

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XVI. No. 4

AHMEDABAD—SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1952

TWO ANNAS

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

The increase in the number of subscribers for the *Harijan* Weeklies from 28-2-'52 to 8-3-'52 is reported as follows:

	<i>Harijan</i>	<i>Harijanbandhu</i>	<i>Harijansevak</i>	Total
28-2-'52	2,840	3,890	2,270	9,000
8-3-'52	3,401	4,796	2,638	10,835
Net increase	561	906	368	1,835

From one side, this increase, within the space of ten days, is satisfactory; but there is also an unsatisfactory element in it. Readers will see that the highest increase is in the number of subscribers of *Harijanbandhu* and lowest in that of *Harijansevak*. The figures I have received have not been classified province-wise; but my inference from the above figures is that greater interest has been shown by the people of Greater Gujarat and Bombay even in the case of *Harijan* and *Harijansevak* than by the people of other parts of India. I feel that, of the three Weeklies, the *Harijansevak* should have the maximum number of subscribers. But, whatever the reason, its subscribers have always been the least of the three. This was so even during the days of Gandhiji. This is regrettable.

I hope that the efforts to increase subscribers will not be slackened, until the target of at least 6,000 permanent subscribers for each of the Weeklies is reached. And it should be reached as quickly as possible.

At the same time, I wish to express my deep appreciation of the efforts being made by several institutions and individuals, in various provinces for raising the number of subscribers. Some institutions have also expressed their readiness to come to the help of the poor class of readers by making the papers available to them either free of cost or at half the price. I regard these gestures as indicative of their love and reverence for Gandhiji's institutions, of which these papers are one.

In this connection, I must also reproduce the following warning from the veteran *Khadi* worker, Shri Sistla Venkatakrishnaiah of Guntur:

"It is not enough if we simply make a few to contribute towards it by purchase (or, let me add, contribute for helping others to get it). If they do not read it carefully to understand the subject such sales mean influence sales and will undoubtedly fall

in a short period. Then we shall be deceiving ourselves and the publishers also. We must approach only those who, we know, sympathize with the constructive programme with faith in it. Having supplied to them, we must continue to meet them now and then, and whenever possible, discuss the subject with them.

"If the constructive workers volunteer to follow such line of action, I have no doubt that the demand for *Harijan* will be even greater than 16,000 copies."

Wardha, 10-3-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

PS. Latest additions up to 15th March:

<i>Harijan</i>	<i>Harijanbandhu</i>	<i>Harijansevak</i>	Total
119	435	22	576

K. G. M.

TO CULTIVATORS AND ZAMINDARS

(By Gandhiji)

[Shri Manubehn Gandhi's diary, under date 16-4-'47, reveals how Gandhiji was preparing the background for the present *Bhoodan Yajna* of Vinoba. Gandhiji's observations are of importance even now for the people of U. P. and Bihar. I reproduce below the relevant extract.

—K. G. M.]

I want to address a few words to cultivators. We have now our own rule in our country and shortly we shall have full political freedom. For many years past there have been efforts to abolish zamindari. After independence the work will proceed further. But it should not mean that the cultivator is hereafter to ride on the back of the landlord, I am informed that the cultivators resort even to violence nowadays. This way they cannot hope to better their lot. If they are wronged they should, no doubt, knock at the doors of the Government any time. But they cannot take the law into their own hands. Freedom does not mean freedom to do anything that one likes. On the contrary, it should make us more humble. We should work with goodwill and sympathy. That alone is the way for India to be happy, and that alone will make landlords ashamed of their owning thousands of acres of land while their brothers are starving. Then they will realize their duty to share a part of their land with the poor, so that the latter might cultivate for their own living. What I mean to convey is this: what can be achieved peacefully, with love, sympathy and efficiency cannot be successfully achieved even by the best of laws. The zamindars should also understand that they can no longer ride on the backs of others and enjoy comforts as they have done hitherto.

(Translated from Gujarati *Bhavnagar Samachar*, 1-3-'52)

THE PRACTICAL IDEALIST

(By Pyarelal)

III — His Personality

Because he excluded all brute force from his technique, he became the greatest moulder of men that our age has seen. It caused him to delve into the secrets of human psychology and made him master of all the varied strings of the human heart, and proved him a born leader of men.

The fact that he worked through non-violence also influenced the choice of his instruments. They included children and illiterate women, even decrepit old folk. People often wondered how he could afford to give so much of his attention to sick and ailing patients, women and children of his Ashram. Thus he found time in the midst of his round-the-clock activity to give message with his own hands to Parchure Shastri, the leper. When some Ashram people objected to his being kept in the Ashram, he told them that if there was no room in the Ashram for Parchure Shastri, there could be none for him. The reason was that non-violence works best through insignificant little things. His own life was made up of things which taken by themselves looked commonplace and small. If Satyagraha did not turn upon the marshalling of little things it would be incapable of being wielded by the masses at large. His instruments had to be commensurate with the capacity of the human material that had to be handled. Nobody who has made a study of the mass movements which Gandhiji organized and led can miss the tremendous part which women and children played in them. They constituted the inner leaven that gave to his movements their swelling energy.

I cannot close this review of Gandhiji's personality without dwelling upon some of the paradoxes that his rich and varied personality presented. He believed in simplicity but not in slovenliness or being untidy. His simplicity was not so simple an affair; it was a highly complex art as he used to say. Its artistry gave it an ineffable charm. The Naked Fakir found himself at home with Viceroy, potentates and heads of States.

He wanted people to be ready for all sorts of hardships and sufferings that might fall to their lot in bearing witness to truth, but he never made a cult of discomfort for its own sake. He believed in living dangerously but only in respect to himself, not to others and always discouraged running foolhardy risks. When during his 'Do or Die' mission in Noakhali, I once unwittingly ran into a nest of danger from which I came out barely by the skin of my teeth, he wrote: "You are not to rush into danger needlessly, but must be prepared to face all dangers that might come in your way in the natural course. In this way if every one of you is wiped out, I would not shed a tear over it but on the contrary will rejoice. People who go to work in

the villages here have to learn to live and move cautiously like the proverbial she-elephant."

There was not a trace of the martyrdom complex in his psychological make-up. Indeed, he regarded the desire for martyrdom to be unethical, a sin — since it can be fulfilled only at the cost of someone else going to perdition.

His heart was softer than a rose petal but he could also be harder than flint. He was the greatest democrat but he had no hesitation in proposing himself as a dictator. Again, mark the paradox — his was a dictatorship that had no sanction behind it save that of love and persuasion — and he was the fittest person to be a dictator because he hated to dictate to anybody.

"He who sheds tears cannot wipe the tears of others," he remarked on a memorable occasion. Having constituted himself the champion of the downtrodden and oppressed poor, he steeled his heart against weak pity. He had at times to be cruel to be kind, because he knew that in this hard, cruel world, weakness gets no quarter. So he could talk unperturbed of India attaining her freedom through rivers of innocent blood — not of the opponent but of her own children — and set his face like flint against the whole present-day philosophy of contraceptives, which suppress the consequences but sanctions the exploitation of the woman for man's lust.

His iron will transmuted his deep emotion into a relentless self-discipline and self-denial which was often mistaken for self-mortification and self-suppression by casual and superficial observers but was as different from either as chalk is from cheese.

That also explains his attitude towards sex. Woman to him represented suffering and self-sacrifice personified. He strove to transmute her self-sacrificing suffering into *shakti* and had the courage, alone perhaps with the author of *Kreutzer Sonata*, to tell the whole truth in regard to her without prevarication or gloss.

People have often talked about his asceticism. Whatever it was, it was not devoid of spiritual gaiety. It was so infectious that the late Maulana Mohammad Ali used to make grievance of it: "Mahatmaji, you are very unfair to us," he once told him: "we come to you full of grouse, to quarrel with you, but you make us smile and laugh in spite of ourselves. So our grouse remains unventilated and you think it is all right with us." And he quoted the celebrated couplet of Ghalib to describe his dilemma:

अनके बीमारिये नेहरे पे जो आ जाती है रीनक
वे समझते हैं कि बीमारका हाल अच्छा है।

Finally, his asceticism never gave him a morbid dread of his fellow creatures but liberated him into the largest possible circle of pure and noble relationships. "I hope you have not missed the woman in me," he once wrote to Mrs. Naidu. This is not a trait associated with the traditional picture of a monk but, as a contemporary has aptly pointed out, it was a striking characteristic of St. Francis of Assisi —

"his great faith, great fortitude, great devotion, great patience, great tenderness and great sympathy. Women would sense that in him they had found a fellow-traveller, one who had passed along the road they, too, were travelling, and could give him an affection deep, pure and untouched by any play of sex emotion." "I associate him (Gandhiji)," says the same writer, "with growing flowers, fresh fruit, the wide and open river, the prayer before the morning star has risen, the walk in the unsullied air of dawn."

This was in brief the amazing personality that burst upon the Indian scene at the commencement of the first world war, armed not only with the power but also with the sweet graces of his basic disciplines.

We shall next examine the technique of action which he evolved out of these basic disciplines and some of the phenomenal results he obtained therefrom.

(End of Lecture I)

BEAUTY ON PARADE

[The following appears as the leading article in *The Guardian* (Madras) of February 7, 1952. It deserves to be read and pondered over by every thoughtful woman of India. These movements have doubtless arisen originally from the minds of men and women living on prostitution. Thoughtlessly even such women as should be expected to think better have become their prey.

It is far better that 'charities' are wound up for want of funds than that they should resort to these methods for maintaining them.

Maybe this is a cry in the wilderness. I have recently come across a case in which a municipality has accepted from a woman maintaining herself as a professional prostitute a handsome donation for a girls' school along with the condition that it shall be named after her!

It is difficult to imagine to what depths of degradation mankind will be led by the lure for money. — K. G. M.]

Beauty contests are to be held in Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow and Bangalore for women between the ages of 18 and 28. The "winners" will enter a final contest at Bombay for the choosing of a "Miss India", who in turn will represent the beauty of Indian womanhood at a parade in Long Beach, California, U. S. A. in a competition for the title "Miss Universe". Her expenses will be met by different manufacturing firms, and an airline company. The young lady's fare will be paid for by a face-cream manufacturer, her travel kit will be provided by a Leather Works and she will wear a costly watch made by another concern. Finally, she is required to parade at Long Beach in a particular brand of swim-suits. The funds collected through admission fees to the beauty parades and dances held in India are to go to "Indian Charities". Associated with this contest in Madras are well-known welfare organizations, chiefly the Provincial Welfare Fund, which will use the Madras proceeds for ex-T. B. patients, Creches, the Seva Samajam, the Boys' Home and similar other social projects in Madras.

Beauty contests of this type are an innovation in India for Indian women. Making a show of themselves at functions organized just for such a purpose comes more naturally to women of the

West than to the women of India. The contests will only impart a new desire to Indian women and bring into vogue this practice of parading women in public for some "charity" or other. The organizers are deceiving themselves if they hope to discover and present to the rest of the world the best of the beauty of Indian womanhood by such contests, for the women who will come forward are few, while countless more beautiful women would prefer to shine in their homes, amid their daily tasks, in their domestic surroundings and shun the public gaze at organized parades. At any rate, the judgments on beauty pronounced at such contests are to be based on a very limited and a very materialistic evaluation of the beauty of womanhood.

There is no doubt that advertisement is the main object of the firms which are to finance the show, for their wares and their trades are to be directly or indirectly advertised through the winner, and the firm concern that will give the winner a contract, is merely scouting a new star the easy way. The entire contest is just another example of the commercialization of the beauty of womanhood which has been carried on to a ridiculous extent in the West. It is regrettable that women leaders in India should associate themselves with what is obviously a commercial project, for many of them are those engaged in welfare work for and among women. The show at Madras will be graced by the presence of no less a personage than H. E. the Maharani of Bhavnagar.

'Indian charities' must be in a sorry state to have to resort to beauty contests for women to raise funds. The cinema is decidedly a superior form of entertainment for raising money to a show at which men and women pay for the privilege of gazing at other women. The welfare worker who considers it his duty to raise money by some means or other and give it for a project is not distinguishable from a man who overflows with wealth and thoughtlessly flings away some in the name of charity. Surely welfare organizations can find other means of raising money than parading their women folk. The announcements that newspapers carry are a degrading advertisement for the causes the organizations have espoused.

That the winning Beauty is to be sent on an "international goodwill mission" is a gross exaggeration of what is purely a commercial show in which welfare organizations seek to gather a share of money. To represent her at international Press conferences India needs men and women of other mettle than winners at beauty contests are likely to be made of. Let the high-minded men and women of India launch a scheme to discover the Man or the Woman of the Year who has waged a heroic battle in life in his or her own little sphere, or made some valuable contribution to national life and send such a person abroad each year as an example of brave and beautiful Indian manhood or womanhood. We shall justly be proud of them.

HARIJAN

March 22

1952

AIM & OBJECT OF FOOD RESEARCH

The readers have now before them the note of Dr. Moorjani and his colleagues as also that of Shri Krishna Chandra on soya-milk, or to be more accurate, soya-emulsion, as suggested by Shri Satish Chandra Das Gupta. Compared to the preparation of the Food Research experts, that of Shri Krishna Chandra will be regarded as crude, and some might doubt my sense of proportion in putting both together. It is also clear that but for his acquaintance with science to a certain extent and the help of expert scientists, Shri Krishna Chandra would not have been able even to think of the possibility of a vegetable milk. If he pursues his subject further, he might again and again have to consult the Food Research experts for the further improvement of his preparations. Hence, the value of scientific research cannot be minimized. I have not mentioned the Sevagram experiment in order to belittle the Mysore work. But I want to show the difference between the objects of the two investigators.

We are short of some essential items of a balanced and full diet. A larger part of the nation does not get sufficient food both in quantity and quality. Even those who have nothing to complain of regarding the quantity starve in quality. The result is that a part of the quantity consumed is merely wasted on account of insufficient assimilation.

Hence, when food researchers suggest a new article of wholesome diet, which could be prepared out of the abundant but unknown or neglected vegetable kingdom, they should almost appear like apostles of a new gospel to a starving nation. Its *sevaks* want to know from the researchers some domestic method of turning into wholesome food a vegetable substance which is regarded as inedible or indigestible, but is lying waste round about them, or can be easily grown by them on their waste grounds, or places where regular crops cannot be grown. Herein, on account of the object with which research is undertaken by the experts, their work becomes disappointing, at times even harmful to the poor. Their work adds to the list of man's menu. They can be availed of by persons who earn their living in some other way and go to the market for purchasing apparently cheap and artificial food. Most of those who can do so will take these things in addition to the things which are food both of the rich and the poor. If the new types of food discovered or improvised by experts were such as would leave the entire stock of the ordinary foods—the grains, the pulses, the animal milk and the ordinary *ghee* and oil—

to be consumed by the poor, it would be something worthy of attempt. But these discoveries do not create new food for the poor. They merely create new luxury articles, varieties and dresses, and they create trade and commerce. Further, in making them they often use, as their base, articles which were once used by the poor only to supply their deficiencies in times of distress. They deprive the poor even of the poor types of roots, fruits and grains, because by their investigations they present these articles to the well-to-do in attractive forms. These people were not any worse for want of these dishes on their table. The result is that what was only poor man's food once now becomes wanted even by the rich and upper middle class. A market is created for these articles. They begin to bring good prices, even better prices than those of staple grains etc. In course of time the demand for them increases to so great an extent that agriculturists cultivate them in preference to regular food. They become what are significantly known as money-crops as opposed to food-crops.

Rice and groundnuts are two typical instances of the way in which science has ill-served rather than helped the poor man in his search for food. First, science gave a mechanized process of dehusking rice. Being a device for reducing labourers, it gave the appearance of cheapness. As it required a large plant, it could be availed of only by the capital-owning trader. Science added to it the perfection of polishing, so that it became more attractive to the eye and sweeter to the palate. Thus dehusking became an affair of pure trade and commerce. Science did not care to know how it affected the poor. He lost the employment of dehusking, also the husk and the wholesome rice.

On further experience and research, science found that the pearl-white scientifically husked rice was rather an unwholesome food. Unless something was added to it, it was injurious to health. So it sought methods of supplying deficiencies brought about by milling by subjecting the rice to further artificial treatment and adding deficient substances to it from outside. Again, it gave additional trade and commerce to the industrialist instead of more food and the withdrawal of obtaining it to the poor. We know that even with sufficient rice in the country, people died of starvation in India, because of want of means to purchase even the apparently cheaper milled rice. Can these people be expected to supply the deficiencies brought about by milling by supplementary articles or fortification?

The same or even more tragic is the story of the groundnut. It is a sweet wholesome article which people used on particular days. That it contained oil was well known, but it was never cultivated for that purpose. In the village *ghani*, it could not be easily pressed. The tradition also in India was opposed to commercializing oil. Selling of oil, milk and some other articles was

not regarded 'honourable'. They were meant for domestic consumption. A needy neighbour might be supplied with them gratis, but the owner would not sell them in exchange of money. Hence oil seeds were not generally cultivated on an extensive scale. They were grown in small quantities along with grain crops.

Science mechanized oil-pressing. Tons of oil-seeds began to be pressed in a day in a central building. The village *ghani*-man and the manufacture of oil for domestic consumption only, as also the growing of oil-seeds as a secondary crop only gave place to commercialized oil-industry. The machine oil-press would be able to crush even stones, if there were oil in it. Groundnut is not a hard substance for its compressors. Hence, the oil-mill did not need tiny *til*, rape and mustard seeds any longer. The larger seeds of groundnut were more convenient. Thus groundnut became a convenient money-crop.

But oil manufactured in such large quantities cannot be easily sold of. It might take even months before it can be consumed. It would become rancid. So, science was again sent for to solve the problem which commercialism had created. It gave commerce refining devices. Refinement meant removal of odour, taste, vitamins etc. It became as *nirguna* (devoid of qualities) as possible. By further investigation science found out that this refined oil can be solidified and made to look like and used for *ghee*, — the much coveted article of Indian diet. If mixed with genuine *ghee*, the adulterated substance can be passed off as *ghee*, and beat the genuine thing in commercial competition. It was a splendid research in the interest of trade.

Time revealed that in the process of refinement this new cheap substance became deficient in important ingredients contributing to health and nutrition. Hence, there was some stigma attached to it. If this was removed, the trade would flourish still better. So science was again sent for, and it gave suitable artificial aromatic substances, vitamins etc. for super addition. All apparent difference between genuine *ghee* and solid oil was obliterated as far as possible. Science came to the aid of commerce by making it an irresistible rival of *ghee* in the *ghee* market. *Ghee*-producers, that is, keepers of milch-cattle naturally abounding in villages only, were displaced and disemployed — thanks to food research.

Soya bean is not produced in India. It is a fatty pulse (*dal*), but more difficult to digest than the various pulses eaten in India. So as a food for daily consumption, it is not well suited. But science has discovered the process of making an emulsion out of it which is said to be almost as perfect in appearance and digestibility as animal milk. It is devoid of some ingredients of milk, if made according to village methods, like the one adopted by Shri Krishna Chandra. The latter's is not meant for marketing. Science

should come to his aid by showing the villager improved ways, which he can bring into use at home without an outlay beyond his means. But the report of Dr. Moorjani shows that a perfect milk-like emulsion could be prepared only if undertaken as a big or middle-sized industry. This will mean not furnishing milk for the poor, but creating a new money-crop and a new factorized industry. How will this artificial milk go into the stomach of the undernourished poor? Whence will he bring the money to purchase it with?

We must love and advance science. It is indispensable for promoting human happiness. Careful food research must be carried on. But the object must not be promotion of trade and commerce, but to aid the poor.

Between soya bean and groundnut, the preparation of the emulsion from the latter is more desirable than from the former, and soya bean is for practical purposes not a very good food as usually cooked. I would request experimenters, both experts and amateurs, to concentrate on groundnut in preference to soya bean.

Wardha, 15-2-52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR

(By J. C. Kumarappa)

My attention has been drawn to an editorial in the *Free Press Journal* of the 14th February, 1952, dealing with my article "The Noose?" in the *Gram Udyog Patrika* of February. (*Harijan*, 8-3-52).

The *Free Press Journal* states that we ought not to "reject foreign aid on flimsy grounds" and "any aid with strings attached" will not be acceptable to India. In this I am in full agreement.

The warning against American aid was not because it was "foreign" nor does the question of "any strings attached", arise. The whole transaction has to be looked at historically with the knowledge of the character of dealings of the donor in the past.

Of late the U. S. A. has been afflicted by a Russia-phobia or a Communist dread. This has been guiding her foreign relations in the countries to the East, West and South of Russia. Germany and Japan have been reduced to ashes. China was to have been made into a jumping off board with a strong alliance with the bourgeois regime under Chiang-Kai-Shek. But this was thwarted, thanks to Mao's shrewdness. Hence is this bitterness against China. India holds a strategic position in the South. But in international affairs our Prime Minister has not minced matters and his statements on the Japanese Security Treaty and on the status of people's China have left no doubt that he is not prepared to tow the line under American lead. This is an intriguing position when even Churchill was pocketing 'his imperial pride.

Therefore India has to be dealt with in a subtle way.

The Indian Prime Minister had expressed time and again, his leanings, though academically, towards rural development. What is natural but for America to evince a sudden affection for Indian rural development! "Love me, Love my dog." There are, of course, no strings attached, but it is hoped that the tongue will be tied by moral obligations of one who has eaten American salt. If not, the Atom bomb pile is always there as the last resort.

Great Britain, in her worst moments, had shown some semblance of moral consideration, but not so the U. S. A., who had been ruthless. Though set aside, General MacArthur typifies the American spirit today. We have to be wary in dealing with a nation with such history behind it when it is running amuck scared by the red rag. Let us beware and be forewarned.

(From *Gram Udyog Patrika*, March '52)

LEGISLATURES AND KASTURBA TRUST AGENTS

At the time of nominations of candidates for the Delhi State Assembly, Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru was pressed by numerous friends that she should stand as a candidate, so as to be able to guide the new Legislature and, if possible, to take office for furtherance of social services. Shrimati Rameshwari was hesitant and told friends that, as she was the Provincial Agent for Punjab for the work under the Kasturba Trust, she would be guided by such advice as I may tender. The matter was thus referred to me and I unhesitatingly advised her not to enter the field of legislature, *in preference to the actual field work among the people*. This was based on the lines laid down by Mahatmaji during his lifetime from 1944 to 1948, when he was the Chairman of the Kasturba Trust and I was working as Vice-Chairman, directly under him.

My advice, though based on Mahatmaji's directions might perhaps appear a bit strange and as an expression of lack of confidence in the work through legislatures. I earnestly beg of all friends to disabuse their minds of such a misimpression. The field worker has to be a servant of Humanity, has to be in constant touch and contact with them, must understand, by personal association, their desires and their difficulties. For this, the workers must have no political colour or religious or communal prejudices. The approach through legislative bodies, apart from the political side of the question, is indirect and inadequate for amelioration of their condition. It is, therefore, essential that the best of our social workers remain outside the legislatures and with the people so as to be able to plead effectively and explain in proper perspective what our legislatures should do. It is not a question of boycotting or keeping away from legislatures, as if they were useless; but greater importance is

attached to the actual field survey and work, as an essential basis of legislation. There is no idea at all of any kind of non-co-operation but to give our Governments much better co-operation, by having a vast number of good field-workers, who will work in co-ordination and co-operation with the Governments. That is the most important aspect; and hence it has been a rule with the Kasturba Trust that those of our sisters who are agents, should not continue as agents, if they intend to take to parliamentary activities. This rule has been in practice and many of our sisters were advised by Bapu to leave the agency work, if they had an urge for parliamentary work. Such cases have occurred even recently and our agents either resigned their agency or abandoned the idea of standing for elections.

Further, I may make it clear that it is not understood that, by entering legislatures, all their contacts with the Kasturba work are lost. But as field-work in close and day-to-day touch with and among the people is considered fundamental as a sound foundation of social advance, the work through a legislature is given a subordinate position. The field-workers cease to be of value for Trust work when they enter the legislatures.

It may also be remembered that one of the conventions of the Trust is that only women should be appointed as agents. The number of capable women who can do this fundamental work for rural areas is small and it is essential that those whom the Trust has been able to secure should be placed in a position of giving undivided attention to the work and should be spared from the glimmers of political careers.

It is for these reasons that Shrimati Rameshwari was advised not to stand for elections. The choice before the Trust was between some work in the legislature and the fundamental constructive work, which she has been doing splendidly for the last several years, in the cause of the womanhood in India. It has to be remembered that the work of the Trust is carried on in rural areas only.

There is yet another question which puzzles the public mind. Friends argue that if the Trustees (including the Chairman) can enter legislatures and hold offices even as Presiding Officers or Ministers, why should an agent or a worker be prevented from contesting and doing work in legislatures? Such a question is *prima facie* legitimate. It arises because the difference between supervisory and directive work on the one hand and the actual field-work and its organization on the other is ignored, or is not properly appreciated. The agent has to be touring in rural areas and directing and supervising the work at various rural centres, of which there are more than three hundred in the country by now. If an agent takes to parliamentary life, the practical difficulty will be that either she must neglect her rural work at the

Trust or she must neglect her work at the legislature. It is not possible to do justice to both. On the ground, therefore, of organization of the Trust work, such a convention is necessary.

20, Akbar Road,
New Delhi, 4-3-52

G. V. MAVALANKAR,
Chairman,
Kasturba Gandhi National
Memorial Trust

Note : It is unnecessary to add anything in support of this solidly reasoned statement.

K. G. M.

VILLAGE-CENTRED OR CENTRE-RIDDEN ?

In the course of his *Bhoodan Yajna Yatra*, Shri Vinobaji reached Hardoi on 9th February, 1952. A large gathering attended the prayer-meeting. In his post-prayer sermon, Vinoba explained how he hoped that the *Bhoodan Yajna* would herald a peaceful revolution in the economic and social structure of our society. He referred to it as a new and timely experiment in line with the numerous successful experiments in sociology which India had seen in the past. Referring to the cultural unity of India, he said that it had become a reality thousands of years ago. It had survived many political vicissitudes and was still intact. Every student of Indian history would have to admit this. Even foreign scholars had accepted this fact.

New Situation

But there was no parallel in India's history to the situation that had now arisen with the advent of the Democratic Republic and the establishment of the rule of the people. In olden days there were great rulers like Ashoka who ruled over extensive empires. But no emperor ever knew then whether his rule was acceptable to all the millions inhabiting his empire. True, that whenever an emperor performed the *ashvamedha* sacrifice, the consecrated horse was sent out to roam about the realm. But normally no commoner felt like stopping the horse and inviting trouble. "Things are different in our days. For the past two months, the consecrated horse of democracy, viz. the ballot box, has been freely moving about the country, and it can be said that we have now verified whether any one would interfere with the free movement of this horse. This verification—of the will of the people—has not only been negative, but also positive, for every adult has had to express his opinion."

Increase in the Power of Government

Science had enabled modern governments, Vinoba continued, to become immensely more pervasive, comprehensive and capable of controlling every department of the lives of the people than the governments of the past. For instance, a fiat from Delhi could now reach and be

executed in any part of the country within a few hours. Such a thing would have been impossible, even in the course of months in the olden days. People of our times had, therefore, an unprecedented chance to remould the life of our country on a sound pattern. But they should remember that the concentration of such vast power in the Government at the Centre might as well be an auspicious sign as an inauspicious one. In the days of Emperor Ashoka, the Government did not have the means to make or mar the fortunes of the country with the thoroughness with which a modern Government can. Moreover, it had become possible for us now to centralize not only material or physical power but also intellectual power. For instance, if our Education Minister so desired, he could see that every schoolboy in the country learnt from the same kind of textbook. It was with the help of such methods that Hitler and Stalin had charmed their people and made even the ballot boxes proclaim that they were the real representatives of the people. All this made them very powerful. But there was no guarantee that power and selflessness would always go together. It was more likely, on the other hand, that power and selfishness went together.

Danger of Becoming Mechanical

There was not much difference in this regard between power that had been centralized through election and power that had been acquired through other means, because both were liable to be exploited for selfish purposes. Where people were weak, they tried to seek strength in the power of the State. They thought that their welfare lay in increasing the power of the State. The result was that even in countries like the United States and Russia, where almost all were literate and educated, people became mechanical. Their minds worked like machines. An "Order of the Day" was enough for millions of people to take up arms and to go to war with a neighbouring country. Another "Order of the Day" from the Government could make these men who went to war without a moment's thought lay down arms and surrender to an aggressor. It was not difficult to move the minds of such people and to secure their support. "We in India, therefore, have to be very careful in the use of the power we have acquired, and will have to see that it is used to protect the glory and the ethos of our country."

Village-Centred and Not Centre-Ridden

Vinobaji then questioned the advisability of entrusting the Centre with the power to control and govern the daily lives of the people. "Side by side with maintaining a sufficiently strong Centre, we should also see that the power to govern and develop our daily lives is vested in the village, i.e. we should have self-government in our villages. I hold the view that if ninety-five per cent of the questions affecting a village can

be dealt with and settled in the village itself, and that with the unanimous approval of the *panchs*, the country will be able to escape the evils that the party system, with its tussle between the majority and the minority, will entail in a modern parliamentary democracy. Our villages have an ethos and an existence of their own. All their economic, social and cultural activities must therefore be in their own hands. If there is any problem affecting many villages or the mutual relations of villages, let the Centre help in its solution. But the problems and quarrels of the village should be settled in the village itself and not taken to the Centre. The Centre may be the link between the villages."

Referring to the evil results that can follow from the concentration of too much power in the Centre, Shri Vinobaji said that if, in the whole country, the same type of textbooks were enforced and an attempt made to regiment the thoughts of children, people would lose their freedom, even as the people of Germany and Russia had done. The name of the ballot box might well remain but it would only be as an instrument for propaganda and for the dissemination of false knowledge.

India, Ahead of Europe in Sociology

Shri Vinoba then referred to the move for establishing a European Federation, and said, "Western nations are still far behind us in sociology. Many may be surprised to hear such a statement from me. They may say that it was in the West that democracy was born and the parliamentary system developed. We are still far behind in these matters. We have yet to develop our democratic institutions and our parliamentary system. I agree that all this is true. It is also true that the western nations have made great progress in physical sciences, and are competent to be our teachers in these branches of knowledge. But as far as the science of sociology is concerned, we are not behind them. For instance, just see what happened during our elections. No one stopped our consecrated horse. Even the Election Commissioner was surprised at the way the elections went off. But can a horse roam like this through the European continent? India is no small country. Many countries of Europe can be contained in a continent like ours. There are many languages and many scripts in our country. Yet while the unity of our country became an established fact long ago, the federation of Europe is still a dream. If England were to hold an *ashvamedha*, her horse would not get as far as France or Belgium. But here in India, even thousands of years ago, our philosophers used to cover the country from Kashi to Kanyakumari. Shankaracharya went from Malabar up to the Himalayas and spread his message throughout the country. Such

thinkers and seers forged the unity of our country centuries ago. That is the reason why I say that Europe is behind us and that whatever we take from the West has to be taken after careful scrutiny. As far as the science of sociology is concerned, it is quite likely that we can teach them a few things."

Bhoodan — The Only Way to Regenerate the Village

In conclusion, Shri Vinobaji referred to the *Bhoodan Yajna* and explained how he hoped that the *Yajna* would liberate and regenerate the villages of our country. Vinobaji said, "There is no other way in which the glow of freedom can be made to illumine everyone of the five lakhs of villages in our country. *Rishis* like Valmiki and great teachers like the Buddha and Kanada and heroic men of action like Shivaji can arise in our villages. But if these villages are to be freed, there must be a proper distribution of land, and villages must be self-sufficient. The revenue and expenditure of every village must be examined independently with the idea that every village is an autonomous unit. If such functions as the providing of education and justice, the promotion of public health and cultural activities, etc. in the villages can be organized and carried on by the villagers themselves with local resources, local talent and local planning, every village will soon begin to produce statesmen. If this does not happen, and if, on important subjects like education, there are only five or six expert thinkers in the country, their intellects will hardly be of any use to the nation. Worse still, the burden may be so great that their intellects may crack."

(From notes received from D. M.)

Some Important Publications

By Mahatma Gandhi
TO THE STUDENTS

Pages xix + 324 Price Rs. 3-8-0 Postage etc. As. 13
SELF-RESTRAINT v. SELF-INDULGENCE
Pages viii + 232 Price Rs. 2 Postage etc. As. 10

By Pyarelal

A PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE

Gandhi & Frontier Gandhi among N.W.F. Pathans
Pages xvii+216 21 Illustrations and 2 Maps
Price Rs. 5 Postage etc. As. 12

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

CONTENTS	Page
NEW SUBSCRIBERS	.. K. G. Mashruwala 25
TO CULTIVATORS AND ZAMINDARS	.. Gandhiji 25
THE PRACTICAL IDEALIST	.. Pyarelal 26
BEAUTY ON PARADE	.. 27
AIM AND OBJECT OF FOOD RESEARCH	.. K. G. Mashruwala 28
THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR	.. J. C. Kumarappa 29
LEGISLATURES AND KASTURBA TRUST AGENTS	.. G. V. Mavalankar 30
VILLAGE-CENTRED OR CENTRE-RIDDEN ?	.. D. M. 31