

HARIJAN

16 Pages

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

PROSELYTIZING METHODS

I have more than once received complaints against the proselytizing methods adopted by some of the Roman Catholic institutions of India. About two years ago I had heard unfavourably about the ways adopted by their priests and workers among the *adivasis* of Madhya Pradesh. A few months ago, a worker in North Gujarat reported to me a case in which a father had placed his children in a Convent school far away in another province. He had received unfavourable reports about his children's progress and suspected that they were systematically tutored so as to bring about their ultimate conversion to Christianity. He found difficulties in interviewing them and the Convent authorities even refused to hand over the children to their parents when they wanted to withdraw them from the school.

Recently I have received a pamphlet and letters from a Sindhi merchant of Bombay. Though himself an orthodox Hindu, he desired to educate his son in Missionary institutions, while the boy was still a child. Proficiency in the English language being regarded by many as the soul of good education and a sure passport to prosperity in the world, the parents with means enough to spend lavishly upon the education of their children, often prefer Mission schools and boarding houses run by European teachers to those run by their own countrymen. And so this boy was brought up in several Missionary schools and finally in one or another of the institutions of the Spanish St. Xavier's Mission in Bombay. It appears that the father did notice now and again that the boy's religious ideas were leaning towards Christianity and that he had been developing a dislike for the religion of his forefathers under the influence of certain Jesuit contacts. He protested against this with the Spanish Mission authorities more than once, but was satisfied at the time with, according to him, the assurances given by them, and so continued to keep the boy under the same educational influence until he had finished his University education. By this time the boy had fully imbibed and mentally accepted the Christian faith in its most intransigent European form and even after passing his school examinations he continued to visit the European Jesuit

Fathers in the school. The father noticed this, felt worried and tried to save the situation by carrying on simultaneous correspondence with the boy's Jesuit teachers and professors and the Catholic Lord Bishop of Bombay. It appears that the father was led to believe that the boy would not be baptized before the completion of 21 years of age. But it was discovered later that before attaining the age of 21 years, he was baptized on a morning without the knowledge of his father. The baptism took place in a distant church, far from the boy's home and away from direct Spanish or Jesuit influence.

When he discovered later that the boy had been actually baptized while the correspondence was going on, he felt highly indignant. While all the time preparations were going on to baptize the boy and even after it had taken place the fact had been concealed from him by every one concerned. He came to know of it through sources other than his son, the Jesuit Fathers and the Bishop of Bombay. He complained to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay and to the Chief Minister of Bombay about this concealment and asked them to investigate the matter thoroughly. It appears that none of them were sufficiently impressed to take the complaint seriously and so nothing came out of it.

Meanwhile the boy continued to stay with the father, but did not feel quite comfortable under his roof, and desired to establish himself separately. So with the help of his religious patrons he sought out an employment with the American Jesuit Mission in Patna. They secured this for him ostensibly on the condition that he obtained his father's permission to accept it. The son asked for this permission, but the father refused it. The father's permission was hardly a legal necessity and the condition was perhaps laid down only in order to show that the religious advisers had always acted in a manner that was above board. But since the father's response was not favourable, the condition appears to have been waived. The service was secured and the son left for Patna, in spite of the father's refusal.

The disappointed parent has now published the whole story and correspondence in pamphlet form. He has also written to me

personally stating what his grievance is. The following are relevant extracts from it :

"He (my son) was seduced out of my house by the missionaries who manoeuvred his conversion to Christianity. I do concede the right of my son to his way of thinking after he attained majority. But as you will notice the missionaries did not keep their word with me, and the sedulously poisoned his mind against Hinduism and Hindu gods when he was a minor.

"After my son became a Christian, I did not pick up any quarrel with my son, nor do I propose to do it today or any day in the future. I offered him a special separate room in the house if he chose. And I repeatedly requested him not to leave the house.....(assuring him) that (he) would be at complete liberty to follow the faith he had chosen.

"I did not appeal to the Chief Minister for reconversion of my son to the Hindu fold. I can be no judge of my son. But I went to the Chief Minister to hold an investigation into the conduct of the Jesuit Fathers, who betrayed me and my confidence.

"He (the Chief Minister) passed on my communication for departmental disposal.....(The Departmental reply) tells me that Mr Moolchand's (i.e. the son's) conversion cannot be attributed to the proselytizing activities carried out at St. Xavier's! To a man like me, it only means that the St. Xavier's does carry on proselytizing activities. Can the Secular State allow it?"

Conversions will always take place, and also the efforts to convert others to one's own way of thinking. They arise from the inherent germ of earnestness in man. An earnest soul will seek new light, and, when he feels that he has obtained something very good, he will try to implant it in others. The evil in this kind of activity arises when zeal is mistaken for earnestness and is measured by the number of conversions made and expresses itself in a planned scheme. If the story given by the Sindhi merchant is true, it is not an instance of earnestness on the part of the Jesuit Fathers, but of a planned lay out. It cannot be an earnest effort on the part of proselytizers when there is suppression of facts and adoption of camouflage devices and scheming.

At the same time, parents of the type of this Sindhi gentleman have to thank themselves for such consequences as above. It is clear that there was considerable negligence on the part of the father. He kept his son in the same environment, even after he found what shape the son's mind was taking. If a parent is earnest about his own religion, he must either carefully provide for it in his own home, or select an institution where this is done to his satisfaction. It should be remembered that even if parents have lost all earnestness about religious matters and practice of noble virtues, intelligent, sensitive and well-behaved children will normally be quite earnest in everything they study—whether it is religion, a language or a branch of science, or work, or play. They will take to it earnestly and accept

in faith whatever their teachers tell them about it. This will be particularly so, when the teacher is lovable and kind and a man of sterling virtues, and has impressive and winning manners.

Most urbanized Hindus, even when they are in their own behaviour ritualistically religious and orthodox, have been, during the last century or more, altogether indifferent to a religious upbringing of their children. Parents do not care whether their children get any religious training at all; and if they do, whether it is one consistent with their own faith or approved by them; all that they care for is that the children should receive good education in languages, mathematics and other mundane subjects. But it is better that a child should be brought up in a truly religious atmosphere under the direct care of a teacher of noble character, even if his religion is different from the child's than that it should have no religious training at all at its tender age.

Such cases will happen now and again. It is a conflict between different ways of thinking, and is a part of the process of the general breaking up and rebuilding of human society, which is going on all over the world. Religion will necessarily play its part in it. But if peaceful relations among the followers of different religions is to be ensured, proselytization methods must be carefully controlled and the zeal for bringing as many people into one's own fold as possible must abate. Such should not be the motive behind missionary service. Let me remind the missionaries what Gandhiji said at the Missionary Conference at Madras on 14-2-1916 :

"If there is any substance in what I have said, will not the great missionary bodies of India to whom she owes a deep debt of gratitude for what they have done and are doing, do still better and serve the spirit of Christianity better by dropping the goal of proselytizing while continuing their philanthropic work?"

—*Economics of Khadi*, p. 4.

At the same time, parents must not send their children to boardings etc. of other religions, unless they are prepared to face the possible consequences of doing so. There seems to be a notion among some that since India is a secular State, no religious instruction can be imparted in any of its public institutions, even if they are run by the people of a particular denomination, and that the Government must not recognize or help them. This is not correct. Education without any religious instruction is of little value. But it should be instruction of one's own religion and not slander or invidious comparison of other religions. And in this respect the followers of other religions have much to learn from Hindus. During the course of not less than three or four thousand years Hindu society has witnessed several major and minor religious conflicts, and has learnt wholesome lessons from it. They have evolved a society in

which its members are accustomed to live among persons believing in scores of different religious sects, and have learnt to regard piety and purity of mind as more important than allegiance to a particular deity or teacher. The zeal for proselytization, therefore, never appeals to them and is particularly abhorrent if it results in breaking up homes, and the convert member is not satisfied with following his new creed but indulges in ridiculing that of others, or behaving at the time of their religious rites in a way which will give them offence.

I know that a good many devout Christians honestly believe that the soul of even a saintly man will not be saved unless he accepts and acknowledges Jesus Christ as his saviour. They, therefore, consider it to be their duty to impress upon the mind of every non-Christian the importance of this necessity. It is as difficult to dislodge them from this belief as to dislodge *Sanatanis* from their various beliefs about untouchability, interdining, intermarriage etc. But honest beliefs are not necessarily correct. And some of our dearly-held honest beliefs have to be re-examined in the light of further knowledge.

It is also necessary to add that the difficulties created by conversion are more due to the social cleavage brought about by it than by the change of forms of denomination and worship. If the secular laws and social customs are common for all, irrespective of religion, it would be possible for a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian and a Sikh to live together in the same social group, even as it is possible in Gujarat and Saurashtra for Shaivas, Vaishnavas, Jains and Arya Samajists to inter-dine, inter-marry and live together. It is the different secular laws associated with different religions that contribute to the creation of hostilities.

Wardha, 28-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

PS.: It is necessary to add that from my correspondence with the Lord Bishop of Bombay I do not think that he can be blamed for the fact that the conversion had already taken place when the father was in correspondence with him. Until I had pointed out even the father had not realized that his first letter to the Bishop bore the same date on which his son was baptized. The Bishop assures me that he signed the necessary papers for baptism in the usual course of official duties and did not realize or suspect that he had become a party to the baptism of a person about whom there was or might be a complaint. On receipt of the father's letter, he lost no time in replying to him and invited him for an interview. The father, however, was not in a mood to see him and carried on an inconclusive correspondence for a while. Thus neither the Bishop nor the father knew that the boy had already been baptized before the first letter of the father had been delivered to the Bishop.

K. G. M.

Second PS.: When I wrote the above I scarcely had a complete idea of the extreme form of the zeal of the Catholics for conversion. Shri Odharam Bulchand sends me a copy of a recent letter received by him from his son. The following sentence occurs therein:

"They have to convert Indian youths because Christ has told them to make the whole world Catholic and that he will help them to the end of the world. And the end of the world will come only when there is 'One fold and one Shepherd', i.e., when the whole world is Catholic."

It is clear that the above belief was instilled into the young man's mind, while he was still a child and unable to think rationally. If his mental and moral growth has not ceased, some day he is bound to realize that the belief instilled in him is irrational.

It appears that "One World" is now the common goal of all mankind. The difference of opinion is only with regard to 'the fold and the Shepherd'. Catholicism offers one, Communism another, Americanism a third. There are also others. Islam had certainly offered once; I do not know if it has since withdrawn from the field. Dalmiaism is also one. And, then, of course, we stand by our Gandhism, and urge it as the only solution for mankind.

Unfortunately many of them hold quite opposite creeds. How is the poor humanity to decide, which really is true? So the safe rule is that every one may hold to his belief very sincerely and no harm can ensue from such various and even contradictory beliefs, if every one agreed to adopt the purest means—truth and non-violence—to achieve an end. Since some of the beliefs conflict mutually, friction is bound to arise at some stage. Satyagraha, or resistance through self-suffering must be the ultimate sanction for meeting it, and not war, fraud, deception etc.

If the world is not going to be saved until it accepts Christ of the Catholic creed, Allah of the Koranic creed, Marx of the Soviet creed, or Gandhi of either the Congress or the *Sarvodaya* creed, the adherent of each creed must feel confident that the world will realize the truth some day and accept it willingly, if those who swear by it are perfect examples of their creed.

Wardha, 7-7-'50

K. G. M.

By J. C. Kumarappa

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MUSLIMS OF AYODHYA

Shri Akshaya Brahmachari is a Shri-vaishnav *sadhu* of Ayodhya. He is also a secretary of the Fyzabad District Congress Committee, and a member of the Uttar Pradesh Provincial Congress Committee, and is well known to the leaders of U.P. as an earnest worker. Fyzabad and Ayodhya are adjacent to each other; in fact, practically they constitute one town and have a common municipality. Since 1949, or a little earlier, this place has disturbed Hindu-Muslim cordiality in a regrettable manner, in which the Muslims have been subjected to much injustice by the Hindus. Shri Akshaya Brahmachari and Shri Siddheshwariprasad (the President of the Town Congress Committee) and a few other workers are very much distressed about it. At one stage (January 1950), when the situation did not improve even after their best efforts, Shri Akshaya Brahmachari undertook a fast as a last resort. The fast lasted from 30th January to 4th February when it was given up on the U. P. Home Minister's assurance that he would do the needful.

Shri Akshaya complains that there has been no inquiry nor the redress of grievances which should have followed the assurance. The situation remains as grievous as it was; in fact, it has worsened and been made more difficult for the Muslims in future. Therefore, Shri Akshaya is again worried; and he has announced his intention to go on a fast again from August 22.

The following are the main facts of the case according to Shri Akshaya Brahmachari:

There is in Ayodhya a mosque known as Babari Masjid. It is about 425 years old. Some people believe that the mosque was built on the site and out of materials of a temple of Rama, which was deliberately destroyed by the then Muslim rulers. It is difficult to say what element of truth there is in this story. There is a burial ground near this mosque. On 13th November 1949, Shri Akshaya learnt that the tombs in this burial ground were being dug out. He himself went to the spot and saw this work in process. In the middle of this graveyard there was a foundation, known among the Muslims as Kanati Masjid. A platform was being raised on its site. The Muslims were full of fear. Under section 145 Cr. Pro. Code, they made a petition to the City Magistrate to stop this injustice, but no action was taken on it. Shri Akshaya saw the District Magistrate personally in private and talked things over with him. This led to a curious result. Two days later, on the night of the 15th, three men entered his house and made an attack on him. From what they said, Shri

Akshaya found that they knew what had transpired between him and the District Magistrate in private. Ultimately section 144 of the Cr. Pro. Code was promulgated; but it was used only for preventing the Muslims from going to the place. The Hindus could go freely.

The digging of the tombs was followed by a programme of reciting the *Ramayana* for nine days at that place. This, in turn, was followed for some days by feasting and distribution of food in front of the Babari Masjid. Propaganda was carried on for this purpose through loud-speakers installed on tongas and motor-cars proclaiming that the birthplace of Rama was being regained and people should visit it for *darshan*. People went in hundreds. Speeches were delivered telling the people that the Babari Masjid was to be converted into a *Rama-mandir*. Government officials attended the recitations of the *Ramayana*. Some more old tombs and holy places were demolished and the idols of Hindu gods were installed in their places. The people thought that all this was being done with the sanction of the Government and must therefore be in order.

Thereafter, at 9 a.m. on December 23, 1949, the District Magistrate intimated to Shri Akshaya that having received information at six o'clock in the morning, through a named person that an idol of Rama had been placed in the Babari Masjid during the night, he himself had visited the place and seen it. This was surprising since section 144 was in force and while the police pickets, who were guarding the place, did not know of what had taken place inside, an outsider had come to know about it at as early as 6 a.m. The District Magistrate did not consider it necessary to inquire how this could happen. Nor did he have the idol removed without loss of time. Till 12 in the noon that day, there were only a few men present at the place and, had he meant it, the removal of the idol could have been easily effected. But this was not done. Next day it was again announced on the loud-speakers that *Bhagwan* (God) had manifested Himself in the Babari Masjid and people were invited to go there for *darshan*. And again crowds and exciting speeches followed. Gandhiji, Congress Governments and Jawaharlal were maligned. The speakers said that there was not a temple left in Pakistan, and so in Ayodhya too they should allow no *masjid* or burial ground to remain. Even some old Congressmen participated in this inciting propaganda. The argument was: A people's government had been established in Bharat. This meant that what the majority liked must happen. Since 85 per cent of the population of Ayodhya did not like the existence of a mosque there, no one could now remove the idol from that place. Even some members of the Congress party in the Legislative Assembly indulged in this kind of irresponsible talk. Afterwards an order was passed under section 145 Cr. Pr. Code, the worship of the idol was

continued and the Muslims were ordered to refrain from offering *namaz* in that mosque until a competent court had pronounced its decision on the dispute. The position is that it is now for the Musalmans to establish their right; the burden of a lingering litigation has been laid on them.

Another incident is as follows:

A certain Musalman was the proprietor of a restaurant, named "Star Hotel". The informer, who has been referred to above, informed the Collector one day that there were arms hidden in that hotel. A search was made but nothing of the kind was recovered. Four men were found on the premises. One of them was from Sultanpur. He had come to this hotel to purchase biscuits. He was arrested under Section 109 Cr. Pr. Code. He was released later on. The District Magistrate ordered the proprietor of the hotel to vacate it and actually got it vacated in his own presence there and then. Later, possession of the shop was given to another person, who started his own concern in it, and called it "Gomati Hotel". Its opening ceremony was performed by the District Judge himself, other Government officials being also present. It is said that the proprietor of the "Star Hotel" is an old nationalist Muslim and at one time had been boycotted by League-Muslims for his nationalist views. This is mentioned just to show that what had happened was not attributable to any grievance against that man on account of his previous participation in anti-Hindu agitations. He took legal proceedings and succeeded; but, even then, he has not been able to obtain possession of the shop so far.

The third incident is worse on account of the callousness behind it. A Muslim woman had died. There are several burial grounds in Ayodhya. Her relations commenced to dig the ground for her burial in a nearby graveyard. But some Hindus would not let them do so. The relations went to the City Magistrate. It was the duty of the Magistrate to have helped them. Instead, he said, since the Hindus objected to the burial on that ground, they had better go to another. They complied and went elsewhere; but another batch of Hindus appeared on the spot and put their opposition to the burial taking place there. The City Magistrate thereupon asked them to go to a third one. In this way they had to try one burial ground after another. There was opposition even in the third graveyard. In the meanwhile the corpse had to stay stale. Ultimately after an interval of 22 hours obsequies were performed but only somewhere outside the limits of Ayodhya. Similar treatment was meted out in respect of four other corpses. An intimidatory campaign has been started to prevent Muslims from burying their corpses inside Ayodhya.

Besides these major incidents, there have been during the past year cases in which Muslims have been harassed in various ways. Lonely

way farers were assaulted, injured and even killed. At the time of the *Bakr-Id* they were molested and at the last *Id* a Muslim was killed and owing to the tense atmosphere the Muslims refrained from observing the *Id*. They were attacked by mobs, and even children and women were subjected to persecution and a great number of Muslims' houses were burnt. Scared Muslims were threatened to be killed. Several Muslims have sent away their families to their relatives, outside Fyzabad. Even peace-workers like Shri Akshaya and others were attacked more than once and their houses looted.

Hindus contend that there should not be any tombs of Muslims in Ayodhya. The use of the term *Hindus* does not mean that Hindu masses in general approve of such activities and disputes. The general masses are so simple that they can be excited to kill Muslims today, and be equally moved to embrace them with love the next day. But a few leaders make it their business to spread hatred instead of cordiality among the people in the name of a community.

I am further told that in this Fyzabad-Ayodhya area the Hindu-Muslim tension is a problem only of recent origin, in fact less than two years old. Even in the years 1947-48, when the entire atmosphere of the country was clouded with communal passions, no communal riot had taken place at Ayodhya. But of late it has become something like a centre of communal hatred. The initial success achieved by it has spread anti-Muslim feeling in other districts such as Agra, Mathura and Bareilly also. Such facts as these were at the root of the migrations of Muslims to Pakistan some months ago. It seems that some of the high Government officials and Congress leaders have also had their hand in these injustices. The U. P. Government could not act promptly to prevent the activities of the Government servants and stop the injustices. On matters which were clear and public, the people should not have been made to resort to litigation by the application of section 145; and the pity of it was that while the victims of the assault were forbidden to visit the place in question, the real offenders were at liberty to do so.

In these circumstances I do not consider it unnatural if the patience of Shri Akshaya is exhausted. If there are any serious deviations from facts in the above narrative, showing the whole picture in a different perspective, or if it is felt that the Brahmachari is taking an unjustifiably hasty step and that there are other courses of action which would secure justice to Muslims, he should be so convinced. Otherwise the Government of U. P. should create confidence by actual deeds that the Muslims there are not denied justice but are accorded complete equality. I know that U. P. is not only a very large but also a very difficult State to administer. The ideas of many leaders as well as the intelligentsia of U. P. are not quite clear as to how justice is to be distinguished from appeasement and so-called rights of the majority. The province is

far more mixed than others communally and happens to include in it famous centres of both Hindu and Muslim cultures. It has all the material for creating a beautiful composite culture provided there is mutual goodwill; with mutual ill-will it has also the potentiality of enacting a terrible tragedy for the whole of India. The almost single-handed efforts of Shri Akshaya and some of his friends for securing justice to Muslims really do credit to them. I hope they will succeed in their efforts and the Government will deem it their duty to exert all their power to secure justice to Muslims.

In the end, a word to the Muslims of Bharat and Pakistan. It will not be right on their part to get nervous or angry on reading the above narrative. Any Muslim misusing this article will do disservice to his own community. It should be remembered that none of the incidents narrated above is quite fresh, and the incidents form a part of the conditions which prevailed in several parts of Bharat and Pakistan both, until the Nehru-Liaqat Ali Pact. There is nothing surprising in what has happened. The account only shows that both the Hindus and Muslims have been guilty of wicked deeds, and none may call the other the greater offender. The conditions have not yet fully improved; but let it be noted that it is a Hindu *sadhu* and his co-workers who have been espousing the cause of the Muslims, in the interest of justice and goodwill. Any Muslim reader, who gets excited or excites others at this, will make the task of Shri Akshaya more difficult.

Wardha, 31-7-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(Translated from Hindi)

Deaf-Blind Children Dance to Musical Vibrations

On a specially constructed floor that is extremely sensitive to sound vibrations, children who are both deaf and blind are being taught dancing at a school for handicapped children in the United States. The floor is one of several training devices being tested at the Deaf-Blind School of the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind, in New York City.

Resting on 30 inner tubes from automobile tires and isolated from the building structure, the floor transmits musical vibrations from a piano to the feet of the students. With a little practice the children learn to recognize pitch and tempo, teachers report. Thus they are taught to dance to the music they "hear" with their feet.

Through experiments such as this, it is considered possible that methods may be developed to enable the deaf-blind to learn to interpret sound waves of vibrations as accurately as if their hearing were unimpaired, the *New York Herald Tribune* says.

The Institute provides free education for persons from 5 to 21 years of age. It is supported by private contributions, bequests, and funds from the Government of the State of New York. All children at the School are taught to read and write braille. They also are taught to speak and to understand speech by feeling the vibrations of the throat with their hands. Both academic and vocational subjects are included in the curriculum.

(*American Newsfeature*, 27-7-'50)

"STANDARD OF LIVING" CULT

I think the time has come to make a frank and sober estimate of the "standard of living" cult on which Governments now lay such great stress. So far as Britain goes, in the great majority of cases it consists of an eight-hour day of uncreative, monotonous labour, and wages sufficient to purchase ample supplies of beer and cigarettes, to attend the cinema frequently, to travel to and attend professional football matches, dog and horse races and boxing contests, and to participate in football pools and other forms of betting. For the ladies it appears to mean ample supplies of cigarettes, cosmetics and nylons, in addition to regular attendance at the cinema.

I write thus neither as a Puritan nor a spoil-sport but as one who is deeply concerned in the achievement of a high standard of living for all, who is alarmed at the cultivation and spread of the mass mind and the mass man. Careful observation has led me to see the very close connection which exists between the extension of automatism in modern mass-production industry, and of popular interest in excitements and mass spectacles, and thus of the mass mind. I cannot, as a student of sociology, avoid being disturbed by the fact that every Saturday for eight or nine months of the year, between one and two millions of adults, chiefly men, attend such mass spectacles as I have named, and that still larger numbers indulge in pool, tote, and other forms of betting, a pastime which absorbs a considerable percentage of their leisure and some £ 700,000,000 of their earnings annually. Britain's annual expenditure on tobacco, beer and betting is now over £ 2,000,000,000.

Nor do I condemn people for thus spending their time and money, for I believe that it arises from a craving for excitement due to the uninteresting and unsatisfying nature of their work. In my opinion the question of sin does not come into the matter at all, as it is obvious to me that the lure of mass excitement in the present age arises from the necessity of filling up the vacuum caused by labour which starves and nauseates mind and soul.

I am therefore compelled to ask if this much-lauded "standard of living" is worth the terrific price that is being paid for it. Is it really for such things that women are being pressed to return to the factories, that the British people must undergo thirty or forty years of grinding, uninteresting labour, that our young men shall be conscripted, and that as a nation we must run the risk of fanning into flame an atomic world war by plunging into an insensate scramble for world markets?

If this is the best that present-day civilization has to offer, is it not high time we began to think out something better? And it may be worth while to inquire whether important values have been lost to mankind on the journey from the pre-industrial era to the highly specialized and mechanized industrialism of today. In the former era the creative genius of the ordinary craftsman was called upon to the maximum. I am unable to escape the conclusion that an industrial system which ruthlessly represses the creative genius of millions of workers is not in accordance with the laws of man's being, with the creative purpose, nor with the teaching of all the great religions, and above all of Christianity. Men have been transformed into machines because it is profitable, in terms of money, not of life, so to do. Whereas the purpose of work should be to serve human need in the most satisfying ways to producers and consumers alike, to beautify man's environment, the place of his habitation, and in the process to ennoble and magnify the mind of the labourer. To create a beautiful thing is to create a beautiful mind; while to work automatically is to end with an empty mind. Is it, then, not time to take thought?

WILFRED WELLOCK

(From *The Third Way*)

COMPLAINTS AGAINST RAILWAYS

A correspondent complains as follows :

"I was arrested one fine morning at Victoria Terminus at about 8 a.m. for the crime of crossing the Railway line. I was taken to the detention room and was made to sit there. After waiting for half an hour, I asked the sentry on guard, how long I would have to wait. "Till 11 o'clock," said he, "when the Court opens." I told him that I wanted to see the officer-in-charge. He said, nothing of the kind was allowed there, and I must quietly wait till 11 o'clock. I asked him whether he would break my head with his bludgeon, if I went out to see the Station Master or other officer of the Railway, whereupon he got sobered and showed me the officer whom I might see. I saw the officer and explained the matter to him. Being satisfied with the bona fides of the case, he allowed me to go out on parole, on condition of my returning at 11 o'clock.

"There was another illiterate man sitting in the room, with his head hanging down. I did not know whether he was sleeping or cursing the authorities for having unjustly arrested him or unnecessarily detained him, and thus making him lose his wages for the day and starve for the whole day.

"I returned at the appointed hour of 11 o'clock. I was produced before the Magistrate. I was asked whether I had crossed the Railway line. I answered in the affirmative. I was not asked whether I had any statement or prayer to make to the Court. I was straightaway sentenced to a fine of Rs 5/- or imprisonment for 2 days.

"Before my case was taken up, there was the usual "Q" of about 2 dozen accused persons. They were all probably guilty of a similar offence—because it was the Railway Magistrate's Court.

"Now the simple point I am curious to know is, what is the *object* of the Law, that forbids crossing the Railway line? Is it in the interest of the individual concerned, or is it because the crossing does harm to any one else—the Railway administration, the society at large, the Railway train, or the steel rails?

"By all means, mine was a technical offence. But the question is, what does the administration mean—or gain—by making such stupid laws, without reference to the needs of the times, and enforcing them without the use of common-sense—and at a huge public expense?

"At the most, in cases of the kind under reference, a simple shout by the porter on the platform, that a train is coming, would be more than enough for the purpose. And, in the particular case under reference there was no train coming on the line—much less, running fast. It was at Victoria Terminus (Bombay).

"2. I do not know whether the Railway fare is for sitting space in the train, or for hanging on the hooks or standing on the foot-boards. This is another point requiring elucidation.

"3. The Railway administration often commits blunders of 'indicating' one platform and bringing the train on another—of the liberal 8 platforms, as against 2, with which the B.B.C.I. manages its service much more efficiently at Church Gate. On such occasions, whole trainfuls of passengers cross the line. Is there a provision in the Law or the Railway's by-law, permitting such wholesale crossings? This is point No. 3 requiring elucidation.

"4. I do not know the legal or constitutional position of the case: that is to say, whether any responsibility is placed on the Railway administration to provide adequate accommodation for the fare it collects from passengers; and whether any penalty is provided for the nonfulfilment of this responsibility. But from the rush in trains—and on foot-

boards—of course of III class carriages—it appears that the Railway collects double the fare of the accommodation it provides. Whether this extra collection of fares does not fall under the category of crimes like extortion, corruption, or fraud on the public; or constitutes lawful revenue of the Railway, is point No. 4 requiring elucidation.

"5. The Railway administration caters to the religious needs and fans the religious emotions of the simple folks, by making special arrangements for pilgrimages. Whether this special concern for pilgrims and special expense for their convenience—under the present abnormal traffic conditions—are consistent with the constitutional canons of secular and financial propriety under the Republic of India, this is the fifth and last point requiring light."

The first complaint is clearly unreasonable. The prohibition to cross the railway line is in the interest of every one—the individual concerned, the railway administration, the society, the train and, when sabotages are common, also rails. It is not sufficient to make a porter responsible for the life of a crosser. It is want of civic sense not to co-operate with the administration in this respect. That at times "whole trainfuls of passengers cross the line" may be unavoidable. It rather shows that the administration does not enforce the rule harshly.

Grievances 2, 3 and 4 are proper and the administration must answer for them. As to No. 5, I do not see anything objectionable on principle in arranging special trains for pilgrims; rather, it is right that such conveniences should be provided.

Another correspondent complains about non-issue of tickets from the regular window on the ground that the Station Master had instructions that the arriving train was over-full, but at the same time issuing them from inside through railway police or other "brokers". This was widely practised on some of the stations near Nasik. Such complaints should be reported to the Traffic Manager, or the Railway Advisory Board, with full details. Also, a daily paper is a better medium for making such complaints than a paper like *Harijan*, which cannot deal with them promptly.

Wardha, 10-7-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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NOTES

Shri Gopinath Bardoloi

The sudden death of Shri Gopinath Bardoloi, the Chief Minister of Assam, by heart failure on Sunday last (6th August) is an event which has been received with feelings of sorrow by all those who take interest in the public life of India. We do not know God's plans; but, to the extent ordinary human understanding goes, the people of Assam have been suddenly deprived of its capable and popular leader, and when no one wants new problems to arise, the Government of Assam has been unexpectedly faced with the difficult problem of filling the gap created by his death. May the people of Assam, members of Shri Bardoloi's larger family, find strength, equally with those of his personal family, to face the loss with fortitude.

Wardha, 9-8-'50

Vanaspatti also Adulterated

One of the arguments advanced in favour of *vanaspatti* has been that it is the only fat which is obtainable in a pure form and at a price which the middle-class man can afford. Liquid oil is adulterated with argemone, white oil and other poisonous stuffs, *ghee* is too costly, if pure, and adulterated, if cheap. *Vanaspatti* is sold in sealed containers and is free from risks of adulteration.

It was hinted in previous articles, that even *vanaspatti* was not free from the taint of adulteration. It was a suspicion so far. But now comes the positive evidence. The *Hindustan Standard* of Calcutta, in its issue of July 27, 1950, refers to a "criminal case recently disposed of in Calcutta in which a dealer in *vanaspatti* was convicted for selling adulterated stuff". Commenting upon this, it says,

"*Vanaspatti* hitherto has been known to have been an adulterant freely mixed with *ghee* and condemned by many on that account. The stuff itself had, however, been regarded as wholesome, being only a variant of certain kinds of edible oils. The manufacturers of *vanaspatti* who are trying to mobilize public opinion in favour of this form of oil are also advertising it as a wholesome food free from the kind of admixture which makes, say, mustard oil, unfit for human consumption. The judgment of the Calcutta Magistrate suggests, however, that the main defence of *vanaspatti* is unsound and that the adulterant itself has started getting adulterated thus becoming doubly dangerous to the health of the people. It appears that the adulteration in the particular form that figured in the Calcutta case was done in the factory itself according to a design in the formulation of which some scientist's brain must have made its proper contribution. We would like to know what the manufacturers have to say about that."

If the condition is as reported, it deprives the *vanaspatti* consumers of even the doubtful consolation of eating a non-injurious, unadulterated fat.

Wardha, 8-8-'50

Raising the Standard of Living

We hear a good deal about "raising the standard of living". Who does not want to raise the standard of living? The *Sarvodaya* economists also want it. But who are those, whose standard of living is to be raised? The phrase is used as if to tell the audience that since it is universally agreed that the standard of living must be raised, no one should suggest that any one should lower his standard of living, and no demand should be made, which might compel its reduction. Thus the U.S. must maintain its standard; and since every other country is on a lower level than the U.S. — India being almost at the lowest rung — none may say that any one in India has a high standard of living!

We are told further that the standard of living can be raised only by greater production. The problem of distribution does not arise until there is sufficient production. The *Sarvodaya* economists also agree that India's production must be considerably raised. But the question of distribution cannot be separated from that of production. Suppose, there are ten members in a family, each requiring two breads for a full meal; they produce however only six breads and the system of distribution is such that one takes $1\frac{1}{2}$ breads, four take $\frac{3}{4}$ each and the remaining five have left for them only $\frac{1}{4}$ each. Here though even the first takes less than his needs, the next four will have grievance against him, and the last five against both. The small production has also to be equitably distributed. In a small family, with cordial relations among members, this can be achieved in a variety of ways so that, in spite of poverty, the productive capacity of none may be more impaired than that of others. In a family of selfish members, the last five would quickly lose all capacity to produce even to the extent of their actual consumption, and the increased production would be out of the question. The result would be that soon the production might fall from six to less than four breads. India's system of distribution is similar to this family of selfish members. It can be remedied effectively by creating a system of small units, so that the problems of production and distribution can be tackled simultaneously. Any other system may fail.

Wardha, 20-6-'50

K. G. M.

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