioner. If the programme can move on this basis, I have no doubt Development Commissioners will be relieved of a good part of their burden. It will also, incidentally, help the Statistical Departments of States to be more realistically oriented to conditions as they are developing on the ground.

PAC SEMINAR

I attended recently a seminar purely of non-official members of Project Advisory Committees in PEPSU. While the seminar had done a good deal of work, I had a feeling that as a policy it is unsatisfactory to have separate seminars of officials and non-officials. The two must combine, if there is to be realism in discussions and better understanding of each other's role



in the programme. It will appear, therefore, that the system now being followed in most States, namely to combine in the same seminar both officials and non-officials, is the right one. We may go farther in this direction and see that officials and non-officials are of the same numerical strength as far as feasible.

WOMEN—THE PURVEYOR OF CULTURE

I discover increasingly that man at best is a hunter and his imagination can only be excited in fits and starts. If stability is to be given to a movement or a culture, it can only be through the unspectacular activity of women. I am so convinced of this thesis that I am prepared to offer a one-way challenge that this programme will not have struck permanent root in the culture of our people, regardless of the effort, except where women have taken up the back-wash of the movement. I repeat, woman is the mother of the universe. We can bargain but for chaos following the first flood of our effort unless we take timely notice of women who alone can sustain the process in its day to day pedestrian movement.

PHYSICAL CULTURE—GATEWAY TO SPIRIT ?

Some of our friends are worried if we are not putting too high an emphasis on physical factors, and if it is not all going to end in the destruction of the spiritual culture we boast of in India. The spiritual culture of India, that we glibly talk about, is but a figment of the imagination of a complacent few. Spirituality is a joke to one who has not known a full meal and is not sure of the next one. The vast masses of people in the countryside move about ghost-like skeletons with hollow bones rattling against each other. If man needs a temple to house the God he cherishes, how much more necessary it is that he feeds the human temple which was to be the abode of the God within. Nourishing food to the full measures, shelter against the weather and then activities of the muscles in free sports with each other, are the essential pre-requisites, if culture is to follow as a national heritage and the spirit a reality.

WHY DOUBLE STANDARDS ?

While we talk of amenities in urban areas, we never fail to think on the style of Franklin Roosevelt. When, however, we think of the villages, our

standard immediately sinks to that of the "panwala" in the slums. What may happen in the future, it is certainly difficult to predict. But one thing seems fairly certain, that if democracy is to survive, the 80% of India which groans in the rural areas will refuse to maintain the capitols of India in their ivory tower corpulence, unless a select few are to establish a repetition of the old subterfuge in a newer feudal form. From all indications time seems to be moving in the opposite direction. Therefore, it is just wisdom to see the "Writing on the wall" and remould our thinking and actions accordingly.

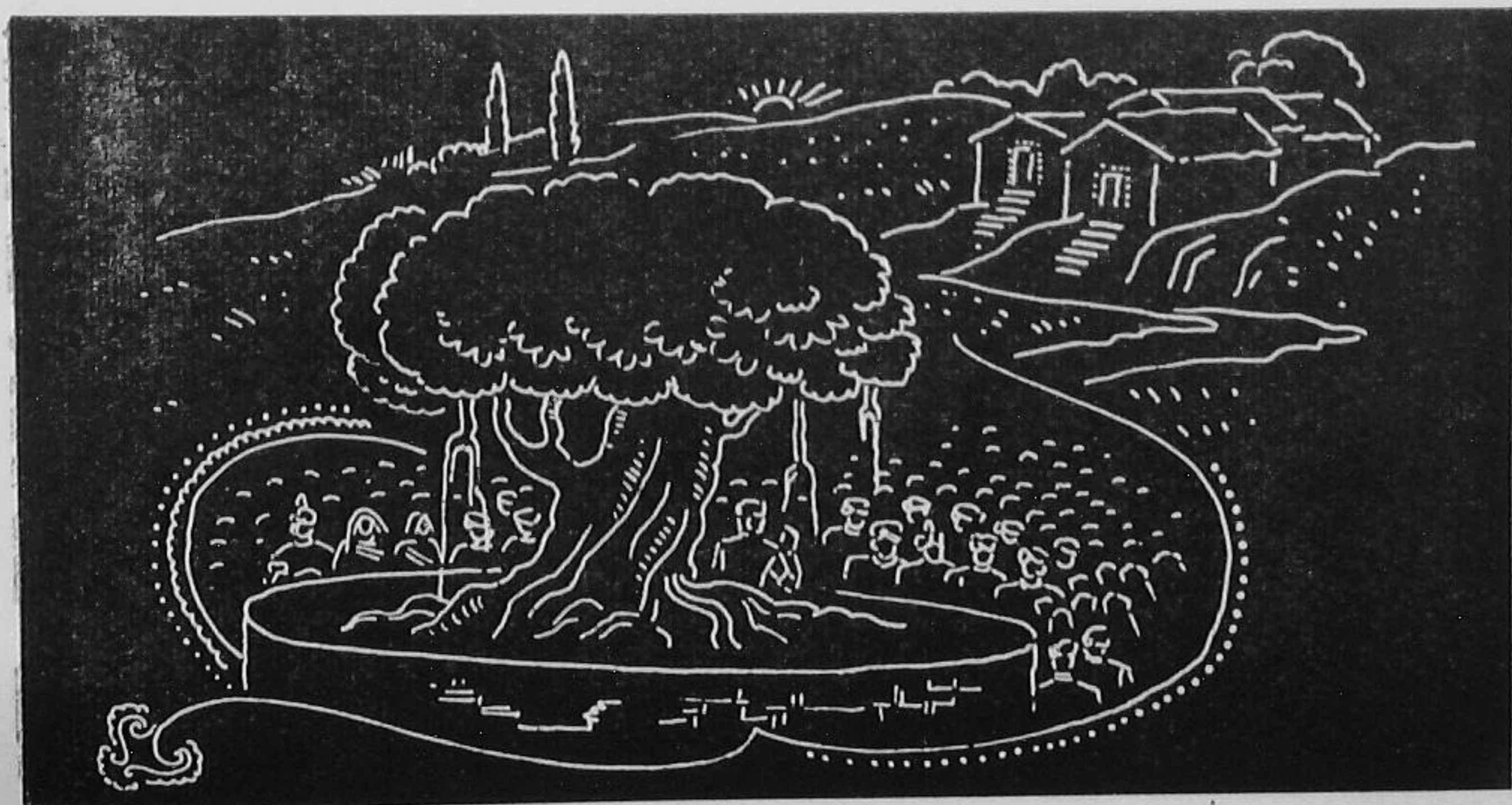
Those, who are engaged in this basic programme, are fully abreast of what I am trying to convey. If I am repeating this platitude it is because there are others who seem to be still hugging the illusion of a world which is no more. Our programme of social education, therefore, has to include the "Writing on the wall" as an integral feature of the new curriculum.

BANYAN—THE PATRIARCH IN THE VILLAGE

I believe I had talked about this once or more in the past. The new Community Centres we are opening out in the villages, in some instances with considerable subsidies from Government, do not hold out a happy prospect for the future. A well constructed "Chabutra" around the village banyan is the outdoor counterpart of the indoor community centre in the village school. With the enforced curtailment of our budget in the future, a separate community centre will prove to be a luxury which we can ill-afford. Our workers should begin necessarily to think in terms of the Community Centres furnished by nature which are aching for use.

THE CHOICE—COURTIER OR OFFICER?

While rarely so in our projects, it is not infrequently that we see elsewhere a new mentality slowly rising in some members of the Government agency. This programme of ours has given a new dignity to Government servants as servants of the people. It was but natural that because of the yawning gap in the representatives of people, there would be increasing jealousy on the part of many a non-official concerning the transitional position occupied by a Government servant. Pressed on one side by measurable quotas of work and accomplishments and, on the other, by



non-official representatives of people who do not have a full appreciation of the responsibilities of Government servants in the new context, it is but natural for the weaklings in the Government agency to follow the shortcut to popularity. Shortcuts, as we know, are rather questionable routes to heights. In the case in particular I can see only a courtier standing at the journey's end uprooted from himself and from his environment. The Officer has an office. He has to discharge this without favour or fear. Courtier is a dangerous workmate. Our workers must needs have double safe-guards against this peculiar animal.

COMMUNION FROM KANYA KUMARI

After the close of the fifth Intra-State Seminar at Kanya Kumari, I had an opportunity to spend an extra day on the spot. I wanted to use the occasion for doing some heart-searching as to the past as also the future. I fell inevitably talking and communing with you. I recorded the thoughts which were as much yours as mine. I would be a thief to withhold these from you. I have chosen to quote these here for all it may be worth.

February 28, 1956

".....Waters of three oceans mingle ahead of me dashing against the rocks and boulders of this southernmost point of India. The land's end or the land's beginning has always captivated my imagination, as I have conveyed to you many a time in the past. The winds howl and the waves rush against the shores from distances as far as the South pole.

The waters of these oceans must have obviously been gushing like this with messages from the distance for untold millinia, indeed from the very beginning of the creation of the land we call India. I wanted to delve within and discover what it is that cries and what for. Many others must have asked the self-same question on this spot. I discover strangely enough that life ceases to be the fragmental insignificance or the megalomania we treat it to be. I realise how insane it is to be proud as an individual, yet how foolish to feel small in this great and rich universe.

The wind which ceases not at this pin-point of land's end keeps on howling. The waters from Antarctic and who knows from where not, continue dashing in silver crested foams. The little vanities of the little man are washed out. I discover to my consternation that in losing the little garments, nudity encompasses the past, the present and the future. The mortal is resurrected to immortality. By ceasing to be, one embraces eternity.

Oh! to be born a man, to live a man, and to die a man ! How I wish you and I and others could have a dip together in this vastness! And yet the thought that this southernmost tip of India would have a *mandapam* erected by my own people debarring the entry to the point to all but the vedantists ! I thought I have discovered the contradiction that is India, the disease that is India, the remedy that is India.

I have been thinking of you all along as a fellow voyager on this pilgrimage. How could I deny you the joys and the agonies even though the message is untimely and may be even uncalled for?"

Cheers to you.

May 19, 1956



DEAR COMRADE,

I am late again. I feel sad at this dereliction. Is it a sign of age creeping in? I begin to wonder. In this programme of ours conscious signs of age have no place. I am therefore struggling to prove to myself. I am determined not to start this communion with you with regrets again.

There is fire above, fire around and fire within. The country likewise is on fire physically, politically, socially and spiritually—a good augury, for there is alchemy taking place visibly within the giant crucible. It is thrilling to be alive and be a participant even as a microcosm in this historic process. I delve within and search for the meaning of this unrest around. I discover, it is the agony and thrill of history pulsating in our blood. You have only to touch your heart to feel it.

The Development Commissioners' Conference is over, as a logical sequel to the year's series of seminars within Blocks, Districts, States and regions. It was too much of a rush. We had very little time to think and repeat our reactions to each other by way of fortifying each other for the long and increasingly troubled route ahead. Yet the maturity that the Conference reflected has appeared staggering even to others totally unconnected with our programme.

While you will, no doubt, receive from CPA, latest by the end of next week, a summary of the recommendations, I feel that in the interest especially of the wider circle of the readers of this communication, it will not be out of place to deal with some of the highlights even though these may appear repetitions to many of us who were in attendance.

ECONOMIC *vis-a-vis* SOCIAL

Double standards in social amenities, one for the rural and the other for the urban cannot avail in this atomic age. All we are doing today on the social side is still, in reality, a mere apology compared to the infinite pains we are being coerced to take under collective organised pressure in urban areas. Our programme is appearing over-balanced on the welfare side, not because there is an excess of welfare but because there is a gross deficit in emphasis on the economic side. Production must increase in the field of agriculture; there should also be corresponding emphasis on village industries so that the surplus of the former may primarily exchange for the surplus of the latter to the progressive improvement in the tone

of living for the rural population as a whole. If this is not done the villager will continue his travail of acting the historic beast of burden. One-way traffic is untenable in modern context. Therefore, there has to be balance even as between economic programmes. The question of easing on the welfare activities naturally does not arise. What does arise is a sharp increase in the emphasis on the organization of the overdue and widespread economic activities.

INSTITUTIONS AS THE BASE AND BINDING FORCE FOR ENDURING ACTION

Government staff even under the seemingly liberal provision under the N. E. S. pattern is hardly adequate even for a fraction of the total requirements if these are to be handled direct by the Government agency "unto the last man". People's institutions—the Panchayats on the administrative side and Co-operatives on the economic side, are Priority No. 1 in the new context if our activities are to be universal and not to be confined to purple spots for visitors and for the expenditure statement in the "without comment" balance-sheet.

Institutions can come into existence through official mandates but these can grow only through the exercise of delegated powers for action under skilled supervision. Contractors direct or indirect are a taboo in this people's programme. Up to the limits indicated, expenditure should be allowed to be incurred by institutions of people. The risk should be nil or negligible at worst, if there is understanding and active supervision.

Indian mind is not used to functioning in a vacuum. It can function but around symbols. The symbols in the context of our programme are the people's institutions, including the Project and Block Advisory Committees. The vedantist or the atheist who claims to be able to function without the symbol is either a genius or a liar. Fortunately genius does not grow in trees. If the mob is to be a community, symbol is the dire prerequisite and it is not enough to create the symbol through a mandate and leave it alone to fend for itself. Visible manifestations such as schools, libraries, recreation centres, etc., are essential ingredients for stimulation of the colourful mind such as characterise our people in India.

HOW DID WE DO IT ?

We have a tendency to scoff in general at the Panchayats, Local Boards, District Boards and Legislatures, just as many a member in these looked askance at the Government agency and the people. Yet we have done it despite all scepticism around. How did we do it ? Touch your heart and you will know that it became possible because we succeeded in carrying conviction—

- (i) that the forgotten villager was not a beast of burden with whom he was huddled together, but was a Man with all the rights and obligations that belong to this King of animals;
- (ii) that the Government servant also is a Man and he also has a purpose in this wide scheme of things.

You will be amazed to discover how the magic wand works even with the most apathetic of people's representatives if only the spark can be ignited by one who has himself been charged first.

DEMOCRACY *vis-a-vis* AUTOCRACY

If the load of the programme is to be borne successfully, the weight of the mountain of effort has to be shared broad-based. Technical departments which alone can provide the content hereafter have to be energised. This will provide the acid test of our physical efficiency in administration as much as of the spiritual transformation which we make bold to claim we are undergoing with a certainty.

I have not found one solitary instance, during these eventful four years, of a person who has not looked forward with thrill to his or her association with this programme once we have succeeded in giving a dip to that person in this Ganga of our programme. I have not come across a person who is not aching to make a contribution, at the present juncture of Indian history, as a justification for existence even as a mere spectator when a definite outlet has been offered to him or her. The net has necessarily to be thrown wider. The administrator whose role primarily, if not exclusively, is one of co-ordination, has to find his measure by the extent to which he attracts or repels others who he wishes should share his burden. This test has to travel right from the Centre up to the village.

THE FIRST LAW IN THE BROTHERHOOD

The administrator, be he at the Centre or at the village, must needs sit down with his associates perusing the ever-flowing stock of literature with a view to a wider dissemination of knowledge and techniques, and then for the planning of programmes and the review of actions. The seminars which are an inevitable corollary to a system of administration based on political democracy have to form an integral feature of the route-march ahead. No temples have endured without the inmates communing on common ground. The cause is the drama which is fast unrolling, individuals but the proud and privileged actors.

CPA BEFORE THE MIRROR

The Third Evaluation Report is something catching, the more one tastes it. I have read it a number of times and I am arranging to have the Summary sent out to the last outpost in our programme. This should be discussed by the partners in the undertaking at all levels. I have begun my assignment with a vengeance at the Headquarters. For the first time I am discovering how far removed I have been mentally from my colleagues at the Centre both in the Ministries and in the CPA in my mad rush on the ground away from Headquarters. I am struggling to bridge the gaps. I commend the same to you. The discoveries you make will be startling. It has been so with me.

I had many a regular dish for your consumption. I am denying myself the pleasure of serving these to you today, as I wish to make this communication a brief one confined mainly to the "High-lights". I look forward to an early return to you with the familiar menu, if it is not too boring to you already.

The Second Five-Year Plan is now off the anvil. It has been designed to build the "Foundation" to the socialist society which is our destination. The Community Projects Administration has been charged with the task of providing the "essential ingredients" to this foundation. We have no choice left. We have to swim across to the shore or sink mid-stream. Sinking does not arise, for India is on the rise and we are alive and are ready to burn with a smile.

Great country, my friend. Standard-bearers of a great people we act and live in stirring times. I can feel the history of man pushing from behind. Let us plunge and be worthy of the great future that can rest on our ashes alone.

Cheers.



Camp: Chail (PEPSU)
June 13, 1956

DEAR COMRADE,

I am facing a serious dilemma and I seek your help. This Government machine of ours, despite all that is said to the contrary, is proving to be too efficient an organization for my purpose. I am not pulling your leg or mine; I want you to believe me in this. It is amazing, for instance, the way it can find a speedy answer to the most difficult of problems and a routine procedure for conducting the most vital of activities. Perhaps this is just how a Government organization should function. Yet, in our programme in which we are dealing with live human beings each one of whom is a law unto himself or herself, finality in procedures and patterns is an antithesis.

I have mentioned to you fairly often, that this programme upto now has moved primarily on the initiative of the officials on one side, and the people on the other, with the people's representatives still to come fully in the picture. If the Government servant has been able to shake himself out of his mechanical existence and act as a prime mover in this programme, it has been because he has succeeded in recognising that he is also a man and a citizen, with a cause to which he can subscribe as a thinking being.

But then, in this mad rush of events especially with the abnormal pace of expansion, he invariably gravitates to the method innate in the organization, namely routinisation. It is here that we face the real danger to this programme. The programme, if it is to be a human movement, will have to imply creative thinking throughout. This does not appear practical in the context in which we function today. I wrote you recently about the proposed "Institute of Study and Research on Community Development". This Institute, as I see it, is to be designed to fill a vital gap in the programme, namely 'Thinking'. No one person or a group of persons can hold the monopoly of thinking for a whole people except in a totalitarian utopia of robots and button-pressers. Delhi, if I may repeat, can ill-claim the monopoly to the nation's wisdom, if we are to grow into a living democracy.

If this administration is to continue responding to the live needs of the new movement, it has to have at its service a structure that will ensure independent thinking on its behalf. The thinking should not be confined to a select few, but should involve instead all the thinkers and actors on the front stage, both officials and non-officials, for short spans totally free from direct executive responsibilities. The atmosphere should be such as can enable them to look back at their own work as distant observers. We can then have action and thought both growing in unison with roots springing from the soil. An Institute like this will also offer a unique opportunity to our friends and comrades abroad, who, in increasing numbers, are beginning to hail to India with high hopes of discovering the key to the 'Open-sesame'. I am pursuing the proposal as vigorously as I can, and hope to tell you something more definite not long from now.

SEMINAR OF E. T. C. PRINCIPALS

I attended, as usual, the last day of the seminar of the E.T.C. Principals which was held at Simla a week ago. The seminar was fully representative despite the dislocation of traffic due to the strike at Kalka. The seminar

has done serious thinking and has formulated recommendations which should render material help if these can be implemented without undue delay. The Ministry of Agriculture will, no doubt, issue the recommendations of the seminar. I am asking them to mark a copy to you personally, and would count on you to make all efforts you possibly can, to implement these recommendations at an early date. Our programme, in moral and physical content, will depend primarily on what we have been able to inject in our workers as the revolving capital which they carry over from these Training Centres.

The training programme within the institutions, and in-service in the field, is a matter of supreme importance. No one can give to others what he does not have himself. The theory "Physician heal thyself" applies to our workers with a special emphasis. If we wish to ease our present headache and future frustration, we will do well to make some investment in these key Centres. I am prepared to do all I can, if you let me know what assistance you would want of me.

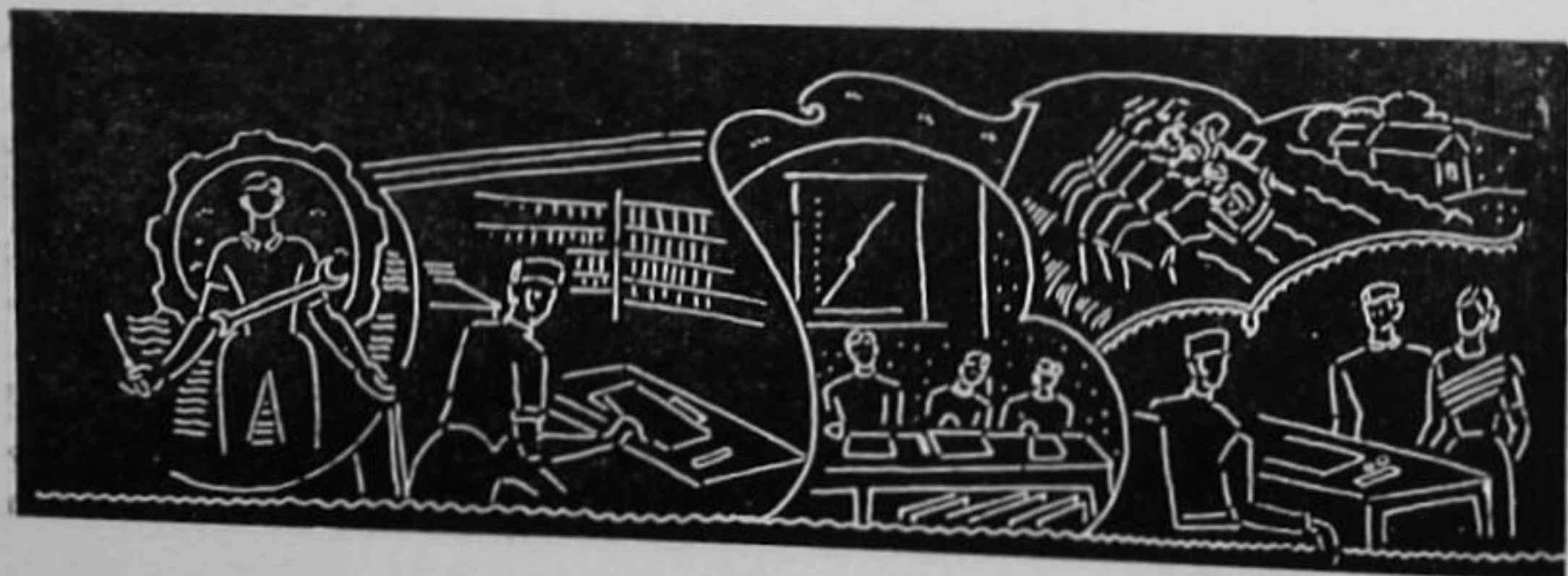
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NAINITAL CONFERENCE

There has been slight delay in issuing the recommendations of the Nainital Conference. I am sorry for it, but these will have reached you by now, and I hope to have the printed copies made available to all our workers, including Collectors, R. D. Os.—S. D. Os. and B. D. Os. I shall plead for your immediate effort for the implementation of these recommendations. CPA is taking speedy steps for those that fall within its own sphere.

SEMINARS—A FORUM FOR THE SHY

Our experiences indicate that there is a general tendency of a wise and vocal few to monopolise the table in these seminars. This is totally opposed to the main objective. The seminars are intended more for the shy in thinking and acting. Now that these seminars have grown to be regular features from the village up to the Centre, a deliberate effort has to be made to ensure that the vocal ones will restrain their tongue for the benefit of the opposite characters.

My invariable experience throughout India is that technical people, including Heads of Departments, are as eager as we are, to play their part in this programme, once they get a taste of it. Our seminars offer a unique opportunity for bringing understanding of this programme to technical Heads, especially those who are high up. Appointment of the Heads of Technical Department as Chairman of Sub-Committees in Seminars should further help to bring this understanding about. I have seen this happening in practice.



VITALIZATION OF TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS

We have been exercised over this question lately. We have recognized without reservation that the physical content of the programme will be determined strictly by the technical content that we put into it, and this in turn will depend on the quality and interest of our technical personnel. One of the ways in which technical departments, especially those functioning at the district headquarters, can be brought more fully in the picture of this programme, will be by encouraging them to report to the Collector at the district level as to the interest and co-operation of the B. D. O. in the respective technical programmes which the departments at the districts are expected to implement through their representatives at the block level.

If the B. D. O. is authorised to write a direct report on the functioning of the technical officers placed at the block level, the suggestion I make here as regards the technical heads at the district level *vis-a-vis* the B. D. O. is the very minimum, if there is to be a *quid-pro-quo*. We cannot get the technical departments to play their part in the programme much less acquire the dignity which we consider vital in them, if we deny them even the semblance of a voice over the B. D. O., so far as the latter's co-operation with their specialities is concerned. The whole structure will be based on sand foundations unless this two-way traffic is assured. This should provide an acid test of the sincerity of the administrative sector of Government to energise the technical departments.

SUPERVISION *vis-a-vis* AUDIT

In the law and order and revenue collecting State it would have been appropriate for a supervisory officer to discover and report on flaws in the functioning of subordinate officials. In the Welfare State, wherein we are introducing democratic action even in the official machinery, supervision has to take the role more of participation than of audit. If this is to be achieved, there will have to be a radical overhaul of our whole attitude towards inspection. In fact, inspection as a word should be a taboo in the Community Development Programme, if not elsewhere also. We have to substitute 'Supervision' for 'Inspection' and mean "Participation", unless we are still to function in the spirit of the old, wherein we used to think we were dealing only with criminals.

TREATMENT OF GRAM SEVAKS

I have received frequent complaints that Gram Sevaks, while they are treated as comrades by other project staff, are still looked upon as some low menials by visiting technical functionaries from high up, who are yet not acquainted with the democratic base of this movement. This has to be specially guarded against and can be achieved only if the technical departments come fully in the picture.

"THIRD WINDOW NOT WITHIN STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS"—SAYS P. W. D. ENGINEER

A school building for which 50 per cent contribution has been made by the village people needed a third window on a wall, which the

villagers were prepared to make extra payment for. This, I understand, was refused by the P. W. D. Engineer as this did not fall within the standard specifications of a school building in the State. In another place, payment for a village school built on joint participation has been held up because the villagers have added two more rooms to the original specifications totally at their own cost. These, I know, are aberrations, but these indicate the limits to which lack of imagination in the functioning of Government can travel. I thought the examples would amuse you.

TRAINING OF SCHOOL TEACHERS

We are introducing shortly the special training camps for school teachers in Community Development Blocks, as agreed to during the Development Commissioners' Conference. I know, this will not go far enough to cover the programme as a whole. Therefore, the obvious long-term answer is the vitalization of the teachers' training schools and colleges in the States. The training curriculum for teachers should include a study of the NES and Community Development Programme. Collectors, B. D. Os. and others available locally should be able to make a substantial contribution to this programme through direct participation in instructions and provision of facilities for field excursions in the projects. The first need is the revision of the curriculum, and the second an imperative demand from the Education Department on all Principals of Teachers Training Centres to call upon the Collectors and others for their contribution. The latter, I know, would be delighted to play their part, provided the former is prepared to walk out of their ivory towers and make a call on others, who have direct knowledge of the programme.

PROGRAMME OF HYGIENE THROUGH SCHOOL CHILDREN

I may make a plain confession that if I have a positive nausea about sloppiness in things and unhygienic conditions around, despite my long childhood upbringing in the heart of dismal village conditions, it is due to the fact that I had in my Primary School a Head Master of scrupulously puritan habits in matters of personal life and hygiene. No amount of social education in later life is a substitute for the social education of children while they are in the formative stage of life in schools. If the children can imbibe clean habits of mind and body, this will have farther-reaching repercussions on our life at home than all efforts combined. We come back once again inevitably to the village school teacher. Our supervisory visits to training schools for school teachers or, on a larger scale, to village schools to which all visitors are invited as a regular routine, should place top emphasis to whether or not children reflect in their person the physical and mental hygiene on which alone we can build the mansion for 'Tomorrow'.

RETIRED OFFICIALS SETTLED IN RURAL AREAS

With the amenities such as we are establishing, there is a happy increase in the influx, for settlement in rural areas, of retired officials from Government, and others from non-official life. We in the CPA receive calls from time to time for the utilization of voluntary services from such persons. In the acute shortage of technical and administrative personnel such as we face in our programme today and the yawning gap in matters of non-official leadership at village level, we should make every effort to enlist the services of such retired personnel. Apart from the direct benefit that should accrue to our programme from such voluntary association, it will also help in prolonging the otherwise useful life of many a people which

whithers away for want of vital nourishment. A retired Government servant without active occupation is a most pathetic sight. Should we allow this to continue today ?

“BHARAT DARSHAN”—A MOBILE CAMP OF VILLAGE LEADERS

“Bharat Darshan” trains carrying village leaders all across this sub-continent promise to be a regular feature in our life from now on. The programme for these villagers should include visits not only to places of pilgrimage and the big projects of Government enroute, but also to as many N. E. S. and Community Project areas as can be conveniently managed enroute. These visits and their duration should be so spaced as to permit free exchange of ideas between the visitors and the representatives of the local people. The four to six weeks’ of life together by diverse elements hailing from different areas in a State can also be utilized, if carefully planned, to serve as a mobile camp for the training of village leaders by including social education in all aspects of village life as a regular feature of the evening programme. I am hoping that some one who has gone through the experience, may be able to write a brief manual for us to serve as a reference. Could you help me in this matter ?

SHRAMDAN ALSO HAS A TECHNIQUE

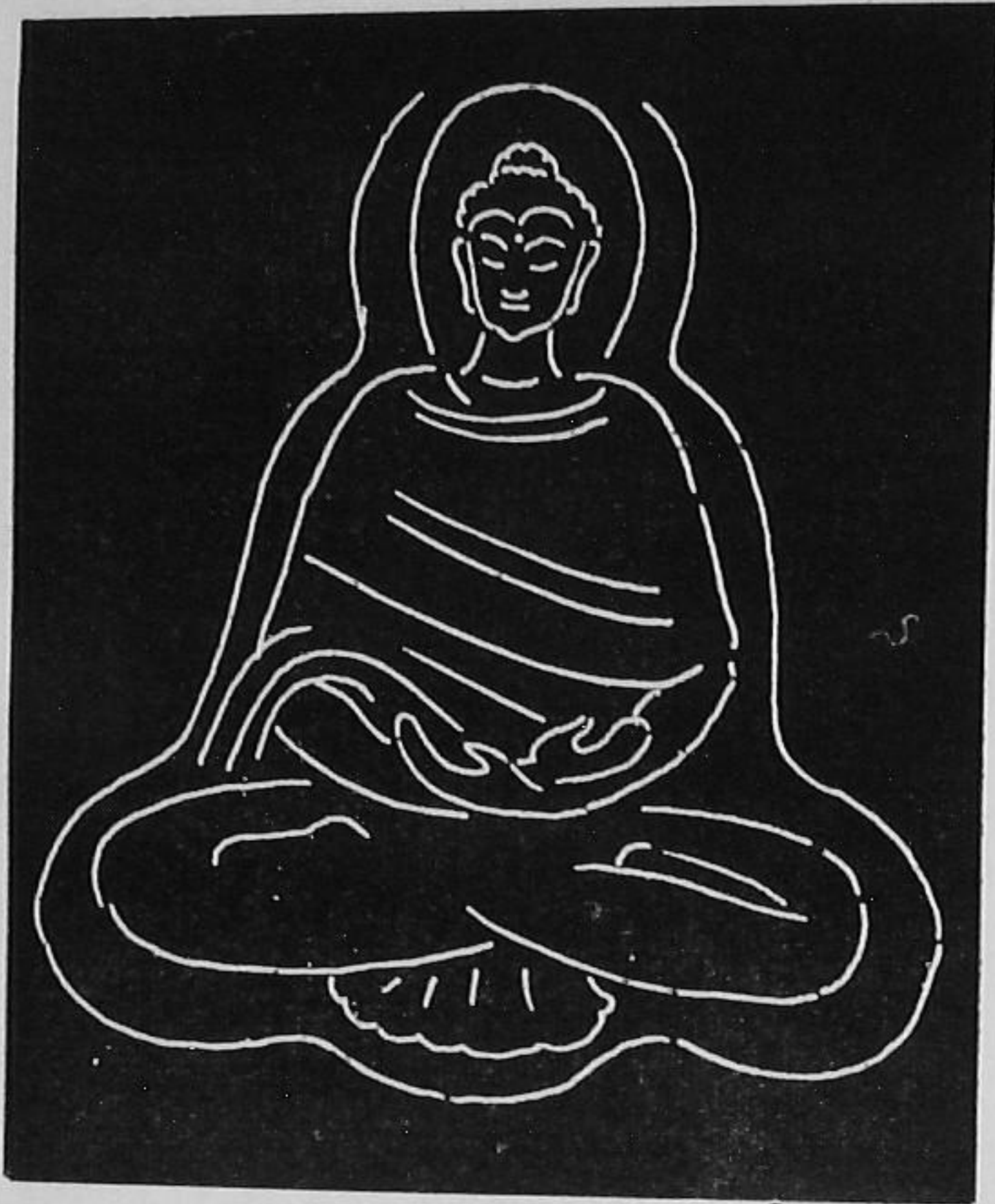
Shramdan as a means of self-help is now a universal feature both within our projects and outside. Yet, it is unmistakably clear that the actual process of Shramdan has yet not been organized in a way as can ensure the best physical output for the effort invested. Methods and procedures have as much a place in Shramdan as in other activities of Government. We may perhaps get much more for the effort of the people, if we can get some members of the Army personnel to initiate orderly methods of work wherever Shramdan is undertaken on a mass scale. I am asking our S. E. O. Training Centres to introduce methods and procedure in Shramdan as a regular feature in the S. E. O. curriculum, and we propose to enlist the service of army personnel, if needs be, for the purpose.

“PATHER PANCHALI”

Our D. I. P.R. wrote to you sometime ago, announcing the special offer I got the West Bengal Government to agree to for the supply of a full length feature film produced by that Government. I had the opportunity of seeing this film myself. I have rarely seen better photography and characterisation, and a more human film dealing with our life in the village. The film has already received wider recognition abroad. I would strongly recommend you to refer to Chatterjee’s letter and procure a certain number of copies of this film from the West Bengal Government at the nominal reproduction price which they have offered. It will help the programme of social education and will also provide a change from the monotony of documentary films which we have been inflicting without respite on our people. I do hope also that other States will follow the lead that the West Bengal Government has given, by producing still richer films such as can form an accessory to our programme, apart from being a source of healthy recreation to the village people and our workers.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN INDONESIA

From the latest reports I have in hand, the Government of Indonesia are now well set to the launching of 20 projects (as against 16 which I had recommended during my visit to Indonesia last year) strictly on the 17th of



August this year—the Anniversary of Indonesian Independence. One of our workers, Bhandari, the Principal of the B.D.O. Training Centre at Ranchi, is now in Indonesia assisting that Government in working out the training programme for the first set of workers. A similar programme, I understand, is also in the process of being implemented in Nepal. There are also other countries coming up. I send these news to you as I know you will be interested in this steady growth of our kinship on a vital life giving movement. This might also come as a sharp contrast to the stones, abuses and threats which are being hurled by our own people on the altar of linguistic and territorial ambitions against our national sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

India celebrated recently the 2,500th birth anniversary of a lone man who lived like anyone of us, but had the fortitude to stand alone against the contradictions, crudities and the fraud of the society around him. He belonged to all humanity and all times. We feel proud because he belonged a wee bit nearer to us. This claim of ours will have meaning only if we are prepared to reflect, howsoever infinitesimally, the character that he possessed in spite of his environment.

In a way, this programme of ours began as a lone furrow. The fact that it is beginning to strike moorings both in depth and space is confirmation that life force is at work, the seeds are potent and have fallen on fertile soil. Shall we continue to nurture the plants with the mother's care they need? Are we devout enough for the purpose?

I send these lines to you while I sit facing the long Himalayan range in a Cricket Pavilion which, I understand, is the second highest cricket

field in the world and which together with its costly palaces around, was built as a personal pleasure resort shut up to the rest of the world by the ex-Maharaja of Patiala. I have been roaming across our mountain blocks, for the past few days and am now in the process of summing up my impressions.

With the alien rule gone, the foundation of the princely order was undermined. The feudal order of princedom is gone for ever. The landlords, who were satellites in the chain, are also in the process of dissolution. Values which were artificially propped up, are fading out in a natural process.

The question that poses for an answer is whether there is room for a vacuum in life, and if not, whether the palaces which are being left vacant by these withdrawing privileges, are going to be filled by those who are of the people, and for them, or by some others of like minds and temperaments but only with a different garb. That is the crucial question of the hour and this is where we succeed or fail in our mission.



VI

July 16, 1956.

DEAR COMRADE,

Test-tube babies, they say, are going to be a reality in the not too distant future. It is said, these will relieve the pain of the mother altogether. Pain and joy one would have thought were inseparable, one from the other. If pain is eschewed, I do not see how joy can really be had. After all, "something for nothing" being a myth, one can reap only what one sows. It follows logically that if we look for test-tube babies, they will demand life-long spoon feeding. They can never grow into self-reliant members of a self-propelled community.

The Community Development Programme with which we have been grappling for the past four years, seems to be the first concerted effort by all combined to discover the road out of the chaos that rules our life within and without. The heart-searching, which is an ever continuing process in this long travail, is the mirror in which we discover the real reflection of what we are and whither we are proceeding.

Two months ago, the Programme Evaluation Organisation under the Planning Commission brought out an objective evaluation, up to date, of our programme. This has been followed by an equally penetrating probe into our programme by no less a person than Dr. M. L. Wilson, a pioneer extension man who has had perhaps the longest continuous experience on the subject in different parts of the world. Both these reports have been widely commented upon in the press. The reports will have been in your hands by now and you will no doubt have perused these with as much interest as I have. A third report is now in our hands which is under print. This is from our friend Dr. Carl Taylor, who has studied our programme over a period of one year in considerable details.

CPA is making a study of these three reports together. The purpose is to discover the salient features of our shortcomings and the ways to overcome them. You will receive from us shortly the result of our thinking, whatever it is. As these reports pour in together with the impressions of other visitors from within and abroad, as we are told of the wider meaning that the movement has already acquired in the present world context and of the rapids that we are yet to cross if the Pilgrim Ship is to be piloted to safe waters, I begin searching within for an answer out of the maelstrom.

Administration as normally understood, is a subject foreign to me academically as also professionally. I cannot, therefore, depend on the answers provided in the book of knowledge, for the books are all out of date in the context in which we function today in India. I try to ask myself as a layman: "What is administration?" I come back again and again to the inevitable thesis that administration is an art as also a science both working concurrently. As an art, it is expected to *inspire* the best of aroma out of the leaves of grass we all are. As a science, it is to ensure that the varied aroma gets *blended* for a common destination and can travel without conflict from within or hurdles from without. I wish you to correct me if I am erring in my understanding.

Now, as I see this great procession of men, women and children on the move slowly but steadily forward, I change fast with them. The same applies to those who work around. I see the same tempo of change overtaking Development Commissioners and Collectors. But as this travels down the State Headquarters, it gets attenuated. I do not find how uniformity in the tempo of change can be assured all along the line.

It is true, the Collector is the key to the programme in the district. Yet with the terrific burden which he carries on his shoulders today, I do not see how we can expect him to do very much more. We invariably come back to the Block Development Officer. He is a person who has no responsibilities other than development—development of himself and the environment around. It is this B. D. O. who will appear to have been the uniform target of attack by all observers. Where he is of the right type, the whole area vibrates with a youthful exuberance. Where he takes himself to be just another functionary of Government, we see only targets, we do not feel the human pulsation behind.

I am convinced after long discourses with myself and others in the programme and outside, that our first effort should be to vitalise and humanise this key functionary. For this, the first course indicated is that we make recruitment of the B. D. O. in future from all ranks. There must be a mixture, for instance, of the revenue, the development services in the States, the open market, the retired Army personnel and the promoted Village Level Workers, as the sources of recruitment for this key position. It is this mixture in the first place, that will allow for the requisite flexibility of outlook through cross fertilization of thoughts that such a character of personnel will inevitably engender.

CPA is trying to modify its training programme both in duration and character consistently with this new understanding. In the States, in-service training in the form of seminars, inter-project visits and inter-State visits and refreshers' training will have to be still more frequent features of the revitalizing process.

The emphasis of the hour, more than any other will have to be on the understanding that the regulatory mentality is already a fossil of the dead past. Chief Ministers of States and other Ministers in a democracy go overboard under public pressure without so much as a murmur following the event. In India today, our Development Commissioners and Collectors function only on their strength to convince rather than to coerce, be it with their colleagues or with the people. The B. D. O. has to imbibe the same mentality with whoever he is dealing. He cannot expect his initiative to be shared either by his colleagues at the Block level or by the people at large, unless he follows this golden rule of conduct as the first principle of his new assignment.

In many a State the 1952 arrangement of the Project Officer at the 3 Block level or the D. P. O. at the district level holding the monopoly of the initiative still continues. The programme is spreading fast. The S. D. Os. and the Collectors are now taking their full place in the picture. The initiative at the Block level has to be transferred to the fullest extent possible to the B. D. O. If the D. P. O. and the Project Officers are to continue, they should do so more as staff officers attached to the Collector and not act as the fifth wheel in the coach, preventing the transfer of the initiative to the B. D. O. which is his by right if he is to act the Block Administrator.

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

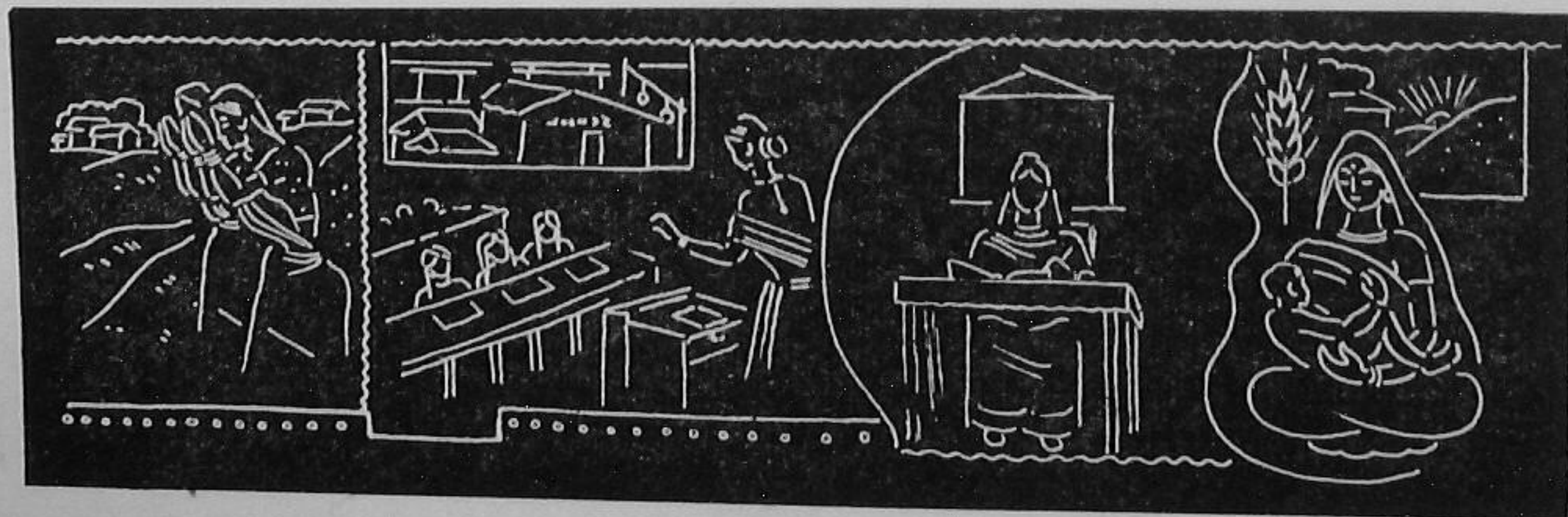
Local institutions, Panchayats, Co-operatives, and the Block Advisory Committees must grow both in initiative as also in capacity for planning and administering the local needs of people, unless the Village Level Worker who has to be an extension adviser to the people, is to end as the counter of gunny bags and the record-keeper of development expenditure and targets.

It is only because this development is still overdue and the real objective of the programme is still to be realised, that Government have agreed to a continuation of operation for a further period of three years of all blocks which have completed their so-called intensive period of development. You will have received the CPA communication, conveying the revised budgets and financial allocations out of the 200 crores which we agreed to at the Nainital Conference. A communication is being issued shortly regarding the manner in which the annual budget of Rs. 25,000 for local works and Rs. 5,000 for social education is to be utilised for the additional 3 year period, in the post-intensive phase.

Briefly, as you will remember from our discussion at Nainital, the intention is to utilise these funds strictly according to the decision of the Block Advisory Committees. Schemes are to be planned and implemented by the village institutions and expenditure is to be incurred by them. There should be no departmental works. In fact, departmental activity except in the role of extension will be an acknowledgement of the earlier failure of the programme.

If we have failed to build up local institutions with the requisite initiative and experience during the earlier phase, the further lease of life is only a concession to ourselves to make up this vital gap in our performance. Our organization handling the programme from the Centre down to the ground will be judged by the present Government and posterity by the extent to which we have been able during this extended period to build up, educate and vitalize local institutions of people and offer opportunities thereby for Government staff to function as real advisers to the people in their varied needs of life.

We are taking action, meantime, to speed up the creation of the Committee to study Local Self-Government institutions in India and abroad, so as to give us a broad line of approach to this question based on a pooling of world knowledge. We should be able to have more light on this some time during the early part of next year. Meantime, we can concentrate on the village Panchayats, the Co-operatives and the Block Advisory Committees and see that these are built on solid foundation on



which further super-structure can be erected according to the knowledge we gather later.

TRAINING

Democracy and exclusive wisdom are contradictions in terms. The wise man has to suffer the so-called fool. If the Prime Minister of the country can devote time, despite his grinding preoccupation with affairs at home and abroad, for days on end with unsophisticated village people and their representatives, the Government agency which functions under the mandate of the Prime Minister in the Centre and the Chief Ministers in the States, can follow no other course. In fact, whether or not the extension man is fit to be where he is, is answered by this one simple criterion: "Is he prepared, despite his preoccupation with targets and audits, to find time from his own vitals to convince the others less fortunately placed than he is, or he is tempted to follow the short-cut?" Our programme, if I may repeat, is one primarily of education and of training in expertise—education of ourselves, co-workers and the people who are our destination, training in expertise such as is related to the ground for immediate practice.

I realise that when we talk of training, we immediately come back to our schools and universities and technical institutions. These have to be brought fully in the picture and related to the ground in the same way as the agency of Government is coming progressively and steadily down from its ivory tower. We are exploring measures by which we can influence this basic source. You can also help by influencing the curricula in training schools for teachers, and the atmosphere in our universities by disseminating knowledge of our programme to these bodies and bringing the indwellers of these institutions closer to the ground through the students' camps and the various other measures which have already been initiated.

The Training Centres run by the CPA and by the States are, however, a direct responsibility on us. CPA is taking steps to bring heart-searching to bear on its own institutions and the action that should follow as a logic. CPA consists of a small staff. Therefore, we shall have perforce to fall back on you for closer participation in these Training Centres. As for the Training Centres run in the States, you will have to take direct steps to see that the instructors in the various Training Centres do have opportunities for field visits and for seminar between themselves. There should also be rotation of staff between Centres as also between the field and the training centres. It would be asking the impossible from an instructor in our Training Centre, if we desire him to retain the same vitality after years of repetitive assignments in the same environment. A human-being as he is, his mind needs change as inescapably as his body. It is good administration that should provide for this periodic cross-fertilisation.

WOMEN

We have recognized that no movement can sustain itself without sustained basic nourishment from women. Women, I find even in the so-called most reactionary areas, are coming forward in overwhelming numbers. The wide experiences of the Social Welfare Board as also of our workers confirm that our women in India are definitely more vital and progressive than our men, and once they have an outlet they have a tenacity to respond to the change which is incredible.

If Women Social Education Organisers are not forthcoming in right quality or number at the present stage in some areas, why not substitute Gram Sevikas? We have now sufficient number of girls from our rural schools who will have acquired the requisite basic qualifications for receiving the training. The "best" is the enemy of the "good", they say. Let us not fall a victim to it. A craft nucleus with a progressive woman in the village who will always be available if we search for her, can make a beginning. This can be supervised by the improvised Gram Sevika I have suggested, or by the Primary or Middle School teacher, who can always be given a short course of training to act as a supervisor for such activities. I still maintain that a nursery school teacher for nursery children in progressive villages should really be the focus for women's activities in a group of villages. No woman worker for a long time yet to come, can afford to hang loose in this country of ours where despite all we profess, the pre-historic blood runs still hot in our system.

The foregoing represent matters to which we propose to apply top emphasis during the months that will follow hereafter. CPA is being equipped with the staff and other requisite facilities to give to the States all assistance it can. I shall now come to the second part of my letter dealing with other observations which I should share with you.

PART II

EASY CRITERION FOR PEOPLE'S PROGRAMME

"Has it been a people's programme?" or "Is it travelling in that direction?" are the two questions that we frequently ask of ourselves. To me the simple criteria that should answer this question seem to be "Are people ready to metal the katcha roads they have built on their own initiative, and to maintain the other structures they have built in the village?" "Do they think of planning on their own for further expansion of amenities which they have completed?" If they do, the catalyst has achieved its first instalment of success. We need have no fears. All that is needed is to continue extending further knowledge, inspiration and finance as and where possible. If this is not so, there is cause for misgivings and a reorientation of our effort. The post-intensive phase of three years is intended to provide for this reoriented approach.

LOCAL CONTRACTORS *vis-a-vis* PANCHAYATS

Reports are not infrequent that in many a case, entrusting of work to Panchayats has, in practice, meant the creation of local individual contractors. We cannot afford to deceive ourselves. If Panchayats or Co-operatives as a body cannot function on Public Works, there is something wrong fundamentally which we should try to correct by all means open to us.

HONORARY N.E.S. WORKERS

The State of Rajasthan have introduced an innovation. You will have read about it in the Press. Outstanding local leaders have been designated as Honorary N. E. S. Workers. This may be tried on a limited scale, to start with, in all other States. As a pilot experiment, the lessons when pooled from all States, will have universal application at a later stage.

AMENITIES A MEANS, NOT AN END

The reduction in the NES and Community Project budget does not mean a reduction in the tempo of local development. This should go on, if possible, even at an increasing pace based on a larger percentage of people's contribution. This can be realised. In fact, it has been in many a State. The emphasis on the economic aspect is meant more for our own workers. If our workers take the pains to promote the economic side, the village people will take to them without much persuasion and certainly without sacrifice of the amenities of which they are in dire need, and which they will take up in any case if we continue providing the understanding support expected of us.

The fact that our village people have come forward and given such an outstanding account of themselves, is because for the first time the Government on which they have looked for leadership has touched them on the back and encouraged them to create the visible emblem of a new sense of their dignity which they find in the pucca school buildings, the community centres, the paved streets, the well-aligned roads, the protected wells and so on. To discourage these cannot but end in the undoing of the programme.

POST-INTENSIVE PHASE—ECONOMIC SECTOR: THE PRIORITY

It is because the village needs are yawning wide and the effort will have to continue for decades to make up the neglect of centuries that we have provided some funds for local development and social education, for the three year post-intensive phase. Yet, the primary emphasis during this period has to be on the economic aspects, especially agriculture and village industries. The recent conferences sponsored by the respective Ministries in the Centre have cleared things considerably. There assuredly will be more intelligent and active effort put by the Departments concerned. Our organisation should do all it can to assist these Departments in reaching their target. This is the primary term of "Extension" in the post-intensive phase of operation.

SRC AND OUR STAFF

The implementation of the SRC Report has caused us, as a people, more trouble since partition than all other factors combined. The political question is being tackled by those who are in charge. We have some responsibilities in the matter. It is to ensure that work is disturbed the least, and that the staff involved, whose future is now in the melting pot, is not disturbed more than what is absolutely unavoidable. We should also see that the individual differences in the operation of the programme between the merging areas are rationalized into a uniform pattern for the newly formed State without undue dislocation in staff or methods. We may also try to correct some of our mistaken approaches if any, at this time when the whole question is bound to be reviewed.

OUT-OF-TURN PROMOTION

In a law and order State there is very little to choose between those who excel in the exercise of the baton. Therefore, strict seniority, as a criterion for promotion, had a very serious justification. In a Welfare

State in the making, the position is different. Here the age of entry in the service should not be the only consideration. Socialist pattern of society implies progressive increase in State undertakings. These can work economically and competitively only if initiative and efficiency receive appropriate recognition. What applies to commercial undertakings should apply equally to administration of Welfare Programmes.

Competence and the personality for creative undertakings are qualities which do not grow necessarily proportionate to the age in service. Yet, unless definite criteria are there for strictly impersonal evaluation of the quality of the personnel, there is serious risk to the morale of staff, if they are to be subject at times, as they very well may be, to the vagaries of unscrupulous or immature influences. How to ensure that efficiency and initiative will receive due recognition in such circumstances? I am just wondering if it is beyond the capacity of our Government agency to evolve a pattern by which the deserving can be rewarded; so that those who are not, find an incentive to correct themselves. I am sorry, I have no suggestion to offer. I hope you will do some thinking on this matter so that we may evolve some answer to it. We should discuss this matter seriously during the next Conference of Development Commissioners in 1957.

WORSHIP OR RITUAL?

We have a natural propensity to fall back on rituals. We tend easily to forget that it is not the size, shape and beauty of the temple, the mosque and the church that determine the value of the institution. It is the character of the worshipers and the piety with which they offer prayers within, that matters. How can we carry conviction to our workers, particularly those nearer the ground, that it is not the manual of instructions or the patterns they follow, but the human beings they have themselves grown to be which will determine what they are about to achieve?

HARMONIUM—THE MONSTROSITY

Harmonium, as a single instrument, has accounted for the greatest damage to the music, that is Indian. This is not an Indian instrument. Should we encourage this hybrid at Government expense?

PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

So far there has been one single pattern of development under NES and CDP, which has been applicable generally to the whole of India with local modifications such as local initiative could attempt. As printed word has a special sanctity of its own in the eyes of all of us, somehow the standard pattern influences all our thinking. In the CPA, we are now working out four different patterns of development for:

- (i) coastal humid areas;
- (ii) the plain areas;
- (iii) the mountain and hilly areas; and
- (iv) the aboriginal areas.

The hope is that these will provide further stimuli to local adjustments in the programme which individual areas invariably demand. We would like you to do some thinking on this line. We shall send you our thinking in the form of a draft paper not long from now.

THE QUESTION ?

I had a hurricane tour of Bhopal in company of the Chief Minister and officials, about three weeks ago. I have been visiting Bhopal off and on throughout these four years, and have been deeply impressed with the devotion to the programme from all quarters and the integrated approach from the top down to the ground. Bhopal for the size of the State, to my mind, has been responsible for more successful innovations in thinking and acting on this programme than any other single State in India. The village people, who were shy four years ago, came up straight and erect and told us how they used to run away into the neighbouring jungles even at the sight of a peon from a Government office and what a great change they find today when they can share their joys and sorrows and their hopes of the future with all alike from the Chief Minister down to the Gram Sevak. I saw the same thing happening in Rajasthan and elsewhere. The morale is clear. The colossus is awake. He is on the move. Shall we develop the wisdom to continue harnessing the force in the right direction? This is the question.



August 19, 1956

DEAR COMRADE,

We won our undependence from colonial rule. But the battle for freedom remained still to be won. The battle is on. The pillars on which colonial rule stood, have already crumbled devoid of support. Princedom stands liquidated. Jagirdars and Zamindars follow the same route; so are vested interests and privileges of all kinds. The battle for Suez, which is on, and the many others which must needs follow inevitably, are but symptoms of the disease which has had its tenure. Even though, crisis follows, one after the other, and insecurity looms large, we must thank Providence that we live in stirring times and have opportunities as actors as well as spectators.

It is amusing in this context to see the investment that goes into armament ostensibly to make the world safe for man—armament that goes out of date before it even gets out of the line of production. Diversion of one such year's investment if equitably planned, shall be enough to banish poverty forever through the means of production that the investment could create. But we live a civilization wherein the devil rules and we get blind to the elementary reality that mind is mightier than the atom split and that man is mightier still than the mind he harbours. The new world now in its birth agonies will take long before it sees the light of the day. Those amongst us whose eyes are open to the "Writing on the wall", will know that "Yesterday" with its interests and privileges is dead and gone, that it is elementary prudence to prepare for "Tomorrow". "Tomorrow" is already round the corner. There can be no room in it for high and low derived from the accident of birth.

While the world goes on with its somnambulist pranks, we, who belong to its underdeveloped regions and who have yet to have the voice proportionate to the heads we represent, cannot do any better than what we are pursuing away from this din of madness. The Community Development Programme in India which is hailed by all alike—the West as well as the East—was to be a quest on fundamentals. The programme must needs face the ever recurring question: "What is all this about"?

"DESTINATION MAN"

"Destination Man" is what we call our main objective. Yet, does one know what man is or what his ultimate likeness should be? Although he is yet in the infancy of being, one thing will seem clear beyond dispute: Freedom is his birth-right—Freedom even unto death. If this is so:

"CAN FREEDOM FROM WANT CO-EXIST WITH FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY?"

Slavery, as we know, is not necessarily physical. There is even a more corrosive kind when it involves the mind and the spirit. In the atomic age which is now around, progressive increase in the centralization of life's activities seems to be an inescapable corollary, unless we are foolish enough to wish to cave in and shut ourselves to the progress of physical science

and its logical repercussion on our day to day mode of living. Centralization, be it in the material or the mental plane, has an element of suppression of the individual. Can this suppression be substituted by a conscious and voluntary surrender of individual sovereignty for collective well-being under collective sovereignty ? If we pursue this line, we are driven irresistibly in the direction of democracy.

The strength of democracy will have to be proportional not merely to the pairs of hands but also to the heads and hearts, intertwined one with the other. We say, the chain is as strong as the weakest link. The human society is not a chain but can be likened more to a building. A building is strong not by the height of the dome above it or its form, but by the bricks that go into its construction and the mortar that binds the bricks and the ballasts. Question naturally arises:

“SYSTEM OR SUPERMAN ?”

No man can substitute a system. If we cannot realise it from current events, we should, from a reading of world history. “Superman” is short-lived and is a myth at best, unless he stands as culmination in the tower supported by bricks and mortar of which he is an organic component. We face then the next question:

“CO-ORDINATION MEANS SUB-ORDINATION OR IDENTIFICATION ?”

We talk of co-ordination in the processing of our programme as the key function in administration. What is “Co-ordination”? Complaints are heard time and again from all quarters that by co-ordination many a practitioner of the art mean but “Sub-ordination” in another guise. We cannot deal with fundamentals under cloaks and pretences. Co-ordinator is the supplier of the mortar out of his vitals. The mortar is “Identification”. I believe, I had mentioned sometime ago a quotation : “When the heart and head combine there is faith”. To faith is delegated powers by God himself so that the individual can grow to be irresistible. How about it my friend ? Shall we do some heart-searching ?

The devil is innate in the tallest of us all. A congenital liar or an eunuch alone will deny its presence. If we are to act our role as administrators, we must needs guard continually against the devil’s pranks in varied guise. This battle between “Good” and “Evil” is perhaps the most dynamic aspect of the whole movement. What the reaction of this programme is to be, on ground or in people, is but a reflection of how we fare in the “Kurukshetra” that rages within.

BEWARE, THE PATH-FINDER IS ABOUT

At the gate of the Ramakrishna Math in Bombay there is an inscription from Swami Vivekananda: “Every soul is potentially divine”. For years I was in Bombay, I used to pause virtually every evening before the inscription in an effort to comprehend what it meant. As you can readily see, comprehension is not easy. But I did realise something in a negative way in the sense that being mortal we are apt to ape our Creator, each one arrogating to himself the role of an original path-finder. Path-finding, I discover to my chagrin, is rather a difficult task and is not given to all and

sundry. It is unconscious realisation of this that prompts us in administration to think of:

“PILOT PROJECTS”

Pilot projects for the man of clay that we are, means controlled observations at a limited number of key points such as can provide for wider applicability later. The greatest danger we apprehend today is that pilot projects begin to be universalized before the pilots have even been conceived. Whether in matter of Panchayats, Co-operatives, functions of different specialists, of co-ordination or integration between them, or between them and others, our enthusiasm and self-confidence, derived partly from the programme and partly from the aspiring “Path-finder” within, drive us to universalize new thoughts and ideas before these have had even a dog’s chance to prove their merit.

If new thoughts are to be tried out for their originality, these to start with, must be confined to limited areas alone. Nature is exacting on her children. No great thought or action has ever received universal recognition except through sweat and tears shed in prolonged obscurity. Thoughts, which are heralded as original with backing—official or otherwise, run the risk of being still-born. Our administration in Government is no different as regards vanities and vagaries from which we suffer as human beings. Therefore, an experiment begun with universal acclamation and support tends to be defensive in character and refuses open probing. The scientific approach to the quest gets lost, and it grows to be a question of prestige. There can be nothing more fatal to a programme such as ours. I may tell you with total confidence, nothing as a single factor has hurt this programme more than these persisting attempts at short-cuts.

My plea, therefore, is that we conduct all pilot projects in the future, whether sponsored under the Centre, the State, the district or the Block, only on a limited scale. Let these be special areas limited in number from out of current activities which offer promise for intensive studies. For instance, if it is a women’s programme which is to be taken up as a pilot project in a State, let it be even in a few villages in a limited number of blocks which have shown the most outstanding response under the normal programme. Let these areas be singled out for intensive application of new ideas and new thoughts under careful observations. We from the CPA have taken a tentative decision that there shall be no more pilot projects except on this pattern. Our programme is comprehensive enough to provide room for the most daring of experimenters, provided these are conducted as experiments and not as administrative expedients or egoistic adventures.

“GENIUS IS 99 PER CENT PERSPIRATION, ONLY 1 PER CENT INSPIRATION”

The above is a common phrase which has passed down to us from prehistoric times. If genius really is 1 per cent inspiration, let us beware of every thought that masquerades as inspiration. Let us, by all means, provide field and scope for perspiration to the prospective genius. We must offer this as an integral feature in the growth of our programme. But let not perspiration be short-circuited by pseudo-inspiration. That spells disaster for the programme and makes parody of the scientific pooling of all-India experiences on which we count for a concerted move forward. May I repeat, no individual is too big for the group to which he belongs, and no State in India can be too big for the great Union of States we call India. They say “Eternal vigilance is the price for liberty”. We have to be on guard against the poser from within and the adventurer from without.

This applies as much to the administrative organization of Government as to the political agency of the people, as also to the people themselves.

THE COMING SEMINARS

I believe, I mentioned to you that after having concentrated all our attention to the field during the past four years, we have at last begun to probe within our own organization. We are staggered by the realization as to the gap in cohesion and understanding between members of our own staff in the CPA as also between us and the Central Ministries for whom we were to act as pilot messengers.

The Community Development Programme appears to me in another sense as a repeater agency such as you know is used in the trunk telephone system where the distances are long and the voice gets attenuated in pitch as it travels. The Community Development system, if it is to act the role that the "Repeater" does in the system of telephones, will have to assure that it does not lose its own pitch and add further to the enfeebling influence of the distance. In other words, the Community Development agency will have to protect itself from acting as the fifth wheel in the coach and to see that its own bearings are receiving adequate lubrication. We come to the seminars.

"CPA SEMINARS"

It will be of interest to you to know that we are already engaged in drawing up an agenda for an inter-agency seminar in the CPA associated with Ministries in the Centre. If everything goes well, this should be held sometime before the end of September, and we should be able to tell you thereafter to what extent CPA is succeeding in its role as the "Repeater mouthpiece" on behalf of the Central Ministries. We have no right to be hard on the States in the sphere of administrative co-ordination, howsoever our programme may be dependent exclusively on this one factor above all others, for its journey hereafter, unless CPA sets the pace in her own house at the Centre. We are making honest efforts. We must succeed. We know, we will. We are also planning for inter-State regional seminars under CPA auspices on new patterns. We would let you have the programme not long from now.

"STATE SEMINARS"

State Governments have already begun their series of seminars. I cannot think of anything more effective, so far as the Headquarters is concerned, than a seminar of the type we are planning in the CPA. In other words, the Development Commissioner can organise a seminar at the Headquarters with all Heads of Departments and Secretaries to explore how best administrative co-ordination between departments can grow to be a reality, so that the pressure of the Government as a whole can move on a multi-line track but in a single direction meeting at key points. Some States have already begun this movement with admirable success. The discovery of the desire all round to share the initiative on this programme has been a rude but agreeable shock to all concerned. I hope it will be tried out in all States and made a recurring feature of the programme.

As for intra-State and regional seminars within States, I would strongly recommend seminars centred round groups of subjects such as recommended in CPA letter No : CPA/2(12)/56—TG dated the 17th August, 1956. This is being currently tried in many a State with outstanding success,

Administration means co-ordination in present context. Co-ordination is inspired identification of one and all with the common cause, the Chief co-ordinator giving the lead by personal example. Whether or not administration is what it should be can be judged by one single factor: "Can the job assigned be forgotten by the assigner?" When we can answer this question with an emphatic affirmative, we should know, we have at last begun to arrive somewhere.

"WHEN THE DISCIPLE IS READY THE MASTER IS READY ALSO"

Years back I came across the above in some Theosophist literature. I understood little then of what it meant. As the years rolled by and I got myself involved with the ship of our programme in an uncharted ocean, I found myself facing situations in which precedents were hardly to be found. Yet, if the pilgrims' progress is to be maintained for the long long journey yet ahead, answers must be found to problems that arise ever afresh. Since precedents are few and getting fewer still, one has perforce to fall back within one's ownself. Curiously enough I find here that the masters are many crying to deliver the lessons, if only the disciples are ready to receive the message. I find that when the mind is free from its own devilish designs, even the particles of dust that fly, let alone life in its free play in nature, can provide clues to the most abstruse of problems. How to neutralize the mind from the pranks of the under-world within is, I find, the most difficult of all tasks.

We come back where we began: "Destination Man". Are we honest and objective enough in our approach to life? A quest on this tends to raise administration to a plane altogether different. Religion, philosophy and life in its rugged day to day march onward, seem all to get intertwined in a unified movement. I would like you to think over this because for certain I would burden you with these thoughts when we meet next. Now I would pass over to the second part of my letter—to random rationalities.

PART II

KURUKSHETRA

Kurukshetra is the monthly organ of the CPA. It was to mirror our programme in its onward march from month to month. Unfortunately, for sometime now, the journal has been showing signs of decaying vitality. I know the programme on the ground in my pulse. The programme is very much alive and kicking. Therefore, the conclusion is inescapable, that the journal itself is suffering from what I hope is a temporary nervous disorder only.

The journal has to be vitalized, if it is to continue, and continue it must. We reviewed this question in all aspects and came to certain concrete measures to revive the tone and bring it in pace with the movement. The Editor is the same, who had resurrected it to its new standard more than three years back. But he is helpless unless he receives active support in the running of the journal from those who are nearer ground. We must have all topical news-items and furthermore broad trends that develop under the programme in different regions. I would entreat you to enlist for this purpose the active interest of your S. E. Os., B.D.Os., Collectors and especially the Department of Publicity in the State.

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The Editor Kurukshetra has already written to you concerning material for the fifth Anniversary Issue of this journal on October 2. The material must arrive before the 31st of August, for it has to be compiled and edited

for the journal to be issued in time. The Anniversary Issue has a wide circulation encompassing all parts of the world. These issues have had appreciation throughout. We wish to make the coming Anniversary Issue an even richer and fuller one. I count in this matter on your personal interest.

PRICES AND PROGRAMMES

Every cloud has also its silver lining. If the prices of food-stuff have gone high and are showing signs of going still higher, we should try to capitalise on the situation, because the rising trend of prices alone can serve as the initial incentive for the acceptance of improved methods and practices. Because of the all out drive on agriculture by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Planning Commission, we expect a rapid intensification of activities in the field of agriculture. The present happy price situation may not obtain indefinitely. This is all the more reason why we should concentrate every effort to extend improved methods of agriculture while conditions are so much in our favour.

WORK ORIENTATION OR PAPER ?

If decisions were horses, we as a country should be standing nearest in distance to the Mars. Unfortunately decisions are but cold prints impressed on cold papers. If we wish to reverse this process of cross thinking and confusion, our thinking necessarily has to undergo a new orientation—from paper to work. We come straight to the question of demonstrations we conduct in our programme under agriculture and other heads of activities. From personal enquiries that I conduct myself on the ground I discover to my disappointment, that while demonstrations in the field are conducted fairly well these are rarely followed up for emulation by others. So we find that the operation is successful but it ends by and large with the patient dying on the table ! A demonstration, you will agree, is not intended for the quarterly report and much less for a mere success to the owner of the plot in which demonstration has been held. Demonstration should be judged strictly by the manner and volume in which it evokes ready emulation. I wish our Extension Officers in the field as also our B. D. Os., had been a little more alive to this aspect of the question.

PROJECT STAFF AND PROGRAMMES

Regardless of what we may or may not do, the success of our programme will be strictly proportional to the quality of our personnel. Any compromise in this matter will react to the debit of the programme not in arithmetic progression but a geometric one. We in the CPA, have been increasingly concerned about the advancing age represented in the trainees sent to our S. E. Os. and B. D. Os. Training Centres, as also by the increase in the incidence of unresponsiveness to the programme as represented by a substantial section of them.

We are fairly convinced that, but for exceptional cases, the age of entry to the NES and CDP programme in whatever capacity it is at the block level and further down, should be limited to 35 or near about. We should also make sure before we confirm our selection that the candidates selected evince active and genuine interest in the programme. It is no use forcing an unwilling person into this programme just because he happens to be subject to the so-called "Fundamental Rules". "Fundamental Rules", you and I know, make the least contribution to this programme.



LITERATURE AND STUDY CIRCLES

Since I became conscious of this question, I have been making frequent enquiries during my visit to projects as to what use is made of the increasing bulk of literature pouring in to our personnel from the Centre as also from the State Headquarters. I find to my dismay that reading as a habit is growing to be a progressive rarity. We have to do something to correct this situation.

Knowledge is the first pre-requisite for one who is engaged in extension. We know what knowledge we get from our schools, colleges and universities ! The literature meant for our programme is designed especially to provide in a nutshell whatever Extension workers require to know within their limitations. If these are not used, we cannot but head in for serious difficulties.

I thought in Government Departments there were regular departmental tests for promotions or for advance increments. Could we not formulate some method by which we can realise these study circles as regular features of this programme? I would like you to think this over. It may help, if you have this as an item in the agenda of your State seminars. We shall be eager to hear of the results.

RURAL HOUSING

Rural housing has at last begun to make a modest start under our programme. The Works, Housing & Supply Ministry in the Centre, as you know, have 10 crores of rupees for rural housing during the Second Plan. This is apart from substantial sums offered by the Home Ministry in the Centre as grants-in-aid for housing to depressed classes and the members of the scheduled tribes. There is also some little provision in our own budget from which one should be able to scratch something here and there.

As we view the programme of rural housing, it appears fairly certain that the programme will catch up, once agricultural production has gone up, creating surplus purchasing power, and simultaneously village industries have been promoted with an eye to the needs of rural housing. Housing, I find, is the most stable and universal item which can catch the imagination of people who can afford the wherewithal, if only we can start the spiral of thinking in that direction. If this is not done, there is a serious danger

that surplus resources with people that result from increased agricultural production, will tend to find an easy and parasitic outlet towards the middlemen in towns. This symptom, I may inform you, has already begun to manifest itself in a number of places. We must take heed and see that we promote a programme deliberately such as can absorb the rural surpluses in directions of permanent improvement. I cannot think of anything better in this context than housing, apart from investment in irrigation and allied aids to agriculture.

While on the subject of rural housing, I have to utter a word of caution. You will not find two houses built by villagers themselves which will be identical in size or form. The villager has his individuality which he tries to project as best as he can in the exterior of his house. When, however, our engineering mind from the project gets hold of the situation, the individuality gets lost and we tend instead to promote the uniformity of military barracks or labour quarters of factory towns. As a practice, this cure will be worse than the disease. We can do nothing worse than to prohibit the individuality of expressions on the part of the villager. Our engineers and architects can certainly do a tremendous lot in the matter of ground planning as also in the techniques of construction. But they should abstain deliberately from promotion of uniformity in the forms of structures.

CONCLUSION

I have spent virtually the whole of today, which is a Sunday, in this communion with you. I am dissuading myself against my inclination from further extension of this communication. The back of the summer for the year seems to have already been broken. The autumn approaches fast and it will be followed by the bracing winter throughout the land. As we face the coming months, we anticipate even greater influx of visitors to our projects. There will also be workers from abroad who will come to study our programme. We have already begun to receive advance notices. We are proceeding with our plan on the "Institute of Study & Research on Community Development". It will take some time in spite of us, because personnel presents the most difficult of problems.

The Second Five-Year Plan advances and we feel increasingly aware of the still more vital role that this programme has to play, if the Second Plan is to be the success we wish it to be. The S. R. C. problems are nearly over. By November 1, India will have been left with only 15 States. Our problems of pooling of all-India experiences will no doubt ease in this new dispensation. There will also be a more even distribution of top quality personnel between States. Planning at Headquarters and development on the ground will get closer with improved administrative co-ordination.

If only we can adhere to the "No compromise" doctrine in selection of personnel, and can maintain the vitality of our institutional and inservice training programmes through seminars, intra-State and inter-State visits, etc., we should have no misgivings about the future. This programme has by now a momentum which we alone can conserve and promote, which we alone can retard or destroy. We have our eyes riveted on "Tomorrow". Retardation or destruction does not arise. We can move only forward. Providence is behind.

VIII

September 28, 1956

DEAR COMRADE,

This communication has got late. I am not at fault this time. A rather unforeseen development had overtaken me. This brought about some amount of dislocation in my customary programmes. I was helpless.

I have been submerged under an avalanche of letters, telegrams and messages in varied forms. These continue pouring in with unabated passion. The expression of affection and sentiments is so deep and touching that I find myself on the verge of tears. It is true, I have worked hard on the cause; but so also have others in thousands. Some have paid a much dearer price than I have, and continue to do so. I know this first-hand. Therefore, when these felicitations and overflow of emotions pour unto me from all corners of the land from people known and unknown, I cannot help feeling like a usurper of collective rights. I begin also to realise in my pulse with a vividness akin to life itself, as to how foolish it is to arrogate to oneself credit which belongs to a system. I plead, do not spoil me with your affection. Trouble always begins when a man with the feet of clay begins to be built into an idol. We have a very hard piece of work on the long road yet ahead. I must needs work on the pedestrian level. Therefore, you must take me at what I was, and continue to be—a comrade of comrades allied to, and working on a common cause. The honour, if I may say so, belongs to the organization. May I repeat, not even a super-man is a substitute for a system.

THE MOVEMENT COMES OF AGE

You will see more of it from the special message sent by P.M. through the columns of 'Kurukshetra', the Anniversary Issue, which is due on October 2. I can briefly tell you, meantime, that the event that you read about, and over which you have been generous enough to shower your felicitations on me as a person, means something much deeper than what appears in the conventional sense. In a democracy Ministers will come and go. This is a routine phenomenon. But Ministries do not come into being with that ease, especially a Ministry such as ours which has no direct subject-matter of its own, but which is charged with the responsibility of acting as a lubricant and a messenger-boy organization for the entire machinery of Government in its approach to the people. In the history of democracy this seems to be without a precedent.

Four years ago, October 2, 1952, a limited number of solitary souls started on a pilgrimage. Faith in themselves and in India was their primary stock with but a modicum of administrative experience behind. "Village people are dead; they cannot be awakened; Government servants are a useless lot with no roots in the soil; and the people's representatives are too far away from the people", were the phrases that were being flung about. Nay more, there was even active opposition to the programme in many a place. Miracles do not happen in the twentieth century, so we claimed, and girded up our loins for the route march ahead with the determination "Do or Die" writ large on every face. What has happened since, is a story much too well known. A third of the country already stands

covered, and the rest is aching frantically to get into action. The machinery of Government justifiably cynical of all innovations has not failed to recognise that this one was slightly different from all others. The machinery, which is conservative in essence and should inevitably continue to be so, has proved beyond contradiction that it is progressive in its conservatism, and that its conservatism is a sign of its culture and not of its decadence; for, if it were dead, it could not rise to the progressive response that we see universally around.

The movement was hanging loose. It had the look of an upstart. A vital movement of people encompasses all aspects of their life. If it is to endure, it should function under a defined mandate. It cannot and should not have its destiny tied around personalities. It should have an outlook which should proclaim: "People come, people go, nothing ever happens". A development such as this is also fitting in with the culture of our people, which continues forging ahead despite the rise and fall of empires and the centuries gliding by. The creation of the Ministry of Community Development does not affect the importance of persons but it makes personalities totally dispensable at all places from the Centre down to the ground. It fits in at last as a natural component to our constitutional pattern. The movement could not survive otherwise. When I choose, therefore, to rejoice with you over the event, I do so more because the character of the movement has received recognition and that it can be designed now to move forward independent of personalities, from one milepost to the other in a logical sequence integrated with the wider objective of the socialist society we now are pledged to usher into being.

THE NEW CHAPTER

The movement has come of age, I have mentioned above. There is cause for rejoicing. There is, however, also cause for serious misgivings and, therefore, for even more vigilant heart-searchings. A movement of people is like an organism which should grow or decay, there being no room for stand-still. The Ministries of all normal Governments in the past were designed mostly for maintenance functions. Maintenance, by its very nature, means maintenance of normal wear and tear and routine additions or alterations. The maintenance agency of a stable Government is not and cannot be geared for a dynamic programme of development, without its normal obligations and functions being interfered with. This is no reflection on one or the other. A Government of a growing people cannot run on mere dynamics nor can it move on mere wisdom. Wisdom and dynamics should act as allies and not as rivals, if death of the race on the one hand and crash on the precipice on the other is to be avoided on the "Road to the Manzil".

As I look at the world today with the eyes still of a vagrant, I find that the root-cause of all our ills is that there is a general failure all round to recognise the basic fact that life is a battle between 'Yesterday' and 'Tomorrow', and that it can move forward only if 'Yesterday' and 'Tomorrow' can find a synthesis in the transition of 'Today'. The creation of this new Ministry in the Centre, therefore, is no call for a mere change in the lettering of the sign-board or on the stationeries. A Ministry without a subject-matter of its own, but with a distinct term of reference to act as a messenger-boy for all, is a call instead for the child of 'Tomorrow' who is

yet to be born, and for the inevitable birth agonies that should be the continuing lot of the mother. The thought of test-tube babies, namely the short-cuts that we all feel tempted at times to adopt under the promptings of the "Path finder" from within, or the slightest sign of arrival, are features which will continue to be anti-thesis to the term of reference, and must needs be avoided like the very plague.

To sum up, the new Ministry means but a wider term of reference on the battle-field—greater security for the warriors in their animal needs and added strength based on the defined armour. The armour, may I mention, is for strength based on definition. It is not for offence. If democracy is to be promoted, and we are to attain the socialist society which is our goal, there is no room for the red eye, visible or invisible, in any of our workers. There can also be no room for rivalry if proper understanding is there in this co-ordinational extension agency.

THE SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, based on irrigation on the physical side, and Co-operation as a principle of work, account for the bulk of India's creative national effort. We thought we had grown self-sufficient in food—the one basic need of life. The world showered bouquets on us. But alas, our jubilation was short-lived. Prices mounted as scarcity loomed large, and we had to borrow from others to feed us. No nation can retain its sovereignty for long, if it is to depend for food on continuing loans and courtesies from others. Our tall talk of sovereignty in thinking and living turns to be a sham, if we are not wise and competent enough to be able to provide ourselves two meals a day with our own labour despite the "Good Earth", our great rivers and the oceans around which have never failed to shower their unfailing abundance on us.

As Prime Minister has indicated in his message to Kurukshetra, the amenities' programme shall continue, because these have contributed to the dignity and the tone of our people in the countryside. But the pre-nuptial festivities with the new clothes and the new looks in the houses are meant only to prepare for the post-nuptial dedication to the promotion of life with all its rugged prose. That the amenities' programme has appeared rather out of proportion to the less spectacular efforts on the economic side, have been due as we know, mainly to the lack of active understanding with, and resources in, the departments handling economic programmes under Government. This has to be corrected, cost what it may in sweat and blood, if our national sovereignty is to endure and be real.



We are already in active discussions with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in the Centre with a view to bringing about closer alliance in this vital and long overdue effort. Ways shall be found to bring about a combined impact, so that the resources of this great Ministry can find their appropriate outlet in this vital sector of our life. Once we see the way clear, we propose jointly to take up the question with State representatives, both of the respective departments as also of the Community Development agency. We have no doubt that before the year is out, we shall be ready to launch a vigorous economic programme with the same passion as characterized the October movement in 1952. You will hear more about it soon.

Once a procedure has been discovered such as can assure intensive effort co-ordinated with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, it will then be a matter merely of extension of the same principle and procedure to the other activities of Government, such as village industries, education, public health, communications, housing, etc., according to the exigencies of the situation. Instead of the CPA acting as the co-ordinator, the new approach is to get the CPA co-ordinated by the appropriate Ministries in the Centre, based on the priority demand of Government. Administrative co-ordination, you will readily see, promises to acquire newer methods and a newer significance.

Coming next to the programme, because it is not possible to give equal emphasis to all sectors of development at the present formative stage of our life as a nation, and yet achieve the emergency objective of food self-sufficiency—nay a surplus, it is expected that the programme will continue with all other aspects with an even emphasis, while food production will be given a top priority till the present emergency is over. The amenities' programme should not be made to suffer in the least, because this is something people can and will take up on their own immediate impulse, if only the technical and financial assistance, which is already there, can be harnessed timely and intelligently to the cause. However, the economic programme will have much less of the spectacular, and will demand sustained effort of a grinding type for which both our workers and our people will have to be geared and charged afresh. Social education, as a concept, will stand or fall strictly according to the extent to which it can generate this impulse and sustain it over the years ahead.

THE PEOPLE'S PROGRAMME

On the administrative side, the creation of the Ministry introduces a new feature. The official organization headed by one, who functioned till yesterday in the role of an official, did its best, virtually unaided, to energise the people. People we know are a mob, unless they are woven round institutional patterns of their own represented by their own leaders. Government agency can at best bring institutions into being. It cannot act as a substitute for the people's leaders. The present change in the character of the organization will now make it possible organizationally to enlist the more active support of non-official representatives of people at all levels from the ground up to the nation's Parliament. The Community Development Programme, we have discussed in the past, is a route march of the people with the people's representatives and people's servants—the three elements yoked together. There was a missing link heretofore. This has now to be closed, which means that our effort in the past to turn a

Government programme with people's participation into a people's programme with Government participation, will have a fresh fillip under the new dispensation.

THE WIDER HORIZON

I informed you earlier, Indonesia has launched her Community Development Programme with all the dormant passion of the nation. Nepal is getting ready to pursue the same development. There are others closely behind. The programme of India in which we have tried to combine as best as we could, the experiences of all countries of the world, promises to serve as a beacon to all of us who are sorry victims of an under-developed world. Who knows, in the process of give and take of experiences such as we have had heretofore and which will continue also hereafter, even the developed world also may not have some lessons for their own? "Destination Man" has been the eternal quest since the hoary past of man as a cave dweller. As a motto of life, it is totally beyond question. Who knows, this phase of our pilgrimage will not add to the validity of our international code of conduct which we define by the word "CO-EXISTENCE," to the bewilderment of many an unbeliever?

The old chapter ends. A new chapter opens. We have had festivities and ceremonials. We have slogged and sweated for the preparations. The consummation is yet far off. It may not come off in our lifetime. But life is a continuum and in it we have taken our plunge. Man is the "Means". He also is an "End". In him alone "End" and "Means" combine. Shall we rise to the occasion? Are we wise enough as a nation to remember always that it is man that matters, that all else are but phantoms? The Great Mother is on trial; more so are we.

With greetings and affections, a fellow voyager.

P. S. From this issue onwards, this letter will follow a slightly changed pattern. The random thoughts, the familiar feature of the past which I must share with you, will be published in 'Kurukshetra' under the title: "From a Wayfarer's Diary", if you are interested. I am attaching to this a copy of an extract from P.M.'s speech which perhaps will provide a prelude to the new development, as he conveyed to the Parliament.

EXTRACT FROM PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH IN LOK SABHA ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1956

In the last three or four years we have built up a rather remarkable and rather, if I may use a very strong word, a wonderful organisation, and that is the Community Development Organisation, both for the Community Project aspect and for the National Extension Service.

The first thing I should like the House to appreciate is the organisational aspect of it. For the first time we have built up an organisation we can reach from the top to the cultivator. There are links. The great difficulty in the past has been that by the Government of India or the State Governments very fine decisions were taken and resolutions were made, but they never trickled down to the poor farmer. Government functioned isolated from the people who were working in the field or the factory. For the first time in our Community Development Organisation we have built up a magnificent organisation.



There are at the present moment *gram sevaks*. We give them a year's training. By and large the *gram sevaks* and *sevikas* are a fine lot, earnest, enthusiastic, knowledgeable to some extent, and disciplined. They have done a very good piece of work. The Community Development Organisation has been interesting itself in agricultural matters. That is one of its chief jobs. But now we want to turn its attention much more pointedly and aggressively towards this agricultural development and make it almost its chief function. I do not wish to deprive it of its other functions which are highly important because, to some extent, it is the other function that has given the tone to that organisation and that has brought enthusiasm of the people. Therefore, the other functions are important but having built up that, we now want and we are turning it in this direction.

How can we do that? The first thing is that the Community Projects Development Organisation should, here at the Centre, be brought in close touch with our Food and Agriculture Ministry. Secondly, it should be in the closest touch with the State Agriculture Ministries. There has been, in the past, a fair measure of co-operation between the Community Projects Administration and the Food & Agriculture Ministry—not that there has not been. But, we want to bring them much closer together so that they may think alike and work alike and push alike. I would appeal to the State Agriculture Ministries also to co-operate and to receive the co-operation and help of the Community Development Organisation in the fullest measure and utilise this great organisation.

I have not got the shadow of doubt that if this marriage between the Agriculture Ministries at the Centre and the States and the Community Projects Administration takes place, the results will be very gratifying.

IX

October 19, 1956

DEAR COMRADE,

We have had more rains in Delhi during the first half of October than I have known during the past 25 years of my association with North India. There is water and water all round, working devastation to fields and homes alike with untold miseries for man and animal. This has happened, as you know, not merely around Delhi but in large tracts in other States also. It will soon be a passing phase. I know also that within perhaps our own life time we shall be able to have sufficient control over this phase of nature to prevent this recurring scourge on our life.

I have chosen to mention this particular situation although it is not quite relevant to our immediate work at least in the major part of the country because there is a good lesson we can learn from this phenomenon. Water is a vital wherewithal for life both for men and animals, as also for the crops in the field. Yet the same sources of water when let loose can work unlimited havoc. Are we sure that the same phenomenon does not apply to some affairs in our life also as a nation such as we have manifested during recent months and years? Our students and our people are easily excitable. When excited they forget all ties and traditions of centuries, and we see a mob at work which is no respecter of personalities. The same thing happens not unoften to our own Government apparatus. It grows and grows till the very process of expansion creates stresses and strains within the organisation. Instead of moving outward with the helping hand to our people the octopus begins to move inwards. Again we see the familiar spectacle of a force for good turning loose upon its own vitals with its concomitant repercussions.

The Community Development Organisation in the Centre and in the States has to its credit a magnificent accomplishment relatively speaking, because the organisation has grown organically. It has deliberately refrained from spreading horizontally in matters of direct functions. The organisation will remain effective so long as it retains its organic character. It will begin to age, the moment it regards itself a substitute for the regular agencies of Government instead of being a complement. The same will accrue also, when it begins to ignore the basic fact that an organisation is as effective as the workers that compose it, rather than the form of the organisation posing as a panacea for all problems.

You will have read in the Press that we have had the first Inter-State Seminar of the year in Saurashtra between the 8th and the 11th. I had the opportunity of participating towards the closing stage of the Seminar. We tried to do some loud thinking as to how we did have the measure of success such as we have had. I thought it will be well worth your participating in this loud thinking.

WHY THE COLOSSUS MOVED

Village people rarely ever responded in the past to Governmental approach on their betterment. It happened so because the heart was not there, although gifts were there on behalf of Government in substantial

measures for limited areas. The villager if anything, lives more on sentiments and instincts than on logic. He responded this time and in all parts of India because he discovered instinctively that the hands of the old trusted leaders whom he adored were there behind, and the mouths and the hands that carried the message had also a heart behind. The heart of the villager met the heart of the official invisibly. The spark was ignited and so we had what really followed, which is now history.

The official moved with his heart moving him from behind because he discovered, he no longer has to suffer from the guilt of being by-passed in the battle for freedom. We have had, as we know, only our battle of Independence. The battle for freedom is a matter which is altogether different. It invariably is long drawn out and will have to continue for many a generation, for no people can claim to be free until they are free from fear—fear of hunger, fear of disease and fear of the darkness that generates from ignorance.

Our officials in India rose in a body to join the new battle. Blessings followed from the highest down to the ground, and so the battle started. The people and their servants met and joined hands. Followed also the people's representatives who are coming in ever increasing number. The creation of this Ministry will give further opportunities to close this missing link so that the route-march we visualised can turn into a pilgrimage of the people, the people's representatives and the people's servants moving hand in hand.

THE SURGING TIDE OF NON-OFFICIALS

The Members of Parliament have already begun to take an interest in this programme even exceeding my own expectations. I know, the same will follow in the State Legislature. It will also be possible for me now to work even more closely with non-officials in an effort to enlist their active participation in the role which can be theirs alone. Officials, non-officials or the people, for better or worse, spring from the common stock. Any gap in understanding between one and the other can but end in disaster in the long run.

THE NORMALISED BLOCK (?)

With this background I would like to come straight to the post-intensive phase of our programme which is the subject I wish to deal in this letter. "Normalised Block" is an expression that has gathered an unhappy currency. I am mainly to blame in this matter as I believe, in some unguarded moment, I was the first to have acceded to this unhappy expression. Normality, as the very expression implies, has an element of the sense of arrival. "Normality" and "Dynamics" exclude each other. In India of today especially, normality can only mean the evils we as a nation have inherited from the past. Tribal instinct in dealing with our distant neighbours, rigid casteism in dealing with each other, sheer lack of discipline in personal conduct, idealism in theory but cannibalism in practice, "Something for nothing" in an effort to cheat God Himself, are features which still predominate in us as a people. Is this what we are to relapse to as the consummation of all our heroic effort over these years?

Those who have been working on this programme have at least acquired one virtue by now, namely to be honest to themselves at least in thinking. We know what the normal administration of Government means in reality, what the common man for instance has to go through even for getting

timely receipt for payment of his dues to Government. Normalisation in this context can, therefore, mean but a relapse to outworn practices of "Yesterday" to the complete sacrifice of "Tomorrow" which is still to be born. Since it was perhaps my own mistake to start with, I have to beg of you to help me in undoing this. The "Normalised Block" must be discarded and forgotten as a virus. We may substitute the expression "The post-intensive Block" which we accepted at the Development Commissioners' Conference at Nainital.

VILLAGES OF "TOMORROW"

The post-intensive Block naturally does not mean that we have done during the intensive phase the major part of what was needed to be done. You will agree, we have barely scratched the surface. When you think of the villages of "Tomorrow", I would like you to compare in your mind a modern mofussil town that you know of today, with what you knew of it 25 to 50 years back. The same comparative degree of development if not more at least in physical terms, must apply when we consider our villages of "Tomorrow".

Imagine for instance, the bulk of our land raising three crops a year on improved methods and techniques of agriculture based on the epoch making discoveries in the biochemic and atomic fields which are now in the process with irrigation from rivers and streams, under-ground sources and artificial rains. Picture to yourself decentralised small industries run on electric power in the bulk of our villages with houses rebuilt with ample spaces around, paved lanes and drains, central water supply and underground sewage, maternity, child welfare and health facilities available to all, village school—the hub of village activities, Community Centres in open parks, open air theatres and other forms of recreation and playgrounds for children and adults alike, every village connected to the other, easy access to fast moving transport, men, women and children of the village working together, arguing together and singing together, and vying for the joy of mere existence with other adjoining communities, the spiral of the community ever expanding till it encompasses the nation and then to the wider horizon offering its hands of welcome to the shrinking "New World" already in the making.

My friend, this is neither a fantasy nor a day-dream. Try to imagine to yourself what Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were like a hundred years ago, compared to what they are today. A hundred years ago if some one described what these cities were to be like today, his place would have been indicated somewhere else. We live in more knowledgeable times; at least we pride that way. Is the picture I have drawn above for our Indian villages so unreal? If it is not we must do some heart-searching as to what we need do in the post-intensive phase.



THE POST-INTENSIVE PHASE

The intensive phase as we have discussed often in the past is intended only to be an awakener of the colossus. The real work of extension, for all it is worth, must begin with all the emphasis we can bring to bear in the post-intensive phase during which we shall be relatively free from ceremonial occupations. It is quite clear by now both to the people as also to our workers that it is not possible for our Government to continue to shower grants-in-aid which poured in during the intensive phase till at least we have gone one round through all the villages of India with the common measure. That is far off. Therefore, if we are to avoid relapsing to normality (?) we must needs make common cause at least now, with the people.

Our people through their long suffering have an understanding of realities much more than we give them credit for. They will understand, if explained on the correct perspective, why grants-in-aid cannot flow in larger measures than has been provided for during the three-year period of the post-intensive phase. They will also understand why they have to work harder and with more intelligence on programmes of economic development at least now that they have an appraisal of their dignity as members contributing to the community of India. The economic programmes have already been provided for perhaps even in larger measures than we are equal to, under the Second Five-Year Plan, and more will certainly come through various channels if we can prove to have justified the current provisions.

The post-intensive phase must concentrate on agriculture above all others, for agriculture constitutes the base on which India stands today as a nation. Agriculture, animal husbandry, village industries, co-operation and panchayats are the activities which have to be woven together on a common pattern because these are complementary to each other. The gap in one is bound to react adversely on the other. Therefore, these five features have to be planned together and implemented together with all the force that we as an organisation can bring to bear on the programme. Government organisation can act but as a catalyst, or a purveyor of modern knowledge and scarce supplies such as are not within easy reach of the people. People's organisations have to be given the prime initiative. These have to be consolidated to take over responsibilities and powers which have been lying uneasily in the hands of the Government agencies.

“THE BATTLE THAT COUNTS”

The history of all battles and all movements in the world has one common lesson to offer. Defeats have come inevitably from lack of preparations, and much more often because the battles or the movements were not followed through with the baptismal fire with which they started. This is how the phrase came into existence—“It is the last battle that counts”. Far too heavy a sacrifice has been made by far too large a number of people to let us get lost with a sense of arrival. This programme my friend, will suffer if at all, not because there was want of money but because the men that ran it grew soft with initial victories. We have far too much at stake in this movement to allow ourselves to take any risk whatsoever. We must be on our guard.

To an over-worked worker whoever he is, the temptation is always there out of a sheer sense of fatigue to rest on the oars a little while. But alas! this cannot be given to us. What is then the way out? I come back

inevitably to my pet thesis. As is the case with education in which the more one gives the more one grows so also is the case with pride in man. The more one shares the pride of accomplishment the more one grows in the vertical direction. Monopoly pride has but one destination—the withering away into oblivion.

PRIDE SHARED WITH TECHNICAL AGENCIES

If pride is to be shared, the first agency with which we have to establish the contact of hearts is the agency of our technical associates. Technical people must grow to be artists in their specialities. They must have the sense of pride such as the painters and sculptors felt over the caves of Ellora and Ajanta or in the thousands of known and unknown temples, mosques and mausoleums spread all over this sub-continent. Then alone will the administrator be free for the real role of administration. For, then the technical personnel, each one, will be a double of the administrator in the respective technical specialities and all will look towards the administrator for inspiration and guidance and for his services as the trouble-shooter in matters, purely administrative, which are a distraction to the technical specialist—artist.

PRIDE SHARED WITH PEOPLE'S AGENCIES

The administrative agency cannot be sufficient unto itself except in a colonial or totalitarian regime. In a growing democracy, this means that the Government agency to whatever extent we choose, or can afford, to multiply it, will never be equal to the task unless the people rise *en masse* to take their destiny in their own hands. People we know are a mob, if let loose. Therefore, they have to be woven round institutional patterns of their own headed by representatives who will act as their leaders sharing in the pride which is now enjoyed more or less as a monopoly by the Government functionary especially at field levels. Naturally, I have the same counsel to offer again. Pride shared with the people's representatives will come back with a return which will be many-fold the investment.

“ONE PLUS ONE” IN HUMAN RELATIONS ?

One plus one certainly makes two in arithmetic, but in human relations when a mind meets another mind and especially the heart meets another heart it is much more than the arithmetic sum. My friend, try it out even with your small child in a dark night when you are groping across long solitary fields. Touch your heart and find the answer as to the extent to which even the youngster adds to your strength.

“TOMORROW” THE JUDGE

You will have read in the Press about the creation of a high-power body which is now headed by the Union Home Minister which will begin a study of all Plan projects. You will have known that a probe into the Community Development Programme has received the place of honour inasmuch as this is the first project which is going to be undertaken for study by this high-power body. I rejoice over this and I know, so will you. Our programme, may I assure you, will be judged for the future not so much by what we have achieved during the intensive phase, as by the manner in which our people are forging ahead with their programme of Community Development in the post-intensive phase.

Forgive me for this long discourse. The thoughts were a torment. I could get no peace till I unburdened my heart.

X

December 2, 1956

DEAR COMRADE,

I am sorry, awfully sorry, for this abnormal delay in reaching you with this communication. I had drafted a letter to you days ago. But when I reread what I wrote, I discovered to my torment that you were missing from it, and so was I. We have been an overlearned people and indeed our learning has been the heaviest halter round our neck! If we have cared about each other, it is not because of our mutual wisdom, rather because I am as foolish or as wise, as lazy or as active as you are fundamentally; because I am struggling as you are, to keep my heart and head above the pull of gravity and to be with you in our struggle to the common destiny whatever it may be. My communication to you is a greeting, a communion on the "Open Road". Wisdom is there everywhere, crying to be picked by the wayside, if only one is attuned to it. I need not labour to add to the heavy stock. So I threw the work of hours reluctantly, but joyfully, into the dustbin and preferred to take the chance when I could be with you in mind and spirit.

I write this in long hand, as I face the wide wide world slowly and steadily passing by the glass window of my cabin in this train which I boarded late last evening on my way back from Nasik to Delhi. There is so much to do, and yet so little one can do with time relentlessly flying past. I see grave danger ahead of me, you and all—danger of the temptation to be normal. Life itself is a battle against gravity. Gravity we know is a pull downwards. It offers the line of least resistance. However, it leads but to the pit wherein hell-fire rages and we see the end of all our struggles, all we stand for. Yet I know, it is an ordeal, while in "Chandni Chowk" to act different from the mob that rules therein. I know, man has no justification to be if he is to act the beast. Yet how is he to move forward if he is to function alone in the mob? This is the crucial question to which we must find an answer if we are to move perceptibly in the direction to which we started our pilgrimage. No man by himself is strong enough to act against gravity if he is not to fall down with battered limbs. What do we do?

VERTICAL MUST BE SUPPORTED BY LATERAL THRUSTS

We must seek companions in ever increasing numbers—comrades and friends who can support us in our vertical effort, with lateral thrusts which can push the effort farther up, and prevent us from falling down with a thud. We have been talking about technical agencies coming in to play the rightful role which is theirs. But wishes alone do not avail. The situation calls for more specific remedies. Technical Departments have gone down in stature as also in content, through years of neglect and scorn all round. Pride of workmanship which was based on labour of love has given place universally to forms and rituals, based on labour for wages. Like the Brahmin's son who having failed everywhere seeks to study Sanskrit as a last resort, technical departments by and large are adopted by people in like spirit. Those who hail with the baptismal fire

burning in them also fall easy prey to the force of gravity and begin measuring themselves by the salary bill they handle as technical administrators instead of acting the technician artist which is their normal role. The artificially propped up halo that grew round the administrative agency during the closing chapter of British rule adds further temptation in this direction.

The Second Five-Year Plan makes such heavy demands of technical departments in all fields that the problem assumes a gigantic proportion. If we were to start an effort for the revitalisation of all technical departments simultaneously, we are bound to end in diffusion. The logical course naturally will be to take up one subject at a time. On this background the recent meeting we held in Delhi between the Central Ministries of Agriculture and Community Development on one side and the State Heads of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry on the other, has proved to be one of special significance. This will be followed up further during the forthcoming interim conference of Development Commissioners along with State Secretaries of Agriculture.

Agriculture with allied subjects holds the centre of the stage at least for the present. What we do or do not succeed in achieving here will be clearly reflected in the transactions in the open market. If in the process of planning a combined impact on the food problem, we can work out a procedure for administrative coordination between the Community Development agency with the Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Minor Irrigation and Cooperation in the States, along with the strengthening of these Departments of Government, we shall have laid the foundation for its later application to other fields as well.

While we plan for measures to bring about closer coordination between ourselves and these vital nation building technical agencies, one after the other, efforts will continue to bring in the representatives of the people closer to the programme. There will soon be an informal Consultative Committee of Parliament attached to this Ministry. We also visualise study circles on Community development with Parliament Members together with field visits by them to areas of development in different parts of the country. This process can repeat with some adjustment to the members of the State Legislature and others down the line *vis-a-vis* the agency of Government in the States. We are working out a detailed scheme in this connection supported by the Ford Foundation.



Our complaint for some time has been that others are not coming to join in of their own accord and may be they are built of different material. Self-righteousness does give temporary respite to the troubled soul. It offers no permanent relief. It is futile, therefore, to decry the quality of people in one group or the other. We come, all, from the common stock and that way become integral part of an indivisible whole. The administrative organisation singly has travelled as far as it could. Without lateral support it can at best look for a standstill position. Life, however, continues to move with its own dynamics. It offers room for movement either forward or backward. There is no standstill position. We must, therefore, follow the logic of the movement, if we are not to be thrown aside in the scrap-heap by forces of the nether world which are gathering strength simultaneously.

CHARACTER, NOT THE CHARACTER ROLL THAT MATTERS

From the Gram Sevaks to the highest functionary in the States we should be clear of one fact. The initiative rests yet with the administrative agency. If the partnership is to be broad-based for dispersal of the initiative, it is the "character" of the administrator rather than the "character roll" which he wishes to wield as an instrument of coercion, that will determine the course of the movement hereafter.

The bitter truth of the lesson has been learnt already by many of us, including many a Collector of Districts. As we go down the line, we find unhappily, the understanding is still wanting. The B. D.O. by and large, continues still as the Lambardar *par excellence*. Our training centres should have done something about it. But these also suffer from the pull in the direction of "Normalisation". Of course, we will do all we can, against this pull of gravity. But you will have to play a much more active role if this key functionary is to be protected against the force of gravity from within himself and without. We may also, perhaps, take a little more care in his recruitment, than we have done heretofore.

DECISION EVOKED RATHER THAN IMPOSED

Seminars and Conferences, we have treated as integral features of our programme of In-service Training. But here again the form may get precedence over the substance and we may easily end the same way as the 550,000 temples, mosques and churches in the like number of our villages wherein rituals rule in place of piety.

Inter-State Seminars are without meaning unless these are the culmination of thinking from the ground upwards. The Block, District, Region, Intra-State Seminars, therefore, are essential pre-requisites. These Seminars at all levels should endeavour to promote free thinking especially for functionaries farther down the line of the hierarchy. Non-officials should form an increasing feature, if these Seminars are to be representative of popular sentiments and opinions. Decisions on matters of policies should be *evoked* rather than being *imposed*. This is one of the prime objectives of these Seminars.

ECONOMICS BASED ON A SOCIAL PURPOSE

An appeal to the purse may be the strongest of incentives in many an advanced country in the world. India, if we understand her at all, provides a conspicuous exception to the rule. The heart rather than the head is the

stronger element in us as a people. This is why life in us from conception to death and even beyond, was one inextricably linked up with a social purpose. The festivals throughout the year and the ceremonials through life were but a conscious recognition of this trait in our character as also of our limitations.

Be it in agriculture or village industries if production is to be improved, it has to be linked afresh with our life in the community. Panchayats and Cooperatives will have to acquire a new purpose if they are to fill the gap in our community existence. The individual approach has its virtues in matters of statistics or of initial demonstration of a material technique. But if efforts are to be broadbased and sustained on a permanent pattern, we must needs follow the community approach and get the community involved in the process. If you can do some thinking over it we shall certainly discover the form in which our action should travel.

RESPONSIBILITY INCONSISTENT WITH ABSENCE OF AUTHORITY

Mad men are not wanting who will be prepared to groan under responsibilities without authority of any kind whatsoever. But these are exceptions rather than rule in a society. Love for fellowman is good as a precept either for self-mortification or for picking the pocket of the neighbour. But it does not carry the society very far. Enlightened self-interest is much more effective as an instrument of social action.

Our solicitude for the village Panchayats and village Cooperatives are worthy objectives when sovereignty has spread in depth and space both. But till that happens, intermediate steps have to be provided for, appropriate to the transitional situations. Panchayat and Cooperative unions at intermediate levels will appear essential pre-requisites if responsibilities are to be exercised on behalf of, and initiative is to be transferred in favour of, the people. The stratification of the social structure in our existing village units will appear proof even against the atomic approach. A wider level in between the Block and the village has to be thought of, such as can cut across rigid strata of demarcation where Panchayats and Cooperatives can meet at a viable point of union.

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The winter sun is setting below the distant horizon. The sky is getting enveloped in a haze. I have been grappling with my pencil in this unaccustomed effort to jot down my stray thoughts as a coherent whole. India as a sub-continent has shrunk in size. I am losing my capacity increasingly to distinguish people of one region from the other except through the language. With the fast pace of travel and increasing inter-change of thoughts and ideas between people in different lands, the world is shrinking in size equally fast. As I meet and discuss the common problems with visitors from other lands, I discover afresh the unity of man, simultaneously the common rapids and undercurrents man has yet to cross.

Behind the tugs and pulls of conflicting ideologies, the common man stands—a part of the eternal procession of life struggling in nature for a crumb of bread, a scrap of clothing, thatch overhead. He stakes his claim for the free air and sun and the water that flows in its never failing abundance. The middleman extends his arm forward by way of assuring protection.

The rate of commission grows progressively higher till he begins to default. The competing middlemen begin to undercut each other in the rates of the levy till they also can stand it no longer. War follows. Hell is let loose. The peasant continues feeding the protecting armies meantime. The battle consumes the surplus mouths. The war to end all war comes at last to a close, repeating itself through the ages with a cyclic precision.

We have seen during recent weeks in this peak of civilisation of the twentieth century, how Egypt was being protected against the invading Israel army. We have also seen how the common man is being protected in Hungary, caught between rival protectors. The practices of life belie its profession, and in this the present seems to be excelling all past records.

Yet against these dismal manifestations of the contradictions that ail life today we see a new unity of purpose in the process of emergence—a new Kumbh Mela for which the common masses of the common people are getting together with an understanding and determination as never before. With the micro-development of the atom, there is a concurrent move in the direction of macro-development in man. The question is, which will catch up earlier. Ours seems to be an unwitting and unostentatious effort to test out if “freedom can co-exist with progress”, if “life can co-exist with intelligence”. India once did work out the answer for herself, which happened to serve many others also. The tradition from the hoary past as also our geography offer us special qualification for this role. Community Development with all its manual of instructions will be still-born unless it is understood on this wider perspective, unless this understanding percolates down to the most distant of our outposts, till “Destination Man” grows to be a realisation as against a jargon.

December 30, 1956.

DEAR FRIEND AND COMRADE,

The midday sun is stooping down to the West. In a day and few more hours, the year 1956 will have come to a close. The sun rises, the sun sets. The cycle goes on. Time invented by man is broken into segments for his own purposes. In this eternal scheme of things life for man assumes a purpose and a meaning only when he organises himself in a disciplined manner in harmony with nature about him. The Government in an established society, the invariable restraints man imposes on himself, the rules and procedures which he follows in the conduct of life in office and outside are integral features of the same process which began with the definition of time. Christmas is way behind but holiday spirit still persists. I feel within myself the pressure of gravitation. Simultaneously, the other force also exerts itself—the force to talk to you on common hopes and fears, for I find myself unable to enjoy or to suffer except in your company.

Prime Minister is back from his fateful pilgrimage to the West. To expect miracles to follow would be childish in this age of unbelief. Yet when powerful minds get together backed by the will of large masses of people yearning for peace, the cold wave begins to get dispersed, a new process emerges inevitably. The trends of recent years which culminated in the fiasco we have witnessed in recent weeks have no doubt been a dismal experience for us all. But there is also the other side of the story which, interpreted correctly, should be cheering enough as portents for the future. We have seen how powerful armies have had to stoop down to the pressure of public opinion when that opinion could exert itself in clear and determined voice. The scene repeats itself with an amazing similarity although on a different plane in our programme and that way the world grows to be an enlargement of our struggle and we grow likewise to be a part of the world movement of man in this battle between yesterday and tomorrow.

With the Parliament session over, I have been struggling to get on my strides again to be with you in the field of action. I discover somehow that I have developed a mental resistance to arranged visits to buildings, roads and *chabutaras*. Instead, I find myself craving instinctively for the sparkle in the eyes of my co-workers and the village people whom I can come across in surprise encounters. I find this process much more satisfying as also revealing than the melee of organised receptions with the invariable accompaniment of garlands, thorans and buntings. My experiences confirm once again that.

A BLOCK IS WHAT THE STAFF IS, and the staff is invariably what the leader is, namely, the Collector at the District and his interest in the programme, the B. D. O. at the Block level and the degree to which he has taken to the programme as a mission. Manuals of instructions as I come across in different States are now fairly uniform throughout India. The manuals of course give guidance practically in all matters but manuals we know are only man-made guides to act as points of reference. By themselves they do not, they

cannot build men. How else could we explain the gap between the sublimity of our thoughts in the Upanishads and the depravity of our action on the bank of the Ganges and in the market-place.

We come back invariably to what we learn in the churches, mosques and our temples. The devotees must congregate together to chant and discourse on the common scriptures, if they are to be reinforced with each other's faith in the fraternity of man and the code of conduct that must needs follow as an inevitable logic.

The literature now available on our programme is enormous if only our workers could make use of these in the way they should. How do we start the study circle at all levels and make sure that this will form an integral part of our assignment? We can give to the village people only what we have. We seem to be living from hand to mouth. The vehicle cannot continue in locomotion unless the battery of our knowledge continues to be recharged while the vehicle is in motion. We should think over this seriously and devise ways and means with which we can start the charging process. This is a "Must" if this programme is not to turn into a mere ritual.

ELECTION, THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL EDUCATION

The forthcoming election approaches us with lightning rapidity in time. The people who are our charge must have a basic understanding of our Constitution and what the votes they cast mean for us as free citizens in a growing democracy. I am struggling to bring out a brief brochure on the subject. If this comes off in time you will have a sufficient number to distribute to our people. The next two months offer us a unique opportunity for the activation of our people in matters of Social Education. We have been crying for non-official participation. It will be there in abundance; more than we are perhaps ready to digest. We should take advantage of the tension in the atmosphere which others will bring about, to the enrichment of the content and character of our programme. This is an opportunity we should not miss. We should go all out to build up the capital.

PILOT PROJECTS IN VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

There are 26 Pilot Projects in different States. These, as you know, were conceived with an open mind to find out how our industries—cottage, handicraft and small-scale—should develop on an integral pattern to offer full employment to the people in the respective projects. These were also intended to offer basic training to our Industries Departments in States such as could serve as a prelude to the Industries Extension Service which is in the process of emergence. Training arrangements for Extension Officers (Industries) are being geared up as best as existing resources permit. The selection of the staff is your responsibility. The programme will suffer to the extent to which we make compromises in quality of personnel during recruitment.

The further expansion of the Industries programme will depend on how often and effectively the Action Committees in States meet to conduct the Pilot Projects, review operations and make their experiences available to the Centre for all-India pooling. The Pilot Project ceases to be a pilot unless it is treated as a fore-runner of experiences which can find wider applications. In a broader sense the Pilot Projects in Village Industries should be regarded in the same way as experimental plots in the field of agricultural research.

PILOT PROJECTS ON RURAL HOUSING

We have had activities under rural housing in various parts of the country based partly on people's own initiative and occasionally on the initiative and finance offered by Government. It is our invariable experience that housing in rural areas is being promoted on urban styles. No wonder it is so, because our engineering staff draw their inspiration from the architecture with which they are acquainted. Perhaps, the same applies to other Block staff as well. This is a most unhappy portent. Let me explain what I am driving at.

We cannot continue exposing the millions of our rural people to the vagaries of the weather to which they have been subject heretofore. At least 90 per cent of the houses in rural areas, which naturally will count in crores, will have to be rebuilt or radically reconditioned in the course of the next 20 to 25 years. A permanent house with adequate facilities for air, light and drainage will constitute the essential foundation on which improvement in the standard of living can even be thought of. Housing will stand third on the list of priorities, if not second immediately after food, which is now being occupied by clothing. If employment through local industries is to be linked up with these essential requirements in a village, rural housing has to be promoted with an eye on local skill and materials and local architecture suited to the native genius of the people. Importation of urban standards in this matter can end in a chaos for our culture, as has already overtaken our life in urban areas. We also run the grave risk of exposing our village people to subservience to imported skill and materials which they can hardly have the resources to pay for in the foreseeable future.

The Block Headquarters we have established, or are in the process of establishing, should have architectural patterns that conform to local conditions. The offer of the Ministry of Works, Housing & Supply, of loan to promote model villages adjoining Block Headquarters will come extremely handy in this connection, if it can be utilised to promote patterns that can be reproduced in harmony with local resources and architecture. This is a field of adventure for the most daring amongst us. Pursuit of the normalized pattern on the P.W. D. style, as practised heretofore, will retard rather than advance the scheme for rural housing with which we wish to engulf the last man.

PILOT PROJECTS ON COOPERATION

Ministry of Agriculture are in the process of building an organization to implement the recommendations of the rural credit survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of India. Cooperatives—large, medium and small—including cooperative farming will receive special impetus under the programme. There is also a scheme for starting some pilot projects on Cooperation more or less on the pattern we are following in the field of village industries. I wonder, if you cannot start pilot projects on your own even in anticipation of the scheme from the Ministry of Agriculture in areas under NES or Community Development specially suited for the purpose. I should start with at least one block in every State under the most favourable conditions. The experiment, if carefully conducted, will have many lessons to offer, provided we are firm about the objective, namely, that every family in the block should be a member of the Cooperative.

PILOT PROJECT ON SANITATION

In spite of all we have done we do not appear to have made much headway in the field of sanitation. Here, again, we discover that environmental sanitation and hygiene cannot be taken up in isolation from other activities relating to life in rural areas. For instance, cowdung cakes being dried on walls, men and animals living together under the same roof, offer a most unhappy ground to encourage talk on sanitation and hygiene. Improved housing based on every family having a fair means of livelihood from agriculture or village industries and the setting of a model village properly laid out for air, light and open space, will appear essential prerequisites, if we are to experiment for further lessons on this difficult subject. Here again, I would recommend combining this pilot project on rural sanitation with the pilot project for housing for a model village and the pilot project for cooperation and industries. Even a single village taken up for an all-out drive in every direction will offer us all the scope we need for experimentation. Could we take it up for a trial ?



WOMEN'S PROGRAMME AND CENTRAL SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD

The Development Commissioners' meeting which we had in Delhi early this month, made certain recommendations for the coordination of the women's programme in Community Development Blocks with the activities of the Central Social Welfare Board. These recommendations have been placed before the Board, and a decision is soon likely to be taken. From indications I have, it seems fairly clear that the recommendations made by Development Commissioners will prove acceptable to the Board and we should be ready for implementation of this programme latest by the 1st of April.

The combination of this predominantly non-official organisation with the predominantly official organization such as we are, is one of the most promising developments since we began our programme. In a way, the Ministry of Community Development and the Central Social Welfare Board are both upstart organs of our Government. The marriage between these two organisations is bound to make far-reaching contribution to our programme, if we approach the future with mutual faith and tolerance.

SEMINAR BY TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS

We have been talking about the revitalisation of technical departments. We have sufficient experiences by now of the participation of technical departments in our seminars to be able to pronounce with confidence that one of the surest ways by which we can restore dignity to technical departments will be to let technical departments under their own auspices have seminars on their specialities with the respective Block staff with which B. D. Os. and others can be associated as equal partners. I cannot conceive of a more effective first step. I would like you to give this a trial.

SEMINAR BY NON-OFFICIALS

You will have received by now the minutes of the interim Development Commissioners' Conference which we held recently in Delhi. We are taking steps to draw up a programme for non-officials more or less on the line we agreed to. This should come into operation immediately after the next election. Side by side with the programme sponsored under Government, I thought, we could also take steps to offer our services for participation in seminars organised by non-officials. This is a movement which is not too difficult to initiate. I can take further steps with all organisations at the all-India level, provided I am assured that you can afford to offer participation of your staff in the programme. I would like you to do further thinking on this subject before I take further concrete steps in this direction.

BHARAT DARSHAN TRAINS

We are in communication with the Ministry of Railways as a result of which we hope there will be improvement in the amenities so far offered in the Bharat Darshan Specials. You will hear more about it after we hear from the Railways. Meantime, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that these Bharat Darshan Specials are meant exclusively for village people living in NES and Community Development areas. We should not mix these with people from other areas.

I would like next to mention that the programme so far drawn up by State Governments is not proving quite what we wanted. While we wish the travelling farmers to see places of pilgrimage as also various big projects under planned development, enough emphasis does not seem to have been given, while drawing up the programme, to NES and Community Development Blocks in other States from which the farmers can derive lessons which they can reproduce on return. These Specials should not degrade into mere sightseeing excursions.

SUB-INSPECTOR'S EDUCATION AND POLICE AS MEMBERS OF BLOCK TEAM

You will have received by now, or you will shortly do, communications from the CPA on the programme of teachers' training in Community Blocks during the Second Five-Year Plan. School teachers cannot be drawn into the orbit of the programme unless the Sub-Inspector of Schools has been drawn in first. Sub-Inspector of Schools should constitute a member of the Block team of specialists, and you should take appropriate action with the department concerned.

The Police has been taking increasing interest in our programme in various parts of the country. While it is true that it is yet premature to involve the Police force as a whole in the development programme, we can make a beginning by associating the Sub-Inspector of Police as a member of the Block team. The function of the police in the new democracy of ours is undergoing a rapid change. We cannot leave any functionary of Government behind, even the hangman. Sub-Inspector of Police, I believe, can be associated with the Advisory Committee with complete impunity.

SELECTIVE BREEDING

With the rapid expansion of the programme we are up against increasing shortage of pedigree bulls and birds in the field of animal husbandry. Induction of pure-bred animals and birds is also not proving too happy,

as apart from feeding which is of an exacting nature, the pure stock is rarely seasoned to the new environment. While cross-breeding may be followed to the extent possible, I feel convinced, increasing reliance has to be placed in the future on selective breeding locally. In every area we have local breed of cattle and birds which belong to a superior type. These can be used for cross-breeding through castration of scrub bulls and cocks with considerable advantage and at little cost. This has been tried out with success by Sir Datar Singh in Kashmir specially in the field of cattle breeding. I am hoping to be able to send out his experiences to you not long from now. You may try this out with advantage. There is nothing to lose, but much to gain.

TRAIN THAT STARTS LATE RARELY EVER ARRIVES IN TIME

All of you will have had experience of travelling by trains which started late. Rarely ever have I found these trains making up time. In fact the late trains invariably dislocate all others on the line and continue losing time as they approach the destination.

We seem to be acting the same way in our projects when we have ceremonial openings on the specified date but fail to make sure that the minimum staff specified for a Block is made available. According to the term of reference which has been agreed to by all, a Block is to have at least three months of pre-extension work with the full complement of staff before the formal date of inauguration. We find, however, that this is not there even after months of formal inauguration. This is totally contrary to the essential term of reference. I am gravely distressed over this matter. This programme cannot move but on faith. "Preventive Detention Act" is a thing of the past. I would naturally beg for your cooperation.

DECISIONS OR IMPLEMENTATION?

"If wishes were horses the beggars would ride," they say. Yet unwittingly this is exactly how we act when decisions arrived at after days of extensive deliberations are relegated to the pigeon-holes and little is done for implementation. The proceedings of the Development Commissioners Conferences and the observations of visitors such as Mr. M. L. Wilson, Dr. Carl Taylor, the Estimates Committee in the Parliament, Evaluation Report from the Planning Commission, etc., are all meant for assisting the implementation of our programme. If any State experiences difficulties in implementing recommendations under any head we should, for obvious reasons like to be co-sharers in its difficulties so that we can render such help as we can. Having delegated all the powers to the States in matters of implementation this is the least we should do if you can give us a chance. I find rarely if ever, there is a reference from a State Government except on the subject of allotment. Most assuredly our programme is far away yet from arrival. Therefore, you should have serious problems of your own. Why not pass on some of your agonies to us who are aching to share your burden?

ADMINISTRATIVE INTELLIGENCE IN A PLANNED ECONOMY

When I visit a project I wish to share the smiles, the tears and the sweat of my comrades slogging there. I do not wish to be a drain inspector. The logic prompts me to believe likewise that the Development Commissioners, the Collectors, the S. D. Os. and the B. D. Os. have a new role in this programme. They have to be partners in a joint enterprise. If

the partners are to play their role there has to be a balance-sheet of activities on which they can base their observations. This should be certified by an approved organisation such as characterises the activities of commercial undertakings. Administrative Intelligence based on statistical reports from the field was intended to serve this purpose. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the Progress Assistant now prescribed at the Block level will have to be a man of the requisite calibre and he should receive the training specified for him. I wish to assure you with all the force that I can command, that the programme has already grown far beyond the capacity of all the physical inspectors that you can appoint from the Headquarters of the State down to the ground. We should depend more on facts than on visual observations. We have already sent you the brief syllabus. You have the Bureau of Economics and Statistical Intelligence at the Headquarters of the State. This organisation will have been crying like all others to participate in this nation-building programme. It should be drawn fully within the orbit and made responsible for providing statistical assistance from the State Headquarters down to the Block level. Government organisation is noted for its extraordinary skill in reducing the most complex of transactions into routine methods and procedures. I would plead for the application of the same technique to this field of Administrative Intelligence in your own interest.

The Programme Evaluation Organisation, under the Planning Commission, has recently been developed into a high-powered organisation. This organisation should be able to render us still more effective service provided we cooperate by developing Administrative Intelligence from the ground upwards such as can be the fore-runner of a new system which can apply to all affairs of Government. No planned economy is feasible unless it is supported by a system of statistical appraisal. Heart cases in Government services which are recurring with increasing frequency will overtake us in the shape of an epidemic if we fail to act with speed. Government Service in India, especially at the higher levels has an integrity which is a source of pride to us all. This has to be conserved, cost what it may. Let us not pay an avoidable price by over-reaching ourselves and by ignoring the fundamental pre-requisite to administration in the new context. Administrative Intelligence as I see it, is the key to our survival as an organisation if we are not to be over-powered and crushed by this unavoidably fast expansion of our activities.

I have taxed your patience long enough. I should close now. The close of a year is a time for stock-taking and for fresh resolutions. In this the mirror is our own conscience. The mirror is also a test of our honesty with ourselves. You will forgive me for what I should have done but have not done. I will try harder still to supplement your efforts during the year which will soon begin to unroll. Meantime I can only wish you health and the joy that springs spontaneously from within.

P.S. I had the opportunity with great effort at last to take a day off at Rajgir on the Christmas Day. I could not content myself and fell imperceptibly into communion with you. Hence the infliction of this epilogue which I thought you might like to read at leisure if you have any.

Camp: Rajgir (Bihar)
December 25, 1956

DEAR COMRADE,

Christmas Day. Nineteen and half centuries of Christianity. Wars of conquest against man and nature. Space stands annihilated. Great victories. But man is bleeding.

I write this from Rajgir facing the hills all round and the wide green valley in between which was once the seat of the mighty Indian Empire. No trace today is left of the Emperor or those who lived under his protection in this great capital. Yet I have been watching with bewilderment the thousands and thousands of pilgrims hailing from all land, including our own, to pay homage to the great Master who lived in the seclusion of the Girdharakuta cave yonder, for a continuous period of 14 years. India provided the air, water and soil in which Buddha the Great son of India could receive enlightenment and share it with the rest of mankind. The Master is gone. His memory remains. All else that existed here has withered or been submerged under the debris of centuries. People hail from different lands—old and young, able and crippled—to have a dip in the warm spring in which the Master used to have his daily ablution and which has been flowing from before and ever after.

As I watch this never ending procession of men and women braving the perils and hardships of their journey from distant lands, my mind goes back to another great pilgrim Hieuen Tsiang of China who travelled to India across the impassable barriers of mountains and glaciers in the Fifth Century A. D., who taught and studied at the University of Nalanda, situated in the outskirts of Rajgir, only a portion of which has so far been unearthed from under the countless mounds that have developed all round since. I saw in the Museum the tools and implements made of iron and steel and the potteries used by people of those days thousands of years ago, and was amazed to see how time stood still for us during the intervening ages. Nay, how time went back and we were left even behind of what we possessed then. Twelve thousand students in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries are said to have been attending at Nalanda. They had a thousand or more Professors who lived as part of them, shared their hopes and fears, their joys and tears. I compare those days with the mercenary time in which we live today and I grieve over the fact that the disciples of the Great Master have to travel across these barriers of distance to content themselves only with the debris of the past.

At Nalanda there stand the remains of layer after layer of temples and monastries. A watchman, a simple rustic, explained that things in those days were destroyed through wars and, therefore, these monastries and temples had to be built afresh in every age. I remarked jokingly that the people in those days must have been very savage indeed to have acted so. He replied with an innocent smile, "Sir, the wars have not ended even today. We have had so many in this generation itself." These village-folks—they do not of course know Geography, History or Archaeology which we study and feel so proud about. They have, however, an innate sense of fundamental values. They rarely err in their appraisal of life. In fact I have never come across a villager anywhere in India who really can err in matters of fundamentals.

As I write this to you on the Christmas Day with the hills and the valleys ahead, I wonder what really we are about. Man did know at one time the art of living. How else could we explain the great work of art and life that flourished all over this sub-continent which we see engraved in immortal stones surviving all this wreckage of time ? How did we manage to lose this art of life and get ourselves so out of tune with life's symphony ?

As I pour over these disconcerting thoughts concerning our complete collapse from all that counts in life through this long sweep of history, I begin to feel that the greatness of which we were proud once, drew its nourishment from the living philosophy which transformed every man, woman and child living in this land into a living creator, a living god in action. Perhaps that alone accounts for the three hundred and thirty million gods that the Hindus feel so proud of. But religion petrified in the course of time in a ritual ! Places of pilgrimage grew to be hideouts for our filthy interior. The crystal water of the Ganga began to be treated as a cleanser of the pick-pockets in us all. The professional Pandas and priests added further to the hypnotic spell. Gautama Buddha, Mahavira, Nanak, Chaitanya, Kabir and the Gandhi of our generation grew to be mere words in picture.

The Great Master lived, and is gone. Yet he lives for ever and provides stimuli to life for millions in every generation. Two thousand five hundred years that have elapsed in between have only added to the effectiveness of what he lived for, and what he radiated while he was living a mere mortal. A Gram Sevak or a Block Development Officer, a Sub-Divisional Officer or a Collector, a Development Commissioner or a Minister, all are but fragments of the infinity which manifests itself in us and has been ever manifest since life began. How do we inject into ourselves this realisation that "something for nothing" is a myth and "nothing for something" is equally so, that in the balance sheet of time there can be neither profit nor loss and life is an eternal struggle for balance, that when we try to get "something for nothing" that something can come but out of our own vitals. There can be profit so called, in man made commerce. There is no room for it in this great scheme of things, we call life which is flowing like the Ganga—never ending but eternally moving. How can we tell our workers that if they are men themselves they will radiate manhood around even without trying for it, that manhood can thrive only as a spontaneous process, that since no real man can ever be at war with another of his kind the principle of "Let Live" follows as a logical course, that Community Development is but a process of "Live and Let Live" for man, if only the worker understood it.

We come back inevitably to our pet thesis "Destination Man" as the means also an end of all our strivings. In this great movement that we have unwittingly unleashed, rules and regulations, roads and bridges, green fields and warehouses are all intended to sub-serve man. Man was not built to sub-serve the means to the end which is himself. Let me close now. Whether you are a Hindu, a Muslim, a Parsi, a Sikh or a Christian, I wish you a merry Christmas, because on this day was born in some part of this great world of ours another particle of life to remind us of our great heritage. May you share the joy of being born a man and to live and struggle so!

INDEX I

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