

THE  
COLLECTED  
WORKS  
OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

VOLUME FOURTEEN



THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

THE  
COLLECTED  
WORKS  
OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

XIV  
(1917-1918)

CW/MG - XIV



142. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 1, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 4

We have said how workers can fulfil their pledge and what they should do during the lock-out. In this leaflet we shall explain how we propose to help them. It is our duty to do this.

LET US STATE, FIRST, WHAT WE CANNOT DO :

- (1) We shall not help the workers in doing anything which is wrong.
- (2) We shall have to abandon the workers and cease helping them if they do anything wrong or make inflated demands or commit violence.
- (3) We can never wish ill to the employers; in all that we do, we are bound to consider their interests. We shall promote the workers' interest while duly safeguarding the employers'.

NOW ABOUT WHAT WE SHALL DO FOR THE WORKERS :

- (1) We are with the workers so long as they conduct themselves well, as they have done so far.
- (2) We shall do all we can to obtain for them 35 per cent increase in wages.
- (3) We are, as yet, only entreating the employers. We have not tried so far to win public sympathy or educate public opinion. But we shall be prepared, if the situation demands it, to acquaint the whole of India with the workers' plight and hope that we shall succeed in obtaining public sympathy for our cause.
- (4) We shall not rest till the workers get what they are entitled to.
- (5) We are making an effort to inform ourselves of the condition of the workers in its economic, moral and educational aspects. We shall show the workers how they may improve their economic condition; we shall strive to raise their moral level; we shall think out and teach them ways and means of living in cleanliness and we shall work for the intellectual improvement of such of them as live in ignorance.
- (6) We shall not ourselves eat or dress without providing food and clothing to such of the workers as are reduced to destitution in the course of the struggle.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following formed part of the advisers' pledge: "If in this struggle any persons are reduced to starvation and are unable to get work, we shall feed and clothe them before we feed and clothe ourselves."

(7) We shall nurse the sick among them and get for them the services of *vaid*s and doctors.

We have undertaken this task with a full sense of our responsibility. We consider the workers' demand to be entirely reasonable and it is because we believe that satisfaction of their demand will eventually serve rather than harm the employers' interests that we have taken up this cause.<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Ek Dharmayuddha*

### 143. LETTER TO SIR E. A. GAIT

SABARMATI,  
March 1, 1918

SIR E. A. GAIT<sup>2</sup>  
LT.-GOVERNOR OF BIHAR & ORISSA  
PATNA

Your kind letter of the 18th ultimo has been redirected here.<sup>3</sup> I have been wandering about in Gujarat attending to one or two rather delicate questions. Hence the delay in replying. Sir Frank Sly's version is quite correct and, as soon as the Bill becomes law, I shall endeavour to have the suits withdrawn. When we discussed the matter, we had not contemplated legalization of the agreement. Now that the enhancements are being legalized,

<sup>1</sup> Mahadev Desai in *A Righteous Struggle*, observes: "Every word contained in this leaflet was carried out literally."

<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward Albert Gait, Lt.-Governor, 1915-20

<sup>3</sup> Sir Edward Gait had written: "In connection with the legislation to carry out the recommendations of the Champaran Agrarian Committee, Messrs Norman and Hill say that a number of suits are still pending with their *rai*yats in which the *sharahbeshi* enhancement is disputed. We referred the matter to Mr. Sly, who says that the question of pending suits was discussed at the meeting between the Committee and the representative planters, and that you then agreed on behalf of the *rai*yats that such suits should be settled in accordance with the terms of the agreement, the *rai*yats no longer contesting the legality of *sharahbeshi* and paying the recorded rent in full up to *Fasli* 1325. Mr. Sly says he is sure that you will support him on this point, and, if so, I would ask you kindly to induce the *rai*yats to carry out the agreement which you made on their behalf."