Manifesto of Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Punjab

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6th April, 1928

YOUNG COMRADES,

Our country is passing through a chaos. There is mutual distrust and despair prevailing everywhere. The great leaders have lost faith in the cause and most of them no more enjoy the confidence of the masses. There is no programme and no enthusiasm among the 'champions' of Indian independence. There is chaos everywhere. But chaos is inevitable and a necessary phase in the course of making of a nation. It is during such critical periods that the sincerity of the workers is tested, their character built, real programme formed, and then, with a new spirit, new, hopes, new faith and enthusiasm, the work is started. Hence there is nothing to be disgusted of.

We are, however, very fortunate to find ourselves on the threshold of a new era. We no more hear the news of reaching chaos that used to be sung vastly in praise of the British bureaucracy. The historic question "Would you be governed by sword or pen", no more lies unanswered. Those who put that question to us have themselves answered it. In the words of Lord Birkenhead, "With the sword we won India and with the sword we shall retain it." Thanks to this candour everything is clear now. After remembering Jallianwala and Manawala outrages it looks absurd to quote that "A good government cannot be a substitute for self-government." It is self-evident.

A word about the blessings of the British rule in India. Is it necessary to quote the whole volumes of Romesh Chandra Dutt, William Digby and Dadabhai Naoroji in evidence to prove the decline and ruin of Indian industries? Does if require any authorities to prove that India, with the richest soil and mine, is today one of the poorest, that India which could be proud of so glorious a civilisations, is today the most backward country with only 5% literacy? Do not the people know that India has to pay the largest toll of human life with the highest child death rate in the world? The epidemics like plague, cholera, influenza and such other diseases are becoming common day by day. Is it not disgraceful for us to hear again and again that we are not fit for self-government? Is it not really degrading for us, with Guru Govind Singh, Shivaji and Hari Singh as our heroes; to be told that we are incapable of defending ourselves? Alas, we have done little to prove the contrary. Did we not see our trade and commerce being crushed in its very infancy in the first effort of Guru Nanak steamship co-started by Baba Gurdit Singh in 1914; the inhuman treatment meted out to them, far away in Canada, on the way and finally, the bloody reception of those despairing, broken-hearted passengers with valleys of shots at Bajbaj, and what not? Did we not see all this? In India, where for the honour of one Dropadi, the great Mahabharat was

fought, dozens of them were ravaged in 1919. They were spit at, in their naked faces. Did we not see all this? Yet, we are content with the existing order of affairs. Is this life worth living?

Does it require any revelation any revelation now to make us realise that we are enslaved and must be free? Shall we wait for an uncertain sage to make us feel that we are an oppressed people? Shall we expectantly wait for divine help or some miracle to deliver us from bondage? Do we not know the fundamental principles of liberty? "Those who want to be free, must themselves strike the blow." Young men, awake, arise; we have slept too long!

We have appealed to the young only. Because the young bear the most inhuman tortures smilingly and face death without hesitation. Because the young bear the most inhuman tortures smilingly and face death without hesitation. Because the whole history of human progress is written with the blood of young men and young women. And because the reforms are ever made by the vigour, courage, self-sacrifice and emotional conviction of the young men who do not know enough to be afraid and who feel much more than they think.

Were it not the young men of Japan who come forth in hundreds to throw themselves in the ditches to make a dry path to Port Arthur? And Japan is today one of the foremost nations in the world. Were it not the young Polish people who fought again and again and failed, but fought again heroically throughout the last century? And today we see a free Poland. Who freed Italy from the Austrian yoke? Young Italy.

Do you know the wonders worked by the Young Turks? Do you not daily read what the young Chinese are doing? Were it not the young Russians who scarified their lives for Russians emancipation? Throughout the last century hundreds and thousands of them were exiled to Siberia for the mere distribution of socialist pamphlets or, like Dostoyevsky, for merely belonging to socialist debating society. Again and again they faced the storm of oppression. But they did not lose the courage. It were they, the young only, who fought. And everywhere the young can fight without hope, without fear and without hesitation. And we find today in the great Russia, the emancipation of the world.

While, we Indians, what are we doing? A branch of peepal tree is cut and religious feelings of the Hindus are injured. A corner of a paper idol, tazia, of the idol-breaker Mohammedans is broken, and 'Allah' gets enraged, who cannot be satisfied with anything less than the blood of the infidel Hindus. Man ought to be attached more importance that the animals and, yet, here in India, they break each other's heads in the name of 'sacred animals'. Our vision is circumscribed by…. * thinks in terms of internationalism.

There are many others among us who hide their lethargy under the garb of internationalism. Asked to serve their country they reply: "Oh Sirs, we are cosmopolitans and believe in universal brotherhood. Let us not quarrel with the British. They are our brothers." A good idea, a beautiful phrase. But they miss its implication. The doctrine of universal brotherhood demands that the exploitation of man by man and nation be nation must be rendered impossible. Equal opportunity to all without any sort of distinction. But British rule in India is a direct negation of all these, and we shall have nothing to do with it.

A world about social servicre here. Many good men think that social service (in the narrow sense, as it is used and under stood in our country) is the panacea to all our ills and the best method of serving the country. Thus we find many ardent youth contending themselves with distributing grain among the poor and nursing the sicks all their life. These men are noble and self-denying but they cannot understand that charity cannot solve the problem of hunger and disease in India and, for that matter, in any other country.

Religious superstitions and bigotry are a great hinderance in our progress. They have proved an obstacle in our way and we must do away with them. "The thing that cannot bear free thought must perish." There are many other such weakness which we are to overcome. The conservativeness and orthodoxy of the Hindus, extra-territorialism and fanaticism of the Mohammedans and narrow-mindedness of all the communities in general are always exploited by the foreign enemy. Young men with revolutionary zeal from all communities are required for the task.

Having achieved nothing, we are not prepared to sacrifice anything for any achievement; our leaders are fighting amongst themselves to decide what will be the share of each community in the hoped achievement. Simply to conceal their cowardice and lack of spirit of self-sacrifice, they are creating a false issue and screening the real one. These arm-chair politicians have their eyes set on the handful of bones that may be thrown to them, as they hope, by the mighty rulers. That is extremely humiliating. Those who come forth to fight the battle of liberty cannot sit and decide first that after so much sacrifices, so much achievement must be sure and so much share to be divided. Such people never make any sort of sacrifice. We want people who may be prepared to fight without hope, without fear and without hesitation, and who may be willing to die unhonoured, unwept and unsung. Without that spirit we will not be able to fight the great two-fold battle that lies before us – two-fold because of the internal foe, on the one hand, and a foreign enemy, on the other. Our real battle is against our own disabilities which are exploited by the enemy and some of our own people for their selfish motives.

Young Punjabis, the youth of other provinces are working tremendously in their respective spheres. The organisation and awakening displayed by young Bengal on February 3, should serve as an example to us. Our Punjab, despite the greatest amount of sacrifice and suffering to its credit, is discribed as a politically backward province. Why? Because, although it belong to the martial race, we are lacking in organisation and discipline; we who are proud of the ancient University of Texila, today stand badly in need of culture. And a culture requires fine literature which cannot be prepared without a common and well developed language. Alas, we have got none.

While trying to solve the above problem that faces our country, we will also have to prepare the masses to fight the greater battle that lies before us. Our political struggle 'began just after the great War of Independence of 1857. It has passed through different phases. Along with the advent of the 20th century the British bureaucracy has adopted quite a new policy towards India. They are drawing our bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie into their fold by adopting the policy of concessions. Their cause is being made common. The progressive investment of British capital in India will inevitably lead to that end. In the very near future we will find that class and their great leaders having thrown their lot with the foreign rulers. Some round-table conference or any such body will end in a compromise between the two. They will no more be lions and cubs. Even without any conciliation the expected Great War of the entire people will surely thin the ranks of the so-called champions of India independence.

The future programme of preparing the country will begin with the motto: "Revolution by the masses and for the masses." In other words, Swaraj for the 90%; Swaraj not only attained by the masses but also for the masses. This is a very difficult task. Thought our leaders have offered many suggestion, none had the courage to put forward and carry out successfully and concrete scheme of awakening the masses. Without going into details, we can safely assert that to achieve our object, thousands of our most brilliant young men, like Russian youth, will have to pass their precious lives in village and make the people understand what the Indian revolution would really mean. They must be made to realise that the revolution which is to come will mean more than a

change of masters. It will, above all, mean the birth of new order of things, a new state. This is not the work of a day or a year. Decades of matchless self-sacrifice will prepare the masses for the accomplishment of that great work and only the revolutionary young men will be able to do that. A revolutionary does not necessarily mean a man of bombs and revolvers.

The task before the young is hard and their resources are scanty. A great many obstacles are likely to block their way. But the earnestness of the few but sincere can overcome them all. The young must come forth. They must see the hard and difficult path that lies before them, the great tasks they have to perform. They must remember in the heart of hearts that "success is but a chance; sacrifice a law". Their lives might be the lives of constant failures, even more wretched than those which Guru Govind Singh had to face throughout his life. Even then they must not repent and say, "Oh, it was all an illusion."

Young men, do not get disheartened when you find such a great battle to fight single-handed, with none to help you. You must realise your own latent strength. Rely on yourselves and success is yours. Remember the words of the great mother of James Garfield which she spoke to her son while sending him away, penniless, helpless and resourceless, to seek his fortune: "Nine times out of ten the best thing that can happen to a young man is to be thrown overboard to swim or sink for himself." Glory to the mother who said these words and glory to those who will rely on them.

Mazzini, that oracle of Italian regeneration, once said: "All great national movements begin with unknown men of the people without influence, except for the faith and the will that counts neither time nor difficulties." Let the boat of life weigh another time. Let it set sail in the Great Ocean, and then:

> Anchor is in no stagnant shallow.
> Trust the wide and wonderous sea,
> Where the tides are fresh for ever,
> And the mighty currents free.
> There perchance, O young Columbus,
> Your new world of truth may be.

Do not hesitate, let not the theory of incarnation haunt your mind and break your courage. Everybody can become great if he strives. Do not forget your own martyrs. Kartar Singh was a young man. Yet, in this teens, when he came forth to serve his country, he ascended the scaffold smiling and echoing "Bande Mataram". Bhai Balmukund and Awadh Bihari were both quite young when they gave their lives for the cause. They were from amongst you. You must try to become as sincere patriots and as ardent lovers of liberty as they were. Do not lose patience and sense at one time, and hope at another. Try to make stability and determination a second nature to yourselves.

Let then young men think independently, calmly, serenely and patiently. Let them adopt the cause of Indian independence as the sole aim of their lives. Let them stand on their own feet. They must organise themselves free from any influence and refuse to be exploited any more by the hypocrites and insincere people who have nothing in common with them and who always desert the cause at the critical juncture. In all seriousness and sincerity, let them make the triple motto of "service, suffering, sacrifice" their sole guide. Let them remember that "the making of a nation requires self-sacrifice of thousands of obscure men and women who care more for the

idea of their country than for their own comfort and interest, than own lives and the lives of those who they love".

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