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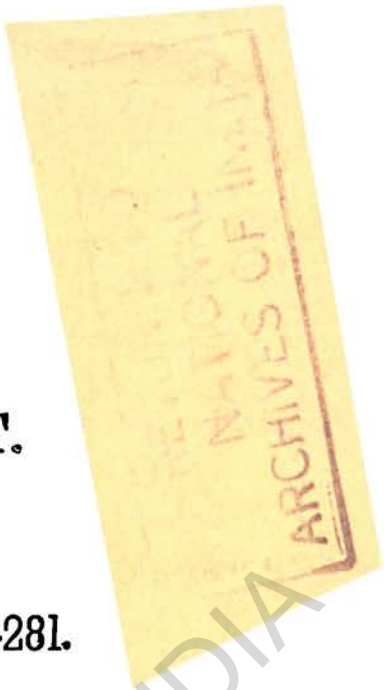
SIMLA RECORDS.

⁵
1916.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.**

POLITICAL—A.

Proceedings, June 1916, nos. 280-281.



Oraon unrest in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa.

Judgment of the Special Tribunal appointed under the Defence of India Act in the Oraon case.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Progs. nos.	Letters, etc., and subjects.	Page.
	Notes	1-2
	Appendix	3
280	Letter from the Government of Bengal, no. 690-P. D., dated the 27th May 1916, forwarding copies of the above judgment ..	4-9
281	Letter to the India Office, no. 1941, dated the 20th June 1916, communicating a copy of the judgment	10

PREVIOUS REFERENCES.

- Political D. (print), September 1915, no. 58.
- " D. (print), October 1915, no. 36.
- " D. (print), November 1915, no. 9.
- " D. (print), December 1915, no. 25.
- " D. (print), April 1916, no. 18.
- " D. (print), April 1916, no. 19.

LATER REFERENCES.

NOTES.

POLITICAL—A., JUNE 1916.

Nos. 280-281.

ORAON UNREST IN BENGAL AND BIHAR AND ORISSA.

JUDGMENT OF THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL APPOINTED UNDER THE DEFENCE OF INDIA ACT IN THE ORAON CASE.

Have we any connected account of the recent Oraon trouble in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa? It has been mentioned in the fortnightly provincial reports and we have seen a good deal about it in the press, but I am inclined to think we should have a connected account from the two local Governments. For instance, I have never seen the full judgment of a special tribunal case which the newspapers have frequently quoted. Please consider and note the facts.

H. WHEELER,—30-5-16.

The unrest among the Oraons was first noticed by the Government of Bengal in their fortnightly report for the first fortnight of March last. Their report for the second half of that month also contained some remarks on this subject and the verdict of the Special Tribunal appointed under the Defence of India Act to try the ringleaders was given in their report for the second half of April. The unrest appears to have been confined to the Oraons employed on the tea gardens of the Jalpaiguri District as although these people come from Chota Nagpur the Bihar and Orissa Government have not noticed it at all in their fortnightly reports. The Bengal report dated the 17th March contains a very brief account of the trouble.

Political D. (print), April 1916, no. 18.

Political D., April 1916, no. 18.
Political D., March 1916, no. 19.

The Government of Bengal may be asked for a detailed report. Draft submitted.

A. L.,—31-5-16.

Surely the Bihar and Orissa Government noticed the unrest in some of their fortnightly reports some time previously to the trouble in Jalpaiguri?

S. R. HIGNELL,—31-5-16.

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL, NO. 690-P. D., DATED THE 27TH MAY 1916.

Pro. No. 20.

Deputy Secretary's query above: The fortnightly reports from the 1st June 1915 have been looked up and it has been found that unrest amongst the Oraons of Chota Nagpur was noticed by the Government of Bihar and Orissa in their reports dated the 16th September, 30th September, 30th October and 16th November 1915, respectively. In the first instance the reports received from the beginning of this year only were looked up.

Political D. (print), September 1915, no. 58.
Political D. (print), October 1915, no. 36.
Political D. (print), November 1915, no. 9.
Political D. (print), December 1915, no. 25.

2. Now that the Government of Bengal has forwarded us a copy of the judgment of the Special Tribunal appointed to try the ringleaders among the Oraons of Jalpaiguri District, there is no need to ask them for any further report. The draft placed in the file has therefore been removed.

Beyond letting Director, Criminal Intelligence, see, no action seems called for. This matter is hardly of enough importance to necessitate a copy of this judgment being forwarded to the India Office.

It will be noticed that in paragraph 5 of the judgment it is stated that this movement "cannot have been deliberately organized by any German missionary, but by some German agent, agitator or imposter". Judging from a perusal of the newspaper articles on this subject,

the general impression appears to have been that the German missionaries were at the bottom of the trouble. As stated above, this, in the opinion of the Special Commissioners, is not correct.

A. L.,—1-6-16.

Director, Criminal Intelligence, may see.

The movement never achieved anything, though it seems to have had potentialities of serious trouble, and we need not report to the India Office.

W. BOOTH-GRAVELY,—2-6-16.

S. R. HIGNELL,—2-6-16.

Before submitting to Hon'ble Member, let Director, Criminal Intelligence see for remarks.

H. WHEELER,—2-6-16.

Director, Criminal Intelligence.

Appendix.

Home Department may see brief notes below by myself, Mr. Nelson and Mr. Denham.

C. R. CLEVELAND,—6-6-16.

Home Department.

Submitted for information.

A. L.,—7-6-16.

W. BOOTH-GRAVELY,—8-6-16.

S. R. HIGNELL,—8-6-16.

This Oraon trouble seems to have subsided and as the judgment of the Special Tribunal gives the gist of it, we need not call for further reports.

We might, however, send a copy of the judgment to the India Office with covering remarks based on the fortnightly reports, as it has a distinct bearing on the question of German mission activity.

H. WHEELER,—8-6-16.

It is a curious and interesting case showing how modern events become garbled up with superstitions and demonology among unsophisticated folk of this kind. I think that Mr. Denham's views are probably correct, and that the mixing up of the Germans and the expulsion of the British with the usual religious excitement which breaks out from time to time among aborigines are the result of suggestions made by the missionaries in their schools of the invincibility of the Kaiser. There was the vague idea that the Oraons would gain something if the Germans came.

It was no doubt necessary to check this movement by the punishment of a few prominent men, but it is difficult to hold such children of ignorance as seriously responsible for the offence of sedition, and as soon as the war is over I think that they may be released.

The India Office should certainly see the judgment, and be informed of the connection with German missionaries.

R. H. C[RADDOCK],—8-6-16.

Draft submitted.

A. L.,—15-6-16.

I have cut out any expression of opinion of the Government of India as this is out of place in a Secretary's letter. His Excellency may now see.

H. WHEELER,—15-6-16.

R. H. C[RADDOCK],—15-6-16.

C[HELMSFORD],—17-6-16.

APPENDIX.

[NOTES IN THE CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE.]

I have never been able to understand the Oraon unrest. But previous unrest among aboriginal tribes has also been difficult to understand. The admixture of superstition and the supernatural generally seems to remove the cases from the domain of ordinary common sense understanding.

Our papers may be put up and Mr. Denham and Personal Assistant may see for favour of remarks if they have anything to say. I never considered the Oraon movement connected with any big movement in other communities.

C. R. CLEVELAND,—5-6-16.

It seems that no successful effort to trace the origins of the Oraon unrest has been made. The reports indicate a variety of causes—

- (1) Economic unrest due to the rise in prices, which was attributed to evil spirits and witches—hence attempts to drive evil spirits out of the villages and the murder of supposed witches.
- (2) A religious revival of a highly emotional type with secret all-night meetings and the singing of *mantras*.
- (3) A social movement, closely connected with the religious movement, directed towards the elevation of the caste. Hence the prohibition of animal food and intoxicating drink, resolution not to work as palki-bearers, &c. As in all such movements, the influence of Hindu ideals is obvious.

The above causes may easily lead to breaches of the peace and more serious crimes but have no tendency towards producing sedition. The puzzle of the movement is how veneration for Germany came to be introduced. It is possible that the Oraon leaders, knowing vaguely of the war and hearing rumours of British reverses, come to regard Germany as a spirit of greater power than Britain, but it is much more probable that the worship of Germany was suggested from outside. The most obvious explanation is that it is due to the influence of German missionaries, not perhaps directly, but through their converts. One instance at least has been reported of an Indian convert of a German missionary, who believed that he was a German subject. It has been argued that Christians took no part in the movement but I have seen it stated that in Jalpaiguri at least renegade Christians were prominent.

The evidence however does not justify any finding as to how sedition crept into the movement.

J. W. NELSON,—6-6-16.

My own opinion is that the Oraon unrest is nothing but one of the religious revivals which seem to take place every few years. These revivals have always been associated with acts of violence and sedition in the form of small rising or repudiation of Government authority. Birsa Munda's rising in 1896 (?) was a typical case and ever since that date leaders have come forward who have stated that they are incarnations of the deceased hero or, as I heard nearly two years ago at Ranchi, "Jesus se acha hai."

I think the veneration for Germany and the Kaiser is due to the teachings of the German missionaries. I do not say that they were directly concerned with the present trouble, but I have always heard and believed that there have been prayers for the Kaiser in Mission Schools and his great power and almost divinity has been brought before the simple Oraons. I cannot but think that some of the childish Oraon leaders thought that they had been struck with a brilliant idea when they chose the Kaiser as their new hero instead of Birsa Munda whose name has become uncomfortably associated with punishment.

G. C. DENHAM,—6-6-16.

Exd. by—M.B.G.
C139HD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, JUNE 1916.

Oraon unrest in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa.
Judgment of the Special Tribunal appointed under the Defence of India Act in the Oraon Case.

ORAON UNREST IN BENGAL AND BIHAR AND ORISSA.
JUDGMENT OF THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL APPOINTED UNDER THE DEFENCE OF INDIA
ACT IN THE ORAON CASE.

No. 690-P. D., dated Darjeeling, the 27th May 1916.

Pro. no. 280

From—The HON'BLE MR. J. H. KERR, C.I.E., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government
of Bengal,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, Simla.

With reference to paragraph 3 of the report on the political situation in Bengal for the second half of April 1916, regarding the Oraon unrest, I am directed to submit, for the information of the Government of India, copies of the judgments delivered by the Special Commission on the 18th April.

JUDGMENT IN THE ORAON CASE.

EMPEROR *versus* BANIA ORAON, LAUDHA ORAON AND MANGRA ORAON.

Under section 124 A, Indian Penal Code, and section 25 (1) (a), Defence of India (Consolidation) Rules.

THE prosecution case is that a movement which began amongst the Oraons of Chota Nagpur has spread to the 60,000 Oraon coolies in the tea gardens of this district, who, ever since November last, have been holding meetings at night, and singing hymns to the "German Father," whom they invoke as if he was a god, calling on him to come and drive out the English, whom they compare to devils, and give an independent raj to the Oraons.

The movement was first brought to the notice of the police by a murder and suicide reported to the Dhupguri police on January 25th. A man named Charua Oraon cut his wife's throat and then tried to cut his own. He told the police that the villagers had asked him to "sing the name of the Germans" and had threatened that, if he did not, a devil named Logo would kill him. He and his wife resolved to kill themselves rather than be killed by a devil. His statement was recorded by a Magistrate. He said that an unknown man was always telling him to recite something, and that as he refused, every one abused him and his wife, so they resolved to commit suicide. He was too badly wounded to explain what it was that he refused to recite, and died in the jail hospital a few days later.

The Superintendent of Police then began to make enquiries to find out what these mysterious recitations were. On February 25th, he got a letter from the Manager of the Tasati Tea Estate, giving him a list of eight Oraon men and six Oraon women who were holding seditious meetings and calling to the "German Father" to come and save them. The Manager said that they were upsetting the coolies in his garden and that it was rumoured that there would be a row at the *Fagua Puja* (March 18th—21st).

On February 27th, the Manager of Sarugaon Tea Estate wrote to the Sub-Inspector of Falakata, that a man named Landroo had come from Chota Nagpur and was preaching the new movement. And on March 2nd he wrote again saying that Landroo's brother, Hasru, was implicated in the movement and was adopting a threatening attitude towards the garden staff and that serious trouble was brewing. On March 1st the Chairman of the Duars Planters' Association wrote that there had been a meeting of Managers to discuss the Oraon movement, but that all that they could discover was that mysterious meetings were being held at night and that there was likely to be trouble at the *Fagua Puja*.

The Superintendent of Police went to the Tasati Tea Estate on March 1st and examined some Oraon coolies. Two Oraon sardars, named Dublai and Letho, repeated to him the words of two of the songs sung at the meetings. The next day the Superintendent of Police arrested ten Oraons in that garden, including Letho, who had assisted at the meetings. Amongst these ten were the three accused Bania, Laudha and Mangra Oraons. The other seven were warned and released on April 3rd, as Government did not wish to take too serious a view of the conduct of ignorant coolies.

It was unfortunate that Letho was released, because he was the most important witness in the case, and he promptly disappeared and is nowhere to be found.

A story was current that the sun would not rise for seven days in the *Fagua Puja*, and that there would be fighting for six days and six nights, during which all the English would be killed, and an Oraon raj would be established. The *Fagua Puja*, however, passed off without disturbance, because the garden sardars were made special constables and held responsible for the peace of the gardens and armed police were stationed at dangerous places.

Government then appointed this Commission under the Defence of India Act to try the three accused, Bania, Laudha and Mangra Oraons, under section 124 A, Indian Penal Code, and section 25 (1) (a), Defence of India (Consolidation) Rules.

The evidence is that the new movement was introduced into Sarugaon Tea Estate by the man Landroo, who has disappeared. He was brother of Hasru, a sardar in that garden, and used to recruit coolies for him in Chota Nagpur. Meetings were held in Hasru's courtyard in November last, at which Hasru and Kandru poured libations, first to the Sun in the east, and then to the German Baba in the west, and then at once sang songs about the Sun coming and casting out the devils and drowning them in the sea. They also taught that the Germans would come and kill all the English and establish an Oraon raj within three years. These meetings were attended by witnesses Soma and Rao, of Sarugaon Tea Estate, and they say that all the three accused, who belong to the neighbouring garden Tasati, were present at the meetings. The accused are said to have learnt to sing these songs and to have taught them in their own garden, Tasati.

Hasru and Kandru, like Landroo, have disappeared. They refused to work, and the Manager spoke to them and asked if they were taking part in the new movement. Hasru shouted in a loud voice "Who said so?" and when the Manager ordered him to put down his hoe and report himself at the office, he and Kandru and another man threw down their hoes and ran away and have never been seen since.

I have seen it stated in the newspapers that the movement amongst the Oraons was an innocent desire for spiritual and social improvement, and I expected that defence to be taken; but though the accused were defended by a pleader, that is not the line of their defence. They strenuously deny that there was any movement amongst the Oraons at all. One aspect of the movement was that the eating of flesh and the drinking of liquor was abandoned, and this looks like an attempt at social reform. But the accused deny even this, and say that they eat and drink just as they always did. This attitude of theirs naturally raises the inference that, if there was any movement amongst the Oraons, it was not an innocent one.

The accused say that the case is entirely false and has been got up by witness Dukhia Oraon, whom each of the accused has offended. Bania says that he kept Dukhia's sister for some time and refused to pay Dukhia anything for the privilege. Laudha says that Dukhia came late to the former's marriage feast and so got nothing to eat, and was offended although he got royally drunk. Mangra says that he has got 26 cattle, and Dukhia wanted to get meat from him, but was unwilling to pay for it, so Mangra refused to supply it.

Only one of these causes of enmity was put to Dukhia in cross-examination. He admitted that Bania once kept his sister, but says she died two years ago and there was no quarrel about it. From Bania's statement, it appears that if there was any grievance it was on Bania's side. He complains that though he lived with Dukhia a whole year, Dukhia never paid him a red pice.

The points for discussion are—

- (1) Was there any movement at all amongst the Oraons?
- (2) Was it a religious revival?
- (3) Was it an attempt to raise their social status?
- (4) Was it a reform of manners?
- (5) Was it a seditious movement?
- (6) What was the part in it ascribed to the accused?
- (7) Have they been made scapegoats for others?
- (8) Did they commit any offence?

(1) It is certain that there was unrest amongst the Oraons. The garden managers know personally that their coolies were excited, though they have no personal knowledge what it was about. Two Oraons of Tasati Tea Estate (Dukhia and Birsai) and two Oraons of Sarugaon Tea Estate (Soma and Rao), and one Ghasi, of Tasati Tea Estate, have given us many details of the new doctrines and have given us portions of three or four of the songs. Soma sang one of the songs in Court to its proper music. I understand the defence

-8-

suggestion to be that Dukhia composed these songs for the purpose of this case. This is absurd, because he does not even know the meaning of them. It is certain that meetings have been held at which these songs (which nobody can properly explain) have been sung. And the movement must have produced a very great excitement since one man and his wife committed suicide because they could not stand against it.

(2) Some portions of the songs suggest that the movement is an attempt to purify the tribal religion and to cast off superstitions and get rid of corruptions of the ancient faith.

After quoting an account of the religion of the Oraons, taken from Dalton's "Ethnology of Bengal," the judgment proceeds:—

It appears probable, therefore, that the restriction of flesh food to white goats and white fowls is based on their being the proper offerings to Dharmesh and is connected with a scheme for driving out foreign devils.

The song written down by Letho, the absconding witness, is sufficiently proved by another witness, Birsai, who also heard it sung. It runs as follows:—

German Baba is coming,
Is slowly slowly coming;
Drive away the devils Manaldanal;
Cast them adrift in the sea.
Suruj Baba (the sun) is coming;
The devils of the Oven will be driven away
And cast adrift in the sea.
Tarijan Baba (the stars) is coming,
Is slowly slowly coming,
Is coming to our very courtyard,
The chigri devils will be driven away
And cast adrift in the sea.

Dukhia told us that there is a hidden meaning in this song. He could not explain at all, but he said that the new school of Oraons call the English devils (*deos*), and that the devils of the Oraons referred to in the song are the English. ✓ The prosecution did not offer any other evidence to that effect, but about the last witness in the case Birsai was asked by one of the Commissioners if he had ever heard this song, and if he knew what it meant. He said yes, he had heard it, and it meant that the Germans were coming to make war, and the Government people would be thrown into the sea. He said that the new school always speak of the Germans as Suruj Baba (the Sun), he did not know why, and that Tarijan Baba also meant the Germans, while of the devils, Manaldanal meant the English, and the devils of the Oraons or hearth meant those Oraons who did not join the new movement.

This interpretation of the song appears to be entirely untutored and there is a good deal to corroborate it.

Now it is certain that the Oraons are not under any mistaken notion as to who and what the Germans are. Two or three Oraon witnesses have told us that the export of tea from the garden was stopped for a time in December, and they heard from the Manager that it was because there was war between the English and the Germans. And when the price of salt and food-grains rose in the markets, the *modis* and *mahajans* also told them that it was due to the war with the Germans. So it appears that the new Oraons are deliberately invoking the head of the King's enemies as if he were a God, and calling on him to come and cast certain devils into the sea. The devils cannot be spiritual devils, and it is highly probable that they represent the English. Manaldanal is a particularly exacting devil, to whom, if an ancestor once sacrificed a bullock, all his descendants must for ever after sacrifice a bullock. Such a devil might well be chosen to represent the Government. And unless it was chosen for this purpose Manaldanal would not be likely to be mentioned at all. Tarijan Baba is more likely to mean the Turks than the Germans, both from the resemblance of sound, and from a possible reference to the Turkish flag, and also because Tarijan Baba is spoken of as being at the very door. Witnesses differ as to whether Tarijan means the moon or the stars.

There must, however, be a sort of religious movement proceeding simultaneously with the seditious movement. Even apart from the inclusion of German Baba, the songs are not in conformity with the old creed. The religion seems to be merely a cloak for sedition. If there is any religion in the

8

movement at all it is a deification of the King's enemies and a relegation of the English to the position of tribal devils who are to be cast out. It may be remarked that the term " Baba " is never applied to any but real fathers and the gods.

(3) & (4) The only social reform that has been attempted is to stop the eating of meat and the drinking of liquor. There is no apparent connection between this and the worship of the Germans. The Germans are not a race of ascetics. It looks like a purely social reform. But the evidence shows that, though the German Emperor may be worshipped as a god or flattered by being compared to a god, the German people are looked upon as mundane deliverers, who are going to deliver the Oraons from subjection to the English, establish an Oraon raj and bring in the millennium. Amongst other things that the Germans are invoked to do is to teach the Oraons to read and write. The Oraons are a race of coolies, and though they are looking for a social uplifting, their hopes depend on the arrival of the Germans. There is no scheme of social reform, apart from their hopes of the coming of the Germans and the expulsion of the English. The whole enthusiasm is seditious. I take it that the Oraons are reforming their manners in order to convince the Germans, when they come, that they are fit for independence or for the possession of a raj.

(5) Apart from the songs, there is a mass of evidence that the new teaching included an assertion that the Germans would cut the English to pieces and cast them into the sea and found an Oraon raj. It is quite clear that the new party amongst the Oraons was praying for the victory of the King's enemies. But it does not appear that the new doctrines have as yet won a very great number of adherents.

All that is known of the origin of this movement is that it was brought from Chota Nagpur by Oraons who went home to recruit new coolies. One characteristic of the movement is that all Christian Oraons were excluded from the meetings. So it cannot have been deliberately organized by any German missionary. But it seems clear that it must have been started either by some German agent or by some agitator or by some impostor. For the Oraons cannot have conceived the idea that the Germans would give them an independent raj, unless some one whom they believed to have authority to make such a promise had promised that the Germans would give it to them. There is nothing in the history or in the reputation of the Germans that is likely to have given rise to a belief that if they conquered the English they would give independent kingdom to all their subjects. Some one must have given the Oraons some assurance on that point or the idea could never have existed; unless perhaps some casual remark that the English would be defeated and that Indians would then be independent was exaggerated into such an assurance in the course of repetition.

* * * * *

(7) The three accused are coolies. Letho himself is a sardar, and so is Dukhia. They are more likely to have been leaders in the movement than their own coolies. But I take it that the three accused were prominent, not because they were intellectual leaders, but because they could sing. Singers were required to learn the new songs and teach them to others. Mangra is aged 35 or 40 years, but Bania is not more than 27, and Laudha not more than 20 or 22. I take it that they were mere vehicles for spreading the seditious doctrines and that they were chosen because they could sing. Their humble position is therefore not a reason for supposing that they have been made scapegoats for more prominent men. There is nothing in the cross-examination to suggest that Dukhia had any motive to accuse them falsely, and even if he had, he has no influence over the accused's relations, Soma and Rao, who are sardars of another garden. It is not a fact that Dukhia himself was ever in danger of being prosecuted.

(8) It is clear that by singing songs extolling the King's enemies as gods the accused attempted to excite disaffection towards the established Government and are guilty of an offence under section 124 A, Indian Penal Code. Unless their object was to excite disaffection, there was no reason to take such trouble to teach the songs to others and to make them widely known. To incite the King's subjects to transfer their allegiance to the King's enemies in anticipation of their victory is to excite disaffection to the Government

3

established by law. Most of the witnesses speak of these songs, in which German Baba is addressed as a god, as being songs "in praise of the Germans." So I take it that this form of address was not an act of religious devotion, but a mere fulsome compliment to propitiate the Germans and secure their goodwill. There is evidence of two witnesses that the devils referred to in the same songs are the English. This is not apparent on the face of the songs, but even if it is not true, the public singing of songs in praise of the Germans amounts to an offence under section 124 A, Indian Penal Code, since the praise asserts that the King's enemies have taken the Oraons under their special protection.

There is ample oral evidence that the three accused circulated a report that the Germans would come and kill all the English and all who did not sing songs in praise of the Germans and would establish an Oraon raj. This report would naturally promote feelings of hatred and enmity between those to whom the raj was promised and those who were to be killed. This is an offence under section 25 (1) (a) of the Defence of India (Consolidation) Rules of 1915. Sanction was given to a prosecution under section 25 (1) (a) of those Rules, but the Defence of India Act authorizes us to convict of any offence which was found proved, whether the sanction covers it or not. A charge was framed under section 25 (1) (a) of the Rules, on the ground that the above report was false and that the accused had no reasonable ground to believe it to be true and that it was likely to cause alarm. But there is some difficulty in holding a report to be false when it is a mere prediction of an event placed in the future. Probably the charge is good in spite of this weakness, because, in my opinion, a report that the British Government is going to come to an end is in the eye of the law false *ab initio*. The law cannot contemplate the possibility of its own demise. But we have decided to acquit on this charge.

We propose to deal with the accused leniently because they are mere coolies, and of a race prone to superstition and credulous of the wildest stories, though it must be remarked that Laudha can read and write, and the Manager thinks that he can even read English. Another reason for leniency is that the evidence does not show that the Oraons had any intention of resorting to violence themselves. We do not of course know all that they intended, but it seems quite likely that they expected the Germans to do all the fighting while they themselves would reap the benefit in reward for their fulsome flatteries. But even if their intention were so limited, the movement was full of dangers. There are 60,000 Oraons in the tea gardens, and 90,000 in the district, and they are a race prone to become mad with excitement at the most absurd rumours. Father Dekon gives some instances, such as a sudden wild slaughter of all the pigs in a district on a bare rumour that a woman had given birth to a pig. The excitement of these nocturnal meetings might have led to serious disturbances at any moment. And the pressure applied to make people join the movement was in itself likely to lead to trouble. Moreover, if the word "*hatai*" in Letho's song means "Let us drive away the devils," the Oraons must have intended to take an active part in the expulsion of the English.

It is hoped that a comparatively lenient sentence will be sufficient to bring the people to their senses. We unanimously find Bania Oraon, Laudha Oraon, and Mangra Oraon guilty of offences under section 124 A, Indian Penal Code, and section 25 (1) (a) of the Defence of India (Consolidation) Rules of 1915, and sentence them to three years' imprisonment under each section. The sentences will run concurrently.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

HOME DEPARTMENT, JUNE 1916.

Oraon unrest in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa.

Judgment of the Special Tribunal appointed under the Defence of India Act in the Oraon case.

No. 1941, dated Simla, the 20th June 1916.

Pro. no. 281.

From—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department,

To—SIR T. W. HOLDERNESS, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., His Majesty's Under Secretary of State for India.

In September and October 1915 the Government of Bihar and Orissa reported

Political D. (print), September 1915, no. 53.

Political D. (print), October 1915, no. 36.

Political D. (print), November 1915, no. 9.

Political D. (print), December 1915, no. 25.

the existence of some unrest amongst the Oraons in parts of the Ranchi district. It was confined to the younger men meeting at night and reciting incantations. A so-called *mantra*, a childish doggerel, included

an invocation for German victory, but the movement was not directly traceable to any inspiration or support from German missionaries or their congregations. The situation was taken in hand at an early stage, and a small police force was sent to the parts affected, which resulted in the unrest subsiding.

2. In March 1916 the Government of Bengal reported a considerable amount

Political D. (print), April 1916, no. 18.

of unrest amongst the same tribe in Chota Nagpur, from whom a large proportion of the labour force employed on the tea gardens of the district of Jalpaiguri were recruited. Secret meetings were held at night, a feature of which was the chanting of songs in which the name of Germany was invoked. Pressure was brought to bear on those who did not join and threats held out that they would be slain by Mussalmans. The movement was reported to be a tribal and social one animated by the political idea of an Oraon Raj to be established with the help of Germany. Ten of the ringleaders were arrested under the Defence of India Rules and others were enrolled as special constables. No serious developments occurred owing to the action taken. Seven of the ten men arrested were warned and released, the other three were tried, convicted and sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment under sections 124-A, Indian Penal Code, and section 25 (1) (a) of the Defence of India Rules.

3. As the case is relevant to the question of the continuance of hostile foreign missions, I am to enclose a copy of the judgment of the Special Tribunal from which it will be seen that though the Special Commissioners thought that the movement could not have been deliberately organised by German missionaries, still they considered it clear that it must have been started either by a German agent or by some agitator or imposter.

Exd. by—M.B.G.

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