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# Young India

Edited by M. K. Gandhi

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## NOTES AND NEWS.

### No SECURITY.

As "Nava Jivan" was having considerable difficulty about printing and as arrangements were being made to print 'Young India' in Ahmedabad the Manohar Press of Ahmedabad has now been purchased and it is rechristened "Nava Jivan Press" Three declarations had therefore to be made, one in connection with the Printing Press, the second in connection with the transfer of "Nava Jivan" to the new Press and third for the transfer of "Young India" to that Press. "Nava Jivan," when it became a weekly was subjected to a security of Rs. 500. "Young India" escaped security, because the Printer was also the keeper of the Press where it was published. The Press in Bombay was itself under security. It therefore was a question how "Young India" and "Nava Jivan" would fare as also the Press itself, but after mature consideration the District Magistrate neither imposed any security on the keeper of the Press nor on the Publishers of the respective papers. Where security makes no difference to a journalist, a waiver really enhances his sense of responsibility. So long therefore as the objectionable features of the Press Act continue to disfigure it, exemption from security, whilst it is creditable for the Government, it can hardly be a matter for congratulation for the controllers of any particular organ so exempted.

### "WE ARE APT TO MAKE MISTAKES."

THE Hon Mr. Sinha whilst he was speaking to the Indemnity Bill was led into a confusion of terms. He was pulled up by Sir George Lowndes, and his Excellency the President defended Mr. Sinha saying it was a slip of the tongue. Mr Sinha then made these frank and dignified remarks; "It is hard for your Excellency to realize what our

difficulties are in speaking a foreign tongue in this council. We are apt to make mistakes." This is only too true. We are apt to make mistakes in our own mothertongue. But they are never so ludicrous as when we attempt to speak in a foreign tongue. Professor Jadunath Sarkar has remarked that our having to speak and think in English puts a strain upon us from which we never fully recover. The remedy for the evil is that we must begin self-government by introducing our own speech in our own assemblies-provincial vernaculars in the provincial legislatures, and Hindustani, a resultant of Hindi and Urdu—in the Imperial Council. We cannot make a better beginning than by adopting the change in the Congress and the Conferences. In adopting English as the medium at these gatherings we have done a positive disservice to the masses who have but a vague idea of the proceedings of these annual gatherings. By persisting to conduct them in English we have actually put obstacles in the way of the masses getting political education. Imagine what would have happened if we had during the thirty five years' existence of the Congress deliberated in Hindustani instead of English which is understood only by a microscopic minority of our countrymen.

### SIX "SUPPRESSED CLASS" SCHOOLS IN AHMEDABAD.

No less than six schools for children of the "suppressed class," started through the laudable efforts of Anasuyabai Sarabhai were opened by Mr. Gandhi in Ahmedabad on Sunday the 21st September. All these are night schools with all their teachers belonging to the suppressed class and working without remuneration. A number of prominent ladies and gentlemen attended the opening ceremony. A remarkable passage from Prof. Anand shankar Dhruva's most instructive speech on the occasion may be translated here. He said:

Untouchables none of us are, or all. Those whose hearts are polluted by the presence of the untouchable spirits, vanity, infatuation, hate greed etc. are untouchables, even though they be Brahmins by birth. Those so-called untouchables whom these deadly enemies dominate are not worthy of our adoration. There is no religion in the idea that we should abandon you (so-called 'untouchables') or that we should not touch you. It is the duty of us Hindus to help you in every way. Most of my time has been spent as a teacher and I am delighted to be present on this occasion. I wish education may help you all to be good."

We congratulate the organisers in securing the attendance of Professor Dhruva at the function and an emphatic pronouncement from him on the question of untouchability.

## Young India

Wednesday, 8th October 1919.

### TO THE SUBSCRIBERS AND THE READERS.

(By M. K. Gandhi.)

"Young India" from this week enters upon a new stage. It became a bi-weekly when Mr. Horniman was deported and the Chronicle was strangled. Ever since the "Chronicle's" re-birth, the syndicate and I have been considering the advisability of reverting to the weekly issue. The conversion of "Nava Jivan" into a weekly and its coming under my charge has hastened the decision. The burden of conducting a bi-weekly and a weekly is too great a strain on me and a weekly "Young India" will now serve almost as well as a bi-weekly. An endeavour will be made to give as much matter as was given in the bi-weekly. The annual subscription will now be Rs. 4 instead of Rs. 8, and the price of a single copy will be one anna instead of two without postage. Subscribers may either have the balance due to this change returned to them or the amount may be credited to the next year's account. Those subscribers who may be dissatisfied with the change can have the proportionate payment refunded to them on application.

The headquarters of "Young India" have been transferred to Ahmedabad for better management, and in order to enable me to devote some time to the Satyagrah Ashram which owing to my continued absence from it was being somewhat neglected by me. Moreover it was obviously uneconomical in every respect to edit two papers at two different places. This deprives me of the privilege of being with Bombay friends as much as I have lately been. But I hope they will forgive me, if the new arrangement results, as I hope it will, in greater service to the country.

"Young India" has hitherto been chiefly occupied in dealing with the Punjab affairs. But one may reasonably hope that the cloud will lift in the near future.

What will "Young India" then present to its readers? I frankly confess that to me, editing a newspaper in English is no pleasure. I feel that in occupying myself with that work, I am not making the best use of my time. And but for the Madras Presidency, I should now leave the work of editing "Young India". It is true that I should at times like to make my views in matters of general interest known to the Government. But I do not need to control a newspaper merely for that purpose.

The editing of "Nava Jivan" has been a perfect revelation to me. Whilst "Young India" has a little

more than 1200 subscribers, "Nava Jivan" has 12000. The number would leap to 20000 if we would but get printers to print that number. It shows that a vernacular newspaper is a felt want. I am proud to think that I have numerous readers among farmers and workers. They make India. Their poverty is India's curse and crime. Their prosperity alone can make India a country fit to live in. They represent nearly 80 p. c. of India's population. The English journals touch but the fringe of the ocean of India's population.

Whilst therefore I hold it to be the duty of every English-knowing Indian to translate the best of the English thought in the vernaculars for the benefit of the masses, I recognise that for a few years to come i.e. until we have accepted Hindustani as the common medium among the cultured classes and until Hindustani becomes compulsory in our schools as a second language, educated India, especially in the Madras Presidency must be addressed in English.

But I will not be party to editing a newspaper that does not pay its way. "Young India" cannot pay its way unless it has at least 2500 paying subscribers. I must appeal to my Tamil friends to see to it that the requisite number of subscribers is found, if they wish to see "Young India" continued.

The more so now, because the proprietors of "Young India" have decided to give up all advertisements. I know that they have not been entirely if at all converted to my view that a newspaper ought to be conducted without advertisements. But they are willing to let me make the experiment. I invite those who wish to see "Young India" free from the curse of advertisements to help me to make the venture a success. The Gujarati "Nava Jivan" has already demonstrated the possibility of conducting a newspaper without advertisements soiling its pages. What a financial gain it would be to the country, if there was for each province only one advertising medium—not a newspaper—containing innocent unvarnished notices of things useful for the public. But for our criminal indifference, we would decline to pay the huge indirect taxation by way of mischievous advertisements. Some readers who are interested in the purity of journalism recently sent me a most indecent advertisement extracted from a well-known newspaper. I have refused to soil the pages of "Nava Jivan" by reproducing it. But anyone turning to the advertisement sheets of even leading journals can verify the aptness of my criticism.

A word as to the policy of "Young India". Apart from its duty of drawing attention to injustices to individuals, it will devote its attention to constructive Satyagrah as also sometimes cleansing Satyagrah. Cleansing Satyagrah is civil resistance where resistance becomes a duty to remove a persistent and degrading injustice such as the Rowlatt Act.



### ADDITIONAL POLICE.

A friend has sent us an extract from the Hon. Mr. Robertson's speech on a resolution moved in the Bombay Legislative Council regarding the additional police posted in Akola. Mr. Robertson has explained the reasons for imposing additional police. He has resented the use of the expression 'punitive police' saying that that expression has no justification in law or practice. He then goes on to explain the 'principles upon which additional police are located in any area. He says:

"The police arrangement in any particular locality, such as the Akola Taluka, are based upon the normal requirements of the Taluka for the maintenance of law and order and for dealing with the normal amount of crime which may be expected there. When, as happened at Akola, crimes of violence take place or large and violent mobs assemble, the condition becomes such as to be beyond the control of the normal strength of the police. And then it is that Government takes advantage of the law and locates additional police in the area so that public security may be maintained. The object of locating this additional police there, is not to punish the perpetrators of the crime but it is to protect the law-abiding inhabitants of the area concerned."

The question raised by the mover of the resolution was one of removal of additional police. Dealing with the matter the Hon. Mr. Robertson said:

"The information I have at my disposal leads me to the conclusion that the excitement engendered by the deeds of the last year has not yet died down, and it is therefore necessary in the interest of the law-abiding people of the neighbourhood that some additional police should be there for maintaining law and order."

In applying these principles to Nadiad and Barejadi there is not a shadow of a ground for imposing additional police on these two places. There is no excitement there and the ordinary police force is in no way inadequate for protecting the inhabitants. It is the peaceful inhabitants who are being mulcted not because they are in any danger of molestation from anybody, but because a few ruffianly men tore down a rail at Nadiad station and such a thing was contemplated at Barejadi. The perpetrators will probably not suffer at all. The Hon. Mr. Paranjpye interposed the question, "Why make the people pay?" whilst Mr. Robertson was expounding the principles on which additional police were posted in a particular area by the Government. His question was quite appropriate because if the addition was not punitive but merely protective or preventive a layman would think that protection was clearly a Government's duty, and therefore there should be no levy from the inhabitants thus protected. Here is Mr. Robertson's reply:—

"As regards the levy of the expense of this police, that is a matter which the law leaves to the discretion of Government and it is a general

rule when additional police have to be placed on account of their faults that the people are made to contribute towards the cost. If all the people did not actually participate in the crime, the fact remains that they did not actively prevent it, and our information is that in this particular instance the whole population of the Taluka was in active sympathy with the rioters."

Assuming the correctness of Mr. Robertson's position, there is not a tittle of evidence to show that the whole of Nadiad or Barejadi was in sympathy with those who tore down a rail or wanted to. It was clearly impossible for a whole population to know that such a crime as the tearing down of a rail was in contemplation. There could, therefore, be no question of their actively preventing it. Tested by the Akola case, the additional police in Nadiad and Barejadi and the levy of the expense of it are wholly unjustifiable.

### ANOTHER PUNJAB CASE.

The petition of Parvati Devi wife of Lala Thakardass of Sangla furnishes one more case of glaring injustice committed under summary court trials. Lala Thakardass was tried at Shekhupura on the 2nd June last under sec. 143 Indian Penal Code i. e. for being a member of an unlawful assembly. He was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Rs 200. The sentence has since been reduced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. Under the section itself the maximum penalty prescribed is six months. How the poor prisoner was sentenced to two years' imprisonment passes comprehension. What is more regrettable still is the fact that the Government although their attention was drawn to the mistake of the Summary Court in awarding greater punishment than that authorised by the section have reduced it only to one year. Unless there are any special regulations authorising higher penalty than that contemplated by the Indian Penal Code, this is a case of gross negligence.

Nor is this all. The petitioner has been refused copy of the judgment and evidence. One has, therefore, to comment upon the case in darkness. The only crime Thakardass seems to have committed is that of attending an anti Rowlatt Act meeting. Judges of the Martial Law Commissions have held these meetings to be perfectly lawful and agitation for removal of the Act *per se* perfectly legitimate. It required a Summary Court magistrate to detect in these harmless meetings an unlawful assembly. If all the facts set forth in the petition be true as they apparently are, that the witnesses for the prosecution were prejudiced, that the witnesses for the defence were not all examined, and that there was no more than speeches against the Rowlatt legislation on the 12th April, surely it is a case of monstrous injustice. We hope that His Honour the Lieut. Governor will set poor Thakardass free and remit the fine unlawfully imposed upon him.

## SOCIAL SERVICE.

The following is the summary of Mr. Gandhi's speech delivered in the Connaught Hall, Rajkot under the chairmanship of Major Moss, Political Agent, Halar on the 24th September last.

Mr. Gandhi said he was pleased to find Major Moss in the chair. It was good for both, that Englishmen and Indians should meet on a common platform on all non-contentious and non-political matters. Such meeting lessened the acerbities of political life and promoted harmony between the two races. The speaker congratulated the Sahayya Mandal for their splendid work during the influenza epidemic and the late famine. He however ventured to suggest that true and lasting social service lay in organising preventive measures whilst it was good to relieve suffering in times of plague or famine, it was better to band together in order to prevent a recurrence of plague or famine. He is a wise and philanthropic doctor or lawyer who prevents diseases or quarrels. Social servants ought not to wait for influenza or famine for giving their service to the nation.

Truer service of the constructive and preventive type could be rendered in the villages. And if we succeeded in keeping our villages pure, clear, healthy and prosperous, the big cities would take care of themselves. He therefore suggested to Mr. Nánalal Kavi who was the head and the heart of the movement in Rajkot to go to some villages and by living among and like them to study their wants and their habits. Then he would discover the best method of rendering social service.

The speaker at one time thought the social service was best known and organised in Europe. Experience had taught him otherwise. He was of opinion that nowhere was social service treated so much a religious duty as in India. He instanced the marvellous manner in which the Kumbh at Hardwar was organised. The Himalayas were a standing testimony to our organising ability and our instinct for social service. Thousands of pilgrims who ascended the Himalayas upto Jamnotri were catered for without difficulty in a spirit of service and not of commercial gain. The matchless caste organisation was an instance of vast social service organisation. The late Sir W. W. Hunter used to say that India was remarkable for the absence of any need of Poor Law. Castes regulated service in the event of disease, death and poverty. He did not wish to glorify caste. He recognised its defects and its excesses, as it at present existed. He merely mentioned it as an illustration to prove his proposition that Social Service was recognised in India as a duty. Unfortunately most of our old institutions had petrified. His point was that the old institutions & methods should be studied, revived & reorganised in so far as it may be necessary to suit new conditions. We were likely to go wrong if we rejected the old without due examination.

## VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT.

In "Nava Jivan" Mr. Gandhi has begun a series of articles on the condition of Indian agriculturists and the means of its amelioration. In the first article he gave a vivid picture of the agriculturist as he has seen him in Kaira, Champaran and Madras. In the second he considers the problem of village improvement. He says:

Mr. Lionel Curtis' description of an Indian village as a collection of insanitary dwellings constructed on a dunghill is not much exaggerated. In fact more pathetic details could be added to those given by him. There should be some system about the structure of a well-ordered village, there should be some order about the village lanes, and the roads should be so scrupulously clean in this land of crores of barefooted pedestrians, that nobody need hesitate in walking or even sleeping in the streets. The lanes should be macadamised and have gutters for letting out water. The temples and mosques should be kept so beautifully clean, that the visitors should feel an air of tranquil holiness about them. The village should, as far as possible, be full of shady trees and fruit trees in and about them. It should have a *Dharmashala*, a school and a small dispensary. Washing and privy arrangements should be such as may not contaminate the air, water and roads of the village. Every village should be self-sufficient so far as its needs of food and clothing are concerned, and should be capable to defend itself against robbers, dacoits or wild animals. There was a time when the Indian village satisfied most of these conditions. If it was deficient in certain particulars, it is possible that the need for them was not then felt. However the case may have been, there is no doubting the fact that an ideal village should approximate to the description I have given above. Only such villages could be called self-governing and if all Indian villages could come up to the ideal, India would be free from most of its worries.

It is not only not impossible to bring about this state of things, it is no a very difficult affair either. There are about seventy five hundred thousand villages in India, so that the average population of a village is 400. In fact there are numerous villages with less than a population of 1000. And it is my firm belief that these small units are easily capable of being well-ordered and organised. For this no speech-making is necessary, nor is there any need of legislative councils or legislation. One thing only is essential and that is a small number of selfless workers—men and women. They can by their example and spirit of service get the requisite improvements made. It is not that they should give their twenty-four hours to the work. In spite of their working for their livelihood, they can bring their spirit of service to bear on the villagers. Nor need they be very highly educated. Even without a knowledge of letters, one can work for village improvement. There is



no fear of Government or State interference, nor is there any very great need of their cooperation. If every village could have a few good volunteer workers, very necessary work of improvement and reform would be possible all over India without much ado, or without any vigorous agitation. Only a little sustained effort would bring about unexpected results. The reader will see that money too will not be very essential either, for this work. The need, and the paramount need, is for selflessness i.e. a religious spirit. It is my experience that this is the easiest way of improving the condition of agriculturists. No village or individual need wait for another's lead in work in this direction. Any man or woman inspired with a spirit of selfless service can immediately set off working, and in so doing he fully serves his country. In my next article I shall relate some of my experiences in this direction. But I hope that every one who appreciates what I have tried to suggest in this article will begin work without a day's delay.

### THE FUTURE OF TURKEY.

The following views of Sir Abbas Ali Baig as reported by a representative of the "Times of India" who interviewed him on his return to India, will be of interest:—

Questioned as to what he thought of the Turkish question, Sir Abbas Ali Baig said: "The Turkish question is apparently dominated by the secret treaties which have vitiated the open declarations of the Allies whereby the support of the Islamic nations to what was proclaimed to be the cause of liberty and self-determination was secured. But after the achievement of victory with the help of Moslem armies, which took a conspicuous part in all victories in Turkish territory 'the principal of nationality and self-determination' is being abandoned in favour of these non-Moslem nations who have set their eyes on the grapes in Naboth's vineyard, especially in Syria. It is a misfortune to the cause of righteousness that President Wilson's sublime altruism, which at one time so completely captured the imagination of mankind, has ingloriously receded into the background under the pressure of French, Greek and other interests. In Islamic circles the impression is that Mr. Wilson's idealism has been exhausted in his effort to secure the admission of the Entente Powers to his League of Nations scheme on which he had set his heart and that he is inclined to do an equally good turn to his supporters at the Peace Conference by letting the secret treaties override the openly declared principles under the guise of mandates. To use an Americanism, he seems to have drifted towards a policy of log-rolling, the unfortunate victims of which are the Moslem races. The apprehension of the Moslem nations that the cause of Islam, after the definite pledges of the Allies, is being betrayed, notwithstanding the friendly attitude of Great Britain, is not unfounded if the secret treaties, the provisions of which have leaked out, are to prevail.

"The Government of India," concluded Sir Abbas Ali, "have no doubt vigorously championed the Moslem cause and their representatives, the Maharaja of Bikaner and Lord Sinha, have very ably pressed the Moslem view before the Peace Conference. But the selfish interests involved in the secret treaties are so weighty that a just solution of the Turkish question likely to satisfy Moslem sentiment in India is by no means easy. All that the Moslems ask for is an honourable adherence both in letter and in spirit to the principle of nationality solemnly accepted by the Allied and Associated Powers so as to free them from the aggressive designs of non-Moslem races armed with mandates."

### GENERAL SMUTS' SPEECH.

(In reply to Durban Indians' Address.)

The following is the speech delivered by General Smuts in reply to the address presented to him by the Durban Indian Community on the 26th instant:—

"Gentleman,—I thank you for the beautiful address with which you have presented me and for the sentiments expressed therein. I am glad to note that, in the address, you have made mention of the fact of your countrymen having served under my command in this Great War. As I have said on previous occasions, I have been proud of the privilege of having had under me in East Africa so large a number of your countrymen. Some of them came from the independent Native States of India, Imperial Service contingents and others who did great and glorious work in this War. I had written from East Africa to the Princes of India of the splendid part played by their troops and that there were few better than they. Your countrymen fought not only in East Africa but took part in other theatres of War. The conquering of the Turkish Empire was in main the work of the Indian Army. The burden of the work in Mesopotamia, Turkestan, and the Indian Frontier fell almost entirely upon the Indian Army. If the war had continued until this year, the Indian Empire would have had over a million men in the field. The stupendous part India played in this great struggle had considerable effect on the result of the War. Owing to her magnificent efforts, India has won for herself a place among the nations of the world. As a member of the War Cabinet I have had great opportunities of knowing more about the feelings of the Indians and their desire for a larger share in the appointment of commissions in the Army, and I was glad I was able to do something for them in the cabinet. I have worked in public and a good deal in private for the recognition of India and her services to the Empire. I strongly supported the proposals of granting commissions to Indians, and when it was pointed out that this might create an anomalous position and that there might be the possibility of Europeans being placed under Indians, I replied "Why not? I would be proud to serve under an Indian officer if he were able." In the Peace Conference, India

was represented by the Maharajah of Bikanir, Lord Sinha and Mr. Montagu. The Maharajah is a personal friend of mine, and Lord Sinha is a man of considerable ability and training. He is the cleverest man I have met, and I was able to learn much from him on Indian problems. As a result of the War, there was an emotional feeling throughout the world which did not leave India unaffected. She desires to govern herself. Other Asiatics have been ruling and misruling, and India, after having been under the British for over a hundred years, should be given a large measure of Self-Government. I have been a party to the Honourable Mr. Montagu going to India to study the question there which has resulted in some far-reaching concrete proposals being submitted to the British Parliament. The British are a very highly imaginative people though they do not appear to be so. There was a great feeling in England in favour of India's aspirations. With the improvement of the status of India, the position of the Indians in other places will be better. Before my return, I found that the Asiatic Trading Act had been passed in the Union Parliament and that there had been a great deal of irritation among the Indians here and which had also caused a great deal of feeling in India. But the Government had decided to appoint a commission to watch over the interests of Indians so that no stigma may attach to them. Some of you think I look down upon Indians, but that is not so. I look up to them. They come from a very old civilisation—much older than ours. They are able to hold their own. We have our difficulties in South Africa, and we as a small white community cannot withstand a great influx of Indians. We would be crushed and overwhelmed if we had an open door. India if she is in need of emigration for her surplus population, has the fertile field of Mesopotamia, the Euphrates, Tigris and Turkestan which can hold thirty millions of people. But now that the Indians are here I hold they should have fair treatment in all parts of the Union. We have to live side by side in conciliation and we must endeavour to understand each other's standpoint so that we may live and grow together. We are members of one family and belong to the same Empire. I thank you again for the beautiful address and the silver casket in which to put the address. Mrs. Smuts will be glad to hear the kindly reference made to her. I thank you all once more."

### HANDLOOM WEAVING IN GUJARAT.

Mr. Maganlal Gandhi in his third article of his series on this subject narrates a history of the handloom experiment in the Satyagrahashram.

The first handloom, he says, was started in the Satyagrahashram five years ago i. e. towards the close of the samvat year 1971. For about ten months, we used to weave only *Khadi* and towels and most of us made small dhotis and vests out of the *Khadi*. Then those who had returned with an experience of weaving obtained outside, began to weave broader and finer cloth, established fly-shuttle looms of the Madras type, and began sizing yarn

after the Madras fashion. But it was all amateur work and it could not come to the level of the work of those born to the profession. We began to experience difficulties in weaving. We had not yet produced cloth suitable for women. One of the Ashram sisters was in need of a garment. It was not easy to obtain a hand-woven one in the market. She expected that she would be permitted to have a mill-woven one, but she was disillusioned. She was told, 'Weave what you require, or do without it.' This curt reply disappointed her, and hurt her husband. But the disappointment and hurt were momentary. The beneficent rebuke had the desired effect. The husband went to the city and obtained twisted fine yarn such as would need no sizing, and began weaving out of it cloth of 50 inches width. The experiment was successful and this gave a fillip to the enterprise. At the end of the samvat year 1972 there were three country and three fly shuttle looms working in the Ashram. On the new year day, we began to take stock of work done during the past year. Our work was mainly weaving and the work at the end of 15 months was not very creditable. It was therefore resolved that before the close of the new year every one should learn enough to be capable to weave cloth sufficient for himself. And everyone bent his energies in the direction. In about six months' time four fly-shuttle looms were added. There were thus ten looms in all working at the time. We used to work nearly 8 hours during the day. Mr. Gandhi himself used to work over four hours on the loom. Three fly-shuttle looms used to turn out cloth of 45 to 50 inches' width, and each turned out three to five yards of such cloth at the end of the day. Cloth of smaller breadth could be turned out at the rate of an yard per hour. That is to say, most of us began to turn out work earning in the market a daily wage of 8 to 12 annas. While work was thus going on apace within and without the Ashram, the Ashram entered on a new stage. It was up to now located in a rented building. We now removed to our present place near the Sabarmati Jail where we had purchased some plots of land. We had not even a hut ready and so we had to live under canvas. Plague was then raging in and about Ahmedabad and so the stay in tents on the fields proved a godsend to us, though our weaving came for a time to a standstill. We then began to order our arrangements. The weaving-shed which is prominently seen from the Railway train as it passes over the Sabarmati Railway bridge, was first constructed. There hangs a tale of pathetic interest about the construction of this shed. When Ahmedabad was the scene last year of a general strike, and when the weavers led by Mr. Gandhi offered a peaceful resistance to the mill agents, hundreds of those labourers as well as a number of those who sympathised with them have carried baskets of sand on their shoulders for the plinth of the shed. Weaving is now going on in full swing in this shed. A number of students are learning weaving there and those who have learnt the art have been sent out for the propagation of spinning and weaving.



**THAKAR DASS'S CASE.****HIS WIFE'S PETITIONS.**

## PETITION TO THE VICEROY.

The humble petition of Must: Parbati wife of Thakar Dass convict, son of Gian Chand of Sangla, Distt: Gujranwala in the Punjab, most respectfully sheweth :—

1. That your Excellency's humble petitioner is quite aware of the fact that Your Excellency's precious time is, at present, much occupied with the consideration of momentous questions of state, but your petitioner however trusts and believes that your Excellency is always ready to listen to and redress the grievances of even the humblest of His Majesty's subjects. Actuated by this belief your petitioner begs to present the following facts for your Excellency's most gracious and merciful consideration.

2. That your humble petitioner's husband was tried with 7 other persons and convicted by J. D. Penny, Esqr., I. C. S. Special Magistrate, Shaikhupura, Distt. Gujranwala, holding powers of a Summary Court under martial law, and punished on 2nd June 1919, with 2 years' rigorous imprisonment and Rs 200 fine under Section 143 I P. C. for being a member of an unlawful assembly.

3. That your humble petitioner applied for a copy of the judgement, to the Officer in charge of the Copying Department in the Gujranwala District, to the D. J. A. G. Northern Command and to the Legal Remembrancer to the Punjab Government, but none of them supplied her with the requisite copy.

4. That your Excellency's humble petitioner first sent an application for mercy to the Local Government but it was returned with the remarks that your petitioner should apply to the General Officer Commanding 2nd Rawalpindi Division. In compliance with that order your petitioner made an application (copy enclosed) to the General Officer Commanding in June 1919 but never received any reply. In that application your Excellency's humble petitioner submitted among other things :—

- (a) That the trial of her innocent husband by the Summary Court, under Martial Law, being without jurisdiction, was ultra vires.
- (b) That what to say of being a member of an unlawful assembly the prosecution evidence did not disclose any offence against the accused, and
- (c) That the maximum punishment sanctioned by the Legislature under section 143, I. P. C. being six months only, the learned Special Magistrate had acted arbitrarily, unjustly, and illegally in awarding 2 years' rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 200 fine, in utter defiance of the law

5. That your petitioner sent on 2/8/1919 another application to His Honour the Lieut: Governor of the Punjab (copy enclosed) and drew His Honour's

kind attention particularly to the illegality of the sentence.

6. That your humble petitioner is now given to understand that the Government of the Punjab has been pleased to reduce the sentence passed on her husband from 2 years to one years' rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 200 fine, for which your petitioner is thankful to Sir Edward Maclagan. But in face of the fact that your petitioner's husband is wholly and absolutely innocent and that the sentence passed on him was, and the reduced sentence still is, in excess of what is the maximum limit authorised by law (viz 6 months) under section 143, I. P. C., your petitioner is not at all satisfied with the remission so kindly granted by the local Government in a general way, and without, it seems, going into the merits of the case.

7. That your petitioner's husband comes of a loyal family in the Rawalpindi District. He is a young man of good character. He was the main stay and the sole bread-winner of a large family. He could hardly earn some twenty rupees a month which can not make even two ends meet in these days of scarcity and famine. The punishment of two years' rigorous imprisonment and even the reduced punishment of one year plus Rs. 200 fine is neither justified nor authorised in law under section 143, I. P. C. and is far too severe for your petitioner's innocent husband and a deathblow to the whole family.

8. That your humble petitioner's husband has been in the police lock-up for about a month before trial, and in jail as a convict for the last four months and the maximum imprisonment authorised by law being six months only, if any mercy is to be shown it should be shown before six months expire.

9. That it is humbly and respectfully prayed that as an act of restoring faith in British justice and of royal clemency, your Excellency may be graciously pleased to show mercy to your petitioner's helpless and innocent husband by ordering his immediate release and remission of fine, for which act of justice and generosity your petitioner will ever pray for your Excellency's long life and the stability of the British Raj.

Your Excellency's humble petitioner,  
**Must: Parbati, wife of Thakar Das,**  
Convict.

RAWALPINDI.

Dated 25-9-1919.

## PETITION TO THE G. O. C. RAWALPINDI DIVISION.

The humble petition of Mussammat Parbati wife of Thakar Dass convict, son of Gian Chand, of Sangla Distt: Gujranwala, Most respectfully sheweth:—

1. That your humble petitioner's husband, was tried with 7 other persons & convicted by J. D. Penny Esquire, I. C. S. Special Magistrate, Sheikhpura on 2/6/1919 & has been punished with two years' rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 200 fine under Section 143 of the Indian Penal Code for being a member of an unlawful assembly.

2. That your petitioner had presented an application for mercy to His Honour The Lieut. Governor of the Punjab, but that application has been returned with the remarks that your petitioner should apply to you.

3. That the offence of holding a meeting and observing Hartal on the 12th April 1919 could not be tried under Martial Law, the proceedings of the Special Magistrate were without jurisdiction and ultra vires for the following reasons:—

- (a) Because the meeting & the Hartal took place on the 12th April 1919 and Martial Law was declared much after that date.
- (b) The offence charged was not triable under the Martial Law Ordinance.
- (c) That the Martial Law jurisdiction had ceased to exist in Mr. Panny, the Special Magistrate before 2nd June 1911. Vide Government Notification of an earlier date.

4. That your petitioner's husband was entirely innocent. The statements of the prosecution-witnesses were concocted, fabricated, coloured, inconsistent and conflicting. They did not establish the offence of being a member of an unlawful assembly against my innocent husband, nor did they attribute to my husband the use of any particular improper language or unlawful conduct. On the other hand the statements of Wazir, Sardari, Thakar, and Boota. prosecution witnesses disclose how great pressure, influence and oppression was exercised on them by the Police to fabricate all the evidence in this case.

5. That the main prosecution witnesses were hostile to my husband on account of the rivalry and competition between the firms with whom they are employed:—

Shankar Dass P. W. is an Agent of Ralli Bros. Co.

Bua Ditta and Budh Singh P. Ws. belong to Sunday Patrick Co., while my husband Thakar Dass is the Local Sub Broker of Louis Dreyfus and Co.

Prem Singh P. W. admits his previous enmity and litigation both with my husband and my father in law.

6. That the prosecution evidence on the file shows at best that the Sangla people including even the prosecution witnesses held a lawful meeting on the 12th April 1919 to offer a bonafide and respectful protest against the Rowlatt Act, They closed their shops for a few hours the same day to express their sense of grievance. Copies of the Resolutions passed in that meeting were sent to the benign Government for favour of consideration. Such meetings were held and Hartals observed all over the country. It was not forbidden by law till then. Such meetings have been held by the Judges to be lawful in recent trials at Lahore, if no disturbance was taken place.

7. That some 122 men were arrested at the outset under the common offence of holding meetings and observing hartal on 12-4-1919. Out of these 114 were let off by the Police after a few days' detention. Of the remaining eight one Jiwan Shah has been acquitted by the Special Magistrate as the evidence of the prosecution witnesses against him was considered to be false. If the evidence of the

prosecution witnesses was disbelieved or was not considered sufficient against one person, how could the same evidence be true or sufficient against my innocent husband and the other co-accused.

8. That my husband had about half a dozen defence witnesses ready in Court but the Special Magistrate recorded the statements of two of them only and refused to take the rest. The defence witnesses were leading persons of the town but the Special Magistrate has taken no notice of their statements which were trustworthy & reliable.

9. That there has been no disturbance whatsoever in Sangla. No life or property was damaged or put to fear. There was only a lawful meeting of peaceful citizens, convened in a lawful manner and conducted in an humble and respectful spirit.

10. That the maximum punishment sanctioned by the Legislature under Section 143 I. P. C. is six months imprisonment; but the learned Special Magistrate has thought fit to exceed even the extreme limits of law in as much as he has awarded two years rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 200/- fine to my utterly innocent husband.

11. That my husband comes of a loyal and respectable family. He is a young man of an exceptional character. He has a large family of six destitute persons. His father is of eighty years of age. He has a girl of tender years. He was the main stay and the sole bread winner to the family. He could hardly earn some 20/- rupees a month which can not make even both ends meet in these days of scarcity and famine. We are very poor people and possess no property moveable or immoveable worth the name.

The punishment of two years rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 200/- fine which was neither justified nor authorised in law, is far too severe for my innocent husband and a death blow to the whole family.

12. That in view of the fact that my innocent husband had been in the Police lock up for about a month before trial and had endured all the hardships entailing thereto, that he would have been in Jail for some considerable time before release and that a fine of fifty thousand rupees is said to have been imposed on the town of Sangla, it is humbly and respectfully prayed that as an act of clemency your honour may be pleased to show mercy to my helpless and innocent husband by ordering his immediate release and remission of fine, for which act of justice and generosity your petitioner and the whole of her family will ever pray for your Honour's long life and the stability of the *British Raj*.

#### PETITION TO THE PUNJAB GOVERNMENT.

The Petition to the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab is in the same strain as above. Ed. Y. I.

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