

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

## THE LABOUR DAY

The first of May is celebrated as the Labour Day. In India the current popular political slogan is *Kisan-Mazdoor Raj*. It is common to the Congress, the Socialists and the Communists. Let us pause and consider what it implies.

If it is fancied that a *kisan* actually tilling the ground or a labourer actually working in the factory can be, *while he is still working on his job*, a member of the Cabinet of the Central or a Provincial Government, it is not going to be. It is not so in Russia or in the Labour Government of Great Britain. It is physically impossible. It is possible only for the members of a village or taluka panchayat to be both actual workers and administrators.

The utmost that some of the members of the Russian and the British Governments can claim is that they have risen from the poorest ranks of the society and have spent some years of their life in doing hard labour in order to live. But these are exceptions and even these have never been both workers and statesmen at the same time. With regard to the rest, most of them have never handled a plough or a tool themselves and some have perhaps never known what penury is. Their contact with the *kisan* and the *mazdoor* is mainly through the intellect. Their scholarship has created a conviction in them in favour of the *Kisan-Mazdoor Raj* and their political ambition (not necessarily selfish) has led them to join one of the political parties, advocating the *kisan-mazdoor* cause, and hence their position in the Government or politics. Even those among them who have been actual peasants or labourers themselves have been men fired with an inborn ambition or hobby urging them to go beyond the beat of routine work for a higher end. They are men who, without neglecting their routine work while engaged in it, have spent their free time in acquiring further knowledge or practical experience, or rendering useful service to society. It is clear that a peasant or a worker cannot become the President or a Minister of the State unless he is much more than a mere peasant or worker in knowledge, character, practical experience and outlook. One day he finds himself in a position to change over completely from the routine work to what was once his side activity. It is necessary for every worker and peasant to realize this. If he wants to advance himself or his people and desires a real *Swaraj* of *kisans* and *mazdoors*, he must,

besides being efficient and diligent at his own job, improve his knowledge, character and experience.

But it is not necessary to be a Socialist in order to do this. Such a peasant or a worker may as well be a believer in capitalism. As a matter of fact, there have been several peasants or labourers who have through these qualities acquired in course of time wealth, power and knowledge. Andrew Carnegie was a weaver's son and commenced his career as an errand-boy. Edison started life as a newspaper vendor. Several Indian capitalists or their forefathers began life as hawkers and collectors of old and waste materials. Australia was colonized almost entirely by peasants and workers.

If it is common ground that actual hard work in the field or the factory is to be given up as an inferior engagement by those who would lead, that a scheme of simple hard life is an inferior standard of life, and the earning of bread with the sweat of the brow is a thing to be banished from life, where is the difference between capitalism and socialism and what is the meaning of *Kisan-Mazdoor Swaraj*?

Gandhiji allowed himself to be associated with the *Kisan-Mazdoor Raj* slogan. But with him to be a *kisan* or a *mazdoor* was a privilege of man and not a curse inflicted on the sons and daughters of Adam or Manu. And so he suggested that whatever the station of life, every human being who is not an infant or invalid must actually participate in physical productive labour. In fact, he wanted to lay it down as a condition of Congress membership and would have welcomed it even as a condition for acquiring the right to vote in the State. And in order that there might be a form of productive physical labour in which every person could participate without distinction of caste, creed, race, sex or status and without encroaching upon other duties of life, he put forth hand-spinning as the common work for everyone. Every distinct avocation leads to the formation of a separate trade union or industrial association. The State is the Union of the whole nation. What shall be the common work, linking every member of that great Union? Gandhiji presented the *charkha*. He asked Kings and Queens, Ministers of State as well as religion, residents of towns, as well as villages, the householders as well as the *sannyasis*, men, women and children to spin regularly so that everyone can honestly say that he or she is a worker. The *Kisan Sangh*, the *Mazdoor Sangh*, the *Sanghs* of

Politicians, Students, Industrialists, Women or any other section, all find a common link in the *charkha*.

Wardha, 22-4-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## TRUTH ALSO WITH NON-VIOLENCE

The third resolution of the Peace Conference held at Sevagram in January last "urges our Governments and peoples to remind themselves constantly of the remarkable success of the use of non-violence in the attainment of Indian freedom and earnestly to seek those forms of non-violent expression which are needed today to settle difficult problems and situations."

Like the authors of the above resolution, I have heard and read countless persons, even the most eminent among them, pointing to non-violence as the force which won independence.

My humble opinion is that this is only partly correct. As a matter of fact, Mahatmaji himself felt that India or the Congress had not been able to act non-violently in the proper sense of the term. I would say that the other and the more important part of the force was Truth. Let me show how.

I entered the political field since 1907, i. e. from the time I attended the Surat Congress and began to take an active part since Lokamanya Tilak's release in 1914 from his six years' imprisonment. Naturally, I could notice the difference of the approach and technique of Lokamanya Tilak as well as of Mahatmaji. Though it is not necessary to go into the details of this difference, it can be safely said that since 1921 when the Congress came to be guided by Mahatmaji, it has not placed on record any resolution which in any way departed from the truthful presentation of its intention or statement of facts.

This truth was very scrupulously observed in every little detail when the Congress dealt with the Government.

It was Truth that was the cause of the successful progress of the Satyagraha in 1930 till its termination in Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Saving the face or window-dressing was never allowed to enter into the Congress resolutions.

Truth again was the cause of the withdrawal of Bardoli Satyagraha in 1922.

Truth was the reason of the giving up the programme of non-co-operation in 1924 at the Belgaum Congress. Truth guided the withdrawal in 1934 of the movement, which had again commenced in 1932 after Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Truthful was the giving up of the powers in Provincial Governments in 1939-40.

I have enumerated only those instances where politics, as it had been practised all over the world, would perhaps have been guided by considerations of saving the face or window-dressing.

Theoretically, Truth is, no doubt, included in non-violence. But it is necessary to emphasize it specifically, because it is — if a relative proposition may be made at all — the major and more

important part of the force than otherwise, and, if not mentioned, it is likely to be lost sight of, as indeed it was often lost sight of in the Indian movements. The underground movements during every Congress agitation came to be thought of because it was not realized that Truth was an essential ingredient of non-violence. This led in its turn to the vitiating of the non-violence itself.

As a consequence the sort of Independence which we have attained was not and has never been the goal of the movement set afoot by Mahatmaji. This could be noticed by persons, even like my humble self, in the withdrawal of Bardoli Satyagraha in 1922, and the withdrawal of non-co-operation in 1924.

The present attainment has only opened the door for the real triumph of this movement. This triumph would materialize in revolutionary social reconstructions in all walks of human life. The march towards this triumph would be beset with unforeseen and Himalayan difficulties. It would take a far heavier toll of sacrifice in all shapes and forms, before it reaches its goal of social reconstruction. But Truth will materialize into giving practical shape to non-violence and lead ultimately to this social reconstruction in India, and this would lead to similar revolution in other countries.

Gandhiji made this clear in the talks with him reproduced in the *Harijan* of the 6th March 1949. There he lays down how we must have "a superior, more advanced type of *khadi* worker" in order to be able to make "Samaj Panchayat Raj a reality", and concludes: "Success will depend on our *uttermost* purity." This is extremely important. Now, can there be purity without Truth? So Truth is the *sine qua non* of non-violence, as it is the first casualty in violence.

To make a beginning, the villagers will have first to realize that they have the strength to resist all sorts of temptations and attempts of their exploitation. This realization can result only from making them appreciate the necessity of strictly being truthful in their day to day dealing individuals or family men or villagers or members of society, etc.

This was actually tried in a village meeting. They realized that the Congress had no other strength but Truth during the fight for independence.

It is not necessary to enter into the discussion, in this short note, of how and by what steps this adherence to Truth will lead to purify the intellect so that one may discover the non-violent technique of creating a Sarvodaya sense in all walks of human life.

V. V. DASTANE

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## EARTH HOUSES — VII

All damage to the rammed earth walls can very easily and satisfactorily be repaired with cement mortar or with cement concrete in case of more extensive damage. When deep cavities have to be filled, 4" to 6" long nails should be driven into the bottom of the cavity, leaving about 1" to anchor the cement concrete.

When the wall is finished and the roof is laid, then the house must be given a protective and finishing coating.

For internal covering of the walls a mud and sand plaster is the simplest and the best. In America it is called "dagga plaster" and it is made by mixing earth and water with sand, so that there is about 75% of sand in the mixture. Mud by itself will crack up; sand by itself has no cohesion, but does not shrink on drying; together they give a smooth and pleasing covering for the wall. Before applying the dagga plaster the walls should be moistened by a spray pump and the plaster should be applied in thin layers, after all unevenness in the wall having been filled up beforehand. Each layer should be allowed to dry before the next is applied, if there is a tendency to crack on drying. The plaster is applied to the total thickness of about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " and, if protected from water, it will last very long. It can be white-washed and painted over with water and oil paints, although mud is at its best when it is apparent.

In a dry climate the outer surface of a rammed earth house will become rough, but once roughened, it will resist weather quite well. The rains lay bare the sand and the gravel, which protect the wall underneath. This protection is quite effective. What will seriously damage a bare earth wall is running water and cutting side drains. Where the monsoon is heavy and the rains slashing, the earth wall will need a protective cover.

The protection of rammed earth against water can be done in several ways: the wall itself can be impregnated with a suitable stabilizer, or the wall can be painted with a water-proof paint or the wall can be plastered with a water-resistant plaster.

Emulsified asphalt is used for stabilizing mud bricks but it is of no use for rammed work, because the mixing in of the asphalt emulsion needs a slushy mud, and cannot be mixed with the almost dry earth used in ramming. Besides asphalt is imported and costly.

A very cheap and satisfactory way of incorporating water resistance into the wall itself is to have two earth mixtures for ramming the wall with: one normal, and the other very rich in sand, and with the addition of cement at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. for every 100 cubic feet of earth. The addition of cement will stabilize the earth and make it resistant to erosion by running water. In order to prevent the premature setting of the cement in the mixture, the water used for moistening the cemented earth should contain some copper sulphate at the rate

of 1 lb. of copper sulphate for every 50 gallons of water. In filling the form with earth for ramming, the cement mixture should be put along the outer side of the form and the rest should be the usual mixture. It is enough if the outer 2 to 3 inches in depth are of the cement mixture. Thus the outer surface of the wall will be made water-resistant by the cement added.

Of all the paints tried so far, only good linseed oil paint has given good, although limited, results. The general impression gathered so far is that earth walls do not take to oil paints. Even a good linseed paint will require repair every few years.

The standard way of protecting the rammed earth is by plastering it with suitable plasters. Dagga plaster with the addition of 10% cement by weight gives a cheap and very satisfactory plaster. Before applying the dagga plaster, nails about 4" long are driven into the wall leaving the head to project about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " above the surface. The nails should be spaced 2" apart at random. The plaster is usually applied in two layers.

Instead of the dagga plaster lime or cement plasters can be applied in the same way.

An ancient way of finishing rammed walls is by scratching them diagonally, when still wet, with a sharp point and throwing on them rough cast plaster with a brush. The gravel added to the rough cast plaster (cement or lime) protects the wall effectively against rains. It is reported that on a good quality wall such plaster will last 2 years easily with occasional whitewashing.

Dagga plaster stabilized with asphalt emulsion has also given very good results. For every 100 lb. of dry plaster  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon of emulsion is needed.

Both the dagga asphalt and the dagga cement plasters seem to be the right answer to the problem of protecting earth walls against heavy rains. The dagga cement is the cheapest of all and perfectly adequate.

The peculiarity of the earth wall is that it "lives". It keeps on "breathing" all the time, absorbing and releasing moisture and air. Maybe this makes an earth house so cosy and healthy, cool in summer and warm in winter. The plasters are inert and sooner or later the bond between the wall and the plaster will break. The plaster will then remain standing by itself with its weight supported by the anchoring nails. This is normal and gives an additional protection to the wall beneath, because of the air-gap between the plaster and the wall. In earth houses everything improves with time.

Yet an earth house cannot be left alone. It must be examined at regular intervals and all repairs attended to immediately. A little earth and sand and cement is all that is required and, if treated with affection, the house will last indefinitely.

MAURICE FRYDMAN

# HARIJAN

May 1

1949

## QUENCHING HEART-BURNING

An educated Harijan youth writes :

"In Jaipur State, Harijans are every day subjected to grave insults by the *savarna* Hindus. During the summer, at the water-sheds opened at various places, Harijans are served water through a bamboo pipe, while *savarna* Hindus are poured water directly from pots. If a Harijan refuses to take water in this manner, abuse and insult are a daily occurrence. It is a pity that such an ill-treatment is accorded to Harijans in independent India. Having been under subjugation for centuries, they are not in a position to resort to law, particularly as the official machinery today is also drawn from the *savarnas*. It is depressing to find oneself in this situation and a feeling of disgust for life develops. I begin to wonder if, in spite of being continuously harassed and humiliated, we must still feel proud of being Hindus. I cannot understand how such a feeling could be retained so long. And then arises a passion to retaliate. Kindly let us know our (Harijans') duty under the circumstances."

The passion to retaliate arises out of a desire for quenching the heart-burning caused by humiliation. There are two ways by which heart-burning is quenched. One is by the adoption of retaliatory measures to punish the *savarnas*. This method comes to mind readily because it is instinctive and is familiar to us from childhood. It is common to man along with other animals. Even after childhood is passed, man does not always rise much above the brute. Rather he becomes a worse brute because of the greater intellectual development. And thus the vicious circle of avenge and revenge goes on ceaselessly in human affairs, and is not confined only to individuals but encircles great nations and States.

But enmity does not end by any number of avenges and revenges. This can be ended only by the other method, namely of Satyagraha. Besides quenching the heart-burning it also opens up the way for obtaining justice. In Satyagraha the wronged person does not seek to punish the offender but invites suffering upon himself, until realization comes to the wrongdoer and he feels ashamed of his conduct.

We must remember that the caste along with its rules of food and drink is the oldest institution in our country. Not only the followers of the *vedas*, but even the Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, etc., are not free from its grip. For a lay Hindu, religion often means nothing more than certain observances in regard to food, drink and bath and of the distance to be kept in associating with others in society. And this view of religion prevails among the members of all the sections of the Hindu community, whether they are learned pandits or

uneducated *kisans*, labourers, women or children, not excluding Harijans.

It should also be remembered that the so-called *savarnas* are regarded as such merely by the accident of birth. As a matter of fact, a great majority of them are as backward and ignorant as the majority of Harijans themselves. Thinking and progressive section among both is very small. Consequently the ill-treatment accorded to Harijans is not so much out of an evil heart as is due to traditional ways of living. The *savarnas* consider themselves as incapable of breaking the traditional customs, as the Harijans are of resorting to law. Their political fetters have been removed but not those of social customs.

Hence the problem before us is the liberation of both the *savarna* and the Harijan. For this, Samaritans among *savarnas* and Harijans will have to practise austerity by inviting sufferings and free both the sections from their handicaps.

In the present case, there is a possible way out. The *savarna* friends should take thirsty Harijans to the water-sheds and should not take water themselves until the Harijans are served in an equal manner. If the Harijans are denied equality, their friends should seat themselves there spinning and chanting *Ramadhun*. If thirst disables them from spinning, they should still continue to sit there peacefully, without quenching their thirst anywhere else. If this is practised with devotion and without harbouring any ill-will towards the water-shed-keeper, there is every hope that it will bear fruit. There should be no hypocrisy in this step. For example, sham Satyagraha should not be undertaken without actual thirst. The untruth deep down in our hearts will nullify our efforts. So the thirsty alone should offer the Satyagraha. If no *savarna* accompanies the Harijan in his Satyagraha, the latter can take this step himself. It may be that in such a case he might have to undergo more sufferings, but he should accept them as God's gifts and bear them. If ignorant or seemingly wicked people abuse or beat him, he should still have a sense of forgiveness and wish them well. He, who behaves in this manner, is a Harijan in the true sense of the word. He alone is Satyagrahi.

The *charkha* will be useful in creating the necessary moral power, because it is itself a protest against the fashion of the day. In this machine-age, when things like the *charkha* appear incongruous and ridiculous, one who plies it exhibits the courage to stand against the current. One who dares to go wisely against the current in one matter often gets the courage to stand against several other wrongs also.

Wardha, 18-4-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)

BAPU — MY MOTHER

By

Manubehn Gandhi

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## NO OBSESSION BUT JUSTICE

A Raipur (C. P.) advocate writes :

" Referring to the removal of Urdu script from the sign-boards at railway stations near Akola, you have raised the question, 'why this anti-Urdu spirit?' I wish to know why is this obsession for Urdu now? Is it to prolong the two-nation theory even now? If not, we must have one nation, one national outlook, one national costume and one national language. Though the Constituent Assembly has not given its decision on the question of script, it has been accepted that there will be one national language. It has also been accepted that in the provinces education and other activities will be through the provincial languages. May I ask you to let me know the province to which Urdu belongs? Has any province or State raised its voice for making Urdu the national language ?

" Even though the question of script is under consideration, the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal—the only opponent of Hindi till the other day—has declared that whether the national language is called Hindi or Hindustani, the national script will be Devnagari.

" If it is not found necessary to write the names of stations near Akola in Gujarati and Bengali, why should it be necessary to write them in Urdu? Why should we feel fascinated towards Urdu, the seed of the two-nation theory? "

I do not want to reopen the controversy regarding the necessity or otherwise of the Urdu script. It has been sufficiently argued both ways. It is not a question of obsession for Urdu but one of pure justice and fairplay. So long as the matter has not been decided by the Central Government, one of its departments cannot act beyond its power; hence the protest. Let alone the abandonment of provincial languages or even of English. Advocates of Nagari do not have the courage to ask other provinces to abandon their respective scripts, or to remove even the Roman script from the station sign-boards.

I do not feel concerned about what may or may not happen to the Urdu language or the Urdu script in future. Time is a great force and brings about all kinds of changes in every matter, including languages and scripts. Who but script-experts are able to read the manuscripts and inscriptions of a thousand years ago? Can anyone, who sees the various forms of scripts today, believe that Tamil and Devnagari were both derived from the same *Brahmi* script in the process of time? But they are. Not only that, it can also be shown that *Brahmi*, Arabic and Roman scripts have also the same origin. Therefore neither do I consider Devnagari as the script of gods, and Urdu of Satan or Roman of thieves; nor Urdu as of Allah and Devnagari of *kafirs*, or Roman of Christians. All scripts are man-made. They are meant for man's convenience. Therefore if there comes into existence one world script, I shall welcome it.

What I regret is the feeling of animosity which is at the root of the present opposition to Urdu. "... why this obsession for Urdu now?" "Is it to prolong the two-nation theory even now?" This 'now' and 'even now' reveal the sting. Why should I accept that because we are politically divided into two States, the Sindhu, the Padma, the Brahmaputra, Peshawar, Karachi, Lahore, Dacca and the people living there have ceased to be a part of my country and my nation? The creation of two independent Dominions is no reason for me to regard that the Hindus and Muslims, who live in Pakistan and who write in Urdu, cease to be my countrymen. My definition of my country and my attitude towards the people living there are not going to be varied every time there are changes in the political map of the country. These changes are brought about by a few statesmen engaged in the game of politics. We have witnessed the frightful results of involving the common man in it. It is these narrow-minded and selfish people (both Hindus and Muslims) who, in the name of Hinduism and Islam, caused this bloodshed, divided not only the country but also provinces like the Punjab and Bengal, ruined the lives of hundreds of innocent people and ended in taking the life of him, who had brought to them their emancipation.

Assuming for a moment that the Urdu script is claimed by Muslims only, there are four crores of Muslims spread all over the provinces in the Indian Union and therefore Urdu is to some extent present in all those provinces. Nagari has yet to achieve that place, for it cannot be claimed that even Sanskrit is studied through Nagari in all provinces.

Who is going to raise a voice in favour of Urdu, when Hindus are in majority in all provinces? And because none does so, can injustice become justice? Should I not raise my voice, only because it is a question affecting a minority? The mischief perpetrated at Akola is not confined to the removal of the name in the Urdu script but it sows along with it seeds of a Marathi-Hindi agitation. Perhaps this has escaped the notice of the learned advocate. If the Hindus are in a majority, they must have self-confidence and generosity. But it is not even a question of generosity; it is simply a question of justice and fairplay.

Wardha, 30-3-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)

### Well Done!

An A. P. I. report says :

" Mr. M. S. Aney, Governor of Bihar, declined to take his dinner at a party arranged in his honour today and came away without taking food as the number of guests exceeded the prescribed number under the Guest Control Order."

It is hoped that his example will be copied and those responsible for the breach of order will be suitably dealt with.

Wardha, 19-4-'49

K. G. M.

## NOTES

## "Sarvodayi"

When equally honest and patriotic men find themselves in opposite camps round about the names of a single objective, it may be assumed that somehow or other each name is associated in the mind of the other side with different objects in some part. The names Hindi and Hindustani are instances to the point. The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and the Hindi provinces in general object to the word Hindustani, because that word in their minds is a synonym for Urdu, and a want of faith in the other side makes them apprehend that the adoption of that word for the national language will mean opening the door for the introduction of the over-Arabio-Persianized Urdu. In the same way, the advocates of the word Hindustani object to the word Hindi, because it has been associated in their minds with the over-Sanskritized Hindi. Each side has now declared in favour of a style in which both the extremes are avoided and no word is disapproved simply because of its foreign origin. But each doubts the bona fides of the other, because of the warmth with which each name is insisted upon by its advocate. Each asks the other: "If you and I are agreed about the contents, why do you not accept my name?"

This tangle can be resolved in only two ways: If the choice is to be made only between these two names, by entrusting the whole matter to any one or more of the leaders suggested at the Wardha meeting, viz., Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendraprasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Another way is to adopt an altogether new name with no previous history. In the *Harijan* of the 13th March last, I hinted: "Our country is Sarvodaya-Sarvadesha and our common language too should be Sarvodayi-Sarvadeshi". A reader suggests that in the absence of an agreement about the names Hindi and Hindustani, none of them might be used for the common Language and we might call it the *Sarvodayi* language. Wardha, 20-4-'49

K. G. M.

## What Is Our Source ?

"That plan springs out of non-violence". I believe your thoughts at that point were most helpful (*Harijan*, March 6th). Will a little more elaboration be helpful?

Jesus said, "God is Love; God is Truth". Thus I would capitalize "Non-violence". The Greek had three words for Love: one for sexual love; one for ordinary friendly concern and finally, Divine Love. Gandhiji always lifted non-violence up to the divine level. That we should ever keep in mind.

Bapuji was constantly reminding us that we could get nowhere unless we had a "living faith in God". Does not that statement bring us pretty close to the true Source of all solid, good work? And Gandhiji's remarkable faithfulness to his prayer and devotional life makes me feel that here is the true Source of our whole constructive programme.

But! Unless that "living faith in Truth and *ahimsa* is constantly thrown into the trying

fires of life it will not be *living*! Bapuji was one moment in close communion with His Truth: the next moment, in firm grip with a critical problem of life. *Nai Talim* has always commanded my respect because it does not try to evade life. And I believe to be finally successful it must also never lose its grip on God—or Truth or *ahimsa*, if you please.

Do I need to remind ourselves that such a "living faith in God" is not always experienced in our churches or temples? Often it seems to be experienced by the most unorthodox of religious discipline. Even a non-Churchman like Abraham Lincoln had that "living faith in God"; and in so far as he did, he lived for eternity!

RALPH RICHARD KEITHAHN

## Bee Colonies

Domesticated bee colonies at Rs. 45 each are available from the All India Village Industries Association, Maganvadi, Wardha. They have to be taken from here in person.

Other bee-keeping equipments are also available. For particulars please write to the Secretary, A. I. V. I. A., Maganvadi, Wardha.

## REFUGEE REHABILITATION—SOME SUGGESTIONS

India has had to face a number of hard problems since the Independence Day. Those that were political were solved, both with speed and wisdom. Two of these however yet seem to baffle us—one, a socio-economic problem pertaining to the rehabilitation of refugees and the other, the food problem with its repercussions on the inflation of prices. To my mind the first is the more urgent that must be and can be dealt within a couple of years. The other is a world problem and requires both a short and long term policy for its solution.

The refugee problem is the more urgent as it is much more psychological and emotional than material. Almost all refugees have suffered loss of property and employment. Many have suffered loss of life; not a few have also suffered loss of respect. All this suffering can be endured and after all Time and Work are great healers. But nothing can easily reconcile the sufferers to the permanent loss of the places of their birth and upbringing. Cut off from their homelands, they seem to be always ill in body and mind. The dream of a Great Return haunts them now and then. The Sindhi refugee is out to lose his language, his customs, his temples and associations that make a society with its own way of life. Today, lakhs are in camps, herded together promiscuously, away from relatives, without occupation, with the education of their children neglected and with everything that reminds them of their distress. They are at sixes and sevens with themselves living in a segregated world filled with lacerated egos. Widespread incursion of scabbies has but heightened their sensibility. As it is, the most normal and even-tempered refugee is really not normal, because not at peace with himself.

And he never will be as long as he is in camps and without work. Camps had their use for six months or so. Today they are moral plague spots and economic sinks for Government moneys. After a year of working they have become tolerable almshouses. But in every other conceivable way they deserve to be closed immediately. The refugees must cease to harp on their sufferings and must be put to some useful work. I think the first necessary step is to move refugees in proximity to the place of their work and in lieu of rations they may be given six months cash allowance. Until permanent shelter is made available, any thatched or tented shelter would do. The only way to expedite the erection of pacca hutments is to move refugees out of pacca camps.

But no rehabilitation is possible without some toleration, if not co-operation, of local people. After all the economic needs of refugees are the same as those of local people. There is bound to be some competition and even encroachment. If a third or fourth baby is born in a family, all the members have to find it a place with a smile, even though it cries the whole night and eats the whole day. The refugees too want a place for themselves in the Indian Family. They have cried enough. Hereafter let us beware that they do not start kicking and fighting too. The local public must therefore be taught a little self-sacrifice and greater regard for their nationals. Active efforts should be made for the cultivation of social contacts specially among the young. Refugee children must be rapidly absorbed within the local educational and social system. Joint provincial and district committees should sit together to hammer out practical economic programmes for rehabilitation so as to live and let live,—above all so as to advance the development schemes of the province—agricultural, industrial and commercial. The refugees are not to be treated as "outsiders". In fact they come from the most prosperous part of undivided India and some of them are first-rate industrialists and merchants. These should be welcome in all provinces. But unfortunately I am bound to confess that so far the local public has been indifferent and interested sections actively hostile to the rehabilitation of refugees.

This brings us to the question of the responsibility of the provincial Governments and political parties. Today we have representative Governments responsible to their electorates and therefore sensitive to all its moods and interests. The impending next election has made provincial Governments all the more sensitive to these moods and interests. No provincial Government seems willing to do anything "unpopular" and whatever adds to the burden of the province, nation or no nation, is unpopular. Today provincialism—both political and economic—is a much greater evil to combat than communalism or communism. The acid test is the step-motherly handling of the refugee problem. All the funds, all the direction, all the pressures are from

the Centre. The provincials are just agents and unwilling agents at that. Provincial Cabinets and Assemblies have neither the vision nor strength of the Centre. Hence the lag in the education of local public opinion. It is unfortunate but necessary to improve certain conditions on provincial agencies—if the refugee problem is not to continue as a festering canker. The Refugee Department must be in charge of the Chief Minister or the next after him. A strict time-limit should be imposed for complete rehabilitation—the 31st March, 1951. A target should be fixed for every six months, followed by a Prime Ministers' conference to render account of the last term and prepare for the next. If there is delay in rehabilitation any expenses on increased relief should be charged to provincial revenues. At least 75% of those employed in rehabilitation services should be refugees and the rest local people. Rehabilitation plans must pay ample attention to productive lines and refugees should be given their share of increasing the agricultural and industrial wealth of the province. Real sense of citizenship comes only with the holding of land or industry in a place.

Lastly it must be clearly recognized that no rehabilitation work can be satisfactorily undertaken unaided by Services. Today the administrative machinery moves slowly and painfully. It is unable to carry on efficiently its normal day's work. It is unprepared for handling a delicate and recalcitrant object like the refugees, so unlike their passive files. A much more responsive organization must be set up, containing vigorous elements both from the local people and refugees with full executive powers, untrammelled by rules and regulations of watertight departments, efficiently planned for all movement. To my mind the solution of the refugee problem is much more a question of speed than of funds, now that policies are laid out. And this can come only by the creation of provincial corporations, on the lines of the Rehabilitation Finance Administration. In no case should the existing Revenue and P. W. D. Departments be entrusted with the real work of rehabilitation, by slight permutations and combinations of officers and procedures. The present official set-up is not and was not intended to meet emergencies of this nature. Mere efficiency, even if available, will not rehabilitate refugees. What is wanted is a set-up that overcomes obstacles and inspires confidence.

5-4-'49

N. R. MALKANI

[I was long anxious to place this subject before the readers of the *Harijan* from the pen of one who was in close touch with the refugees and working for them. I am glad to find one in Prof. Malkani. His sober observations and suggestions need no recommendation. It must be confessed that the refugees have not received the necessary amount of attention and sympathy at the hands of the people and the provincial governments. The result is that these helpless victims of our communal politics are undone.

— K. G. M.]

## MEDIUM OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS

When it was announced that it was decided as a common policy of all the provinces that whatever the provincial language might be, the medium of instruction of primary schools should be the mother-tongue of the child (if there were sufficient number of children to learn), I thought that it was a satisfactory decision. It appears, however, that the terms used have a different sense from what was assumed by me, along with others.

Ever since the adoption of the Basic Education idea, the term Primary Education was tacitly taken by "national educationists" to be equivalent to Basic Education, which extends to not less than seven years. The Government having also adopted the term Basic Education, I thought that the child would study the mother-tongue during the entire period of Basic Education. I, however, discover now that owing to the policy of bifurcating Basic Education at the end of four or five years under the terms Junior and Senior Basic Courses alias Primary and Secondary Education, the term Primary Education still retains the sense of only the first four or five years of training. This is too short a period for giving the mother-tongue even a good foundation and cannot satisfy those minorities to please whom this amenity is provided. Educationally this change-over is unsound. If the concession of the mother-tongue school is at all to be made to minorities, it should extend over the whole period of Basic Education, i. e. seven years. At the end of that period, the guardian would have the alternative of allowing the child to be trained through the language of that province or of sending it to a school in his home-province. The child would be old enough at that period to be sent away from home. I speak this not as a mere theoretical educationist but as one who had to shift constantly from Gujarati into Marathi and vice versa at the primary stage, and knows its strain on the child's nerves; also as one who has some members of his family educated through Marathi entirely and others through Gujarati entirely and some shifted from one to another according to circumstances and as one who knows how it has affected each of them. While it is possible for many people to have a working knowledge of several languages, it is said that as a general rule a man is not able to write or speak more than two languages accurately. More so when the mixture has been made at the very foundation. If the mother-tongue is to be the medium of education for four or five years only, I would prefer if I had a ward under me, to put it into a school of the provincial language from the very beginning, to educating it in the mother-tongue for four or five years and then put it into the provincial language school. The latter child would necessarily be at a disadvantage on account of a weak linguistic foundation and would also often provide at his own expense fun to others for mistakes of grammar, idioms and pronunciation. A child between 12 and 15 is too self-conscious to enjoy such fun.

The very idea of bifurcation of courses during the Basic stage is unsound.

Wardha, 20-4-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## CLARIFICATION ABOUT MODI

Referring to the note *Revival of Modi* in the *Harijan* of the 3rd April, I have received the following clarification:

"There appears to be some misapprehension about what we have recently done for Modi in this Province and why. Modi script is adopted (as you stated) only in Marathi and not in the other languages of the Province. There is a wealth of material in Marathi language available only in Modi and Modi is even now current for maintenance of Indian accounts. We have now provided for the teaching of this script at certain stages of school education in Marathi only, but we are making it clear that there is no compulsion about it.

"It has also been made clear that undue importance should not be given to the teaching of the script in the curriculum of the Marathi primary schools to the detriment of the general education of the child, the intention being to provide facilities for learning the script to those who like to do so." I welcome the clarification.

There can be no objection to anybody acquiring the knowledge of Modi or, for the matter of that, any script whatever. At a proper stage in education, there can be provision for the study of a new script (old or current) at the option of the student, just as there can be about an additional language. Along with other optional groups, there can be a script group also. Modi is certainly, as I stated in my note referred to, within certain limits a convenient way of writing, and to students preparing for particular departments and literary career, its knowledge is essential. But if it is allowed to be used once again in public documents and new writings, it will create for the administration and the public the same difficulties which were in existence about a generation ago and the realization of which led to its abandonment. It may also be remembered that if the study of Modi is not considered as an additional burden upon the student, the study of Urdu cannot also be objected to on that ground.

Wardha, 21-4-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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