



were compelled to take rice without ghee. Then he said, "for you specially, I would order bread to be given." I said, "thank you, but I had not applied for myself alone, and I would not be able to take bread for myself alone, till ghee was ordered to be given to all others." The Doctor said, "Then you should not find fault with me, now."

I again petitioned and I came to learn that the food regulations would ultimately be made as in Natal. I criticised that also and gave the reasons why I could not for myself alone accept ghee. At last, when in all about a month and a half had elapsed, I got a reply stating that wherever there were many Indian prisoners, ghee would invariably be given. Thus it might be said that after a month and a half I broke my fast, and for the last month I was able to take rice, ghee and bread. But I took no breakfast and at noon, when pap was doled out, I hardly took ten spoonfuls, as every day it was differently prepared. But still I got good nourishment from the bread and rice, and so my health improved. I say so, because when I used to eat once only, it had broken down. I had lost all strength, and for ten days I was suffering from a severe ache in half of my forehead. My chest too had shewn symptoms of being affected.

I had told many passive resisters that, if they left jail with spoiled health, they would be considered wanting in the right spirit. We must turn our prisons into palaces so that when I found my own health getting ruined I felt apprehensive lest I should have to go out for that reason. It has to be remembered that I had not availed myself of the order for ghee made in my favour, so that there was a chance of my health getting affected, but this does not apply in the case of others, as it is open to





each individual prisoner, when he is in jail, to have some special order made in his favour, and thus preserve his health.

#### OTHER CHANGES

I have said that my Warder was harsh in his dealings with me. But this did not last long. When he saw that I was fighting with the Government about food, &c., but obeying his orders unreservedly, he changed his conduct and allowed me to do as I liked. This removed my difficulties about bath, latrine, &c. He became so considerate that he scarcely allowed it to be seen that he *ordered* me to do anything. The man who succeeded him was like a Pasha and he was always anxious to work after my conveniences. He said, "I love those who fight for their community, I myself am such a fighter, and I do not consider you to be a convict." He thus used to comfort me.

Again, the bench which was refused in the beginning was sent to me, by the Chief Warder himself, after some days. In the meanwhile I had received two religious books for reading from General Smuts. From this I concluded that the hardship I had to undergo were due, not to his express orders, but to the carelessness and indifference to himself and others, and also because the Indians were considered to be like Kaffirs. The only object of isolating me appeared to be to prevent my talking with others. After some trouble I got permission for the use of a note-book and pencil.

#### THE VISIT OF THE DIRECTOR

Before I was taken to Pretoria, Mr. Lichenstein had seen me with special permission. He had come to see on office business, but he asked me how I was, &c. I





was not willing to answer him on the point, but he pressed me. So I said, "I will not tell you all, but I will say this much, that they treat me cruelly. General Smuts by this means wants me to give in, but that would never be, as I was prepared to undergo whatever befell me, that my mind was at peace, but that you should publish, this. After coming out, I myself would do so." He communicated it to Mr. Polak, who not being able to keep it to himself in his turn spoke to others, and Mr. David Polak thereupon wrote to Lord Selborne and an inquiry was held. The warder came for that purpose and I spoke to him the very words set out above. I also pointed out the defects, which I have mentioned in the beginning. Thereupon, after ten days he sent me a plank for bed, a pillow, a night shirt and a handkerchief, which I took. In my memorial to him I had asked him to provide this convenience for all Indians. Really speaking, in this respect Indians are softer than the whites, and they cannot do without pillows.

#### HANDCUFFS

The opinion I had come to, in consequence of my treatment in jail in the beginning, was confirmed by what happened now. About four days after I received a witness summons in Mr. Pillay's case. So I was taken to Court. I was manacled this time, and the Warder took no time in putting on the handcuffs. I think this was done unintentionally. The Chief Warder had seen me and from him I had obtained leave to carry a book with me. He seemed to be under the impression that I was ashamed of the manacles, and so I had asked permission to carry a book, and hence he asked me to





hold the book in my hands in such a way as to conceal the handcuffs. This made me smile, as I was feeling honoured in thus being manacled. The book that I was carrying was called, "The Court of God is in Their Mind." I thought this a happy coincidence, because I thought what hardships might trouble me externally, if I were such as to make God live in my heart, what should I care for the hardships? I was thus taken on foot, handcuffed, to Court.

### LESSONS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Some of the above details might be considered trivial, but my main object in setting them out has been that to minor as well as important matters you can apply the principles of resistance. I calmly acquiesced in all the troubles, bodily given to me by the warder, with the result that not only was I able to remain calm and quiet, but that he himself had to remove them in the end. If I had opposed him, my strength of mind would have become weakened, and I could not have done these more important things that I had to do, and in the bargain made him my enemy.

My food difficulty also was solved at last because I resisted, and underwent suffering in the beginning.

The greatest good I derived from these sufferings was that by undergoing bodily hardships I could see my mental strength clearly increasing, and it is even now maintained. The experience of the last three months has left me more than ever prepared to undergo all such hardships with ease. I feel that God helps such conscientious objectors, and in putting them to the test. He only burdens them with such sufferings as they can bear.





## WHAT I READ

The tale of my happiness or unhappiness is now at an end. Amongst the many benefits I received in these three months, one was the opportunity I got to read. At the start, I must admit, I fell into moods of despondency and thoughtfulness while reading, and was even tired of these hardships, and my mind played antics like a monkey. Such a state of mind leads many towards lunacy, but, in my case, my books saved me. They made up in a large measure for the loss of the society of my Indian brethren. I always got about three hours to read.

So that I was able to go through about thirty books, and con over others, which comprised English, Hindi, Gujarathi, Sanskrit and Tamil works. Out of these, I consider Tolstoy's, Emerson's and Carlyle's worth mentioning. The two former related to religion. I had borrowed the Bible from the jail. Tolstoy's books are so simple and easy that any man can study and profit by them. Again he is a man who practices what he preaches, and hence his writings inspire great confidence.

Carlyle's French Revolution is written in a very effective style. It made me think that from the White Nations we could hardly learn the remedy to remove the present miseries of India, because I am of opinion that the French people have secured no special benefits by their Revolution. This was what Mazzini thought too. There is a great conflict of opinion about this, which it is hardly proper to mention here. Even there I saw some instances of passive resistance.

The Swamiji had sent me Gujarati, Hindi and Sanskrit books. Bhat Keshavram had sent *Vedasabdhasankhija* and Mr. Motilal Devan, the Upanishads. I also read the





Manusmriti, the Ramayana Sar, published in Phoenix, the Patanjali Yog Darshana, the Ahnik Prakash of Nathuramji, the Sandhya Gutika given by Professor Parmanand, the Bhagavad Gita and the works of the late Kavi Shri Rajchandra. This gave me much food for thought. The Upanishads produced in me great peacefulness. One sentence specially has struck to me. It means, "whatever thou dost, thou shouldst do the same for the good of the soul." The words are of great importance and deserve great consideration too.

But I derived the greatest satisfaction from the writings of Kavi Shri Rajchandra. In my opinion they are such as should attract universal belief and popularity. His life was as exemplary and high as Tolstoy's. I had learnt some passages from them and from the Sandhya book by heart and repeated them at night while lying awake. Every morning also for half an hour I used to think over them, and repeat what I had learnt by heart. This kept my mind in a state of cheerfulness, night and day. If disappointment or despair attacked me at times, I would think over what I had read and my heart would instantly become gladdened, and thank God. . . . I would only say, that in this world good books make up for the absence of good companions, so that all Indians, if they want to live happily in jail, should accustom themselves to reading good books.

#### MY TAMIL STUDIES

What the Tamils have done in the struggle no other Indian community has done. So I thought that if for no other reason than to show my sincere gratefulness to them, I should seriously read their books. So I spent the last month in attentively studying their language. The





more I studied, the more I felt its beauties. It is an interesting and sweet language, and from its construction and from what I read, I saw that the Tamils counted in their midst, in the past and even now, many intelligent, clever and wise persons. Again, if there is to be one nation in India, those who live outside the Madras Presidency, must know Tamil.

#### THE END

I wish that the result of the perusal of these experiences would be that he who knows not what patriotism is would learn it, and after doing so, become a passive resister, and he who is so already, would be confirmed in his attitude. I also get more and more convinced that he who does not know his true duty or religion would never know what patriotism or feeling for one's own country is.

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## Passive Resistance

### HOW THE IDEA ORIGINATED

*In answer to a question put to him by the Rev. Joseph Doke, his biographer, as to the birth and evolution of this principle so far as he was concerned, Mr. Gandhi replied as follows:—*

"I remember," he said, "how one verse of a Gujarati poem, which, as a child, I learned at school, clung to me. In substance it was this:—

"If a man gives you a drink of water and you give him a drink in return, that is nothing.

Real beauty consists in doing good against evil."

"As a child, this verse had a powerful influence over me, and I tried to carry it into practice. Then came the 'Sermon on the Mount.'"

"But," said I, "surely the *Bhagavad-Gita* came first?"

"No," he replied, "of course I knew the *Bhagavad-Gita* in Sanskrit tolerably well, but I had not made its teaching in that particular a study. It was the New Testament which really awakened me to the rightness and value of Passive Resistance. When I read in the 'Sermon on the Mount' such passages as 'Resist not him that is evil but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also' and 'Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may





be sons of your Father which is in heaven.' I was simply overjoyed, and found my own opinion confirmed where I least expected it. The *Bhagavad Gita* deepened the impression, and Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' gave it a permanent form."

*Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and the Passive Resistance Movement in England* "had proved an object lesson, not only to him but to his people, of singular force and interest." Mr. Gandhi's ideal "is not so much to resist evil passively; it has its active compliment—to do good in reply to evil." In answer to Rev. Joseph Doke, he said:—

I do not like the term "passive resistance." It fails to convey all I mean. It describes a method, but gives no hint of the system of which it is only part. Real beauty, and that is my aim, is in doing good against evil. Still, I adopt the phrase because it is well-known, and easily understood, and because, at present, the great majority of my people can only grasp that idea. To me, the ideas which underlie the Gujarati hymn and the "Sermon on the Mount" should revolutionise the whole of life.

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### SOUL FORCE v. PHYSICAL FORCE

*The advantages of soul-force against physical force are well pictured by Mr. Gandhi in the following words :—*

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword ; it can be used anyhow ; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used without drawing a drop of blood ; it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be





stolen. Competition between passive resisters does not exhaust them. The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard, and one cannot be forcibly dispossessed of it.

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## THE ORIGIN OF THE MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

*As to how the movement originated in South Africa, here is Mr. Gandhi's statement :—*

Some years ago, when I began to take an active part in the public life of Natal, the adoption of this method occurred to me as the best course to pursue, should petitions fail, but, in the then unorganised condition of our Indian community, the attempt seemed useless. Here, however, in Johannesburg, when the Asiatic Registration Act was introduced, the Indian community was so deeply stirred, and so knit together in a common determination to resist it, that the moment seemed opportune. Some action they would take; it seemed to be best for the Colony, and altogether right, that their action should not take a riotous form, but that of Passive Resistance. They had no vote in Parliament, no hope of obtaining redress, no one would listen to their complaints. The Christian churches were indifferent, so I proposed this pathway of suffering, and after much discussion, it was adopted. In September, 1906, there was a large gathering of Indians in the old Empire Theatre, when the position was thoroughly faced, and, under the inspiration of deep feeling, and on the proposal of one of our leading men, they swore a solemn oath committing themselves to Passive Resistance.





## THE GENESIS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE.

*In an address that Mr. Gandhi delivered before an audience of Europeans at the Germiston (Transvaal) Literary and Debating Society in 1908, he said :—*

Passive resistance was a misnomer. But the expression had been accepted as it was popular, and had been for a long time used by those who carried out in practice the idea denoted by the term. The idea was more completely and better expressed by the term "soul-force." As such, it was as old as the human race. Active resistance was better expressed by the term "body force." Jesus Christ, Daniel and Socrates represented the purest form of passive resistance or soul-force. All these teachers counted their bodies as nothing in comparison to their soul. Tolstoy was the best and brightest (modern) exponent of the doctrine. He not only expounded it, but lived according to it. In India, the doctrine was understood and commonly practised long before it came into vogue in Europe. It was easy to see that soul force was infinitely superior to body force. If people in order to secure redress of wrongs, resorted to soul force, much of the present suffering would be avoided. In any case the wielding of this force never caused suffering to others. So that, whenever it was misused, it only injured the users, and not those against whom it was used. Like virtue, it was its own reward. There was no such thing as failure in the use of this kind of force. "Resist not evil" meant that evil was not to be repelled by evil, but by good; in other words, physical force was to be opposed not by its like but by soul-force. The





same idea was expressed in Indian philosophy by the expression, "freedom from injury to every living thing." The exercise of this doctrine involved physical suffering on the part of those who practised it. But it was a known fact that the sum of such suffering was greater rather than less in the world. That being so, all that was necessary for those who recognised the immeasurable power of soul force, was consciously and deliberately to accept physical suffering as their lot, and when this was done, the very suffering became a source of joy to the sufferer. It was quite plain that passive resistance thus understood, was infinitely superior to physical force, and that it required greater courage than the latter. No transition was, therefore, possible from passive resistance to active or physical resistance. . . .

The only condition of a successful use of this force was a recognition of the existence of the soul as apart from the body, and its permanent and superior nature. And this recognition must amount to a living faith and not a mere intellectual grasp.

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## PASSIVE RESISTERS IN THE TOLSTOY FARM

*Writing to a friend from the Tolstoy Farm, where he was living with a number of passive resisters' families, Mr. Gandhi says, touching manual labour:—*

I prepare the bread that is required on the farm. The general opinion about it is that it is well made. Manilal and a few others have learnt how to prepare it. We put in no yeast and no baking power. We grind our own





wheat. We have just prepared some marmalade from the oranges grown on the farm. I have also learnt how to prepare coromel coffee. It can be given as a beverage even to babies. The passive resisters on the farm have given up the use of tea and coffee, and taken to coromel coffee prepared on the farm. It is made from wheat which is first baked in a certain way and then ground. We intend to sell our surplus production of the above three articles to the public later on. Just at present, we are working as labourers on the construction work that is going on, on the farm, and have not time to produce more of the articles above-mentioned than we need for ourselves.

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### A LESSON TO INDIA

*Mr. Gandhi wrote these lines in reply to the Rev. Joseph Doka, his well-known biographer, who had invited him to send a message to his countrymen in India with reference to the unrest in 1909 :—*

The struggle in the Transvaal is not without its interest for India. We are engaged in raising men who will give a good account of themselves in any part of the world. We have undertaken the struggle on the following assumptions :—

- (1) Passive Resistance is always infinitely superior to physical force.
- (2) There is no inherent barrier between European and Indian anywhere.
- (3) Whatever may have been the motives of the British rulers in India, there is a desire on the part of the Nation at large to see that justice is done. It would be a





calamity to break the connection between the British people and the people of India. If we are treated as, or assert our right to be treated as, free men, whether in India or elsewhere, the connection between the British people and the people of India cannot only be mutually beneficial, but is calculated to be of enormous advantage to the world religiously, and, therefore, socially and politically. In my opinion, each Nation is the complement of the other.

Passive Resistance in connection with the Transvaal struggle I should hold justifiable on the strength of any of these propositions. It may be a slow remedy, not only for our ills in the Transvaal, but for all the political and other troubles from which our people suffer in India.

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## A MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS

*The following message to the Congress was published in the Indian Review for December, 1909 :—*

You have cabled me for a message to the forthcoming Congress. I do not know that I am at all competent to send any message. Simple courtesy, however, demands that I should say something in reply to your cable. At the present moment I am unable to think of anything but the task immediately before me, namely, the struggle that is going on in the Transvaal. I hope our countrymen throughout India realise that it is national in its aim, in that it has been undertaken to save India's honour. I may be wrong, but I have not hesitated publicly to remark that it is the greatest struggle of modern times, because it is the purest as well in its goal as in its



methods. Our countrymen in the Transvaal are fighting for the right of cultured Indians to enter the Transvaal in common with Europeans. In this the fighters have no personal interest to serve, nor is there any material gain to accrue to anybody after the above-mentioned right (which has for the first time in Colonial Legislation been taken away) is restored. The sons of Hindustan, who are in the Transvaal, are showing that they are capable of fighting for an ideal, pure and simple. The methods adopted in order to secure relief are also equally pure and equally simple. Violence in any shape or form is entirely eschewed. They believe that self-suffering is the only true and effective means to procure lasting reforms. They endeavour to meet and conquer hatred by love. They oppose the brute or physical force by soul force. They hold that loyalty to an earthly sovereign or an earthly constitution is subordinate to loyalty to God and His constitution. In interpreting God's constitution through their conscience they admit that they may possibly be wrong. Hence, in resisting or disregarding those man-made laws which they consider to be inconsistent with the eternal laws of God, they accept with resignation the penalties provided by the former, and trust to the working of time and to the best in human nature to make good their position. If they are wrong, they alone suffer, and the established order of things continues. In the process, over 2,500 Indians or nearly one-half of the resident Indian population, or one-fifth of the possible Indian population of the Transvaal, have suffered imprisonment, carrying with it terrible hardships. Some of them have gone to gaol again and again. Many families have been impoverished. Several merchants have accepted privation rather than surrender





their manhood. Incidentally, the Hindu-Mahomedan problem has been solved in South Africa. We realise there that the one cannot do without the other. Mahomedans, Parsees and Hindus, or taking them provincially, Bengalees, Madrasees, Punjabis, Afghanistanees, and Bombayites, have fought shoulder to shoulder.

I venture to suggest that a struggle such as this is worthy of occupying the best, if not, indeed, the exclusive attention of the Congress. If it be not impertinent I would like to distinguish between this and the other items on the programme of the Congress. The opposition to the laws or the policy with which the other items deal does not involve any material suffering: the Congress activity consists in a mental attitude without corresponding action. In the Transvaal case the law and the policy it enunciates being wrong, we disregard it, and therefore consciously and deliberately suffer material and physical injury; action follows, and corresponds to, our mental attitude. If the view here submitted be correct, it will be allowed that in asking for the best place in the Congress programme for the Transvaal question, I have not been unreasonable. May I also suggest that in pondering over and concentrating our attention upon passive resistance such as has been described above, we would perchance find out that, for the many ills we suffer from India, passive resistance is an infalliable panacea. It is worthy of careful study, and I am sure it will be found that it is the only weapon that is suited to the genius of our people and our land, which is the nursery of the most ancient religions and has very little to learn from modern civilization—a civilization based on violence of the blackest type, largely a negation of the Divine in man, and which is rushing headlong to its own ruin.





## THE GAINS OF THE PASSIVE RESISTANCE STRUGGLE

*The following is an English rendering from Gujarati, originally published in the "Indian Review" for Nov.-Dec., 1911:—*

Very often we come across Indians who question the utility of passive resistance as carried on in this country (South Africa). They say that what our people have got as a result of the terrible sufferings in the jails and outside is some proposed modification in the Immigration Law, which they cannot understand, and which is hardly likely to be of any practical value to them. The maximum gain from the struggle, according to their view, is that thereby a few very highly-educated Indians who are least likely to be of any use to them will find it possible to enter the country. For the edification of those who hold the above view, we propose to give a short summary of the gains thereof.

That thereby the Indian community could preserve its national self-respect: according to our proverb, one who can preserve his self-respect can preserve everything else.

That thereby the Registration Act of 1907 has got to be swept off the statute book.

That thereby the whole of India became acquainted with our disabilities in this country.

That through it other nations became acquainted with our grievances and began to appreciate us better.

That by it was brought about the prohibition of Indian indentured labour to Natal by the Indian Government.





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## GAINS OF THE PASSIVE RESISTANCE STRUGGLE 189

That the struggle helped to bring about some desirable modification in the Licensing Law of Natal.

That it brought about the disallowance of the Registration Law of Rhodesia which was framed on the same basis as that of the Transvaal.

That it brought about the disallowance of the most obnoxious Licensing Law of Natal. Any one who doubts this statement had better refer to the despatch of the Imperial Government disallowing the Act and the reasons for such disallowance.

That but for the struggle the other Colonies in South Africa would have passed Immigration Restriction Laws similar to the law in the Transvaal.

That but for the struggle, the Transvaal Legislature would have passed other Anti-Asiatic Law as harsh as the Immigration Restriction Law.

That the struggle brought about the repeal of the Railway Regulations which differentiated between the white and the coloured people and that they are now applicable to all equally.

That it is a matter of common knowledge that the Transvaal Registration Law of 1907 was the first of a series of Anti-Asiatic Laws that were proposed to be added to the statute book. The unanimous opposition of the Indians to this law, however, deterred the Transvaal Government from taking up the other legislation.

That it brought into existence a committee consisting of Europeans under the presidency of Mr. Hoeken which could not have come into existence otherwise. This committee is likely to be useful to Indian future struggle.



That besides those who have already joined the committee, it has created, in a great many other Europeans, feelings of sympathy and regard for Indians.

That thereby the Indian community has gained a great deal of prestige and that those Europeans who before the struggle used to treat Indians with contempt, have been taught to show them due regard and consideration.

That the Government now feels that the strength which is in us is unconquerable.

That the majority of the Indians domiciled in the country showed themselves quite cowardly before the struggle. It has, however, given them more vigour and courage. Those who were afraid even to whisper before that time, are now boldly speaking out their minds as men.

That whereas before the struggle, there was no woman's movement in Johannesburg, now there is a class opened under Mrs. Vogle who gives her services free to the community.

That jail life which seemed so dreadful to Indians before the struggle, is no longer terrifying to them.

That although on account of the struggle, Mr. Cachalia and others have lost almost all their earthly possessions, they feel that as a consequence thereof, they have acquired much strength of mind and character which they could not have purchased with any amount of money and which nothing but the actual struggle could have infused into them.

That but for the struggle, the Indian community continued to remain ignorant of the fact that a section thereof, there were men and women





who were great assets to this people, and who would do credit to any community.

That the struggle, which brought about the Transvaal Law of 1908, revived the rights of hundreds of Indians who had left the country during the great war.

That the Indian community now stands before the world fully acquitted of all charges of fraud which were levelled against them before the present settlement.

That the withdrawal of the Bill introduced in the Union Parliament exempting Europeans from the payment of the poll-tax in Natal is one of the freshest instances showing the dread the authorities have of a fresh passive resistance struggle on the part of Indians.

That the struggle made General Smuts rescind his own orders on three and the Imperial Government on two different occasions.

That before the struggle, all laws used to be framed against us independently of us and what we thought of them, but that since the struggle the authorities are obliged to take our views and feelings into their consideration and they certainly show more regard to them.

That as a consequence of the struggle, the prestige of the Indian community stands on a much higher level than ever before. Better this than the riches of the whole world.

That the community has demonstrated to the world the invulnerability of "Truth."

That by keeping its full faith in God the community has vindicated the glory of Religion. "Where there is truth and where there is religion, there alone is victory."

On bestowing more thought on the question and looking at it from its various bearings, one can find much more to say as to the fruits thereof, than what has been





stated above. The last on the list, however, is incomparably the best of them all. Such a great fight could not have been carried on successfully without fully trusting in God. He was our only prop all that time. Those who put their implicit faith in Him cannot but reach their aims. The struggle will not have been carried on in vain, if, as a result of it, we shall have learnt to put still more trust in Him.





# The Champaran Enquiry

## LABOUR TROUBLE IN BEHAR

*For many years past the relations of landlords and tenants and the circumstances attending the cultivation of indigo in the Champaran District have not been satisfactory. In response to an insistent public demand to inquire into the conditions under which Indian labourers work in the Indigo Plantations, Mr. Gandhi arrived at Muzaffarpur on the 15th April, 1917, whence he took the midday train for Motihari. Next day he was served with a notice to quit the District "by next available train as his presence," the notice announced "will endanger the public peace and may lead to serious disturbance which may be accompanied by loss of life." Mr. Gandhi replied:—*

Which references to the order under Sec. 144, Cr. P. C., just served upon me, I beg to state that I am sorry that you have felt called upon to issue it; and I am sorry too that the Commissioner of the Division has totally mis-interpreted my position. Out of a sense of public responsibility, I feel it to be my duty to say that I am unable to leave this district, but if it so pleases the authorities, I shall submit to the order by suffering the penalty of disobedience.

I most emphatically repudiate the Commissioner's suggestion that 'my object is likely to be agitation.' My desire is purely and simply for 'genuine search for





knowledge ' and this I shall continue to satisfy so long as I am left free.

*Mr. Gandhi appeared before the Magistrate on the 18th instant and read the following statement before the Court:—*

With the permission of the Court I would like to make a brief statement showing why I have taken the very serious step of seemingly disobeying the order made under S. 144 of the Cr. P. C. In my humble opinion it is a question of difference of opinion between the local administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters. I could not render any help without studying the problem. I have, therefore, come to study it with the assistance, if possible, of the administration and the planters. I have no other motive and I cannot believe that my coming here can in any way disturb public peace or cause loss of life. I claim to have considerable experience in such matters. The administration, however, have thought differently. I fully appreciate their difficulty, and I admit too, that they can only proceed upon the information they receive. As a law-abiding citizen, my first instinct would be as it was, to obey the order served upon me. I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I came. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst. I could not, therefore, voluntarily retire. Amid this conflict of duty I could only throw the responsibility of removing me from them on the administration. I am fully conscious of the fact that a person, holding in the public life of





India a position such as I do, has to be most careful in setting examples. It is my firm belief that in the complex constitution under which we are living, the only safe and honourable course for a self-respecting man is, in the circumstances such as face me, to do what I have decided to do, that is, to submit without protest to the penalty of disobedience. I have ventured to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me, not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being—the voice of conscience.

*Under instructions from higher authorities the notice was soon withdrawn. Early in June a commission was appointed to enquire into the agrarian troubles in the Behar plantations with Mr. Gandhi himself as one of the members of the commission. In December, 1917, the Champaran Agrarian Bill based on the recommendations of the Commission was passed in the Behar Legislative Council when the Hon. Mr. Maude who moved the Bill made a frank statement of the scandals which necessitated the enquiry, thus justifying Mr. Gandhi's work on behalf of the labourers.*

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# The Kaira Question

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## THE SITUATION IN KAIRA

*In the year 1916-17 there was serious and widespread failure of crops in the District of Kaira in Gujarat. Under the revenue rules the ryots were entitled to full suspension of taxes if the yield was less than 4 as. in the rupee and half suspension if between 4 and 6 as. The Government granted complete suspension to one village only out of a total of 600, half suspension to some 104 villages and issued orders to collect revenue from the rest. The ryots claimed that the Government were wrong in their estimate and Mr. Gandhi and Mr. V. J. Patel who conducted an enquiry also came to the same conclusion. The Government persisted in collecting revenues as usual. Petitions and protests having been of no avail, the ryots resorted to passive resistance under the guidance of Mr. Gandhi. In the following lecture at Bombay in February, 1918, Mr. Gandhi narrated the story of the trouble in Kaira in his usually brief and lucid manner :—*

*I do not want to say much. I have received a letter asking me to be present at to-morrow's deputation that is going to wait on his Excellency the Governor, and I am sure I will be able to explain to him the true facts. Still I must make it clear here that the responsibility of the notice issued by the Gujarat Sabha lies on me. I was at Ahmedabad before that notice was issued, where*





the matter of Kaira District was being discussed, when it was decided that the Gujarat Sabha ought to take part in the matter. I think that, as regards this notice, a mountain has been made out of a mole-hill. Everyone knew what the notice was when it was being framed. Nobody then even dreamt that Government would misinterpret it. The Sabha had with it sufficient data about the plight of the people. They came to know that Government officials were collecting taxes and the people were even selling their cattle to pay the taxes. The matter had come to such a pass, and, knowing this, the Sabha thought it better to issue a notice to console the people who braved these hardships. And the notice was the result of that information, and I have every hope that in the deputation that is going to wait on the Governor, the result of the deliberations will end in the success of the people.

#### COMMISSIONER'S WRATH

If the Commissioner had not been angry with us, and had talked politely with the deputation that waited on him, and had not misinstructed the Bombay Government, such a grave crisis would not have eventuated, and we would not have had the trouble of meeting here this evening. The Sabha's request was to suspend the collection of dues till the negotiations were over. But Government did not take this proper course and issued an angry Press Note. It was my firm belief—and even now I firmly believe—that the representatives of the people and Government could have joined together and taken the proper steps. I regret to have to say that Government has made a mistake. Perhaps subordinate officers of Government would say to Government that



the notice was issued not from a pure motive, but from some other ulterior motive. If Government are impressed with this erroneous belief, those who have stood by the people, I hope, will continue to stand by them to the end and will not retreat. Any responsible right-thinking man could have given them the same advice. People possess the same rights as the authorities have, and public men have every right to advise the people of their rights. The people that do not fight for their rights are like slaves (hear, hear), and such people do not deserve Home Rule. When authorities think that they can take anything from the people and can interfere, a difficult situation arises. And if such a situation arises, I must plainly say that those who have given the people the right advice, will stand by them till the end.

#### THE WEAPONS

I have not yet come to any conclusion, and I sincerely trust that those who understand the responsibility, will not hesitate to undergo hardships in order to secure justice. (Applause). And in such an eventuality I hope you will not beat an ignominious retreat. The first and the last principle of passive resistance is that we should not inflict hardships on others, but put up with them ourselves in order to get justice, and Government need not fear anything if we make up our mind, as we are bent on getting sheer justice from it and nothing else. To get that justice we must fight with the authorities and the people that do not so fight are but slaves. We can have only two weapons on occasions like this: Revolt or passive resistance, and my request is for the second remedy always. The right of suffering hardships and claiming justice and getting our demands is from





one's birth. Similarly we have to get justice at the hands of Government by suffering hardships. We must suffer hardships like brave men. What I have to say is, resort to the right means, and that very firmly, in order to remove the distress through which the Gujarat people are passing. It is my conviction that, if we tell the truth to the British Government, it can ultimately be convinced, and if only we are firm in our resolve, rest assured that Kaira people shall suffer wrongs no more. (Loud cheers).

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### THE VOW OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

*As a result of the persistent refusal of Government to recognize the serious state of affairs in Kaira and grant a suspension of revenue, a passive resistance movement was inaugurated under Mr. Gandhi's lead. At the meeting on the 22nd March, 1918, at Nadiad, Mr. Gandhi exhorted the ryots to resort to Satyagraha, and over 200 men signed the following declaration:—*

Knowing that the crops of our villages are less than four annas we had requested the Government to suspend the revenue collection till the ensuing year. As however Government has not acceded to our prayer, we, the undersigned, hereby solemnly declare that we shall not pay the full or remaining revenue, but we will let the Government take such legal steps as they may think fit to collect the same and we shall gladly suffer all the consequences of our refusal to pay. We shall allow our lands to be confiscated, but we shall not, of our own accord, pay anything and thereby lose our self-respect





and prove ourselves wrong. If Government decide to suspend the second instalment of the revenue throughout the district, those amongst us who are in a position to pay, will pay the whole or the balance of the revenue as may be due. The reason why those of us who have the money to pay and still do not, is that if they do the poorer might in panic sell their things or borrow to pay and thereby suffer.

Under the circumstances we believe it is the duty of those who are able to pay to protect the poor.

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### STATEMENT ON THE KAIRA DISTRESS

*Mr. Gandhi sent to the Press the following statement on the Kaira distress under date 28th March, 1918:—*

In the District of Kaira the crops for the year 1917-18 have, by common admission, proved a partial failure. Under the Revenue rules if the crops are under four annas, the cultivators are entitled to full suspension of the Revenue assessment for the year; if the crops are under six annas, half the amount of assessment is suspended. So far as I am aware, the Government have been pleased to grant full suspension with regard to one village out of nearly 600, and half-suspension in the case of over 103 villages. It is claimed on behalf of the ryots that the suspension is not at all adequate to the actuality. The Government contend that in the vast majority of villages crops have been over six annas. The only question, therefore, at issue is, whether the crops have been under four annas or six annas, as the case may be, or over the latter figure. Government valuation is in the first instance made by the Talatis assisted by the chiefman of the villages concerned. As a rule no check





on their figures is considered necessary, for it is only during partial failure of crops that Government valuation of crops may have to be challenged. The Talatis are as a class obsequious, unscrupulous and tyrannical. The chief men are especially selected for their docility. The Talati's one aim is naturally to collect full assessment as promptly as possible. We sometimes read accounts of assiduous Talatis having been awarded 'pogrees' for making full collection. In applying to the Talatis the adjectives I have given, I wish to cast no reflections on them as men. I merely state the fact. The Talatis are not born; they are made; and rent-collectors all the world over have to cultivate a callousness without which they could not do their work to the satisfaction of their masters. It is impossible for me to reproduce the graphic description given by the ryots of the recent collectors which the Talatis chiefly are. My purpose in dealing with the Talatis is to show that the Government's valuation of the crops is derived in the first instance from the tainted source and is presumably biased against the ryots. As against their valuation we have the universal testimony of ryots, high and low, some of whom are men of position and considerable wealth who have a reputation to lose and who have nothing to gain by exaggerations except the odium of Talatis and possibly higher officials. I wish to state at once that behind this movement there is no desire to discredit the Government, or an individual official. The movement is intended to assert the right of the people to be effectively heard in matters concerning themselves.

It is known to the public that the Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Parekh and Mr. V. J. Patel invited and assisted by the





Gujarat Sabha carried on investigations, as also Messrs. Doodhar, Joshi and Thakkar of the Servants of India Society. Their investigation was necessarily preliminary and brief and therefore confined to a few villages only. But the result of their enquiry went to show that the crops in the majority of cases was under four annas. As their investigation, not being extensive enough, was capable of being challenged, and it was challenged, I undertook a full inquiry with the assistance of over 20 capable, experienced, and impartial men of influence and status. I personally visited over 50 villages and met as many men in the villages as I could, inspected in these villages most of the fields belonging to them and after a searching cross-examination of the villagers, came to the conclusion that their crops were under four annas. I found that among the men who surrounded me, there were present those who were ready to check exaggerations and wild statements. Men knew what was at stake if they departed from the truth. As to the 'Rabi' crops and the still standing 'Kharif' crops, I was able by the evidence of my own eyes to check the statements of the agriculturists. The methods adopted by my co-workers were exactly the same. In this manner nearly four hundred villagers were examined, and with but a few exceptions, crops were found to be under four annas, and only in three cases they were found to be over six annas. The method adopted by us was, so far as the 'Kharif' crops were concerned, to ascertain the actual yield of the whole of the crops of individual villages and the possible yield of the same village in a normal year. Assuming the truth of the statements made by them, this is admittedly an absolute test, and any other method that would bring about the same result must be rejected as untrue and





unscientific; and, as I have already remarked, all probability of exaggeration was avoided in the above-named investigation. As to the standing 'Rabi' crops, there was the eye estimate and it was tested by the method above mentioned. The Government method is an eye estimate and therefore a matter largely of guess-work. It is moreover open to fundamental objections which I have endeavoured to set forth in a letter to the Collector of the District. I requested him to treat Vadthal—a well-known and ordinarily well-to-do village of the District with the railway line passing by it and which is near a trade centre—as a test case, and I suggested that if the crops were in that village proved to be under four annas, as I hold they were, it might be assumed that in the other villages less fortunately situated, crops were not likely to be more than four annas. I have added to my request a suggestion that I should be permitted to be present at the inquiry. He made the inquiry, but rejected my suggestion, and therefore it proved to be one-sided. The Collector has made an elaborate report on the crops of that village, which in my opinion I have successfully challenged. The original Government valuation, I understand, was twelve annas, the Collector's minimum valuation is seven annas. If the probably wrong methods of valuation to which I have drawn attention and which have been adopted by the Collector are allowed for, the valuation according to his own reckoning would come under six annas and according to the agriculturists it would be under four annas. Both the report and my answer are too technical to be of value to the public. But I have suggested that, as both the Government and agriculturists hold themselves in the right, if the Government have any regard for





popular opinion, they should appoint an impartial committee of inquiry with the cultivators' representatives upon it, or gracefully accept the popular view. The Government have rejected both the suggestions and insist upon applying coercive measures for the collection of revenue. It may be mentioned that these measures have never been totally suspended and in many cases the ryots have paid simply under pressure. The Talatis have taken away cattle, and have returned them only after the payment of assessment. In one case, I witnessed a painful incident :—A man having his milch buffalo taken away from him, and it was only on my happening to go to the village that the buffalo was released ; this buffalo was the most valuable property the man possessed and a source of daily bread for him. Scores of such cases have already happened and many more will no doubt happen hereafter if the public opinion is not ranged on the side of the people. Every means of seeking redress by prayer has been exhausted. Interviews with the Collector, the Commissioner and His Excellency have taken place. The final suggestion that was made is this :—Although in the majority of cases people are entitled to full suspension, half suspension should be granted throughout the District, except for the villages which show, by common consent, crops over six annas. Such a gracious concession may be accompanied by a declaration that the Government would expect those who have ready means voluntarily to pay up the dues, and the workers on our part undertaking to persuade such people to pay up the Government dues. This will leave only the poorest people untouched. I venture to submit that acceptance of this suggestion can only bring credit and strength to the Government. Resistance of





popular will can only produce discontent which in the case of fear-stricken peasantry such as of Kaira can only find an underground passage and thus demoralise them. The present movement is an attempt to get out of such a false position, humiliating alike for the Government and the people. And how do the Government propose to assert their position and so-called prestige? They have a 'Revenue Code' giving them unlimited powers without a right of appeal to the ryots against the decisions of the Revenue Authorities. Exercises of these powers in a case like the one before us in which the ryots are fighting for a principle and the authorities for prestige, would be a prostitution of justice, of a disavowal of all fair-play. These powers are:—

(1) Right of summary execution.

(2) Right of exacting a quarter of the assessment as punishment.

(3) Right of confiscation of land, not merely 'Rayatwari' but even 'Inami' or 'Sanadia,' and the right of keeping a man under *hajat*.

Those remedies may be applied singly or all together, and unbelievable though it may seem to the public, it may be mentioned that notices of the application of all these remedies but the last have been issued. Thus a man owning two hundred acres of land in perpetuity and valued at thousands of rupees, paying a small assessment rate, may at the will of the authority lose the whole of it, because for the sake of principle he respectfully refuses voluntarily to pay the assessment himself, and is prepared meekly but under strong protest to penalties that may be inflicted by law. Surely vindictive confiscation of property ought not to be the reward for orderly disobedience which properly handled





can only result in progress all round and in giving the Government a bold and a frank peasantry with a will of its own.

I venture to invite the press and the public to assist these cultivators of Kaira who have dared to enter up a fight for what they consider is just and right. Let the public remember this also that unprecedentedly severe plague has decimated the population of Kaira. People are living outside their homes in specially prepared thatched cottages at considerable expenses to themselves. In some villages mortality has been tremendous. Prices are ruling high on which owing to the failure of crops they can but take little advantage and have to suffer all the disadvantages thereof. It is not money they want, so much as the voice of a strong, unanimous and emphatic public opinion.

#### REPLY TO THE COMMISSIONER.

*Mr. Gandhi wrote from Nadiad under date 15th April, the following reply to the Commissioner's address to the cultivators to desist from following Mr. Gandhi's lead in regard to the vow of Passive Resistance. The Commissioner's exhortations to the agriculturists amounted to a threat detailing the consequences of non-payment of revenues. Mr. Gandhi replied as follows:—*

The publication of the summary of the Commissioner's Gujarati address to the Kaira cultivators necessitates a reply in justice to the latter as also the workers.

I have before me a verbatim report of the speech. It is more direct than the summary in the laying down of the Government policy. The Commissioner's position is that the revenue authorities' decision regarding sus-





pension is final. They may and do receive and hear complaints from the ryots but the finality of their decision cannot be questioned. This is the crux of struggle. It is contended on behalf of the ryots that where there are, in matters of administrative orders, sharp differences of opinion between local officials and them the points of differences are and ought to be referred to an impartial committee of inquiry. This, it is held, constitutes the strength of the British constitution. The Commissioner has on principle rejected this position and invited a crisis. And he has made such a fetish of it that he armed himself beforehand with a letter from Lord Willingdon to the effect that even he should not interfere with the Commissioner's decision. He brings in the war to defend his position and abjures the ryots and me to desist from our cause at this time of peril to the Empire. But I venture to suggest that the Commissioner's attitude constitutes a peril far graver than the German peril, and I am serving the Empire in trying to deliver it from this peril from within. There is no mistaking the fact that India is waking up from its long sleep. The Ryots do not need to be literate to appreciate their rights and their duties. They have but to realise their invulnerable power and no Government, however strong, can stand against their will. The Kaira ryots are solving an imperial problem of the first magnitude in India. They will show that it is impossible to govern men without their consent. Once the Civil Service realises this position, it will supply to India truly *civil servants* who will be the bulwark of the people's rights. To-day the Civil Service rule is a rule of fear. The Kaira Ryot is fighting for the rule of love. It is the Commissioner who has produced the crisis. It was, as it is now, his duty to placate the people when





he saw that they held a different view. The revenue of India will be no more in danger because a Commissioner yields to the popular demands and grants concessions than the administration of justice was in danger when Mrs. Maybrick was reprieved purely in obedience to the popular will, or the Empire was in danger because a corner of a mosque in Cawnpore was replaced in obedience to the same demand. Had I hesitated to advise the people to stand firm against the Commissioner's refusal to listen to their prayer, instead of taking the open and healthy course it has taken, their discontent would have burrowed under and bred ill-will. That son is a true son of his father who rather than harbour ill-will against him, frankly but respectfully tells him all he feels and equally respectfully resists him, if he cannot truthfully obey his commands. I apply the same law to the relations between the Government and the people. There cannot be seasons when a man must suspend his conscience. But just as a wise father will quickly agree with his son and not incur his ill-will, especially if the family was in danger from without, even so a wise Government will quickly agree with the ryots rather than incur their displeasure. War cannot be permitted to give a license to the officials to exact obedience to their orders, even though the ryots may consider them to be unreasonable and unjust.

The Commissioner steels the hearts of the ryots for continuing their course by telling them that for a revenue of four lakhs of rupees he will for ever confiscate over a hundred and fifty thousand acres of land worth over three crores of rupees, and for ever declare the holders, their wives and children unworthy of holding any lands in Kaira. He considers the ryots to be misguided and





contumacious in the same breath. These are solemn words:—

"Do not be under the impression that our mamlatdars and our Talatis will realise the assessment by attaching and selling your movable property. We are not going to trouble ourselves so much. Our officers' time is valuable. Only by your bringing in the monies shall the treasuries be filled. This is no threat. You take it from me that parents never threaten their children. They only advise. But if you do not pay the dues, your lands will be confiscated. Many people say that this will not happen. But I say it will. I have no need to take a vow. I shall prove that I mean what I say. The lands of those who do not pay will be confiscated. Those who are contumacious will get no lands in future. Government do not want their names on their Records of Rights. Those who go out shall never be admitted again."

I hold that it is the sacred duty of every loyal citizen to fight unto death against such a spirit of vindictiveness and tyranny. The Commissioner has done the Ahmedabad strikers and me a cruel wrong, in saying that the strikers knowingly broke their vow. He was present at the meeting where the settlement was declared. He may hold that the strikers had broken their vow (though his speech at the meeting produced a contrary impression) but there is nothing to show that the strikers knowingly broke their vow. On the contrary it was entirely kept by their resuming their work on their getting for the first day wages demanded by them, and the final decision as to wages being referred to arbitration. The strikers had suggested arbitration which the mill-owners had rejected. Their struggle in its essence was for a thirty-five per cent. increase in their wages or such increase as an arbitration board may decide. And this is what they have got. The hit at the strikers and me is, I regret to have to say, a hit below the belt.





## THE MEANING OF THE COVENANT

*On the 20th April, Mr. Gandhi in company of Mrs. Gandhi, Messrs. Manu Subedar, V. J. Patel and others visited three villages, viz., Kasar, Ajarpura and Samarkha in Anand Taluka.*

*At Ajarpura which was visited by the Mamlatdar of the Taluka only two days back and where he had taken great pains to explain to the people why they should now pay up the revenue without any further delay, but where all efforts had proved fruitless, a meeting of about a thousand men and three hundred ladies was held. Here Mr. Gandhi delivered a long address. He said:—*

First of all I want to talk to you a little about the Mamlatdar's visit. The Mamlatdar told you that the covenant must be observed. But he misinterpreted the meaning of the covenant. He told you that your forefathers had entered into a covenant with the Government to pay a certain assessment for the lands in their possession. Now let us see as to what kind of covenant our forefathers had entered into. Our ancient law covenant is that we should give to our king one-fourth of the grains that grow in our fields. It meant that whenever our crops failed we had to pay nothing. The present Government have changed this law and forces up to pay in money. I do not know whether it has gained thereby. Perhaps they may have. But remember well that this is our ancient law, and you have taken the vow in accordance with it. And again it is the Government law that if the crops are under four annas, the collection of revenue must be suspended till the next year. This year you sincerely believe that your crops are under four annas and there-





fore your revenue must be suspended. The Government say that it is not your right, but it is only a grace that it suspends revenue till the next year. Let me declare to you that it is no grace on the part of Government, but it is your right. And if it is a grace Government cannot show it at its sweet will."

He then pointed out that the real significance of the struggle lay in the fact that it would revive the old village republics. The key of village self-government lay in the assertion of public opinion. He then exhorted them to be fearless. He then said that *Satyagraha* must pervade through all their life.

#### REPLY TO KAIRA PRESS NOTE

*Mr. M. K. Gandhi sent the following reply to the press note issued by the Bombay Government in the first week of May, 1918, on the situation in the Kaira District,*

The Government press note on the Kaira trouble is remarkable for the sins both of omission and commission. As to the paragraph devoted to Messrs. Parakh's and Patel's investigations, I wish only to say that at the interview with His Excellency the Governor, the Commissioner challenged the accuracy of their statements. I immediately suggested the appointment of a committee of inquiry. Surely, it was the most proper thing that the Government could have done, and the whole of the unseemly executions, the removal of the cultivators' milch cattle and their ornaments, the confiscation orders, could have been avoided. Instead, as the press note says, they posted a Collector 'of long experience.' What could he do? The best of officials have to move in a vicious circle. They have to carry out the traditions of a service which



has made of prestige a fetish and which considers itself to be almost infallible, and rarely admits its mistakes.

With reference to the investigation by Mr. Devdhar and his co-workers, the press note leaves on the reader the impression that the Commissioner had responded to their suggestions. At the interview at which I was present he challenged the report they had submitted to him and said distinctly that whatever relief he granted would not be granted because of the report which he said in substance was not true so far as it contained any new things and was not new in so far as it contained any true statements.

I cannot weary the public with the tragedy in the Matar Taluka. In certain villages of the Taluka which are affected by the irrigation canals they have a double grievance: (1) the ordinary failure of crops by reason of the excessive rainfall, and (2) the total destruction of crops by reason of overflowing. In the second case, they are entitled to full remission. So far as I am aware, in many cases it has not been granted.

It is not correct to say that the Servants of India Society stopped investigation in the Thasra Taluka because there was no case for inquiry but because they deemed it unnecessary, so their report says, as I had decided to inquire into the crops of almost every village.

#### MR. GANDHI'S CHALLENGE NOT ACCEPTED

The press note is less than fair in calling my method of inquiry 'Utopian.' I do adhere to my contention that if the cultivators' statements may be relied upon, my method cannot but yield absolutely reliable results. Who should know better than the cultivator himself the yield of his crops? I refuse to believe that lakhs of men could





conspire to tell an untruth when there was no great gain in view, and suffering, a certainty. It is impossible for thousands of men to learn by heart figures as to the yield, —actual and probable—of over ten crops so that the total in each case would give less than a four-anna crop. I contend that my method contains automatic safeguards against deception. Moreover I had challenged the official annawari alike of *kharif* and *rabi* crops. When I did so the *rabi* crops were still standing. I had, therefore, suggested that they could cut the *rabi* crops and test the yield and thus find the true annawari. I had suggested this specially of Vadthal. My argument was that if the cultivators' annawari of such *rabi* crops was found to be correct and the officials' wrong, it was not improper to infer that the cultivators' valuations regarding the *kharif* crops were also right. My offer was not accepted. I may add that I had asked to be allowed to be present when the collector visited Vadthal which was taken as a test village. This request was also not acceded to.

The note is misleading inasmuch as it states that in arriving at my annawari, I have not taken into account the *rabi* crops or the cotton crops. I have taken these crops into account, I have simply questioned the logic of the official system. The reason is obvious. If out of a population of one thousand men, only two hundred men grew *rabi* crops, it would be highly unjust to the eight hundred men to force up their annawari if without the *rabi* crops their crops showed only four annas or under.

#### GROSS INACCURACIES

I am surprised at the gross inaccuracies in the paragraph devoted to the crops in Limbasi. In the first ins-





tance I was not present when the official inquiry was made, and in the second instance the wheat, which is valued at Rs. 13,445, included wheat also from two neighbouring villages so that out of the crops estimated at Rs. 13,445, three assessments had to be paid. And what are Rs. 13,445 in a population of eighteen hundred men? For the matter of that, I am prepared to admit that the Limbasi people had a rice crop which too gave them as many rupees. At the rate of forty rupees per head per year to feed a man the Limbasi people would require Rs. 72,000 for their food alone. It may interest the public to know that according to the official annawari, the Limbasi wheat alone should have been Rs. 83,021. This figure has been supplied to me by the collector. To demonstrate the recklessness with which the press note has been prepared, I may add that if the Limbasi people are to be believed, the whole of the wheat crop was on the threshing floor. According to their statements, nearly one-third was foreign wheat. The Limbasi wheat, therefore, would be under Rs. 9,000. The official annawari is ten annas. Now according to the actual yield the wheat annawari of Limbasi was 11 annas as against the official ten annas. Moreover, a maund of wheat per Vigha is required as seed and the Limbasi cultivators had 3,000 (Rs. 3 per maund equals Rs. 9,000) maunds of wheat on 1,965 Vighas, *i.e.*, the wheat crop was a trifle over the seed. Lastly, whilst the crop was under harvest, I had offered to the collector to go over to Limbasi myself and to have it weighed so that there might be no question of the accuracy or otherwise of the cultivators' statements. But the collector did not accept my offer. Therefore, I hold that the cultivators' figures must be accepted as true.





## ADVOCACY OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Merely to show how hopelessly misleading the press note is I may state that the Gujarat Sabha did not pass a resolution advising passive resistance. Nor that it would have shirked it but I felt myself that passive resistance should not be the subject of a resolution in a Sabha, whose constitution was governed by the rule of majority and so the Gujarat Sabha's resolution left it open to individual members to follow their own bent of mind. It is true that most of the active members of the Sabha are engaged in the Kaira trouble.

I must repudiate totally the insinuation that I dissuaded payment by people who wished to pay. The figures given in the press note showing the collection in the different Talukas, if they prove anything, prove that the hand of the law has hit them hard and that the fears of the Ravanis and the Talatis have proved too strong for them. When after confiscation and sales under execution the Government show a clean bill and no arrears, will they contend that there was no case for relief or inquiry?

I admit that the suspension is granted as a matter of grace and not as a matter of right enforceable by law, but the concession is not based on caprice, but is regulated by properly defined rules, and the Government do not contend that if the crops had been under four annas they could have withheld suspension. The sole point throughout has been the difference as to annawari. If it is true that in granting concessions the Government take into account also other circumstances, e. g., in the words of the press note, the general economic situation, suspension is doubly necessary this year because of the plague and high prices. The collector told me definitely that he could not take this last into account. He could grant





suspension only under the rules which had reference only to crops and nothing else.

I think I have shown enough here to warrant a committee of inquiry and I submit that, as a matter of principle, it would be worth while granting the inquiry even if one cultivator remains with an arrear against him, because there is nothing found to attach and the Government might be reluctant to sell his lands. The people have challenged the accuracy of Talatis' figures; in some cases there are Talatis themselves ready to come forward to show that they were asked to put up the annawari found by them. But if the inquiry is now held to be unnecessary, why do the Government not grant suspension, especially when admittedly there is only a small number left to collect from and more especially when if suspension is granted well-to-do cultivators are ready to pay.

It is evident now that Government have surrendered the question of principle for which the Commissioner has stood.

#### VICEROY'S CALL FOR CONCORD

The Viceroy has appealed for the sinking of domestic differences. Is the appeal confined only to the ryots or may the officials also yield to the popular will when the popular demand is not immoral or unjust and thus produce contentment?

If distress means starvation, I admit that the Kaira people are not starving. But if sale of goods to pay assessment or to buy grain for food be an indication of distress there is enough of it in the district. I am prepared to show that hundreds have paid their assessment either by incurring debts or by selling their trees, cattle or other valuables. The most grievous omission





in the press note, however, is that of the fact that collections are being made in a vindictive spirit. The cultivators are being taught a lesson for their contumacy so called. They are under threat to lose their lands worth 3 crores of rupees for an assessment of 4 lakhs of rupees. In many cases a quarter of the assessment has been exacted as a penalty. Is there not in the above narrative room for a doubt that the officials may be in the wrong?

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### END OF THE KAIRA STRUGGLE

*The following is the translation of a manifesto issued in Gujarati to the people of Kaira by Messrs. M.K. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai J. Patel :—*

The struggle that the people of the District of Kaira entered upon on the 22nd of March last, has come to an end. The people took the following vow on that day :—

“Our village has had crops under four annas. We therefore requested the Government to postpone collection to the next year, but they did not do so. We the undersigned therefore solemnly declare that we shall not pay the assessment for the year whether it be wholly or in part. We shall undergo all the sufferings that may result from such refraining. We shall also allow our lands to be confiscated should they do so. But we shall not by voluntary payment allow ourselves to be regarded as liars and thus lose our self-respect. If the Government would graciously postpone for all the remaining villages collection of the balance of the revenue, we, who can afford it, would be prepared to pay up revenue whether it be in full or in part. The reason why the well-to-do amongst us would not pay is that if they do, the needy ones would out of fright sell their chattels, or incur debts and pay the revenue and thus suffer. We believe that it is the duty of the well-to-do to protect the needy against such a plight.”

The meaning of this vow is that the Government suspending collection of the revenue from the poor, the well-to-do should pay the assessment due by them. The Mamlatdar of Nadiad at Uttersanda, on the 3rd of June, issued such orders, whereupon the people of Uttersanda





who could afford, were advised to pay up. Payments have already commenced there.

On the foregoing order having been passed at Utersanda a letter was addressed to the Collector stating that if orders like the one in Utersanda were passed everywhere the struggle would come to an end, and it would be possible to inform His Excellency the Governor on the 10th instant—the day of the sitting of the Provincial War Conference—that the domestic difference in Kaira was settled. The Collector has replied to the effect that the order like the one in Utersanda is applicable to the whole district. Thus the peoples' prayer has at last been granted. The Collector has also stated in reply to a query about *Chothai* orders that the orders will not be enforced against those who may voluntarily pay up. Our thanks are due to the Collector for this concession.

#### AN END WITHOUT GRACE

We are obliged to say with sorrow that although the struggle has come to an end it is an end without grace. It lacks dignity. The above orders have not been passed either with generosity or with the heart in them. It very much looks as if the orders have been passed with the greatest reluctance. The Collector says :—

"Orders were issued to all mamlatdars on the 25th April that no pressure should be put on those unable to pay. Their attention was again drawn to these orders in a proper circular issued by me on the 22nd of May and to ensure that proper effect was given to them. The mamlatdars were advised to divide the defaulters in each village into two classes, those who could pay and those who were unable to pay on account of poverty."

If this was so why were these orders not published to the people? Had they known them on the 25th April what sufferings would they not have been saved from. The expenses that were unnecessarily incurred by the Government in engaging the officials of the district in





effecting executions would have been saved. Wherever the assessment was uncollected the people lived with their lives in their hands. They have lived away from their homes to avoid attachments. They have not had even enough food. The women have suffered what they ought not to have. At times, they have been obliged to put up with insults from insolent Circle Inspectors, and to helplessly watch their milch buffaloes taken away from them. They have paid *Chothai* fines, and had they known the foregoing orders they would have been saved all the miseries. The officials knew that this relief for the poor was the crux of the struggle. The Commissioner would not even look at this difficulty. Many letters were addressed to him but he remained unbending. He said : " Individual relief cannot be granted, it is not the law." Now the Collector says : " The orders of April 25, so far as it related to putting pressure on those who were really unable to pay on account of poverty, were merely a re-statement of what are publicly known to be the standing orders of Government on that subject." If this is really true the people have suffered deliberately and through sheer obstinacy ! At the time of going to Delhi Mr. Gandhi wrote to the Commissioner requesting him to grant or to issue orders to the above effect so that the good news could be given to His Excellency the Viceroy. The Commissioner gave no heed to the request.

#### OFFICIAL'S OBSTINACY

" We are moved by the sufferings of the people, we perceive our mistake and in order to placate the people we are now prepared to grant individual relief," the officials could have generously said all this and endeared themselves to the people but they have obstinately avoided this method (of winning them over). And even now relief has been granted in a niggardly manner, involuntarily and without admission of any mistake. It is even claimed that what has now been granted is nothing new. And hence we say that there is little grace in the settlement.





The officials have failed to be popular because of their obstinacy, because of their mistaken belief that they should never admit being in the wrong and because of their having made it a fetish that it should never be said of them that they had yielded to anything like popular agitation. It grieves us to offer this criticism. But we have permitted ourselves to do so as their friends.

#### A TRIBUTE TO KAIRA PEOPLE

But though the official attitude is thus unsatisfactory, our prayer has been granted and it is our duty to accept the concession with thankfulness. Now, there is only 8 per cent. of the assessment remaining unpaid. It was a point of honour with us till now to refuse payment. Conditions having materially altered it is a point of honour for a Satyagrahi to pay up the assessment. Those who can afford should pay without causing the Government the slightest trouble and thus show that, when there is no conflict between the dictates of conscience and those of man-made law they are able to compel anybody to obey the law of the land. A Satyagrahi sometimes appears momentarily to disobey laws and the constituted authority, only to prove in the end his regard for both.

In making a list of those who are unable to pay we should apply a test so rigid that no one can challenge our finding. Those whose incapacity for payment is at all in doubt should consider it their duty to pay. The final decision as to the incapacity for payment will rest with the authorities, but we believe that the judgment of the people will have its full weight.

#### HONOUR OF A SATYAGRAHI

By their courage the people of Kaira have drawn the attention of the whole of India. During the last six months they have had full taste of the fruits of observing





truth, fearlessness, unity, determination and self-sacrifice. We hope that they will still further cultivate these great qualities, will move forward in the path of progress, and shed lustre on the name of the Motherland. It is our firm belief that the people of Kaira have truly served their own cause, as well as the cause of Swaraj and the Empire.

May God bless you.

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### THE LAST PHASE

*The Satyagraha Campaign in Kaira was thus practically over. Several meetings were held, some to greet the Satyagrahis released from jail, some to celebrate the victory of the campaign and several more to do honour to Mr. Gandhi for his wise and courageous lead. At the meeting of the 27th July at Nadiad, Mr. Gandhi thus welcomed those who were released from the jail:—*

We stand on the threshold of a twilight—whether morning or evening twilight we know not. One is followed by the night, the other heralds the dawn. If we want to see the dawning day after the twilight and not the mournful night, it behoves every one of us who are Home Rulers to realise the truth at this juncture, to stand for it against any odds and to preach and practise it at any cost unflinchingly. Only will the correct practice of truth entitle them to the name of Home Rulers.

*It happened that some one who preceded had said in the course of his speech that he was the disciple of Mr. Pandya who, in turn, was the disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Almost the whole of Mr. Gandhi's address was in answer to this statement. He said:—*

As the fate would have it, it happens that with my longer stay and increasing familiarity in India, the unen-