14 Satyagraha as Emancipation

Gandhi, Kallenbach and Naidoo

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Without the active support of European collaborators and friends as well as the close cooperation with the Chinese and the Tamil community in South Africa, Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns would not have succeeded or would have ended in bloodshed and massacres. Gandhi's name would not have become synonymous with the role model for nonviolent resistance. Satyagraha as an exemplary code of righteous conduct, particularly in political conflicts, requires a basic understanding of cooperation and "mutual aid" (Peter Kropotkin). The historic examples connected with Tolstoy and Gandhi shall be remembered today as follows: the fruitful communication between Leo Tolstoy and the Doukhobor leader Peter Verigin, which resulted in the legendary 1895 burning of arms and the 1898 collective exodus to Canada receiving worldwide attention.

Moreover, the political success of Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns was rooted in his cooperation with Christian and Jewish Europeans who closely collaborated with Gandhi's emancipation programme, for instance, the Baptist missionary pastor Joseph John Doke (1861–1913), who wrote the first biography of Gandhi (*An Indian Patriot in South Africa*, first edition 1909, published by The London Indian Chronicle). Furthermore, recalling the names of the closest collaborators of Gandhi in South Africa, we should highlight the four Jewish assistants and secretaries: Henry Solomon Leon Polak (1882–1959), Lewis Walter Ritch (1868–1952), Hermann Kallenbach (1871–1945), and Sonia Schlesin (1888–1956), besides William M. Vogl, a draper, with his wife Elizabeth J. Vogl, and Gabriel I. Isaac (1874–1914). The latter three persons' biographies are particularly interesting for the encouragement and support of Gandhi.

"Gabriel I. Isaac; English Jew and jeweller; a practising vegetarian associated with the Johannesburg vegetarian restaurant; sometime member of Phoenix settlement; travelled collecting subscriptions and advertisements for *Indian Opinion* and was ever ready to be of use to the journal and to Gandhiji; in 1908, offered to become nominal owner of satyagrahis' shops, following the Government's policy of auctioning their goods; in June, 1909, was sent by Gandhiji to Delagoa Bay to assist satyagrahis being deported to India […]. He went to jail as a satyagrahi during the Great March of 1913."[1]

DOI: 10.4324/9781003630210-18

Particularly, the Vogls are an almost forgotten example of essential European support for the Indian community in their satyagraha struggle because the couple demonstrated a deep understanding of how to close the gap between the two communities, who were supposed to be separated because of their ethnicities according to the hubris of racist and segregationist ideologies inside the Boer and British colonialist mindset.

"The Committee of European Sympathizers was founded in 1908 by Albert Cartwright, then editor of *The Transvaal Leader*. He was the first member of the Progressive Party actively to espouse the Indian cause, and he played a decisive role in bringing about the famous compromise of January 1908. […] The Chairman, William Hosken, was a rich and prominent member of the pre-Union Transvaal legislature and at one time a leading member of the Progressive Party. His mediatory efforts in the later stages of the 1908 campaign were not inconsiderable. By 1910, his sympathies had become more active, and he wrote a letter to Smuts supporting Gandhiji and the Indians in their demands."[2]

"Mrs Vogl conducted classes for Indian women and organized Indian Bazaars in Johannesburg. She, as also her husband, a draper, took keen interest in the cause of Indians."[3]

"Mr Gandhi said that the community was grateful to Mrs Vogl and Miss Schlesin for their noble work among the Indian women of the Transvaal. […] The work among 'Indian ladies' had been inaugurated by Mrs Polak, and was continued by Mrs Vogl and Miss Schlesin; women's meetings were held regularly."[4]

"Mrs VogI's Indian Bazaar […] was held once in 1910 and again in 1911."[5] Another Bazaar held under the auspices of the Indian Women's Association was set to take place in May 1913.[6]

"The Transvaal Women's Association itself is one of the important products of the passive resistance struggle. It represents, it is true, only a few Indian women of Johannesburg. They are mostly, if not all, passive resistance families. The Association owes its present activity to the genius of Mrs Vogl, assisted by Miss Schlesin. Mrs Vogl has been occupied with the organization of the Bazaar practically for the past twelve months. All her spare time has been devoted to the work. Under her tuition and guidance, our girls have been preparing the work which the public of Johannesburg will have the opportunity of appreciating or criticizing. The Transvaal Women's Association contains in it the material for a structure of the highest importance to the Indians of South Africa. And our sisters in India, by their thoughtful assistance, will have done not a little to help on the structure. All honour to them and to the passive resistance movement which has made possible such a harmonious blending as we notice in the composition and the activity of the Transvaal Women's Association and the Indian Ladies' Committee"[7] (*Indian Opinion*, 28-10-1911).

"This great Bazaar is the coping-stone to the work done by you. During our darkest hours, when those who were near and dear to us were in prison,

you and Miss Schlesin, by unremitting zeal, assisted us in no small measure to forget our misery. You have indeed been a true sister to us, and, so long as the European community contains women like you, we need not despair of seeing the two divisions of the Empire living in peace and friendliness"[8] (*Indian Opinion*, 25-11-1911).

Interestingly, the school at Tolstoy Farm had been enriched by Mrs Vogl's practical skills and teaching, free of charge, in complete identification with Tolstoy's principle of Bread Labour:

"No school fees are charged. Manual training is combined with mental but the greatest stress is laid on character-building. No corporal punishment is inflicted, but every endeavour is made to draw out the best that is in the boys by an appeal to their hearts and their reason. They are allowed to take the greatest freedom with their teachers. Indeed, the establishment is not a school but a family, of which all the pupils are persuaded, by example and precept, to consider themselves a part. For three hours in the morning, the boys perform some kind of manual labour, preferably agricultural, of the simplest type. They do their own washing, and are taught to be perfectly self-reliant in everything. There is, too, attached to the school a sandal-making class, as also a sewing-class, the latter under the supervision of Mrs Vogl, who so successfully organized the Indian Bazaar, held under the auspices of the Indian Women's Association last year. I need hardly mention that Mrs Vogl's work is a labour of love. No paid servants are kept on the farm in connection either with the school or the kitchen."[9]

Herman Kallenbach,[10] a German-born Jewish carpenter and architect who had emigrated from East Prussia, became invaluable for the effectiveness of Gandhi's *satyagraha* campaigns in South Africa. Kallenbach met Gandhi in 1904 and was deeply influenced by his concept of *satyagraha* – not only as a resistance method, but also as a moral philosophy. In 1910, Kallenbach donated a sizeable farm for Gandhi's cause and named it as "Tolstoy Farm." Kallenbach's resilience and engagement with the British police during the Epic March of 1913 is a testament to his deep understanding and conviction towards a nonviolent civil disobedience against the colonial system.

"Herman Kallenbach; a prosperous German architect of Johannesburg with a vein of other-worldliness" who, when challenged to a duel by a Volksrust European for his Indian sympathies, declined, saying that he had "accepted the religion of peace"; himself a satyagrahi, he gave his 1100-acre "Tolstoy Farm" near Johannesburg for the maintenance of satyagrahis' families; taught on his farm carpentry, gardening and sandal-making, the last of which he had learnt at a Trappist monastery; associated in dietetic experiments with Gandhiji who describes him as "a man of strong feelings, wide sympathies and childlike simplicity."[11]

Gandhi honoured the memory of Nagappen, Narayansamy and Valliamma, the three martyrs who died in the passive resistance fight, by a "ceremonial unveiling of memorial tablets erected […] in Braamfontein cemetery."[12]

"Nagappan Padayatchi or Swamy Nagappan Padayachee (1891 – 6 July 1909) is a South African Satyagraha martyr from India. […] Nagappan Padayatchi was an Indian born in Mayiladuthurai in Mayiladuthurai district of Tamil Nadu. […] involved in Satyagraha with Mahatma Gandhi on 1909. He was sentenced to 10 days hard labor on 21 June 1909 during the first Satyagraha campaign […] Nagappan was about 18 years old when he was sentenced on 21 June 1909 to the three pounds or ten days imprisonment with hard labor. After spending a night at the Fort he was made to walk to the Jukskei Road Prison Camp, 26 km away. He was discharged from the camp on 30 June and died on 6 July of double pneumonia and resultant heart failure. His body was full of bruises and weals. Fellow prisoners reported that he had been physically abused in prison by at least one warden, and that his illness was neglected by the prison authorities and he was still expected to carry out his hard labor sentence, this ultimately led to his death. Despite all the evidence, the official enquiry exonerated the prison officials and rejected the allegations of the appalling conditions in the Camp. […] In 1914 Mohandas Gandhi unveiled memorial tablet to Padayachee, as for Gandhi, they were inspirations, 'like a lighted match to dry fuel'."[13]

"A. Narayanswamy [was] a hawker in Johannesburg. He served with the British troops in a non-combatant capacity during the Anglo-Boer War and was granted residence in the Transvaal. He went to jail in 1908 and 1909, and was illegally deported to India in 1910. He returned to Durban with 82 other deportees. He was not allowed to land in Durban and had to go from to port on the deck of the ship. He died on board Gertrude Woermann on 16 October 1910, and was buried in Delagoa Bay."[14]

"Thillaiyadi Valliammai (22 February 1898 – 22 February 1914) was a South African Tamil girl who worked with Mahatma Gandhi in her early years. […] She was born to R. Munuswamy Mudaliar and Mangalam, a young immigrant couple from a small village called Thillaiyadi in Mayiladuthurai district in India to Johannesburg – the gold-city of South Africa to work for their way out of difficulty. She was from Sengunthar Kaikola Mudaliar community. […] On 15 July 1914, three days before he left South Africa, Gandhi attended the unveiling of the gravestones of Nagappan and Valliamma in the Braamfontein cemetery in Johannesburg. […] Valliamma, and her mother Mangalam, joined the second batch of Transvaal women who went to Natal in October 1913 to explain the inequity of the three-pound tax to the workers and persuade them to strike. (Valliamma's father, R. Munuswamy Mudaliar, owner of a fruit and vegetable shop in Johannesburg and a satyagrahi in the Transvaal, was recovering from an operation). They visited different centres and addressed meetings. They were sentenced in December to three months with hard labour, and sent to the Maritzburg prison. Valliamma fell ill soon after her conviction but refused an offer of early release by the prison authorities. She died shortly after release, on 22 February 1914."[15]

Gandhi founded a unit of Indian stretcher bearers, called "The Natal Indian Ambulance Corps," supporting the British forces during the Second

Boer War (1899–1902). This experience led him to organize another unit of stretcher bearers during the Bambatha Rebellion of 1906, where he was tasked with catering to the wounded Africans as white-skinned doctors refused to treat them. These two instances played a significant role in shaping Gandhi's subsequent political programme – a nonviolent resistance against colonial oppression, as he witnessed the brutality of genocidal war and the racist treatment by the colonial powers. The Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance came into effect in the region of Transvaal in 1906, which mandated all Asians to register their fingerprints and carry a certificate of identity. Gandhi, who had realized that peace cannot be envisioned through violence, proposed a pragmatic approach against the racist discriminatory laws, denouncing all forms of violence and engaging in passive resistance.

An early member of this nonviolent resistance movement was the Mauritius-born Tamil Indian Govindasamy Krishnasamy Thambi Naidoo (1875–1933), who had been voicing opinions as early as 1885 against the discriminatory practices by the British government towards the Indians in Natal. He mobilized Indians to rally together in the *satyagraha* campaigns and persuaded the workers of coal mines, plantations and railways to go on strike as a gesture of support. When Gandhi was imprisoned, Naidoo is credited to have organized the most significant general strike in the region of Natal, which resulted in the release of Gandhi and the subsequent agreement with the Natal government which relented to the demands of the *satyagraha* campaign. This essay emphasizes the relationship between Gandhi and the Indian Tamil community in their collective fight for equality, in the context of racism and the indentured labour system in sugar plantations and coal mines.

A footnote in the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi perfectly encapsulates the essence of Thambi Naidoo and his contribution to the Asiatic community's struggle against the discrimination by the South African Government:

> Thambi Naidoo; a Tamil cartage contractor from Mauritius whom Gandhiji described as "lion-like" and as one of the two most eminent satyagrahis; who but for his rashness of temper "could easily have assumed the leadership of the community in the Transvaal"; had a flair for languages and cooking; became Chairman of the Tamil Benefit Society in 1912.[16]

The Asiatic Registration Act of 1906 had an amendment in 1907 under the name of Asiatic Law Amendment Act of 1907.[17] Gandhi, having read the announcement from the *Transvaal Gazette*, wrote in the *Indian Opinion* a detailed account of what the regulation would bring to the Indians in Transvaal, deeming it "so oppressive, so obnoxious, that it seems impossible for any Indian to submit to them."[18] The amendment was to come into effect from 1 July 1907, with the deadline of applying to the Register of Asiatics

before 31 July 1907. Following this announcement, a mass meeting among the Indians in South Africa was convened at Pretoria on a Sunday, 30 June. Thambi Naidoo, speaking in Tamil, asserted that "even if he were to die, he would not submit to the law."[19] A couple weeks later, Transvaal Football Association convened a meeting at the Ebenezer School, where Naidoo acted as a Tamil language interpreter to Gandhi's speech on the law, explaining to the Tamil residents how the act would affect their lives. The meeting concluded with everyone standing up and taking an oath that they would not apply for registration, even if that meant losing their jobs.[20]

Gandhi made a speech at the Hamidia Islamic Society on 27 December 1907, as part of the campaign against the law. He lauded Thambi Naidoo, who resisted as the chief picket in Johannesburg, for shining "brilliantly throughout the campaign," and condemned the government for the uncertainty it had caused for the families of the resisters.

> He had a wife and five children who had been in the Colony for five years. What was to happen if he were deported, and who was going to take care of his wife and children? He could not find a single section in the Act which was to protect the families of those deported. What was it the Government wanted to do? Why had it not the honesty to tell the Indians they were not wanted in the country? […] This was legislation which no self-respecting nation and no self-respecting man could accept-not because of its regulations, but because it was class legislation of the worst type, based on entire distrust of the community and based on charges flung against them without any proof.[21]

In December 1907, the government issued warrants of arrest against the resisters in Pretoria, Pietersburg, Johannesburg, and Germiston, including against Thambi Naidoo in Johannesburg. Gandhi was certain that imprisonment was the certain consequence and was part of the struggle. "Every Indian must have realized by now that this is going to be a hard fight. There is no escape from imprisonment. This at least is certain. It must be assumed that those who are not arrested now will be arrested later," wrote Gandhi.[22]

On 28 January 1908, Gandhi, Leung Quinn, the Chairman of the Chinese Association, and Thambi Naidoo wrote a joint letter from Johannesburg jail to General Smuts, the colonial secretary. They clarified that their opposition was never against the necessity of fingerprints as a form of identifying a person, but only that such registrations must be on a voluntary basis. "On that ground we have repeatedly offered to undergo voluntary registration if the Act were repealed," they wrote.[23]

> We put forward the above suggestions because we are sincerely anxious to prove to the Government that we are loyal and law-abiding, and that we are willing to adopt any course which will lead out of the present difficulty without violating our consciences, inflicting any indignity or casting any stigma on us.[24]

Two days later, General Smuts wrote a reply through E. M. Gorges, the acting assistant colonial secretary, that he accepted their reassurance that they will use their influence with their compatriots to make that registration "effective and final."[25]

One of the readers of the *Indian Opinion* wrote to Gandhi, questioning why Gandhi and Naidoo signed the letter on their own authority, and whether they ought to have consulted the community prior to it. Gandhi responded that it was not an issue of finger-impressions, but that the community had already agreed on voluntary registrations, and that they "have not accepted finger-impressions in the manner envisaged by the law. [...] it will be a magnanimous gesture if Indians give their finger-impressions on their own and add that they themselves will do so."[26]

> You will agree moreover that those who are accepted as leaders must have a certain freedom [of action] in crises. We do not admit having availed ourselves of any such freedom in arriving at this compromise but on an occasion like this we would be justified in saying a few words on people's duty to the leaders. Great care should be exercised in choosing leaders. But once they are chosen, it may prove harmful if on occasion they are not allowed any freedom of action. If they are required to consult the others every now and again, that will suggest lack of confidence in them. In the absence of such confidence work will suffer. Confidence in the leaders is a sign of unity, of generosity and of an unflagging spirit among the people. No people can progress if its leaders are not honest and if they are not trusted. Leaders do sometimes make honest mistakes. They are not to be blamed on that account. There is only one test-that of sincerity. And the best way is that those who are sincere should be trusted.[27]

After Gandhi and Naidoo were released from the jail, they, along with few other Indians, set out towards the Registration Office. Gandhi had a feeling that there might be an attack on him[28]. He had spotted a couple of assailants near the office. On the way, they were interrupted by them and they were asked where they were going. Gandhi gave a truthful answer, saying, "I am going [to the Registration Office] to give my finger-impressions. The others, too, will do the same. If you want to give your thumb-impressions [only], you can do that."[29] Following the reply, Gandhi received severe blows from an iron pipe on his left ribs that rendered him difficult to breathe. He had a cut on his upper lip, a bruise above the left eye, and a wound on his forehead.[30] While Essop Mia and Thambi Naidoo tried to intervene, Naidoo got hit and was injured on his ear. About this incident, Gandhi reflected:

> On reflection, I feel that we fear death needlessly. I believe that I have not known such fear for a long time now. And I have grown more fearless after this incident. If I had not regained consciousness, I would not

> have felt the suffering that I went through later. We can thus see that there is suffering only as long as the soul is in intimate union with the body. I became aware of the suffering only when the soul's union with the body was restored.[31]

In January 1908, Gandhi was again in jail and he reported the increase of Satyagrahis in prison. On January 14, Thambi Naidoo, the chief picket, Mrs Thambi Naidoo, and Leung Quinn, the Chairman of the Chinese Association, joined Gandhi in prison. "All of us were happy to see them," wrote Gandhi.[32] Thambi Naidoo became the cook in jail, cooking for more than 150 people, while Gandhi served the food.[33] Thambi Naidoo cultivated the habit of voracious reading while in jail, and also started to learn Gujarati.[34] Gandhi and his Satyagrahis also obtained the Governor's permission to handle the sewing machine. Thambi Naidoo learnt the art of sewing quite quickly, while it took a while for Gandhi. Before Gandhi could fully learn sewing, the number of prisoners increased multifold, rendering him focused on their needs.

In July 1908, Thambi Naidoo was once again arrested, for four days, along with Imam Abdool Cadir Bawazeer, the Chairman of the Hamidia Islamic Society, for allegedly selling goods without a proper licence. Gandhi clarified in a letter that they did so as a way of protest against the law.[35] They refused to be bailed out, and thus were subsequently brought to the court from the jail for a hearing and were charged with trading without proper licences. Gandhi later commented:

> All of them refused to bailout. Is there any Indian who does not both weep and smile on reading this? One cannot but weep at the thought of these Indians, used to a life of comfort, undergoing so much suffering for the sake of their motherland. One must smile at the thought that there are men of such rare courage in the Indian community, who will be the means of its deliverance. Mr Abdool Kadir Bawazeer is an Imam. He is Chairman of the Hamidia Islamic Society. I would say that, on the day on which he is gaoled, Indians throughout South Africa should go on a strike.[36]

Thambi Naidoo and others were getting imprisoned so frequently that Gandhi wrote it was needless to speak again of their services to the Indian cause[37]: They were getting recognition by default, de facto. During the trial, Naidoo pleaded guilty and was fined £2, with the alternative of 14 days of imprisonment with hard labour. Gandhi was fined £1, with the alternative of seven days of imprisonment with hard labour. They went to jail. One week after Thambi Naidoo was released, another wave of the campaign started where several Indians set out with a basket of goods without licenses in hopes of getting arrested. Thambi Naidoo joined this protest and got re-arrested as a result.[38] In jail they observed the grave conditions they were subjected to, and Gandhi reported it in *Indian Opinion*.[39]

During their trial, where Gandhi was their lawyer, he demanded maximum penalty to the Magistrate as requested by them, but the Magistrate awarded "only seven days' hard labour to each of them"[40]. Thambi Naidoo, however, received 14 days of imprisonment since he was in jail for the same offence one week earlier. Touched by his resistance, Gandhi wrote a dedicated editorial piece:

> There are few Indians who can touch Mr Thambi Naidoo for courage. He is so poor that he lives from hand to mouth. His wife is expecting a baby shortly. Disregarding all this, he has returned to gaol soon after his release. Also, his conduct in the gaol has been so good that all the [gaol] officials are pleased with him. He does not, however, flatter anyone. As Chief Picket, too, he worked with the utmost tact. I wish the Indian community would produce more heroes like him.[41]

Two days later, Gandhi had to write in detail about Thambi Naidoo in *Indian Opinion*, but with sadness, as Thambi Naidoo's wife had a miscarriage. Gandhi wrote, "Mr Naidoo does not know this. But the community's obligation to him is mounting. He left his wife's side at a difficult time and deliberately went to gaol for the sake of the community, and this is what has happened meanwhile. Mr Naidoo is still in gaol."[42] Gandhi wrote that it was probable that the miscarriage happened because Thambi Naidoo had gone to jail, and that there was no doubt that the guilt for the child's death must be attached to the Transvaal Government. Gandhi spoke later that General Smuts was responsible for the "murder of young Mr Naidoo," referring to the still-born child, and that Mrs Naidoo was in pain when Thambi Naidoo was arrested. It could be interpreted that she was experiencing pregnancy-related pain.

A couple weeks later, Thambi Naidoo was released from jail, but his health had deteriorated. "His courage, however, has doubled," wrote Gandhi.[43] After saying that he would "court a fourth term of imprisonment," he proceeded to see his wife whose health was slowly progressing following a two-day fever. A social gathering of Tamils took place in the evening, honouring him in public on behalf of the Indian communities. Several speeches were made, honouring Thambi Naidoo's courage, as he was garlanded with flowers.[44]

Reporting all these incidents, the journal "The Star" criticized Gandhi, writing, "Mr Gandhi goes so far as to accuse Mr Smuts of 'murder' and 'organized robbery'; even those who are not unsympathetic must feel sceptical of his trustworthiness in questions of fact. [...] Mr Smuts is the servant of Parliament and any promise he may have made to Mr Gandhi was necessarily subject to the ratification of the legislature."[45] Gandhi responded to "The Star" in a letter to its editor, registering his disagreement over the editor's resentment that Gandhi accused General Smuts of murdering Thambi Naidoo's child. Gandhi wrote:

> I witnessed the scene enacted in Mrs Naidoo's room immediately after her husband's third incarceration. I cannot forget it. Six days after, I heard that she had a still-born son. Mr Naidoo had committed no offence save that, first, of helping General Smuts out of an awkward dilemma, and then of preferring his conscience to everything else. Although you may wonder, I must repeat that the death of the child must be laid at the door of General Smuts.[46]

On 19 September 1908, Gandhi, Thambi Naidoo, Essop Mia, Imam Bawazir, Quinn, and a few wrote a collective letter to William Hosken, who was then the ex-President of the Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa. He had been sympathetic to the cause of British Indians in South Africa. The letter was written after a meeting with him that day where he had told them that General Smuts had genuinely regretted the persecution that Asiatic communities were undergoing, and that he had been thinking that there would not be much difficulty in meeting their request.[47] Making use of this opportunity, Gandhi, Naidoo and others stressed in their letter that they demanded a promise from General Smuts and the leader of the Progressive Opposition, a party in the Transvaal Parliament, that the Asiatic Act would be repealed during the next session of the parliament.[48] Following this letter, Hosken initiated a proposal for a settlement, speaking with General Smuts. After his conversation, Hosken arranged another meeting with Gandhi, Naidoo and others, after which Hosken forwarded their letter directly to General Smuts. Upon reading it, Smuts responded that there had been no change in their demands, and that they cannot be conceded. Gandhi wrote, "There is no reason to be disheartened by this. [...] A solution will be found only when we pass that test [set by him] and are found prepared to renounce everything."[49]

In December 1908, Thambi Naidoo organized a passive resistance picket in front of the registration office in Von Brandis Square when a group of Indians proceeded to the registration office. Naidoo, along with 27 Indians were arrested and charged with having refused to produce registration certificates and fingerprints. When Gandhi was arrested in Volksrust jail in 1909, many Tamils, along with Thambi Naidoo, joined the imprisonment. During a meeting at Johannesburg, on 24 May 24 1909, Gandhi said, "Mr Naidoo writes to say that they remain unbending, and are ready to go to gaol at a moment's notice. We have a paper of our own, so that we are able to carry on propaganda. There is no paper in the language of the Tamils, and yet what courage they have been displaying, and how well they have been doing their duty! They have faith in God. We ought to learn a lesson from them and follow in their footsteps. If we do, victory will be ours quite soon."[50] Gandhi observed a change in Thambi Naidoo: he had given up smoking, tea and coffee, a frequent user before, following multiple imprisonments. Thambi Naidoo was again arrested on 15 June 1909, for refusing to produce their registration certificates and fingerprints. During Thambi Naidoo's trial,

Gandhi appeared on his behalf as his lawyer. Naidoo pleaded guilty and was sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for three months, as he refused to pay the £50 fine.[51] Gandhi spoke the next day in Johannesburg that the "The brave Thambi Naidoo" was also in jail along with the others.[52] He concluded his speech as:

> It only remains for this meeting to say what the remaining Indians are capable of doing. I am fully aware that all the members of the community are not capable of undergoing the same measure of suffering, but, if you cannot do that, you can certainly help those who have now gone to gaol and can help the cause by showing your sympathy in many other respects, and I do hope that this meeting will not fail in its duty.[53]

Thambi Naidoo filed an affidavit before the court, explaining his defence that General Smuts' promise of repealing the act should have been a part of compromise, that led them to support voluntary registration. However, without such an assurance, the community would have never accepted the compromise, the assurance which was not upheld.[54] Gandhi wrote a letter to Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the Indian leader from the "moderate" faction of the Indian National Congress, reporting the incidents that happened in South Africa so far. Gokhale later would be the key person who invited Gandhi to India and advised him to tour India before entering into the struggle against British imperialism, acting as a mentor to Gandhi. Gandhi wrote to Gokhale:

> [...] perhaps the bravest and the staunchest of all is the indomitable Thambi Naidoo. I do not know any Indian who knows the spirit of the struggle so well as he does. He was born in Mauritius, but is more Indian than most of us. He has sacrificed himself entirely, and has sent me a defiant message, saying that, even though I may yield and accept anything less than Lord Ampthill's amendment, he alone will offer resistance and die in the Transvaal gaols. [...] The possibilities of a struggle such as this it is very difficult to measure. I hope that the Motherland will come to the rescue, and assist us as far as possible. The moral effect of continued pecuniary assistance from India will also be very great.[55]

When Thambi Naidoo, along with few others, were released from prison, there were no letters or telegrams from the Indian community welcoming him. Gandhi wrote that it was both a good and a bad sign, good in the sense that the Indian community had gotten used to the activities of them, and bad in the sense that the community had not shown courtesy in welcoming them or sufficient interest in the satyagraha campaign.[56] Following Naidoo's speech at Durban Indian Society, Gandhi said:

> Everyone will admit that he, more than others, has received true education. He has spared himself no sacrifice. He has acted like Socrates who cheerfully swallowed a draught of poison. [...] The Colonials especially must emulate Mr Naidoo's example. Imprisonment in connection with satyagraha makes a man pure, truthful and brave.[57]

On 26 April 1910, Gandhi wrote a letter to the Director of Prisons, pleading about the conditions in South African jails following the repeated imprisonments of the Satyagrahis. He raised Thambi Naidoo's complaint to the Medical Officer that the prisoners were subjected to partial starvation, for which the medical officer called Naidoo a liar.[58] Detailing each of such accounts from various Satyagrahis, such as lack of blankets, inhuman working obligations, physical injuries during prison duties not being adequately taken care of, etc., Gandhi ended the letter, writing, "My Association ventures to trust that the matters herein set forth will receive your urgent and careful attention."[59]

In June 1910, Thambi Naidoo was arrested once again. Following his three months of imprisonment at Diepkloof jail, he was released in the morning, and after a brief meeting with his son, Naidoo was re-arrested on the same afternoon.[60] Gandhi wrote:

> [He] has been re-arrested. The officials cannot afford to let him remain free even for a minute. He has an incomparable spirit. What need is there to write in praise of him? This struggle has produced few satyagrahis who can be his equals. This is the eighth time that he has been arrested.[61] [...] It is evident that General Smuts, now that he is confirmed in his control over Asiatics, wishes to show his firmness by taking up the bravest passive resisters. We wish him joy of his task. [...] Mr Naidoo is one of the most determined and persevering of passive resisters. Whether in or out of the gaol, he gives himself no rest. His one aim is to live so as to deserve the high title of passive resister as the term is understood among the strugglers in the Transvaal. Mr Naidoo, like Mr Sorabji, is among the brightest stars of the Indian community in South Africa.[62]

Around the same time, Gandhi had established a community farm from the land that Hermann Kallenbach offered for the families of the Satyagrahis. Kallenbach also had bestowed a name to it: Tolstoy Farm. Thambi Naidoo, along with some fellow Tamils, visited Tolstoy Farm and spent a whole day there, looking around.[63] At the end of June, however, Thambi Naidoo was deported from South Africa along with 60 Satyagrahis for failure to produce the certificate of registration. For a brief period, nobody had any clues as to where he was being taken to.[64] On reaching Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, Thambi Naidoo, along with 26 others, sailed back to Durban. Out of those 26, 9 were refused permission to enter, including Thambi Naidoo, and again

got ordered to be sent back to India. On the way, they attempted to land at Zanzibar. There, they were received and arrested.[65]

Following this incident, Gandhi wrote a letter to the South Africa British Indian Committee in London, explaining the inaccurate and misleading statements made by the Transvaal Government to the Transvaal Governor. The ministers from the Transvaal Government wrote to the Governor that every opportunity was provided to the individuals for proving domicile in South Africa, and only after the failure of proof that they were deported. They also had cited the Supreme Court cases of Quinn Leung and Thambi Naidoo, stating that when an "Asiatic" failed on demand to produce the certificate of registration, he could be arrested, and that if he did not satisfy the Magistrate that he would be registered as an Asiatic, there was no option but to direct that Asiatic to be removed from the colony. Gandhi denied this argument that every opportunity was provided to prove domicile or South African birth and that they should

> justify the extraordinary conduct of the Government in trying to bring passive resisters before an administrative board and to procure their deportation rather than allow them to be tried judicially and to suffer imprisonment to which they had become inured.[66]

> [Thambi Naidoo] was not only known to the police, the Magistrate, the Registrar and everybody concerned to have been a registered resident but he was one of those who, when voluntary registration was going on (in 1907), helped the Registrar's Department, and was thanked by the Registrar for his work. [...] Why was he deported?[67]

Gandhi later wrote a telegram, presumably to Thambi Naidoo, to protest against the Immigration Bill's "severity education test," the uncertainty in the rights of domicile and the rights of wives and children, with an emphasis, "Lose no time"[68] Gandhi later gave a speech in Kimberly amidst the members of the Indian community and some Europeans, where he paid, amidst a loud applause, "a glowing tribute to Mr Thambi Naidoo, whom he considered to be one of the greatest of passive resisters in the arduous campaign."[69]

On 2 May 1911, a meeting was held at the Hamidia Hall, on the suspension of passive resistance following the Government's assurances. While Thambi Naidoo and others spoke in favour of the acceptance of the proposal to suspend the passive resistance, there were also heated arguments urging Gandhi to suspend the passive resistance only on the condition of fulfillment of the pledges made by General Smuts.[70] There was an intense distrust towards the intentions of the Government, and hence was also a counterproposal of not stopping the passive resistance until the intentions of the Government were carried into practice. Finally, the original proposal passed.[71] Gandhi continued to engage in further correspondence with General Smuts, exchanging letters.[72]

One month later, there was a farewell event to Sorabji Shapurji Adajania, a fellow Satyagrahi as committed as Thambi Naidoo. Sorabji was returning to India as the Transvaal Satyagraha had concluded. Gandhi spoke:

> As a satyagrahi Mr Sorabji has displayed many fine qualities. He has rightly been described as the greatest of the satyagrahis. From one point of view I place Mr Thambi Naidoo on par with him. (Applause.) Another person who can match Mr Naidoo in self-sacrifice is unlikely to be found even in India.[73]

Meanwhile, Hermann Kallenbach was also set to leave Johannesburg for Europe in July, and Gandhi planned a reception event for him. Gandhi jovially narrated how Kallenbach was about to leave without accepting a public acknowledgement from the Indian community, which is worth to be published below in its original form:

> Mr Kallenbach was informed that he was to be presented with an address. Mr Kallenbach laughed. "What have I done? You owe me nothing, and if you do, I do not wish to collect my debt just yet." This happened on Saturday when he was on his way to the Farm. He was to leave on Monday. But the determined men who had done duty as pickets would not have 'no' for an answer. Mr Kallenbach said: "I cannot receive any public acknowledgment." His interviewers said: "You must." Thus they parted, Mr Kallenbach thinking the storm had blown over. But on Monday morning, on his way from Lawley, Mr Kallenbach was picketed and intercepted by a zealous band, headed by Mr Thambi Naidoo, who had all run from Vrededorp to Canada, a distance of five miles, to meet him in his own compartment. Others met him at Fordsburg station. What could Mr Kallenbach do against such a determination. He had to yield. Passive resistance (love) and picketing were once more triumphant.[74]

Before Kallenbach's departure, A. M. Cachalia, the Chairman of the British Indian Association, and Gandhi, its Secretary, wrote an address to Kallenbach, which Thambi Naidoo read it during the event.[75] The words that Thambi Naidoo read are:

> On behalf of the Transvaal British Indian Association, we, the Chairman and Honorary Secretary, ask your acceptance of this small token of the affection and esteem your whole-hearted and brotherly co-operation has won from the British Indians of the Transvaal.Your help during the long struggle that was forced upon us by reason of the immigration and registration laws was the more valuable because it was spontaneous. Your timely generosity in placing Tolstoy Farm at the disposal of the passive resisters proved an invaluable aid to us. The acts of personal

> service rendered by you to our people in adversity can never be repaid. We thank you also for your work as Hon. Secretary of the Transvaal European Committee. All these things and many more have made the Indian community your lifelong debtors, and we pray that God may bless you for them.[76]

Two years later, Gandhi and his Satyagrahis were organizing passive resistance against the "three-pound tax" to repeal the £3 annual tax that was part of the Immigration Law Amendment Bill of 1895.[77] Gandhi proposed a 36-mile march on 6 November 1913, from Newcastle to Charlestown, crossing the Transvaal border, and continuing towards the Tolstoy Farm, with over 2,000 men and 127 women.[78] Gandhi was arrested during the march but was released on bail. He returned to the march. During those four days of the march, Gandhi was arrested three times and was sentenced to nine months of imprisonment with hard labour.[79]

Gandhi wrote a telegram to Gopal Krishna Gokhale, reporting that nearly 100 people were jailed, and that nearly 2,000 families of the indentured and free labourers in Natal were striking. Mrs Thambi Naidoo was one of the Satyagrahis who was arrested in the protest and who was sentenced to three months of imprisonment with hard labor. Gandhi credited the women protestors that, the strike was largely due to their influence.[80]

Gandhi, Kallenbach and Millie Graham Polak were released from prison in six weeks, and General Smuts agreed to appoint a commission to hear the grievances of the resistors.[81] In the end, an agreement was reached, leading to the abolition of the three-pound tax and the abolition of the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance that brought in the Asiatic Register, compulsory registration, and submission of fingerprints. The "Black Act," as it was called, was finally repealed in 1914.

Gandhi wrote a thorough account of the march under the title "The Last Satyagraha Campaign: My Experience," where he detailed each and every step of the Satyagrahis from planning, execution, arrest, and consequences. He also accounted the deeds of Thambi Naidoo and Mrs Naidoo during the struggle. We recommend the readers to take a look at that editorial, available online, that formed the basis of inspiration to write this essay.[82]

Following the success of the Satyagraha campaign, Gandhi and Kasturba set to leave South Africa to India. A farewell banquet was organized on 14 July 1914, at the Masonic Hall, Jeppe Street, Johannesburg, in honour of Gandhi, Kasturba and Kallenbach. "They were presented with addresses on behalf of the British Indian Association, the Chinese Association, the Tamil Benefit Society, the Transvaal Indian Women's Association and the Gujarati, the Mahomedan and the Parsee communities."[83] During the event, Thambi Naidoo offered his four sons to Gandhi, saying, "On behalf of myself and my wife, I have the honour to present these four boys to be servants of India."[84] The *Indian Opinion* reported Gandhi's reaction to it as follows:

> Of all the precious gifts that had been given to them, those four boys were the most precious, and probably Mr Chamney could tell them something of the law of adoption in India and what Mr and Mrs Naidoo, both of them old gaol-birds, had done. They had gone through the ceremony of adoption, and they had surrendered their right to their four children and given them (Mr and Mrs Gandhi) the charge. He [Gandhi] did not know that they were worthy to take charge of those children. He could only assure them that they would try to do their best. The four boys had been his pupils when he had been conducting a school for Passive Resisters at Tolstoy Farm and later on at Phoenix. Then when Mrs Naidoo had sought imprisonment, the boys had been taken over to Johannesburg, and he thought that he had lost those four pearls, but the pearls had returned to him. He only hoped that Mrs Gandhi and he would be able to take charge of the precious gift.[85]

Next day, Gandhi spoke at a Tamil meeting, presided by Thambi Naidoo, and attended by Kasturba and others, Gandhi expressed that "of all the different sections of the Indian community [...] the Tamils had borne the brunt of the struggle,"[86] and that the largest number of deaths from the passive resistance came from the Tamil community. Gandhi, who had been crediting Thambi Naidoo with utmost recognition and praises throughout these years, gave an ultimate tribute to him by showcasing his renouncement of his children as a supreme act of love towards his country, while he was sensing division among various communities. Gandhi said, which is worthy of presenting it below in its original form:

> They had sometimes, as every other section of the community had, jealousies amongst themselves. They had petty jealousies not in connection with the struggle, but in matters which had nothing to do with the struggle. All those petty jealousies and differences he [Gandhi] hoped would go, and they would rise higher still in the estimation of themselves and of those who at all grew to know them and the depth of character which they had. They had also, as all sections of the Indian community had, not only those jealousies but sometimes many bickerings also, and petty quarrels. He felt these also should be removed especially from their midst, because they had shown themselves so fit to give themselves to the Motherland. And here, of course, it was a Tamil who had given his four sons to be trained as servants of India. He hoped Mr and Mrs Naidoo knew exactly what they had done. They had surrendered all right to those children for life, and they could not possibly do anything to advance their material well-being, but had always to remain servants of India. It was no joke, and yet Mr and Mrs Naidoo had certainly done that. He could not appeal to them too strongly that they of all sections should rid themselves of all those bickerings, petty jealousies and quarrels amongst themselves.[87]

Notes

1 CWMG 11, p. 136fn1. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi shall henceforth be referred to as CWMG, followed by the volume number.*
2 CWMG 11, p. 102.
3 CWMG 9, p. 309.
4 CWMG 10, p. 90.
5 CWMG 11 p. 78fn1.
6 CWMG 11, p. 445.
7 CWMG 11, p. 174.
8 CWMG 11, p. 184.
9 CWMG 11, p. 251.
10 Christian Bartolf, Isa Sarid: *Hermann Kallenbach - Mahatma Gandhi's friend in South Africa*. Berlin: Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum, 1997.
11 CWMG. 8, p. 148fn1.
12 CWMG 12, pp. 486f.
13 Wikipedia contributors, "Nagappan Padayatchi," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia,* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagappan_Padayatchi (accessed August 10, 2022).
14 E.S. Reddy: Gandhi, Tamils and the Satyagraha in South Africa https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/gandhi-tamils-and-satyagraha-south-africa-es-reddy (accessed August 10, 2022).
15 Wikipedia contributors, "ThillaiaadiValliammai," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia,* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thillaiaadi_Valliammai (accessed August 10, 2022).
16 CWMG 11, p. 41.
17 Appendix IV, Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, vol. 7, pp. 497.
18 CWMG 7, p. 75.
19 CWMG 7, pp. 80–81.
20 CWMG 7, p. 102.
21 CWMG 7, pp. 449–450.
22 CWMG 7, pp. 472–475.
23 CWMG 8, pp. 40–42.
24 CWMG 8, pp. 40–42.
25 CWMG 8, pp. 65–66.
26 CWMG 8, p. 85.
27 CWMG 8, p. 85.
28 CWMG 8, p. 93.
29 CWMG 8, p. 93.
30 CWMG 8, p. 93.
31 CWMG 8, p. 93.
32 CWMG 8, p. 142.
33 CWMG 8, pp. 152–155.
34 CWMG 8, pp. 159–161.
35 CWMG 8, p. 385.
36 CWMG 8, pp. 388–390.
37 CWMG 8, pp. 388–390.
38 CWMG 8, pp. 409–413.
39 CWMG 8, pp. 409–413.
40 CWMG 8, pp. 409–413.
41 CWMG 8, pp. 409–413.
42 CWMG 8, p. 423.
43 CWMG 8, pp. 442–444.
44 CWMG 8, pp. 442–444.

45 CWMG 8, pp. 446–447.
46 CWMG 8, pp. 446–447.
47 CWMG 9, pp. 59–61.
48 CWMG 9, pp. 59–61.
49 CWMG 9, p. 69.
50 CWMG 9, pp. 218–219.
51 CWMG 9, pp. 251–252.
52 CWMG 9, pp. 252–253.
53 CWMG 9, pp. 252–253.
54 CWMG 9, pp. 552–555.
55 CWMG 10, pp. 96–98.
56 CWMG 10, p. 144.
57 CWMG 10, p. 169.
58 CWMG 10, pp. 234–236.
59 CWMG 10, pp. 234–236.
60 CWMG 10, p. 270.
61 CWMG 10, p. 267.
62 CWMG 10, p. 270.
63 CWMG 10, pp. 272–273.
64 CWMG 10, pp. 275–276.
65 CWMG 10, p. 283.
66 CWMG 10, pp. 389–391.
67 CWMG 10, pp. 234–236.
68 CWMG 10, p. 454.
69 CWMG 11, pp. 40–41.
70 CWMG 11, pp. 56–58.
71 CWMG 11, pp. 56–58.
72 CWMG 11, pp. 56–58.
73 CWMG 11, pp. 107–108.
74 CWMG 11, pp. 134–136.
75 CWMG 11, pp. 134–136.
76 CWMG 11, p.132.
77 Nakhoda, Zein. 2011. Indians in South Africa wage Satyagraha for their rights, 1906–1914. *Global Nonviolent Action Database*. Accessed from: https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/indians-south-africa-wage-satyagraha-their-rights-1906-1914
78 Nakhoda, Zein. 2011. Indians in South Africa wage Satyagraha for their rights, 1906–1914. *Global Nonviolent Action Database*. Accessed From: https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/indians-south-africa-wage-satyagraha-their-rights-1906-1914.
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80 CWMG 12, p. 244.
81 Nakhoda, Zein. 2011. Indians in South Africa wage Satyagraha for their rights, 1906–1914. *Global Nonviolent Action* Database. Accessed from: https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/indians-south-africa-wage-satyagraha-their-rights-1906-1914
82 CWMG 12, pp. 508–519.
83 CWMG 12, pp. 473–478.
84 CWMG 12, pp. 473–478.
85 CWMG 12, pp. 473–478.

86 CWMG 12, pp. 493–495.
87 CWMG 12, pp. 493–495.

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