

THE
COLLECTED
WORKS
OF
MAHATMA
GANDHI

VOLUME FOURTEEN



THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

THE
COLLECTED
WORKS
OF
MAHATMA
GANDHI

XIV
(1917-1918)

CW/MIG - XIV



105. LETTER TO COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN DIVISION¹

SABARMATI,
February 7, 1918

F. G. PRATT, ESQ.
AHMEDABAD

I have read some of the notices issued over the signature of the Mamlatdar of Kapadvanj. One notice threatens confiscation if land revenue is not paid before the 11th of January. I have seen several of the people on whom this notice was served. They appear to me to be respectable gentlemen. Their objection is one of principle. Many of these people are holding lands on special tenure. I feel certain that, whatever the Government's final decision, the Government would not wish to take steps which can only leave bitterness behind. I have seen another notice issued by this Mamlatdar. In this an expression *dandai* has been used in regard to highly respected landowners. This word can only mean "scoundrel", and I must say that such language is unbecoming and unnecessarily painful in such a context.²

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

106. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS³

February 8, 1918

You should address a letter to the mill-owners about your grievances. We do not want any bitterness to grow between the two

¹ On his return to Sabarmati Ashram on February 6, Gandhiji was shown copies of notices and circulars issued by the Mamlatdars and the Collector. *Vide* also "Letter to Commissioner, Northern Division", after February 10, 1918.

² To this, the Commissioner replied, on February 10, as follows: "The penalty for failure to pay up land revenue has been clearly set out in the Land Revenue Code. Nothing has been done against the law, nothing will be done against the law. I cannot understand, therefore, why you say that steps which have been taken in accordance with the law are steps which are irritating and must increase bitterness."

³ Gandhiji had gone to Bombay in connection with the Kheda situation. There he met Ambalal Sarabhai, the Ahmedabad mill-owner, who told him of the discontent among mill-hands over the issue of bonus. Sarabhai requested Gandhiji to intervene. Gandhiji went to Ahmedabad and studied the problem first-hand. The workers apprehended great hardship from an abrupt stoppage of the plague bonus and were demanding a dearness increase of 50 per cent in its place. This was, perhaps, the first meeting of mill-hands that Gandhiji addressed.

parties. We cannot all at once demand an increase of 50 to 60 per cent. We shall appeal to them with due firmness. If, despite that, they do not agree, we will have five persons nominated by each side and accept their decision. It will be binding on both sides. They are sure to consider our reasonable demands. They, too, are Indians, like us and there is no reason, therefore, to give up hope. You should follow the path of justice and seek a solution without bitterness. This will make your case all the stronger. Anasuyabehn lives only for you. With increased earnings as demanded by you, you should learn to be clean, should get rid of your various addictions and see that your children get education. Place your just demands before your employers without fear. I want to help you in all this as much as I can.

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 17-2-1918

107. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MRS. JINARAJADAS¹*

[SABARMATI,
Before *February 10, 1918*]

The sentence about Mrs. Gandhi's signature in English was unhappily worded. The complete thought has not been given in it. Mrs. Gandhi is not educated in any sense of the term. She can hardly read and write Gujarati. That she cannot even sign her name in English was intended to convey to those who prize English education the full measure of Mrs. Gandhi's unfitness to become a member of an association whose members are scholars, either in their own language or in English.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

¹ The letter was Gandhiji's rejoinder to the addressee's gentle rebuke for his letter to her dated February 2; *vide* p. 181.