

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XII. No. 45

AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 1949

TWO ANNAS

## CORRUPTION GALORE

An organizer of a village industries store in Bihar writes to the following effect:

"Please show me the way out of the following difficulties:

"Through Gandhiji's efforts salt has become tax-free. But there is a licence fee of Rs. 20 for keeping a salt-store. But in order to pay the fee, one must pay Rs. 2 to the *darogah* and Re. 1 to the *chaprasi* of the Treasury Office. Then in order to present the application with a valid receipt, one has to pay Rs. 5 to 7 to the *sirastedar* (clerk). Formerly it was Rs. 2 to 4, but owing to dearness, the clerk has also doubled his fee! There is no practical way to avoid the payment. For one would have to attend the office for months and months, before the application is heard. The *sirastedar* has always too much work.

"Similar story can be told in respect of kerosene, cloth, sugar etc. Cloth of good quality is concealed, and only sold secretly at blackmarket price. Kerosene oil is sold at 10 to 12 annas (a bottle?) if the purchaser appears to be very needy. Salt is sold at 0-1-6, though its proper price is 0-0-6.

"I wanted to keep kerosene and salt in my shop under control rules. But I have not even the requisite amount to pay the licence fee, not to talk of the various *dasturs* (customary levies)."

The writer is from a small village in Champaran; but story of corruption is the same throughout India—not excluding New Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta. I remember how once in my early days of legal practice, I had an important application for execution of a decree delayed for months as the judge's clerk had not received his illegal due and the reference to the judge himself became useless. Ultimately I had to own defeat and satisfy the fellow, with tears in my eyes. Thereafter I had to leave all such matters to be settled by my clerk and my client and the officer concerned.

But what is the remedy? The writer suggests that there should be stricter espionage over petty officers. I consider that to be useless. The spies cannot be more honest than their brothers of another department. It is the people who have to deal with them and must make organized efforts to stop corruption. They must, in the first instance, themselves pledge not to give bribe, come what may, and employ volunteer pickets to induce people

going to public offices not to pay a single pie to any public servant, and to report to the volunteer what difficulties they might encounter. The Government can help by putting up boards in public offices asking the public not to pay *bakshis* to any officer. There might also be an information and complaints office just at the entrance where a responsible officer might be posted to guide the public about the particular person they should go to for their particular work, and to receive and immediately deal with complaints of any harassment experienced. Even this method may not succeed. For, ultimately the question is one of raising the moral character and sense of civic duty in the people, and no people can get a better administration than their moral character can command.

Bombay, 25-12-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## NOTES

### Relief

Every one must have experienced a sense of relief on hearing the announcement of cessation of hostilities in Kashmir. May the New Year, which has been so well ushered in, be the harbinger of a true and lasting peace among the people of Kashmir and both the Dominions.

Bombay, 2-1-'49

### Gandhi Fund Again

Referring to my article on this subject (*Harijan*, 12th December, '48), correspondents have written to me giving me their reasons for the meagre response of the public. My humble request to them is: If you are not one of those who have to collect funds from others, please do not mind why others do not pay, provided you have paid your quota. If you yourself have not paid, then it might be worth while your informing me or the organizers of the fund, why you do not wish to.

If for any reason you do not wish to pay through the accredited agent of your place, it is open for you to purchase coupons, or pay the amount directly into one of the authorized banks, or send directly to the Head Office of the Fund at 6, Jantar Mantar Road, New Delhi.

If you are one of the collectors and wish to point out the difficulties encountered by you, you should write to the President or Secretary of the Fund who are the proper persons to think of these matters.

Bombay, 25-12-'48

K. G. M.

## ADIM JATI SEVAK SANGH

### INTRODUCTION

The conveners of the Conference of the Social Workers and Anthropologists for Tribal People in India held on the 24th and 25th October, 1948, in Delhi, have issued a report of its proceedings. In the course of its *Introduction*, Shri Thakkar Bapa writes :

"The problem of doing welfare work of the Aborigines and Hill tribes in this country is comparatively a tough problem.

"They live a secluded life, away from towns and even villages, and numbers of them reside in detached huts either on hill tops or on hill slopes. The Bhils of Gujarat and Rajputana, though they have left their original practice of shifting cultivation, or cultivation by burning plots in forests and merely throwing seeds in the ashes, are still living in detached huts in their own fields, but not in clusters of even 10 to 12 huts in group. The Marias and Murias of the Gond Country in the C. P. rarely come down from their hill-tops and mix with the people of the plains, even once a week or on market days. The Juangs and Bhuiyas, Khutia Khonds and Lanjia Savaras residing in the highlands of Orissa yet live a very primitive life and are much more secluded than others of the tribes who have come down to live in the plains. But the Nagas and Lushais, not to speak of Garos and Mikirs of Assam live in their mountain regions by themselves and have very little contact with the Assamese people, with whom they are politically connected, nor has any one tribe social connection with the other because the various tribes of Assam speak different languages and have socially no connection with one another. Thus the problem of assimilating them with the large mass of the people of India is obviously a difficult one.

"Before the partition of August, 1947, the population of all the tribal people living in the plains and in the hills was estimated at 25 millions out of 389 millions in 1941. In 1931 it was enumerated at 22.4 millions. But while talking of numbers it should be noted that this vast number cannot all be said to be residents of hills or quite secluded. It has been roughly calculated that out of the 25 millions, 20 millions live in the plains and are assimilated with the rest of the people more or less, and only 5 millions or 50 lakhs may be taken as the population residing in hills and may be classed as wholly secluded. After the partition the 25 millions have been reduced to, roughly, 24 millions.

"After a few months work of famine relief among the Bhils of the Panch-Mahals District of Gujarat and after having personally seen the poverty, the low standard of living, and the not-care-for-the-morrow habits of Bhils, in the year 1921, I decided to organize welfare work among them. With a small band of young co-workers, pledged to serve the Bhils for not less than 20 years, the Bhil Seva Mandal began its work in 1922 in the two talukas or tahsils of Dahod and Jhalod extending over 600 sq. miles and in the Bhil population of Bhils and Patelias of about a lakh and a quarter. I continued to be the head of this institution till 1932 when

my services were transferred by the Servants of India Society for the work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The Mandal is being continued upto date by my co-workers, among whom I am glad to say that there are at present more Bhils as life workers than non-Bhils. Various similar organizations for the service of tribal people have since been started in the various Provinces and States, and they are working in their own fields according to their resources in men and money. It may be said that there are about 20 organizations of this kind at work in various areas, and a few of them are organized by tribals themselves. I am loosely connected with many of these, though from a distance. Mahatma Gandhi and the famous Birla family have been my chief guides and supporters in this cause.

"I was contemplating the formation of an All India Association to co-ordinate all such activities since 1940, but times were not propitious for the same. The long drawn fight of the Indian Nation with the British Government for Independence was a great disturbing cause. Now that the country is free from foreign domination and that we are forging our own Constitution for the future administration of the country, I thought it was high time seriously to take in hand such an important social problem. Taking courage in both hands I approached Dr. Rajendraprasad, the President of the National Congress, if he would accept the Presidentship of such an Association, if and when formed. He, after some hesitation, very kindly agreed and in the last week of October last a Conference of Social Workers and Anthropologists was called at Delhi. I am very glad to observe here that one of the dreams of my life is thus being fulfilled, at an advanced age, nearing 80 years. But it is always better to be late than never." At the commencement Shri A. V. Thakkar explained the object of the Conference emphasizing the necessity for starting an All India Organization for co-ordinating the work of various institutions and focussing the attention of the public and the Governments of Provinces and State Unions and of the Union of India to the problem of Aboriginal Tribes.

### PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

Dr. Rajendraprasad, in his Presidential speech, referred to the backward condition of the 2½ crores of aboriginals in the country who spent their lives in utter poverty, ignorance and wastefulness. It was, he added, their duty to help these countrymen of theirs and take them out of this rot. There was a vast difference between the association that they wanted to form and those which were generally formed these days. The latter type first organized a central organization and then went on to open their branches, while in the present case, he said, their branches had not only been formed but were functioning most satisfactorily in every part of the country for the last several years and were being run by most enthusiastic and sincere workers. They had simply to form the central organization so that each one of them could benefit from the experiences and difficulties of others. He was sure that their central organization would function most

effectively because it would have been founded on very sound foundations. Dr. Rajendraprasad referred to the invaluable work done by Thakkarbapa in various spheres of social work and added that their organization would have the whole-hearted support and co-operation of one whose zeal and energy even at that advanced stage in life made young men envious.

#### WORK AMONG ADIBASIS

Dr. Rajendraprasad pointed out that this social work among the Adibasis had been started by Indians only about 15 or 20 years ago, but foreign missionaries had taken it up much earlier and had carried it out with real missionary zeal even at the cost of several lives, and facing various handicaps. Theirs, he added, was a selfless service. The only interest that they had, was to bring them into the fold of their own religion. He warned and advised those gathered to see that their service of the aboriginals was a real selfless missionary service with the sole aim of seeing those poor brethren flourish into real citizens worthy of their great country. They should have no truck with any sort of politics in their work. Otherwise, he warned them, they would entangle themselves in all sorts of party politics which would lead them away from their cherished goal. They had an advantage over the missionaries who worked among these tribes in as much as that they would not have had to think of changing the tribesmen's religion. They had simply to educate those people like the Sadhus of old. The Sadhus, he told his audience, simply brought these dwellers of the jungles into their constant contact with the result that after some time most of them realized the truth about their self. The final result they know was that several of those very aboriginals were today Rajputs or other useful members of society.

Dr. Rajendraprasad agreed that they had been most negligent about these people of our society. Now, he concluded, it was their duty to see that these tribes got full confidence in their bona fides and considered them their friends. On his own part Dr. Rajendraprasad promised all the help that he could offer.

#### THE NEW ORGANIZATION

The conference resolved

"that an All India Organization be formed for the uplift of aboriginal and backward tribes of the Country. The organization will have its branches in all the different provinces and State Unions. A Subcommittee is appointed for drafting the Constitution for this organization, suggesting the names of the office bearers and placing before the Conference."

The Conference met on the second day, when the report and Draft Constitution prepared by the Committee were read out by Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta, clause by clause. After certain amendments, the Constitution was unanimously adopted.

The following are the important articles of the Constitution :

1. Name. The Society will be known by the name of the Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh (the Association for the Service of Primitive Tribes of India).
2. Headquarters. The office of the Sangh shall be located at Delhi.

3. Creed. The Society will be non-political and it will not engage itself in any proselytizing activities.

4. Object. The object of the Sangh will be to work for the social, economic, cultural and educational advancement of the Adim-Jati (Primitive and Aboriginal Tribes) in India with a view to enable them to take their legitimate place in the national life of the country as equal citizens.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An interim Executive Committee was appointed to work and bring into force the new Constitution before 31st October 1949. The following are the members of the Executive Committee with the office bearers.

#### President

Dr. Rajendraprasad.

#### Vice-Presidents

1. Shri A. V. Thakkar, Delhi.
2. Dr. B. S. Guha, Calcutta.

#### Secretaries

1. Shri Laxmidas M. Shrikant, (Gujarat).
2. Shri V. Raghaviah, Nellore, (Andhra).
3. ( To be selected later )

#### Treasurer

Shri Bhagirath Kanoria, Calcutta.

#### Members

1. Hon'ble Shri B. G. Kher, Bombay.
2. " H. N. Kunzru, U. P.
3. " Shri Omeo Kumar Das, Assam.
4. " Shri Rajkrishna Bose, Orissa.
5. Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta, Rajputana.
6. Shri V. N. Barve, Maharashtra.
7. Dr. Vasudeo Poduval, Travancore.
8. Shri Narayanji, Bihar.
9. Shri P. G. Vanikar, C. P.
10. ( To be nominated later )

The conference concluded its session on Monday, the 25th October at 6 p. m. after hearing the closing speech of the President, in which he expressed his appreciation of the work done by selfless workers in the tribal areas so far and added that, from what he had gathered from reports presented to the conference, he was convinced that it was not want of funds as much as lack of workers which was a great hurdle in the uplift of tribal people. He stressed the need of attracting and enlisting selfless and persevering workers to this important cause. The need of adequate training to such workers before they are sent out was also emphasized by Dr. Rajendraprasad.

About the collection of funds, Dr. Rajendraprasad said that they would try to convince the trustees of the Gandhi National Memorial Fund of the importance of this cause which was dear to Mahatma Gandhi and could consequently get a substantial sum set apart for the purpose. He added that various Governments and the public would also be willing to help if the workers by their zeal and perseverance proved that the cause was deserving.

Shri A. V. Thakkar thanked the President, and the guests and announced that he had received donations amounting to Rs. 10,300 for the newly formed organization.

# HARIJAN

January 9

1949

## THE EVIL OF CONTROLS

"I was very happy to note that you took up the problem of controls under the heading *Controls for Sarvodaya* and gave your comments and advice on the same.

"I still disagree with your views—that the problem is by no means absolutely simple and is very complicated—and it is absolutely necessary that none should feel dogmatic and certain of the correctness of his own views—that none can afford to feel disgusted with policies not in accordance with one's views. If you go through both of my articles you will find that I have not suggested any remedies in the hackneyed sense of the term for efficient control, but have only pleaded that the Government should refrain from meddling any further and should gradually bring back the country's economy to its natural position, so that people may gauge whether all these hardships are necessary. It is one thing to start setting aright things which have gone wrong but another to be doing something simply to confuse the already complicated.

"My views are that in India conditions for successful working of controls did not and do not exist. Nor can any foreign pattern be copied *in toto*. In England controls are successfully worked because there is a necessity for them in view of their indebtedness to various other countries. Even there, bread, for which they are solely dependent on foreign countries, was not controlled throughout the war and even when controlled, was given in such quantities that nobody was short of it, thus eliminating the origin of black market. India is an agricultural country growing 90/95 per cent of its requirements and the balance is being imported. If under rationing people were given sufficient quantity instead of what they are given now, there will not be any possibility for black markets nor need people worry about it. Take a worker's case: the daily statutory ration of 8 oz or 16 oz is absolutely insufficient for a poor man, whereas it is too much in the case of a middle or upper-middle class man. See again the cloth rationing: *Per capita* it is 11-1/2 yards. No civilized man can ever be expected to cover himself up with this yardage; that means, the Government is pushing him by the neck in the black market which he can resist only by preferring nakedness. The absurdity in such a *per capita* limitation is unparalleled and to add fuel to the fire, advertisements are daily appearing in the Press asking people to limit their requirements to this *per capita* distribution which represents wasteful expenditure of public money as nobody is likely to be affected by such advertisements. I wonder whether people who are responsible for drafting these advertisements are able to manage on this

*per capita* consumption. The fact is that even in pre-control days 90 per cent or even more of the population were semi-naked or naked. Let Industry & Supply Minister go to the villages and see actual cloth worn by these people and he will find that his *per capita* distribution is the feeder of black markets and has even demoralized the poorer classes.

"I believe that these controls are maintained and sought to be maintained to feed the demon of provincialism; ousting the business and trading community, which is not provincial. The various controls are utilized to give preferences in trade and commerce to inhabitants of the provinces, thereby eliminating organizations or persons who are in the line for generations together. These newcomers who are creations of control authorities are really responsible for black markets.

"I now come to some specific instances about the working of controls. As a matter of policy, food grains were decontrolled in January 1948, but interprovincial movements were on a Government basis. I enquired from local merchants whether the rice which they were selling was available in the province or it was coming from other provinces and I learnt that finer varieties of rice were not available in province x but they came in from other provinces, not as a result of interprovincial movements, but through back-door channels of private trade; that means, the Government machinery was not capable of mopping up surplus supplies and distributing it in time. Local officials hamper movements so that shortages can be created, maintained and illegal money obtained. Take the case of cement: The capacity of factories in India is not utilized to the full, but we are importing foreign cement and selling it at a much higher rate than locally manufactured cement. I have heard instances where cement permits have been refused to individuals, though they were prepared to make their own arrangements for lifting the same. In case where permits have been issued for cement, they are on far off producers, or the permit holders are asked to make their own arrangements for transport, though factories are situated very near to the place of consumption. Take again the distribution of iron and steel. If a man wants a small quantity of iron materials in a mofussil centre, he cannot get it directly from the producing centres, but from Provincial Centres like Nagpur, Bombay, Cawnpore, Madras. The effect of this is that transport is unnecessarily utilized. It is once taken to the Provincial capital and again brought back to the consuming centre. If there was free movement then materials can go directly to the consuming centre, and in the same wagon space one can bring something else in return.

"The mass of people are ignorantly afraid of rising prices immediately following decontrol. True, there will be some rise. But that is inevitable. It is not true that during controls, they got cheaper or that things were plentiful and on de-control the position is reversed. Even if controls were worked success-

fully not for one year but for a decade and then stopped, there will be some reaction. This reaction is as natural as that of a person who on attaining maturity and freedom from strict and orthodox parental control indulges in a manner unbecoming his freedom, but comes round as soon as he tastes the bitter fruits of that conduct. Higher prices on decontrol will not upset the Government or the public, because demand will fall off and prices will regain their natural level. The Government propaganda should be diverted to impress on the public to withhold their demand and the purchasing power of the millions, if withheld even for one month, will annihilate any daring blackmarketeer who will have the foolhardiness to indulge in this nefarious game immediately after decontrol. Decontrol should be thorough in essence as has been pointed out by me.

"As regards foodgrains, the Government should allow free movements between all provinces and open cheap grain shops from their imported quantities whenever they find that the prices are high or are rising and causing hardships to the public. The Government selling price should be their imported price plus cost of transport only and not inflated prices after additions of various administrative charges of their top-heavy administration.

"Gandhiji with his characteristic insight had seen the demoralizing effect of controls on the public services and the masses, and had therefore strongly taken the cause of decontrol; but unfortunately after his death, there is none among the top-ranking leaders who can see through this game of controls and put a stop to the colossal expenditure on the establishments of various controls. The public has to foot the bill through the exchequer for their maintenance and again pay higher prices on controlled articles because of their inefficiency and corruption. Controls have not achieved their twin objectives—equitable distribution and cheaper prices. On the contrary, controls have resulted in black marketing, corruption, high prices, manipulated shortages and deterioration of foodgrains and their consequent total loss and non-utilization of the full productive capacity of the country. It has often been argued that the Government have their own difficulties in routing out corruption and inefficiency from public services and there is no public co-operation also. If the Government cannot improve their services, and if the public are so demoralized, then how is the Government going to achieve a planned economy of 300 million people?

"I have mentioned only a few of the vagaries of controls, and I could convince you further if I could discuss the whole problem threadbare with you.

"As I have pointed out elsewhere, in India the basic factors for working controls efficiently are lacking. They are:

"1. Government personnel: Though leaders may be sincere, the same cannot be said of the

rank and file. Red-tapism, bureaucratic methods of handling, lack of practical knowledge of the articles controlled, inordinate delay and corruption—terms which have become synonymous with Government administration—will render controls as abominable as ever before.

"2. Controls cannot be worked in our country on standards of social justice, as there are very wide variations in consumption from province to province and even class to class. If all controls are worked on the basis of population, then India will be a land of permanent shortages and controls must continue eternally, or till such time production goes up—nobody knows when; as is evident from food, cloth and sugar distribution controls.

"3. Public co-operation: Controls, instead of ensuring fair supplies to all really needy, have demoralized the lower strata, who constitute 90 per cent of the population. Complete lack of fellow-feeling and civic sense have so lowered them that there is no hope of any active co-operation from them. If such a large percentage of the population indulges in blackmarketing, no controls can work efficiently.

"I think all controls including Exchange and Railway Priority should be scrapped lock, stock and barrel and thrown into the deep sea, never to be resuscitated. This will save the public exchequer crores of rupees, remove all loopholes of corruption and inflationary tendencies will disappear. There may be chaos for some time, but it will be of a self-liquidating nature, as you have pointed out. There should be a regular campaign before the public to cease all purchase except food grains for a couple of months and things will adjust themselves."

I have omitted the learned correspondent's name at his own request. As I stated in the article referred to I agree with much, if not with all, that he says. Apart from other factors, I attach the greatest importance to the effect our corporate actions produce on the character of the people; and I have no doubt that the controls are demoralizing the nation, including the officers. It is a greater evil than even hunger and nakedness.

But the question is similar to one that crops up in many a family. The story of the Pandawas is well known. Yudhishtira held that a Kshatriya king could not refuse an invitation to play with dice. None of his brothers thought so. But they could do nothing but obey Dharmaraja. The tragic consequences of that erroneous idea of honour made the history of the *Mahabharata*. Even so with us, the principal heads of our national family are honest, selfless, talented, indispensable, over-worked, surrounded by unexpected and immense difficulties. We trust them, we respect them, we love them, and we want them. But still they have their own limitations even as we ourselves have, and we have to take them as they are. All junior members might feel convinced that in respect of certain

matters their approach and views are, sadly wrong and harmful to the interests of the family. But until the seniors are converted to our views there is no way out. If their conversion does not come through our arguments, it has to come through hard experience and loss. Till then, we must co-operate with them and yet repeatedly press our views before them, or else politely but firmly ask them to retire and courageously take charge of the affairs into our own hands. Such situations arise in every family or firm in critical periods, and nations are but huge families.

Bombay, 24-12-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

### DELETION OF A REFERENCE

An aged correspondent has appointed himself my monitor and pulls me up every time if he finds in my writings a word or sentence to be inconsistent with dignified style. He has taken exception to the second of the following sentences in my article *Temple Entry* (*Harijan*, 14th November, '48):

"On the altar of communalism we sacrificed the greatest man of the modern age, who insisted upon the liquidation of communal hatred and passions by the power of truth and love. The other leader, who unfortunately interested himself in keeping the communal quarrel alive, has also come to the end of his life's journey."

He says that I need not have made that invidious comparison, obviously between Gandhiji and the Qaid-e-Azam. The remark would necessarily displease many an admirer of the Muslim leader, and be felt as having been made simply to indulge in a rhetorical attempt to show how much superior Gandhiji was to Mr. Jinnah. He was pained to see that the *Harijan* should go so low. Besides, the fact that the Qaid-e-Azam can no longer defend himself, even if he cared to, the reference was unnecessary for the development of the principal theme of the article, viz. *Harijan Temple Entry*.

I thank the correspondent, apologize and delete the reference to the Qaid-e-Azam.

Bombay, 23-12-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

### Distribution of Imported Food Grains

A correspondent suggests that all imported grains should be distributed along coast-lines, instead of being transported inland through railways. It will be cheaper, as water route is always cheaper than land route and will considerably relieve the railway system. It appears to be a helpful suggestion.

Bombay, 25-12-'48

K. G. M.

### KEY TO HEALTH

By M. K. Gandhi

Translated by Dr. Shushila Nayyar

Price Rs. 0-10-0

Postage etc. 0-2-0

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE  
Post. Box 105, AHMEDABAD

## GANDHI JAYANTI AT GANDHI GRAM

We have yet to learn how truly to pay tribute to the birth of a great man. If a man has been truly great, that is, of immortal stuff, then his birthday cannot be a mere holiday! It must be one of those concentrated work-days when we live for the Ages. May Gandhi Jayanti gradually rise to such heights!

Some one hundred staff and student members of Gandhi Gram started planning some days ahead this year for a fairly intensive programme in the villages during Gandhi Jayanti. We divided into seven groups: four to go to four village centres where we planned to do intensive work during the coming year, and three to develop special projects for all the centres: a village exhibition, an evening of drama, and a tree-planting project for the villages and for Gandhi Gram itself. For two weeks previous to Gandhi Jayanti these groups were at work planning for the Gandhi Jayanti programme. The village groups planned their village programmes, worked out their needs and prepared for intensive work. They visited the villages concerned and made plans for their coming. Fortunately we had already arranged a *panchayat* for that area so that we had the representatives of the people to work with.

### SUSPICIOUS VILLAGERS

Except in two villages where *gram sevikas* were working, our reception was not very cordial. We were suspected especially by the caste people. They sensed that there were Harijans in our midst. They had heard of our stand on untouchability. They felt we were going to force them into a similar position. That suspicion remained unto the end with many. In one village however the Harijans alone were represented and there we had very good response and very good co-operation. But in every village, within a few hours, several felt the sincerity of our workers and responded. And when the nine days were over and the groups had to return for the Gandhi Gram Anniversary programme which would climax the whole programme there was universal regret that newly-formed friends had to leave. I was especially impressed by one village where we wondered if hospitality would be available. Cowsheds were finally made available. Our trainees soon had them in order and were soon in happy fellowship with the villagers. I was surprised how soon the hearts of many were won. The process was slower in other villages but that depended upon personalities.

Before the groups went to the villages, they had their discipline and programme worked out. Thus, right from the beginning they started with morning prayers, sanitation work, morning meal, spinning, etc. Very soon the villagers joined in with morning and evening prayers: at least those who were present and not in the fields. In most places children and a little later the women joined in with the sanitation work. Very quickly children, then some youth and later even some of the older people wanted to learn spinning. And they did learn so that some twenty of them shared in the spinning contest at Gandhi Gram on our Anniversary Day. In each village spinning is continuing and we are making plans to put this beginning on a self-sufficient and stable basis. That perhaps is the greatest significance of those nine days in the village; it started for Gandhi Gram a substantial

bit of work that we must now carry on throughout the year.

#### THE VILLAGE PROGRAMME

Our Exhibition was largely a chart exhibition and that did not appeal greatly to people who were 95% illiterate. Another year we must do more with models that tell their own story. The Drama group had a better response. There were several scenes on the significance of a "casteless, classless society" in the village with special emphasis on a casteless village. Then the group had also worked a drama from *Les Miserables*. Perhaps here again we must come closer to the village life and experience. I was most interested in the Tree Planting Squad and project. Over 30 trees were planted: mango and cocoa-nut, both on common and private land. A tree planted and well-cared for is a gift to immortality! The groups naturally had much to do with the children. This occupied the time of several each morning. And the villages are all more deeply interested in schools. Simple medical work was carried on under the supervision of qualified medical help. Many sore eyes and much itch was eliminated during those few days. Naturally, adult education went on 18 hours each day. At the prayer meetings there were talks about the great leaders of India and what they stood for. There was an explanation of what Gandhi Gram stood for. Villagers learned more about the *Gita* and other scriptures. One day an agricultural fieldman came and told the men about more scientific manure pits. And as the ladies visited the homes, naturally much informal education went on as questions were poured forth from eager minds. Villagers learned something of the significance of the flag and nationhood—something of the etiquette of the flag. And on October 2nd all of this was brought together into one happy programme. Spinning went on throughout the day; the flag was raised at the time of the morning prayer; memorial trees were planted; there was a public meeting, and at one village the foundations for a Basic Education school were laid.

#### THE FOLLOW-UP

It is impossible to list all that was done during those full days. One group writes, "The villages gained practically nothing." That is a sound judgement. Again, "Our short stay will take us nowhere except that it would have given us some experience." That is the heart of the value of such days at least for a Training Institution. When students go to the villages, they should not be permitted to fool themselves that they accomplish much. They often do under favourable circumstances. But again as a group writes, "The work is too vast for the *grama sevika* to handle it alone." Such work must be a part of much larger and longer programmes. There must be preparations made previously; there must be a follow-up after the special contact is made. And so now the follow-up is being planned. Members of groups have visited their village friends during the past month. Some villagers have visited Gandhi Gram. The staff itself is preparing a substantial programme for the coming months which will be started by the training of a small group of young village enthusiasts from the villages themselves so that they may carry the brunt of the work started, although naturally we shall be at their sides constantly giving every inspiration and help possible. Spinning will be placed on

a regular basis. Adult education will be carried on regularly. Wells will be dug and repaired so that a safe drinking water supply is assured. Within a reasonable time we expect a Basic Education School in all these villages; one has been already started. The newly planted trees will be cared for and the villagers will be encouraged to plant more. And, not the least of all, we shall work with the *panchayat* and the local *panchayats* that may soon work as experienced and responsible groups. The villagers have said they would go only to their own *panchayats* or to their common *panchayat* when there was trouble. But we must go long ways before the *panchayats* will be able to command the confidence of the people at every point.

We "enjoyed our short stay" in the villages. It "taught us a great deal". We "felt that we should have stayed longer". "We were able to win the affection and love of the majority of the villagers." This was the response of Gandhi Gram as it went to the villages for Gandhi Jayanti. My experience is that this is the common experience when interested youth go to share some little thing with those who have so little to share. But we must never fool ourselves that we can do much in such a brief time in the villages. On the other hand, if such a programme is fitted thoughtfully in a long term programme, the special contribution can be of no little value. The greatest value comes to the youth who go to the village. However, the villagers also profit, especially if there is wise and selfless leadership. Many years ago I chanced to be one of the weak members of such a college team that went to a village in Southern Minnesota during our vacation season. Our work was one of inspiration. We conducted religious services. Young and immature I have always felt that we could not have done much although the experience was very valuable for my own development. But sometime later I chanced to meet a leader of the village. He told me that the coming of our small college group had started a small revival of religious living and nearly one hundred people had joined one or the other of the churches in the village as a result of our coming. If that was true, it was only because good preparation had been made for our coming and a thoughtful follow-up programme was carried on. So also our Indian students go to the villages to render small service.

Our reverence for Gandhiji must take solid form. When we celebrate his birthday it must be more than a mere public meeting. When we would carry on his memory it must be by means of something of far more substance than a mere statue or picture. Gandhiji has given us a task for not less than a lifetime. If we truly take him in earnest, if we truly admit him and his life, then it is for us to implement that way of life—a way of life that has meaning not only for India but for all the world. Some of us may have the privilege of giving full time to the carrying out of the programme which his way of life implies. Others will strengthen our hands as they are able to do. But whatever our part, we shall be at the job of bringing a "casteless, classless society" based upon a "living faith in God" to this selfish, divided world. And each of us will be living the kind of life this faith implies in our own way and in our own particular sphere.

RALPH RICHARD KEITHAHN

## HARIJAN SEVAK—URDU

I regret to announce that the Trustees of the Navajivan Press have decided to suspend the publication of the Urdu script *Harijan Sevak* from the next week. Having regard to the extremely meagre circulation (less than 125 copies) of that edition, it became impossible for me to insist upon its continuance. For nearly six months last, friends taking interest in the continuation of that edition had been making earnest efforts to enroll more subscribers, but there was not much success. The Trustees carried it on during all these months at considerable loss.

The decision is painful. The question might be raised whether under the circumstances it was not due to us or me that the Nagari edition should also be stopped, in view of Gandhiji's declared attitude on the matter in the *Harijan Sevak* of 25th January 1948; namely, that if the Urdu edition was suspended, the Nagari would also be. After discussing the matter with several friends and co-workers of Hindustani, I realized that to do so would be injurious to the cause of Hindustani itself, besides being unfair to those whose natural script is Nagari. The more fundamental thing in the matter is the language. The tendency of the present writers of the basic language—variously called Hindi, Hindustani or Urdu, is to write it in a style which cannot be understood by not only Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Anglo-Indians, but even, I dare say, Punjabis, Sindhis, Sikhs, and a considerable part of other Hindu masses. Until that tendency changes it is necessary to speak to the people in a language, which they will understand. It is possible that Governments with a determined policy to push out all non-Sanskrit elements in our languages might in the course of a generation or more so mould our languages and impart them also to non-Hindi sections of the country, that the new generation might get used to Sanskrit words and forms, to a far greater extent than the present. How far that will be in the best interest of the nation, is a different matter. I need not enter into that speculation. It is enough that the *Harijan Sevak* should try to speak in a language capable of being understood by its present day readers.

I am aware that the *Harijan Sevak* has not always been successful in achieving that object. But henceforth it will be my attempt to present it in as simple a language as possible, keeping in mind the necessities of those not used to highflown styles (whether of the Hindi or Urdu schools) of the basic language in Hindustani.

I urge all those readers, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, who are more conversant with the Urdu script or with that script only, that they should make themselves at home with the Nagari script. It is essential to do so in their own interest. They must realize that with everything said and done, the Urdu script can be read with ease and used as a

daily habit only by a very small section of the total Hindustani-speaking population. For this reason, I would also request that writers and publishers of Urdu script books should undertake to present their masterpieces in the Nagari script also, (with, wherever necessary, glossaries of difficult words), to make their contribution to the Hindustani language known to a greater circle of readers. Likewise, they should republish into the Urdu script good Hindi-Hindustani literature published in the Nagari script only. They will also do well to reproduce articles of the *Harijan Sevak* in their Urdu journals for the benefit of their readers. They will see that they and the Hindustani language stand to gain thereby.

Bombay, 31-12-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

### Regional Development Conference

A conference of persons interested in regional development referred to in the article *Propositions to Save India's Independence* (*Harijan* 19th December, '48), will be held under the auspices of the Indian Town and Country Planning Association, on the 19th and the 20th February, 1949 at Sinhgad Fort near Poona. A study tour will be organized for the members attending the conference in the Gunjawani and the Mutha valley area and there will also be a series of five lectures delivered in Poona from Monday the 14th to Friday the 18th February, 1949, in English and in Marathi as a preliminary to the tour. This will enable the visitors to take an intelligent interest in the study tour and deliberations.

All persons interested are requested to correspond with the undersigned:

S. R. BHAGWAT,

Organizer, People's Commonwealth Regional  
Development Organization,  
282, Sadashiva Peth,  
Poona 2.

### GANDHIANA

(A Bibliography of Gandhian Literature)

Compiled by

P. G. Deshpande

Nearly three thousand books in various Indian languages and in English have been classified and listed in this Bibliography.

A title index also is included.

Pages 254 Price Rs. 3-4-0; Postage etc. 0-8-0

CONTENTS		PAGE
CORRUPTION GALORE ... K. G. MASHRUWALA		373
ADIM JATI SEVAK SANGH ...		374
THE EVIL OF CONTROLS ... K. G. MASHRUWALA		376
DELETION OF A REFERENCE ... K. G. MASHRUWALA		378
GANDHI JAYANTI AT		
GANDHI GRAM ... RALPH RICHARD KEITHAHN		378
HARIJAN SEVAK—URDU ... K. G. MASHRUWALA		380
NOTES:		
RELIEF ... K. G. M.		373
GANDHI FUND AGAIN ... K. G. M.		373
DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTED		
FOOD GRAINS ... K. G. M.		378
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT		
CONFERENCE		380