

THE  
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WORKS  
OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

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THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

THE  
COLLECTED  
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OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

XIV  
(1917-1918)

GANDHI - XIV



## 154. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

March 5, 1918<sup>1</sup>

In going to jail and defying the Government, these three sought nothing for themselves. These sisters and brothers of ours did not have to pay the tax. Cachalia was a big merchant and did not have to pay it. Hurbatsingh had migrated before the tax was imposed, so he, too, did not have to pay it. The law imposing the tax had not been brought into force at the place where Valliamah lived. And yet all these joined the struggle with the rest for the sake of the honour of Indians in South Africa. Your struggle, on the other hand, is for your own good. It should, therefore, be casier for you to remain firm. May their example strengthen you and make you resolute.

[From Gujarati]

*Ek Dharmayuddha*

## 155. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 6, 1918

### LEAFLET No. 9

Yesterday we discussed the examples of three satyagrahis; they were not the only satyagrahis in that struggle. Twenty thousand workers were out of work at a time, and the trouble was not over within twelve days. The entire struggle lasted for seven years and during that period hundreds of men lived under great suspense and anxiety and stuck to their resolve. Twenty thousand workers lived homeless and without wages for three months. Many sold whatever goods they had. They left their huts, sold their beds and mattresses and cattle and marched forth. Hundreds of them marched 20 miles a day for several days, each getting on only on  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of flour and an ounce of sugar. There were Muslims as well as Hindus among them. One of them is the son of the Muezzin of the Jumma Masjid of Bombay. His name is Imam Saheb Abdul Kadir Bawazeer<sup>2</sup>. He who had never suffered

<sup>1</sup> The remarks evidently refer to leaflet No. 8, and were made on this date.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Vol. X, pp. 158 & 161.

any hardship before endured the rigours of jail life, labouring, during his terms of imprisonment, on cleaning roads, breaking stones, etc., and for months lived on tasteless and simple food. At present he has not a pie with him. The same is true of Dadamiya Kaji of Surat. Two seventeen-year-old youngsters from Madras, Narayansamy<sup>1</sup> and Nagappen suffered to the utmost and sacrificed their lives, but did not give in. In this same struggle, we may note, women who had never done any manual work before went round hawking and laboured as washerwomen in jails.

Remembering these examples, will any worker among us not be prepared to suffer some inconvenience to keep his pledge?

In the leaflets issued by the employers, we find that, in their anger, they have said many unworthy things; many things have been exaggerated, maybe unintentionally, and a few twisted. We may not meet anger with anger. It does not seem right even to correct the mis-statements in them. It is enough to say that we should not allow ourselves either to be misled or provoked by such statements. If the allegations made against the advisers of the workers are true, merely contradicting them here will not prove them false. We know that they are untrue but, rather than attempt to prove them so here, we shall rely on our future behaviour to furnish the proof.

Tomorrow we shall say something which has a bearing on this point.

[From Gujarati]

*Ek Dharmayuddha*

## 156. LETTER TO MILLIE GRAHAM POLAK

SABARMATI,  
March 6, 1918

DEAR MILLIE<sup>2</sup>,

I am here attending to the Kheda trouble as also a big strike. My passive resistance is therefore beginning to have full play in all the departments of life. These two things detain me in Ahmedabad. I am sending Henry some papers about it directly.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Vol. XII, pp. 390, 446, 447 & 486-7.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of H. S. L. Polak