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Bhagat Singh

Reasons for Refusing to Attend the Court

4th February, 1930

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[The second hunger strike of the LCC accused was also suspended after twenty-one days on the assurance given by the government. But there were so many minor issues and complaints which the magistrate was not prepared to listen to. The accused thereupon refused to attend the court. The Civil and Military Gazette (an Anglo-Indian daily from Lahore) commented that the accused had boycotted the British court. This was wrong.

Bhagat Singh contradicted it and explained the reasons for refusing to attend the court.]

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Reasons for Refusing to Attend the Court

Bhagat Singh

4th February, 1930

MISTER MAGISTRATE

After going through your order dated 4 February, 1930, which was published in The Civil and Military Gazette, it appears necessary that we explain to you the reason of our boycott of the court.

It is wrong to say that we have boycotted the courts of the British government. Today, we are going to the court of Mr. Louis who is hearing the case initiated against us under Section 22 of the Jail Act. We had presented our problems and difficulties in our bail application before you, but it still remains unconsidered.

Our comrades under trial belong to different and distant corner of the country. Therefore, they should be given the facility of meeting their wellwishers and sympathisers. Shri B.K. Dutt gave an application to meet Miss Lajjawati, and Shri Kamal Nath Tewari also wanted to meet someone, but were neither their relatives nor their lawyers. Even after securing their authorisation, they were not allowed to meet. It is quite clear from this that the undertrials are not given the facilities for their defence. Not merely this, Comrade Kranti Kumar, who was doing very useful work for our

defence committee and was also providing us with things of daily use, has been imprisoned on a fabricated charge. It has come to our knowledge that when the fabricated charge of bringing bullets in the sauce, could not be proved against him, under Section 124 A in Gurudaspur which is distant from Lahore.

I myself cannot keep a wholetime lawyer: therefore I wanted that my trusted friends should observe the court proceedings by being present there, but they were denied permission without any explicit reason, and only Lala Amardas, Advocate, has been given a seat.

We can never like this drama acted in the name of justice, because we do not get any facility or benefit for defending ourselves. One more serious complaint is against non-available of newspapers. Undertrial prisoners cannot be treated like convicted prisoners. We should be given at least one newspaper regularly. We want one newspaper also for those who do not know English. Therefore, as a protest, we are returning even the English. Therefore, as a protest, we are returning even the English daily Tribune. We decided to boycott the court on 29 January, 1930, because of these complaints. We will rejoin the proceedings when these inconveniences are removed.

Yours
etc. etc.