

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

"FOR HARIJANS ONLY"

Shri B. Jagannadhadas, the well-known *sevak* of Harijans in Madras, and now Judge of the Cuttuck High Court, writes:

"One of the important subjects considerably discussed at the last meeting of the Central Harijan Sevak Sangh held at Kengeri (Bangalore) was whether the hostels run by the Harijan Sevak Sangh should any longer be confined to Harijans alone or that there should be a substantial admixture of backward caste-Hindus therein say, to the extent of about 25%. Ultimately the subject was adjourned for further consideration at the next meeting of the Sangh.

"The proposition is the outcome of a growing feeling that the special facilities which are now rightly being afforded to Harijans by Governments and private organizations in the political, educational and economic fields in order to ameliorate their condition and to remove untouchability, have been now developing communal-mindedness, that is, a desire that they should continue to remain a distinct and exclusive section of the nation interested in preserving and perpetuating the special facilities provided for them at present. The custom, which was once regarded as a disability and impediment in their progress and an insult to their manhood, and so a curse, is now considered to be an advantage. This it is said, defeats the purpose of full assimilation of Harijans in the Hindu society for which Mahatma Gandhi and the Harijan Sevak Sangh have been working all these years, and may lead in course of time to serious complications. The solution suggested is the admixture of Harijans and caste-Hindus in all fields of ameliorative activity. It was also said that since untouchability as such has been legally abolished by the Temple-entry and Civil Disabilities Removal Acts, the problem of the Harijan now stands on no higher footing than that of the problem of other economically backward classes.

"The opposite view put forth was that the educational and economic facilities afforded to the Harijans are still very small compared to the crying need of their situation, and that even a limited admission of caste-Hindu students within the hostels would substantially reduce the facilities and produce serious discontent in them. Rather, it was maintained, if the Governments or Harijan Sevak Sanghs and private organizations found additional facilities they should be made available

only to the Harijans, having regard to the inadequacy of the same at present and the unlikelihood of Governments or private organizations finding sufficient funds in the near future to meet the demands of both Harijans and backward caste-Hindus in this respect.

"The tendency, if any, on the part of Harijans to develop an exclusiveness, was, it was said, merely the reaction to the superiority-complex of the caste-Hindus and was the inevitable outcome of the growth of the self-respect of the Harijans. The only remedy for it is the eradication of that mentality on the part of the caste-Hindus.

"Undoubtedly, the facilities at present afforded to the Harijans are extremely inadequate compared to the magnitude of their needs and that not only nothing should be done to curtail such facilities or to interfere with the scope for their expansion but every effort should be made for rapid expansion of the same. A heavy duty lies in this respect on the various Governments, the Harijan Sevak Sanghs and other private organizations, to ensure such rapid expansion and to allay any apprehension that the policy of admixture will interfere with such legitimate expansion. But it must at the same time be recognized that the idea of admixture of Harijan students and caste-Hindu students in hostels and schools and other places is a step in the right direction. It must be remembered that the Harijan uplift movement is intended to weld the Harijan and non-Harijan sections into a homogeneous society by removing untouchability and other injustices. The programme of affording educational and economic facilities for Harijans has been adumbrated as a step in the direction of removal of untouchability and not for perpetuating the exclusiveness. Hostels confined to exclusive sects or castes which have a tendency to perpetuate the distinctions should be transformed as far as possible into mixed hostels in the larger national interests. This is what the Orissa Government already appears to have done.

"There is a good deal of force in the view that the growing tendency, if any, of the awakened Harijan to consider himself as of a separate privileged community is the result of the sense of self-respect which he has developed as a result of his education and that the remedy for it is largely with the caste-Hindu who must eradicate the superiority-consciousness from his mind. Nevertheless, the duty in this respect is not one-sided but mutual. If the educated Harijans allow themselves to react to the sense of

self-respect to the extent of feeling distinct from Hindu society and claiming vested interests, the eradication of caste-mindedness becomes a difficult process. For instance, one of the unhealthy reactions that has been of late noticeable is the tendency to claim institutions and funds, founded by caste-Hindus, rendering service to Harijans in a spirit of penitence, as in a sense belonging to Harijans in which they must have the predominant if not the sole voice. It is not realized that the work of Harijan amelioration through these institutions is one to be largely done by and the burden of which is to be almost entirely borne by, the caste-Hindus. It is only by active participation in such work by the caste-Hindus in large numbers that the caste-Hindu mind will get revolutionized. Hence it is up to the educated Harijans to check this growing tendency to claim Harijan institutions and funds as their vested property. Perhaps under normal circumstances, these tendencies might not have attracted much attention, but in the present political context the nationalist mind has become circumspect about new separatist tendencies having regard to the bitter experiences of the Hindu-Muslim problem.

"While, therefore, the commencement must be made by the so-called upper and more enlightened section of every caste to eradicate rapidly from their mind the age-long caste-complex, it is equally the duty of the Harijans not to give room for the impression that the privileges and facilities afforded to Harijans are only helping to disrupt the Hindu society and sowing the seeds for another national crisis in the fulness of time.

"It is, of course, important to remember that while untouchability may have been removed by legislation, the problem of untouchability still persists in society to a large extent. It would not at all be right to imagine that the problem of the Harijan is hereafter only the problem of one amongst the many backward classes. Legal impediments having now been removed, the rapid educational and economic amelioration of the Harijans is the only sure means of removing untouchability. The tendency if any that this process may create for separatism must be tackled and counteracted only by measures which will draw out and strengthen the innate Hindu culture in the Harijan mind.

"It is the slow pace of the programme of amelioration that gives scope for any inevitable separatist tendencies to harden. The need of the hour in relation to this problem is this. Just as in the political field a ten year period has been envisaged as the period of continuance of electoral privileges for Harijans, a ten year period must also be envisaged as the period for affording special facilities for Harijans. A ten year programme should be immediately put into effective operation whereby the Harijan community will be transformed within this period into a socially, economically and educationally progressive community, not requiring to be considered or treated as a backward commu-

nity, any longer at the end of the period and not requiring any special facilities or privileges."

I endorse generally the views of Shri Jagannadhas. My view of caste-mindedness is that accurately speaking, the attribution of superiority complex to caste Hindus only is a half truth. The caste-complex permeates all sections of the Hindu society and has not left even the non-Hindu societies. And it is not only a superiority complex always. Caste distinctions based on equality-complex are as mutually exclusive as those based on superiority or inferiority complex. There are castes both among the so-called caste Hindus and out-caste Hindus, who would not inter-dine or mix with one another because none is lower than the other or each regards itself as superior to the other. The nomenclature 'caste Hindus', as opposed to 'non-caste Hindus' is really a misnomer. There is no 'non-caste Hindu' in the whole of orthodox India, be he non-Harijan, Harijan, Adivasi or another. And if we go further and take the term Hindu in its very correct sense of an inhabitant on this side of the Indus, then followers of Islam and Christianity are also 'caste-Hindus'. What is essential to be removed is the caste-complex, and it has to be removed from all sections of the Indian nation, including Adivasis, Harijans, Muslims, Christians and Parsis.

Having regard to the past history of the movement, perhaps the suggestion of allowing a ten year period is an inevitable necessity. My view is that the movement for removal of social disabilities and inequalities of Harijans, should hereafter be made independent of their economic, educational and political emancipation. In the latter field of service should have been included all people below a particular standard of life, whether Harijans, Adivasis, Backward 'caste-Hindus' like Bhils, Baraiyas, Patanwadias, Thakardas, Halpatis etc., and also Muslims and Christians of the same economic and educational status. The creation of separate institutions for serving a particular backward community should not any longer be continued, at any rate emphasized, and if possible, all such institutions should be broadened to allow inclusion of members of other communities in their sphere of service. I request the attention of the organizers of various Particular-Community Seva Sanghs to this suggestion.

Wardha, 20-6-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Reminder

A correspondent desires to remind the readers that this is the season for doing a little bit of gardening for growing vegetables and edible leaves. He says that although he commenced this only last year in a dry village of Jaipur out of mere earnestness to follow Gandhiji's advice, he has highly benefitted thereby, having been able to get vegetables for 4 days in a week.

28-7-'48

K. G. M.

LEST WE FORGET

VIII
THE DRINK EVIL
(a)

The use of intoxicants like wine and the rest not only leads to mental and physical decay, but also deadens the moral instincts and destroys all power of self-control.

(b)

Drugs and drink are the two arms of the devil.

(c)

I hold drinking spirituous liquors in India to be more criminal than the petty thefts which I see starving men and women committing and for which they are prosecuted and punished. I do tolerate, very unwillingly it is true and helplessly because of want of full realization of the law of love, a moderate system of penal code. And so long as I do I must advocate the summary punishment of those who manufacture the fiery liquid and those even who will persist in drinking it notwithstanding repeated warnings. I do not hesitate forcibly to prevent my children from rushing into fire or deep waters. Rushing to red water is far more dangerous than rushing to raging furnace or flooded stream. The latter destroys only the body, the former destroys both body and soul.

(d)

You will not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion and that those who wish to drink must have facilities provided for them. The State does not cater for the vices of its people. We do not regulate and license houses of ill-fame. We do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge in their propensity for thieving. I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both?

(e)

In a climate like ours there is no need for drinks whatsoever. Nothing but ruin stares a nation in the face that is a prey to the drink habit... The great community to which Shri Krishna belonged was ruined by that habit. The monstrous evil was one of the contributing factors in the fall of Rome. If therefore you will live decently, you will shut this evil whilst there is yet time.

(f)

There is no halfway house between drunkenness and prohibition. Well-to-do men may pretend to be moderate. But there is no such thing as moderation possible among labourers.

(g)

If I was appointed dictator for one hour for all India, the first thing I would do would be to close without compensation all the liquor shops, destroy all the toddy palms, such as I know in Gujarat, and compel factory owners to produce human conditions for their workers and open refreshment and recreation rooms where these workmen would get innocent drinks and equally innocent amusements.

BAPU

We had fallen on evil days. We were groping in the dark. We were a struggling nation. Bapu appeared on the horizon. He brought light and warmth to us. His ideal was fixed; we thought it was a far off land. He discovered means to lead us to that end. We doubted their efficacy. Bapu thought that free and unfettered soul is a prerequisite for the march on to his goal. Thought and action were one to him. We were ruthlessly exploited by the foreigners. He waged war against the machinery of exploitation. He loved the foreigner. He hated his exploitation. We did not understand him. He used his weapons. We thought they were blunt. To our surprise we found that they were sharper than our known instruments. "Wonderful" we shouted. "Bapu give us, give us, the weapons. We will fight the foreigners," we implored. "Here they are," said Bapu with a smile.

We were a struggling nation. We were groping in the dark. Bapu brought us light and warmth. He gave us weapons. He taught us to fight. He was at the front, we were at his back. He wielded the weapons. We imitated him. He was our leader. He was our ideal. We installed him in our hearts. We danced with joy. Bapu was a magician. He transformed the struggling nation into a fighting nation. Fifteenth August dawned. The foreigner was gone. That was a pleasant shock. We realized our dream. Our fight reached its end. We were free. Are we free? We joined hands in gratitude to Bapu. In one voice we shouted *Mahatma Gandhiki Jai*.

Bapu looked behind. We were his followers. He was our leader. We looked at his face. We were painfully surprised. That was a shock to us. He was pale. He was trembling. His rejuvenating smile had vanished. Slowly and steadily he said, "This is not our destination, brothers." It is *there*. This is a halting place. *This is a means to that end.*"

"No no, Bapu, this is our destination. Our dreams are realized. Our fight has come to an end," we said.

"Then brothers," he said, "I must march on. I came alone, I remained alone, I shall go alone."

We were a struggling nation. We were groping in the dark. Bapu brought us light and warmth. He transformed us into a fighting nation. He gave us the weapons. He taught us to fight. He was our leader. We were his followers. We installed him in our hearts. He is marching. He is alone; we are halting. Alas! what ingratitude!

He is standing there. He is waiting for us to follow. Oh, how sweet! how sweet! how kind! how tolerant!

D. B. TANKSALI

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By Nirmal Kumar Bose

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REFORMATION OF THE CONGRESS

It has been suggested by some old workers and leading Congressmen that in order to purify the Congress organization as well as Government administration our top leaders like Shri Rajagopalachari, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Azad and others should get out of offices and substitute in their place able and efficient but not equally important Congressmen, whom they should guide and control from outside in the same way as they did during the 1937 regime.

I think this is possible only if we change the fundamental conception of our system of Government. Under the present system, as we know, the Executive is a Party Government empowered to initiate policies and, though technically responsible to the legislature, for all practical purposes, capable of controlling at least its own party in the legislature. If, however, the above suggestion is to be put into effect, it would be necessary to substitute in its place a system of nominated Executive Ministers with little power of initiation and with no obligation to resign on defeat of a step initiated by them, but bound simply to carry out the policy dictated by the legislature. I understand that the Constitution of Switzerland is something of this kind. Unless the Constituent Assembly re-opens all its deliberations, this is now a closed subject. But even if we make such constitutional changes as would enable us to do as above, it should be remembered that it would not any longer be possible for the members of the High Command to control the ministers' without themselves becoming members of their legislative assemblies. It would have to be something like this: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel would have to be Leader and Deputy Leader respectively of the Central legislature and place some other able Congressmen in the ministries acting on their command (and not merely advice), both in theory and in practice. The Government would run in the name of the Governor-General who will act on the advice of his Cabinet who will be selected and directed at every step by the Leader of the majority party and his Working Committee!

I believe that, besides making a puzzling situation, this would not improve the present state of affairs in the least. The change in the situation brought about by the attainment of Dominion Status needs that both in theory and practice Government must vest in the actual popular High Command of the country. However efficient the ministers may be, if both the theory and actual position are that their Cabinet is controlled by somebody who is technically either under it or altogether outside it, they would not carry that authority and weight which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or Sardar Vallabhbhai

bhai Patel or other ministers have today in foreign and internal affairs. And there would always be a possibility of high placed persons of not too high principles to get out of the control of the so-called High Command. I, therefore, think that whatever solution has to be found, it must be through the retention of the actual leaders of the country in office.

And so we must consider how the Congress can reform itself with this end. I have already indicated the preliminary steps for the purification of the organization and the administration in my previous articles. That done, the Congress should divest itself of allegiance to any theoretical ideology like capitalism, socialism, Gandhi-ism, communism, etc., as also to all practised ideologies such as of communalism, provincialism, culturism, nepotism, opportunism, etc. Instead of the first named *isms*, it should gather together the courage of saying to the public that having regard to the various problems actually before it, it is unable to swear by any particular ideology. It would say that if the tenets of every one of these ideologies were to be listed, it would be found that no two present Congressmen accepted every item of any list or put the same emphasis on any particular item of them. If they were to accept only the greatest common measure, it would become negligible. All that can be said is that there is a general leaning of all towards a few broad principles, (which should be set down). It may indicate the goal which it tends towards, but say that when they came to practical application, it became difficult to satisfy every one. So the reformed Congress should divest itself of theoretical acceptance of any particular ideology. Even if there was the risk of its being considered as simply carrying on a policy of drift, it should say that it would examine every problem before it with an open mind and in the light of circumstances which it had actually to face and would try to come to a decision which it felt to be the only possible step under the circumstances. Not that such solutions would have no long term objectives but, may be, the approach towards long term objectives was not so rapid as would satisfy the protagonists of particular ideologies. The Congress should seek satisfaction of showing that no party could do better than it for implementing a policy, without serious disturbances in the life and peace of the people.

With regard to the second set of ideologies, I should think that if a special ideology for the Congress were needed, it should be the *ism* of the negation of communalism, provincialism, culturism, nepotism, opportunism, etc. It is indeed more important than the former. Equal regard for every Indian irrespective of caste, creed, race, language, sect, original habitation etc., honest and frank dealing, utmost care to purify the administration and to organize it in a way so as to be most convenient to the people, absence of all favouritism and similar characteristic features of model character

should be the watchword or the only aim, ideal and method of the Congress. If this is honestly effected and every effort is made to reach this goal, even if the Congress had only a handful of members on its roll, it would retain its popularity and usefulness as well as it had in the past.

Ordinary people, howsoever politically awakened they might appear to be, are after all never staunch followers of any particular *ism*. They hardly understand more about it than what the slogans, which are but generalized half-truths, vaguely convey to them. We know how the Muslim masses were un-understandingly carried away by the slogan of Pakistan and a separate homeland for Indian Muslims to the great loss both of the Muslims as well as other Indians. We are not out of the wood yet. If any service has to be rendered to the people, it has to make them sceptic about the value of such slogans and the Congress would do well to not put forth a slogan of its own, but rather try its best to wean away people from credulousness towards them.

Thus the Congress might be an organization of parliamentarians, and associates and workers outside statutory bodies, all pledged to serve the nation with self-sacrifice and uprightness through parliamentary activities and performance of responsible public duties, officially or otherwise, with a view to bring the blessings of honesty, justice and other elements of high character to the people. If a pledge is necessary, a pledge indicated on lines mentioned above might be adopted.

Necessarily, membership of such a Congress would not be open to any one who chose to sign a form and pay the subscription. It would be a limited body, with stiff conditions attached to admission, so as to ensure high principles, character, ability and a record of voluntary service. It would be wide enough to allow men from every walk of life and with elementary school training to take part in it if they fulfil the test. And it would be strict enough not to be influenced by mere wealth or learning or cunning in granting admissions.

Whether in office or outside, it would study and initiate study, investigation and research of various national, international, urban and rural problems concerning every department of life. It would neither identify itself with nor reject the help and study of particular schools of thought.

Such Congress would not represent itself as Gandhian to the public, and non-Gandhian *inter se*. Its attitude towards the constructive institutions like the A. I. S. A., A. I. V. I. A., etc., would be the same as that towards any other institution unconnected with Gandhiji or old Congress. It would seek to serve the people through parliamentary activities and to reach them (while in office) through explaining to them the Government policies and seeing to their application in such manner as would benefit the general public. If uprightness, impartiality, civility and model life became the distinguishing features of a Congressman, the Congress would always be wanted.

Wardha, 24-7-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

AMENDS

With reference to my article on "*Unclean Means*", my attention has been drawn to two errors of fact made therein. The circular, of which a great part was reproduced by me, I am informed, was not issued by the Bihar Government, or an authorized body, but by a so-called "Joint Committee of Officials and Non-officials". Shri Krishna Ballabh Sahay, the Revenue Minister of Bihar, writes to me saying that according to the information, of the Government, no such body as a matter of fact exists.

Secondly, the resolution of the Manbhum District Congress Committee referred to by me was not passed but rejected by that body by 55 to 43 votes. As a result of this 38 members of the D. C. C. including the President and the Secretary resigned.

Since that article was written, my attention has also been drawn to the kind of methods employed by the propagonists of the pro-Bengal agitation both in Manbhum and West Bengal. If the reports are correct, and I see no reason to disbelieve them, the agitation is inflammatory in character and incites the people to violence. If the circular, which I was responsible for giving publicity to, is a hoax, I have been grossly deceived by the Bengali friends who sent it to me. As the friend from whom I received it is incapable of practising fraud upon me, I am afraid, that he too was deceived in the matter by those who supplied him with it and led into hasty steps. No wonder that my article has been made a convenient tool by the pro-Bengal propagonists. But thereby they have, instead of rendering service, done disservice to their own cause. For, if I am capable of criticizing strongly, I am also capable of apologizing freely and doing everything to make amends without reservation.

After the above was written, I received a full letter from Shri Badrinath Varma, Minister for Education, Bihar, dealing with the subject complained of and clearly speaking what the policy of the Bihar Government is on the question of languages in these areas. I reproduce elsewhere almost the whole of the said letter omitting only such portions as are not quite necessary to clarify the Government side. The policy, if fully implemented appears to be good, but if anything more is to be done, better ways than the kind of propaganda which is being carried on could be employed for further improvement.

Let me repeat, that whichever side uses unclean means, even if it succeeds in achieving its object, it will not succeed in bringing happiness to the people of Manbhum or establishing good relations between the people of the two provinces. They will simply sow seeds of discord and strife. The matter does not appear to me such as could not be settled in a clean and peaceful manner.

New Delhi, 30-7-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS

I am glad to share with the reader the following views of Dr. Kailasnath Katju on the duties of constructive workers and those who believe in Gandhiji's constructive programme. They are culled from one of his letters:

"Organizers and workers should make a solemn resolve that they shall *never* look up to or ask for Government help for the prosecution of their activities and that they shall solely rely upon their own efforts, their own funds or such funds as they may be able to collect from others interested in this enterprise. The wider the circle of financial supporters, beginning with the cultivator with his As. 8 or Rs. 1, the better for the success of the work. I attach the very greatest importance to this particular feature, because naturally office and office-holders become centres of all power, political and otherwise. Office means patronage, means finance, and there is the greatest danger of our workers of the constructive programme opening centres and then rushing to ministers for grants. The moment that is done, I register a mental note of my own that the particular enterprise is not likely to succeed. Over and over again I have seen honoured friends and other co-workers wasting their time in securing financial support from Government and then comes the irritation when that support is either given grudgingly or inadequately or is made subject to necessary official restrictions. Not only this, the moment you get or depend upon official financial support it seems to me that that particular enterprise loses a great deal in its moral appeal and does not carry that moral influence which it should. I am not against accepting official financial support, but I am decisively of the opinion that the mainstay of such an enterprise should be the widest possible non-official support. If that support comes from the masses of our cultivators, so much the better. Official support should come unsought, unprayed for. It should be really the minister who should beg you to accept the grant and not the organizers rushing to the Secretariat at Lucknow or Naini Tal begging in the minister's office or at his house. That makes all the difference in the world. If the Government are serious about the furtherance of the constructive programme, then it is up to them to promote it in the manner they may like best. I have my own views upon it. I do not know how, but in some way or other Gandhiji has made this programme almost unworkable through official agency. It is not only a programme for the development of cottage industries, it is really a programme for the upliftment of the individual himself and that upliftment can only come when the individual or the group concerned make a voluntary effort and are not goaded on through a soulless official agency. But Government of course are responsible for the proper expenditure of public funds and they may adopt such measures as they think fit. But somehow or

other the impression left on my mind is that all these Special Training Centres just go half the way and do not serve the purpose completely. The ideal course would be for hundreds of selfless workers of unquestioned and unquestionable integrity to combine together and spread out into the villages doing this work and the Government giving them grants in lump sums for encouragement in their work, such grants being only a fraction of the funds that may be necessary for their purposes.

"Another aspect which has struck me more and more forcibly as time passes by is that of personal example, particularly in this field of constructive endeavour. I think that Gandhiji was able to carry his message of the spinning wheel to every hamlet in India not only because of his wonderful personality but also because he span himself daily without fail. I now see with great regret that there is not much real faith in the efficacy of the spinning wheel. If such faith existed, one might see it working in practice. I do not know how many of our ministers in the Central and the Provincial Governments of India ply the wheel every day. I know the tremendous burden of responsibilities which rests upon their shoulders, but nevertheless I suggest that to carry the message of the spinning wheel to the masses of India it seems necessary that our biggest men and our ministers should reinforce it by practical application thereof in their own lives. Mere preaching unfortunately these days does not carry us very far. Gandhiji insisted upon manual labour, upon doing oneself what we ask others to do. My remarks are not merely limited to ministers and persons occupying high office; they are equally applicable to all our leaders, whether they are in office or out of office. I think personally that it should be almost a sacred duty of every Congress worker, be he a leader or a follower, if he really believes in the constructive programme, to set personal example in this respect. He must spin himself daily and let it be widely known that he does so. If he were to do so in congregation every day, so much the better. If he wishes to encourage cottage industries, he must set an example of using the products of those cottage industries in his own home just as Gandhiji used to do it as long as he lived. The Constructive programme is not only an economic programme; it is a comprehensive programme for the elevation of the individual in a variety of ways, the economic advancement being only one of the side advantages, if I may say so, flowing from the programme itself. And the moment you divorce the moral side from the economic side and concentrate on the economic side alone, it seems to me that in these days, when there are so many other ideologies confusing the public mind, you are likely to fail.

"Gandhiji wanted the Congress in the old sense of the word to be dissolved. So far as politics were concerned, he thought that the Congress register covered the entire population. He wanted to leave politics alone, I imagine, to the politicians, to

Parliamentary parties and to ministries. The constructive programme he left to a band of soldiers in this field. But political power attracts. It attracts still more in an authority-ridden country like India. There is a sort of a halo or a glamour round the man who possesses political power. I think Gandhiji, when he thought of his selfless workers, also thought of their acquiring influence in the present set-up by the austerity of their life, by the moral integrity of their character and by the intensely unselfishness of their devotion and unconnected with any association with or support of those who possess and wield political power. If these devoted workers work silently on their own without depending in any way on official support or patronage, then I am sure by the purity of their life and by the loftiness of their character and endeavour they will succeed.

"I imagine I have said nothing very original, but it is sometimes the obvious which we ignore. I am only anxious that the aspect which I have emphasized should be carefully borne in mind.

"Nowadays, when the dark night of adversity has yielded place to the sunshine of political power, all Congressmen naturally want to enjoy it and also to serve the public through the beneficent use of such power. I am deeply anxious that those who come forward to tread this path of selfless service may achieve success which they so richly deserve. I should love these workers to take in hand the organization of multiple co-operative societies for the development of *khadi* and other cottage industries. That will bring them into the closest contact with the villager and they can render inestimable service to him, because a well organized co-operative society of this kind requires careful and efficient handling."

Since the Constructive Workers' Conference at Sevagram, there have been similar Conferences in various provinces. I ask the reader's pardon for reproducing the following from a letter written to the organizers of one of such Conferences, some days ago :

"These Provincial Conferences are necessary but I should like to warn the workers against falling into one or two errors: One is, that we are likely to feel that the "successful" holding of conferences is by itself a part of service, and are liable to draw up a programme of one conference after another, such as District, Taluka, etc.; another is to regard that the passing of carefully worded resolutions along with speeches in support of them is execution of the programme; a third one is to look to Government or non-official all-India institutions for material support and lead in every matter.

"Government—Central or Provincial—as well as non-official all-India institutions do have their place and spheres of duty. But if the workers relied too much on them, all organizations might collapse if these bodies did not function fully, and the people would never attain that *Swaraj*, which will ensure *Sarvodaya*.

"I therefore request the workers to carry the people with them, and to make the people work for the fulfilment of the Constructive Programme on

their own initiative. The various targets in the programme should be fixed in terms of possible popular effort, whether Government or non-official central institutions could give them aid or no."

Wardha, 8-7-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

POLICY OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN BIHAR

My attention has been drawn to an article appearing in a recent issue of the *Harijan* under the heading "*Unclean Means*" and its Hindi version in the *Harijansewak* of the 11th July 1948. The subject-matter of the article has been a great surprise to me. That the article should have emanated from you is still more surprising and, I should say, painful. I should have expected that in a matter like the one which forms the subject-matter of the article and in which serious imputations are made against a Provincial Government some attempt at least should have been made to ascertain the truth of the allegations. I need not point out to you that a great mischief has been done, unwittingly of course. We would not have minded if the article had appeared in any other paper and I believe the mischief would not have been as great. But what is written in the *Harijan* and what emanates from your pen are unhesitatingly given credence to by the ordinary public and accepted almost as gospel truth by a large section of the people. I do not know how the impression created by the article in question can be counteracted. I am writing this letter to explain to you the exact position, but I must at the outset tell you that no circular of the type which forms the subject-matter of your comment has been issued by the Bihar Government nor any of their officers are associated with any activity which can even remotely be described as "*unclean*". A section of our Bengali brethren are, however, bent upon discrediting the Bihar Government and its officers in their zeal for getting certain portions of this province amalgamated with Western Bengal and no method is considered too low to achieve the object in view. The circulation of the imaginary circular is only an instance of the depths to which these friends can descend. It is very painful for me to say all this but that is about the truth and only a visit to the spot and careful scrutiny of the prevailing position by an impartial observer can reveal the full extent of the undesirable tactics that are being resorted to by our friends. I wish you had first-hand knowledge of the situation.

2. I need not, however, pursue this matter further and would content myself by giving you in brief the actual facts of the situation which are very simple. The Education Department of this province is very anxious to re-organize the educational system on national lines and inasmuch as basic education or *Nai Talim* has now been accepted to be the type of education that has to be introduced throughout the country, an attempt is being made here to assimilate the existing primary and middle schools also to the type as far as

practicable so that ultimately when an adequate number of basic education trained teachers are available these schools might be easily converted into the full basic type. Of course, full-fledged basic schools are being separately established also and as fast as our resources in men and money could allow. With a view to achieve the object in view the syllabus of the existing primary and middle schools has been completely remodelled and teaching of and practical training in arts and crafts of various kinds, particularly spinning, weaving, gardening etc. has been introduced. The medium of instruction is also being changed and it is to be as far as practicable the mother tongue of the child in the primary sections. There is, however, provision for the gradual change of the medium in the higher classes into Hindi as that has been accepted to be the State language of the province and is likely to be accepted as State language by the Central Government also and because that is to be the medium of instruction at the secondary stage and the University. This is to enable those whose mother tongue is not Hindi to take full advantage of the facilities for higher education and to enter the various services without difficulty. There is no truth at all in the statement that Bengali children are being forced to give up their language. On the other hand, in areas in which the Bengali population predominates the medium of instruction will be Bengali, as in regions where Hindi is the prevailing language Hindi will be the medium of instruction in the primary classes. Similarly, the tribal languages like Santali, Mundari, Ho, and Uraon will be the medium of instruction in the regions where these are the prevailing languages. This will go on up to the lower primary standard. In the upper primary stage a little of Hindi will be introduced but the medium for the children will continue to be as before. In the middle stage, however, the medium will be changed into Hindi for non-language subjects but the children will continue to read their mother tongue and this they will be allowed to do till as long as there is provision for the study of literature in the secondary and University stages. Therefore, there is no question of any body being forced to give up his own language. On the contrary, the present is an attempt to enable even those children who had not been receiving their primary education through their own tongue to do so. For instance the Santali, Mundari, Uraon and Ho children were so far being instructed through the medium of Hindi or Bengali. Now for the first time they will have the opportunity of getting their primary education through the medium of their own tongue. What is being attempted in Bihar is in consonance with what has been accepted by the Educational Conference attended by the Educational Officers of all provinces at Delhi and the Bihar Government are attempting nothing

more. What appears, however, to trouble our Bengali friends in Manbhum is that they do not want that the Santals and the Hindi-speaking children should get their education through the medium of their respective mother tongue. For reasons which I need not discuss here, Bengali had been imposed in the past upon all those who reside in Manbhum and our Bengali friends would like to perpetuate that state of affairs. Probably it is known to you that not less than 70 to 80 per cent of the population in Manbhum is either Hindi-speaking or speaks one or other of the tribal languages, mostly Santali. All these have so far been forced to read through the medium of Bengali from the earliest stages. Under the new syllabus they will be free to choose their own language as their medium of instruction in the primary classes as the Bengalis are and will be free to get their primary education through the medium of Bengali. Some of our Bengali friends, who are mostly settlers from outside, obviously do not like this change and that is why they have been trying to adopt all kinds of tactics to give this Government a bad name in the outside world. . . .

3. The Bihar Government has been trying to be as fair as possible to the non-Hindi speaking people. Probably you do not know that conscious of the fact that the teaching of Hindi to the non-Hindi speaking people may impose a little burden upon these people and may be interpreted as being unfair to them as compared to Hindi-speaking children, the Education Department is trying to arrange that so far as practicable just as non-Hindi speaking children are to learn Hindi so Hindi-speaking children of the predominantly non-Hindi speaking regions should also learn the regional language—Bengali, Santali etc. as the case may be. This will help also to establish cultural contact between the speakers of different languages and so to create among them understanding and goodwill.

5. I have tried to give above the bare facts. You will kindly excuse me for writing this long letter but I could not help doing so because facts had to be brought to your notice for a proper appreciation of the exact situation.

Ranchi, 23-7-'48

BADRI NATH VARMA

Minister for Education & Information

CONTENTS		PAGE
"FOR HARIJANS ONLY"	... K. G. MASHRUWALA	193
LEST WE FORGET—VIII	... M. K. GANDHI	195
BAPU	... D. B. TANKSALI	195
REFORMATION OF THE		
CONGRESS	... K. G. MASHRUWALA	196
AMENDS	... K. G. MASHRUWALA	197
CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS'		
ORGANIZATIONS	... K. G. MASHRUWALA	198
POLICY OF LANGUAGE		
EDUCATION IN BIHAR	... BADRI NATH VARMA	199
NOTE		
REMINDER	... K. G. M.	194