

Indian Opinion

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THE LONDON CONFERENCE

(BY REV. C. F. ANDREWS)

HERE are very many different opinions as to the success or failure of the London Conference on the Indian Constitution. At the time when I left England on board the Kenilworth Castle for South Africa, I was almost in despair. Things looked very dark indeed, and I was quite afraid that the general bulk of the Conservative members in the House of Commons would vote against any declaration which would finally commit the whole British nation to a full dominion status policy; for this (as General Hertzog rightly states) is exactly equivalent to full and complete independence. On that point the Irish Free State President left nothing in doubt or uncertainty.

But at the eleventh hour, things went better as far as the general situation was concerned. The Prime Minister was able to make a declaration in the House of Commons on behalf of the National Government now in power. This declaration was embodied in a White Paper and laid upon the table of the House. Only a brief cable has reached me as yet about the contents of this white paper, but this cable has at least dissipated my worst fears. It states without any reserve that the declaration of the Labour Prime Minister of the 19th January 1931 still holds good, and that this has now become the settled policy of the whole British nation towards India.

When I was in England, some of the most important authorities I met, who had spent a lifetime in public affairs, told me quite frankly that they did not believe that it was possible to get such a declaration of full dominion status for India passed in the present British House of Commons. They said that the slump towards diehard conservatism had been immense—almost like an avalanche. They told me that Winston Churchill could certainly count on over two hundred votes, and could possibly even obtain a majority in favour of a reactionary policy towards India. One, whose name I cannot mention, stated that unless such a declaration were made before Parliament adjourned in December, it would never be made at all in the present House of Commons. He pressed upon me with all his might that it was either now or never in Indian affairs. What was needed was to get this resolution confirming the Prime Minister's declaration passed finally in the House of Commons before the reaction began and the protection policy combined

with a reactionary Indian policy swept the board. This policy would be called "ruling India with a strong hand," but its ultimate aim would be to keep a tight hold of the reins of Government and not advance further towards self-government for India.

This, at least, has now been avoided, and the declaration of the Prime Minister which he made as head of a Labour Government has now been repeated openly in the House of Commons by the same Prime Minister as head of a National Government composed of all parties. This bedrock has now been established within the British Constitution itself; and if the tide of reaction flows back next year when protection becomes the dominant cry, this rock will nevertheless stand out in the tide as it flows forward, and will be firmer than ever on its fixed basis when the tide recedes.

Thus I feel that whatever else may have been lost or miscarried, this one solid gain has been achieved, and it is only step by step that Indian self-government will reach the final goal. To put the matter into military language, the first line of trenches has now been taken, but a very strong second line of trenches remains untaken.

I have been asked by Dutch and English alike in South Africa, "Why, then, has Mahatma Gandhi so completely repudiated the Conference as altogether useless and unprofitable?" They have asked also why he is determined to start passive resistance again.

Here I am clearly out of my depth in trying to answer these questions on the evidence of a very vague and most probably misleading message to an Italian paper from Rome. I can remember how entirely the poet Tagore was misinterpreted in Italy; and I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears Mahatma Gandhi make a speech to the students at Marseilles which was entirely misrepresented in the London press. Therefore I feel fairly certain that we have not got the Mahatma's exact words. At the same time, I cannot help noticing that in India itself the Government has taken such drastic steps against the Congress leaders that for all practical purposes the truce is already at an end. Mahatma Gandhi, when he returns, will find a situation that has gone far further than when he left India in September. There is also an agrarian trouble which has gone far beyond recalling to the paths of order and

peace. The supreme difficulty will be to keep all these developments non-violent. Thus even though he himself may not wish for an immediate open rupture, the force of circumstances may possibly have carried things far beyond his control.

In conclusion, it is not difficult for me to understand why Mahatma Gandhi is altogether dissatisfied with the results of the Conference, even though the point which I have mentioned has been gained. He finds that the safeguards, especially on the side of finance, are so stringent that for all practical purposes what Great Britain has given with one hand she has taken away with the other.

Thus he has come to look with entire suspicion on mere promises and declarations. He will not accept anything but deeds and actions. Many years ago I asked him what he regarded as the essence of Swaraj. He replied without a moment's hesitation "Financial autonomy." In spite of the declaration of the Prime Minister, financial autonomy seems to-day almost as far off as ever, and therefore he does not regard the declaration in the House of Commons as sincere and final, but rather as diplomatic.

A REVIEW

WHEN this issue goes into the hands of our readers the New Year will have dawned.

We Indians in South Africa have our own problem to grapple with eternally. Our attention is also naturally drawn towards the very grave situation created in our Motherland as a result of her struggle for independence, and we would certainly not be Indians if it did not cause us the deepest concern. Reviewing the past, we find that in so far as the situation in India is concerned, the past year brought us a great deal of happiness after the grave sufferings of our brothers and sisters in the year 1930. There were the truce and negotiations for a settlement with the high expectations that it would bring peace and happiness both to Britain and India. That state of joy, however, has not lasted long. The Round Table Conference in London has proved a failure and the British Government in India have launched upon a policy of ruthless repression with a view to crush, by the vilest means, the ever-growing nationalism and to subdue the people by force of arms. Heavy clouds are gathering over India and one shudders to think of what the present year has in store for her. While the Christian world is enjoying the Christmas and New Year holidays, the Indian world is in mourning over its leaders being clapped into prison one after another. Within a few days we have learnt of the arrest of Messrs. Parshottamdas Tandan, Krishnakant Malaviya, Jawahirlal Nehru and Dr. Sherwani and of the policy of terrorism pursued by the authorities in the North-West Frontier Provinces after the arrest of Abdul Gafurkan, the leader of the people in those Provinces. The end of the past year has been as gloomy as the beginning of the year was bright. India is being put to the test. It will be a severe test and if she is found wanting, she will have to wait for many long years still before she

can achieve her aspired goal. If, however, she passes through the test unflinchingly, the present repression will have come as a blessing in disguise and the stronger the repression the sooner will India be free from her shackles. Our prayers for the New Year are: May Heaven's blessings be on our suffering brothers and sisters in India and may God guide our opponents to the path of righteousness.

Coming now to our own affairs in this country, the beginning of the past year was gloomy and the end has been gloomier still. The policy of the Government has, unquestionably, been one of making the life of Indians as uncomfortable as possible so that they may either be compelled to leave the country or to remain in it as helots. We have had, during the past year, the Transvaal Land Tenure Bill which aims at uprooting the comparatively handful of Indians in the Transvaal by depriving them of the right to trade or to reside anywhere but in locations. We have the Transvaal Licensing Control Draft Ordinance of 1931 which has been passed by the Provincial Council but is still awaiting the assent of the Governor-General-in-Council. The effect of that Ordinance is almost exactly the same as that of the above-mentioned Bill, in that, it will deprive the Indian of the right to trade in any place other than in which he has the right to reside, and the only place in which he has the right to do so is the location. If, therefore, the Land Tenure Bill is shelved and the Licensing Control Ordinance is allowed to come into force, Indians in the Transvaal will be in the same predicament as they would have been had the former Bill been passed. We have also the Immigration Amendment Act of 1931, a dangerous piece of legislation which aims at depriving a person of his domiciliary rights on a flimsy pretext, no matter how many years he may have been resident in the Union, and which empowers the Minister to deport any person other than a Colonial-born if he is convicted under any offence. What the implication of this would be it is easy to understand. We thus find ourselves burdened with the above harsh measures causing us a great deal of consternation.

In a few days we will be welcoming amongst us the official and non-official delegates appointed by the Government of India to deliberate with the Union Government at the forthcoming Round Table Conference. It is now five years since the Capetown Agreement was arrived at and it is felt that the time has arrived when that Agreement might be reviewed. The Agreement was hailed as a "Gentlemen's Agreement." It gave us the impression, at the time, that the lot of the Indian community in the Union would improve as a result of that Agreement and that in the provision of educational and other facilities, Indians who were to remain part of the permanent population, would not be allowed to lag behind any other sections of the population. Our hopes in this respect have been shattered. In regard to educational facilities, apart from preventing the Natal Provincial authorities from robbing the subsidy granted for Indian education, nothing has been done on the part of the Government, while the Indian community has subscribed nearly £20,000 as its own share in that direction. In regard to the improvement of the housing conditions of Indians

in and around Durban the only thing that has been done is that a sum of £50,000 has been granted to the Durban Municipality, out of which £25,000 are only now being utilised in giving loans to Indians owning land outside the Borough to erect their own houses. The housing conditions within the Borough remain as bad as ever. With regard to the existing trade licensing laws it was promised, under the Agreement, that when the time for the revision of those laws arrived, the Union Government would give all due consideration to the suggestions made by the Government of India. In the delegation, that the discretionary powers of local authorities might reasonably be limited to the following grounds:—

- (1) The grounds on which a licence may be refused should be laid down by statute;
- (2) The reasons for which a licence is refused should be recorded.
- (3) There should be a right of appeal in cases of first applications and transfers, as well as in cases of renewals, to the Courts or to some impartial tribunal.

Five years have passed since the promise was made but the time for the revision of these laws has, apparently, not yet arrived. On the contrary, by a recent judgment of the Natal Supreme Court in the case of Gora Mahomed vs. the Durban Town Council, the discretionary powers of the licensing authorities have been widened and, in the Transvaal, measures are being taken to tighten up the existing licensing laws. Therefore, in so far as affording the permanent Indian population of the Union every facilities to enable it to conform to Western standards of life and not allowing it to lag behind any other sections of the people, is concerned, nothing whatsoever has been done while, on the other hand, everything has been done to deprive Indians of any such facilities that they have hitherto been enjoying.

The Agreement has, indeed, succeeded in one thing, and that is its Assisted Emigration Scheme. The then Government of India delegation, with good intention, we have no doubt, agreed to this scheme relying on the good faith of the Government of the Union, with the hope that the floating Indian population might be attracted by the scheme and would voluntarily choose to return to their Motherland where they would find a comfortable home, and at the same time help in removing the fear, among the Europeans, of Indians flooding the Union, and thus make it convenient for the remaining population to live comfortably. Experience has, however, shown the folly of accepting the scheme. The evils wrought under it are now no longer a secret.

The issue before the Government of India delegation is, therefore, quite clear. We do not think there is any room for bargaining with the Union Government as they have done in the past. We do not wish that the rights of a section of our brethren should be bartered away in order that we may live comfortably in this country. There is nothing that we can give. All that has been taken away from us has to be returned to us. The Transvaal Land Tenure Bill must go. The Transvaal Licensing Control Ordinance of 1931 must not receive the assent of the Governor-General-in-Council. The Immigration Amendment Act of

1931 must be repealed. The condonees must be allowed to bring their wives and children into the Union. In short, the position, as it was after the 1914 settlement, should be reinstated and improved upon it by amending the Transvaal Township Act, the Gold Law of 1908, and Law 3 of 1885 to the extent that Indians in that Province may have the right of ownership of property. The Licensing Laws should be amended in the manner suggested by the last delegation. These are the minimum demands of Indians in this country, which should be acceded to and for which Indians should be prepared to sacrifice their all, if they have any vestige of self-respect in them.

However gloomy the outlook appears to be, both in India and in South Africa, we wish our readers every happiness and Heaven's blessings in this New Year.

We cordially welcome the members of the Government of India delegation to these shores and pray that they may be guided by wise counsel in their deliberations at the Round Table Conference and that the honour of India may remain safe in their hands.

The Importance Of India

(By L. W. RITCHIE)

What has the near future in store for India? What for Indians in South Africa? What for the world?

India's fate would appear to turn largely, if not altogether, upon Gandhiji's ability to maintain the renewed struggle on the lofty plane to which hitherto he and his followers have confined it.

Gandhiji has captured the imagination and quickened the hopes and expectations of a world weary of the grubbiness in life and sick to death of the tyranny of Mammon and of all the incidence of that brutal idol's domination. Gandhiji's appeal has, quite apart from India, aroused keen response in thousands of hearts because it would seem to express a truth dimly sensed but scarcely at all objectivated, that the life of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit are not mere abstractions unrelated to "practical politics," but that as is said of Faith, Spiritual force ("soul-force" Gandhiji terms it) can and will, when selflessly exercised, move mountains and reduce brute strength to impotence.

Gandhiji's aversion from much in modern civilisation and modern methods is due to these being rooted in a false and soul-destroying materialism, in which appetites, desires and personal ambitions occupy pride of place. He sees, and sees truly, that the institutions and conventions that characterise our civilisation, the competitions, rivalries and selfishnesses generally that constitute the accepted relationships between man and man, nation and nation, race and race, are neither more or less than a concrete expression of the animal in us, that rules where should rule the Man.

By some followers of Gautama, the Buddha, this earth (Myalba) is regarded as Hell! It is because Gandhiji has visioned a possible Heaven in place of an existing Hell that eager eyes are watching and

fervent prayers are uttering in the hope that his efforts may lead to the replacement of the old selfish order by the newer and better of which a certain Master spoke some two thousand years ago.

In the mad rush, inspired by desire for the things that feed the desires while they leave the soul un-fed, life has become mechanised and human beings little better than machines. Gandhiji seeks to bring back to sanity a soul-sick world; to re-establish in us a sense of proportion; to demonstrate the way to liberation from the coils of a materialism that is strangling what is best in humanity, and promoting only what is base and sordid. He and those who are with him are doing this in the old accepted—the only known—way. That way has ever been the path of self-sacrifice, of suffering, of crucifixion. It is the only way and the inevitable, for those who aspire to "help bring the world deliverance and its bliss."

The spiritual regeneration of India will mean India's political, social and industrial regeneration. It will make possible the rescue of western civilisation from the evils that are fast hastening its destruction. It will compel a re-orientation of the Indian question in South Africa. Let all who can help offer contribution according to their ability.

The Future Of East Africa

Thus the *Times of India* :—

Of the many reports by committees of enquiry into affairs in East Africa that have been published in recent years none surely has been quite so cautious as that by the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee which has just been issued. We are told in this report that the setting up for the first time of a Parliamentary Joint Committee "afforded a unique opportunity of endeavouring to reach some conclusion which will lead to a continuity of policy in that part of the Empire." The policy recommended by the Committee, however, is one of undisguised hesitation and caution, and the whole report appears to be modelled on the maxim of never do to-day what you can put off until to-morrow. The territories of East Africa are to go on developing upon their own lines; the time has not yet come for taking any far-reaching step in the direction of a formal union; the scales are to be held even; the Government is a trustee; the Committee do not wish to pronounce categorically or to prejudice future developments in regard to Kenya. As for the Indian population of Kenya, the Committee consider that the existing system of election should be continued, but that "the desirability of introducing a common roll should be re-examined without prejudice" if at some future date changes are made in the situation. Having thus managed to evade giving any definite opinion on the most important questions presented for their consideration, the Committee no doubt congratulated themselves on the thoroughly judicial attitude they had been able to adopt.

But, while the Committee may have satisfied themselves, it seems very unlikely they can have satisfied any of those various interests in East Africa which recognise that considerable changes are needed if there is to be any real progress. It is true that the Committee have propounded a scheme for economic co-operation between the three territories. They could hardly have avoided doing that; discussion on railway rates alone must have made obvious the necessity for closer economic union. But the Committee have done very little beyond that. The long fight made by the Government of

India for a common electoral roll and a common franchise has so far been in vain, but there remains just this consolation that the Parliamentary Joint Committee, in recording their opinion that no change should be made in that respect, definitely say that this decision "should not be allowed to militate against the adoption of the common roll should it later be deemed desirable." That is poor comfort. Quite apart from the fact that nobody would ever have regarded the dicta of this flabby Committee as definitive, there is ample precedent in the history of committees on East Africa for wholly ignoring or reversing what has been said by earlier advisers of Government. We imagine that the condescending suggestion that the Committee's recommendation about the electoral system may some day be ignored will make no difference whatever to the Indians in Kenya or to the Government of India in their struggle to obtain the introduction of the common electoral roll.

International Club

New Movement In Johannesburg

The first public meeting of the newly-formed International Club was held recently in Johannesburg, when Professor D. K. Karve, founder of the first Indian Women's University, was the guest of honour of the club at a garden party at the residence of Rev. and Mrs. Ray Phillips, in Saratoga Avenue, Doornfontein. The attendance was a representative one, among those present being Dr. W. B. Godfrey (president), Sir Kurma Reddi (Agent of the Government of India), the Rev. J. Dexter Taylor, Dr. L. N. Liang, Mr. Oliver Yung, Mr. W. G. Ballinger, Mr. K. J. Tavaris, Mr. Masole, Mr. Theo. Twala, Mr. Tribhovan Patel, Mr. Leonard Barnes, Mr. de Villiers, besides others representing the Indian, Chinese, Persian, Bantu, Afrikaans and English-speaking communities.

Mr. Ray E. Phillips, in extending a welcome to the guests, said the International Club was the most interesting organisation he had ever been connected with. Those present that afternoon were all friends in a friendly place.

Dr. Godfrey, in introducing Professor Karve, said the International Club had been started three months ago, but its existence had been a very great secret. They did not wish to appear before the public until they were well founded. They must see that the club never went down again; it might be the means of bringing the races together in peace and harmony, which, unfortunately, was not the case to-day.

The objects of the club are set forth as follows in its constitution :

"The International Club is a society of men and women of all nations which seek to remove prejudice and develop understanding between peoples of South Africa. As a means to this end it is proposed to organise discussions and lectures, to establish clubs and in other ways to make the different peoples of South Africa better known to one another and promote friendship between them. The International Club recognises no invidious distinctions of race, colour or creed. The club is non-political. Membership is open to all persons in South Africa over the age of 21."

The following have been elected officers :—

Chairman or president : Dr. W. B. Godfrey, vice-chairmen : Dr. L. Liang, Mr. Leonard Barnes, Mr. J. R. Radebe and Mr. A. J. Ferreira; joint hon. treasurers : Mr. K. J. Taveria and Mr. George Crowe, joint hon. secretaries : the Rev. Ray Phillips and the Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney; other members of the executive : Captain R. Douglas, Mr. Theo. Twala and Mr. Oliver Yung.

Professor Karve, in an interesting address, traced the rise of the movement for education for Indian women. In answer to a series of questions, he dealt with matters like child marriages, mother tongue education, untouchability and so forth. The Professor was accorded a hearty vote of thanks for his informative address.—*The Star*.

The Truth About India

It is England's good fortune that it has in its midst statesmen who do not fight shy of speaking the truth even when the Nation is groping in the dark and refuses to see the light. One of such statesmen is Lord Irwin to whom goes the credit of making the Round Table Conference what it has been. The Irwin-Gandhi truce was more a personal triumph for Lord Irwin than a credit to the diplomacy of the Bureaucracy which rules in India; nay it was not even a credit to the British Government who have repeatedly threatened to embark upon repression in order to demonstrate to India its power and its unflinching determination to make its will respected. It was only the other day that the Indian Government paraded their military machines carrying terror into the hearts of the poor peasants in the villages! As a representative of His Britannic Majesty, Lord Irwin had concluded a pact with Mahatma Gandhi prior to his departure from India and the terms of truce were observed by the Congress by the cessation of non-violent hostilities in which the Nation was engaged. It was a gentlemen's truce, but the authorities in India respected it more in the breach than in the observance of its terms. Since the resumption of the Round Table Conference, the same authorities have further aggravated the situation by introducing legislation which has reduced the press to a state of impotency and made legitimate expression of political thought a dangerous undertaking. The Congress Committee in Bengal has resumed its non-co-operation which, in the circumstances in which the Round Table Conference closed, must of necessity spread throughout the country. Lord Irwin has issued a timely warning which, if not heeded, will involve the two countries into a life and death struggle which it should be common duty of Britisher and Indian alike to avert.—*Fairplay*.

Sawoti Government Aided Indian School

Annual Prize Distribution

(Contributed)

The third annual prize distribution and entertainment of the above School was held recently on the School Grounds before a gathering of 150 persons. The Headmaster, Mr. S. Arrikum, in his address said:—

"In the name and on behalf of the staff and the school children I accord you all a hearty welcome. Our Indian friends of this district are very generous, and take a great delight in helping me. It is by their kind help, as well as that of others, that we have been able to arrange this function on such a scale as you all see.

"I cannot find suitable words to express my thanks to those who so generously donated towards the purchase of prizes etc. Let me say to you once more how much I appreciate your kindness in attending our function. It is very encouraging for me to realise that I have your support and your

wholehearted sympathy in my work. I thank heartily our worthy friend Mr. M. M. Govender who has travelled all the way from Umzinto to distribute the prizes. I also thank Messrs. H. Kisoonsingh and P. Naicker for their kindness in managing the sports of the children, and our School Manager, Mr. R. D. Chowthee, who takes the keenest interest in the School. Further, he has evinced his interest and kindness to the Indian community resident here by erecting this fine school at a cost exceeding £146.

"This is the third annual celebration of the school. We commenced school at the beginning of this year on the 26th of January with 39 children, and since then and up to December 11th 23 children have been admitted making a grand total of 62 children. The daily average attendance for the month of January was 27. The highest daily attendance in the month of September was 41. Since then the average fell considerably owing to the irregular attendance of pupils. I sincerely appeal to the parents of the children to let their children attend more regularly than at present. I must congratulate the parents of the children that attend regularly.

"The staff consists of one Teacher, Mr. R. Doorasamy Pillay who was appointed on the 4th of August 1931. I wish to thank him for the support and assistance he has always afforded me."

Messrs. M. M. Govender, H. Kisoonsingh, P. Naicker and C. Mahabeer delivered short speeches praising the good work of the School, and congratulated the School Manager, Mr. R. D. Chowthee for the establishment of the school at his own expense.

NOTICE

A Public Reception will be given to the Indian Delegation to the Round Table Conference at the City Hall, Johannesburg, on Wednesday, 6th January 1932, at 8 p.m. His Lordship the Bishop will preside.

All Indians are requested to be present.

S. B. MEDH
S. M. DESAI

Jt. Secretaries.

Transvaal Indian Congress.

Indian Child Welfare Society Centre

150, BROOK STREET, DURBAN

Open daily, Monday to Saturday, 8-30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Infants, young children, nursing and expectant mothers.

Lady doctors give free attendance.

Tuesday morning 8-30 o'clock. Friday afternoon 3 o'clock.

ઈન્ડિયન ઓપિનિયન.

સુસ્તક ૩૦ મું.

શુક્રવાર, તારીખ ૧ જાન્યુઆરી ૧૯૩૨

અંક ૧

“ઈન્ડિયન ઓપિનિયન”

શુક્રવાર, ૧ જાન્યુઆરી ૧૯૩૨

આ અંક અમારા વાચકોના હાથમાં પહોંચશે ત્યારે નવાં વર્ષનો હૃદય થઈ ગયો હશે. આપણું હિંદીઓને આ અનુભવો દેશમાં આપણા પોતાના સવાલ સાથે નિરંતર અગ્રણ્ય હોય છે. અરંભ તે સાથે પોતાના સ્વાતંત્ર્ય ચૂકવે પ્રિયતા આપણી માતૃભૂમિમાં ઉત્પન્ન થયેલી આત્મિક અંબીર સ્થિતિ તરફ પણ આપણું ધ્યાન આભાવિક ખેંચાય છે અને તેને વિશે ઉડી ચિંતા ન શાય તો આપણે હિંદીઓ કહેવડાવવાને લાખકળ અણુપણુ નહિ. ગત વર્ષ તરફ નજર કરતાં આપણે જોઈએ છીએ કે ૧૯૩૦ ની સાલ માં સ્વદેશમાં આપણા લાભો અને ખેતોએ સહેલાં મહાન સુકોટી આફ મેટ વર્ષનો આરંભ સુખદાયક થયો હતો, સરકારની સાથે સંધી થઈ હતી અને હિંદુસ્તાન તેમજ બ્રિટનને સુખ જાને શાંતિ આપનારું સમાધાન થયું એવી ઉચ્ચ આશાઓથી મસલતો ચાલી રહી હતી. પરંતુ એ આનંદ લાંબો કાળ નહીં થકયો નથી. લંડનની ગોળમેળ પરિષદ નિષ્ફળ મળી છે અને હિંદુસ્તાનની સરકારે હિંદુસ્તાનમાંથી રાષ્ટ્રિયવાદનો નીચમાં નીચ ઉપાયોથી સંઘા નાશ કરવાને અને લોકોને અસહાયથી દાખી દેવાને ઉચ્ચ દમનનીતી ચલાવી છે. હિંદુસ્તાન પર કાળાં વાદ્યો થેરવા લાગ્યાં છે અને આજુ વર્ષમાં હિંદુસ્તાનને કેવી કસોટીમાંથી પસાર થવું પડશે તેનો વિચાર કરતાં હૃદય ધકકે છે. ખ્રીસ્તી આલમ આજે જ્યારે ક્રીસ્ટમસ અને નવાં વર્ષના તહેવારો ઉજવી રહી છે ત્યારે હિંદુસ્તાનની આવમ એક પછી એક પોતાના નેતાઓને કારણમાં નાખવા માં આવે છે તેનો શોક કરી રહી છે. થોડાજ દિવસની અંદર આપણે શ્રી. પુરષોત્તમદાસ ટંડન, કૃષ્ણકાન્ત માલવીયા, જવાહરલાલ નેહરુ સુતે કે. શેરવાણી પક્કડાયાના ખબર જાણ્યા અને પેશાવર પ્રાંતમાં ત્યાંના લોકોના નેતા અબ્દુલ અપુરખાનના પક્કડાયા બાદ સરકારે ત્રાસતી નીતી ચાલુ કરેલી હોવાના ખબર જાણ્યા છે. ગત વર્ષમાં આરંભકાળ જેટલો ઉજવળ હતો તેટલોજ તેનો અંતકાળ કાળો નીવડ્યો છે. ભારતમાતાની કસોટી થઈ રહી છે. કસોટી થઈ જાય સખત છે અને જો તેમાં તે હારી તો તેનો છટ હેતુ સિદ્ધ કરવાને ખીજ અનેક વર્ષો સુધી તેને સમજવું પડશે. પરંતુ જો તે કસોટીમાંથી તે દૃઢ રહી પ્રચાર કૃષ્ટ જરૂરી તો હાલની સરકારની દમનનીતી આશિષ્વાદરૂપ સુધી પડશે અને જેમ દમનનીતીનું જોર વધતું જશે તેમ ભારતમાતાની બેડીઓ વહેલી પડતી જશે. આ નવાં વર્ષની અમારી મુખ્ય પ્રાર્થના છે કે મુશર હિંદુસ્તાનમાં આપણા દુ:ખી થતાં લાભો અને ખેતો પર રહમ કરે અને આપણા વિશ્વાસોને સુધે દોરે.

હવે આ દેશમાં આપણા સવાલ પર આવતાં ચત વર્ષનો આરંભ નિરાશાજનક થયો હતો અને અંત વધુ નિરાશાજનક નીવડ્યો છે. સરકારની નીતી પરજ આ દેશમાં આપણી સ્થિતિ એટલી બધી અગવડભરેલી કરી મુકવાની છે જેથી આપણને તો આ દેશ છોડી જવાનીજ ધા તો ગુલામી દશમાં પડી રહેવાની દરજ પડે. ગત વર્ષમાં આપણી સામે ટ્રાંસવાલનું લેન્ડ ટેન્ડર ખીલ આવ્યું હતું કે જેનો હેતુ આપણો લોકોને સિવાય અન્ય કોઈ પણ સ્થળે વસવા કે વેપાર કરવાનો હતું છીનવી લઇને આપણી જડ ફાટવાનો છે. ત્યાર આફ ૧૯૩૧ નો ટ્રાંસવાલનો લાયસેન્સીંગ કન્ટ્રોલ ક્રાફ્ટ ઓર્ડીનન્સ આવ્યો કે જે ટ્રાંસવાલ પ્રાંતિક કોર્પોરેશનમાંથી પસાર થઈ ચુક્યો છે અને અવરનર-જનરલ-મન-કોર્પોરેશન તરફથી સંમતિ મળવાની આજી રહી છે. એ ઓર્ડીનન્સની અસર ઉપર જાણીએલાં ખીલના જોવીજ છે એટલે કે ન્યાં હિંદીને વસવાટનો હતું હોય ત્યાંજ તેને વેપારનો હતું મળી શકે એવું એ ઓર્ડીનન્સમાં દર્શાવવામાં આવ્યું એટલે લોકોનેની બહાર હિંદીઓથી કોઈ પણ સ્થળે વેપાર કરી શકાય નહિ. એટલે જો કદાપિ લેન્ડ ટેન્ડર ખીલને છોડી દેવામાં આવે તો પણ આ ઓર્ડીનન્સથી ટ્રાંસવાલના હિંદીઓની સ્થિતિ મજબૂર ખીલથી ખરાબ થતે તેટલીજ ખરાબ થવાની. વળી ૧૯૩૧ નો ધર્મોચેત એમેન્ડમેન્ટ એક્ટ આપણી સામે આવેલો છે કે જે કાયદો લખકર છે. એ કાયદાથી ગમે તેટલાં વર્ષોથી આ દેશમાં વસી રહેલા હિંદીને પણ વસવાટનો હતું નળવા કારણથી છીનવી લઈ શકાય છે અને ગમે તેવા ગુન્હા માટે સજા પામેલા આજુસને દેશનિકાલ કરી દેવાની પ્રધાનને સત્તા મળે છે. આવી સત્તાનું પરિણામ શું આવી શકે એ સહેલાઈથી સમજ શકાય છે. આ પ્રમાણે જુલમી કાયદાઓ આપણી ઉપર લાદવામાં આવ્યા છે અને આપણને ઉડી ચિંતા ઉત્પન્ન કરાવી રહ્યા છે. થોડાજ દિવસમાં આપણી ઘરને આવતી ગોળમેળ પરિષદ યુનીયન સરકારની સામે મસલત ચલાવવાને હિંદ સરકારના સરકારી અને બિન સરકારી પ્રતિનિધિઓને આપણે આવકાર આપી રહ્યા હોઈયુ. કેપ્ટાલિન એગ્રીમેન્ટ થવાને પાંચ વર્ષ વીતી ગયાં છે અને હવે તેનું પુનરાવલોન કરવાનું ઉચિત ધારવામાં આવ્યું છે. કેપ્ટાલિન એગ્રીમેન્ટને “નેટલમેન્ટ એગ્રીમેન્ટ” તરીકે પ્રમાણવામાં આવ્યું હતું. એ વખતે અમને લાગ્યું હતું કે એગ્રીમેન્ટને પરિણામે આપણા લાભોની સ્થિતિ યુનીયનમાં સુધરશે અને કેળવણી અને અન્ય સગવડો માં જે હિંદીઓ આ દેશની પ્રજાના એક કાયમના ભાગ તરીકે વસી રહ્યા હશે તેઓને પ્રજાના અન્ય વર્ગોની પાછળ ઘસડાવા દેવામાં આરો નહિ. હવે કેળવણીની સગવડોના સંબંધમાં ન્યાયલાખ પ્રાંતિક સરકાર હિંદીની કેળવણી પ્રેરે સરકાર તરફથી આપવામાં આવતી રકમ ઘટી જતી હતી તે હાલની અટકાવવા ઉપરાંત વિશેષ કંઈ પણ સરકાર તરફથી કરવામાં આવ્યું નથી.

