

# Indian Opinion

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## UNION INDIANS CELEBRATE MAHATMA GANDHI'S BIRTHDAY

THE Natal Indian Congress in co-operation with the Kathiawar Arya Mandal and the Surat Hindu Association celebrated the Sixty-fourth birthday of Mahatma Gandhi at the Victoria Picture Palace, Victoria Street, Durban, on Sunday the 2nd October 1932. The Hall was full with men, women and children.

The President of the Congress Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee presided. The Agent of the Government of India Kunwar Maharaj Singh and the Kunwarani graced the function with their presence. Mr. Rustomjee delivered his speech as follows:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—To-day is the Sixty-fourth birthday of that Greatest Soul in the world, Mahatma Gandhi. We have come here to celebrate his birthday and to offer him our sincerest wishes.

Mahatma Gandhi's Sixty-fourth birthday will long be remembered by every Indian and will be cherished in our hearts. For, has he not just achieved a remarkable success by bringing about an agreement between Caste Hindus and the Depressed Classes? It is a success that means the uplift of the depressed classes whose oppression is a blot in the history of India. That Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya should openly state that the depressed classes should be uplifted is an indication that the whole of the Caste Hindus would stand by the agreement just reached.

Mahatma Gandhi is the greatest living person in the world. It is his pure living, his unblemished character, his enormous sacrifices for others, his services for humanity as a whole, that place him in the highest estimation of all.

To us the name of Mahatma Gandhi is much dearer, for, there are few South African Indians who have not either known him personally or who have not followed his various activities in South Africa. Many of us have worked with him and learned the ideals set by him. In all our public work we strive to follow as closely as possible the ethics he has enunciated. If only it were possible for us to follow those ethics to the letter, no one could deny that all our endeavours would be crowned with success.

Since Mahatma Gandhi's arrival in India some eighteen years ago, India has made enormous strides. Her progress has been remarkable. He has been able to raise in the hearts of millions of our country-

men and country women a sense of national consciousness. His influence over the masses is remarkable. Perhaps his greatest work in India is the revival of the Home Industries—I refer particularly to the Spinning Wheel—the dying of which impoverished our people to such an extent that the earning power of the average Indian in India became the lowest in the world.

The spinning wheel has once again revived an industry which had long been lost and as a result of the use of Khaddar has become national. That the late Pundit Motilal Nehru who usually got his dress shirts laundered in Paris, took immediately to Khaddar will give us an idea of the enormous hold that the use of Khaddar has on the people of India.

A week ago every one of us was anxious about the life of our revered leader. We are thankful to Almighty that He has spared us Mahatma Gandhi. There is much to be done in India and let us pray that he will long be spared so that he may carry on his good work for the benefit of humanity."

Two of Mahatma Gandhi's photos were illuminated with coloured lights and covered with flowers. After Chandan ceremony had been performed by the ladies and children Kunwar Maharaj Singh addressed the children present and spoke of the character of the great person. An interesting feature of his speech was that he questioned the children with a view to ascertaining whether they knew anything about Mahatma Gandhi. The answers given by the children showed conclusively that they knew the good qualities of Mahatma Gandhi. The Kunwarani who spoke in Hindustani paid a tribute to the Mahatma.

Amongst others who spoke were Advocate A. Christopher, Swami Bhawani Dayal, Messrs. M. K. Lodhia, A. H. Kazi, A. M. Lokhat, Pragji Desai, B. M. Patel and O. H. A. Jhaveri.

At the termination of the meeting over 1,250 packets of sweatmeats were distributed to the children, kindly donated by the Parsee Rustomjee Jivanjee Ghorkhoodoo Trust.

The following cable was sent to Mahatma Gandhi:

"Natal Indians send their love and greetings your Sixty-fourth birthday. Your service for humanity has created niche which will remain always lit in human history. May God bless you with long life so that your noble mission may be continued."

### Transvaal Indian Congress

There was a mass meeting of Indians in the Trades Hall, to celebrate the 64th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. O. K. T. Naidu presided, and after prayers by Dr. Doke, and a Hindu priest, there were numerous addresses, and a series of resolutions were passed.

The first was in the form of a message to Mahatma Gandhi: "That this meeting of all sections of the Indian community acclaims with gratitude your determined effort to rescue the depressed classes, even at the cost of your precious life, and rejoices at the victory achieved and your vindication of your faith in God and in the power of soul force over brute force. This meeting further offers you its loving greetings on the occasion of your 64th birthday, and prays that you may be long spared as our guide, exemplar and leader, and that it may be your lot to lead the Motherland to the goal of Swaraj."

It was also resolved: "That this meeting of the Transvaal Indians hereby places on record its appreciation and thanks to the Prime Minister of England and his colleagues for their prompt action in the "Fast-to-Death" of Mahatma Gandhi, who firmly stood for the progress and emancipation of the depressed classes, and offers its grateful thanks to Providence for averting a national disaster to India and the world at large."

Finally it was decided that: "This meeting of the Transvaal Indian Congress places on record its respectful appreciation, and congratulates the leaders of India in arriving at a satisfactory agreement, and thereby saving the life of Mahatmajji. This meeting further prays that the leaders of India shall continue the humanitarian work begun by Mahatmajji."

### Ladysmith Hindu Community

Mahatma Gandhi's 64th birthday was celebrated by the Hindu community of Ladysmith on Tuesday the 27th September, 1932 at 8-15 p.m., when many leading European citizens and a large number of Indians assembled in response to the invitation.

The Mayor, Mr. W. Cochrane was unanimously elected to the chair. The meeting opened with the chanting of Vedic hymns, followed by a welcome song in Hindi by the Gujrati School children. Mr. V. Lala then spoke in Hindi of the significance of the day, subsequent to which Mahatma Gandhi's portrait was garlanded by one of the Gujrati girl students. His Worship the Mayor and the various speakers amongst whom were Messrs. F. Pearse, Rev. Turnbull, W. D. Maars, T. A. Turner, M. Thomas, D. F. Yusuf and R. Singh, spoke at length on the life, the greatness and the doings of the Great Soul.

Some of the speakers mentioned that Gandhi was one who had won the admiration of the whole world, led a life of truthfulness, was one of the most illustrious and noblest sons of India, one who had championed the cause of the oppressed classes, while others stated that Gandhi was humble, a national

hero who achieved his ends by passive means and was one who abhorred bloodshed and advocated non-violence and one who worked on right lines. Reference was also made to his recent fast—a noble sacrifice. All the speakers prayed that Mahatma Gandhi may be spared for many more years.

The guests were entertained with light refreshments, which were provided by Mr. Hirjee Valjee, who was also responsible for the expenses incurred in the celebration, for which the Hindu community extends thanks.

The following message was cabled to Mahatma Gandhi:—

"Hindu community warmly congratulate you on your Sixty-fourth birthday. Wish you long life and prosperity. We learnt with greatest satisfaction your victory over caste divisions. Your noble sacrifice is worthy of praise."

### East London Hindu Society

The above society celebrated Mahatma Gandhi's 64th birthday and prayers were offered to God that He may grant long life to Mahatmajji.

The Zoutpansberg Indian Congress and the Gujrati Kehatriya Mochi Mandal, of Port Elizabeth also celebrated Mahatma Gandhi's 64th birthday.

### Pretoria Vedic Society

Under the auspices of the Pretoria Tamil Vedic Young Men's Association prayer service was daily held at 6-30 p.m. at the Pretoria Tamil School to that Mahatmajji "The Life of India" will achieve his object and be blessed with long life, and on the 27th September Mahatmajji's birthday was celebrated. The following resolution was put by the chairman and was unanimously adopted by the audience standing:—

"Pretoria Tamilians adore your ideals. Pray humbly to accept sincere love and deep gratitude. Grateful to God, Macdonald, Indian leaders for unparalleled victory. May God bless you with long life, health and strength."

The meeting ended with prayer.

### INDIA AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

THE Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa finished its work a few days ago. The representatives of all the parts of the British Empire were present there. India is also supposed to be represented there on equal terms with the Dominions. Her representatives go and attend the sittings of the League of Nations and Imperial Conferences and she has a right to vote independently as she likes. This fact is emphasised on the outside world. The representatives of the Dominions who go to attend the sittings of these institutions are the true representatives of their people because they are elected by their assembly. Such is not the position of the representatives of India. Those who go as representatives of India are selected by the Government of India which is alien to the people of India and therefore they are merely tools of that Government. It surprises us to know therefore that some public institutions in India send important representations on the grievances of the Indian community who is settled in the self-governing Dominions for their mitigation to these so-called representatives. A delegation of India had gone to attend the Conference at Ottawa under the leadership of Sir Atul Chander Chatterjee. He held the post of High Commissioner on behalf of the Government of India in London. Such high

posts are often given by the Government of India to such Indians who would say aye to what the Government of India has to say. Therefore in the meetings of the Imperial Conferences and at the sittings of League of Nations these so-called representatives of India are not the true representatives of the people of India. They are considered as the creatures of the Government of India. The Council of the Imperial Citizenship Association of Bombay sent a cable to Sir Atul Chander Chatterjee at Ottawa which reads "that the Council of Imperial Citizenship Association, Bombay, begs respectfully to remind the economic co-operation committee of the Conference of the imperative necessity of their not missing this opportunity of bringing home to the Dominions concerned that invidious immigration laws against Indians are serious barriers to economic co-operation and require to be repealed as a first step." It really surprises us to know that the Council of the Imperial Citizenship Association sent this kind of cable to Sir Atul Chatterjee. We see no meaning in it. Almost all the British Dominions have closed their doors against India. It is a settled fact. If the Government of India were to ask these dominions to repeal the immigration laws these dominions will at once say to India Government to mind its own business. Let alone asking these dominions to repeal the immigration laws, here in South Africa the Indian Government of Sir Atul Chander Chatterjee is absolutely helpless. According to Capetown Agreement the Indians are to be considered as part of the permanent population. They are lawfully domiciled here. Most of them are born in this country. And yet the Union Government go on passing iniquitous laws against them. As an example we sight the Transvaal Land Tenure Act. The South African Indian Congress has been putting up a fight against this Bill ever since the Select Committee introduced it in Parliament. Protests after protests were made and as a result of its agitation second Round Table Conference was held. The Congress asked the Government of India deputation to get the Tenure Bill withdrawn and relief be given to Indians in the Transvaal by repealing sections 130 and 131 of the Gold Law of 1908. As soon as the delegation returned to India the Union Government not only passed the Tenure Act but H.E. the Governor-General gave his assent to the Transvaal Provincial Licensing Control Ordinance which gives supreme and autocratic powers to the Municipalities. In the presence of the Agent of the Government of India the Union Parliament passed in a day the Immigration Act in 1930 which deprived Transvaal Indian's rights which they enjoyed under Registration Certificates. The South African Indian Congress do not even know up to now whether the delegation discussed this important question at the second Round Table Conference? It is useless to ask the delegates of the Government of India at the Ottawa Conference to get the immigration laws repealed when the Agent of the Government of India even cannot get redress of the serious grievances of the domiciled Indians in South Africa. As a matter of fact India has no place in the British Empire. The British Government still consider India as its dependency and her people are treated as helots in all the British

Dominions. Therefore our advice to the Indians in the British Dominions is that they must seek their own salvation by relying on their own strength till India achieves either Dominion Status or Complete Independence. It is a plain fact that neither the British Government nor the Government of India have got any powers left in them to protect their subject's rights in the British Dominions.

#### ROODEPOORT MUNICIPALITY AND INDIANS

THE Roodepoort-Maraisburg Town Council has passed a very important resolution with reference to the Transvaal Land Tenure Act. The resolution reads: "That the Council adhere to its policy of opposing residence or occupation of stands inside the boundaries of the Townships within the Roodepoort-Maraisburg Municipality by coloured persons and Asiatics, but, as the Council recognises that, under the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act, 1932, the Minister of the Interior, after consultation with the Minister of Mines, has a right to exempt any land from the operation of the provisions of Act 35 of 1908, as amended, the Council will undertake, if necessary and subject to the Administrator's consent, to establish outside, but as near to the township of Roodepoort as possible, an Asiatic bazaar for residential and trading purposes and also a Coloured township for residential purposes." The town council also selected officials to appear before the Commission appointed under the Act. It is a well-known fact that the Municipalities in the Transvaal Province are deadly against the Indian community living and trading within their respective towns. When the Union Parliament appointed a select committee to go into the question of Asiatic tenure of land and other matters relating to Transvaal Indians the representatives of the Transvaal Municipal Association appeared before it and gave evidence. They demanded that with regards to the issuing of trading licences to the Asiatics the Municipalities in the Transvaal must have unrestricted authority. The Transvaal Provincial Council gave this authority to the Municipalities by passing the Licensing Control Ordinance which also received H.E. the Governor-General's assent during the early part of this year. Now under the Transvaal Land Tenure Act it can be clearly seen from the resolution passed by the Roodepoort Town Council what the Europeans desire to do. We will not be surprised in the least if the other Municipalities also may follow the suit. The Transvaal Indians did everything in their power to take necessary steps to get the Tenure Bill withdrawn. The South African Indian Congress protested in vain. It presented the Transvaal Indian's case to the Fazli delegation. That delegation failed miserably in getting the grievances of the Transvaal Indians relieved. When the Tenure Bill became Act and when the Congress realised the helpless position of the Transvaal Indians it passed a resolution to passively resist the Act after the finding of the Commission. There was no other way open to the Congress but to decide to take this drastic step. We hope that our countrymen in the Transvaal will prove their manhood and show to the world that they cared for their self-respect first and for their worldly possession afterwards.

## Agent-General At Maritzburg

Kunwar Maharaj Singh, the Agent of the Government of India, spent a few days at Maritzburg last week. He spoke at a meeting of the Natal Debating Society and also at the City Parliament. At the meeting of the Natal Debating Society he spoke on a subject that 'The line of demarcation between Europeans and Indians in South Africa should be based on a civilisation test rather than merely on colour.'

The Kunwar began by outlining the condition of the 170,000 Indians in South Africa, about 150,000 of whom were in Natal. Of these people he estimated that about 80 per cent. had been born in the Union and had their permanent homes there.

Not only had they no parliamentary nor municipal vote but educational facilities for them were inadequate and they had to submit to segregation and anti-Asiatic legislation, such as the Government's white labour policy and the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act.

There were no subsidies from provincial revenues for Indian education and very few facilities for technical training, while no relief works for Indian unemployed were provided by any Government or municipal authority.

### Suspicion And Mistrust

As a result of these disabilities, Indians in South Africa were suffering from a feeling of mistrust, suspicion, and even of fear and apprehension.

These feelings of fear had caused a great deal of unnecessary friction between the Governments and peoples of India and South Africa.

India was rapidly approaching the status of a full Dominion and it was most important that everything possible should be done to minimise the friction which existed between the two countries.

"I think I am correct in saying—I am certainly voicing the views of the Government of India and the Indian community in South Africa—that Indians here seek no political domination whatever," said the Kunwar. "They realise that they can never be the dominant race in this country, and I would like you to get rid of the fear that the Indian community is ever likely to get the upper hand of the European in this country."

### Capetown Agreement

The Capetown Agreement of 1927 had promised the Indians opportunities of upliftment, and he begged that the South African Government would give more educational opportunities to Indian boys and girls. He suggested also that training might be given to Indians as market gardeners and carpenters—two trades to which they had proved themselves peculiarly suited—or even as doctors or nurses.

"My claim," he declared, "is that the line of demarcation should be based more on a civilisation test than merely on colour. In the part of India from which my wife and I come you will find that practically 80 per cent. of the population are fair, while I have myself been to the south of Italy and France and seen thousands of Europeans as dark—or fair—as I am.

"I would urge that it is essential that in the years to come, when India is a self-governing Dominion within the British Empire, a better feeling should exist between the great countries of India and South Africa. I am quite sure that by principles of evolution and goodwill a great deal can be done."

The Kunwarani also spoke, dealing with the subject from the women's point of view.

Senator W. E. Thrash said there was a tendency on the part of Indians in Natal to live as "shacks" and under slum conditions, particularly with regard to overcrowding, evasion of the laws, especially the

immigration laws, and a tendency to take sport too seriously. These faults had been less obvious during the past 10 or 15 years.

In his reply the Kunwar said that the best form of government for India, and perhaps for many Western countries, would be benevolent autocracy, as existed in India in the seventeenth century under the great emperor Akbar.

Europeans were entitled, he added, to safeguard their full rights in the country, but he appealed once more to all present to give the Indian a fair deal as regards education and thus help to abolish the fears which at present existed between the two peoples.

## At The City Parliament

Over 300 people welcomed the Agent-General of India, Kunwar Maharaj Singh, and the Kunwarani at the City Parliament, Maritzburg. The Kunwarani was presented with a bouquet by the Prime Minister (Mr. Austin Hughes), who then introduced Kunwar Maharaj Singh as "the featherweight champion of Oxford" during his university days. (Laughter.)

Speaking to the motion for the evening, "The policy of the nations is becoming increasingly international," the Agent-General conceded that nationalism, patriotism and blood relationship at their best were eminently praiseworthy. Nationalism and patriotism had been responsible for a great deal of excellent literature.

He protested against excessive nationalism or racialism. Narrow and insular racialism lent itself to many objections.

As examples of excessive racialism he cited the German war song, "Deutschland Uber Alles," and two lines from the British national anthem:

"Confound their politics,  
Frustrate their knavish tricks."

Edith Cavell

The defects in excessive nationalism led to armaments, tremendous expenditure and ultimate war. They would remember the huge armaments before the Great War and the increasing burden of taxation.

Excessive racialism amounted to "My country, right or wrong." He was sure the House would agree with him in condemning an argument of that kind. Edith Cavell's last words were: "Patriotism is not enough for me."

What did she mean? She could have gone to her death in a spirit of racialism, but she preferred to regard humanity as a whole. Patriotism was not enough for her. (Applause.)

All countries competed at sport at the Olympic Games or at the tennis championships at Wimbledon. East and West had met long ago, chiefly through the founders of religion—Jesus, Buddha and other men of the East.

Who could have imagined 30 years ago that every sojourner in a mandated territory who have equal rights, as was the case to-day?

### Indian Problem

Speaking on the Indian problem, Kunwar Maharaj Singh appealed for closer co-operation between Europeans and Indians. It was easy to fan the flames of racialism and to set up a gulf between the races. If the Indian was depressed the whole country would undoubtedly suffer. If they increased the economic condition of the Indian they would increase the potential assets of South Africa as a whole. (Applause.)

Indo-European councils, child welfare and technical classes could do a great deal in the way of co-operation.

Mr. Baytopp (leader of the Opposition) held that Indians as citizens of the Union should not be prohibited from living in the O.F.S. and the Transval.

Another speaker asked whether South Africa would lower her tariffs in order that the sweated goods of Japan, India and other countries should be allowed entry into the Union?

Mr. Garnet Jones appealed to the merchant princes of the Indian community to pay their employees higher wages so that they could reach the same economic level as the Europeans.

### Europeans Taken To Task

Mr. Christopher, a prominent Indian, taunted Europeans with conquering India for her raw products and making her a pawn in world politics. He accused the Europeans of exploiting the Indian labourers, who had worked on the estate under conditions of slavery while Europeans made fortunes. They had asked the Indians to co-operate with them in obtaining minimum wage clauses, but when they secured minimum wages they debarred the Indian. Indians had formed trade unions, but when it came to equal treatment the European downed tools, saying that he would not work alongside an Indian.

After further speeches the motion was carried.—  
*Natal Witness.*

## Indian Press On Asiatic Land Tenure Act

The *Bombay Chronicle* writes under the caption 'Plight of S. A. Indians.' :—

Telegrams are being received in India from South Africa that the situation there 'vis-a-vis' the Indian community is becoming very critical. A few days ago at a mass meeting Indians decided that they should embark on a 'Satyagraha' against the new law passed against them, and a little later Indian women passed a similar resolution civilly to disobey the law. Indians in South Africa are fairly familiar with such a movement since the days of Mahatma Gandhi. As a matter of fact, he had to resort to it as the only remedy to right their many grievances.

The new Indian Agent in South Africa speaking at a lunch given in his honour by the Durban Rotary Club, referring especially to the Transvaal, said, a "great deal of what he considered unnecessary and undesirable anti-Indian activity had taken place," and he pleaded for a better understanding between Indians and Europeans. We have our doubt whether, in the intensive propaganda and race war carried on against South African Indians, these few words appealing for sanity will have any tangible result in improving the present situation, or rather relaxing the tension between Indians and the Whites. The most important question at the present moment, which the Agent will have to deal with, is the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act recently passed by the Union, and it is intended to isolate and humiliate Indians. The provisions of this Act bear harshly on Indians, and it is against them that Indians are making such a united and determined stand.

Unfortunately for Indians the Fazli Hussain delegation has approved of the measure though that does not take away the right of Indians to fight their own battles in their own way. What Indians most object to, under the Asiatic Land Tenure Act, is the principle of segregation implicit in it. Indians have always revolted against this humiliation and they will never accept it despite the assent of the new measure has received from the Indian Government. It is urged by some that the Asiatic Land Tenure Act will give some security to Indians of their "occupation and residence," but we

doubt whether this questionable security will compensate them or the loss of their self-respect. Some people feel that "without the moral backing of the Government of India the agitation in South Africa will be greatly handicapped, and in such an enterprise failure is worse than defeat." Even when the Government of India were considering the measure the South African Indians had raised their voice of protest against it and the Congress in South Africa had whole-heartedly condemned it. In these circumstances the Government had no business to accept a law which would permanently brand South African Indians with the stigma of inferiority. We cannot at all agree that wisdom lies in submitting to it, because the Whites are a powerful body. If Indians are defeated in the lawful fight against the South African Whites there is no disgrace in it, but it is far better than an abject surrender of most vital principles which are involved in this issue.

*The People of Lahore* writes :—

### Satyagraha In South Africa

While the new Agent is getting acquainted with his work, a telegram published in the *Times of India* says that the South African Indian Congress has endorsed the decision of the Transvaal Indian Congress to launch a Satyagraha campaign against the Transvaal Land Tenure Act. The Act is an abomination and aims at virtual segregation of Indians and the decision of the two bodies to start agitation that will bring untold miseries on Indian settlers brings into relief the feeling among Indians in South Africa against this breach of "gentlemen's" agreement. The new Agent, the *Times of India* cable adds, is optimistic of peaceful negotiations and has called upon his compatriots to stay their hands in the hope that a more sympathetic attitude would be shown by South African Whites in the near future. We wish we could have subscribed to this optimism, which we feel is altogether misplaced. The Whites of South Africa demand the whole sun for themselves and are determined to throw Indians out bag and baggage.

*The Samachar* :—

### Clouds On The South African Horizon

It is long since Mahatma Gandhi led a Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa, which resulted in the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914.

To-day South African horizon is clouded more heavily than on the former occasion and Mahatma Gandhi is not there. But the action of the Union Government is responsible for the trouble which is the result of the Union Government having passed the Asiatic Land Tenure Act in respect of the Transvaal Indians even before the ink of the renewed Cape Town Agreement of January last was dry! It will suffice to say that the passing of this Act as well as the sanctioning by Union Government of the Licences Control Ordinance of the Transvaal Provincial Council have practically tolled the death-knell of the Transvaal Indians and so left them no alternative but Passive Resistance.

The new Agent-General to the Indian Government in the Union, Kunwar Maharaj Singh has expressed his disapproval of the resolution, which he characterises as hasty one. He must speak about the resolution in this way, because, in the first place, he is an Agent of the Indian Government and secondly, because his shoe does not pinch! It is the shoe of the Transvaal Indians which pinches and that it is pinching unbearably has been shown by the fact that even the Indian ladies of Transvaal had to pass a solemn resolution to stand by their men-folk in this impending trouble.

A very serious position has been created in Transvaal and all eyes will now be turned towards the events that may follow the action of the Indians of that Province of the Union in launching the Passive Resistance Movement!

## Gulf Between British And Congress Viewpoints

Mr. C. F. Andrews writes in the *Manchester Guardian* of July 26:

Behind all the political movement in India there is a most disturbing economic situation of poverty and want which Mahatma Gandhi alone brought forward into prominence at the Round Table Conference in London. He declared himself to have come there as a delegate on behalf of the poorest of the poor. He pointed out that the great majority of the Indian population lived in the villages and that the area of poverty among them was unrelieved. One-fifth of the whole human race was involved in this poverty of village India.

This was no idle declaration when it came from Mr. Gandhi's lips, for none has more fully identified himself with the poor of India. Especially has he given himself to the Untouchables whose hardships are greatest of all. His very top, dress and habits of life have bound him to them. He has lived among them as one of themselves. While other members of the Conference would naturally travel in comfort, he has unflinchingly travelled among the crowds of village people, in third-class Indian railway carriages, where the comfort is often indescribable.

### Hard Life

Thus he has willingly and joyfully led a daily life of extreme physical hardship. Though at one time he was a sick man, living in great comfort, he has renounced it all for the sake of the poor. It is a marvellous thing to witness his endurance in spite of the frailties of his body. I have learnt this from my own experience. When I have been out on tour with him it has often been very difficult indeed to keep up without suffering a physical breakdown in the end. Many others, stronger and younger than myself, have felt the same thing. He never spares himself for a single moment, and he is always true to the course of life he has voluntarily adopted.

The same thing in India, over vast stretches of territory, are on the verge of an agrarian revolution owing to unbearable conditions. The world depression which in the last few years has hit Europe so badly, has cruelly affected Asia. Millions whose daily life had been eking out with extreme difficulty, on a low level of subsistence, have now dropped even below that subsistence level until their sufferings have become acute. In China, whole provinces have now adopted Soviet methods of class warfare. Landlords have been ejected from their estates by the peasants, and their lands have been divided up. In India, the same misery has spread far and wide, especially over the North.

### Noble Men

It is useless to explain to poverty-stricken masses such as these the intricate points that were being discussed at the Round Table Conference in London. While I was living with Mahatma Gandhi last November he used to speak to me almost daily of the unreality of the debates that were carried on at St. James's Palace. He told me that the inner sense of the truth of things only came back to him when he returned to the East End of London and felt the presence of the poor around him.

Those who met Mr. Gandhi at the Round Table Conference last year often found him difficult to understand. His language was not their own. But

the fault was theirs rather than his, for they would not consider along with him the affliction of the masses. Other delegates spoke about different financial safeguards, but his one wish was to defend the villagers from depression. His most serious condemnation of the Government of India, with its huge buildings at New Delhi and its large official incomes, was that it cruelly crushed beneath its weight the poor people. He spoke of us, clad in coarse raiment, as a prophet, but we answered him as politicians, seeking to obtain some diplomatic advantage.

How can we in England meet Mr. Gandhi's moral claim against us? What will attract him most quickly to our own side? What will win him his chief lieutenant, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is regarded by most Englishmen as an impossible extremist, though in reality he is the sincerest and noblest of men?

Not any mere bargaining about political reforms in the abstract but much rather the getting down to the central problem of relieving substantially the poverty of the villagers of India who form 90 per cent. of the whole vast population.

### Spinning

On more than one occasion, even at the height of his power, Mahatma Gandhi had offered to cooperate with the Government of India if only they would take up seriously his spinning programme for the Indian villagers called the Khaddar Programme and also prohibit the sale of intoxicating opium and alcohol as a Government monopoly. This offer I brought personally from him to the highest authorities in India, but the offer was refused, mainly on the ground that to encourage village hand-spinning might hurt the Lancashire cotton industry.

This ground for refusal which was put before me some years ago, no longer now holds good for Lancashire people themselves have repudiated any selfish policy of this kind. But the failure to come to terms with Mahatma Gandhi along these very lines, which he himself had laid down and the National Congress had adopted, is still painfully apparent. For to accept a programme of this kind from one who is regarded in the world at large as the greatest lover of poor people since the days of St. Francis, would be considered as beneath the dignity of the Government of India.

I have brought forward this direct economic issue in the foremost place because I know intimately the four Congress leaders, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Dr. Ambedkar, and I believe with all my heart that their devotion to the village poor of India is far deeper than any idea of political advantage.

### Congress Leaders

But to turn from the economic to the political background, it appears to me quite certain that no settlement can carry any final weight in India without the direct approval of the Congress leaders. For they have laboured and suffered whole-heartedly in the midst of the Indian villagers, who have learnt to love them. They have also gone cheerfully to prison for the sake of the Indian cause. Therefore no settlement can be made without them.

Sooner or later all those who have attended the Round Table Conference will feel the pressure of loyalty towards these devoted men and women who are suffering imprisonment in India to-day. Even if they do not agree logically with them, patriotic sentiment will carry them farther than logic. The very fact that leading Moderates have felt obliged to tender their resignations to the Viceroy reveals a gulf



between the British rulers and Indians who deeply love their country. The continuance of a policy of imprisonment mingled with repression, can only make the gulf still wider.

## Agent's Annual Report

A Review Of 1931

Simla, Aug. 30

The annual report of the agent of the Government of India in South Africa for the year 1931 has been released for publication. It states that at the opening of the year the whole Indian community was in fear of the passing of the Transvaal Asiatic Tenure Amendment Bill, but the Union Government courteously agreed to postpone it until January to suit the convenience of the Government of India. The Capetown Conference with the Government of India was followed by somewhat desultory agitation in the press about forming an anti-Indian society in Natal on the lines of the South African League. The attempt, however, failed. Some anti-Asiatic meetings demanded extension to Natal of the Transvaal laws debarring the Asiatics from acquiring ownership of land and passing legislation to prevent their acquiring new licenses. It cannot be said that the arraival of the Indian delegation provoked any general outbursts of anti-Asiatic feelings, but on the other hand it was generally welcomed. In February the introduction of the Immigration Amendment Bill by Dr. Malan aroused grave alarm among the South African and specially Transvaal, Indians, but the Bill does not appear to affect the Natal and Cape Indians, nor would it affect the Transvaal Indians who retained their domicile provided that they do not in future remain outside for than three years. It is hoped that the number of such persons is a small one.

An important measure of the session was the passing of the new franchise bill to provide for adult male suffrage for Europeans throughout the Union. Indians joined in the general protest of Cape non-Europeans against the bill which however left the Government unmoved. A great stir was caused throughout South Africa by the 'Gentleman's Agreement' between the Japanese Government and the Union concluded before the 1931 session. The agreement allows for entry into the Union on a temporary permit of Japanese recommended by Japanese consul. In one way this agreement may be said to have benefited the Indian cause since it has made it appear an inconsistency that the Japanese are allowed to enter the Union in a manner which is forbidden to Indians.

The Pretoria City Council drew up new rules for the Pretoria Asiatic bazaar which alarmed the Indians, the reason being that instead of giving them freehold they tendered their tenure even more precarious and gave a greater degree of control to the superintendent over the daily lives and actions of the residents in the bazaar. The Agent had an interview on this subject with the City Council which led to a revision of the rules to meet the Indian wishes. Towards the close of the parliamentary session the Transvaal Provincial Council passed the Licences Control Ordinance. The new Act appears to be an attempt to give the Transvaal municipalities as complete a control over the issue of licenses as possible. The Agent approached Dr. Malan on the subject of the ordinance and pointed out the serious results that would follow for the Indians if it should become law. He suggested that the Governor in Council might be moved to exercise his powers to reserve ordin-

ance for further consideration until the conference should be completed. The ordinance has not yet become law.

During this year report of the Durban Borough Boundaries Commission was published. It recommended the inclusion within the borough of six health board areas adjoining the Durban. The Indians favoured the incorporation as in the area to be included within the borough are 49,000 Asiatics as compared with 19,000 Europeans. The land and buildings of these Asiatics will now for the first time be valued and assessed to municipal rates. The Agent asked that either Indians should be given a chance to elect a member of the valuation appeal board or the administrator should nominate a member to represent the Indian interests. Unfortunately the select committee did not see its way to give effect to the agent's demands.

Speaking about assisted immigration the report says that during the first ten months of the year the number of persons availing themselves of the scheme continued low, but during the last two months there was a remarkable increase, the main reason being acute unemployment. 1,707 persons proceeded to Madras and Calcutta, 1,807 going during the last six months.

During the year some attempt was made to clear the situation in regard to £50,000 earmarked for Indian housing in accordance with the 1927 Cape Town Agreement.—*The Leader*.

## Potency Of Passive Resistance

We give below the interview given by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to George Sylvester Viereck a great German author—immediately before the former became Prime Minister, and is recorded in the latter's most interesting book, "Glimpses of the Great." Mr. Ramsay MacDonald believed in the potency of Passive Resistance, before he became Prime Minister. It is irony of fate that this very man today in India has imprisoned thousands of Passive Resisters. One could compare his present policy in India with his interview and see the hypocrisy of the Prime Minister of England.

"My own country," Mr. MacDonald went to say, "can by no means boast of perfection. England is no Archangel Gabriel come down to benefit poor fallen humanity from the goodness of her heart.

"However an increasing number of our people desire to see England seated around the same table with others, trying to ponder, not the ephemeral problems of pride and pompousness and self-advantage, but the problems that have plagued mankind from the beginning, the problems of justice, liberty and fair play.

"With problems such as these, force cannot grapple. They can be solved only by the great moral sentiments which alone bind nations together.

"Governments foolishly get themselves into positions where questions of prestige and a mistaken sense of their dignity make it difficult for them to find a way out.

"The great function of the Labour Party is to find the way out of such difficulties, to create a new basis for negotiations. We are equally opposed to all imperialism, under whatever flag it shows its helmeted head.

"But how is it possible to meet militarism except by resorting to arms?" I (George Sylvester Viereck) asked.

"The Passive Resistance of German Labour at the time of Ruhr invasion shows that it is possible to meet force with moral and spiritual weapons.

It was one of the most magnificent things in the history of the human race.

"Unfortunately," I rejoined, "sentiments, however fine, cannot stop tanks and machine guns."

"Militarism," replied Mr. MacDonald, "has nothing but tanks and machine guns. Militarism can only win when it is pitted against militarism. It cannot cope with the heroic determination of a great people to place its faith in right."

"Moral power is the greatest force in the universe. If Germany were not handicapped by the lingering remnants of the old prejudice against her, created at least in part by her own transgressions, the moral sentiment of the whole world would have rallied to her support."

"France will suffer for her moral transgressions, no less than Germany. For generations to come, the world will sicken of French violence, and point with pride to the splendid tale of Germany's Passive Resistance."

"I place equal stress upon both words. Her resistance, though passive, was real. It is not necessary to strike. A firm resolution to refuse co-operation paralyses the hand of militarism."

"The sympathies with Germany which are growing in many quarters," Mr. MacDonald continued, "would be dissipated completely if the Germans themselves gave the militarists of Paris an excuse for starting another war."

"Are you not," I asked, "imposing too severe a strain upon human nature? If you had seen women and children flogged, if you had witnessed the studied insolence of the French invader in the Ruhr and in the Rhineland."

"Even then," Mr. MacDonald calmly interpolated, "I should preach non-resistance."

"Supposing," I said, "a French soldier struck you across the face with a riding-whip?"

"In that case," Mr. MacDonald replied with the serenity of a Christian martyr, "I should say: 'Thank you.'"

"If he were to kick you with his boots into the mire?"

"My answer," Mr. MacDonald, unperturbed, replied, "would be: 'I am very much obliged, sir. I understand that this is the action of a French gentleman.'"

"And," the great Labour leader added with simple sincerity, "I would be truly obliged to him. For surely no other action could more emphatically confirm his moral inferiority. In no other way could he put himself more utterly in the wrong."

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