

Professor Puran Singh's OPEN LETTER TO SIR JOHN SIMON

in 1928

Foretold the Fate of Minorities and Have-nots After the End of British Rule Over India

Professor Puran Singh (1881-9131), a distinguished Sikh of the twentieth century, was a versatile man – a thinker, author, philosopher, poet, farmer and scientist. He is the father of open verse poetry in Punjabi and one of Punjab's most popular poets. Puran Singh wrote prose and poetry both in Punjabi and English. I am deeply impressed by his insightful and thought provoking commentaries on Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat). In contrast to modern Sikh academics and theologians, he realized the essence of Nanakian philosophy enshrined in Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) during the age when Sikhism was camouflaged in Brahminical colors. He warned scholars and writers against misinterpretation and distortion of Gurmat and the Sikh movement.

The words Brhman (Brahm) and Para-Brahm also come in Guru Granth, but as Cunningham says "by way of illustration only". Similarly the names of all gods and goddesses of Brahminical Pantheon.

(Spirit of the Sikhs, Part II, Vol. II, p. 75.)

It is to be regretted that Sikh and Hindu scholars are interpreting Guru Nanak in the futile terms of the colour he used, the brush he took; are analysing the skin and flesh of his words and dissecting texts to find the Guru's meaning to be same as of the Vedas and Upanishads! This indicates enslavement to the power of Brahminical tradition. Dead words are used to interpret the fire of the Master's souls! The results are always grotesque and clumsy translations, which have no meaning at all. Macauliffe's almost schoolboy-like literal rendering into English, following possibly the interpretations given him by the Brahminical type of gyanis, the unilluminated theologians who lacked both the fire of inspiration, and the modern mental equipment and who were decayed and eaten up by the inner fungus of the Brahminical mentality, has made the live faith of the Sikh a dead

carcase. It has produced neither the beautiful artistic color of the idol and the shrine, nor the fervour of the inspiration of love. And from his translators, one thinks Sikhism is weak Brahminism. Much that is redundant is put before a world-audience, without the light that made every straw and every little dust particle, every pretty detail even, radiant and beautiful. The purple cloud in the sky thrown by nature behind the green trembling branches of a high *sheeshum* tree, like wings of a huge bird shaking drops of water away, makes of the little tree on earth more a dream of beauty than merely a tree! If however, the cloud is not there and the rainy season of hot months is not on, it is but a tree, all the charm surrounding it is gone. Beauty when deprived of its vital redundancies seems to loose its very soul.

The Master who has attracted a whole people, men, women and children, and has poured his love and song into their souls; the Master round whom they still go in endless worship is seated there amidst them in their souls. The Guru is the very pole-star with a whole number of stars of the Sikh life going round him. And the people still sing and have been singing in maddening rhythm of soul for centuries now—the Name of Guru Nanak. Ignoring this living spectacle of four centuries and more, the pedestrian scholar closes himself in his room and interprets these songs of the people by the aid of Sanskrit lexicons and English dictionaries! It is the personal passion for the Guru, it is the infinite self-sacrifice of man invoked by his inspiration of love, which truly can interpret the Guru's songs. Music of life can have no meaning to one aches not to it. Mere thinking is an obstacle: the devotees cross all frontiers to meet Him.

(*Spirit of the Sikhs*, Part II, Vol. II, p. 271.)

This erudite and leading light also experimented with commercial farming and worked as an agriculture industrial chemist. Moreover, he was a vigorous and forceful advocate of the human rights of the downtrodden. Unlike armchair intellectuals, he was fully conscious of the political scene of contemporary India. Puran Singh was deeply troubled by the machinations of political leaders who were maneuvering to grab power after the departure of the British. He openly expressed his deep concern for the fate of minorities and have-nots after the end of British rule over India, in a letter he wrote to Sir John Simon in 1928. I am honored and delighted to share the thoughts of this great genius with the readers of *SikhSpectrum*.

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Dear Sir John Simon

The Indian situation is indeed very complex and baffles all kinds of genius to find a royal road to India's freedom. It may not be out of place at this stage when changes in the Constitution are under contemplation to write to you a few thoughts that occur to me, one of the *ryot* (peasant). They may be of no direct help to you, but I am sure they would reveal a bit of the mind of an Indian, who is in the thick of all the mental confusions and naturally reads more of the minds of his people than any foreigner can.

I see the boycott of your Commission is already getting weak. The most ardent boycotters have published their proposed Constitution. Thus they have put their views indirectly before you. It appears to me even if they had boycotted you completely as they intended, this temporary loss of temper on their part could have been treated, but as trivial. Let me say frankly there is no ghost of a chance of a successful revolution in India at least at the call of these intellectuals. If it could come at their call, it is certainly overdue because in the verity of things, there is nothing like freedom. In reality, there are many sudden turns in the affairs of men, and your countrymen are also afraid of a possible revolution, of course till it does not actually come. An armed revolt being out of question, I know, between you and them, there will be much of the usual give and take, a lot of crossing of t's and dotting of i's. This business of writing a lot of Constitution by Pundit Moti Lal Nehru or yourself is of little interest to us poor farmers of India. And why?



Puran Singh

The Witches' Cauldron

When things descend to melancholy, details of daily life and to the carrying out of these fine Constitutions in the spirit of practical sympathy, there is very little man material in India which can be singled out truly as cultured and rightly trained to deserve the title "Indian", which means one who, like a Japanese or an Englishman, will place before himself the interest of the country as a whole, first and foremost, and who would burn with a passion of its service. There are Hindus, Sikhs, Moslems, Christians, Parsis and Jains in India but very few Indians. And strange as it may sound, it is quite true that those who have removed those labels are empty bottles, without having any character of wine, of acid, or of poison. They are of no account, because, for centuries, in India the formation of character has been associated, not with the practice of broad-minded patriotism, but with certain racial prejudices and social superstitions. It is, therefore, not extricable from the so-called religious bias and bigotry. Self Government in India means Government by the very few cunning and aggressive people who, once put in possession of the authority, would twist all letters of law and constitutions to their individual wills and make them work on the communal or the so called religious bias.

The Moslem does not believe in any country as his own. He believes in a brotherhood, which, by its sheer number, must conquer the whole world. To him, political advancement of the Moslem brotherhood is his real progress. From a racial point of view, this Moslem outlook is worthy of praise, and such a community of people, unless forced by compelling circumstances, forever refuse to live under any alien domination. The Moslem essentially desires to rule over the world and, even his children dream of pan-Islamic Asiatic Empire.

The interest of Moslem in India cannot be national in the sense that the national Congress of the Hindu intellectuals so far has been declaring to mean. Men of exceptional outlooks can be found in the races, and in India's Moslems also. To get such exceptions together at Lucknow and find agreements merely on the surface of things in certain wordings of a few formal resolutions to agree to the Nehru Committee's Draft, is to me a ludicrous unreality of the so-called history-making announcements.

I was going to say it is indulgence of the Indian intellectuals in happy phrases when the country is slowly and surely going from bad to worse. For the reason given, which is in the very constitution of the Moslem mentality, he can come to no terms with the Hindu

but those that give him the domination and advantage over the Hindu and all other low-lying communities living in India. Any compromise arrived at would collapse as soon as the Moslem finds out that it is not to his interest and he would be thereby put merely in a position of disadvantage. Agreements bought at such a price are not worth the paper on which they are written. Surely, the Nehru Report is not founded on true patriotism or true nationalism in which the individual community merges into the larger nation with a flaming passion.

Come to the Hindu. He is the implacable but cowardly foe of the Moslem. He does not trust him and in the heart of his heart, he considers him filthy, cow eating, treacherous, barbarous, one capable of any tyranny, rapine, plunder and cruelty. Even the touch of a Moslem pollutes his food! The Hindu believes his own culture and caste superior to all other human institutions. He alone is pure. For this very attitude, in him also, there can be no genuine feeling akin to that noble patriotism which shapes the destinies of nations to their freedom and progress in the West.

Thus there are two distinct mentalities at dagger's drawn, in spite of professing friendship and political union and social amities. One is aggressive, self assertive, revengeful mentality of a united people of one religion, one-creed, one caste, with a dream of an empire driving them onward. The other is the self-centered bias of highly conservative, non-progressive, over-individualized, indifferent, disunited, dollar-loving people who have consented to be slaves for centuries. The Hindu is still referring, for orders, to his old scriptures from where no more orders come. He cannot raise the marriage-able age of the girl. He cannot remarry his child widow. He cannot give up caste and superstitions. He is hopelessly bound with the past, somewhat like the Russian peasant tied to the superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church. This eternal difference between the Hindu and the Moslem is seen by Dr. James Cousins even up to the method of wearing the Hindu dhoti and the Moslem trousers.

TANSEN —

It is, your majesty,

And it would be a song most pitiful

That Akbar's legs were traitors to his feet,

And after these long miles of journeying

Flaunted discovery. An hour ago

I died to Islam and was born a Hindu
But you are struck halfway from life to life
Loins downward shamelessly a *Mussalman*.

AKBAR —

I have seen Hindu trousered.

TANSEN —

Very true,
But there is something deeper than the fact
That has escaped you. Take a pair of trousers
From Muslim's legs and put them on a Hindu's
And they will seem alike aliens of the race.
Aye, perverts from the faith. No, no too much
Hangs from your waist to risk. Here take this cloth
And reincarnate quickly.

AKBAR —

If my limbs
Could ape the Hindu as glibly as your tongue
Takes on his language. I far more would fear
To lose myself in that which we assume,
Than be unmasked, and so I rather choose

To don the Hindu than to slough the Muslim.

And being both be either at the need.

(He has put on a Hindu dhoti or skirt).

TANSEN—

"Well, well the risk at least is covered up."

—*The King's Wife*

Then there are Sikhs, for example, amongst many important newly created nations. And each of these minorities is pulling in its own way because each one believes in a new inspiration and a new life that it wishes to save by cutting itself from the Hindu stock. If the mother-stock shoots up, the beauty and life of the new graft will go. For example, the Sikh believes in the inspirations of the Ten Gurus. His past begins from Guru Nanak and his future lies in the progress of his ideals. His masters did cut off a portion from the dead stock of Hindus and infuse a new life into it. They isolated the Sikhs from the disintegrating people called the Hindus who are self-hypnotized slaves of the peculiar theological tyranny of complex intrigue of Brahmanism.

The Sikh Gurus molded a fine strong nation out of the terror-stricken masses. All historians admit the worth of this great experiment of the Gurus and appreciate how Guru Gobind Singh infused a spirit similar to the Bushido Spirit of the Japanese into his Sikhs. The Guru isolated them from dead mass around. The Sikh keeps long hair, wears a sword; However ridiculous these signs may appear to the modern, considered under the local social conditions of India and the environmental context, they are fruits of an act of genius which has concealed the new life of a whole nation under such trivial-things-the knot of hair and beard-as nature conceals the lightning spark in the soft wool of clouds. Hindus have seen that this process is against them. The Guru has declared the Hindu dead as long as he does not join his Khalsa for his emancipation. The Hindu cannot tolerate such experimental condemnations of his caste and religion as the Guru makes by the very reactivity of his fresh inspiration on the masses of the Punjab.

The Hindu turned down Buddhism in the past and is thinking of devouring Sikhism, because both systems condemn the Hindu tyranny of caste masquerading as religion of love. A few straws show which way the wind blows. Mahatma Gandhi preaches against keeping of hair. He denounces those Sikh shouts of conquests as communal as against national, with which they battered the Mughal tyranny and became a free nation. The Sikh will die if he cuts his hair and assumes the Hindu shape. The patronizing attitude

which the Nehru Constitution adopts towards the Sikhs is the policy of the Hindu Congress to include the Sikhs in the Hindus.

Dear Sir John Simon! There yonder are the witches who have put their cauldron on fire. And these matters cannot be settled till the witches' cauldron boils and incantations are murmured. Vapors rise and in them there are acting and reacting upon each other the communal tensions and inflammable prejudices.

You might have already seen the scene of the *Walpurgis Night of Goeth's Faust* in India. There is some fearsome conspiracy against the poor people who till the soil. What can be done by you or any one to help them? The Biblical truth that thy enemies shall be of thy own household appears to be true of the Indian intellectuals, who deceive themselves in imaginings that they are the saviors of the poor, people-Saviors with what? They but organize an empty handed protest and noise of wayward meeting on the mob against the British.

A Few Imaginings

Let me indulge, while face to face with the witches, in some imaginings, if perhaps, some stray flight of the flying horse of the Arabian Nights might take me and you out of this ghostly darkness. Ah! could nature send its bolt from the blue and break this huge peninsula into small little islands! Ah! could the Engineer divide it by many a Panama Canal. Failing this geographical division, could India be cut up and divided a new to make more harmonious Presidencies with the population of the Hindu with his various castes that in practical life from many small nations is themselves, and the Moslem, equally balanced in the practical exercise of political power that the British might give them out of their great mercy for fallen nations !!

I put it down merely for making the impossible possible. Suppose, as one of the suggestions, Gujrat, Kathiawar, a portion of C.P., the Sind, the Punjab and the North Western Frontier are made into one Presidency, a portion of Bombay goes with Madras as a second Presidency and the half of Madras is lumped up with Bengal as the third, Bihar and U.P. and a portion of C.P. constitutes the fourth Presidency.

The Hindus in this division of India can be treated as many diverse communities. Because the differences between the Brahman and Non-Brahman are as acute as between the Hindu and the Moslem, between the Hindu and the Sikh. And these new Harmony Presidencies of India could be conveniently sub-divided into small independent States

governed by one Presidency Legislative council and one Governor. To give the latter to small Provinces would be ruinously costly. On the other hand to have large Harmony Presidencies would be too unwieldy for administration of justice, etc., if they are not cut up into small autonomous States. This administrative cutting up of India would set in process for the development of India into the future independent States of Asia. You are asked to hand India over to us by the Nehru Committee. Failing the re-division of India into New Harmony Presidencies, it would be a much better feat of far-sighted statesmanship to hand it over to a benevolent dictatorship of some kind.

Perhaps you will say I am wasting your time; but I assure you, you and your friends will be equally wasting your time if you, only as constitutional lawyers, sitting down like Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and the men of his mind, write Constitutions for this India where the witches' cauldron is boiling and *Walpurgis night* is on. Any Constitution coming in here like this essentially means the domination of one community over all others, which must be kept in a permanent state of suspended animation. All progress under such Constitutions shall be one-communal and not multi-communal. It would no more be dyarchy but it would be a form of civil anarchy in administration run by an autocratic and communal majority. The herd and its vote does not really matter. The whole District is run by a few officers. They are not chosen by the people. They are the real autocrats. And if the services are corrupted by communal bias, it is the more powerful community that shall drive the others in practical details of administration. The Hindu if he is in the chair would tease the Moslem mass and if the Moslem is in authority he would injure the Hindu mass. Votes for electing a truly representative Legislative body under such conditions of communal tension in securing the monopoly of authority under any such system as adumbrated by the Nehru Committee shall, for all times, be wholly impotent and ineffective in maintaining the morale of the public services. The adult franchise is but the herd vote.

By giving the Monford Reforms you took away all the *noblesse oblige* of the "Steel frame" services, which did work like irresponsible autocrats but in a spirit in which there are some odour of benevolence. After the Reforms, India has become no one's land, the cost of administration has gone up and the spirit of the services demoralized. The past cannot be brought back and the future cannot be assured, neither as you might wish nor as they might desire. It has become no one's business for example, to *look after the costs of the Government*.

You have tried for the last hundred years to teach us and to make us into a free nation as you say, but, unlike Afghans who are much less civilized than ourselves, in spite of your intentions, we, as a people, are but a set of women who can just dangle their bangles on their wrists and pose beautiful. America threw your tea into the sea and Washington led and then was the Constitution drafted. One can understand Abraham Lincoln proclaiming from the housetops his grand political maxim—*the Government of the people, by the people, for the people*. That was some culture, some education, which grew restless and effectively restless for its freedom. But a trained statesman must laugh in his sleeves at

the impotence of men like Gandhi and Moti Lal Nehru, who wish to be Abraham Lincoln of India without the substance which entitles the people on this earth with human nature as constituted, to liberty. I have said you have tried a hundred years to educate us and look at this great and disappointing intellectual disaster. There is not one Amanullah in this whole country of India, there is not one Kamal Pasha. This fundamental problem of education, which you also have taken into your hands, is such as cannot be solved by *systems but by men*.

If you really wish to lead India to independence or Dominion status, which practically means independence with an empty and courteous bow to England, I say, do not give the poor people of India, Constitutions that do not define their rights. Let all these things come later, but give us say a real Dictator to train at least one province, say the Punjab, at the cost of the whole of India and make it really *independent* and see incidentally with what sport other provinces bear this wonderful concentration for the sake of the uplift of their brothers of blood for the Punjab. So far, either you have not done your best to educate us or you are unfit to organize nations to freedom. You must confess either unwillingness to make us men, free men, or the utter incompetence of your system and men as you have so far given us. The education our Universities are giving is the imitation of that luxurious academic training which you give to your youths to enable them to run the Empire and its Embassies. Of what use is it to us? Afghans have arsenals, aeroplanes, but we are rendered so impotent that our youths cannot earn their livings !! We get mere crumbs that fall from the Olympian Tables. All, in India, must overwork to death to have one meal a day or die of starvation. We the farmers are crushed under steel heels.

A Bit of Brutal Frankness

Coming to practical problems which I am afraid the more you think about, the more theoretical and unpractical they grow, you would see some great minds become mad while thinking of India. The sign of madness is that they go on preaching but one fad. You must agree with me that if we were a people and we had any power or if we were less civilized and more manly with some ground under our feet, you would not have entered our house and said: "Now boys be quiet, we run your home for your good." You must admit that your proclamations are only political speeches which mean very little, because if you really wanted, you would have by these hundred years and more made us men fit for self-government. As I have already pointed out, if this is not correct then you as a nation are hopelessly unfit for organizing people to their political freedom. Hence we think you only know how to run the Government and utilize the country in your own ways for your own good. Whatever may be the case, our suspicion is that you did not and perhaps do not mean to help us to freedom.

On your side, there are suspicions against us. If you arm us, we may revolt and be free. Of course if you had meant to give us independence you might have taken that risk. But you did not and naturally you would not.

The general man strength of this country is getting low every day in various ways. Defective education, slow and systematic economic drain, and want of opportunity for our being made armed soldiers for the defense of this country are a few amongst many. Dadabhai Naroojee and William Digby say that India is being bled white. Lord Curzon supports them in the contention that India is the poorest country in the world. Imagine, if this country belonged to you in another sense, you would have secured long ago her economic independence. That indeed must be your first concern even if for doing it, you have to make India an English colony like Australia. Why has Australia grown into a power in such a short time? The Indian thinkers should have given up their case for her political independence even in their "class rooms" of these mockeries of Legislative Assemblies, had they not come to the grim conclusion that because of our being helpless dependents, ground by your system of drainage of our wealth and consequently of strength, we cannot possibly secure our economic independence till we get rid of you.

It is the irony of the fate that there may be prosperity in our budgets and in the trade statistics, but the masses are growing weaker and weaker for want of food. We the tillers of the soil are famishing. Millions there are who scarcely get one full meal a day. They are good soil for the growth of plague germs, malarial parasites, *kala bazar* and consumption. Man and woman material is fast decaying. This is the fundamental indictment against your policy of drift. Closely connected with this policy is the academic knowledge being imparted to the youths of the country by our Universities. This knowledge falsely stimulates the intellects. The stimulated intellect wishes to surround itself with higher standards of life than the productive capacity of the county can permit or its undeveloped resources can afford. What is that strange system that does not change for the good of the people, aye for keeping them alive? As I will show later, this has given birth to an artificial prosperous middle class in the country mainly made up of the variety of the Government services. I, therefore, appeal to you to realize this situation as it is in reality, and do something substantial to avert this disaster. What use indeed are those ponderous unwieldy Royal Commissions on Industry and Agriculture that came and went. You will see that the Agricultural Commission has clearly left the problem as it was. Their conclusions and suggestions are mere more yawns of an exhausted listener who has been made to hear so much volume of vague and vaporous opinions. It was not necessary that they should have come all the way and gone through all that travail to tell His Excellency the Viceroy of India that the Economic condition of Indian farmer needs immediate looking after. The Commission on Industries came to the ridiculous conclusions of two more Imperial Services! You must admit that this is not how living

nations are doing their business of development now, nor how the Japanese would tackle a life and death problem like this.

Provision of cheap and good food to the millions of Indian farmers is more important than the declaration of the rights of the people. Much is being side shunted for purposes of political show? Allow me to put a little suggestion here. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, thinks that we men should spin like women and he repeats the gospels of khaddar, as I have said, like genius gone mad when thinking on the complex problem of Indian freedom. Thus he wishes to give useful employment to the farmers to clothe themselves, but what use is clothing of men who are starving and have no strength for any extra employment? Why is the dairy industry dying all over? It is a preeminently agricultural occupation. There are no pastures provided. For example, Government sells land in Punjab colonies by auction to raise as much money as possible. This is helping the capitalist and killing the farmer. No lands have been reserved by the Government as open pastures for each village. Consequently it has become uneconomical to keep herds of milch cattle. This had led the farmer to adulterate his ghee with hydrogenised oils. If people could be helped by grants of large tracts of lands as pastures all over India, the home industry of ghee making would pay better than khaddar. They would have plenty of milk to drink. It is better to go nude but well fed. When they are well fed, khaddar making certainly can be additional advantage and the women folk could spin like old Eve, and the poor masses could again throw up some coppice of life.

The very foundation of the society and the Government, *the Indian tiller* is being sapped. The permanent settlement system in Bengal has worked havoc. The Taluqdars of Oudh and the United Provinces are a kind of ransacking "permanent settlement of Bengal." The taluqdars are the middlemen between the tillers and the Government. They overtax them and overwork them. Practically the middle class which, should be consisting of the tillers and the farmers in this most agricultural country in the world, as we happily yet a little in the Punjab, has practically disappeared in Bengal, in Bihar, and in the United Provinces. I am afraid it is also fast disappearing from the Punjab. Consciously or unconsciously the Government has helped the rise of men of the type of the late Sir Ganga Ram in the Punjab, who are engines of destruction of the real middle class of wealth-creative laborers who form the back bone of all nations of the world. And why have such men made millions? Because the government is so hopelessly devoid of true experts. The experts of the Government gaped like wax toys in utter astonishment finding men like Sir Ganga Ram succeeding lift irrigation, which they had not even imagined as profitable.

Thus, when the flood is weeping on the very foundation of the Government and society, the farmer and the tiller of soil, will you sit to define the rights of the people or first save them from death?

The economic condition of the Indian farmer can be improved by the future Indian *Constitution siding with the farmers and the tillers of soil and not with the capitalistic combines and influences working in India or in England*. Real improvements in Indian agriculture would come through the Constitutions and special Legislations and not through the so-called agricultural experts till the economic condition of the farmer goes up to a certain standard. The Agricultural expert is of very little use to them. The application of modern agricultural knowledge which, is so far advanced and has become popular knowledge in other countries is matter of propaganda for a long time yet in India. This propaganda reaches home through commercial concerns better than through these huge and luxurious Imperial departments of the Government of India. The very first thing is to abolish the Imperial Science Services and reorganize the Scientific Research. The Government Services should be reduced and expenditure on the remaining few and essential few must be cut down to very minimum. The Japanese Prime Minister is getting less pay than that of an ordinary Deputy Commissioner of India!

All salaries of the Government services form a part of the general plunder of the farmer and tiller on whom the only addition to services, the class of lawyers, the government contractors and suppliers should be considered parasites living on the revenues on the country. As said above, the Government servants and this class of people constitute an artificial middle class in India who keep up a show of prosperity. They are consumers of wealth and not the producers thereof. All the firework of prosperity is being displayed at the grim cost of the farmer's body and soul. A contractor who may not be able to earn by his own power even one hundred a month does manage by some fluke to make hundreds of thousands from the Government. The Government muddles up things when they find themselves being looted in broad daylight. For example, they start stores purchase department, not knowing that this service would add another middleman to the numerous middlemen between the Government and the manufacturers. So any remedy made out by the Government is generally worse than the disease. The Government is run on files are mostly very clean and well written! All is well with the files, but the broad daylight waste is rampant.

Again the centralization of all commercial concerns -- the Railways, forests, store purchase, construction, buildings, and roads -- as Imperial services and departments is hopelessly costly and inefficient. The bulkiness of the country and its requirements needed splitting up of work, giving commercial concerns to commercial people or to public companies. Failing to find English and Indian experts commercial boards of international experts of all nations can be asked to come in and run these concerns in a pure business like way. The policy of not bringing in foreign experts whenever required apparently either for political reasons or for reasons of jealousy to provide high billets only to Englishmen, tends to inefficiency that can never be found out by any Government however well meaning and anxious for the welfare of the people. But there is something rotten in the State of Denmark. These very countrymen of yours manage things so well,

say in Australia. One is driven to the conclusion -- split up India, reduce the cost of administration, and increase the efficiency of the men who work in the systems. Ring out policy of false prestige and waste and ring the Policy of Honest Work for the uplift and development of the people. The greater the number of Government services, the more costly and less efficient the general administration. The hugeness of office work takes away the genius of Government for the efficient management of the State affairs. To use a military metaphor, the present Government of India with its variety of Services is like the army in the trenches without the general staff behind. The Government looks like an emergency Government, even in times of peace. The Government shows huge profits of these departments, but never considers at what comparative cost. It is wrong to be satisfied with the declared profits. Can those profits be made still more and at a very much less cost? Could not the land-tax be decreased and the tillers of soil given relief. What is the meaning of policy that makes profits and spends on the consuming and unproductive artificial middle class?

In commercial departments, to lend the security and prestige of the Government service leads to excessive corruption as in the case of railways and to neglect of duty and general inefficiency as in the case of the so-called Research Departments in India. Scientific research should never be departmental. It should be surrounded by the whole world's critical atmosphere where no third class mediocre be able to breathe. To make Imperial Departments of science and scientific inquiry is immoral, considering that no Government can well criticize its experts. Research should be handed over to the Universities. The Universities should not be merely examining bodies as they are at present in India but great cultural world-centers. They should be not Indian but International in the greatness of their teachers and in the quality of their work done by their laboratories and their luminaries. The staff should rise or fall by their international reputation. The merest tyros are put in charge of the Research Departments.

My plea is that you should define in the new Constitution the real and limited function of the Government. Running business concerns, as Imperial Departments should be discouraged. Scientific Research, as said above, of India should be under the Universities of fame, under the governance of men whose reputation for honest, scientific work is beyond doubt. What use is any Scientific Council of Government officials? The great men can bear no yoke. It is men of true scientific independence and of the unbiased scientific mind that shall control research. Surely not the mere file-makers and Imperialistic experts.

The Proposed Remedies

I have pointed out what occurs to me as fundamentally wrong in the Constitution of the people and the Institutions of the Government of India. I have drawn your attention to the economic condition of the people who are the backbone of the Government and how the Government unnecessarily feeds its huge bulky and inefficient services at the cost of the *ryot*. There is the false glitter of an artificial middle class in India, which of Government servants and parasites.

What are the remedies then? It is for you to find them out and not end as did the Industrial and Agricultural Commissions.

Let us look at the remedies proposed by more brainy people than myself. The remedy proposed by Gandhi is "*khaddar*, non-violent non-co-operation and eventually civil disobedience." He, too, however has seen the scene of Walpurgis night in India. The witches on the heath are against him. In India alone you have mob-war on the Sikh-made mutton and the Muslim-made mutton, on music before the mosque, on the killing of cows! They are the ephemeral vapors of the witches' cauldron. The impossible condition attached with Gandhi's remedy is self-sacrifice without an end. All self-sacrifice in political matters is for the gain of political ends. When these advantages are never in sight, self-sacrifice in such matters can never become the religion of the people. Gandhi wishes to make the politics of India some such religion, which can only be the impossible religion of a few Christ-like men, and of the minds who, can never stoop down from those heights.

And the Nehru draft. The Hindu has bowed down to the wind. It is ushering in of civil anarchy in which the one community wins the head and all others lose the tail. In fact the Muslim has floored the Hindu by creating a Kohat and a Lahore for him. Mahatma Gandhi and others all say as India is not homogeneous for there is the Muslim, this is the best compromise under the critical local conditions.

Supposing you were to go and leave the country there would set in an anarchy, in which all communities will have an equal opportunity to fight to any fate of freedom or eternal slavery. And the Hindu-Sanskrit culture and intelligence will be put again to a military test. One Khilji did walk over from Delhi to Cape Comorin with a few armed soldiers unopposed by the Hindu millions. He who occupied the Punjab occupied the whole of India with one pitched battle near Delhi or Agra. This is the history of the Hindu's defense of his country and himself. The same is the case today. He who governs the Punjab governs the whole of India. In the Nehru Constitution, the Muslim has completely defeated the Hindu. The great anarchy, creative of equal opportunities for all and the victory of one community over all others, is not to come but this incipient consumption-like civil anarchy is welcomed in the Nehru Constitution by all kinds of men! It shows how in their zeal for mere tall talks on national work they are blind to the practical effects of their proposals on the governed masses. If it is not the collapse of the Hindu, on what principle, by the way, should Sindh be separated from an advanced province like Bombay and made into a backward pure Muslim province? And why should the Sindhi merchants,

mostly Sikh and Hindu, who trade all over the world be compelled to agree to it for the sake of the Nehru draft and an academics agreement? If that principle is granted why should not the Central Punjab be made into a Sikh Province? Because the Majha and Malwa Sikhs have so far not created a Kohat and a Multan, what else? The Nehru Committee has ignored the Sikh because he is not as many in numbers as the Muslim. But conquerors like Ahmad Shah acknowledged the Sikh as the only entity in the Punjab. Perhaps it was Nadir Shah who remarked "from this Nation comes the odor of Sovereignty."

The English commanders, one after the other have spoken in glowing terms of the outstanding bravery, chivalry, and the upright character of the Sikh soldier. The present Commander-in-Chief in India once remarked that he would trust his wife and daughter for their safety to a Sikh soldier. And it is in the Punjab that the Misals of the Sikhs were formed. A Sikh chief would throw his saddle in a village or a town and thenceforth it will be his private estate. The Punjabi Hindu could not oppose the Sikh saddle. Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Punjab was never a Muslim province but a Sikh province. The Muslim ministers of the Maharaja remained faithful to the last, while the Hindu and the Brahmin ministers proved traitors. It may be remembered Maharaja Ranjit Singh the Sardar of the Sikh Misals, was invited by the Muslim choudhries of Lahore to come and be their King. Hari Singh Nalwa struck terror in the den of the lion. The Frontier Pathans still say to their crying children "Harya Ragla" "Hush, Harya has come!" How can the Nehru Committee today extinguish such a community by a stroke of the pen. Is this their Hindu fairness? Sindh must be separated because that is the Muslim demand and the Sikh is but a Hindu, ignore him. The Hindu if he were a man should have stood up for the Sikh and proposed the separation of the Central Punjab as the Sikh Province. It is all non-violent civil anarchy giving all advantages to a powerful and well-combined community who shows the mailed fist. Let me say openly if the Sikh Jats get into their heads that they can have a province to rule, they will die to a man and create many Kohats. The Sikh knows how to fight for his rights but why should such activities at all be inspired by the Nehru report?

Let us take the population basis and the adult suffrage on which the whole of the theoretical reasonableness of the Nehru Report is being preached, broadcast.

In this country, where one powerful Zamindar of Bengal has thousands of his galley slaves to sweat for him for a starving pittance, where even in the most virile Punjab, the secret of Agricultural prosperity in the most prosperous irrigated colonies is the perpetual indebtedness of the tiller who gets but the barest subsistence and works more for keeping his flesh and blood together than to earn a wage that may make life worth its joys, and is under the thumb of the moneylender, what an absolutely hypothetical value is attached in this Report to the voter as if he were an old Athenian peasant or a Roman citizen!

With the old Roman citizen, as even with the Greek peasant, the political sense was, as to say, the sixth sense. An illiterate voter would go and ask a literate citizen to write down

for him the name of his chosen candidate. He behaved as a citizen. Even then, we know how the oratory of the Anthonies and others swayed the political-minded mob. And exactly similar is the case in England and other Western countries now.

For ages, the masses of this country have been terror stricken, not only by the foreign invaders, but by the habitual and slow daily tyranny of the little Neros of India, the Indian Kings, and Zamindars and the Bankers, and have been driven like the bleating sheep that are led to the slaughter house. It is simply sickening to find such an uninformed population made as the basis of an adult vote. And when practical modern administrators of experience laugh at the schoolboy like proposals of the Nehru Committee, the ill-organized noise of the Congress Camp, utters a hooting shriek. However able these Hindu lawyers of India may be to make the purely academic debates hot and saucy in the Assembly chamber, they cut a sorry figure in practical administration. The Japanese statesman has the same poor opinion about the quality of this highly intricate Hindu intellect.

It is an open secret how an audacious A.D.C. and some of the Secretaries made the late Lord Sinha uncomfortable. I dare say a Sikh Sardar or a Moslem Zamindar of the Punjab would have known better how to sit in that chair.

What is then the significance of the Nehru report when it is vitiated by the fundamental mistake of determining power to vote by mere population and mere adult suffrage in this country where it is impossible to get an independent voter?

Mahatma Gandhi has failed to give a remedy. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru has not asked you to leave the country, as he should have done, to violent anarchy, but wishes you to set in that form of consumption which would naturally eat up the weaker communities. It would be the same thing if you agree with Nehru's draft or make yourself a similar one with a few modifications, both will be useless unless you re-divide India into four or five Harmony-Presidencies with all communal power well nigh equally balanced. If the wise acres tell you that this re-division is impossible, then no Democracy can be made to work equitably in India. Better put back the hands of clock and bring in one efficient, impartial, stern but benevolent *dictatorship*.

What Should the Englishmen Do?

So there is no remedy as far as thought devoid of fiery imagination can go penetrating the details of human affairs in India and the details that have been here for centuries as rigid

facts. I now come to what the Englishman should do under the circumstances. To be brief, if he is a Cromwell, he should frankly say not only to India but say so in the face of the nations of the world: "O, Indians! do your damndest; we will govern you as we like. Go away. On what grounds and in what way is India more specially yours than ours? Aryans conquered it, they have gone. We occupied it when you were all fighting amongst yourselves; we will occupy it as long as we can. Come. We will die to a man and govern you as best we choose." After this proclamation, he, the Cromwell, will guide the Government of India on a new basis of that benevolent and biasless autocracy of his Puritan type. Abolish all religious superstition, all social inequities and all backward tendencies of these diseased people by law put into force at the point of the bayonet. Guru Gobind Singh made a living people out of these willy-nilly Johnnies by a moral power. Let his idea be now carried out by a military power. The write of "Mother India" has written scandalously, as Gandhi says like a drain inspector. But what use is writing "Unhappy India" and "Father India" in reply? We must frankly admit all those shames are inherent in the constitution of our society and admit that we are mostly as she says. The way out of it is not any reply to her but change like the one coming over Afghanistan and Turkey. Let military law do with us what so far moral law has not been able to do.

And if he is Bentham, or a Burke, then certainly he shall make no compromise with miserable political conditions in India as the Nehru Committee has done in a most miserable way, and as they expect and wish you might follow. It is an enslaved country from centuries and all these communal conditions have come about under encouragement of one kind or another from the subtle tone of administrative machinery. Also, denominational education of Aligarh, Benares, Lahore and Amritsar has added fuel to the fire. The lure of coveted Government services and powers of municipal chairs and authority of District Boards have added to the flame. As a straight forward Englishman, bent upon doing substantial service to the people of India, in helping them to Self-Government and Independence, you must discourage all such conditions that have artificially created partialities shown at different times to one or the other community are responsible for these miseries.

Due to these partialities shown directly or indirectly the people surmise that your policy is divide and rule. You must put a stop to all this nonsense. In the new Constitution, there shall be no compromise of any kind with one community or the other. Your Constitution must afford equal opportunities to all who live under it. The truly Democratic Constitution should not allow one community to get into power and work mischief through the democratic institutions to crush the other. In the grant of your New Constitution, the right of all people should be equal in the eye of law. Public services shall not be demoralized by selection of candidates on any communal basis. No more shall English servants of the Crown take sides. Detering punishments shall be freely meted out to those who might in any way corrupt the services.

The crux of the introduction of the truly democratic Government in the country is the question of franchise and such franchise that would automatically and mechanically make the electorate non-communal. You are expected by afflicted lovers of the progress of the Indian peoples to determine it under the Indian conditions. I may just suggest that the question of franchise cannot be properly settled nor a non-communal general electorate be made possible and efficiently workable without taking away the great errors of history which have been made by your countrymen in making provinces and sub-divisions in India. The Nehru Committee has taken lying down the arbitrary and imaginary administrative lines that are supposed to divide one province from the other. Wipe out the provinces as they are for a universal franchise based on equitable ground by which no one community should be able to dominate. So far imagination has been lacking in removing these errors because your nation went on adding one province after another to their Empire and went on making little bits into separate administrative units. Under pre-Reform autocracy, such divisions worked fairly well. And any divisions could work well under a strong Central Government. With the democratic institutions and the Provincial Autonomies coming in, these divisions need another casting. And the principle of dividing provinces on the communal basis is axing the very root of the political progress in the country. It is simply unstatesman-like to treat Sindh, Northwestern Frontier and Bengal as the Moslem-majority provinces when these provinces can be either split or lumped up into better working divisions than the present ones. The real work of genius should be the system of conditioning the franchise in such a way as to balance power. As long as the military power and the army are with the Central Government, this balance of power can be effectively secured in all the new Harmony Presidencies. It goes without saying that for a real and effective change some hard discipline is essential for some time to let the new change settle to function properly.

I would suggest not only to make the Constitution impartial and non-communal but to so divide India administratively that the joint electorate may be possible on non-communal basis in a foolproof way. The franchise should be granted under certain limits of revenue-paying capacity, education and the human substance, also on soldier yielding capacities of different peoples. With the new division of most harmonious provinces and with the new limits of franchise, the elected bodies would be coming forth to work the new constitution in a non-communal manner befitting sensible men and true citizens. My point is to so re-divide the country that there may be a fairly balanced opportunity for all communities and castes and the franchise may be so limited and elastic that best representatives of all communities may have equal chances. Thus, either bring in true Western condition of running the democratic institutions by completely ignoring the communal differences not in a theoretical way but in a practical manner, considering the local conditions of prejudice and ignorance and tenant slavery or go back to benevolent autocracy of a dictator. The latter is impossible now. It would be ridiculous in the eyes of the civilized world if you do not grant us Dominion Status forthwith. Therefore the only possible alternative is to give a foolproof franchise to secure the balance of the political power that manifests itself most acutely and effectively in the selection of the state

servants. If this is done, the various minorities may also be let alone to take care of themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would request you not to be so small as to be partial in any way to any community and not to be so large as to give over India into the hands of one powerful community and thus reduce the other minor communities to eternal slavery even under democratic Institutions. By cutting up the country into Muslim provinces and Hindu provinces, you would be only introducing a slow eating consumption of civil anarchy, which could kill the weaker communities. Where the Hindus prevail, Muslims shall suffer and where the Muslims prevail, the Hindus shall suffer. And as I have already said virile communities like that of the Sikhs may risk to fight to death at ask for a purely Sikh province.

The moment is great and the English people have to show a political imagination, which they have not shown so far.

I pray the Highest in you may help you to rise to your full moral stature and you may be able to surprise the Indians with your New Constitution. Give a franchise on the new-India-nation-making basis and let the limits of the franchise be such as no one community may swamp the majority votes. It is simply unwise to build the New Constitution on the population basis. It is the worth that counts. A racehorse is worth a million of donkeys. And in determining these limits, your genius has to come into full play. Wipe out by your Constitution the Hindu and the Muslim as such and bring in conditions in which the "Indian" may become possible, who may truly represent the dumb driven masses of India.

The Nehru Committee has drafted a Compromise Constitution on the crater of an active volcano.

I, therefore, appeal to you to recommend a Non-communal Constitution. Secure the economic Independence for us as it is being achieved, say in Australia. Reduce the bewildering varieties of Government services and the Neroic cost of administration. Let the tiller of the soil be relieved of excessive taxation by reducing the overhead charges to a minimum. Only then will the economic condition of tillers of the soil go up and a real middle class of the wealth-creative laborers comes into being.

Yours sincerely,

Puran Singh

21st October, 1928.

P.O. Chak No. 73/19.

(Via Nankana Sahib, N.W. Ry., Punjab)