

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XII. No. 28

AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1948

TWO ANNAS

QUESTION BOX

POST-MORTEM CONDITION OF THE SOUL

Q. "We cannot say if the dead commune with the living, but there is not the least doubt about the fact that the living do influence the dead." (Gandhiji's words as reported in the *Harijan* dated 25-7-'48, p. 179). Can you give a reasoned explanation for the last assertion?

A. No. I am unable to assert or deny anything about the post-mortem condition of the individual soul. I have so trained myself that I do not feel anxious or curious about my post-mortem future. Gandhiji has expressed the exact scope of his faith about it in definite terms. Incidentally, a fitting elucidation of that faith will be found in the speech of H. E. Shri Rajagopalachari at Sevagram reported elsewhere in these columns.

Wardha, 28-8-'48

GANDHIJI ON BOMBAY

Q. As late as 25th January last Gandhiji, while speaking on the formation of linguistic provinces had declared in his prayer meeting:

"After the formation of different provinces Bombay amongst them should not believe that it has nothing to do with Maharashtra, Maharashtra should not feel that it has now no relation with Karnatak, Karnatak should not think that it has no connection with Andhra." (Delhi Diary, Hindustani edition).

Do you think that this implied that Gandhiji had in his mind the formation of Bombay into a separate province as in the existing constitution of the Congress?

A. I do not think it would be proper to draw any such definite inference from this casual and illustrative remark. I do not know what opinion he would have expressed if a question on the point had been specifically put to him. I have a faint memory that when the Congress framed a new constitution for itself in 1934, Gandhiji suggested that Madras and Calcutta might be constituted into separate provinces like Bombay, but the suggestion was not approved by the leaders of those provinces and it was dropped. But even this I would not take as indicative of any definite mind on his part.

Independently of Gandhiji, my personal feeling is that (1) as far as possible, all areas speaking the same language should be placed under the same administration as a matter of convenience; and (2)

all cities with a population of ten lakhs or more should be constituted into separate provinces. This latter I regard as necessary not only on account of the greater cosmopolitan nature of the cities, but also in the interest of rural India. The present administration is a handicap to the villages. The cities, though affecting only a small section of the people, exercise such overpowering influence on government that rural India does not get sufficient facilities to grow. Otherwise, I do not regard the existence of multi-linguistic provinces as an evil by itself. Rather, there is something which can be urged in their favour. If good sense prevailed no great language or its speakers need suffer under multi-linguistic administration.

Wardha, 3-9-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

NOTES

Shri K. P. Khadilkar

The death of Shri K. P. Khadilkar at the age of 75 at Bombay on 26-8-'48 removes from our midst one of the first rank Marathi journalists. As junior colleagues of Lokamanya Tilak, he and the late Shri N. C. Kelkar worked for a long time together in the field of journalism as his assistants. After the death of the Lokamanya, there was a division in the ranks of his followers. Some of them like Shri Gangadharrao Deshapande, Shri Khadilkar and the late Shri Abhyankar of Nagpur threw their weight on the side of Gandhiji, while another section remained as a sort of opposition to Gandhiji's influence. Kakasaheb Khadilkar (as he was popularly called) started a new Marathi Daily at Bombay called the *Navakal* in support of the Congress movement under Gandhiji. He was a forceful writer and an eloquent speaker. He was a good scholar of Sanskrit and a master of the Marathi language. Besides his journalistic activity, he wrote a scholarly commentary on some of the *Upanishads*. He also wrote several historical plays which became very popular on the Marathi stage. For some years past he lay ill in bed, and the responsibility of his paper devolved upon his son, the present editor of the *Navakal*. To Shri Khadilkar personally, his death must be regarded as a welcome deliverance. But that does not minimize the sense of loss to his numerous friends and relations. To them my sympathies.

Wardha, 31-8-'48

Wrong Abbreviations

Closely allied to the practice of using Roman initials is the wrong imitation of the English practice

of abbreviating Indian names. When names are written as, for instance, (Dr.) Rajendra Prasad, Haridas Lalji, Jaiprakash Narain, (Sir) Tenali Vaidyanath Narayanan, it is natural for an Englishman to think, in conformity with the English practice, that the last part of each name is the family name, and the rest a single or compound personal name of those individuals. He would therefore, refer to them in short as Dr. Prasad, Mr. Lalji, Mr. Narain, Sir Tenali, or Sir T. V. Narayanan, and so on. He may be excused for not knowing that Prasad is only a part of Rajendrababu's personal name, which could as well have been spelt Rajendraprasad; that Lalji was father of Haridas, and that the reference to Mr. Lalji alone would convey to the Indian reader that Mr. Haridas Lalji's father was referred to; that Jayaprakash Narain was a single compound name; that in Sir Tenali Vaidyanath Narayanan, Tenali was the name of the place from which that gentleman hailed, and might be regarded as the family name, Vaidyanath was his father's, and Narayanan was his personal name, and that according to the English practice might have been written Sir Narayanan Vaidyanath Tenali, so that with the title it would have been Sir Narayanan or Sir N. V. Tenali.

But that is no reason for Indian journalists and broadcasters to imitate the English practice. If names have to be abbreviated there are Indian ways of doing so: e. g. Rajenbabu, Shri Haridas, Shri Jaiprakash, Sir Narayanan, etc. It sounds odd to the Indian ear to hear persons referred to as Dr. Prasad, Shri Narain (for Jaiprakash Narain), Sir Arcot (for Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar), Dr. Raman (for C. Venkata Raman) — also often mispronounced रमण instead of रामन etc.

Wardha, 19-8-'48

K. G. M.

Mahilashram, Wardha

The Mahila Seva Mandal, Wardha, which has been doing valuable work for the last 25 years in the sphere of women's education, has decided to widen the scope of its activity by instituting a series of five graded examinations at various centres. They have been named Prarambhik, Pravesh, Nitaa, Sunitaa and Paarangataa.

These examinations will ordinarily be held in the months of September and January every year. In the current year, however, they will be held in November next on the 13th and 14th. Candidates for examinations and persons interested in the opening of the centres at their places may please correspond with the Pariksha Mantri, Mahilashram, Wardha.

THE NATION'S VOICE

(Second Edition)

[Being a collection of Gandhiji's speeches in England and Sjt. Mahadev Desai's account of the sojourn — September to December 1931]

Edited by

C. Rajagopalachar and J. C. Kumarappa
Price Rs. Three Postage etc. As. Ten

RURAL SERVICE CAMPS

[Shri Vinoba was invited to open a village service training camp at Raugram near Indore on the Independence day. The camp has been organized by Shri Baijanath Mahodaya, a life worker and for some time a Minister of the old Indore State. The following is a summary of Shri Vinoba's speech.

—D. M.]

RESPONSIBILITY OF INAUGURATING A NEW ACTIVITY

Shri Vinoba said that he was generally unwilling to take part in the opening of an institution. It was a different thing if he was called upon to conclude it; because, in the latter case he could feel that the work was now over and no further harm could accrue if the work which had been carried on was not good. The wise men of India had laid down that the first step in wisdom was not to commence a new activity, and the second was, that if it was commenced, to maintain it till its end. Accordingly, whenever he was asked to open a new activity, he had to make sure as to how it would be conducted and maintained. One who consented to inaugurate an institution must consider himself as one of those who was responsible for its proper conduct. He consented to take part in the opening of that camp because he could reasonably expect that those who had organized that camp would not leave the work incomplete, or neglected. He consented also because he realized the importance of such camps.

VILLAGE SERVICE — PIONEER WORK

He had some experience of this kind of work, said Shri Vinoba. He was of opinion that such institutions could not be successfully carried on by persons who wanted to guide them from a distance without taking any personal part in their activities. Village service was not a programme which could be successfully organized by people, however wise and intelligent, but living away from the institution and desiring to have the work done through employees and volunteers. It was still a work which was in its infancy. It had not a well-prepared code of instructions and technique in readiness. It was pioneering and research work. Those who had realized its importance and had some intuition for it must themselves in the beginning carry it on and through their own experience and work train others for that kind of service. They could train good workers only that way. At any rate, that was Shri Vinoba's way of organizing that work. Whatever guidance he was capable of giving was due to his having carried on such work personally for several years. He had always refused to send instructions or guide people from a distance or through speeches. He invited them to come and stay with him and see how he was doing it and to take such clues from it as they could.

PLACE OF STATE AID

They had now come to a stage when possibly they could get some Government help in their activities. While he would not taboo acceptance of such help, he would like to caution them. It was possible that on account of the availability of State

help, they might extend the scope of their activities in larger areas than they could cope with. The result would be that there would be extension without any depth. A well which was rather narrow in circumference but deep enough to give a constant supply of water was better than a shallow tank capable of becoming a pool for breeding mosquitoes. This caution was particularly necessary where training was concerned.

PLACE OF LECTURES AND SPEECHES

There was a fashion to arrange lectures and speeches in such camps. To a certain extent these were necessary. But they should remember that the more important thing was to teach through work and activity and the lectures must also have a bearing upon the work to be done. Otherwise, they might simply hear interesting talks on matters which had little bearing on their actual work.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Spinning, grinding, sweeping, ploughing, raising of vegetables and fruits were the more necessary and important means and methods of instruction in rural service camps than lectures on various topics. The central objective was to increase the wealth of the villages and to improve their sanitation and health. If they could not make a profitable use of the night-soil and manure, then rural service would fail. The present day villages of India were nurseries of all sorts of diseases and exhibited a state of degeneration. The sense of untouchability had become a great obstacle in the healthy progress of the villages. A village of about one thousand population lost annually three thousand rupees worth of manure because of the neglect of the night-soil. They could learn a good deal from China and Japan in this respect.

IMPORT OF SWARAJ

He had been garlanded and presented with flowers at several places. Only one or two individuals gave him some yarn. There were hardly ten or twenty rounds in each. It meant that the people had lost the spinning tradition. Some were of the opinion that spinning was no longer necessary as Swaraj had come. But that meant that they wanted to lose Swaraj again. If people forgot the main import of Swaraj, its achievement would only provide a means to foment internal quarrels.

HOW MODERN IMPERIALISM WORKS

In the new conditions of life, imperialism of the old type had become a thing of the past. The Roman Empire had lasted for twelve centuries. The British Empire could not do so for more than a century and a half. No country would now be able to establish its imperialistic rule over another for a long time. And so, the new technique of the imperialists was to establish their influence over other countries not through direct government but through trade relations. That was what other countries would attempt to do over India hereafter.

BE ALERT TO BE TRULY FREE

If the people did not remain alert and did not pay sufficient attention to the production of essen-

tial wealth in the country, they would not be able to raise the poor from their fallen condition. It was absolutely essential that the villages should become self-reliant and self-sufficient in the matter of food and clothing, and also in organizing their sanitation, education, defence and justice. India would become free in the true sense of the word only when they could organize such villages.

TRUE INDEPENDENCE

Gandhiji had a true idea of independence. He had understood the importance of the villages and had therefore given the villages the place of honour in his programme. He saw that India was a congregation of small villages and the development of villages was the development of India. He also realized that the atmosphere for non-violence could be sustained only in a decentralized economy. Violence was inevitable in centralization. The political, social and economic organizations of Europe had provided ample proof for this. They had been unable to end war. India could become truly free only if they could avoid such centralization and thereby show to the world an example of true independence. They had not yet attained true freedom. As a matter of fact, none in the world had done so. America and Russia also did not provide right examples of freedom. In those countries even knowledge and opinions had become regimented and had to run in prescribed channels only. Where there was not freedom even to form one's opinion, there could be no true independence.

VILLAGE SERVICE—FUNCTION OF THE INTELLIGENT AND THE GIFTED

Returning to the topic of village service, Shri Vinoba said that some people thought that intelligent people must be at the head of governments and various departments of the State. They might also concede that professors and lecturers in universities should be intelligent people. But they considered that ordinary dull people could be employed in primary education and village work. That was a great fallacy. Most intelligent and gifted people were needed for the training of the child. A child's was a raw brain which had to be carefully developed. It was like creating infinity from zero. Brahmaa created the world from nothing. So it was with those who had to create good citizens out of babies and children.

GANDHIJI'S IDEA OF SWARAJ

Gandhiji not only spoke to us of Swaraj but told us what his idea of Swaraj was. He made the ideal of Swaraj as acquiring authority for serving the poor. If people forgot that the authority which they had obtained would prove to be a power not of creation but of self-destruction, it would become a demonic power and a curse to the country. It must be like the power of the railway engine which did not simply go itself, but carried the whole train with it. In the same way, those in power should carry the whole country with them on their way to progress.

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)

HARIJAN

September 12

1948

SPIN HE MUST

[During the Civil Disobedience movement of 1932-33, Shri Mahadev Desai was placed on 10-3-'32 with Gandhiji and Sardar Vallabhbhai at the Yeravda Central Prison. The Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad, has just published the first volume of Mahadevbhai's Gujarati Diary of the period. It covers the period from 10-3-'32 to 4-9-'32. I give below a free translation of a few extracts from the Diary relating to Gandhiji's devotion to spinning and love for hand-spun and hand-woven fabrics. Please note that these are not the only items under each date.

— K. G. M.]

11-3-'32

Bapu described to me, while he span, the alterations he had made in the *charkha*. He told me that he spins 250 yards every day at present. He complained that he was still feeling fatigued.

7-4-'32

(Bapu) received a fine woolen carpet from Syria. It has dark red, saffron-colour and ash-blue stripes, with fine black designs. The letter accompanying it deserves to be copied in full:

"British Consulate,
Aleppo, Syria,

"Sunday, Jan. 17, After Eng. service.

"Dear Mr. Gandhi,

"The day has come, when being in prison, I feel that you will be free to accept one of our Armenian National Coloured *Killims*, spun and woven by the refugees. I am come to live and work amongst them in view of my country's debt towards these war victims who have passed through such horrors of death, and also because I find that they are the "child"-nation "set in the midst of those at strife." The colours are red — sacrifice; sky-blue — hope; gold — the light.

"Yours with deepest gratitude for the message you are bringing to our world,

Moto Edith Roberto"

12-4-'32

(Bapu) wanted to dictate a letter. I was spinning at the time. Bapu observed, "He cannot be asked to stop spinning." Thereupon Vallabhbhai said, "You can dictate it to me." Bapu said, "All right, I'll not have pity on you," and he gave him the dictation.

13-4-'32

There is pain in Bapu's left elbow-bone, and also on the right thumb. But he seems to have made a vow for the last three days to spin 375 rounds every day. Dr. Mehta has advised complete rest to both the hands. But Bapu says, "The pain does not increase by spinning." It seems he has over-worked on the wheel because of the national week. He was fatigued. Generally the spinning is over by 3 p.m. But as it was the last day of the week, he

did not feel easy until he had spun 500 yards, and so he continued to spin till he finished at 4 p.m. the required number of rounds.

14-4-'32

Bapu seems to have determined to spin 500 yards daily henceforth. He was well exhausted today.

16-4-'32

Who can defeat or understand Bapu in his insatiable greed — greed for service? There is pain in the hands, doctors disapprove, but he insists upon saying that the pain has nothing to do with spinning, and has spun 405 rounds today. He says, "See, how I progress!" Added to this, is his greed for Urdu. He wants to refresh his knowledge of Urdu, and to increase the practice of reading it quickly. Raihanabehn writes to him in Urdu. He sends replies in Urdu, and asks her to show him his mistakes. He addresses her as his 'Teacher' and signs himself her 'Pupil'! Not satisfied with this he has sent for all the Urdu books from the Prison Library and commenced reading them at the morning meal-time.

17-4-'32

I have referred to Bapu's greed yesterday. With the ostensible purpose of accepting the doctor's advice, i. e. of giving rest to the left elbow-bone he has hit upon a new service. The *Yeravada Charkha* of Bardoli can be so adapted that the spindle can be suspended on the right side, so as to allow the wheel to be turned by the left hand. He commenced to spin in this manner today. I doubted if this would give him the necessary rest. For, the left hand would be engaged in turning the wheel while the right would draw the thread. It would only change the place of fatigue on the two hands. Nevertheless, Bapu commenced his experiment. I had tried this at Nasik when I had pain in my right hand, but not having succeeded in drawing any thread, I gave up the attempt. But Bapu persisted. He continued his efforts for an hour and a half and span seven slivers. From the last sliver he could draw thread in the same way, as with the other hand. He was pleased and said to me, "See, I have spun 95 rounds. I had a balance of 282 rounds in my favour yesterday, so the two together make up my undertaking of 375 rounds per day." I said, "But Bapu, you get no rest in this!" Bapu replied, "With practice, this will bring me the necessary rest. But even if it did not, it is a profitable business. Because, in case the right hand refuses to work altogether, it is good to cultivate the left hand practice."

18-4-'32

Bapu made changes in the spindle-holder of the *Yeravda Charkha*. The axle-bearers of yesterday's wheel were not suitable, and so he fitted up his own wheel, and continued his experiment on left hand spinning. The result was better than yesterday. He had spun 95 rounds in three and a half hours yesterday. Today he span 85 rounds in two and a half hours. Vallabhbhai remarked, "This is not paying. It is too late to form new habits now. You must carry on the old practice." Bapu said,

"None can deny that I have made today good progress over yesterday," Vallabhbhai said, "If the Ashram people come to know of this, they will begin to spin with the left hand, and a new sect will arise!" Bapu said, "Of course, they will know. I shall write to them." At this Vallabhbhai became a little serious and said, "Then it would be better to teach every child to spin with both the hands." Bapu replied, "You are right. In Japan they do teach boys to use both the hands."

He wrote to Narandasbhai, relating how his experiment commenced, and the thoughts arising from it. He recommended to the Ashram inmates to acquire the practice of doing every type of work with both the hands.

An old man of 61 has sent today a piece of self-spun and self-woven khaddar for Bapu. There must be so many of such devoted people in all the corners of India.

MAHADEV DESAI

(Translated from Gujarati)

SHRI RAJAJI AT SEVAGRAM

Workers of about ten institutions of Wardha and Sevagram gathered together on the 27th to meet Shri Rajaji, who paid his first visit to Sevagram after the demise of Gandhiji. He regarded it more as a pilgrimage for himself than a Governor-General's gracious visit to a public institution. He spent four hours visiting various institutions of Sevagram and having talks and chats with the inmates. He was overwhelmed with feelings on entering Bapu's empty hut, and threw himself down on Bapu's mattress which is always kept arranged in the same way as it used to be in Bapu's time, as if his arrival was always expected. For a few minutes he remained motionless with tears. Then gently getting up he sat behind the partition leaning against the eastern wall of the hut. The Ashram people had proposed to meet him in another hut, but as he took his seat there, they all gathered together in Bapu's room and a short prayer was conducted by Shri Kashiben Gandhi and Shri Prabhakarji. After two minutes' silence, Shri Kashiben sang Bapu's favourite hymn *Vaishnava jana to tene kahiye* and Prabhakarji led the *Ramadhun*. Thereafter Rajaji visited Ba's hut and then one after the other various institutions, namely the Talimi Sangh, the Kasturba Dispensary and the Khadi Vidyalaya. He addressed a few words to the students and members of the Talimi Sangh and then to the workers of Wardha and Sevagram at Mahadev Bhavan in the premises of the Khadi Vidyalaya. The gathering numbered about three to four hundred.

It was usual, Shri Rajaji said, for a visitor to say on such occasions that he was happy to meet them. But he could not say as much on that visit. He was indeed glad to meet them, but was overwhelmed with sorrow to see the house of Gandhiji.

The traditional custom was that they could not celebrate a marriage along with a funeral ceremony. But the occasion of his visit appeared something

of that type. But whatever misfortunes might come, they should help one another to overcome them. In that gathering, for those who were young, the Ashram was their field of action. They could forget their sorrow by intense application to their work, and forgetting everything else through work. But it was difficult for those, who like himself were no longer young, to forget their sorrows.

It was a good thing that one of themselves, a common man of the people, had been appointed to the highest office of the State. The good did not consist in the fact that it was *he* who was made the Governor-General, but the fact that it was a man belonging to the ordinary class, who was so installed. It was that fact, which gave particular gratification to the people in greeting him.

They — the workers — must now carry on their activities under the inspiration of that Original Source, who had created all these activities. Bapu had left behind him many loyal and devoted workers, who had served him while he was alive, and who would now serve them hereafter. They were their trustees who would guide and guard them. But they needed no trustees, if they had faith in God.

Bapu had tried to attain perfection by developing perfect detachment and conquest over desires, but he had not attained the fullest detachment. His love for his country and his countrymen and his desire to see them happy and progressing towards good had remained till the end. This might be considered as his imperfection. It was believed that if a man died with his desires unsatisfied, his spirit would hover round over the institutions which he had created for working out his various ideas for the happiness of the country; that is to say over the *charkhas* and the looms, and the dispensaries and the patients there. His spirit must always keep hovering round about them, feeling happy at every little activity that they might do in pursuance of his ideals and feeling agitated and dissatisfied when somebody did something which was bad and impure or contrary to his ideals. Aberrations of the workers would make his spirit agitated and disturb his peace; and their good endeavours gladden it. If they kept his institutions pure and useful in the same way as they were when he was alive, it would give him peace. If they spoiled them through their impure acts and thoughts, they would not be able to give him any peace, even if they prayed that his soul should attain peace.

These institutions, which he had raised himself, where he had lived and had worked out his various ideas, were more important memorials of him than where he died and was cremated. People not only of India but from all over the world would be anxious to visit these centres and would want to see them actively carrying on the activities which he had started and also go around the places in which he had lived and worked. He hoped that every child, young and old person there would do his or her level best to keep the atmosphere of these

institutions always pure and clean and to make them thrive with industriousness and love in accordance with his ideals.

After taking his forenoon meals at the Ashram, he left for Nagpur at about 1-30 p. m.

Wardha, 28-8-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

ROMAN INITIALS

The editor of the Bengali *Harijan Patrika* draws my attention to the rather queer way in which initials in Roman letters are being used and have often to be compulsorily used in Indian languages. Thus, for instance, if a person is referred to or signs himself in an English communication as G. P. K., and the translator does not know what these letters stand for, and has to refer to him in an Indian language communication, he is compelled to transliterate these as *Jee. Pee. Kay*. These convey, if at all, absolutely a wrong idea of the name. For the name may well be Ghanashyam Purushottam Kher, the proper initials for which would be *Gha.* (घ) *Pu.* (पु.) *Khe.* (खे.) in the alphabets of the Sanskrit system.

It sounds very queer to the ear when you hear an Indian language radio pronouncing the Governor-General's name as Shri Si. (C.) Rajagopalachari. Either the whole word Chakravarti ought to be uttered or that initial should be dropped altogether. If it is necessary to refer to the initials, the first syllables of all these names should be given instead of the Roman letters : say, Cha. (च) Raa. (रा) and not Si. (सी) Aar. (आर.).

It is difficult to correct a wrong practice, when once it has become hardened. It can be done only with the help of the authors of such names. If I indicate at some place or in the signature my full name, or at least the first syllables (e. g. *Ki. Gha. Ma.* instead of *K. G. M.*), even in English, the difficulty of the Indian translator could be removed. But it would appear equally odd in English. In South India they have adopted the rather unusual and equally odd course of putting down Roman initials mixed up with Indian script thus : T. S. N. राव (Rao).

As long as our names come to our ears initially through English, this oddity will persist. I would suggest that translators into Indian languages, when they do not know what the initials stand for, should in such cases render such initials as *K. G. M.* into क. ग. म. (*Ka. Ga. Ma.*) and not के. जी. जेम्. (*Ke. Jee. Em.*), being nearer to the correct name, if not absolutely so. Of course, if the name is familiar, it should be rendered correctly, as कि. घ. म. (*Ki. Gha. Ma.*) in my case.

Wardha, 19-8-'48

K. G. M.

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By Nirmal Kumar Bose

With a Foreword by Gandhiji

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ASSAM

In Assam the main production centres round rice but the province imports articles such as *dal*, oil, sugar, textile goods, leather goods and kerosene oil. The implications of this economy is that unless Assam is in a position to produce the requisite surplus of rice to meet all its imports, it will always be rapidly drifting towards poverty because all the imported articles have to be paid for out of local products. As conditions are, it does not appear as though Assam can afford to import great many articles as the surplus production is small. The way Assam can solve its own problem of poverty is by a twofold programme. One is to increase its own products and the other is to restrict its imports.

Its own production may be increased by trying to produce all the articles it needs. For instance, it may produce mustard oil seed in larger quantity and crush that seed by bullock *ghanis* ready for the consumers. Similarly, its hides instead of being exported can be tanned locally and the leather utilized. It may also import raw cotton, spin it into yarn and have it woven for its use. Assam has a great tradition of weaving amongst its womenfolk. While this tradition is being preserved, we must also build up hand-spinning as an industry to feed the local looms. In this way, if we can produce cloth so much of the paddy that is now being exported to obtain cloth from Bombay or Ahmedabad would be saved in favour of the people on the land to enrich the diet of the people and improve their economic condition by taking up all the slack moments and utilizing them for gainful occupations.

Introduction of large-scale industries such as Rice Mills, Oil Mills, Sugar Mills, Textile Mills and Paper Mills for other than newsprint will ultimately lead to unemployment and consequent poverty. It is a short-sighted policy and the Assam Government would be well advised to reconsider their programme and lay out a fairly wise and long-range plan which will supply the needs of the people rather than let the glamour of it catch the eyes of greedy industrialists.

One of the peculiar problems of Assam is the question of settling tribal people. This requires a considerable amount of study of their habits and their requirements. At the present time their system of cultivation is very primitive. They have to be sympathetically brought into settling down in low areas and educated into adopting better methods of living. This is one of the main responsibilities of every Assamese and if it is taken up as such, I have no doubt that the primitive tribes will soon contribute their share to the Assamese culture.

Another question that needs consideration is the relationship of the foreign tea-planters in the province as citizens. We have to review their position to see if they are contributing their equitable share to the wellbeing of the province and that the labourers of the tea estates do not become merely

drawers of water and hewers of wood. With the departure of the British the growing of tea as a commercial product may also have to be reviewed. In our country which is short of food and other prime necessities, production should be centred round commodities for use rather than for exchange.

One is struck by the existence side by side of the luxuriant growth of grass and foliage along with the skiny bony condition of the cattle. This phenomenon would seem to be the result of a lack of a balanced diet for the cattle. They do not get any concentrates like oil cakes. The proximity of the tea gardens attracts what little oil cakes are available for manural purposes. One is also surprised at the comparatively good condition of the cattle at the tea plantations themselves. The poor condition of the animals calls for the immediate attention of the Government to have a thorough study of their feed etc. made and to take adequate measures to improve both the breed and the availability of proper fodder.

Assam has been blessed by nature in many ways, including natural scenery and beauty. Consequently the people are artistic and inclined towards handicrafts and small industries. If proper leadership is forthcoming and if the Government is well-advised, the people's activity can be channelled into such ways as to contribute not only to production to meet their economic needs but to their cultural growth. I trust, therefore, that the newly attained freedom will be utilized for the good of the common man rather than in attempts to exploit him.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

THE CHRISTIANS OF JASHPUR

In the *Harijan* dated 23-5-'48 Shri Thakkarbapa in the course of an article entitled *Unexplored States of Chhattisgarh in C. P.* had referred to the missionary activities of the Christians in the Jashpur State of Chhattisgarh. The following sentence occurred in that article:

"Converted Oraons of Jashpur State are no better than rice Christians of China. They are converted merely for the sake of their belly and nothing else."

This unfortunate sentence has deeply hurt the Christian readers of that State and I have received several letters emphatically protesting against this slander of theirs before the world. I regret I missed its import while editing, for Shri Thakkarbapa had generously allowed me permission to make necessary changes. The condemnation of a whole community in a generalized manner is always painful to the feelings of the readers concerned. In this poverty-stricken and caste-ridden land of ours, it should not be taken as surprising if there are some who are induced to change their religion out of materialistic considerations. In societies more educated and polished and also better socially placed, we come across people who sell their daughters' and even wives' honour for economic considerations. If, therefore, some famine-stricken people and people in

continuous poverty were induced to save themselves by accepting conversion to a particular religion or sect, I do not think that much blame attaches to them.

And, because there are people who may have been induced to be converted on materialistic considerations, could all converts be condemned on this ground? If we examine the matter deeply, the fault lies not in the conversion to Christianity or Islam or any other religion, but in the application of different laws of marriage, inheritance, and rules of social conduct, food, dress, etc., accompanying the conversion to these two religions. If the faith were to change without change in society, conversion to Christianity or Islam would not have any more political or social importance than that to, say, the Arya Samaj. This needs to be remedied by enacting common laws for all citizens, irrespective of their creeds. But, this matter apart, what we must look at is whether, on the whole, the standard of life, intelligence and morals of the converts have not improved in comparison with those of their unconverted kinsmen. And from this point of view, I, for one, have believed that the missionary activities have had a beneficial effect upon the backward classes of our country; nay, not only on the backward classes, even upon the more advanced classes. It was not without discovering something of intrinsic worth in Christianity, something which was not easily to be had from Hinduism or Islam as they exist in India (outside of Gandhiji's influence), that men like Manishankar Ratnaji Bhatt, N. V. Tilak, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and so many others in all parts of India were induced to accept that faith. I received part of my school and college education in missionary institutions, and I owe much to my Christian teachers, — even their Bible classes, sermons, songs and prayers, — in spite of, at times, their uninformed and bigoted criticism of Hinduism, for whatever broad outlook I possess. Nothing is an unmixed good or an unmixed evil, and Christianity, like British rule itself, has had its dark side also. But, on the whole, I believe that the introduction of Christianity in India has not been disadvantageous to our people. Both Hinduism and Islam needed to come into contact with it.

Coming specifically to the Christians of Jashpur, the correspondents have questioned the correctness of Shri Thakkarbapa's statement of facts. Without desiring to allow this controversy to go on, I think that in fairness to the correspondents, I should allow one of their representatives to represent his view of the facts:

"You are not aware that we, poor aboriginals, have made and are making heavy sacrifices for the education of our children.

"Thanks to the Jesuit Fathers, we have long ago understood the need of education. We have made some progress and, had it not been for the wooden policy of the State administration, we would have made much more.

"We were allowed to erect pig-sties for our pigs but not even a hut for the education of our children. It has taken us 30 years to secure permission to erect any village schools. Yet we started classes long ago in many villages. Our children gathered under trees, in an abandoned house, in a stable, in a verandah, and there, for many years together our schools have been going on. And, in these miserable schools, we paid fees, for we are not beggars.

"Then some of our children went to the various Mission Middle Schools. The 500 boys and 150 girls in Ginabaha and the 400 boys and 160 girls in Gholeng pay the tuition fees prescribed by the Code and some extra fee besides. The 500 who are boarders in those schools are not fed by the Mission. It is we, their parents, who feed them. It is we who carry on our shoulders, from our homes, the whole amount of rice and *dal* that will be needed for the whole school year, and, as to vegetables, it is our children who, by working daily in the garden, help in growing them. For we are not beggars nor 'rice Christians' as dear Thakkarbapa thinks.

"It was only in 1946 that we were at least allowed to erect 37 village school buildings. We, poor aboriginals, built those 37 schools at our own expense and with our own labour. We still require many more schools, and we shall work towards that end.

"We have helped substantially with our own money and with our labour towards the erection of the 5 Central Middle Schools for boys and the 2 Central Middle Schools for girls—the only institutions of that standard outside Jashpuranagar.

"True, the Mission also had to run into debt in order to complete the work and maintain such large establishments, for under the wooden administration of the Political Department, not a pice of building grant or of grant-in-aid was ever given. And moreover, the Mission does wholly maintain some orphans and cripples and runs dispensaries and other works of charity.

"We pay rents and the school cess as everyone else, and on top of it we build our own schools in which we pay fees for the education of our children without any return from the State. This has been going on for years.

"We have been groaning under this unjust treatment. We have often found the burden crushingly heavy, but we have not given up our schools.

"Yes, we are poor, much poorer than many Harijans who enjoy scholarships and free student-ships and what not. We, poor aboriginals, have been neglected all along.

"We had hoped that, with the merger of 1-1-'48 an era of equity and justice was being ushered in. Will our hopes be frustrated because

we are Christians, and are not prepared to give up Christianity? If veteran and venerable servants of the country and friends of the poor like Thakkarbapa, who wield undisputed influence in Government circles publicly set their face against the converted Oraons of Jashpur, our hopes of relief are gone for ever."

I have no authority to give any assurance on behalf of any government. But I am sure that Shri Ravishankar Shukla, the Premier of C. P., no less than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, believes in the absolutely secular basis of the Indian State, and under his government no citizen need apprehend that he will be unjustly treated because of his caste or creed.

Wardha, 29-8-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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During Gandhiji's lifetime and now much more after his demise we have been receiving inquiries regarding literature by and about him. As it happens we have been mainly responsible in bringing out his writings in book form. To be helpful, therefore, in regard to such enquiries we have now brought out a complete up-to-date catalogue of our publications in English and three Indian languages, viz. Gujarati, Hindustani and Marathi.

This catalogue however does not and of course cannot give an adequate idea of the vast mass of literature by and about Gandhiji. We have therefore undertaken to bring out a complete catalogue of Gandhian literature which is already in press and will be out by the end of October. A thorough attempt to include all books bearing on the subject in as many Indian Languages as possible as well as in English has been made and we have no doubt all lovers of Gandhian literature will find this publication a very reliable and useful guide. This catalogue will at least indicate the name of the book, the publisher and the price in each case.

Our own catalogues are available at our office here and at all our branches.

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Ahmedabad, 8-9-1948

JIVANJI DESAI

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