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upon even to work on Sundays, should cease work after receiving due permission. The two suggestions are of universal application and take in also public servants. The third suggestion is to hold in every hamlet of India public meetings, protesting against the Rowlatt legislation and asking the Secretary of State for India to repeal that legislation. All the suggestions are designed by way of self-denial, self-discipline and education. In the fast we expect our women, our servants and everyone to join us. If you accept my humble suggestions, I hope you will carry them out in the spirit in which I have made them. You have kindly refrained from applauding, whistling or making a noisy demonstration while I have been speaking, out of regard for my health. I ask you to transfer that regard to all satyagrahis. If you will not divert your attention by applauding or crying "Shame, shame!" or "Hear, hear!", you will concentrate better on the topic before you. You will not also disturb the thought of the person speaking. I would even go so far as to suggest that in all our meetings, whether of satyagrahis or otherwise, there should not be this new-fangled demonstration. But whether you accept my advice as of universal application or no, I hope that you will accept it so far as satyagraha meetings are concerned. The only weapon before us is to rely upon truth and self-sacrifice. I hope you will always rely upon that and that alone. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me such a patient hearing. And I pray to God that He will give you strength to carry on the mission that we have undertaken.

*The Hindu, 2-4-1919*

158. *SPEECH ON CAPITAL AND LABOUR AND ROWLATT BILLS, NAGAPATAM*

*March 29, 1919*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I must once more ask forgiveness that I cannot speak standing being too weak to do so. I am sorry also that I cannot address you in beautiful Tamil. I am sorry that the majority of you do not know Hindi, to enable me to speak in the national language. I thank you for the beautiful address presented to me this afternoon and my thanks would have been still more warm if your address had been written in Tamil. You may have given me an English or Hindi translation or I would certainly have had the address translated for me. I do hope that when the next occasion arises,

no matter who the visitor may be, you will recognize the dignity of your own mother tongue.

### CAPITAL AND LABOUR

I have come here principally on the invitation of the labourers' Union. I understand, too, that the majority of this meeting are labourers. The others therefore will forgive me whilst I say a few words specially addressed to the labourers. Practically the whole of my life has been passed among labourers. I know something about labour problems. I hope I fully realize the dignity of labour. I hope, too, that those who are guiding the great labour movement in this important War will enable the labourers to appreciate the dignity of labour. Labourers are not the least important among the citizens of India. Indeed, if we include the peasantry, they form by far the vast majority. It is but a truism when I say that the future of India and for that matter of any country depends more upon the masses than upon the classes. It is therefore necessary that the labourers should recognize their own status in society. And it is necessary also that the classes who are instructors of the masses should recognize their obligations towards the masses. Also, in our own system we see many defects and it is my firm conviction that our system will not allow of the struggle for existence that is going on in the West between labour and capital. In the West, practically capital and labour are at opposite interest [*sic*]. Each distrusts the other. It was not so in ancient India, and I am glad the leaders of the labour movement here had not introduced the Western form of agitation between capital and labour. They would teach the labourers that they are in no way slaves of capital and they should hold themselves [*erect*]. There is only one occasion to be given in asking the labourers [*sic*] to understand and recognize that they, after all, are the predominant power and the predominant partners and they should recognize their strength. They should know that labour without capital is entirely useless. [They should also know that] large organizations in India would be utterly impossible without adequate capital. They should therefore recognize their obligations to capital. The labourers are going to play an important part in the future. Taking India, it is not enough that they regulate their own [Unions] in a satisfactory manner. They must therefore look beyond the concerns of their Unions. They should understand that they are after all part of the larger wholes<sup>1</sup>. It adds to their dignity when they understand

<sup>1</sup> The source has "homes".

that they are members and citizens of the Empire and if they only do so they will also tend to understand the national activities.

#### ROWLATT BILLS

Of one such activity, I propose to give a brief description this afternoon. You may know that the Government have just now embarked upon a piece of legislation which I hold and the country holds to be most hurtful to the nation. It is the duty of every one of us whether we belong to the classes, whether we are men or women, to understand this legislation that may be passed by the rulers. I hope therefore that the leaders will go amongst the masses and inform them of what this legislation is. It is but natural and necessary that the hurtful legislation should be removed. We have therefore to so act as to enable us to secure the removal of this legislation. We have held meetings all over India, we have passed resolutions and have appealed to the Viceroy to remove this legislation; but all these appeals have fallen upon deaf ears. Our governors have therefore done a double wrong, in that they are making a piece of harmful legislation and they have flouted public opinion. When people are hurt and become angry and do not believe in God, they take up arms and fight with the wrongdoers. That is the doctrine of violence. As a whole, India has not adopted that doctrine. India has therefore believed in the absolute triumph of hope [*sic*]. India has believed in God and His righteousness and therefore in our hour of trial we have depended upon God. It is part of our duty to disobey the wrongdoer when he inflicts unjust things upon us. But we must resist them in the manner Prahlad resisted [by suffering] the penalty for disobedience. So should we do in the present instance, with measures contrary to the method of violence. This is called satyagraha.

It is the doctrine of self-suffering in which there is therefore no defeat. Our countrymen in South Africa, where they were labouring, copied these examples with the results you probably know. In that movement all joined hands but the majority were the common people. There were two beautiful boys and one beautiful girl in South Africa who lost their lives for the cause of national honour. You should know their sacred names, which will be remembered from day to day so long as this struggle lasts and even after. The girl's name is Valliamma, the boys' names are Nagappan and Narayansami. They were all about 15 years old and they were drawn from the labouring classes. They did not receive liberal education nor had they read of the deeds of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*—Indian blood flowed through

their veins. The law of suffering was engraved upon their hearts and I ask everyone present here to copy the example of these two heroes and heroine. If you and I are in suffering, if our properties are taken away from us, no matter, for we preserve our dignity and national honour. You will learn more of this struggle from the leaders here. As this is purely a religious struggle we propose to make a beginning next Sunday week, the 6th day of April. I have suggested that all men, women, labourers and moneyed men and everyone who has Indian blood in him should fast for 24 hours from the last night's meal. We begin our civil disobedience and it is a purely religious movement. This fast is not a show but a sincere prayer to the Almighty that we may receive proper strength and proper wisdom in going through these struggles. I have also suggested that we should stop all business and work for that day. I hope that our merchant friends will fall in with this plan. If there are any labourers who are called upon to work on Sundays, they will cease work only if they receive permission from their masters. It is not part of civil disobedience that we should disobey our employers' just orders. We should hold meetings on that day and [reports of the] proceedings should be sent to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State to remove this objectionable legislation. It will not be an idle prayer but it is by the force of satyagraha and I assure you that if many of us approach this struggle in a proper and becoming spirit, we can have the legislation destroyed in a short space of time.

#### CONCLUSION

I thank you sincerely for inviting me to Nagapatam. I thank you also for giving me a patient hearing. I cannot find sufficient words to describe the great affection that has been showered upon me throughout the Madras Presidency. I learnt in South Africa to have boundless faith in the Indians. More than any other part of India, you have preserved the national traditions in a superior manner. You have preserved most decidedly the outward form. You have also great faith in divinity. When I look at you, my mind reminds me of our great *rishis*<sup>1</sup>. I am sure they could not have lived simpler lives, but one thing is simple [*sic*]. You have to infuse into the form, that you have so beautifully preserved, the spirit of the *rishis*. Then you will be a power in the land and you will preserve the dignity of the nation and realize her future destiny. I hope that God will give you sufficient strength for this.

*The Hindu*, 3-4-1919

<sup>1</sup> Sages