

# Indian Opinion

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## NOTES AND NEWS

THE following stirring message was sent to his fellow-countrymen in India by Mr. C. R. Das just after his arrest:—

"This is my last message to you, men and women of India: Victory is in sight, if you are prepared to win it by suffering; it is in such agony as that through which we are passing that nations are born; but you must bear this agony with fortitude, with courage and with self-composure. Remember that so long as you follow the path of non-violence, you put the bureaucracy in the wrong; but none by a hair's breadth from the path which Mahatma Gandhi has mapped out for you, and you give away the battle to the bureaucracy. Swaraj is our goal, Swaraj not in compartments, not by instalments; but Swaraj whole and entire. Now it's for you men and women, to say whether we shall attain the goal for which we are striving.

To my moderate friends I say this: Survey the history of the world from the beginning of all times. Has any nation yet won freedom by pursuing the path which you are pursuing? If the appeal should reach any waverrer amongst you, I ask him to consider whether he will now stand on the side of India in her conflict with the bureaucracy. There may be compromise in the matter of details, but there can be no compromise in the essential question that divides us from the bureaucracy, and if you do not stand by and for India, you assuredly stand for the bureaucracy.

"And to the students, I say this: You are at once the hope and the glory of India. True education does not consist in learning to add two and two make four, but lies in the service which you are prepared to give to the mother of us all. There is work to be done for the mother. Who amongst you, is prepared to answer the call?"

Appeal of Mr. S. Rustomjee against the decision of Mr. F. J. Clerk in his case in connection with the Point trouble will be heard, we understand, on February 9. The judgment will be awaited with interest by the Indian community.

The case of Mr. Ismail Gani (President Natal Indian Congress), Mr. Manilal Gandhi and Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee, who was re-arrested on the charge of obstruction at the wharf, is due to be heard on the 16th of February.

Reuter (Bombay) in a message dated Jan. 19, states:—The All-India Congress Committee, presided over by Mr. Gandhi, passed a resolution postponing

civil disobedience till Jan. 31, urging the Government to create a favourable atmosphere by the raising of the embargo on the formation of Volunteer corps, public meetings and the release of political prisoners. Should this step be taken, the hartals and other activities of the Congress would cease.

Calcutta, Jan. 20, (Reuter).—A state of excitement prevails among students in consequence of 50 arrests by the police, who dispersed three public meetings, attempted in a prohibited area by the Bengal Provincial Congress, in pursuance of the policy of civil disobedience. Those arrested include speakers of the Caliphate Volunteers. A number of students attended one of the prohibited meetings in consequence of which the University authorities suspended the college's evening classes.

A Reuter's message from London dated Jan. 20, states:—The firm policy of the Government of India has been upheld in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi, which rejected by 53 votes to 33 a resolution recommending the abandonment of the Government's policy of repression; also by 52 votes to 33 an amendment condemning both the non-co-operators' aggressive policy and the Government's policy of repression, demanding the abandonment of the present policy and the release of all prisoners arrested in pursuance thereof, and asking for a round table conference.

A Reuter's message from Delhi dated Jan. 21 reports that the Indian Council of State has negatived by 23 votes to 10 the motion by Mr. Sethna, advocating a joint session of both Houses to determine the lines for holding a conference of all shades of political opinion in India. Sir Mian Shafi, who is an official member of the Council, defended the Government's policy, and emphasised that Gandhi's attitude was impracticable. He maintained that it was useless to discuss a settlement with Gandhi unless he suspended his activities and requested a conference. The Government has announced that it is considering measures to deal effectively with intimidation.

A message from Delhi states that a Democratic Party has been formed to conduct the Opposition in the House of Assembly. Fifty members have joined the party, which has been divided into five groups, each group dealing with specified subjects like finance, health, communications, commerce, and foreign affairs. The party hopes to make an effective debut by passing a resolution condemning the Government's policy. The object of the party is to secure for India the status of a self-governing Dominion as early as possible, to which end it will carry on an anti-waste campaign, and endeavour to secure fiscal autonomy and the largest measure of provincial autonomy, the Indianisation of all services, and the adoption of every measure to bring about the complete responsibility of the Executive to the Assembly.

The following new postal tariff which has effect from the 1st of January is published for general information:—

**Letters.**—For destinations outside the South African postal union (Union of South Africa, South-West Africa, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Rhodesia, Mozambique) with the exception of the British Empire and Egypt:—First unit of 1 oz., 3d.; each additional unit, 1½d.

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**Embossed literature for the blind (international service),** ½d. per lb.

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London, Jan. 18.—Reuter understands that the strictest secrecy has been maintained during the negotiations in connection with the status of Indians in East Africa, but it is believed little progress has been made hitherto, owing to Mr. Churchill being immersed in the business of handing over the government of South Ireland. As soon as this is fairly completed, it is anticipated that conversations will be resumed between Mr. Churchill and Lord Delamere, who is the protagonist of the European residents in Kenya. After this Mr. Churchill will probably see the Indian deputation which has been strengthened for the purpose of the negotiations, and will comprise Mr. Jeevanjee, an East African, Mr. Polak, a London barrister, and Colonel Wedgwood (Labour M.P.). It is reliably stated that the demands of the Indians have been broadened to include besides equality in regard to voters, the test of any written or spoken language instead of English only, also no reservation of seats in the legislative body. In view of the position, considerable interest attaches to the East African dinner in London on Jan. 27, at which Mr. Churchill will be the principal speaker.

Nairobi, Jan. 17 (Reuter).—The following resolution was passed at a largely attended meeting of Indians:—  
(1) "Request the Government speedily to put into practice the principle of equality of status enunciated at the last Imperial Conference respecting the Indians in the colonies, especially the Crown Colonies and Protectorates." (2) Conveying this opinion to the Secretary of State, that the delegation, headed by Lord Delamere, which is now in London, to submit the European standpoint does not represent the whole of the European opinion in Kenya. (3) Congratulating Mr. Griffith on the Irish Free State, and requesting Irish support of the Indian demand for full dominion Home Rule in India, and the grant of equal rights to the Indians in the Colonies."

A Reuter's message from Delhi dated Jan. 18, states:—(It was officially stated in the Council of State that 2,250 Moplahs had been killed, 5,727 sentenced to imprisonment, and many thousands of Hindus forcibly converted to the Islam religion. The military expenditure during the Moplah campaign amounted to 1,500,000 rupees.

Why no figures as to the conversions of the Hindus

to the Islam faith have been given in the above message is surprising. Why, we wonder, is it put vaguely, *many thousands of Hindus forcibly converted to the Islam religion!* Is it a trickery to cause a split between the two sections whose unity seems to hurt the authorities? We think the time is long past to achieve that object. It is difficult to believe that the tie which was bound between the Hindus and Mahomedans as a result of the deed committed by General Dyer at the Jallianwalla Bagh would break by the fault of the Moplahs who were after all their misguided brethren. We feel sure that the co-religionists of those who have had the misfortune of being forcibly converted will have the good sense to take them back to their own religion. But the above figures do not reflect so much upon the crimes of the Moplahs as they do upon the authorities who were, if not directly, indirectly responsible for the crimes and useless expenditure. Had the leaders not been prevented from entering the troubled parts to guide their brethren the crimes and expenditure would certainly not have reached the figures they are reported to have. But the authorities, evidently, were anxious to display the principle of "will you be governed by the pen or the sword?" And they will no doubt be credited for their performance by those who approve of their actions.

The same message further says:—The Legislative Assembly adopted, with acclamation, a resolution welcoming the Prince of Wales' visit and expressing confidence that the full measure of responsible government would not be long delayed, anticipating the day when India would take her proper place as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Whether this will be taken any notice of by the present India and under the present conditions is very doubtful indeed.

## REPRESSION IN INDIA

REUTER'S messages during the week in connection with the present situation in India has caused a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the Indians in this country who are watching with keen interest the movements in the motherland. They are somewhat surprised at the resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee presided over by Mr. Gandhi. According to the resolution as reported to have been passed it would appear that civil disobedience would be postponed till Jan. 31, and that if the Government will raise the embargo on the formation of Volunteer corps and public meetings and will release the political prisoners the "hartsals and other activities of the Congress would cease." That civil disobedience would be postponed is a thing that could be understood. Mr. Gandhi has already stated that that is a step which is to be taken after serious consideration and as a last resort, and that without the strictest adherence to non-violence that step would prove greatly harmful rather than of any benefit. Under the circumstances and in view of the unfortunate riots that took place recently at Bombay if civil disobedience were to be postponed for another short period the step would not be considered to have been taken in the wrong direction. If *Hartsals* were to be stopped even that would not be considered a wrong step. But what the people in this country are amazed at is that the Congress Committee should have decided to cause all its activities if Government were to withhold their

policy of repression. They cannot understand how the Congress could come to such a decision. The Congress would thereby be retracing its steps which would amount to an acceptance of their defeat. Even if the authorities in India were to give up their policy of repression how could the Congress cease its *Swadeshi* propaganda, the establishing of National schools and other institutions and the destroying of the drink evil. These activities are essential and according to Reuter's message even these would be stopped by the Congress, which is most unbelievable.

Reuter's messages being so vague and uncertain especially with regard to India it is difficult to make out from them what the real situation is. Hence we are unable at present to express any opinion. Notwithstanding, however, if the situation as stated above is the true one then there would certainly be cause for disappointment, but we do not believe it to be so.

On the other hand whilst the All-India Congress Committee is reported to have passed the above mentioned resolution, in Calcutta civil disobedience seems to be quite strong and many more arrests are reported. And notwithstanding this resolution on the part of the Congress Committee the Indian Legislative Assembly has by a majority of votes upheld the Government's repression policy and the Government are "considering measures to deal effectively with intimidation." Sir Mian Shafi (official member of the Council) is reported to have emphasised that Mr. Gandhi's attitude was impracticable and that "it was useless to discuss a settlement with Mr. Gandhi unless he suspended his activities and requested a conference." So long as the Government do not suspend their policy of repression so long it is not likely that the Non-co-operators will cease their activities, and ultimately civil disobedience will also be added to their programme. We will only pray that the Almighty may bestow upon the Government of India the wisdom not to render the situation such as would necessitate the adoption of civil disobedience by the Non-co-operators and thus to avoid making the atmosphere more unfavourable than what it already is.

INDIAN SITUATION

FROM AGHA SAJDAR

The following two letters were sent by Agha Sajdar to Mr. Gandhi showing how the brave Punjabis are being hampered and tried and proving themselves true, how the gallant Sikhs are defying the whole strength of the Government stupidly directed against its erstwhile noblest friends and supporters, and how all the Punjab leaders are working with one mind and how they are all keeping an unflinching temper in the midst of exceptional difficulty.

"I am in receipt of your telegram congratulating Lalaji and others and have not furnished you with details because the telegrams are being held up under orders of the District Magistrate. You must have learnt through the Associated Press the circumstances under which the arrests were made. Lalaji wished very much to abide by your wishes and not court arrest, but it could not be helped, and he, being the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, could not stay away from the meeting. The meeting was called immediately after the orders were passed stop-

ping public meetings and disbanding volunteer corps, the agenda being consideration of the present political situation. The District Magistrate stopped the meeting labelling it as seditious, but as the order was illegal it was decided not to obey it.

Lalaji, Santaram, Gopichand and Lal Khan are now in the Central Jail. They are happy and contented. Bedding and books were supplied to them but they declined to take food from outside and are having the jail food.

The case is coming up for hearing on 27th December and it is said the trial is to take place under Sec. 145 I. P. C. After the arrests were made, the Congress Committee office was locked and search was made on 4th December. A few papers are taken away by the Police but they do not appear to have satisfied with what they have removed. They wanted the original copy of the resolutions passed in the meeting of 3rd December along with the names of proposers and seconders but that could not be found in the office. Probably they want it as a part of evidence.

The whole of the province is quiet and peaceful. We are laying stress upon *Khaddi* and boycott of *vadeshi* cloth and the people seem to respond to it while their hearts are sore. Police paraded in large numbers in different parts of the city yesterday and kept the Punjab Provincial, Khilafat, and City Committee offices in cordon the whole day, but nothing untoward has happened, nor any arrests have been made. Volunteers in breach of Government orders went round the city preaching *Khaddi*. To-day a public meeting is going to take place in the Bradlaugh Hall, where admission will be by tickets. S. Prem Singh Sodhbans will preside, two volunteers have advertised for the meeting through the local press and 20 volunteers are going to court arrest. This will probably continue till 20th December. We have a sufficient supply of volunteers. The Seditious Meetings Act is to be defied only in Lahore and Amritsar but the order re volunteers will be defied in different head-quarters of the Districts. The work will commence everywhere to-day. We have already called a meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee on 11th December for election of delegates for election of delegates for the Congress and we mean to insist on its taking place. The date was fixed even before the prohibitory orders were passed. I shall preside over the meeting and suffer the consequences.

Our Khalsa friends are still busy holding public meetings at Amritsar but no further arrests are being made. Total arrests have been 21 out of whom 11 have already been convicted. Similar divans have commenced meeting in Lahore and so far one arrest has been made.

We are all trying our best to keep a non-violent atmosphere and have every hope to succeed, as people are gradually imbibing the spirit and are keeping under control even under provocative circumstances. Ours is to make an effort, success lies in the hands of the Almighty. May God help us. Lala Dinichand, Pandit Rambhaji Dutt Chaudhary and Lala Govardhandas, D. Niranjandras and Lala Prilokchand Kapur are all heartily co-operating and are so far acting with one mind.

"I hope you have got my letter I wrote you this morning. A public meeting was advertised at 4 p.m. in the Bradlaugh Hall which was to be presided over by S. Prem Singh Sodhbans. Strong police force with lathis and rifles surrounded the hall and all the approaches thereto by two noon and kept the guard till after 4 p.m. None was permitted to enter the premises. 30 volunteers approached the place by 1 p.m. but they were taken in a cordon by the police, taken round different roads to the Ravi river and thus kept engaged till 4 p.m. Three or four thousand people collected round the place and remained quiet and orderly. S. Prem Singh arrived by 3-30 p.m. but was stopped by the police force and ordered to clear off by

a European police officer. He turned round along with the crowd and held a meeting at some distance passing a resolution congratulating Lalaji and his comrades, and then dispersed the meeting. The whole affair ended quietly. The volunteers having been released by the police came to me by 5 p. m. at Lalaji's house and then dispersed in an orderly manner. Nobody was arrested and the police appear to have adopted the policy of scaring away the people. I have, however, just heard that a student was badly beaten by a police constable and is lying in the hospital in a precarious state. Pandit Rambhaji Dutt has just gone out to see him.

Lalaji and others were interviewed in the jail yesterday. They are all keeping good spirits. Treatment accorded to them has not been exceptional. They are all kept in separate cells and are living on jail food.

Mr. Stokes' case has been put off to 8th December, and it is said that both Lalaji's and Stokes' cases will be heard in the jail. Lalaji's case is coming up tomorrow.

At Amritsar, I hear from Girdharilal, there has happened something untoward. Sikhs were peacefully holding their public meeting when all of a sudden a few Sadhus appeared on the spot and began beating promiscuously with their iron sticks. The Sikhs remained non-violent and got a few persons injured. Simultaneously with the advent of the Sadhus there appeared the Deputy Commissioner along with police and military force on the spot. The Deputy Commissioner was permitted entrance. But the Sikh leader Gnanu Sher Singh refused official intervention and declined any help from the Deputy Commissioner. The position is said to be well in hand and no further violence is reported.

It is getting post-time. I am in hurry. It is just reported that the student maltreated by the police is feeling well."

Nothing that I can add (says Mr. Gandhi), can enhance the beauty of the simple narrative given by the Aghasabeh. I have not altered a single word in the two letters. I bow in reverence to Lalaji and his comrades who refused even whilst under trial anything but gaol food, and I tender my congratulations to Sardar Premsinh Sodhbans who conducted the meeting with such calm dignity in defiance of the magisterial order and in the face of the provoking presence of the police. I congratulate the young volunteer with his broken head. The serious affray at Amritsar must await separate treatment when full details are available. There seems little doubt that the Sikhs have behaved with wonderful courage and restraint. When born fighters become non-violent they exhibit courage of the highest order. The Sikhs have historical evidence of such exhibition in their midst. They are now repeating their own history. Let me hope and pray that they will carry out the instructions of Sardar Khadagsinh to remain non-violent to the end, to become simple in their tastes to wear only *Khadis*.

The following is a letter from the surviving Secretary of the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee Mr. Jairam Saksena received by Mr. M. K. Gandhi which we take from *Young India* :—

Of all the local office-bearers of the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee I am the only unfortunate secretary who is yet out of jail. It has therefore fallen to my lot to inform you of what recently happened here.

The Provincial Congress Committee Office was searched at about midnight and the registers of the U. P. Congress Committee, Executive Council and other subordinate bodies were taken away by the Deputy Superintendent of Police who conducted the search. Besides, the Khilafat Committee office and the houses of the gentlemen arrested were searched.

We have now started civil disobedience in Allahabad in an organised and systematic form. National volun-

teers are being briskly recruited. They have been divided into batches of a dozen volunteers each. They are placed under a captain whose orders the volunteers have to obey implicitly. We have not published the names of our volunteers. Yesterday a batch of a dozen volunteers was sent out for a round in the city with national badges on their arms, singing patriotic songs and loudly announcing the fact of their being Congress and Khilafat volunteers. They stopped for some time before the Kotwali, and there waited for arrest but though the Kotwal came out and listened to the announcement of the volunteers, none was taken in custody with the result that the batch after parading the streets of the city for some hours, came back to the Provincial Congress Committee Office most disappointed and furious with themselves for not being able to join their leaders in the jail. To-day the same batch with another of a dozen volunteers paraded the town from one end to the other with badges on, openly enlisting volunteers for the national corps. It is now late in the evening and one of the batches has already returned from their round. No arrests took place to-day.

Our volunteers' behaviour has been admirable and the popular mind though considerably agitated yet is self-possessed. The situation is completely well in hand. Our reserve of volunteers is quite sufficient for our present purposes, and enlistment is proceeding apace.

We have filled up the vacancies in the Town Congress Committee. The Provincial Congress Committee meets on the 13th instant, when we shall re-elect our volunteer Board in place of the one now wholly in jail; other office-bearers will also be appointed."

The following is from a Lahore correspondent :—

"The general atmosphere is very good. People are fearless and non-violent. The City Congress Committees are sending out volunteers to hold meetings in different parts of the town at the same hour, to read out the same written speech, and to sing the same song and disperse within ten or fifteen minutes. Yesterday (the 8th instant) twenty such meetings were held in twenty centres. On Tuesday last an attempted public meeting with Sardar Prem Singh in the chair was stopped by the Police surrounding Badliauh Hall allowing none to enter. The people went back calmly but held a meeting all the same in an adjoining place. Some were arrested but let off after a short time. Fear of arrest or the jail is gone."

## THINGS THAT SINK

(By Mr. M. K. Gandhi, in *Young India*)

To imprison those who, with the highest love, break the commandments, to treat them as common felons, to deprive them of their prison privileges, one can understand. I would not call that foul play. If you incur the wrath of one who is over you or who has you under his power for the time being, to be punished by him for your disobedience is what you expect. But if he humiliates you, if he makes your children do things you and they do not like and which you are not required in law to do, if he treats you like dirt, it becomes unbearable. One learns that in Cocanada a Magistrate had the Swaraj and the Khilafat flags pulled down, that he prohibited the use of such flags for one week, that the children of a school were compelled to salute the Union Jack, that a distinguished Professor in Calcutta, going out in his academic costume and on the strength thereof going up to an officer to stop a wanton hunt of inoffensive men, was brutally assaulted for his innocent inquiry as to the cause of the hunt, that a party of brave cultured young men were kicked about by those who were their warders for the time being. These are things that sink. These humiliations show that there is little change in the manners of our

'masters.' The O'Dwyerian spirit has not died out. Of what use is it that Lord Ronaldshay sends for the injured Professor, soothes him and assures him that the thing will not happen again? What will not happen again? The Professor will not be assaulted? Of course he will not be during the present crisis. The Professor himself will not again presume upon his academic costume and challenge an officer very soon. But has the officer any respect for the Professor? The Professor did not seek relief for himself. He interceded for injured humanity. Will Indian humanity be protected and respected in future because of his Lordship's assurance? It is the habitual training given to the soldier that matters. He is converted into a vicious animal to be let loose on harmless people on given occasions. The Dases and the Azads have gone to gaol to prevent a repetition of such unmanly and brutal exhibitions. They have welcomed imprisonment in order that even the worst criminal may be protected against wanton injury, that even he may not have his self-respect wounded. They have not gone to gaol for any mechanical transference of power. The organic change they want, that Lala Lajpat Rai has been pining for for years, that has become the breath of life for the case-loving Motilal Nehru and has made of him practically a Fakir, is not to be brought about by Lord Ronaldshay, however well-intentioned he may be in his apologies, nor by Lord Reading's smooth phrases and his personal care that officers and men might not overstep the limits of law. The organic change will be and can only be brought about by the suffering that has come to the people and for which thank God they find themselves prepared. A cautious friend in order to restrain my optimism tells me, that he suffering has only just begun, that for the end in view we must pay a much higher price still. He really expects that we shall have to invite a repetition of Jalianwalas and that instead of approaching the triangles of the crawling land lame tremblingly and reluctantly, we shall have now to walk to them cheerfully and with a steady step and suffer lashes for refusing to crawl. I assure the friend that my optimism has room for all these things and much worse that he can imagine. But I promise, too, that if India remains calm and unperturbed and does not retaliate even mentally—a very difficult process I admit and yet not so difficult in India's present exalted mood,—our very preparedness and consequent absence of re-action will exhaust the brute spirit for want of nutrition, and Lord Reading, instead of talking big things to us, will himself adopt the human language of penitence and see ample occasion in the Indian atmosphere for a new diplomacy. Whereas if we forget ourselves and our pledge, we must be ready for a thousand Jalianwalas and India being turned into a vast shambles. The President-elect has prepared us for such a consumation. He is sure that we have shed the fear of the prison. He is almost certain probably from the experience of his brave son and his company that we will be prepared to undergo the ordeal of assaults. But he bids us give up the fear of death itself. If that time is in store for us, I hope that there will be non-violent non-co-operators enough in India, of whom it will be written:

'They suffered bullets without anger and with prayer on their lips even for the ignorant murderer.'

Well, if the reports are to be credited, two Assamese volunteers have been whipped, the volunteers of Lahore have meekly borne the wanton assaults committed on them. This fight is not a joke. We have disciplined ourselves for the past twelve months and more, and we must now go through it the end. There is no turning back.

17th December.

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Manager, INDIAN OPINION, Phoenix, Natal.

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