

THE DAILY PROVINCE

SEPTEMBER 30, 1909

[The Indian Sedition Mongers]

The Indian sedition-mongers will not be greatly discouraged in their mischievous activities by contemplation of the fate of their companion, Guy Alfred Aldred, the publisher of the notorious Indian Sociologist. The charge against Aldred was grave, in the words of the attorney-general at the trial in London recently, it was that he had aided in carrying on a criminal propaganda which, "so far as could reasonably be said; had resulted in murders of a particularly atrocious character"; and furthermore that, "with a knowledge of all this in his mind, he had proposed himself voluntarily to assist the continuance and extension of that propaganda, and not only to assist it as a printer, but to become an apostle." Mr. Justice Coleridge was at some pains to proclaim that the crime of sedition could not be lightly regarded; after which Aldred was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in the first division. It will be agreed that he has escaped lightly. Aldred is a very young man and his anarchical views are not likely to be modified by imprisonment of any duration, however great. It is generally a mistake, perhaps, to oblige a political stormy petrel who is anxious to pose as a martyr, but the reformatory and the vindictive or retributive theories of punishment are not the only ones. In a case of this kind punishment is either deterrent or it is nothing. In this instance appeal to the courts was not made merely in order that a hot-headed young fanatic with no sense of personal responsibility might be forced to spend a few unpleasant months in jail. It was made in order that other and more dangerous men might receive warning—in order to demonstrate to the world that even in Great Britain sedition is still a crime abhorrent to all rational people. The Indian agitators know how that any man may glorify political assassination at the very heart of the empire without fear of any penalty worth the name—that the culprit found guilty of such an offence will even receive special consideration in being graciously preserved from degrading contact with shoplifters, drunkards, and the ordinary riff-raff of the jails. No man will be deterred from active sedition by such sentences as that which has been passed upon the advocate of Mardar Lal Dhingra.

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Abstract

This article discusses the sentence of Guy Alfred Aldred, convicted of sedition for printing a pro-nationalist periodical, the Indian Sociologist. It criticises the leniency of the sentence, one year imprisonment, and states that harsher punishments must be imposed on nationalists and nationalist sympathisers if they are to act as a deterrent.

Key Words

Revolutionary movement

Nationalist Movement