

## 1. LETTER TO INDIRA NEHRU

[After October 15, 1939]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. INDU,

You must have now lost the habit of writing Hindi. But I must write, mustn't I, in the *rashtrabhasha* ?

Have you gone there for studies or for falling ill? How did you contract pleurisy? I have suffered the pangs of pleurisy. May God restore you soon to health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 9805. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 2. NOTES

### A POSER

A Britisher has written to Deenabandhu Andrews a letter on the war expounding his own views. He is an ardent pacifist. Deenabandhu has shared the letter with me. In it occur the following paragraphs:

For India too I think that this is a very critical time. The danger I see is that Britain may promise full Dominion Status or something of the kind, and as a result India will raise an army and become one more military-minded nation. Her witness for the way of non-violence and soul-force would then be largely discounted.

How can Gandhiji as a believer in non-violence ask for clarification of war aims with a view to getting India's support for Britain in this way of war? The only thing that he can do and that we should all be doing is to build up an army of men and women who are committed to the way of love and forgiveness and to receive but never to return violence. We have to work this out to see how it will alter our daily life as well as all our thinking and acting towards other communities and nations. We have to be disciplined in this and also to

<sup>1</sup> In her book, *With No Regrets*, Krishna Hutheesing explains that the addressee went hiking during the autumn of 1939, got soaked and caught a chill which developed into pleurisy. In a letter dated November 6, 1939, Jawaharlal Nehru had written to the addressee that he had a joint cable "from Agatha and Bhandari that you are going to Europe". She went to Leysin (in Switzerland) after having spent some time in Middlesex Hospital. *Vide* also the preceding item and "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru". 25-10-1939.

learn to act together as one man. Along this line I see tremendous possibilities.

Of course we should also use all the influence we can to urge Britain to acknowledge and put into practice full democracy in India as it is a high principle quite apart from whether India helps Britain in the war or not.

The danger that the writer senses is real. I dealt with it last week.<sup>1</sup> The writer cavils at my sympathy with the Allies. I have shown it as an out-and-out believer in non-violence, even because of my belief. Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for, it is even the duty of, a believer in ahimsa to distinguish between the aggressor and the defender. Having done so, he will side with the defender in a non-violent manner, i.e., give his life in saving him. His intervention is likely to bring a speedier end to the duel and may even result in bringing about peace between the combatants. Applying the argument to the present war, if the Congress actively sides with the Allies in a non-violent way, the Congress assistance will lift the Allied cause to a high moral plane and the Congress influence will be effectively used in the cause of peace. What is more it will be the special business of the Congress to see that, if the war is fought to a finish, no humiliation is heaped upon the vanquished. That is the role I have conceived for the Congress. The declaration of independence has become a necessity. The question having been raised, the Congress cannot help Britain if Britain is secretly fighting for imperialism while it declares to the world that the fight is for saving democracies. For Britain to be in the right a clear declaration of her war aim is a necessity, irrespective of the Congress policy.

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

*Harijan*, 21-10-1939

### 3. THE FICTION OF MAJORITY

It is painful to find the British Press and Britishers advancing the minority claim to prevent the declaration suggested<sup>2</sup> by the Congress, if I may say so, in the common interest. If the force of the Congress suggestion has not been overwhelmingly felt, the declaration will not

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "On Trial", 10-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendices "Working Committee's Manifesto", 14-9-1939 and "A.I.C.C. Resolution", 14-10-1939.

come. There need be no dejection among Congressmen if it does not. We shall get our independence when it is deserved. But it would be well for the British Government and the Allied cause, if the minority argument were not flung in the face of a credulous world. It would be honest to say that the British desire to hold India yet awhile. There will be nothing wrong in such a desire. India is a conquest. Conquests are not surrendered except when the conquered successfully rebel, or under an awakened conscience the conqueror repents of the conquest, or when the conquered territory ceases to be a profitable concern. I had hoped and still hope that the British, having become war-weary and sickened over the mad slaughter involved in the present war, would want to close it at the earliest possible moment by being above board in every respect and therefore in respect of India. This they can never be, so long as they hold India in bondage.

I know that many have been angry with me for claiming an exclusive right for the Congress to speak for the people of India as a whole. It is not an arrogant pretension. It is explicit in the first article of the Congress. It wants and works for independence for the whole of India. It speaks neither for majority nor minority. It seeks to represent all Indians without any distinction. Therefore those who oppose it should not count, if the claim for independence is admitted. Those who support the claim simply give added strength to the Congress claim.

Britain has hitherto held India by producing before the world Indians who want Britain to remain in India as ruler and arbiter between rival claimants. These will always exist. The question is whether it is right for Britain to plead these rivalries in defence of holding India under subjection or whether she should now recognize the mistake and leave India to decide upon the method of her own government.

And who are the minorities? They are religious, political and social: thus Mussalmans (religious), Depressed Classes (social), Liberals (political), Princes (social), Brahmins (social), non-Brahmins (social), Lingayats (social), Sikhs (social?), Christians—Protestants and Catholics (religious), Jains (Social?), Zamindars (political?). I have a letter from the Secretary of the All-India Shia Conference registering their claim for separate existence. Who are the majority in this medley? Unfortunately for unhappy India even Muslims are somewhat divided and so are the Christians. It is the policy of the

British Government to recognize every group that becomes sufficiently vocal and troublesome. I have drawn no fanciful picture of the minorities. It is true to life. The Congress itself has been obliged to deal with every one of the groups I have mentioned. My list is not exhaustive. It is illustrative. It can be increased *ad libitum*.

I know that the fashion is to talk of the Hindus forming the majority community. But Hinduism is an elastic, indefinable term, and Hindus are not a homogeneous whole like Muslims and Christians. And when one analyses the majority in any provincial legislature it will be found to consist of a combination of the so-called minorities. In other words and in reality so far as India is concerned, there can only be political parties and no majority or minority communities. The cry of the tyranny of the majority is a fictitious cry.

I observe that Janab Jinnah Saheb has said, in reply<sup>1</sup> to Rajen Babu's letter<sup>2</sup> offering to refer the League's grievances against the Congress Governments to an arbitration tribunal, that he has

already placed the whole case before the Viceroy and Governor-General and requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the Governors of the Provinces have been expressly authorised under the Constitution and entrusted with the responsibility to protect the rights and the interests of the minorities.

The matter is now under His Excellency's consideration, and he is the proper authority to take such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans in those Provinces where the Congress Ministries are in charge of the administration.

It is unfortunate that he had rejected Rajendra Babu's reasonable proposal. Is it rejection of the proffered hand of friendship? Be that as it may, nobody can have anything to say against the Viceroy investigating and adjudicating upon the charges brought against Congress Ministries. Let us hope he will soon conduct the investigation. Whether the Muslims are regarded as minorities or otherwise, their as well as any other community's rights and privileges, religious, social, cultural and political, must be regarded as a sacred trust to be jealously guarded. And the independence of India will make no difference to the protection of those rights. In fact they will

<sup>1</sup> Dated October 6, 1939

<sup>2</sup> Dated October 5, 1939

be better protected in every way, if only because in the framing of the Charter of Independence by the nation's representatives the Muslims and other minorities, real or so-called, will have an effective voice.

Consider for one moment what can happen if the English were to withdraw all of a sudden and there was no foreign usurper to rule. It may be said that the Punjabis, be they Muslims, Sikhs or others, will overrun India. It is highly likely that the Gurkhas will throw in their lot with the Punjabis. Assume further that non-Punjabi Muslims will make common cause with the Punjabis. Where will the Congressmen composed chiefly of Hindus be? If they are still truly non-violent, they will be left unmolested by the warriors. Congressmen won't want to divide power with the warriors but will refuse to let them exploit their unarmed countrymen. Thus if anybody has cause to keep the British rule for protection from the stronger element, it is the Congressmen and those Hindus and others who are represented by the Congress. The question, therefore, resolves itself into not who is numerically superior but who is stronger. Surely there is only one answer. Those who raise the cry of minority in danger have nothing to fear from the so-called majority which is merely a paper majority and which in any event is ineffective because it is weak in the military sense. Paradoxical as it may appear, it is literally true that the so-called minorities' fear has some bottom only so long as the weak majority has the backing of the British bayonets to enable it to play at democracy. But the British power will, so long as it so chooses, successfully play one against the other calling the parties by whatever names it pleases. And this process need not be dishonest. They may honestly believe that so long as there are rival claims put up, they must remain in India in response to a call from God to hold the balance evenly between them. Only that way lies not Democracy but Fascism, Nazism, Bolshevism and Imperialism, all facets of the doctrine of 'Might is Right.' I would fain hope that this war will change values. It can only do so, if India is recognized as independent and if that India represents unadulterated non-violence on the political field.

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

*Harijan*, 21-10-1939

#### 4. FAMINE WORK IN MORVI

Referring to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur's visit to Morvi during the *Rentia Jayanti* celebrations, the Dewan writes as follows:<sup>1</sup>

His Highness the Maharaja Saheb has been giving for some years Rs. 10,000 every year during the Gandhi Jayanti for the benefit of the Harijans and khadi. Sometimes the amount is sent to you as was done last year, and many times the amount is spent in Morvi for Harijans and for the encouragement of khadi.. . .

This year we are hard hit by famine. We have organized relief measures on an extensive scale.. . . Cheap grain and grass depots are opened throughout the State where food and fodder are distributed on cash and credit.. . . Agriculturists are given food and fodder on credit.. . . and.. . . are helped to grow fodder crops by giving loans for seeds.

Every available source of water is used for irrigation by setting up small pumping plants.

You will be glad to learn that one of the activities of famine relief is to produce khadi. The Famine Department purchases raw cotton, and all operations from carding to weaving are paid for at reasonable rates. The State takes all the khadi that is being produced. It is hoped that this will give the much required employment to a large section of the people—most of them Harijans—at their doors.

This year His Highness has decided to distribute khadi worth Rs. 1,000 to the needy, and owing to scarcity conditions many will need free help of clothing. This will be his usual donation on Gandhi Jayanti.. . .

Bhangis and Meghwars would not use the common tank for taking their water and the State had closed it till their differences were composed. During the period of the existing stress they have made up their differences and now they use the common tank.

During the year the State has provided two measures for the benefit of the lower ranks of State service which include Harijans—one is to give them loans without interest, and the other is to give female servants the benefit of one month's maternity leave on full pay.

Seeing that generally it falls to my lot to criticize the States, it is a pleasure to be able to record the good work done in Morvi in connection with famine. I congratulate the Maharaja Saheb on the

<sup>1</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

effort that is being put forth to alleviate distress. As to khadi I would like to suggest that if it is to become a permanent insurance against famine, the Maharaja Saheb and the people of Morvi have to use khadi for their personal and domestic use. Morvi grows good cotton enough for its requirements. Its people can produce all the khadi they need. Those who are too poor to pay the higher price at which khadi must be sold if it is to give an adequate wage to the spinners, should become spinners themselves. Shri Narandas Gandhi's yearly experiments have shown progressively the immense possibilities in this direction. But these latent virtues of khadi cannot be brought out so long as the Maharaja Saheb and the people of Morvi remain distant patrons instead of becoming lovers and wearers themselves of khadi. It is suicidal economy to buy cheap mill-cloth even though the people can easily produce enough khadi in their own homes without much extra effort or outlay of capital.

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

*Harijan*, 21-10-1939

## 5. BAPA JAYANTI

Thakkar Bapa, the father of Harijans and all those who are almost like them and classified as semi-civilized races, animists and what not, completes his seventy years on 29th November next. The inmates of Harijan Nivas in Delhi have planned to celebrate the event in a manner that must delight Thakkar Bapa's heart. They want to collect the modest sum of Rs. 7,000 to be presented to Thakkar Bapa on his birthday for the Harijan cause. They want me to bless and advertise the effort. I have written to them accusing them of little faith. Thakkar Bapa is a rare worker. He is unassuming. He wants no praise. His work is his sole satisfaction and recreation. Old age has not slackened his zeal. He is himself an institution. I once suggested that he might take a little rest. Immediately came the answer, 'How can I rest when there is so much to do? My work must be my rest.' He puts to shame every young man around him in the energy he expends upon his life mission. A purse of Rs. 7,000 is an insult to the cause and to him who carries on his broad shoulders its heavy burden. The workers must aim at collecting nothing less than Rs. 70,000 from all India. Even that amount is nothing for the cause and its father. But it is a respectable enough sum to be collected inside a month. How I wish it was possible to collect coppers from Harijans and Bhils. They

know him. But the monied and middle-class men too know Bapa and love him. I have no doubt that they will subscribe liberally to the fund both for the cause and for the geat *sevak* who represents it. Subscriptions may be sent to (1) Harijan Nivas, Kingsway, Delhi, (2) Harijan Ashram, Sabarmati, or (3) Segaoon *via* Wardha.

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

*Harijan*, 21-10-1939

## 6. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 16, 1939*

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I hope you got my wire. Deeper consideration made it clear to me that I must not force the pace. Therefore I am not sending Mahadev. God will guide every one of us. You are right in not rushing to Calcutta. Your place is clearly there where you are. You will [avoid]<sup>1</sup> all anxiety.

Love.

MOHAN

[PS.]

Amrit says, "there" means Calcutta. Hence the addition.

From the original: C. W. 10203. Courtesy: Visvabharati, Santiniketan

## 7. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 16, 1939*

DEAR MR. ALEXANDER,

.. .. I am commissioned by Bapu who is overwhelmed with work to write and acknowledge yours of the 3rd instant duly received. He is grateful for the greetings from your college staff and sends you all his love.. . .

*Yours sincerely,*

AMRIT KAUR

From a photostat: G. N. 1431

<sup>1</sup> The source is illegible.



## 8. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 16, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have sent your article<sup>1</sup> to *Harijanbandhu*. I have written<sup>2</sup> as much as I could in *Harijan*. I have had no time for further embellishment. What is your suggestion regarding how the money collected should be used? I understand your difficulty. What cannot be cured must be endured.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U/II. Also C. W. 8567. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

## 9. A SILENCE-DAY NOTE

[On or after *October 16, 1939*]<sup>3</sup>

I thought that you were keeping a daily count. You should study my article carefully. It answers all difficulties. Even the majority can't function without the British bayonet. The whole agitation is bluster to force as much as they can from the so-called majority.

From the original: C.W. 9263. Courtesy: Jairamdas Doulatram

## 10. NOTES

### HINDU-MUSLIM CLASHES

If proof were wanted to show that the non-violence of the Congress was in effect violence in suspension or inactive violence, it is furnished by the effective though quite indisciplined violence exhibited in Hindu-Muslim clashes. Had the thousands of Hindus and Muslims who took part in the Khilafat agitation been non-violent at

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's article "*Rentia Jayanti in Rajkot*" appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 22-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 12-7-1939.

<sup>3</sup> From the reference to "article", presumably, "The Fiction of Majority", pp. 258-61.

heart, they could never have been violent towards one another as they are continually found to be. Nor can it be said that those who take part in the clashes are not Congressmen. If we rule out all those who resort to violence as non-Congressmen, the Congress will cease to be a mass organization. For the combatants in these clashes are derived from the masses. More over one finds today violence resorted to by rival Congressmen at Congress meetings. The gross indiscipline and fraud practised at Congress elections are all illustrations of Congress violence. It is difficult to say, therefore, who, if any, are non-violent Congressmen. If they were in a majority in the Congress and if they played an effective part in Hindu-Muslim clashes, they could stop them or at least give their lives in stopping them. If the bulk of Congressmen were truly non-violent, Muslims would be obliged to confess that Congressmen could not be accused of anti-Muslim bias. It is not enough for Congressmen to say that they have not been found guilty of incorrect attitude. I may be proved to be legally correct but may fail miserably if my action was examined in non-violent scales. But this non-violence has to be non-violence of the brave and the strong. It must come from inward conviction. I have, therefore, not hesitated to say that it is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. Violence is any day preferable to impotence. There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.

#### NOT TOO LATE

Rashtrapati Rajen Babu, Acharya Kirpalani, Shri Shankarrao Dev, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Shri Jairamdas had remained behind for two or three days after the meeting of the A. I. C. C. All of these except Rajen Babu gently complained that I had wronged them by saying that the whole of the Working Committee was against me in the interpretation I had put upon their action in terms of non-violence. They said that they had hitherto given team work. They had always followed Rajen Babu and the Sardar at the meetings of the Working Committee. It must be said for them that they had whispered in my ears that they were with me in the interpretation I had put on non-violence. I had remonstrated that that was not enough. They had boldly to assert themselves at this critical juncture. But their humility would not allow them to do so.

But even their vote, if they had cast it in favour of my interpr-

etation, would have been in their individual and not representative capacity. As I have made clear in my note on Hindu-Muslim clashes, it is not possible to claim non-violence for the Congress masses. Those Congressmen who believe in non-violence as a creed, to be enforced as much in Hindu-Muslim quarrels as in defending India, have to begin with the alphabet of non-violence and find out how many Congressmen are with them. It is highly probable that they will have to retire from the Congress and, like me, serve and convert the Congress from without. The new road is straight enough but difficult to negotiate. It is overlaid with the bones of lonely seekers. They died without finding the way, but they had the inward satisfaction of having lived and died for their faith. When I wrote<sup>1</sup> on the formation of peace brigade I had adumbrated a programme for them. The brigades died as soon as they were born but the programme abides. It is a programme of courting death in preventing Hindu-Muslim clashes and the like. It is a programme of dying to prevent violence. Such death, however, will count as criminal suicide if the suicide has not a heart free from impurity and malice.

SEGAON, October 17, 1939

*Harijan*, 21-10-1939

### 11. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,

October 17, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

Please find with this a letter from Chhaganlal. Please read it and send me your suggestion. Chhaganlal's suggestion about the money collected appeals to me. But all the same, let me know your view.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M. M. U./II. Also C.W. 8568. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Qualifications of a Peace Brigade", 18-6-1938.

## 12. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

The Viceregal declaration<sup>2</sup> is profoundly disappointing. It would have been better if the British Government had declined to make any declaration whatsoever. The long statement made by the Viceroy simply shows that the old policy of divide and rule is to continue. So far as I can see the Congress will be no party to it, nor can the India of Congress conception be a partner with Britain in her war with Herr Hitler. The Indian declaration<sup>3</sup> shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it. Another Round Table Conference is promised at the end of the war. Like its predecessor it is bound to fail. The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone. What the future has in store for India I dare not foretell. I do not blame the Viceroy or the leaders of Britain for the unfortunate result. The Congress will have to go into the wilderness again before it becomes strong and pure enough to reach its objectives. I have no doubt that Congressmen will await the Working Committee's decision<sup>4</sup>.

SEGAON, October 18, 1939

*Harijan*, 21-10-1939

## 13. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 18, 1939*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I must thank you for your kind letter enclosing an advance copy of your pronouncement<sup>5</sup>. I suppose it had to be. I have just

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes", sub-title, "Disappointing". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 18-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendices "Viceroy's Declaration", 17-10-1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendices "Congress Working Committee Resolution", after 18-7-1939, "Working Committee's Manifesto", 14-9-1939 and "A.I.C.C. Resolution", 14-10-1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939.

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Declaration", 17-10-1939.

issued a Press statement<sup>1</sup> of which a copy is enclosed herewith.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm: Lord Linlithgow Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

#### *14. LETTER TO M. R. MASANI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 18, 1939*

MY DEAR MASANI,

I want the co-operation of everyone. But the question is whether our agreement is superficial or solid. The Viceregal declaration<sup>4</sup> will soon show where we are.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 4131. Also C.W. 4889. Courtesy: M. R. Masani

#### *15. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 18, 1939*

MY DEAR BHIKSHU,

I had your wire and now have your letter. I hope things will shape themselves as you expect.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours,*

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1388

#### *16. LETTER TO HARISHCHANDRA*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 18, 1939*

BHAI HARISHCHANDRA,

I got your letter of good wishes. Thank you.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5679

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Telegram to G. V. Gurjale", September 1939.

## 17. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEGAON,  
October 18, 1939

CHI. PRABHA,

I did write to you. How is it that you did not get the letter? Jayaprakash came and saw me afterwards. We have decided that you should come and stay with me. I am eagerly waiting for you. Saraswati has gone to Trivandrum, and Kanti also will go. Rajkumari has come here. Vijaya and Sharda are here. Sharda is pregnant; it is the seventh month. Radha also is here at present and so is Krishnadas Gandhi. Ba is all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 3529

## 18. LETTER TO SURENDRA AND MANUBEHN MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 18, 1939

CHI. SURENDRA AND MANUDI,

I have your letter. I am in correspondence with Kunvarji. I have written<sup>1</sup> to him and advised him to stay there as long as he feels some improvement. Otherwise he may come over here. There is no facility for staying in Nagpur. The doctor is competent. If he comes, I shall make some arrangement for him to stay either at Segaoon or Wardha. Manudi must be fine. I hope she is taking care of her health. Does she read the books prescribed for her?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI SURENDRA MASHRUWALA  
BALKIRAN, SOUTH AVENUE, SANTACRUZ

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2672. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Kunvarji K. Parekh", 12-10-1939.

*19. LETTER TO KANCHANBEHN M. SHAH*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*October 18, 1939*

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have your letter. What a girl you are! In your letter you have mentioned Segaoon as your address, and have not given your correct address there. I got it from Munnalal. I did not even know that you were unwell. But thank God you have reached there safely. Now stay there in peace. Write to me regularly.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI KANCHANBEHN  
C/O SHRI MAGANLAL KALIDAS SHAH  
VALOD, *via* MADHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8290. Also C.W. 7060. Courtesy:  
Munnalal G. Shah

*20. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*October 18, 1939*

CHI. NAJUKLAL,

I was glad to have your letter after a long time. Moti<sup>1</sup> should get well.

There is no question of violence or non-violence on the part of God. Prahlada's non-violence, however, remained inviolate. If the whole world were non-violent there would be no Hiranyakashipu<sup>2</sup> or his like. But if there should be any, then there would be many more like him. God will always use them. However, they do not cease to be violent. How do we know for whose destruction Hitler was born? But will Hitler's violence ever count as non-violence?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12153

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's wife

<sup>2</sup> Prahlada's father who defied God

## 21. LETTER TO B. P. RUSTOGI<sup>1</sup>

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 19, 1939

DEAR SIR,

Please give me the Dewan's name, his salary, etc. What is your occupation? Are the previous dictators in jail? If they are, what is their sentence? How many are in prison?

*Yours sincerely,*

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 22. LETTER TO KANTI N. PAREKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 19, 1939

CHI. KANTI,

You have taken a great many pledges before and broken many of them. May God grant you the strength to keep the latest one.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 6274

## 23. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 19, 1939

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I read your letter to Mahadev. Will the work you have done ever be undone? There is no need for newspaper publicity. What do you intend to do now ?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M. M. U./III

<sup>1</sup> The addressee was Joint Secretary, Pataudi State Praja Mandal.



## 24. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

SEGAON,  
*October 19, 1939*

CHI. KANAIYO,

Your birthday note is lying in front of me. May you rise higher every day and grow stronger in body and mind. May your angularities get smoothed out in the course of time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

## 25. LETTER TO TARA JASANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*October 19, 1939*

CHI. TARA,

You have made no mistake. Being dubbed a 'mahatma', I have two birthdays. Greater ones still may have three birthdays. You must find out and let me know how I have two and others may have three or more birthdays.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SMT. TARABEHN JASANI  
ANANDKUNJ  
RAJKOT, KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9833. Courtesy: Tarabehn Pratap

26. *SPEECH AT CONFERENCE OF LOCAL BODIES’  
REPRESENTATIVES, WARDHA<sup>1</sup>*

[October 19, 1939]<sup>2</sup>

I am glad that you have asked me this question. I had better answer it by saying that the present system of primary education was devised without any thought of the economic advancement of the country. The State gets no return whatsoever for the money it is spending on primary education. That we get a few administrators like Shuklaji<sup>3</sup> as products of the so-called higher education is no justification for the waste on primary education. It only brings into painful relief the pathetic superstition that we cannot carry on the affairs of India except through men with English degrees or possessing a knowledge of English. Directors of Public Instruction have admitted that the present system of primary education is a colossal waste, that a very small percentage of the pupils reach the higher classes, that there is nothing like permanency in the literacy imparted and that, even as it is, it touches but a small fraction of the vast rural areas. What a small fraction of the C.P. villages, for instance, have even these primary schools? And the few schools that there are in the villages bring no kind of return to them.

The question that you have asked me, therefore, really does not arise. But the new scheme is claimed to be based on sound economics, for all education will be through the medium of a craft. It is not education plus training in a craft, but it is all education by means of a craft. Therefore a boy who receives education, say, through weaving, will surely and must be better than a weaver as a mere craftsman. And nobody can say that a weaver is an economic waste. This weaver will know the various tools and the technique of all the processes and will produce better results than a weaver-craftsman. The economic results of the system as it has been carried out during the past few months had better be studied in the facts and figures collected by Shrimati

<sup>1</sup> This is extracted from “C. P. Local Bodies Give the Lead” by Mahadev Desai, who explains: “A conference of the representatives of the local bodies in the Central provinces and Berar.. .. invited Gandhiji to address them.. .. Gandhiji did so confining himself to a general question put to him by one of the members, viz., ‘How was the Basic Education Scheme calculated to contribute to the economic and political advancement of the country ?’”

<sup>2</sup> From *The Hindu*, 20-10-1939

<sup>3</sup> Ravishankar Shukla, Premier, Central Provinces, who welcomed the representatives

Ashadevi<sup>1</sup>. They have gone far beyond our expectations. That is what I mean by self-supporting education. When I used the word 'self-supporting' I did not mean that all the capital expenditure would be defrayed from it, but that at least the salary of the teacher would be found out of the proceeds of the articles made by the pupils. The economic aspect of the basic system of education is thus self-evident.

Then there is another aspect, viz., that of the national awakening. I wonder if you have read the Kumarappa Committee's report<sup>2</sup> on rural industries. The traditional figure of the average income *per capita* is Rs. 70, but he has proved that the *per capita* income in the C.P. villages does not exceed Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 per year. Spinning and other village industries for basic education have been so selected that they answer village wants. Therefore the boys who receive their education through village crafts must spread their knowledge in their homes. Now you will see that the average income of the villager can be easily doubled by the village crafts being revived. Most of the bickerings in the district boards will also cease if you will become servants of the people and interest yourselves actively in the new system. As I was coming to the meeting I had a letter from a school where the children had earned out of a four hours' spinning for 30 days Rs. 75 odd. If 30 children earned Rs. 75 in a month, you can easily work out how much would be the earning of crores of primary school children in India.

And imagine the result of the self-confidence and resourcefulness fostered among these children, as also of the consciousness that they are adding to the income of the land and solving the problem of unequal distribution. This would lead to an automatic political awakening. I would expect the children to know everything about the local affairs, about our corruption and how it can be ended. This kind of political education I would wish every one of our children to have. That would surely add a cubit to their stature.

I think I have more than proved that the system of basic education is sure to promote the economic and political advancement of the country.

Having said this I would make an appeal to you. Now that you have come here I would ask you to study this system of education and

<sup>1</sup> Ashadevi Aryanayakam, Editor, *Nayi Taleem*, the chief organ of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. Her article "Conference of Basic Education" appeared in *Harijan*, 7-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> For Gandhiji's summary of the report, *vide* "Summary of Industrial Survey Committee Report", 29-7-1939.

to tell Shuklaji and Aryanayakamji<sup>1</sup> whether you are going away with faith in it or not. I am sure that if you give it a fair trial, in three months' time you will be able to report that you have revived the schools, and put new energy and new life into the children. A seed may take years before it grows into a tree, but the limited results of the educational seed you will sow will be seen in the course of a few months. I have placed the simplest things before the people of India, simplest things calculated to bring about revolutionary changes. e.g., khadi, prohibition, revival of handicrafts, education through crafts. But unless you can get over the intoxication of the existing regime you will not see the simple things.

Whatever you do, do not deceive yourselves and us. If you do not feel enthused over the system, you will please plainly say so.

A word about capital expenditure. The capital expenditure that you will incur will be no dead loss like the expenditure on buildings. You will have to expend on tools and stock which will be of productive use for years. The spinning-wheels and the looms and the carding-bows you will invest in should be useful to numerous batches of students. Industrialization involves heavy capital expenditure and plenty of wear and tear and depreciation. The present scheme involves nothing like it, as indeed nothing like it is required in a well-planned rural economy.

One last thing. I want you not to be disturbed by the impending changes in our political system. The Ministries may go as they came. They came on the understanding that they would have to go at the shortest possible notice. They knew that they would have to march from the secretariat to the prison if the occasion came, and they would do so with a smile on their lips. But your work and your programme need not depend on the Ministries. If the work that you have planned is based on solid foundations, it will endure, no matter how many Ministries come and go. But it depends on the faith you have in your work. The Congress and its work will endure so long as it remains true to its creed of truth and non-violence. I have criticized the Congress severely and mercilessly exposed its failings, but I also know that it has still got a fair credit balance.

Above all let me tell you that everything will depend on your faith and your determination. If you have the will, there is sure to be

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Aryanayakam, Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh

the way. Every difficulty will dissolve, if you make up your minds that this is a scheme that has to be put through. Only the faith has got to be a living faith. Thousands profess to have faith in God, but if they fly in terror at the slightest alarm, their faith is a dead faith, no living faith. A living faith endows one with the requisite knowledge and resources to put one's plan through. I am glad that every one of you claims to have that faith. If that is really so, your province will have set a noble example to other provinces.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 28-10-1939

## 27. LETTER TO RAVISHANKAR SHUKLA

[On or after *October 19,*<sup>2</sup> 1939

BHAI SHUKLAJI,

The report you have sent me of our talks is not worth revising. You will realize it from the few lines that I have revised. There are very few short-hand writers in India who can accurately take down conversations. I have summarized below my thoughts on the subject, which may perhaps better clarify my attitude. You may publish it if you like. If you need an English rendering get it done there. If you want the same thing in English from me I shall send you one. In that case you will please return the Hindi.

Here is an abstract of the discussion with the Chief Minister regarding his scheme and mine:

There is no need to co-ordinate the President's scheme<sup>3</sup> with mine<sup>4</sup>. Both can run parallel but their aims are different. Under the President's scheme the burden of expenditure on primary education is to fall on the individual village. And this through the dedication of the land. This is certainly commendable if it can be done. People will develop an interest in the education of their children. But I doubt the possibility of earning Rs. 15 per month from a plot of land thus acquired. Nonetheless, there can be no harm in making an experi-

<sup>1</sup> Mahadev Desai adds that "the members had a discussion after this for several hours" and passed resolutions.

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to "talks" with the addressee, which, presumably, took place during the conference of local bodies; *vide* the preceding item.

<sup>3</sup> The Vidya Mandir Scheme sponsored by the addressee. A Bill on the scheme was passed by the Central Provinces Legislative Assembly on November 2, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> The Basic Education Scheme

ment if some zamindar gifts a large plot in the village. The experiment, if it succeeds, will certainly be beneficial. We shall not come across many people who will utilize the land profitably. Those who graduate from the agricultural colleges are not at all trained for work on the land. Hence the knowledge acquired in agricultural colleges proves generally sterile.

The aim of my scheme is to change the very system of education. The new system will fulfil the needs of the country as well as the individual and bring about self-reliance. Self-reliance is also a true test of the fulfilment of education. Hence it makes no difference to my scheme of education even if someone gives a donation for running a primary school. And here is the scheme in a nutshell:

Primary education shall be given only through some craft or the other. Real education and an all-round development of the child is not possible without it. And such education must be self-supporting. This does not mean that each class will be self-supporting. However, boys or girls who will go through the seven-year curriculum in a craft-based school will be able to pay all these years' expenses through their earnings from the crafts.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 28. *LETTER TO V. A. SUNDARAM*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*October 20, 1939*

MY DEAR SUNDARAM,

The voice within told me 'not yet'. So the contemplated letter has not gone.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3183

## 29. *LETTER TO PYARELAL*

SEGAON,  
*October 20, 1939*

CHI. PYARELAL,

What a letter from you! I have not understood it at all. It does not contain answers to my questions. If you believe that my decisions

are inspired by God, then I should not find it a strain to get work out of you. These are our decisions:

1. From Tuesday onward you will do the massage and bathe me. Sushila will do these on Sundays and Mondays.
2. You will take care of the mail, maybe with a sense of detachment but with the same interest.
3. You will write something for *Harijan*.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

### 30. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

*October 20, 1939*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Go to Dr. A. Lakshmipati. Give him the service he needs. Let me know about his health.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4329

### 31. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 20, 1939*

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I see no comparison between gambling and wine. I have taken donations from many wine merchants. Also from prostitutes. Whose money should I reject and whose should I accept? Yes, I had refused Rs. 12,000 from Gohar Jan because of the condition that I should go and listen to her music. But Alibhai went and collected the money. Tell me what we can do now. Strange are the ways of dharma.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

If Balvantsinha has arrived there<sup>1</sup>, tell him that his other letters have been received. He must be visiting the dairy there. Mahadev had written to him.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2472

### 32. INTERVIEW TO “THE TIMES OF INDIA”<sup>2</sup>

SEGAON,

[October 20, 1939]<sup>3</sup>

Requested to give a reply to *The times of India*'s editorial appeal addressed to him, Mr. Gandhi told me in a special interview that no amount of clarification or explanation of the Viceregal statement<sup>4</sup> would make it acceptable so long as the precise demand of the Congress was not met. There was no evidence of a desire or readiness on the part of Great Britain to transfer power to Indians.

*The Times of India*'s appeal related to the scope, authority and function of the conference of India's representatives, proposed to be called at the end of the war.

The journal drew attention to the following words from the Viceroy's statement:

His Majesty's Government recognize that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future Federal Government of India, and of the plan destined to give effect to the assurances given in Parliament by the late Secretary of State<sup>5</sup> to which I have just referred, it will be necessary to reconsider in the light of the then circumstances to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remained appropriate.

*The Times of India* interpreted these words to mean that it would be open to the projected conference at the end of the war to consider Dominion Status. It requested Mr. Gandhi and the Congress to appreciate the value of such a conference and, if they had any doubt, to ask for an authoritative clarification of the scope of that conference.

The words quoted by *The Times of India*, thought Mr. Gandhi, were “too vague to admit of clarification; they left everything beautifully indefinite.” He added:

What the Congress wants is the clearest possible acceptance

<sup>1</sup> In Delhi

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under the title “An Important Interview” as reproduced from *The Times of India*, 21-10-1939.

<sup>3</sup> From *Gandhi—1915-1948: A Detailed Chronology*

<sup>4</sup> Of October 17; vide Appendix “Viceroy's Declaration”, 17-10-1939.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Samuel Hoare



of the fact that India is to be treated as an independent nation. For India to become enthusiastic about participation in this war it is necessary to speak to her in the language of precision, admitting of no other meaning.

Surely what the Congress wants is easy enough to give, if the will is there. I miss the will in the Viceregal declaration.

And whom is the conference to consist of? Are they to be those to be invited by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State? How can they be called representative in the true sense of the term ?

In order to avoid any doubt, the Congress had suggested a representative assembly of men and women elected on the widest possible franchise. Such an assembly the Congress described by the accepted phraseology, namely, a constituent assembly. How can this be objected to by any party which desires freedom for India? Is it right to invite people to say whether they want freedom or not? Should a slave be consulted as to the desirability of his freedom? He might be asked as to the manner thereof. This the constituent assembly can do. It is for that assembly to decide whether it is to be Dominion Status or what. It may be more or less. The people's representatives should have the fullest freedom to decide upon the nature and content of the freedom.

It is surprising how the minorities are being played against the Congress. Surely the Congress has no quarrel with any of them. The Congress will safeguard the rights of every minority so long as they do not advance claims inconsistent with India's independence. The Muslims, the Scheduled Classes and every other class will be fully represented in the constituent assembly and they will have to decide their own special rights. Even the Princes and the zamindars have nothing to fear if they become, and appear, as representatives of the ryots. Independent India will not tolerate any interests in conflict with the true interests of the masses, whether the latter are known as Muslims, Scheduled Classes, Christians, Parsis, Jews, Sikhs, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, or any other.

But I blame neither the Viceroy nor the British War Cabinet. Independence is not to depend upon the British or anyone else's mercy. It will come when the people are ready for it. Evidently British statesmen think that the people of India are not ready. The Congress or any other organization that seeks to represent the millions has to consolidate its strength and resources for the purpose.

Mr. Gandhi said he had hoped that British statesmen, from the bitter experience of European turmoil, had turned over a new leaf; that hope was for the time being dashed to pieces.

Mr. Gandhi, proceeding, remarked that *The Times of India* should direct its appeal to the Englishmen and ask them to do the right thing by India in keeping with the professed war aims of Britain. He said he was grieved to find that the paper which had till the other day been urging the authorities to make a generous gesture “had suddenly changed its front”. Judged by the paper’s own past demands, the Viceroy’s statement was a poor response. Yet *The Times of India* praised it.

Mr. Gandhi concluded with the reply to the personal reference made to him in *The Times of India* editorial. He denied that he had been inconsistent or that he had deviated from his first statements<sup>1</sup> in which he had expressed his sympathy for England and France. He said he still held the view. But now that the issue has been raised, he expected England to face the issue and give a satisfactory answer.

His advice to the Congress did not mean that India’s support to the Allied cause should be at the expense of her own freedom. He would not be a party to India being tied to the chariot wheel of Britain. His prayer still was not only that Britain and France should win, but also that Germany should not be ruined.

He had no desire to rear India’s freedom on the ashes of any of the belligerent Powers, even as he did not want the freedom of the European Powers to be built upon the ruins of India’s freedom.

*Harijan*, 28-10-1939

### 33. AM I A MESSENGER OF GOD?

A Muslim friend writes a long letter which pruned down reads as follows:

The chief difficulty that stands in your way of right thinking is that your heart has so hardened by looking at and interpreting things in the light of your self-assumed principles, that you cannot bring to bear an open mind on anything howsoever valuable it may be.

If God has not appointed you as his messenger, what you say or teach cannot be claimed to be a word of God. No one would contest the truthfulness of truth and non-violence as teachings of the prophets, and principles of very high spiritual value; but their true understanding and application require a soul that is in direct communion with God. Any person who has only polished his

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Statement to the Press”, 5-9-1939 and “Source of my Sympathy”, 11-9-1939.

soul by suppressing or acting against the desires and cravings of the flesh and the self is not a prophet.

The fact that you stand as a teacher of the world and claim to have diagnosed the disease from which the world is suffering, and proclaim that the truth of your choice and practice and the non-violence of your conviction and application are the only cures for the afflicted world, betrays your utter disregard and misconception of the truth. You admit you make mistakes. Your non-violence is actually a concealed violence as it is not based on actual spiritual life and is not the earnest of true inspiration from God.

As a true believer and in pursuance of that teaching of Islam which enjoins on every Muslim to convey the truth to every human being, I would request you to clear your mind of all complexes, to place yourself in the position of an ordinary human being who wants to learn and not to teach, and to become a real seeker after truth.

If you wish to find out the truth, I would request you to study the Koran and the life of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace of God be upon him) written by Shebli Nowani and M. Sulaiman Nadwi with an open mind.

As for unity among the different communities inhabiting India, it can never come in terms of a single nation. Broad-minded toleration of each other's religion and practices and an agreement based on the recognition of the Muslims as a nation with their own complete code of life and culture to guide them and an equality of status in political life, shall bring harmony and peace to India.

I have omitted no argument used by the writer.

I have not hardened my heart. I have never claimed to be a messenger of God except in the sense in which all human beings are. I am a mortal as liable to err as any other. Nor have I claimed to be a teacher. But I cannot prevent admirers from calling me a teacher or a mahatma, as I cannot prevent traducers from calling me all sorts of names and ascribing to me vices to which I am a stranger. I lay both praise and blame at the feet of the Almighty and go my way.

For the information of my correspondent, who is a schoolmaster in a high school, I may say that I have reverently studied the works he mentions and also many other works on Islam. I have more than once read the Koran. My religion enables me, obliges me, to imbibe all that is good in all the great religions of the earth. This does not mean that I must accept the interpretation that my correspondent may put upon the message of the Prophet of Islam or any other Prophet. I must use the limited intelligence that God has given me to interpret the

teachings bequeathed to mankind by the Prophets of the world. I am glad to find that my correspondent agrees that truth and non-violence are taught by the holy Koran. Surely it is for him, as for every one of us, to apply these principles to daily life according to the light given to us by God.

The last paragraph in the letter lays down a dangerous doctrine. Why is India not one nation? Was it not one during, say, the Moghul period? Is India composed of two nations? If it is, why only two? Are not Christians a third, Parsis a fourth, and so on? Are the Muslims of China a nation separate from the other Chinese? Are the Muslims of England a different nation from the other English? How are the Muslims of the Punjab different from the Hindus and the Sikhs? Are they not all Punjabis, drinking the same water, breathing the same air and deriving sustenance from the same soil? What is there to prevent them from following their respective religious practices? Are Muslims all the world over a separate nation? Or are the Muslims of India only to be a separate nation distinct from the others? Is India to be vivisected into two parts, one Muslim and the other non-Muslim? And what is to happen to the handful of Muslims living in the numerous villages where the population is predominantly Hindu, and conversely to the Hindus where, as in the Frontier Province or Sind, they are a handful? The way suggested by the correspondent is the way of strife. Live and let live or mutual forbearance and toleration is the law of life. That is the lesson I have learnt from the Koran, the Bible, the Zend-Avesta and the *Gita*.

SEGAON, October 21, 1939

*Harijan*, 28-10-1939

### 34. TELEGRAM TO PATTOM THANU PILLAI<sup>1</sup>

October 21, 1939

SHOULD NOT PUBLISH WITHOUT REFERENCE DEWAN. YOU  
ASK HIM OTHERWISE I CAN WRITE.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's telegram dated October 21, in which he informed Gandhiji of the Working Committee's decision to publish the correspondence regarding Gandhiji's talks with the Dewan and sought permission for its publication.

### 35. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

SEGAON,

October 21, 1939

DEAR DR. HARDIKAR,

Several Mysore friends have been here. I have told them that I shall do nothing without the consent of those of you who have hitherto guided the Mysore workers.

Ramdurg is bad business, I can only advise mute suffering.<sup>1</sup> If there is no retaliation even by way of reply in the Press the fictitious agitation will die out. It follows that violence must always be from the traducers. You must train your followers in the art of non-violence. This presupposes a living faith on your part in the efficacy of non-violence under all conditions.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours Sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: N. S. Hardikar Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> In his letter dated October 18, the addressee had, *inter alia*, said: "The minds of the people are poisoned against those who gave evidence against Justice Davar. Shri Shankarrao Deo, Gangadharrao Deshpande, R. R. Diwakar, H. S. Kaujalgi and myself are the targets. . . . If this is left unchecked, I am afraid, it is bound to lead to violence."

<sup>2</sup> In his reply dated October 26, the addressee said: ". . . We will mutely suffer everything as advised by you. . . Now as regards the present movement, it was started by the Mysore workers on their own initiative. . . . We have, however, been giving some publicity to the actual happenings in the State and. . . necessary suggestions. . . Beyond that we have been doing nothing. . . We were glad to learn from Shri Bhimappa Naik that you were willing to intervene provided the State agreed to it. We feel sure that the Mysore State Working Committee or responsible Mysore workers will certainly jump at the idea of your intervention. . . ." *Vide* also "Letter to N. S. Hardikar", 14-10-1939 and "Fragment of Letter to People of Mysore", 24-11-1939.

### 36. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,

October 21, 1939

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

Do what you can about the Harijans after discussing the matter with Bapa, Hariji<sup>1</sup> and others.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2471

### 37. VIRTUES OF SILENCE

Thus writes Dr. Rajan<sup>2</sup> to Mahadev Desai:

The other day when I was at Segaoon to see Mahatmaji, I found him observing silence. You know he wrote on a slip of paper to the following effect, referring to his silence: "This has become a health-necessity with me". These few words have made me ponder over the idea of silence in relation to physical health. As a piece of scientific information it will be good to have a record of his personal experience.

I should like to know as a result of his observing silence,

1. whether there is any visible drop in the blood-pressure variation;
2. whether after a period of silence he feels physically better and is able to put forth greater energy and application to his work; and
3. whether he feels mental recuperation also *pari passu* with that of his body while he is observing silence.

To observe silence is indeed a difficult self-imposed restriction. But it is worth while in the interests of physical and mental well-being to make this possible.<sup>3</sup> You know that I never write or indulge in such speculative writing to a busy person like Gandhiji. You will therefore appreciate as to why I am writing to you. If you think the information which I seek is worth while, I shall be glad if you can publish it in *Harijan*.

Before I answer the questions let me say that for me silence is

<sup>1</sup> Viyogi Hari of Harijan Nivas, New Delhi

<sup>2</sup> Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, Minister of Public Health, Madras

<sup>3</sup> As in the source

no strain and no effort. Indeed I am so tired of arguing and talking that I speak only when I feel I must. Generally, therefore, I am nowadays silent except to visitors who come by appointment and on some business connected with activities with which I am identified. In the Segaon Ashram I am silent to everybody except in cases of sickness and the like. I observe too that I get easily irritated if members of the Ashram act in a manner contrary to expectation. I find that silence avoids irritation.

Now for the questions.

1. There is a perceptible drop in blood-pressure when I observe silence. Medical friends have therefore advised me to take as much silence as I can.

2. There is no doubt whatsoever that after every silence I feel recuperated and have greater energy for work. The output of work during silence is much greater than when I am not silent.

3. The mind enjoys a peace during silence which it does not without it. That is to say, the decision to be silent itself produces a soothing effect on me. It lifts a burden off my mind. My experience tells me that silence soothes the nerves in a manner no drugs can. With me it also induces sleep.

Caution : I have noticed in the jails that prisoners get moody when, deprived of company, they have to observe enforced silence. To produce the effect I have described, silence has to be liked. No one, therefore, need be silent out of love of imitation or merely for the knowledge that it produces on me the effect described by me. The best thing would be to take silence on medical advice. Needless to say that here I do not refer to the spiritual need and effects of silence.

SEGAON, October 22, 1939

*Harijan*, 28-10-1939

### 38. ON BRAHMACHARYA

One may say I have long ago stopped writing for *Harijan-bandhu*. The will is not absent; but lack of time has stood in the way. I have been waiting for a long time to write on this subject. Today I shall dwell on it briefly.

A friend has pointed out to me that in an earlier article I had promised to state my views on *brahmacharya*. I do not recollect the exact words. But I had certainly said that I would try to write

something.

My definition of *brahmacharya* still stands. According to it, a man who is affected by passion even mentally has fallen from *brahmacharya*. One who is not free from passion [even] in thought can never be considered a perfect *brahmachari*. I do not consider myself an ideal *brahmachari* since I have not reached that ideal. Though I am far away from this ideal I think I have progressed from what I was when I started. Freedom from passion in thought cannot be achieved until one gets a vision of the Supreme.<sup>1</sup> When one achieves complete control over one's thoughts, 'man' and 'woman' include each other. I believe in the possibility of such a *brahmachari* although I have not come across one. I still continue my strenuous efforts to become such a *brahmachari*. So long as such *brahmacharya* is not attained, man cannot realize the full potentialities of ahimsa.

I have not recognized the permanent need for the conventional restrictions on a *brahmachari*. One who needs outer restrictions is not a perfect *brahmachari*. On the contrary, one who is on the look-out for opportunities to waive the restrictions is not a *brahmachari* but a fraud.

How to achieve such fearless *brahmacharya*? I do not have the right key to it for I have not attained perfection in it. But I may state what I have found essential for myself.

One should keep the mind engaged in pure thoughts. Constant repetition of Ramanama should go on all the twenty-four hours as naturally as breathing, even during sleep. One should engage oneself in reading good books and thinking about one's own work, which again should be infused with public spirit. Those who are married should not seek privacy. They should not sleep in one room or in one bed. If their passion is aroused on seeing each other, they should live separately. If they experience passionate feelings while talking to each other, they should stop talking. One who is aroused at the sight of any woman should abandon the thought of *brahmacharya* and have restrained marital relations with his wife. If he is not married, he should think of marrying. None should insist on exceeding one's own capacity. I can think of many instances when men have fallen in attempting to exceed their capacity.

Anyone who gleefully listens to obscene talk, indulges in staring

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 59



at women, reads dirty books and gloats over filthy stories violates *brahmacharya*. Many students and teachers fail in practising *brahmacharya* because they are not aware of the discipline in hearing, seeing, reading, speaking and so on. And they ask me how they should practise *brahmacharya*. They do not even try to observe it. Let us bear in mind that a man who on any pretext touches a woman with passion violates *brahmacharya*. Those who strictly observe the above discipline can observe *brahmacharya* without difficulty.

An idle man can never practise *brahmacharya*. One who conserves his vital fluid acquires unfailling power. He must put his body and mind ceaselessly to work. Hence every seeker should select such service as would leave him no time for indulging the senses.

The seeker has to have complete control over his diet. Whatever he eats he should eat as medicine, for the preservation of the body, never to pamper the palate. He should, therefore, never take intoxicants, spices, etc. A person practising *brahmacharya* should be not merely temperate but abstemious in eating. Everyone should prescribe his own restrictions.

Fasting, etc., do have a place in the observance of *brahmacharya*. But those who attach undue importance to fasting, etc., and think that they have done their duty if they have fasted are gravely mistaken. When a man starves his senses, the objects of those senses disappear from him, but not the yearning for them.<sup>1</sup> Fasting is beneficial for physical health. An abstemious person may also make mistakes and hence occasional fasts will certainly benefit him.

Why should I lose my vitality for the sake of a momentary pleasure? Why should I deceive God by misusing His gift, i. e., by wasting my vitality which has the power of generating progeny? Since I can gain power by conserving my vitality, why should I lose that power by wasting it? If a seeker always meditates on these lines and prays for God's grace, it is possible for him to retain his vitality and be a *brahmachari* during this very life. I live in this hope.

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 22-10-1939

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 59

*39. NOTE TO POLICE SUPERINTENDENT AND  
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER<sup>1</sup>*

*October 22, 1939*

I have been thinking hard over the proposal. I feel that it is wholly unnecessary to provide any protection so far as I am concerned. My co-operation in such protection will conflict with my own response to any attack on my own life. If therefore the authorities must take any precautions, they should be taken outside the Ashram limits. If the authorities will consult my wishes, they should drop all measures for protecting me. They can use this writing for absolving them from all responsibility about me.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

*40. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

SEGAON,

*October 22, 1939*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

What a confusion reigns in your mind ! Read your note again. In one place you say that you would go to Ramana Maharshi since I advise you to do so but later on say that you do not know where to go. I suggest only one thing. You should go straight from here to Ramana Maharshi's Ashram, stay there for seven days and if you feel no benefit by the end of that period either go to Pondicherry or return here straight.

Did you understand what I told you yesterday about Shankaran? If you did not, reflect over it deeply till you understand it. It was no ordinary mistake.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8557. Also C. W. 7059. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> The addressees had met Gandhiji and proposed to arrange for his protection as they had received the news that some people were planning to assault him.

## 41. CABLE TO WORLD PRESS<sup>1</sup>

October 23, 1939

IN ANSWER TO (YOUR) INQUIRY (I MAY SAY) THE CONGRESS HAS DEMANDED NO CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE DURING WAR. ITS DEMAND IS FOR DECLARATION THAT BRITAIN'S WAR AIMS NECESSARILY INCLUDE INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE ACCORDING TO THE CHARTER FRAMED BY HER ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AFTER WAR. THIS DECLARATION SHOULD BE ACTED UP TO DURING WAR TO THE UTMOST EXTENT POSSIBLE. THE MINORITIES QUESTION IS A BOGEY. NOT THAT IT DOES NOT EXIST BUT ITS PROPER SOLUTION CAN ONLY COME OUT OF THE PROPOSED CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. THE BURDEN OF SOLVING THE TANGLE RESTS NOT ON BRITAIN BUT ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. ACCORDING TO INDIAN OPINION HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION IS THE DIRECT PRODUCT OF BRITISH RULE. THE LEAST THE CONGRESS COULD DO WAS TO WITHDRAW THE CONGRESS MINISTERS FROM PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS. FURTHER ACTION WILL WHOLLY DEPEND UPON BRITAIN'S HANDLING OF THE CRISIS. THE CONGRESS HAS LEFT THE DOOR OPEN TO BRITAIN TO MEND THE MISTAKE.

*Harijan, 28-10-1939*

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the title "Door Still Open" as Gandhiji's "reply to a Press correspondent representing various European papers". According to *The Hindu*, 26-10-1939, among the newspapers and agencies that made the request were *The New York Times*; *The Daily Herald*; *Paris Soir*; *Popolo D' Italia*, Rome; *National Tidende*, Copenhagen; *Aften Posten* and *Telegraaf*, Amsterdam; the Tass News Agency, Moscow; *Arbizzi*, Madrid; the *Dagen Synther*, Stockholm; Swiss News Agency, Geneva; the *La Nacion*, Buenos Aires; *Yormiuri Shimibun*, Tokyo; *Unsi Suomi*, Helsingfors and *Nation Belge*, Antwerp.

42. CABLE TO Y. M. DADOO <sup>1</sup>

October 23, 1939

DADOO

47 ENDSTREET

JOHANNESBURG

ADVISE PATIENCE. SEND DETAILS WHAT GOES ON.

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 11347. Courtesy: E. S. Reddy; also *South Africa's Freedom Struggle*, p. 310

43. CABLE TO J. C. SMUTS

October 23, 1939

GENERAL SMUTS

PRETORIA

DISTURBING NEWS FROM INDIAN FRIENDS JOHANNESBURG. TRUST YOU ARE NOT ENFORCING NEW LEGISLATION. SUGGEST YOUR INVITING DR. DADOO SEE YOU.

GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 11348. Courtesy: E. S. Reddy. Also *South Africa's Freedom Struggle*, p. 310

44. A LETTER<sup>2</sup>

SEGAON,

October 23, 1939

I am quite clear in my mind that what has happened<sup>3</sup> is the best for the cause. It is a bitter pill I know. But it was needed. It will drive

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's cable of October 21, 1939 which read: "Act of 1939 inflicting intolerable hardships on growing number of our people. Patience stretched to straining point. Pray cable definite advice".

<sup>2</sup> This was found among the letters to C. Rajagopalachari. The date-line has been written by Amrit Kaur.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the Congress Working Committee resolution of October 22; *vide* Appendix "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939.

away all the parasites from the body. We would have been obliged to do wrong things which we shall be able to avoid. We shall come to power with added strength. I shall still be trying for peace, if I keep my strength.

From a photostat: G. N. 2077

#### 45. CAUSES

The best way of losing a cause is to abuse your opponent and to trade upon his weakness. Whatever may be true of other modes of warfare, in satyagraha it had been held that the causes for failure are to be sought within. The refusal by the British Government to fulfil the Congress hope, that they would make the expected declaration, is solely due to the weaknesses in the Congress organization and Congressmen.

The greatest weakness lies in our want of full appreciation of non-violence and its many implications. All our other weaknesses are to be derived from that one grave defect. Whilst we have fairly observed physical non-violence, our breasts have harboured violence. Hence our non-violence in respect of the Government is a result of our incapacity for effective violence. But therefore we have been betrayed into violence in our dealings with one another. We have quarrelled with one another in committees; sometimes we have even come to blows. We have refused to carry out instructions of the Working Committee. We have formed rival groups wanting to seize power. Hindus and Muslims have come to blows on the slightest pretext. Congressmen must be held partly responsible for the failure to compose communal differences. It is all very well to blame the British Government for our disunity. But that way we prolong the agony. We knew that the policy of divide and rule was there in 1920, and yet we made Hindu-Muslim unity part of our constructive programme. We did so because we had expected that, in spite of the Government being in our way, we would achieve unity. What is more we seemed for the time being to have attained it.

These examples of our weaknesses are terrible. They have prevented the Congress from rising to its full height, and reduced our professions of non-violence to a mockery. If my analysis of the causes of our failure is correct, there is the solid consolation that the remedy is dependent not upon any extraneous circumstance but upon

ourselves. We must put our own organization in order and make it pure enough and strong enough to command respect, not by inspiring fear among those who impede our march towards the goal but by the indubitable evidence of our non-violent speech and action.

The Working Committee's resolution, if it is evidence of Congress earnestness in vindicating India's freedom, is also a test of Congressmen's discipline and non-violence. Though nothing is said in the resolution, the control and management of civil disobedience has been left in my hands at the will of the Committee. Needless to say I have no sanction, never had any, save the willing and knowing obedience of the vast mass of Congressmen, registered and unregistered, to the instruction issued to them through the Committee, or through *Young India* and *Navajivan*, whilst they were published, and now through *Harijan*. When, therefore, I find that my instructions have no running power, Congressmen will find me retiring from the field without ado. But if I am to retain the general control of the struggle, I shall want the strictest adherence to discipline. So far as I can see there is no possibility of civil resistance on a large scale unless Congressmen show perfect discipline and greater appreciation than hitherto of non-violence and truth. There need be none unless we are goaded into it by the authorities.

We are engaged in a life and death struggle. Violence surrounds us. It is a time of great trial for the country. No camouflage will answer our purpose. If Congressmen find that they have no non-violence in them, if they cannot cast out bitterness against the English officials or the countrymen who may oppose the Congress, they must say so openly, discard non-violence and displace the present Working Committee. Such dismissal will be no calamity. But it will be a calamity of the first magnitude to keep the Committee without full faith in them and in their instructions. So far as I can see, there is no independence for India except through the strictest adherence to truth and non-violence. My generalship is of no use whatsoever if I have an army which doubts the efficacy of the weapons with which I arm them. I am as determined a foe of the exploitation of my country as anyone can be. I am as impatient as the hottest Congressman for the complete deliverance of the country from the foreign yoke. But I have no hate for a single Englishman and for that matter for anybody on earth. If I may not help the Allies, I do not wish disaster to them. Though the British Government have grievously disappointed the Congress hope, my hope, I do not seek any gain from their

embarrassment.

My attempt and my prayer are, and will be, for an honourable peace between the belligerent nations in the least possible time. I had nursed the hope that there would be an honourable peace and partnership between Britain and India, and that I might be able to play a humble part in finding a way out of the awful carnage that is disgracing humanity and making life itself a burden. But God had willed it otherwise.

SEGAON, October 24, 1939

*Harijan*, 28-10-1939

#### 46. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 24, 1939*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

Mr. Thompson<sup>1</sup> has been here. He told me that you had thought I was guilty of discourtesy in making the statement<sup>2</sup> I did on your declaration<sup>3</sup>. I have not understood Mr. Thompson but I told him, I would write to you and make amends if I was guilty. Will you please enlighten me in the matter? I have no doubt that the friendship that has sprung between us will bear the strain of differences of opinion that may arise among us.

*I am,*

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm: Lord Linlithgow Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

#### 47. LETTER TO PYARELAL

*October 24, 1939*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I agree that it would have been better for me to have you rather than Sushila to attend to my massage and bath. But since you

<sup>1</sup> Edward Thompson, British poet and writer; *vide* also "My Life".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "statement to the Press", 18-10-1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Declaration", 17-10-1939.

will be busy with the *Harijan* work on Sundays and Mondays, Sushila can do these on those days. I must not waste time over this argument. I shall be happy if you can do this much cheerfully. I have discussed it with Sushila.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladwi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

#### 48. LETTER TO PANNALAL JHAVERI

*October 24, 1939*

CHI. PANNALAL,

I am impatient for a talk with you. But I am saving my time and my wits. Before going, have a good look at the dairy, the fields and so on and let me know your conclusions about anything else you may have seen.

I forbade Nanibehn to massage my feet. That was for the sake of A. But my word had no effect. I am facing such tests here all around.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Manavtana Prahari—Pannalal Jhaveri, p. 38*

#### 49. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

*October 24, 1939*

DAUGHTER,

What am I to do? I did my best. Certainly Ba is extremely displeased with you. I don't know about others. Your duty is to leave this house. You may return when the cloud blows over. I had no inkling of Ba's displeasure. I was surprised when I noticed it today. How can I send for Hanif<sup>1</sup> here under these circumstances?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 432

<sup>1</sup> A khadi worker of Punjab



50. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 25, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have gone through the American thing. It is most expensive. In other respects, too, it does not attract me.

I hope you have good news about Indu.<sup>1</sup>

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

51. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 25, 1939

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

Yes, do go to Hardwar; also take a look at Dayal Bagh. We shall talk about your test when we meet.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1926

52. DISCUSSION WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF GANDHI  
SEVA SANGH—*I*

WARDHA,  
October 25, 1939

The problem haunts me. It gives me no rest. I have described<sup>3</sup> in *Harijan* the position of the junior members of the Working

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* footnote of "Letter to Indira Nehru", after 15-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> This is extracted from "The Hour of Trial" by Mahadev Desai, who explains: "On the 25th morning Gandhiji woke up at one o'clock and was thinking about what he should say to the Executive Members of Gandhi Seva Sangh, whom he was to meet in the afternoon."

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 17-10-1939.

Committee. Theirs was a difficult position. They were torn between loyalty to a principle and loyalty to their colleagues. But their eagerness to make their position clear to me was most welcome. It shows that we are all votaries of truth and even our mental struggles and conflicts arise out of our anxiety to be faithful to it. We had a very fine discussion in the Working Committee yesterday, and we discussed threadbare the position of the members as individuals and as representatives of the Congress and the people. The question with you is different. For you are here in your individual capacity and you have to decide your conduct no matter what Congress or Congressmen may think. The question is thus much simpler for you. Will you adopt an attitude of brotherliness to one who has done your dear ones a grievous injury? Supposing Rajendra Babu was attacked, would you retaliate or rather stand between Rajendra Babu and the assailant and bear cheerfully the blows meant for him? You will do the latter if you have shed all fear of death and injury to limbs, and all considerations for the domestic ties that bind you. But unless you have nothing but brotherliness for those that spitefully use you, your resolution that you would stand by the principle of non-violence through thick and thin will have no meaning. It would be far better to wind up the Sangh than to have an empty resolution.

Non-violence is not a cloistered virtue, confined only to the *rishi* and the cave-dweller. It is capable of being practised by the millions, not with full knowledge of its implications, but because it is the law of our species. It distinguishes man from the brute. But man has not shed the brute in him. He has to strive to do so. This striving applies to the practice of non-violence, not to the belief in it. I cannot strive to believe in a principle; I either believe in it or I do not. And if I believe in it, I must bravely strive to practise it. Ahimsa is an attribute of the brave. Cowardice and ahimsa do not go together any more than water and fire. It is that ahimsa that every member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh has to make a conscious effort to develop in himself.

We have often thought about this question but the hour of our trial has arrived today, as much with reference to war as with the struggle for swaraj and equally with reference to Hindu-Muslim unity. Remember also that your non-violence cannot operate effectively unless you have faith in the spinning-wheel. I would ask you to read *Hind Swaraj*<sup>1</sup> with my eyes and see therein the chapter on how to

<sup>1</sup> Vide "*Hind Swaraj*", 22-11-1909.

make India non-violent. You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages. Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process. Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have therefore to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning-wheel.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 4-11-1939

### 53. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 26, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I could see that though your affection and regard for me remain undiminished, differences in outlook between us are becoming most marked. Perhaps this is the most critical period in our history. I hold very strong views on the most important questions which occupy our attention. I know you too hold strong views on them but different from mine. Your mode of expression is different from mine. I am not sure that I carry the other members with me in the views that I hold very strongly. I cannot move about. I cannot come in direct touch with the masses, not even with the Congress workers. I feel that I must not lead if I cannot carry you all with me. There should be no divided counsels among the members of the Working Committee. I feel that you should take full charge and lead the country, leaving me free to voice my opinion. But if you all thought that I should observe complete silence, I should, I hope, find no difficulty in complying. If you think it worth while, you should come and discuss the whole thing.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.  
Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 394

<sup>1</sup> According to Mahadev Desai, the members had a discussion with Gandhiji on the next day also; *vide* "Discussion with Executive Members of Gandhi Seva Sangh-II", 26-10-1939.

#### 54. LETTER TO B. G. KHER

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 26, 1939

BHAI BALASAHEB,

As you are going to leave your post, take double interest in the work on hand and have such faith that whatever seeds you have sown will never be wasted. This great sacrifice will yield tenfold reward to the Congress.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 66

#### 55. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 26, 1939

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I have your letter. You may come whenever you wish to. I shall fix up your stay either at Wardha or Segaoon in the very same place where I had lodged Balkrishna. With me it is so crowded that you will feel suffocated. But we will decide all that when you come. We will have to send you to Nagpur to be examined by the expert there. Two<sup>1</sup> were cured in this manner. You will be the third. There is no need for Rami to come. But there will be no harm either if she does come. Do what you both consider best. If that place does not suit you, do not delay coming over here.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI KUNVARJI KHETSI PAREKH  
HINDU DHARMASHALA, MIRAJ

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9731

<sup>1</sup> Balkoba and Mathew; *vide* "Letter to Kunvarji K. Parekh", 12-10-1939.

## 56. LETTER TO DIGVIJAYSINH

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 26, 1939

MEHERBAN MAHARAJA<sup>1</sup>,

I thank you for sending me a prompt reply. I understand what you write about water. Nevertheless I am requesting you to go deep into the matter and resolve to rid Kathiawar of this scarcity of water. It is my humble opinion that very little has been done to increase the number of trees.

When I get an opportunity to meet you, I shall certainly state my views about the doubt you have raised. It is my firm belief that the path you have adopted is not right. This much I have written as a friend.

*Yours,*

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 57. DISCUSSION WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF GANDHI SEVA SANGH—II

WARDHA,  
October 26, 1939

QUESTION: How can a believer in the non-violence of your conception<sup>2</sup> be a Minister?

GANDHIJI: I fear he cannot in the present state of things. We have seen that our Ministers have had to resort to violence even as the British Government in the pre-autonomy days. It was inevitable perhaps. Had Congressmen been truly non-violent, there would have been no resort to force. But the Congress majorities were not based on unadulterated non-violence. A Minister said the other day that although he had not given up an iota of non-violence he could not do without resorting to the minimum of firing. He had resorted to it only to the extent that it was unavoidable. He may have said it then, he may not say it again if I can help it. For if he goes in again, he will have

<sup>1</sup> Of Nawanagar

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Discussion with Executive Members of Gandhi Seva Sangh-I", 25-10-1939.

made his position clear and he will represent a House that is predominantly non-violent. In other words, he will take office if he is sure that the people would let him carry on the Government on a non-violent basis.

But may it not be that whereas a non-violent Minister will confine violence to the lowest minimum, one who does not believe in non-violence would observe no such restraint?

That belief is a delusion. All those who are using violence today make the same claim. Hitler too would say the same thing. General Dyer was acclaimed as the hero of the hour by the House of Lords because his object was said to be to prevent the spread of mob violence. Soviet Russia believes its violence is a transitional stage to the establishment of an order without violence. In the present state of our belief and practice it may be better to wind up the Sangh leaving each one to grow unfettered.

KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA: But the suggestion is being made that we may confine the membership to those who are engaged in constructive work.

That suggestion is good, and we can conceivably convert the Sangh into such a body and then try each of us in our individual capacity to purify ourselves as much as we can. For non-violence is impossible without self-purification. Let us therefore be members of a self-purification association, but no association is necessary for that purpose. Therefore let us try each in our own way to face difficulties and problems as they come and see how far we can go. In Hudli, two years ago, I asked<sup>1</sup> you to help in the elections and in sending the best possible men to the legislatures. I gave advice in the atmosphere as it existed then. I cannot give you that advice today. In fact the time may have come when it becomes necessary for such of you as believe in the non-violence of the brave to retire from the Congress as I did in 1934<sup>2</sup>.

How do you think that the masses can practise non-violence when we know that they are all prone to anger, hate, ill will? They are known to fight for the most trivial things.

They are, and yet, I think they can practise non-violence for the common good. Do you think the thousands of women that collected contraband salt had ill will against anyone? They knew that the

<sup>1</sup> In April 1937.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 30-10-1939.

Congress or Gandhi had asked them to do certain things, and they did those things in faith and hope. To my mind the most perfect demonstration of non-violence was in Champaran. Did the thousands of ryots who rose up in revolt against the agrarian evils harbour the least ill will against the Government or the planters? Their belief in non-violence was unintelligent, even as the belief in the earth being round with many is unintelligent. But their belief in their leaders was genuine, and that was enough. With those who lead it is another matter. Their belief has got to be intelligent, and they have to live up to all the implications of the belief.

But then are not the masses the world over like that?

They are not, for others have not that background of non-violence.

But if there was non-violence ingrained in our masses, how should they have come to this state of slavery?

There indeed is what I flatter myself is going to be my contribution. I want that non-violence of the weak to become non-violence of the brave. It may be a dream, but I have to strive for its realization.

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

## 58. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 27, 1939

CHI. VALJI,

It is very good indeed that you have decided to come here. We shall see what is to be done. You must have received Rs. 25 sent for Chitre. I have asked Kanu to send today another Rs. 30. I would like Chitre staying with you. I would then have to worry less about you. If he was needed there, why won't he be needed here? However, do whatever you and Chitre wish.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 7489. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

## 59. LETTER TO PYARELAL

October 27, 1939

CHI. PYARELAL,

I do not have the strength to command you. I do not wish to thrust on you a burden which you cannot carry. I wish to entrust to you only the work of your choice. When I ask you to do the massage and it hurts your feelings, it also hurts my feelings. I do not know what has caused your anguish. If it is only mental, the remedy for it is in God's hands or yours. If there is something which I can do let me know. I shall do it or at least try. If you find attending to the mail burdensome I shall take away that burden. I am being tested outside. I am being tested here and within my heart. That is why I am not able to find any way out. How can I guide you in your pitiable state? I am willing to break my silence if you wish to talk. Perhaps writing suits you better. May God be our guide.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati Original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar



## 60 . LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

October 27, 1939

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH,

I got your letter. You may stay in Bombay as long as it is necessary. Get yourself medically examined.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SARDAR PRITHVI SINGH

C/O "JANMABHOOMI"

MEADOWS STREET

BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 5636. Also C. W. 2947. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

## 61 . STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

SEGAON,

October 27, 1939

I have read Sir Samuel Hoare's speech<sup>2</sup> with the attention it deserves. I appreciate the conciliatory tone behind it. It makes it, therefore, embarrassing for me to produce what may appear to be a jarring note. But even as he speaks from a sense of duty I hope I shall receive the same credit. Has Dominion Status for India any meaning unless it is synonymous with independence? Has the India of his imagination the right to secede from the Commonwealth? I like the declaration that the British have shed imperialistic ambition. Will he allow the people of India to judge for themselves whether in reality that ambition has been shed? If it is, the proof of it should be forthcoming even before India is statutorily declared independent.

When the protection of minorities is pleaded against the declaration required by the Congress, the great pronouncement made

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the title "Found Wanting". The statement was also published in *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Hindu* on October 28.

<sup>2</sup> Replying to the debate on India, in the House of Commons, on October 26; *vide* Appendix "Sir Samuel Hoare's Speech", 26-10-1939.

by Sir Samuel Hoare sounds unreal. What the Congress has asked is not any sounding of Indian opinion but a declaration of Britain's intention. I have endeavoured<sup>1</sup> to show that there is no such thing as real minorities in India whose rights can be endangered by India becoming independent. With the exception of the Depressed Classes there is no minority which is not able to take care of itself. I observe that Sir Samuel Hoare has mentioned the Europeans also as a minority. The very mention of Europeans, in my opinion, condemns the cry of the interest of minorities. But the protection of minorities, whatever they are, is common cause between the British Government and the Congress. I would like the British Government to remember that there is every prospect of Congress India, to use Sir Samuel's phrase, being a hopeless minority. I like Sir Samuel's division of India into Congress and non-Congress. And if non-Congress India contains not merely the Princes but the people of Princes' India, all the Mussalmans, all those who might be represented by the Hindu Mahasabha and others who refuse to be classified as part of Congress India, it is Congress India which will be in danger of a non-Congress majority. And the Congress has got to make good its position even though it may represent a minority wholly unarmed, partly by outside force but largely by its own will.

I am glad that Sir Samuel Hoare has declared that the present British policy is to be judged in the moral scales suggested by me. I venture to suggest that if Sir Samuel's speech is the last word on behalf of the British Government, British political morality will be found wanting. Sir Samuel has laughed at non-co-operation as a barren doctrine. I am convinced that it is not as barren as he thinks. It has proved its worth in the eyes of millions of Indians and will do so again if the Congress remains truly non-violent, as I hope it will. The Congress decision<sup>2</sup> is an imperative call of duty. It puts both the Congress and the British Government on their trial. Nothing but good will come out of it if both will play the game.<sup>3</sup>

SEGAON, October 27, 1939

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Fiction of Majority", 16-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> That the Ministries should resign; *vide* Appendix "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* also "Good and Bad", 30-10-1939

## 62. CABLE TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"<sup>1</sup>

[Before October 28, 1939]

I HAVE NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER THAT THE VICEREGAL STATEMENT<sup>2</sup> ON BEHALF OF BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN REPLY TO CONGRESS INVITATION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MADE MORE IRRITATING THAN IT HAS PROVED TO BE. WHAT CONGRESS HAD ASKED WAS NOT AN ANSWER TO INDIA'S DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE BUT IT HAD REMINDED BRITAIN OF NEGLECT TO DECLARE WHETHER HER WAR AGAINST HERR HITLER TO PRESERVE DEMOCRACY INCLUDED INDIA THIS HAD NO CONNECTION WITH INDIA'S READINESS TO DIGEST INDEPENDENCE. BUT THE CONGRESS DEMAND WAS EVIDENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD AND THE VICEROY BEGAN A SORT OF ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE IN WHICH ONE MEMBER DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE OTHER SAID TO THE VICEROY AND AS A RESULT OF THESE TALKS HE WAS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE A STATEMENT WHOLLY UNRELATED TO THE UNPRECEDENTED UPHEAVAL GOING ON IN FRONT OF US. IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WANTED TO MEASURE THE STRENGTH OF THE CONGRESS AND THAT OF OTHER POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS THAT THE CONGRESS COULD NOT SATISFY THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD. BUT THE CONGRESS HAD SET BEFORE ITSELF A HIGHER MISSION. THE CONGRESS WANTED TO HELP BRITAIN BY GIVING HER THE MORAL SUPPORT WHICH WAS ITS SPECIALITY AND THE ONLY THING IT COULD GIVE. THE CONGRESS WOULD NOT GIVE THIS UNLESS IT WAS CLEAR THAT BRITAIN'S POLITICAL MORALITY WAS WHOLLY SOUND. I WISH BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD REALIZE THAT INDIA IS NOT BEGGING FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE CONGRESS ASKED BRITAIN TO SAY THAT BRITAIN WOULD NOT RESIST INDEPENDENCE. THE HINDU-MUSLIM AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES ARE THERE BEYOND DISPUTE. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER BRITAIN WILL STAND ASIDE AND LET INDIA SETTLE

<sup>1</sup> The cable appeared under the title "Congress Demand Misunderstood" with a note that it was "in response to a request from *The News Chronicle* (London)".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Declaration", 17-10-1939.

HER OWN DIFFICULTIES IN HER OWN WAY WHEN THE WAR IS OVER. THAT IS WHY THE CONGRESS HAS SUGGESTED A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHERE EVERY COMMUNITY WILL BE FULLY REPRESENTED TO FRAME INDIA'S CONSTITUTION. THE MISCHIEF DONE IS VERY REAL. THE WORKING COMMITTEE HAVE PASSED A MILD RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>. IT STILL AFFORDS SCOPE FOR REPAIRING THE BLUNDER. WILL THE BRITISH PUBLIC REALIZE THAT IT IS A BLUNDER OR WILL THEY PERSIST IN THE HYPNOTIC BELIEF THAT THE INDIA OFFICE CAN NEVER ERR AND THAT INDIA MUST ALWAYS REMAIN THEIR MILCH COW? I CAN ONLY SAY THAT THE CONGRESS WILL NOT REST AND WILL GIVE NO REST TILL THE GOAL IS WON. ITS VERY EXISTENCE DEPENDS UPON ITS RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF THE GOAL WHICH IS NO LESS THAN COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA.

*Harijan, 28-10-1939*

### 63. NOTES

#### THAKKAR BAPA AND SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY

A friend who loves the Servants of India Society as himself, in sending his donation of Rs. 10 for the Thakkar Bapa Fund, writes:

I endorse every word of your praise<sup>2</sup> of Thakkar Bapa. The only suggestion I would venture to make is that his membership of the Servants of India Society might have been mentioned. The Society may not take credit for his meritorious work; but it has kept him there without a demur and indeed taken pride in his great services to humanity.

The rebuke is well merited. To tell the truth, I did not even know that I had omitted to mention among Bapa's many merits that he had given up his office of Road Engineer for the Bombay Municipal Corporation to become a Servant of India. He is a loan to the Harijan Sevak Sangh by the Society. The Society needs no advertisement from me. And since I call myself an unofficial self-appointed member of the Society, to mention the latter is, in a way, advertising myself. But I am quite capable of performing that somewhat delicate task. The

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Bapa Jayanti", 16-10-1939.

reason for omitting the mention was, however, accidental. I work under tremendous pressure and though it was my intention to connect Bapa with the Society, I evidently failed to carry it out. I hope that this belated reference will bring more funds to the Bapa purse, which is Harijan purse. Let the Servants of India too, official and unofficial, set apart some time daily for the collection of the purse. I do not mind their collecting coppers. The real tribute to Bapa will consist in collecting coppers from Harijans and the numerous poor lovers of Harijans. Let no one plead shortness of notice. Let novices know from me, an experienced collector, that funds big or small do not need months to collect. They are collected in a few days if the collection is well organized and the cause worthy. Let them know that the crore for the Tilak Swaraj Fund<sup>1</sup> was collected in one month.

SEGAON, October 28, 1939

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

#### 64. MESSAGE TO POONA BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE<sup>2</sup>

SEGAON,

*October 28, 1939*

I hope that the Poona Educational Conference will, in all it does, keep steadily in view the newness of the *Nai Talim*, rendered in English as Basic Education. Just as we may neither reduce nor increase ingredients in a chemical experiment, so also we may not add to or discard anything from the essentials of the Wardha Scheme. The newness of this scheme is that education is to be given through a village craft. The end in view is not to be accomplished by merely adding a village craft to the current syllabus.

M. K. G

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

<sup>1</sup> Bal Gangadhar Tilak died on July 31, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under "Notes", sub-title "Basic Education" as a "translation of the message in Hindi".

65. *LETTER TO PURATAN J. BUCH*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
October 28, 1939

CHI. PURATAN,

I have your letter. When you cannot restrain your wish to come here, do come. Room can always be found for a person like you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9174

66. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

SEGAON,  
October 28, 1939

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I was glad to have your letter. Return only after you have completely recovered your peace of mind. Do go to Pondicherry. I will certainly look forward to your return. I do miss you. But I felt that your good lay in sending you there. You have done well in asking Kanchan to join you there. It will be good if she comes, and no harm will be done if she doesn't.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI MUNNALALJI OF SEGAON  
RAMANA ASHRAM  
TIRUVANNAMALAI  
SOUTH INDIA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8556. Also C. W. 7062. Courtesy:  
Munnalal G. Shah

## 67. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEGAON,  
October 28, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

1. The idea is that a man,<sup>1</sup> by becoming passionless, transforms himself into a woman, that is, he includes the woman into himself. The same is true of a passionless woman. If you visualize the state of passionlessness in your mind, you will understand what I say. It is a different story that we do not come across such men and women.

2. *Ektara*<sup>2</sup> can blend with any music. No other instrument can take its place. Ramanama, like *ektara*, sustains the tune. If Ramanama fills our hearts it goes on sounding there like breathing during sleep.

3. We overeat in the name of balanced diet. That is why the *Gita* uses the word *laghwahar*<sup>3</sup>. Limited diet should not mean going hungry. Rarely does a man go really hungry. One should never feel weak. The quantity of food will differ with each individual. I shall remember about the letter to Panchgani.

You can give up anything else except teaching Hindi to the Japanese brother.<sup>4</sup>

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4330

## 68. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

SEGAON, WARDHA  
October 28, 1939

CHI. HARIBHAU,

I got your letter. I shall not judge in a hurry. I shall bother you no more. Your foremost duty is to recover your health by staying in a

<sup>1</sup> The rest of this sentence and the one that follows are in Gujarati.

<sup>2</sup> A musical instrument with only one string.

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII. 52, however, has '*laghvashi*' which also means one on spare diet.

<sup>4</sup> In a note, at the bottom of the letter, the addressee had remarked that Gandhiji had misunderstood his point. He had himself given up learning Japanese but continued teaching Hindi to the Japanese friend.

quiet place. If the place you are staying in is not suitable, why not go to Delhi? The weather there is excellent these days.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6087. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyaya

### 69. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*Unrevised*

SEGAON,  
October 29, 1939<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR IDIOT,

It is never too late to learn. No one is too old to learn. It is your laziness which makes you say you may be too old to learn. And it is your pride which feels wounded to be corrected. No one will drive you out of Segaoon. You alone can perform that trick, i e., of driving yourself out. And idiocy is no bar to people living in Segaoon. I thought you had penetration enough to see that this was an asylum for the insane, the infirm, the abnormal and the like.

Do cheer up.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

One air-mail letter [was] redirected. If Mahadev [is] still there, tell him I had his letter.

From the original: C. W. 3661. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6470

### 70. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA  
October 29, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I wrote to you yesterday. This is to send you a complaint from Meerut.<sup>2</sup> Please inquire and write directly to the correspondent. I have told him I have passed the letter on to you.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> This is in Devanagari.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is, presumably, to the communal riots which broke out in Meerut on October 4, when the army was called out and arrests were made.



## 71 . LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

SEGAON, WARDHA

[Before *October 30, 1939*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. PREMA,

Why should you feel despondent?<sup>2</sup> How shallow is your faith? True faith is that which stands unshaken against the whole world, such faith alone counts. How can one's ahimsa endure without such faith? It would be a different matter if you were to say that you had no ahimsa in you. But if it were so what could you do about it? And in that case why feel despondent? You have then to watch and see what happens. If I have true ahimsa in me, it will shine out in any one of you at the right moment. But if I don't have it, how will it show itself in you all? It is, therefore, I who am being tested. That should make you dance with joy.

You have made a good beginning in Bihar. But what next? What has already been done will of course not be wasted. I take it that on your way back at any rate you will break journey here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10402. Also C. W. 6841. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

## 72. UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT ?

Several British friends are puzzled and ask "Have you really said, you will give unconditional support to Great Britain as you are reported to have said?" The origin of this report lies in my very first statement<sup>3</sup> after my talk<sup>4</sup> with the Viceroy. The phrase 'unconditional

<sup>1</sup> According to the addressee, the letter was written some time in October 1939. The addressee, who had gone to Bihar to organize a women volunteer corps, came to Wardha on October 30, 1939; *vide* "Letter to Kanchanbehn M. Shah", and "Letter to Shardabehn G. Chokhawala", 30-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> In *Bapuna patro-5: Premabehn Kantakne* p. 270, the addressee explains: "In view of the world war, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that ahimsa could not retain its primary place in the party's programme."

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 5-9-1939.

<sup>4</sup> On September 4 at Simla

support' does not occur in that statement. But had the Congress appreciated the position I took up, Congress support would have been unconditional in the sense that the Congress would not have asked for a clarification of Britain's war aims. But the Working Committee could not honestly take up that position. Therefore it passed as it had every right and justification for passing, the resolution<sup>1</sup> it did. Events have shown the prudence of the course adopted by the Working Committee. But had it waived the demand for the declaration of war aims, the support would have been unconditional. Remember, according to its constitution, the Congress is a non-violent body. Therefore its support would have been purely moral. It has no soldiers to supply, it has no money to give. But it has its good wishes. In my opinion those good wishes would have been more than many battalions. The Congress support would have put the British cause on an unassailable moral basis. It would have made the British case just, beyond measure. All the dependent races of the earth would have felt an indescribable glow of freedom. British moral stock would have shot up high at a bound. That is what the Congress unconditional support would have meant.

But God had willed otherwise. British statesmen had not faith enough in the Congress profession of non-violence. I must confess that the Congress could not pass the test to the satisfaction of a strict though just examiner. Anyway my British friends should have no difficulty in understanding my position. Of course it is open to them to argue that as a war resister I could not even give moral support. I have already said in these columns<sup>2</sup> that I do not hold such a view. It is open to a war resister to judge between two combatants and wish success to the one who has justice on his side. By so judging he is more likely to bring peace between the two than by remaining a mere spectator.

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Congress Working Committee Resolution", after 18-7-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 16-10-1939.

### 73. MY LIFE

The following from its Allahabad correspondent appears in *The Bombay Chronicle*:

Startling revelations have come to light regarding what has been going round the House of Commons about Gandhiji. It is reported that Mr. Edward Thompson, the British historian who visited Allahabad recently, threw some light on the curious mentality prevailing in England. Mr. Thompson, who met some political leaders here, is reported to have told them three things going round the House of Commons regarding Gandhiji:

1. Gandhiji was for unconditional co-operation with the British Government.
2. Gandhiji could still influence the Congress.
3. There were various stories about Gandhiji's sensual life, it being the impression that Gandhiji had ceased to be a saint.

Impressions about Gandhiji's 'sensual life', it appeared to Mr. Thompson, were based on some Marathi papers. He spoke about them, I understand, to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who repudiated them. He spoke about them to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. P. N. Sapru also, who strongly repudiated them.

It appears Mr. Thompson, before leaving England, had seen several members of the House of Commons. Mr. Thompson, before leaving Allahabad, sent a letter to Mr. Greenwood, M.P., on the suggestion of Pandit Nehru pointing out that the stories regarding Gandhiji were absolutely baseless.

Mr. Thompson was good enough to visit Segaoon. He confirmed the report as substantially correct.

The 'unconditional co-operation' is dealt with in another note<sup>1</sup>.

The country will presently know the influence I have over the Congress.

The third charge needs clearing. Two days ago I received a letter signed by four or five Gujaratis sending me a newspaper whose one mission seems to be to paint me as black as it is possible for any person to be painted. According to its headline it is a paper devoted to 'the organization of Hindus'. The charges against me are mostly

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

taken from my confessions and distorted from their setting. Among many other charges, the charge of sensuality is most marked. My *brahmacharya* is said to be a cloak to hide my sensuality. Poor Dr. Sushila Nayyar has been dragged before the public gaze for the crime of giving me massage and medicated baths, the two things for which she is the best qualified among those who surround me. The curious may be informed that there is no privacy about these operations which take over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours and during which I often go off to sleep but during which I also transact business with Mahadev, Pyarelal or other co-workers.

The charges, to my knowledge, began with my active campaign against untouchability. This was when it was included in the Congress programme and I began to address crowds on the subject and insisted on having Harijans at meetings and in the Ashram. It was then that some sanatanists, who used to help me and befriend me, broke with me and began a campaign of vilification. Later, a very high-placed Englishman joined the chorus. He picked out my freedom with women and showed up my 'saintliness' as sinfulness. In this chorus there were also one or two well-known Indians. During the Round Table Conference, American Journals indulged in cruel caricatures of me. Mirabai who used to look after me was the target of their attack. As far as I could understand Mr. Thompson, who knows the gentlemen who have been behind these charges, my letters to Premabehn Kankat, who is a member of the Sabarmati Ashram, have also been used to prove my depravity. She is a graduate and worker of proved merit. She used to ask questions relating to *brahmacharya* and other topics. I sent her full replies<sup>1</sup>. She thought they might be of general use and she published them with my permission. I hold them to be absolutely innocent and pure.

Hitherto I have ignored these charges. But Mr. Thompson's talks about them and the importunity of the Gujarati correspondents, who say the indictment sent by them is but a sample of what is being said about me, impel me to repudiate them. I have no secrets of my own in this life. I have owned my weaknesses. If I were sensually inclined, I would have the courage to make the confession. It was when I developed detestation of sensual connection even with my own wife and had sufficiently tested myself that I took the vow of

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Premabehn Kankat", 6-5-1936 and 21-5-1936; also "Letter to Premabehn Kankat", 5-2-1937 and 25-8-1937.

*brahmacharya* in 1906, and that for the sake of better dedication to the service of the country. From that day began my open life. I do not remember having ever slept or remained with my own wife or other women with closed doors except for the occasions referred to in my writings in *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Those were black nights with me. But as I have said repeatedly God has saved me in spite of myself. I claim no credit for any virtue that I may possess. He is for me the Giver of all good and has saved me for His service.

From that day when I began *brahmacharya*, our freedom began. My wife became a free woman, free from my authority as her lord and master, and I became free from my slavery to my own appetite which she had to satisfy. No other woman had any attraction for me in the same sense that my wife had. I was too loyal to her as husband and too loyal to the vow I had taken before my mother to be slave to any other woman. But the manner in which my *brahmacharya* came to me irresistibly drew me to woman as the mother of man. She became too sacred for sexual love. And so every woman at once became sister or daughter to me. I had enough women about me at Phoenix. Several of them were my own relations whom I had enticed to South Africa. Others were co-workers' wives or relatives. Among these were the Wests and other Englishmen. The Wests included West, his sister, his wife, and his mother-in-law who had become the Granny of the little settlement.

As has been my wont, I could not keep the new good thing to myself. So I presented *brahmacharya* for the acceptance of all the settlers. All approved of it. And some took it up and remained true to the ideal. My *brahmacharya* knew nothing of the orthodox laws governing its observance. I framed my own rules as occasion necessitated. But I have never believed that all contact with women was to be shunned for the due observance of *brahmacharya*. That restraint which demands abstention from all contact, no matter how innocent, with the opposite sex is a forced growth, having little or no vital value. Therefore natural contacts for service were never restrained. And I found myself enjoying the confidence of many sisters, European and Indian, in South Africa. And when I invited the Indian sisters in South Africa to join the civil resistance movement, I found myself one of them. I discovered that I was specially fitted to serve womankind. To cut the (for me enthralling) story short, my return to India found me in no time one with India's women. The easy access I had to their hearts was an agreeable revelation to me. Muslim sisters never kept

*pardah* before me here even as they did not in South Africa. I sleep in the Ashram surrounded by women for they feel safe with me in every respect. It should be remembered that there is no privacy in the Segaon Ashram.

If I were sexually attracted towards women, I have courage enough, even at this time of life, to become a polygamist. I do not believe in free love—secret or open. Free, open love I have looked upon as dog's love. Secret love is besides cowardly.

Sanatanist Hindus may abhor my non-violence. I know many of them think that Hindus will become cowards if they remain under my influence. I know of no man having become a coward under my influence. They may decry my non-violence as much as they like. But they ill serve themselves or Hinduism by indulging in palpable lies.

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

*Harijan*, 4-11-1939

#### 74. THE NEXT STEP

I have never felt the weight of responsibility as heavily as I do today in connection with the present impasse with the British Government. The resignation of Congress Ministries was a necessity. But the next step is by no means clear. Congressmen seem to be expecting a big move. Some correspondents tell me, if I only give the call, there will be an India-wide response such as has never been made before. And they assure me that the people will remain non-violent. Beyond their assurance I have no other proof in support of their statement. I have proof in my own possession to the contrary. These columns have contained some of that proof. I cannot identify myself with any civil disobedience unless I am convinced that Congressmen believe in non-violence with all its implications and will follow implicitly the instructions issued from time to time.

Apart from the uncertainty of the observance of non-violence in Congress ranks is the tremendous fact that the Muslim League look upon the Congress as the enemy of the Muslims. This makes it well-nigh impossible for the Congress to organize successful non-violent revolution through civil disobedience. It will certainly mean Hindu-Muslim riots. Non-violent technique, therefore, demands the reduction of civil disobedience to the lowest term consistent with national self-respect. The offensive will have to be taken by the British

Government. In a situation so delicate and unexampled, no individual Congressman or even Congress Committee can be allowed to take law into their own hands. The Working Committee should alone have the right to declare and regulate civil disobedience.

I have undertaken to guide the Working Committee, but my limitations appal me. My physical condition makes it impossible for me to move about as I used to before. I am therefore cut off from all outward contact with the masses. Even the present Congress workers I do not know personally. I never meet them. My correspondence has to be restricted as much as possible. Therefore, unless Congressmen almost instinctively perceive the duty and the necessity of the preliminary inaction I am prescribing, my guidance will be not only useless but it will be harmful. It will create confusion.

I hold the opinion strongly that whilst by their own action the British Government have made it impossible for the Congress to co-operate with them in the prosecution of the war, the Congress must not embarrass them in its prosecution. I do not desire anarchy in the country. Independence will never come through it. I do not wish for the defeat of the British or, for that matter, of the Germans. The peoples of Europe have been helplessly drawn into the war. But they will soon be awakened from their torpor. This war will not be a war to the finish unless the whole of modern civilization is to perish. Be that as it may, holding the views I do, I am in no hurry to precipitate civil disobedience. My prescription to Congressmen, for the time being, is to consolidate the organization by purging it of all weaknesses. I swear by the old constructive programme of communal unity, removal of untouchability and the charkha. It is quite clear that non-violence is impossible without the first two. If India's villages are to live and prosper, the charkha must become universal. Rural civilization is impossible without the charkha and all it implies, i. e., revival of village crafts. Thus the charkha is the symbol *par excellence* of non-violence. And it can occupy the whole of the time of all Congressmen. If it makes no appeal to them, either they have no non-violence in them or I do not know the A. B. C. of non-violence. If my love of the charkha is a weakness in me, it is so radical as to make me unfit as a general. The wheel is bound up with my scheme of swaraj, indeed with life itself. All India should know my credentials on the eve of what can become the last and decisive battle for swaraj.

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

## 75. GOOD AND BAD

The more I ponder over Sir Samuel Hoare's recent speech<sup>1</sup> in the House of Commons the more puzzled I become. It is both good and bad. But the bad part is so bad that it vitiates the good. His statement that the British Government have shed imperialism hardly squares with his defence of the promises made to the minorities. He gives up the whole of his case when he brackets the Europeans of India and the Princes with the other minorities. If Europeans who have made no home in India and whose roots are all in Europe are a minority requiring protection, the British soldiers and civilians too who are a hopeless minority require to be protected. In other words, rights acquired by conquest are to remain intact. European interests are an imposition protected by the British bayonet. A free India will claim to examine every European interest on its merit, and that which conflicts with the national interest will go by the board. I turn up *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* and I find the following definition of imperialism: "Extension of British Empire where trade required protection of the flag." If this is imperialism, does not Sir Samuel's speech fully protect it? India's ambition is to destroy that imperialism.

Do not Princes stand much on the same footing as the Europeans? Many, if not most, of them are an imperial creation and sustained for imperial interests. The Princes in no way represent their people. If I published the complaints I receive weekly from the people of the States, I should need to double the size of *Harijan*. They make a woeful tale neither creditable to the Princes nor to their protector, the British authority. Does not this British protectorate mean naked imperialism? The Congress is invited to regard the Princes as a minority. British power is the overlord without whom the Princes cannot breathe! They are not free even to see Congressmen, much less to enter into any settlement with them. I do not complain against the Princes for what they are doing in the crisis. They are powerless to do otherwise.

Sir Samuel talks of the Communal Award<sup>2</sup> as a meritorious act of the British Government. I am sorry he mentioned it. I have very bitter memories of the Award which was being hatched during the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Sir Samuel Hoare's Speech", 26-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* 2nd footnote of "Letter to Ramsay Macdonald", 18-8-1932.



Round Table Conference time. I am unable to regard it as a proud British achievement. I know how miserably the parties themselves failed. I regard the Award as discreditable for all parties. I say this apart from its merits which do not bear close scrutiny. But the Congress has loyally accepted it because I was party to the request made to the late Mr. MacDonald to arbitrate. Then his division of India into Congress India and non-Congress India ! It would have been better if Sir Samuel had talked of armed India and unarmed India. The Congress represents the unarmed millions, no matter to what caste or creed they belong. Is it right to pit armed India against its unarmed part? It will be hard to find a parallel in history in which unarmed people have represented the urge for freedom, turning the very armlessness into the central means for deliverance. Sir Samuel has informed the world that India's battle for freedom cannot be won till unarmed India has come to terms with armed India including, of course, the British Government. Again, I do not complain. Sir Samuel could not, all of a sudden, alter British tradition and nature. Only it is my painful duty to show how an unbiased Indian has understood his speech. I have no doubt that Sir Samuel has meant what he has said. Only he has said nothing that can quench the parched throats of Congressmen who are thirsting for freedom. The Congress has to live up more closely than ever to its creed and develop the non-violent strength which will disarm armed India and with it armed Britain. If it can do so, it will be the greatest contribution to the peace of the world. For peace won't come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds.<sup>1</sup>

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

## 76. NOTES

### HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity means communal unity. No pact seems to be in front of us. Janab Jinnah Saheb looks to the British power to safeguard the Muslim rights. Nothing that the Congress can do or concede will satisfy him. For he can always, and naturally, from his own standpoint, ask for more than the British can give or guarantee.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", 27-10-1939.

Therefore there can be no limit to the Muslim League demands. So far as the Congress is concerned, it does not represent all Hindus or all of any single community except in the sense that the Congress represents all because all are believed to desire independence for the country and the Congress is without a rival in fighting for that goal. In fact the Congress is the only national army the country possesses. It is not the less but all the more an army for its being non-violent. It has been the unbroken tradition of the Congress to refuse to represent any but the national interest. It has certainly never represented the Hindus as such. That function is claimed by the Hindu Mahasabha just as that of solely representing Muslim interests is claimed by the Muslim League.

The only course left open to the Congress, therefore, is to state its own communal policy for the guidance of Congressmen, no matter to which community they belong. The Congress should have no quarrel with the League for getting all it can through the British Power. An institution that is fighting that power will never put itself in the wrong by fighting the Muslims.

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

*Harijan*, 4 - 11-1939

### 77. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA

*October 30, 1939*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Strange! No letter, no telegram! Rajen Babu and I are off to Delhi tomorrow to see the Viceroy. Hope to return on Thursday.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

POONA HOTEL

POONA

From the original: C. W. 3662. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6471

78. *LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
*October 30, 1939*

MY DEAR C. R.,

Yours to Mahadev of 28th was duly read by me. I agree with every word of what you say. I had anticipated you as you will see from *Harijan*.<sup>1</sup> Keep well. We—Rajendra Prasad and I—are off to Delhi, I hope, only for a few hours.

Love.

BAPU

SHRIC. RAJAGOPALACHARI  
48 BAZULULLAH ROAD  
THYAGARAYANAGAR  
MADRAS

From a photostat: G. N. 2076

79. *LETTER TO KANU GANDHI*

*October 30, 1939*

CHI. KANAIYO,

I do not have the courage to take you along. I am leaving behind Sushilabehn. Get well soon. Afterwards if you wish you may go to Rajkot to regain your strength. For getting the tonsils removed you will have to go to Bombay. I hope to return on Thursday. Is that all right?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M. M. U./II

<sup>1</sup> The reference is, presumably, to the “Statement to the Press”; *vide* “Statement to the Press”, 27-10-1939.

80. LETTER TO KANCHANBEHN M. SHAH

SEGAON, WARDHA

October 30, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have your letter. You should write your address in every letter. Munnalal has gone to Ramana Ashram and I have received a nice letter from him from there. He says that he has sent for you there. Go if you feel like it. He will return in about a month's time. Sharda has left and Premabehn has arrived. Lilavati is here. Vasumati will be coming in a few days. Thus the house remains full. Take proper care and improve your health. I am leaving for Delhi tomorrow. I hope to return on Thursday.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8289. Also C. W. 7063. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

81. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA

October 30, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. You must make it a point to go out for regular walks. Is it that you don't get any woman friend to accompany you? Here everything is all right. Premabehn arrived today. I shall have to leave for Delhi tomorrow. I hope to return on Thursday.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10017. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

## 82. *THE CONGRESSMAN*

The Congressman seems to have become a distinct species. The various groups who make up the Congress organization have one thing in common. They are nationalists to the core. They will die for India's independence as they are living for it. They have made nationalism part of their religion, whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Christians or any other.

Now the Congress contains, besides those who need no other label but that of being Congressmen, socialists, communists, Kisan Sabhaites, trade unionists, Congress nationalists, Royists, ex-terrorists, the so-called Gandhi-ites, etc. I have not intentionally omitted any group. Some of these have sub-divisions. The Forward Bloc is an amalgam. Its other name is leftists. As the Congress movement spreads, it may throw up other groups. But all of them have one thing in common: a burning passion for freedom and readiness to die for it.

It is true that the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus. But they stand apart from other Hindus as we have found in the South during the campaign for temple-entry. The sanatanists, who I think and hope are a handful have fought the reformers who are mostly Congressmen, and have denounced the latter as traitors to their religion. The Hindu Mahasabha is becoming a protest against the Congress. Some of its members use about the Congress language calculated to create contempt for it. They regard Hindus who belong to the Congress as enemies of Hinduism. The Muslims who belong to the Congress are almost outcastes.

That the Congressman stands for complete independence, for bold social reform, for broad tolerance, has a brilliant record for suffering and sacrifice, is a matter for legitimate satisfaction. The formation of different groups in a mass organization like the Congress is inevitable and may be a distinct sign of progress and life. But if it is so, why are there communal quarrels, why do the Mahasabhaites distrust Congress Hindus, why do not men and women belonging to all faiths flock to the Congress banner, and, last but not least, is it all well with the groups themselves which I have mentioned?

Let us examine their condition. Are they centripetal or centrifugal? Do they strengthen the organization or do they weaken it? Are they not bidding for power? Do they not distrust one another?

Do they submit to discipline?

I am not able to give a flattering answer to all these questions. I am afraid that these groups contain in themselves the seeds of the decay of the Congress. The cause that accounts for weakness within Congress ranks is also the cause that accounts for the Congress failure to draw all communities to its ranks.

*That cause is absence of a living faith in non-violence in thought, word and deed.*

Now, therefore, is the time for every one of us to test the efficacy or otherwise of non-violence. A false step by the Congress at this stage of its career is bound to retard the country's progress towards its goal. Strange as it may appear to Congressmen, I make bold to suggest that the one way to disarm communal suspicion is not to offer civil disobedience in terms of swaraj. The prospect that is about to face the country is that of the British Government in alliance with the so-called minorities arrayed against the Congress single-handed. Civil disobedience against this combination is a contradiction in terms. It would not even be civil war. It would be criminal war.

If Congressmen, whether labelled or unlabelled, do not subscribe to non-violence as I have been developing it in these columns, and do not appreciate the instructions issued by Rajendra Babu and the advice I have tendered<sup>1</sup> in *Harijan*, they should signify in writing their discontent to Rajendra Babu and tell him what they would like him to do and, if he cannot comply with their wishes, what they would themselves do. It must be clear to every Congressman that this is no time for divided counsels, indecision, or half-hearted obedience to instructions. For decisive action the whole Congress has to move forward in confidence and with one mind.

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, October 31, 1939

*Harijan*, 11 - 11-1939

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Notes", 17-10-1939 and "The Next Step", 30-10-1939.

### 83. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*October 31, 1939*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

This<sup>1</sup> has just come. You will do what is proper.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3938. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7274

### 84. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 31, 1939*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Why do you fall ill so often? You must take care of your health. Send me wire at Delhi.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

11 CHOWPATY SEAFACE

BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 237*

### 85. TELEGRAM TO SAMPURNANAND

*[October]<sup>2</sup> 1939*

MY SYMPATHY WITH YOU IN YOUR LOSS.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to a telegram to the addressee, at the back of which Gandhiji had written this letter. The telegram dated “Dehra Dun, October 30, 1939” from Ramdev, a leader of Arya Samaj, read: “If possible, arrive one day earlier.”

<sup>2</sup> The source, however, has “September”. In his *Memories and Reflections*, p. 104, the addressee says: “My youngest son died in October 1939 and his death was followed about a fortnight later by the death of my wife. In the course of the next twelve months or so, I lost another son and my elder daughter, Minakshi.”

## 86. LETTER TO KUNDAR DIWAN

[October 1939]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI KUNDAR,

Your letters arrive regularly. You have enclosed Vachchharaj-bhai's letter which, too, is good. Balkrishna should stay there for the present. The present is the best time to benefit from the weather there.

You mentioned your nature. In all these matters ahimsa or pure love is the only way. If we start with recognizing the temperament of our patient, or colleague or opponent, much friction can be avoided.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi G.N. 214

## 87. LETTER TO SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN

SEGAON, WARDHA<sup>2</sup>,

ON THE MOVING TRAIN TO DELHI,

*November 1, 1939*

DEAR SIR SIKANDAR,

You will forgive me please for reverting to Sucha Singh's case. Here is a copy of his reply to my inquiry. There seems to be no reason to doubt his version. Whatever he may [have] said in his evidence, the Jail Superintendent's evidence should be conclusive. I suggest his indefinite release on parole. His record in the Hazaribagh Jail seems to be clean. His release is not likely to result in any mischief being done by him. I plead for mercy on grounds of humanity.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Balkrishna's illness; *vide* "Letter to Kundar Diwan", 6-10-1939

<sup>2</sup> Permanent address



88. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO KUNG*<sup>1</sup>

[November 1, 1939]<sup>2</sup>

What you say of the relations between our two countries finds a ready echo in my heart.

*The Hindu*, 13-11-1939

89. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO CHILDREN OF CHINA*

[November 1, 1939]

How I wish I could meet you and see your beautiful country.

*The Hindu*, 13 -11-1939

90. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO YAN- YUN-SHAN*

[November 1, 1939]

I know I occupy a corner in the Chinese heart.

*The Hindu*, 13-11-1939

91. *TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR*

NEW DELHI

November 1, 1939

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

POONA HOTEL

POONA

YOUR WIRE. HOPE YOU ARE BETTER. LEAVING TOMORROW. LOVE..

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3939. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7248

<sup>1</sup> The addressee was the Chinese Premier.

<sup>2</sup> Reporting this and the two following items as written by Gandhiji “during his train journey to Delhi”, which was on November 1, the source explains: “These . . . have been sent to Prof. Yan Yun-Shan to be forwarded to their respective addresses. In one of his replies Mr. Gandhi humorously explains that writing was rendered difficult ‘owing to jolting’.”

## 92. SPEECH AT HARIJAN NIVAS, NEW DELHI

November 2, 1939

The hall built by the Chandiwala brothers in commemoration of Shrimati Janaki Devi<sup>1</sup> has in fact been already open for prayers for the last so many days. But this formal function has been organized with the pious feeling that it would be better if I threw open the temple. I do not know whether or no my hands would add to its religious merit. The importance of this shrine will increase if the hearts of the Harijan children present here are filled with true prayer. I would like to say a few words to the Harijan boys who come here for prayer and to their Superintendent Viyogi Hariji.

Deprivation of food does not do much harm to a man. On the other hand it may benefit him, because we often indulge in over-eating. But prayer is the food of the soul without which it is starved to death. The more you pray the better it is. In prayer there can be no excess. I have never come across a person harmed by excessive prayer. We should devote the maximum time to prayer so that ultimately our life becomes one continuous prayer. Therefore, if this hall increases such religious faith, the devotion of the brothers who have built it will have borne fruit and the spirit of Shrimati Janaki Devi will rest in peace.

There are a few Harijan ashrams in the country through which caste Hindus are atoning for their past sins. If untouchability is eradicated by such atonement, it will help the preservation of Hinduism.

Harijan children here are living without any discrimination. The superintendent also lives and mixes with them freely without any inhibition. It is certainly desirable of them if all pray together in harmony and rhythm. But the value of true prayer is never lost for want of any rhythm or harmony. Prayer should proceed from the depth of one's heart. If one perseveres, success is assured. The very purpose of opening a temple is to strengthen religious feeling. If this is fulfilled, the people who have built it will be content. May our goodwill bear fruit.

[From Hindi]

*Harijan Sevak*, 4-11-1939

<sup>1</sup> Mother of the Chandiwala brothers

### 93. INTERVIEW TO "THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

NEW DELHI,  
November 4, 1939

Mahatma Gandhi, in an interview to the Indian correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* on the Lords' debate<sup>1</sup> on India, said he was shocked at Lord Zetland's suggestion that the Congress is a Hindu organization; and was amazed that it could emanate from one in the responsible position of the Secretary of State.

Mahatma Gandhi observed that though the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus, the Congress contained many Indians of all classes and creeds. What is more, from its very commencement the Congress has claimed to be and has been a wholly political organization and never communal. It has proved its claim repeatedly and on every relevant occasion. The Hindu Mahasabha is a communal organization and it came into being because even notable Hindus thought that the Congress did not and could not protect the special rights of Hindus. Lord Zetland as a former Governor and an author knows all these facts. His misdescription of the Congress is untimely, disturbing and calculated to increase irritation and bitterness. Mahatma Gandhi hopes that Lord Zetland will lose no time to correct what Gandhiji regards as a great blunder.

*The Hindustan Times*, 5-11-1939

### 94. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

RAILWAY STATION, DELHI,  
November 4, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Just after you had gone, Kripalani told me that in United Provinces there was great ferment and preparation for civil disobedience. He told me, too, that anonymous placards had been circulated asking people to cut wires and tear up rails. My own opinion is that there is at present no atmosphere for civil disobedience. If people take the law into their own hands I must give up command of civil disobedience movement. I would like you to read this week's *Harijan*.<sup>2</sup> It deals with my position in this connection. It was this that I had intended to discuss with you. But it was not to be.

<sup>1</sup> On November 2; *vide* also "Statement to the Press", 6-11-1939, and "Is Congress a Hindu Organization?", 13-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "The Next Step", 30-10-1939.

At this critical time in our history there should be no misunderstanding between us and, if possible, there should be one mind.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.  
Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 394-5

### 95. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

NAGPUR,

November 5, 1939

I will resist civil disobedience unless I find the country prepared for that.

As for non-co-operation, he said, it had already begun with the resignation of the Congress Ministries.

*The Hindu*, 6-11-1939

### 96. TRAVANCORE AGAIN

There was a forced lull in Travancore after the acceptance by the State Congress of my advice to suspend civil disobedience. But things seem to have gone from bad to worse. The inactivity of the State Congress was perhaps mistaken for fatigue or worse. I knew that the State Congress leaders were being held down by me. Their loyalty was great. But when the other day a deputation came to me and asked me whether, in order to avoid civil disobedience, they were to stop even ordinary activity which one knows as political, I told them that even that severe restraint might be part of the people's training. But I also told them that I could not judge for them in such matters. I could not have the data they had. They could not help me in judging the atmosphere in Travancore. Physical presence there was necessary to enable me to judge. No second-hand evidence could be of much assistance, at least not to me. I told them, therefore, that they must judge for themselves, irrespective of my opinion. For I was not prepared to take the risk of curbing even harmless political activity for fear of imaginary consequences. The leaders should, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji passed through Nagpur *en route* to Wardha.

consider themselves free from any restraint from me.

After the greatest deliberation they took two steps embodied in restrained language. Their resolutions and the Press note in reply are printed below.<sup>1</sup>

In my opinion the State Congress had every right to dissociate themselves from the glorification of the Dewan's administration. Even an adversary is entitled to many happy returns of the day. But it is another matter when an attempt is made, as it is said to have been made in the present case, to make political capital out of an innocent event like a birthday. The first resolution is a protest against such political use of the Dewan's birthday.

The second resolution has nothing controversial about it. It is a mere assertion of the right to hold public meetings, etc.

News has now been received that Shri Thanu Pillai, Shri Philipose and three others were arrested on the 2nd instant and that the State Congress office was taken possession of by the Travancore Government. Furniture, it is said, was thrown out.

The policy of the Travancore Government is ununderstandable. The repression seems to me to be wholly unjustifiable. It is wrong to put the best and wisest citizens in jail. I know that those who have been arrested are sincere, devoted and able workers.

I can send no better consolation to the Travancore State Congress workers than that those who go to jail should do so joyously and with the determination to serve the whole period of imprisonment. I have no doubt that it is the surest way to swaraj if those who are imprisoned possess pure hearts.

SEGAON, November 6, 1939

*Harijan*, 11-11-1939

### 97. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

*November 6, 1939*

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I was delayed by three days and you have meanwhile gone in for fever. Today is my day for *Harijan*. I, therefore, will not go over

<sup>1</sup> The resolutions are not reproduced here; for the Press note, *vide* Appendix "Travancore Governmewnt Press Note", 30-10-1939.

there. Besides, it is Silence Day. There is one complaint against you, that you do not take complete rest. You must take complete rest. Strictly follow Sushilabehn's instructions. She told me everything last evening. If you take complete rest, your fever will certainly subside. Only then can you be taken to Nagpur. I hope there is no difficulty. If there is, tell Sushilabehn. Write to me. However, I shall certainly see you tomorrow.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S. N. 9732

### 98. LETTER TO GHULAM RASUL QURESHI

*November 6, 1939*

CHI. QURESHI,

I feel that if you are able to engross yourself in khadi besides the work that is given to you, that is the only firm thing for Hindu-Muslim unity. Literature cannot do much. Knowledge of letters can be useful along with khadi. Do not think of the whole India for serving but only the sphere which you can easily handle yourself. If while doing so we have purity in us it is bound to have its impact.

I have Akbar's<sup>1</sup> letter. Blessings to him. He must be all right now. Is Amina<sup>2</sup> getting fever?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai. Also C. W. 10768. Courtesy: Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's son and wife

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

## 99. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

SEGAON,

November 6, 1939

The London *Times* editorial seems to me to be unfair. The minorities question has invariably been brought up whenever the question of India's freedom has come to the fore. To represent the Congress and its demand as totalitarian is to misrepresent facts. This misrepresentation is not less serious because it is unconscious. The Congress has deliberately discarded the use of force. It has no military backing or tradition. It has from its inception believed in communal unity. It seeks to represent non-Hindus as well as Hindus. It has had Parsis, Muslims and Christians leading it. It has gone out of its way to placate all communities. It could not do otherwise as its only sanction was constitutional agitation till it forged non-co-operation and civil disobedience as an addition to constitutional agitation and as an effective substitute for violence. Communal differences have been used by the British Government to thwart India's aspiration. That the process is likely to have been unconscious does not make it less mischievous. That the Congress has no desire for loaves and fishes must be crystal clear from wholesale resignations of Congress Ministries. The Congress will never be party to communal quarrels. It will rather stand aside and wander in the wilderness and wait for a better day. Even now the ugly spectacle of playing off the league against the Congress seems to be going on. I had expected that the stupendous European crisis would bring better perception to British statesmen.

The mention of the Princes in this connection is particularly unfair. They owe their existence to the Paramount Power and have no status independent of it. Strange as the assertion may appear, they can do nothing good or big without the consent, tacit or implied, of the Paramount Power. They represent nobody but themselves. To invite the Congress to settle with the Princes is the same as inviting it to settle with the Paramount Power.

*The Times* wants the Congress record of dealings with Muslims

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the title "Unfair". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 7-11-1939.

and Depressed Classes during the last two years. All that I can say is, 'Let Governors of Provinces speak.' That the Muslim League and some Depressed Class leaders complain is nothing strange. Some discontent is inevitable in democracy. The Congress has made a handsome and sporting offer. Let a Constituent Assembly of elected representatives frame a constitution for future Government of India subject to safe-guards for protection of rights of minorities to their satisfaction. Will British statesmen play the game?'

*Harijan*, 11-11-1939

### *100. OPINIONS DIFFER*

An M. A. of Aligarh writes :

You have said on many occasions that your study of the holy Koran has revealed to you that Islam enjoins non-violence upon its followers. You again say that your study of the life of the holy prophet confirms you in this belief. Allow me to say that it must be only a sort of 'wishful' reading that you have done. The simple fact is that your philosophy of ahimsa eschews the use of force altogether. Islam, on the contrary, does allow the use of force on certain occasions. Did not the Prophet meet force with force at Badr? I dare not cite any authority because you have refused to accept any interpretation except your own. Yet I hope you will show some respect to what your own hypnotized Maulana Saheb said so long ago as during the first non-co-operation movement. He said in his statement to the court: "I do not agree with Mahatma Gandhi that the use of force should not be allowed in any case. Because I am a Muslim I believe that the use of force is allowed on the particular occasions specified by Islam." Again he said in the same statement to the court during his trial: "Against the non-Muslim Government, Islam prescribes only sword, protracted battle and the cutting of throats." I am sure Maulana Saheb cannot deny it even today.

So much for non-violence in Islam. As to the question whether the Muslims are a separate nation or not, I would say that the Muslims have been a separate nation ever since the beginning of Islam. They were so when Mohammed Bin Kasim first set foot on Indian soil, they were so during the days of the Moghul Empire, they are so even today, and they will remain the same for ever if they are true to their religion. Akbar attempted to evolve not only a common religion but also a common social system, but were not his

<sup>1</sup> Vide also "Interview to *The Manchester Guardian*", 4-11-1939.



attempts doomed to failure? The Muslims are a separate nation in the sense that they cannot merge their identity with any other community. But this need not frighten the champions of unity at all. Co-operation in some particular sphere for some particular goal is always possible. Breathing the same air and inhabiting the same land does not make a nation. It is the unity of thought that really matters. It is religion which moulds the mind. A Muslim may be the next-door neighbour of Sikh. But their viewpoints, their modes of thought and their modes of life will always differ from each other. The air is the same all round the globe. Is the air of England in any way different from that of India? Physical surroundings affect only the physical features. The mind is not affected by them. Of course, the Christians are also a separate nation, and so are the Parsis. India is a land of nationalities. It will be a red-letter day in the history of India when the Indian National Congress is transformed into a 'Federation of Indian Nations'.

Yes, the Muslims are a separate nation in China. If the insinuation is that they merged themselves with the other Chinese, then I can only say that they stand as an object-lesson before the whole Islamic world. Islamic brotherhood will be reduced to a mere farce if the same process continues. Islam has definitely laid down that the Muslims should have some distinction even in their dress. Does not Maulana Saheb stand prominent among the members of the Congress Working Committee ?

I have no doubt that this letter represents the present mood of many educated Muslims. I do not propose to enter into any long argument about the interpretation of the Koran. Being a non-Muslim I am at a disadvantage. If I began an argument, the natural retort would be: 'How can you, a non-Muslim, interpret Muslim scriptures ?' It would serve no purpose to answer back that I have the same reverence for Islam and the other faiths as I have for my own.

I may, however, inform my correspondent that I had before my mind the battle of Badr and similar incidents in the Prophet's life. I was aware of verses in the Koran itself contradicting my interpretation. I suggest, nevertheless, that it is possible that the teaching of a book or a man's life may be different from isolated texts in a book or incidents in a life, however many the latter may be. The *Mahabharata* is the story of a bloody war. But I have maintained in the teeth of orthodox Hindu opposition that it is a book written to establish the futility of war and violence.

I have no right to speak for the Maulana Saheb. He is well able to take care of himself. I must confess that I have no recollection of

the Maulana Saheb having given the evidence quoted. I do not question the veracity of my correspondent. Only that evidence does not affect the opinion I have held for many years about the central teaching of the holy Koran. Opinions will differ to the end of time. I plead for mutual forbearance.

The proposition laid down by my correspondent about nations is startling. There may be arguable grounds for maintaining that Muslims in India are a separate nation. But I have never heard it said that there are as many nations as there are religions on earth. If there are, it would follow that a man changes his nationality when he changes his faith. According to my correspondent, the English, Egyptians, Americans, Japanese, etc., are not nations, but Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Jews, Buddhists are different nations no matter where born. I am afraid my correspondent occupies very weak ground in maintaining that nations are or should be divided according to their religions. In his zeal to maintain an untenable proposition he has overproved his case.

I must deny that the Muslim dynasties divided India into two nations. Akbar's example is irrelevant. He aimed at a fusion of religions. It was a dream not to be realized. But the other Muslim emperors and kings surely regarded India as one indivisible whole. That is how I learnt history as a boy.

If we Hindus, Muslims and others are to evolve democracy, we shall do so only by the whole nation speaking its mind through its representatives elected under the broadest franchise possible, and that either through British goodwill or in the teeth of its opposition. The pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government give no promise of British goodwill. British imperialism is still vigorous and, in spite of Sir Samuel Hoare's declaration<sup>1</sup> to the contrary, it will die hard. The proposal to vivisect India is a contribution to imperialistic growth. For vivisection can only be made by the aid of the British bayonet or through a deadly civil war. I hope the Congress will be party to neither game. British refusal to make the required declaration of Britain's war aims about India has perhaps come as blessing in disguise. It removes the Congress out of the way to enable the Muslim League to make its choice, unfettered by the Congress administration in eight Provinces<sup>2</sup>, as to whether it will keep the British yoke by

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Sir Samuel Hoare's Speech", 26-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa, United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province.

vivisectioning India or whether it will fight for the independence of an undivided India. I hope that the League does not want to vivisection India. I hope that my correspondent does not represent a large body of Muslim opinion in India. Presently the talks<sup>1</sup> between Janab Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will be resumed. Let us hope that they will result in producing a basis for a lasting solution of the communal tangle.

SEGAON, November 7, 1939

*Harijan*, 11-11-1939

### *101. LETTER TO SHAMBHUSHANKAR TRIVEDI<sup>2</sup>*

*November 7, 1939*

Your letter called for no reply. Keep your pledge. One must certainly put up hedges round oneself to be able to keep a pledge, but how long one should cling to them, even if one breaks down, should be decided by each one for himself. What one should do about others who fail to keep their pledges depends on each individual case. Is politics [at your place] improving?

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

### *102. TELEGRAM TO RULER OF PALITANA*

[After *November 7, 1939*]<sup>3</sup>

THAKORE SAHEB

PALITANA

UNDERSTAND SHAMBHUBHAI STARVING AS PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED BREACH OF PROMISE BY YOU HOPE YOU WILL GIVE SATISFACTION AND SAVE PRECIOUS LIFE.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The first round of talks took place in Delhi on November 2.

<sup>2</sup> A constructive worker of Palitana (Saurashtra) known for his fasts

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

### 103. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

SEGAON,

November 8, 1939

I have read with respectful attention His Excellency the Viceroy's broadcast<sup>2</sup> and his introductory remarks<sup>3</sup> on the correspondence between himself and Shri Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah Saheb released by His Excellency. I welcome His Excellency's refusal to accept defeat and his determination to solve what seems to have become insoluble. I share to the fullest extent His Excellency's anxiety to reach a solution. Without, therefore, waiting for the Congress reaction to these two declarations and purely for the sake of assisting the common cause, I would like to suggest that no solution is possible unless an acceptable declaration of war aims about India is forthcoming. The pronouncements hitherto made, whether, here or in Great Britain, are after the old style, suspected and discredited by freedom-loving India. If imperialism is dead, there must be a clear break with the past. Language suited to the new era has to be used. If the time has not yet come for the acceptance of this fundamental truth, I would urge that further effort at reaching a solution should be suspended. In this connection I would remind British statesmen that what is wanted is a declaration of Britain's intention regarding her Indian policy irrespective of India's wishes. A slave-holder, who has decided to abolish slavery, does not consult his slaves whether they desire freedom or not.

Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Protection of rights of minorities will then become simple. The game of seesaw will cease. The minorities are entitled to protection, not in stages but to the fullest extent and in one single step. No charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority. The minorities will be full fledged partners in the framing of the

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the title "End the Game of Seesaw". The Statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 9-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Broadcast Declaration", 5-11-1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Prefatory Remarks on Correspondence with Leaders", 5-11-1939.

constitution. How that can be attained will depend upon the wisdom of the representatives charged with the sacred duty of preparing the constitution. Britain has hitherto held power—this is inevitable in any system of imperialism—by playing the minorities against the so-called majority and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts well-nigh impossible. The burden of finding a formula for the protection of minorities should be thrown on the parties themselves. So long as Britain considers it her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as a dependency. And patriots impatient for deliverance will fight, non-violently if I can guide them and violently if I fail and perish in the attempt. God's curse of war, I had hoped and still hope, would be turned into a blessing by Britain realizing that the one thing needful for her to justify and hasten the end of this war was to free a great and ancient country like India from her yoke.

Believing as I do in the Viceroy's sincerity, I would urge fellow-workers not to lose patience. There can be no civil resistance so long as, first, the Viceroy is exploring the possibilities of a settlement, secondly, the Muslim League blocks the way, and thirdly, there is indiscipline and disunity in Congress ranks.

The second condition should not offend Muslim friends. So long as there is no workable arrangement with the Muslim League, civil resistance must involve resistance against the League. No Congressman can be party to it. I observe that my note<sup>1</sup> in *Harijan* has shocked Jinnah Saheb. I am sorry for it. But at this stage I would not defend myself. I do not want to mar in any way the negotiations between him and Pandit Nehru which I hope will be resumed soon and pray will lead to communal peace.

Since making the above statement I have read the report of the further statement<sup>2</sup> of the Secretary of State in the House of Lords yesterday. It leaves the main position unchanged.

*Harijan*, 11-11-1939

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 30-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Lord Zetland's Statement", 7-11-1939.

*104. CABLE TO J. C. SMUTS* <sup>1</sup>

*November 8, 1939*

PRIME MINISTER

PRETORIA

YOUR KIND CABLE. GREATLY RELIEVED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. Courtesy: E. S. Reddy. Also *South Africa's Freedom Struggle*, p. 311

*105. TELEGRAM TO S. SATYAMURTI*

[On or before *November 9, 1939*]<sup>2</sup>

MY BLESSINGS YOU HAVE ON YOUR ELECTION<sup>3</sup>.

*The Hindu*, 9-11-1939

*106. TELEGRAM TO PADMAJA NAIDU*

WARDHAGANJ,

*November 11, 1939*

PADMAJA NAIDU

RED HILLS

HYDERABAD, DECCAN

LIVE LONG. LIVE TRUE. LOVE.

PLAYMATE

From the original: Padmaja Naidu Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Mussum and Library

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's wire which read: "No justification for alarm. Dr. Dadoo evidently misinformed and is being granted interview by Minister of Interior."

<sup>2</sup> The telegram was reported under the date-line "Madras, November 9".

<sup>3</sup> As Mayor of Madras

*107. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON,

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your wire is disturbing. May God keep you. I hope you will not have to go through a strenuous programme. I shall expect a wire tomorrow though it is Sunday.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C. W. 3940. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7249

*108. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

SEGAON, WARDHA

*November 11, 1939*

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your letter. I have no intention of courting imprisonment. Nor have you. The future lies with God. Jayaprakash wishes that you should stay with me so that the household expenses may be saved and your studies may continue. This can be arranged in Segaoon or Wardha. I would be generally staying in Segaoon. Occasionally when I go out for three or four days, I will not take you with me. Your study must remain uninterrupted. I, therefore, feel that you are needlessly wasting your time there. Ba asks: "What! Prabha will not come to stay with me or will she never come for my sake? What difference would it make whether or not you are here? Write to her, 'Ba wants you here'." This is her message. She often inquires, "When is Prabha coming?" I have to reach Allahabad<sup>1</sup> on the 19th instant. Come there if you can, and accompany me from there.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 3536

<sup>1</sup> To attend the Congress Working Committee meeting

*109. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI*

SEGAON,  
*November 11, 1939*

CHI. AMRITLAL,  
Let Natwarlal come.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Vijaya's letter is enclosed. Tear it up.  
From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10797

*110. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
*November 12, 1939*

MY DEAR AMRIT,

You have been true to your word. Though your telegrams have made bad reading they have consoled me, being so full and accurate. I hope that in spite of all the trouble, you will come well out of your illness and reach Simla in a fairly fit condition. I must have wires while you are ailing.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3941. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7250

*111. LETTER TO ISWAR SARAN*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
*November 12, 1939*

DEAR MUNSHIJI,

I should like to see your creation. But I fear there will be no time left. I should be reserved for such special work which my health still permits me to do.

*Yours si ncerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

MUNSHI ISWAR SARAN  
6 EDMONSTON ROAD  
ALLAHABAD

From the original: C. W. 10204. Courtesy: Municipal Museum, Allahabad



## 112. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
November 12, 1939

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Those who are on committees do not have to come out for the present. The addressee had asked whether in pursuance of the Congress resolution of October 22, 1939, Congressmen who were members of Municipalities ought to resign. I see no harm if Government officials are heading them. We shall have an opportunity of testing them. We can even quarrel with them if it becomes necessary. Maybe the committees will be superseded.

Let the Municipality maintain all connections. Non-cooperation this time is not like it was in 1920. These are my personal views. You can decide the matter in consultation with Sardar.

Harijans should certainly have a right to use the cremation ground which is under municipal control. The Municipality should requisition houses in some areas. These houses can be rented out to everyone, but Harijans should have the first preference.

Are you looking after your health?

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

## 113. IS CONGRESS A HINDU ORGANIZATION?<sup>1</sup>

Evidently we have not heard the last of Lord Zetland's charge that the National Congress is an organization representing Hindus and therefore national only in name but in reality communal. There cannot be a grosser libel on the Congress than this. From its inception it has been national. Its originator was an Englishman. The late A. O. Hume was long its Secretary. It has always had one or two Muslim Secretaries. It has had Muslim, English, Christian and Parsi Presidents. Dadabhai was, till he became invalid, the soul of the Congress. His was the guiding hand and the directing brain in everything. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency. He was the maker of Presidents both of the Congress and

<sup>1</sup> Vide also "Interview to *The Manchester Guardian*", 4-11-1939.

of the Bombay Corporation. Badruddin Tyabji was for years a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress. Who does not know that whilst Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan was alive nothing could be done by the Congress if it had not his *imprimatur*? Dr. Ansari was for years Joint General Secretary. The readers know the influence that the Ali Brothers exercised over the Congress during the Khilafat days. Today the Working Committee does not move without Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's co-operation and wise guidance. His is the decisive voice on Hindu-Muslim questions. Through its whole history now running into the second half of a century the Congress has ever striven to represent the whole of India in a manner no other organization has done. Every victory scored by the Congress has benefited all communities.

“If such is really the case, why has the Congress usurped the function that belongs to the All-India Hindu Mahasabha?” ask some angry correspondents. *The Tribune* has also pointed out what has appeared to the Editor the illogicality of the Congress. The illogicality has to be admitted. But neither life nor institutions are governed by logic. Obviously, the Congress felt the necessity of a communal adjustment for the political advancement of the country, and the Congress-League Pact of 1916 was born. Ever since that time the Congress has made communal unity a plank in the Congress programme. Though the function should logically belong to communal organizations, a mass organization like the Congress cannot look on if communities quarrel and when in the national interest a solution becomes necessary. Thus the Congress could not shirk what came to it as a clear call to duty. The Congress is and should be the organization to take a purely nationalistic and impartial view on communal questions. Whatever may be said to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress embodies the hope and aspirations of India. It can conclude no pact with any person if it does not represent the whole of India in so far as her political aspirations are concerned. Its traditions unfit it to represent Hindus as against Muslims or *vice versa*. It is fit to represent the common interest of all sons of Hindustan. I can see nothing wrong in the Congress trying to arrange pacts with men or their organizations for the furtherance of common interest. Needless to say they must be all mutually helpful, never contradictory. It is a difficult task no doubt. But if people and organizations extend their goodwill to the Congress, the task is not beyond its scope or capacity. It does not inspire that all-round trust

today. It may therefore have to wait for that day. If some other organization does it, Congressmen will welcome it.

SEGAON, November 13, 1939

*Harijan*, 18-11-1939

#### 114. UNNECESSARY ALARM

Writing on my statement<sup>1</sup> on the Viceregal preface<sup>2</sup> to the correspondence between the Viceroy and Shri Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah Saheb, an esteemed co-worker says :

I have read with some surprise and distress your statement in today's papers which makes any further action by us dependent on a settlement with the Muslim league and on the Viceroy continuing his efforts at parleying. I should imagine that this attitude makes any settlement either with the British Government or the Muslim League most difficult.

This sentiment is probably shared by many Congressmen. I must therefore try to dispel the fear. In my opinion suspension of civil disobedience is inherent in both the cases. We may not precipitate civil disobedience whilst the Viceroy is making an effort to placate parties. The suspension cannot be indefinite or even prolonged. We may not put ourselves in the wrong. Suspension for the sake of the Viceroy is an aid to settlement.

As to the Muslim League, it seems to me to be self-evident that, whilst we are quarrelling among ourselves, we cannot resort to civil disobedience on any large scale. This is obvious. Moreover we cannot come to a true settlement by hiding the truth from ourselves or others. I refuse to believe that Muslims can possibly hold up for any length of time the progress of the country which is as much theirs as others'. I see no harm in making the admission that, if the crores of Muslims do not desire freedom, they can at least for a time prevent it for the others, unless the latter are prepared to fight the former. I have eliminated that possibility so far as the Congress is concerned. The admission of the obvious is a gesture of goodwill towards the Muslim League. It throws also the onus on the League of blocking the country's progress. The admission should improve the prospect of a

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 8-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Prefatory Remarks on Correspondence with Leaders", 5-11-1939.

settlement.

It is worthwhile noticing the use of the word 'action' in the remarks quoted by me. What I have contemplated is merely suspension of civil disobedience in the event of the two contingencies mentioned by me, not of every variety of action. The Congress is not a static organization. It is ever moving. Whilst I cannot anticipate events, I have no doubt that the Congress will find means other than civil disobedience, within its self-imposed limits, of dealing with the crisis. I must repeat that we shall harm the cause by being impatient. I daily receive letters from men and women telling me that they are ready for the word and they will give a good account of themselves, and that I need have no fear of an outbreak of violence. To all these I would say that, if they are sincere in their professions, patient waiting will add to their strength and ensure success.

SEGAON, November 13, 1939

*Harijan*, 18-11-1939

### *115. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR*

WARDHAGANJ,  
November 13, 1939

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
2 METCALFE HOUSE ROAD, DELHI

HOPE    TROUBLE    SUBSIDING.    KEEP    WELL.    LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3942. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7251

### *116. POLITICS v. MORALS*

In response to my suggestion in my article<sup>1</sup> on the Congressman, Shri M. N. Roy has sent a long letter not to Dr. Rajendra Prasad but to me. He asks for a public discussion of the points raised by him. Omitting the prefatory paragraphs which have no interest for the reader, the letter is reproduced elsewhere.

To take the ministerial resignations<sup>2</sup> first, I feel sure that they

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Congressman", 31-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter, M. N. Roy said that "It was not necessary to have the Congress Ministers resign at this stage."

have added to the prestige of the Congress. The Working Committee would no doubt have done better to have accepted my proposal, only if it could have assimilated non-violence with all the implications suggested by me. But the members of the Working Committee were too conscious of their duty to accept my proposal mechanically and without heart belief. The Working Committee's resolution was, therefore, the only true course for the Working Committee to adopt. Having done so, resignations were the logical result.

It would have been unbecoming to have retained office for the doubtful advantage of guarding civil liberty. If they were ministers of autonomous States they could never have been ignored as they were about the war. Having been ignored, they would have been given satisfaction, when the attention of the British Government was drawn by the Working Committee to the grievous omission and when they were told how they could repair the mischief and retain India's co-operation in the prosecution of the war. The least that the Ministers could do, therefore, was to resign if only to show the hollowness of autonomy. To remain in office after the discovery of their impotence would have been to court ignominy. To retain office for the protection of civil liberty would have been to mistake the wood for the tree. And Shri Roy may feel quite sure that the weakened Ministers would have been poor guardians of civil liberty. The Governors would have set aside their decisions and caught hold of those whom they would have chosen to imprison. The Ministers had taken office principally to advance independence. When they failed, they were bound to forgo every other advantage however great in itself. And they can never go back to their offices so long as the demand of the Congress remains unsatisfied.

Civil disobedience is by no means the next inevitable forward step. It depends upon a variety of circumstances some of which I have already mentioned. Inaction is often the most effective action in the strategy of war—more so when the war is non-violent.

Now for the crucial point.<sup>1</sup> Non-violence is the central fact of the civil disobedience technique. It was in 1920 that the Congress hooked its politics deliberately to fundamental morals and vital social reform. It came to the conclusion that swaraj could not be won without non-violence and certain definite social reform, viz.,

<sup>1</sup> M. N. Roy criticized the doctrine of non-violence as "having no bearing upon the political programme of the Congress".

prohibition and removal of untouchability. It also put the charkha at the centre of its economic programme. Indeed it eschewed the then known political programme, i.e., the parliamentary. Hence the introduction of morals into Congress politics was not and is not irrelevant to the Congress fight for freedom. It is its core. There were a few grumblers then. But the vast majority welcomed the programme as the Congress had never done in the whole of its brilliant history. That programme justified itself by giving rise to a mass awakening on a phenomenal scale. By it the Congress gained an importance it had never before enjoyed. Shri Roy would not expect me at this stage to repeat here the argument that led to the enthusiastic acceptance of the programme. He should turn to the pages of *Young India* if he would know the pros and cons of the subject. The Congress became a mass democratic organization from the time of acceptance of the programme, and it framed a democratic Constitution<sup>1</sup> which stands to this day without much material and fundamental alteration.

The Congress has a double function. It is a democratic organization in peace time. It becomes a non-violent army in war time. In its second capacity it has no voting power. Its will is expressed by its general whoever he may be. Every unit has to tender him willing obedience in thought, word and deed. Yes, even in thought, since the fight is non-violent.

Shri Roy and other Congressmen do not need to be told that I am not in the habit of losing co-workers<sup>2</sup>. I go a long way with them in winning their affection and retaining it. But there does come a limit beyond which my compromise does not and cannot and should not go. No compromise is worth the name which endangers chances of success.

SEGAON, November 14, 1939

*Harijan*, 18-11-1939

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Congress Constitution Adopted at Nagpur Session", December 1920, and "Constitution of the Indian National Congress", 28-10-1934.

<sup>2</sup> M. N. Roy concluded his letter with a note that he and his group should not be "driven out of the Congress . . . for no other fault than the courage of our conviction and our devotion to the cause of Indian freedom"

## 117. NOTES

### AWARD OR DECISION?

Protests against an innocent sentence in my article ‘Good and Bad’<sup>1</sup> (*Harijan*, 4 -11-1939) are being showered upon me from all sides. The writers pay me unintended compliment for accuracy when they detect and severely criticize a hasty inaccuracy in my writings. I admit that what I have described as an award was after all not an award but a decision of the British Government. And if it was an award, there could be no question of my being party to it. But apart from that my “being party” requires an explanation. I was signatory to no application to the late Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. But having refused to sign the reference that was placed before me, I wrote<sup>2</sup> to the deceased Prime Minister to the effect that whatever all parties agreed to in the matter of communal adjustment would be accepted by the Congress. That project, however, fell through and there was no award but a decision given by the British Government in the absence of an agreed reference. A lapse of memory on my part cannot alter facts. But I am sorry for the trouble so many correspondents have been put to owing to my inaccuracy. Beyond however expressing my sorrow, I am afraid I shall not be able to mend my ways. Working under double pressure the slip like the one that has angered so many correspondents is likely to recur. But would-be correspondents will find me always ready to correct inaccuracies whenever they occur. And let my critics remember that of the neutral formula<sup>3</sup> of the Congress too, for which they have suddenly developed a liking, I was the author. They may also feel assured that if the time came during my lifetime for an agreed revision of the decision, which has many glaring defects, they will find me among the workers helping to evolve an equitable adjustment. What I will not do is to make an appeal to the British Government to revise it over the heads of the parties affected. It stands till the parties agree to purge it of its absurdities.

SEGAON, November 14, 1939

*Harijan*, 18-11-1939

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Good and Bad”, 30-10-1939; also “Notes”, 27-11-1939, sub-title, “Communal Decision Again”.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Prime Minister”, 14-11-1931.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* “Proposed Communal Solution”, 16-7-1931.

## 118. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA  
November 14, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your letters have been coming in regularly. I have seen yours to Rajen Babu. Before I saw it I had written a note<sup>1</sup> on it for *Harijan*, I must try to send you an advance copy.

If you need me longer in Allahabad, you will keep me.<sup>2</sup>

The interested editings in London of our statements here do not worry me. If I find time I shall write out a brief message<sup>3</sup> for *The News Chronicle*. I have prepaid authority from that paper.

More when we meet.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Mahadev just reminds me that you complete half a century today. I hope you will complete the other half retaining the same vigour, frankness and robust honesty.

B.

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.  
Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 396

## 119. CABLE TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"<sup>4</sup>

November 14, 1939

I OBSERVE THAT THE MAIN ISSUE BETWEEN BRITAIN AND INDIA IS BEING CONFUSED IN THE BRITISH PRESS. DOES BRITAIN INTEND TO RECOGNIZE INDIA AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION OR MUST INDIA REMAIN BRITAIN'S DEPENDENCY?

<sup>1</sup> The reference is, presumably, to the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee, in his letter dated November 8 to Gandhiji, said: "All the members of the U.P.P.C.C. were desirous of having an opportunity of meeting you, if this was possible during your stay in Allahabad. . . . The Working Committee is likely to last up to the 21st or possibly the 22nd. May I suggest the 23rd for an informal meeting between you and some of our prominent workers in the U.P., say, about 30 or so?"

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the following item.

<sup>4</sup> This appeared under the title "The Main Issue".



THIS QUESTION HAS NOT BEEN RAISED BY THE CONGRESS TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE OVER BRITAIN, BUT TO ENABLE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA TO DECIDE HOW THEY SHOULD BEHAVE DURING THE WORLD CRISIS. THE ISSUE THUS BECOMES PURELY MORAL FOR, OWING TO HER MATERIAL AND MILITARY CONTROL OF INDIA, BRITAIN IS ABLE TO REGULATE THE INDIAN AND BRITISH GARRISON AND DRAIN INDIA'S WEALTH AT HER WILL. EIGHT PROVINCES OUT OF ELEVEN HAVE SAID IN EMPHATIC LANGUAGE THAT THEY CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN THE WAR, IF IT DOES NOT MEAN, AMONG OTHER THINGS, INDIA'S COMPLETE FREEDOM. ALL OTHER ISSUES ARE SUBORDINATE. THE QUESTION OF MINORITIES IS PURELY A DOMESTIC ONE FOR THE MAJORITY AND THE MINORITIES TO SETTLE THEMSELVES. THE PROPOSED CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IS THE ONLY BODY THAT CAN EVOLVE A PROPER AND LASTING SOLUTION. ANY OTHER CAN ONLY BE A MAKE-SHIFT CARRYING NO POPULAR SANCTION. TO FLING THE MINORITIES QUESTION IN INDIA'S FACE IS TO CONFUSE ISSUES. TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE PRINCES IS STILL MORE UNTENABLE. THEY ARE PART OF THE PARAMOUNT POWER. IT IS PAINFUL TO THINK THAT BRITISH STATESMEN DO NOT SO MUCH AS MENTION THE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE OF THE STATES. HAVE THEY NO VOICE IN THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT? ARE THEY TO REMAIN SERFS, WHICH THEY ARE, THOUGH THEY ARE DRAGGED INTO THE WAR? NOWONDER HERR HITLER HAS CHALLENGED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO PROVE HER SINCERITY BY RECOGNIZING INDIA AS A FREE NATION. WHATEVER MAY BE HIS INTENTION IN ISSUING THE CHALLENGE, IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT IT IS PERTINENT. ANYWAY, LET THE BRITISH PUBLIC KNOW THAT THE CONGRESS DEMAND IS UNEQUIVOCAL AND CAPABLE OF BEING SATISFIED IF THERE IS THE WILL TO SHED IMPERIALISM. THE WORKING COMMITTEE MEETS ON THE 19TH INSTANT AT ALLAHABAD TO CONSIDER THE NEXT STEP. THERE SHOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING, THEREFORE, ABOUT THE ISSUE. IF THERE IS TO BE A FIGHT BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE CONGRESS THE WORLD SHOULD KNOW CLEARLY WHAT IT IS TO BE FOR.

*Harijan 25-11-1939*

## *120. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
*November 14, 1939*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

You have been very regular in sending me wires. Yesterday I sent mine<sup>1</sup> before yours came into my hands. Thank God for the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Amrit Kaur", 13-11-1939.

ending of the Dehra Dun programme. You must now have complete rest. I hope you will have no worry in Simla. I am well. The strain of work is there. B. P. 180/106 and 160/100. Radha and Lilavati went today, so did Homi.

No more tonight.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C. W. 3943. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7252

### *121. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
November 15, 1939

MY DEAR NIRMALANANDA,

You must not divert your attention from the service you are performing.

Yours,  
BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 1389

### *122. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
November 15, 1939

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

If Dinshaw so advises, have your teeth pulled out; you ought not to be afraid of it.

It is better to get the teeth removed, when there is discharge of pus; though, if the roots are too strong, one may have to consider. Let Dinshaw follow his judgment. Write to me in detail, How is Madalasa? I got Om's letter. Thanks.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 3005

*123. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR*

WARDHA,  
*November 16, 1939*

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
SIMLA W[EST]

YOUR WIRE DISTURBING. MY PRAYERS WITH YOU. YOU MUST TAKE  
COMPLETE. REST. GET THOROUGHLY WELL. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3945. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7254

*124. TELEGRAM TO DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA*

WARDHA,  
*November 16, 1939*

DR. COPICHAND  
LAJPATBHUVAN  
LAHORE

NOT GOING DELHI.<sup>1</sup>

BAPU

From the original: Dr. Gopichand Bhargava Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial  
Museum and Library

*125. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
*November 16, 1939*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your wire from Simla has disturbed me. I have a guilty  
conscience. Why did I promise to send you to Doon? But there am I.  
It is my nature to exploit co-workers to the fullest extent possible. But  
I should have known your weak body. Ten thousand apologies to

<sup>1</sup> The addressee in his letter of November 12 had expressed his wish to meet  
Gandhiji in Delhi if he was going there.

Shummy<sup>1</sup>. None to you. For you would resent even the thought of my sparing you. But I shall have to spare you for the sake of the cause. I am sending you a wire. You must now become strong. You can be, if only you will make up your mind to be strong. You have to get rid of your moods and sensitiveness. It is no use your saying you cannot change your nature. We are on this earth to bend our natures to the Higher Will.

I hope Shummy is well. Tofa<sup>2</sup> must have received you boisterously. The patients are doing well. Love to you all.

TYRANT

[PS.]

I understand I had given the letter to Ghanshyamdas to have it gummed and posted.

From the original: C. W. 3946 Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7255

### *126. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI*

SEGAON,

*November 16, 1939*

CHI. AMRITLAL,

You did well in remaining there for the sake of Kamath. I shall discuss with Sushila about the purgative. What you have written about Ashalatabehn is correct. Hers is a difficult problem. I shall see. If grown-up persons cannot look after themselves, what can we do?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10798

### *127. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*September 16, 1939*

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. I, for my part, did write to you. How is Nanabhai's health? Is your health improving? As Kakasaheb is not

<sup>1</sup> Shumshere Singh, the addressee's brother, a retired surgeon

<sup>2</sup> The addressee's pet dog

here, Amritlal sleeps here for the present. He leads the prayers. Today he is not here because Kamath is ill and laid up at his place.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I am going to Prayag for some three days.

SHRI VIJAYABEHN  
C/O SHRINANABHAI  
AMBLA, *via* SONEGADH  
KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 4612. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

### *128. LETTER TO DLKHUSH B. DIWANJI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*November 16, 1939*

BHAI DILKHUSH,

I have your letter. Your work is no doubt always solid. Has your problem been solved? Your weaving is done there, isn't it? Can you weave fine yarn? Try to attain perfection.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DILKHUSH DIWANJI  
GANDHI KUTIR  
KARADI, *via* NAVSARI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 2643

### *129. LETTER TO KANCHANBEHN M. SHAH*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*November 16, 1939*

CHI. KANCHAN,

I got your two letters. They did not call for any reply. Go to Ramana Ashram only if you feel like going. Recently there has been

no news from Munnalal. But there is nothing to worry. Improve your health. I am going to Allahabad for some three days.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8288. Also C. W. 7064. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

*130. LETTER TO NIRMALA, KANAM, SUMITRA AND  
USHA GANDHI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*November 16, 1939*

CHI. NIMU,

What an idler you are! Ba is pining for a letter from you: 'No letter from Nimu even on the occasion of Diwali?' I told her you are busy with your work. Is that right?

CHI. KANAM,

The camera you wanted is getting ready. But do you remember the condition on which it is to be given to you? If Nimu sends a certificate for you, take it that the camera is ready. You will come over here to take it, won't you?

CHI. SUMI,

You must have grown into a big girl now. Does Kanam harass you?

CHI. USHA,

You never came to play with me. Would you not come now? Ramdas is here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Kunvarji is all right.

SHRI NIRMALABEHN RAMDAS GANDHI

DAKSHINAMURTI STHAL

BHAVNAGAR, KATHIAWAD

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 131. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,  
Nearing 8 p.m., November 16, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

This letter<sup>1</sup> should have gone to you early. But want of time is the excuse, or is it want of method, or both?

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3944. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7253

### 132. INTERVIEW TO A CO-WORKER <sup>2</sup>

[On or before *November 17, 1939*]

CO-WORKER: I have come to listen to you, trusting as I do in your leadership.

GANDHIJI: Mine is an insipid leadership. I have nothing but this<sup>3</sup> to show.

Your statement<sup>4</sup> about civil disobedience is perplexing. It does not speak for itself. Thus when you say we should not start civil disobedience if the Muslim League blocks the way, I feel very much intrigued. Is there fear of communal rioting? Why should there be a riot?

Why was there one the other day in Nellore?

Oh, that was over some Diwali affair, nothing to do with politics.

Everything to do with want of communal unity.

You think they will obstruct us, lest we should secure our demands?

No, they will say in fighting Government we are fighting them and obstructing them in getting what they want by co-operation. Do you want to fight the Mussalmans?

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to a letter dated Bombay, November 10, 1939, from Shankerlal Banker to the addressee, at the back of which Gandhiji had written this letter.

<sup>2</sup> The interview is extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "Puzzled and Perplexed", dated "Segaon, November 17".

<sup>3</sup> Mahadev Desai explains: "Gandhiji was laughing and pointing to the spinning-wheel which he was trying to put right."

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 8-11-1939 and "Unnecessary Alarm", 13-11-1939.

No. In your talks<sup>1</sup> with Jinnah Saheb did you get any such impression from him?

He gave me no such impression. But nothing more than ordinary common sense is required to see what I have said. In fact I am surprised that you do not see what is so obvious. Others of your party are clear that there would be trouble, but they say that we should not mind it, we should be able to deal with it. I say to them it is wrong to anticipate a riot in the hope that we can deal with it. If a big minority is opposed to the launching of civil disobedience, I should say let us wait.

But you have mentioned other obstacles.

That is the main obstacle. But should I not have said, there should be discipline among us?

But there is discipline. We do not start civil disobedience when you say we should not start it. I am surprised at the response given by our own leftists. Of course one or two of us have talked extreme language, but otherwise there is discipline.<sup>2</sup>

You, Mahatmaji, will go on waiting and want others also to wait?

Therefore I have said, don't have two masters. Either convert me or desert me.

So you have no objection to our starting civil disobedience if we do so after leaving the Congress?

My objection will have no effect on non-Congressmen.

But we will remain non-violent. The main obstacle you have mentioned, viz., communal disunity, should be removed. I accept it, but after it is removed you won't resist us.

On the contrary, if you remain non-violent in thought, word and deed, you will make me follow you. As I have been telling Prithvi Singh, when he is completely non-violent in thought, word and deed I should follow him as he would be very much superior to me. So when you are all non-violent I should dance with joy.

You have mentioned hostile acts by Government. What have you in mind?

For example, when they make civil liberty impossible.

But it is impossible. They arrest us even if we speak. Do you think it would be a breach of our self-imposed vow if we criticize the Government?

No, if you are not violent in your speech.

<sup>1</sup> In Delhi, on November 1 and 2

<sup>2</sup> Mahadev Desai adds: "Gandhiji gave the friend examples of indiscipline."



So we can attack Lord Zetland's speech. We can call them international robbers and say, there is nothing to choose between their imperialism and fascism.

Oh, yes.

That won't get us into trouble?

Not certainly with me.

Then I come to the next point. Now that there is an irresponsible executive why should we pay taxes? Some of our Kisan Sabha friends find the position anomalous. Can't we refuse to pay taxes?

That would be civil disobedience. How can you start non-payment of taxes on mass scale?

No, I do not mean on a mass scale.

Then it will not be non-payment of taxes. It has no meaning except on a mass scale.

Why not one or two men in a single village refuse to pay taxes as a kind of protest? It will be a test case.

You may try it, but it will be sheer madness, I tell you. And you may be sure no one will listen to you. No, you must not run away with your feelings. I assure you, I am capable of saying to the people: 'Those who are prepared to suffer to the uttermost may refuse to pay.' But that will not be today. The time may come some day—let us hope in my lifetime.

But is there any harm in doing what the Congress does not ban?

Everything is banned that the Congress does not advise to be done.

But if a man feels so strongly about it and wants an escape, how is he to find it?

By leaving the Congress—which is the only right thing.

You have asked us to rest content with the constructive programme. Now there are full-blooded people amongst us. They want to do something—something which may not be civil disobedience, but which may lead irresistibly towards it.

That surely is constructive programme. It is surely for the general to decide what that is to be. 'Every man shall walk five miles a day,' says he, or 'Everyone shall go and help in emptying a tank, and then march.' If you believe in observing discipline, don't you think everyone should do this?

But we do not know what exactly is to come ultimately.

You may therefore say that my language is not precise. You

would have me say, 'Ply the charkha for so many hours, and, if so many people do it for so many hours, we will have civil disobedience? I am quite prepared to say so.

We do not say that the negotiations should not continue and the peace efforts should be relaxed, but we should keep ourselves ready.

I am also ready to issue instructions to say that these are my minimum requirements, and that only those can join the non-violent army who satisfy them.

I am glad you will do it. When you declared that the Working Committee had left the whole thing in your hands, at any rate as regards civil disobedience, we were all very happy; you put heart into us, and we gained a feeling of self-confidence. If now you think there is no harm, why should not the Working Committee organize a sort of preparation committee or give all power to you to prepare for all eventualities?

I will see what happens in Allahabad.

Lastly, let me ask you one thing. If there is such need for unity, why should there be such persecution of the leftists?

Persecution is a wrong word. There is none, and the ban<sup>1</sup> can be removed provided there is the assurance of heart obedience being yielded.

Why don't you assume it?

We cannot, as there are apostates in the ranks. And the worst that can happen is that we go on expelling people until, say, I am left alone. Then I should resign and declare that I am defeated. But joking apart, don't you think whoever wants the ban to be removed should say, provided he means it, 'I must not keep away, I will tender my apology?' And he will be immediately taken.

It took their breath away when saw that you also approved of the action of the Working committee. They have a deep regard for you—not based on reason but personal affection. And for you they will do anything. If you can get the ban removed, they will be all very happy.

Then what I suggest is that you should write a letter to Rajendra Babu explaining everything and making the suggestion.

I will see what can be done. All I would appeal to you to realize is that there

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the ban imposed on Subhas Chandra Bose by the Congress Working Committee; *vide* "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 11-8-1939.

should be no question of prestige with the Working Committee.

There is no question of prestige, it is a question of discipline.

The Congress, I think, has been given greater discipline than any army in the world. Against how few people have you had to take action ?

But, I wish I could take the same view as you. I have brought into being so many organizations here and in South Africa, and I am not able to say that the Congress compares favourably with them. Wherever the organizations have done well, it was because the members have yielded willing obedience. Whereas here we have had violent disobedience.<sup>1</sup>

Well, take away one thought with you and say how many Congressmen have carried out the khadi clause.<sup>2</sup>

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. There is a tremendous surplus of khadi everywhere. Why should your province not finish all the stocks lying unsold?

*Harijan, 25-11-1939*

### 133. A LETTER

*November 17, 1939*

“Be careful for nothing.”<sup>3</sup> This is the same as *anasakti* of the *Gita*. The book has to be studied with this central theme in view.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

### 134. LETTER TO MANUBEHN S. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*November 17, 1939*

CHI. MANUDI,

I am not able to write to you as often as I wish to. Now your confinement should be very near. Hope you are keeping up your courage. Surendra should send a wire. One can say that you passed these last months without any trouble. Krishnadas is progressing and

<sup>1</sup> Here Mahadev Desai says: “The friend did not agree and was inclined for further argument. But the time was running against him.”

<sup>2</sup> Mahadev Desai adds: “Nothing daunted, the friend tried to make out that in his province at any rate there were few culprits among Congressmen.”

<sup>3</sup> *Philippians, IV. 6*

so is Kunvarji. They are improving faster than expected. Rami is fine. What a long name<sup>1</sup> you have given to her daughter? Who suggested that name to you? Or did you take revenge for your having been given a simple name?

*Blessings to you both from*  
BAPU

SHRI MANUBEHN MASHRUWALA  
BALKIRAN  
SANTA CRUZ

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 2673. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

### *135. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*November 17, 1939*

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I am leaving for Prayag tomorrow. Most probably I will return before the 25th. Find out from a newspaper before coming.

I am not writing separately to Maneklal<sup>2</sup> or the girls.

*Blessings to all from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./III

### *136. LETTER TO MANEKLAL AND RADHA KOTHARI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*November 17, 1939*

CHIL. MANEKLAL<sup>3</sup> AND CHI. RADHA<sup>4</sup>,

I got the letters of you both. May you prosper during the New Year<sup>5</sup>.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./XXIII

<sup>1</sup> Navamalika

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's brother

<sup>3</sup> Maneklal Kothari, son-in-law of Gandhiji's eldest brother, Lakshmidas Gandhi

<sup>4</sup> Wife of Maneklal Kothari

<sup>5</sup> According to the Vikram calendar the day following Diwali is observed as the new-year's day (*Kartik Sud 1*). In 1939, it was on November 12.

137. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
November 17, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

What a letter from you! Why do you seem to be getting away from me? Write to me in detail. You cause me worry. I have built high hopes on you. Do not disappoint me. We are going to Prayag tomorrow. I am keeping Pyarelal here. I have kept a leprosy patient, Parachure Shastri<sup>1</sup>, in the Ashram. We hope to return on the 23rd. Hope you are getting on well. Reply to me immediately.

*Blessings to you both from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10018. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

138. LETTER TO SUMANGAL PRAKASH

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
November 17, 1939

CHI. SUMANGAL,

I have your letter. I am glad your marriage has been according to your wishes. May you both be happy and serve the country.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRISUMANGAL PRAKASH  
NAVASHAKTI KARYALAYA  
PATNA

From a photostat of the Hindi: Sumangal Prakash Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> In his book, *Under the Shelter of Bapu* (pp. 110-1), Balvantsinha explains: "Parachure Shastri went to Bapuji and said that he would like to stay with him till he died. . . Bapuji looked thoughtful. . . ultimately decided to keep him. . . . When the disease took a serious turn, Bapuji began to massage him with his own hands." Parachure Shastri died on September 5, 1945.

*139. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MAHOMED YUNUS*

*November 18, 1939*

How can I convince you if you cannot accept my word that my attention is continually devoted to the question of questions? But man can only propose, God alone disposes. Whom He has joined none can keep permanently apart.<sup>1</sup>

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

*140. LETTER TO P. KODANDA RAO*

ON THE TRAIN,

*November [18]<sup>2</sup>, 1939*

MY DEAR KODANDA RAO,

Your argument is quite good. But tell me who is today the League of Nations<sup>3</sup>? The situation is baffling but deeply interesting. I am hoping that our country will play an important part in this moving drama.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 6283

*141. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

ITARSI,

*November 18, 1939*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Here we are for five hours waiting for the train. Rajaji and Jairamdas are with us. I had your wire from Simla. You have been extraordinarily good. I hope the progress will be steady. You must not worry about anything and concentrate on getting quite well and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to Mahomed Yunus", 14-10-1939.

<sup>2</sup> The source, however, has "10". Gandhiji was going to Allahabad.

<sup>3</sup> With the outbreak of the war in September 1939, all activity of the League of Nations had ceased although it continued to exist till April 1946.

strong.

I expect to leave Allahabad for Segaoon on Tuesday but it may not be possible to do so. In that case I leave on Wednesday. My mind is in Segaoon especially since the coming of Parachure Shastri. He is God's gift. But it is also a medium of my examination.<sup>1</sup>

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C. W. 3947. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7256

### *142. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI*

ITARSI,

*November 18, 1939*

CHI. BHANSALI,

Nayan is pining for a letter from you. It is your duty, since it is ahimsa, to satisfy her. We may not keep up personal relations with our relatives but we should not hurt them either. As the circle of our kith and kin widens, we must not get involved and maintain relations with them only for the sake of service. Take care of your health in your present exertions.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 433

### *143. LETTER TO PYARELAL*

*November 18, 1939*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I have your chit. I have not understood it well. My demand is quite simple. If you can accept it, I may or may not get any work out of you. If you can act in good faith, nothing is spoilt. I have not received many letters of the type you imagine. But if somebody writes something, should I divulge it even if it is irrelevant? Is it possible? Explain it to me. But one thing I have already made clear: that is that when I cannot tell something to someone, no one should say anything about it to me.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* 1st footnote of "Letter to Shardabehn G. Chokhawala", 17-11-1939

Meet Parachure Shastri and find out everything from him. He is constantly in my mind.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

#### *144. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

ITARSI,

*November 18, 1939*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I am pleased with your progress. Go ahead.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of Hindi: G. N. 4331

#### *145. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL*

ON THE MOVING TRAIN,

*November 18, 1939*

BHAI DAHYABHAI,

I did get your letter. I hope you are getting along well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI DAHYABHAI MANORDAS PATEL

DHOLKA

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2711. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

#### *146. THE ONLY WAY*

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has compelled me to study, among other things, the implications of a Constituent Assembly. When he first introduced it<sup>1</sup> in the Congress resolutions, I reconciled myself to it

<sup>1</sup> At the Congress Working Committee meeting on September 14, 1939; *vide* Appendix "Working Committee's Manifesto", 14-9-1939.



because of my belief in his superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy. But I was not free from scepticism. Hard facts have, however, made me a convert and, for that reason perhaps, more enthusiastic than Jawaharlal himself. For I seem to see in it a remedy, which Jawaharlal may not, for our communal and other distempers, besides being a vehicle for mass political and other education.

The more criticism I see of the scheme, the more enamoured I become of it. It will be the surest index to the popular feeling. It will bring out the best and the worst in us. Illiteracy does not worry me. I would plump for unadulterated adult franchise for both men and women, i. e., I would put them all on the register of voters. It is open to them not to exercise it if they do not wish to. I would give separate vote to the Muslims; but, without giving separate vote, I would, though reluctantly, give reservation, if required, to every real minority according to its numerical strength.

Thus the Constituent Assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem. Today we are unable to say with mathematical precision who represents whom. Though the Congress is admittedly the oldest representative organization on the widest scale, it is open to political and semi-political organizations to question, as they do question, its overwhelmingly representative character. The Muslim League is undoubtedly the largest organization representing Muslims, but several Muslim bodies—by no means all insignificant—deny its claim to represent them. But the Constituent Assembly will represent all communities in their exact proportion. Except it there is no other way of doing full justice to rival claims. Without it there can be no finality to communal and other claims.

Again, the Constituent Assembly alone can produce a constitution indigenous to the country and truly and fully representing the will of the people. Undoubtedly such a constitution will not be ideal, but it will be real, however imperfect it may be in the estimation of the theorists or legal luminaries. Self-government to be self-government has merely to reflect the will of the people who are to govern themselves. If they are not prepared for it, they will make a hash of it. I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I cannot conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fabled jackdaw could

not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion. A diseased person has a prospect of getting well by personal effort. He cannot borrow health from others.

The risks of the experiment are admitted. There is likely to be impersonation. Unscrupulous persons will mislead the illiterate masses into voting for wrong men and women. These risks have to be run, if we are to evolve something true and big. The Constituent Assembly, if it comes into being—as I hope it will—as a result of an honourable settlement between us and the British people, the combined wit of the best men of the two nations will produce an Assembly that will reflect fairly truly the best mind of India. Therefore the success of the experiment at the present stage of India's history depends upon the intention of the British statesmen to part with power without engaging India in a deadly unorganized rebellion. For I know that India has become impatient. I am painfully conscious of the fact that India is not yet ready for non-violent civil disobedience on a mass scale. If, therefore, I cannot persuade the Congress to await the time when non-violent action is possible, I have no desire to live to see a dog-fight between the two communities. I know for certain that if I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction to the satisfaction of the Congress and there is no communal adjustment, nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting for the time being in anarchy and red ruin. I hold that it is the duty of all communities and Englishmen to prevent such a catastrophe.

The only way out is a Constituent Assembly. I have given my own opinion on it, but I am not tied down to the details. When I was nearly through with this article, I got the following wire from Syed Abdulla Brelvi<sup>1</sup>;

Considerable misapprehensions among minorities (about) Constituent Assembly. Strongly urge clarification details, franchise, composition, methods arriving decision.

I think I have said sufficient in the foregoing to answer Syed Saheb's question. By minorities he has Muslims principally in mind as represented by the Muslim League. If once the proposition that all communities desire a charter of independence framed by a Constituent Assembly and that they will not be satisfied with anything else is accepted, the settling of details surely becomes easy. Any other

<sup>1</sup> Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*

method must lead to an imposed constitution mostly undemocratic. It would mean an indefinite prolongation of imperialistic rule sustained by the help of those who will not accept the fully democratic method of a Constituent Assembly.

The principal hindrance is undoubtedly the British Government. If they can summon a Round Table Conference as they propose to do after the war, they can surely summon a Constituent Assembly subject to safeguards to the satisfaction of minorities. The expression 'satisfaction of minorities' may be regarded as vague. It can be defined beforehand by agreement. The question thus resolves itself into whether the British Government desire to part with power and open a new chapter in their own history. I have already shown<sup>1</sup> that the question of the Princes is a red herring across the path. European interests are absolutely safe so long as they are not in conflict with 'the interests of India'. I think this expression finds place in the Irwin-Gandhi Pact<sup>2</sup>.

Look at the question from any standpoint you like, it will be found that the way to democratic swaraj lies only through a properly constituted Assembly, call it by whatever name you like. All resources must, therefore, be exhausted to reach the Constituent Assembly before direct action is thought of. A stage may be reached when direct action may become the necessary prelude to the Constituent Assembly. That stage is not yet.

ALLAHABAD, November 19, 1939

*Harijan*, 25-11-1939

#### *147. SPEECH AT KAMALA NEHRU MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, ALLAHABAD<sup>3</sup>*

*November 19, 1939*

After my coming from Africa, I came into contact with Kamala Nehru also. She was a remarkable person. Besides being devoted to her husband as most Indian women are, she loved her country much and this love was great. She was a high-principled lady and candid enough to express her opinion if she differed on principles. She had a

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 6-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> Of March 5, 1931; *vide* Appendix "Provisional Settlement", 12-3-1931.

<sup>3</sup> After laying the corner-stone, Gandhiji spoke in Hindi. He read out a message from Madan Mohan Malaviya, one of the trustees of the hospital.

noble soul and whatever she did was not for show or gain or favour.

Congressmen have gained the reputation of being agitators only and not being capable of constructive work, but such critics are now inclined to change their opinion. During the Civil Disobedience movement Kamala's heart went out to the sufferers. It was then that she took active interest in the Congress Hospital which had then been started. During my last meeting<sup>1</sup> with Kamala in Bombay while she was leaving for Europe for treatment, she told me that she might not come back and that I should see that the work of the hospital went on. I gave her my word then. This work is my sacred duty and I come to Allahabad specially for it. I would have gone back tomorrow after this work here, but Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru insisted upon my staying here longer.

I gave my signature to the appeal for funds for this hospital, which is for five lakhs. Only half the amount has been collected. I hope you will all contribute to the fund. This hospital is not only for the United Provinces, but for all India. We should now think in terms of the whole of India. There are so many universities in the U. P., and so many students. I hope they will all help to collect funds. Then there are so many industrial magnates in Kanpur. It should not be difficult for you to raise the money. Finally, I wish God that He may give peace and rest to Kamala's soul.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindustan Times, 20-11-1939*

#### 148. RAJKOT REFORMS

Having once offended, however unwittingly, against the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot and Durbar Shri Virawala, I have restrained myself against saying anything by way of criticism of the Durbar's doings in that State.<sup>3</sup> But duty to the people of Rajkot who have shown exemplary discipline demands a word from me on the reforms just announced. They expect me to give my opinion on them. It pains me to have to say that they have undone what the late Thakore Saheb had done. The adult franchise which it was the late Thakore Saheb's boon lasting 15 years has been revoked, and it has been reduced to the

<sup>1</sup> On May 22, 1935. Kamala Nehru died in Geneva on February 28, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Notes", 20-11-1939.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to Gandhiji's four days' fast from May 3, which was given up after the Viceroy's assurance.

possession of property qualifications and a stiff residential test. The elected President gives place to the Dewan as permanent President. The original Sabha which was wholly composed of elected representatives is to contain 40 elected members against 20 nominated. The elected members will be sub-divided into minorities. The so-called majority will thus become really a minority. The natural course of reforms is progressive increase of popular control. Here without the slightest justification popular control has been materially reduced. The original Sabha had wide powers of legislation. These have been curtailed.

There was a definite announcement that the privy purse was to be fixed. The reforms ignore the announcement. The Notification of December 26th last was to transfer to the people 'the widest powers possible'. My reading of them leads me to the conclusion that not only have the powers already possessed by the people been taken away but they have been limited as much as possible. In one word, the Thakore Saheb's, i. e., the Dewan's, will is to be by the Supreme Law in Rajkot.

I am sorry to have to write these lines. I do not know whether these reforms are the last act of the tragedy for which my violence is responsible. A fast is a remedy to be applied only by an expert. It interrupts the even course of a movement for better. The slightest touch of violence damages it. I have admitted that my appeal to the Viceroy against the acts of the Thakore Saheb whilst the fast was pending was violence and vitiated the fast. I had thought that I had paid the penalty by repentance, and that the happy relations established between the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Shri Virawala and me would open a new and bright chapter for the people of Rajkot. The *darbar* held in my honour after my public repentance seemed to have set the seal on the good that the repentance had done. I see, I was mistaken. Men's natures are not changed in a moment. I apologize to the people of Rajkot.

But I do not repent of my repentance. I am quite sure that what was morally right was also politically right. My repentance saved the people of Rajkot from a worse fate. It averted a communal clash. I am quite sure that in the end the people of Rajkot will come to their own. Meanwhile the evil that the reforms in my opinion are, must be allowed to work itself out. Those citizens of Rajkot who have any sense of self-respect must abstain from co-operation in working them.

They will, if they take my advice, watch, wait, pray and literally spin. They will find that they will be also spinners of real liberty in Rajkot in the non-violent way which is the only true way.

ALLAHABAD, November 20, 1939

*Harijan*, 25-11-1939

### 149. NOTES

#### KAMALA NEHRU MEMORIAL

On the 19th instant I had the privilege of laying the foundation-stone of the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital in Allahabad before a large gathering.<sup>1</sup> This hospital will be not only a fitting remembrance of the memory of a true devotee of her country and a woman of great spiritual beauty, it will be a redemption of the promise made to her by me that I would do what lay in my power to see that the work for which she had made herself responsible was carried on even after her death. She was going to Europe in search of health. The visit proved to be a search of death. As she was going she had invited me, if I could, either to join her for a brief talk during part of her journey to Bombay or to see her in Bombay. I went to Bombay. During the time that I was able to give her she asked me, if she died in Europe, to try to see that the hospital which Jawaharlal had commenced in Swaraj Bhavan and which she had laboured to keep alive was put on a permanent footing. I told her I would do what I could. That promise was partly the foundation for the appeal, to which I had become party, for funds for the Memorial. Owing to circumstances beyond my control I was not able to take much active part in collecting the funds. The appeal was made for five lacs and only half the amount has come in. At the ceremony of foundation-laying, I made an appeal to the large audience composed of the wealthy as also the poor to share the burden of making up the deficit. By judicious organization it ought to be easy to make the collection for a cause so worthy and for a memory so sacred. Able doctors of all-India reputation like Jivraj Mehta and Bidhan Chandra Roy are among the trustees. They have made themselves responsible for the proper construction, organization and management of the hospital. I hope that not only will the deficit be soon made up but the doctors will have no difficulty in securing a

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Kamla Nehru Memorial Hospital, Allahabad", 19-11-1939.

suitable staff for the efficient management of the hospital.

#### A REMINDER

Narandas Gandhi tells me that I should remind the readers that all those who want to take part in the spinning *yajna* against the *rentia jayanti* should send in their names at once. The *yajna* took effect from the 11th October last. Those who have not yet sent in their names are already behindhand. But better late than never. Those who are behindhand can make up by spinning more than the stipulated quantity till they have made up for the past neglect. Narandas Gandhi has specialized in this class of khadi work. He loves figures at which he is quick. To keep an exact record of names and addresses of sacrificial spinners and register their output does not tire him. On the contrary he delights in this work. He believes in method. He thinks that the mere keeping of such registers systematizes the work of which a register is kept, and stimulates workers. If a fairly large number will spin for sacrifice, they can help in bringing about a material reduction in the price of khadi. The scheme is rich with possibilities. I hope, therefore, that it will meet with the response it deserves.

#### A GOOD SUGGESTION

A khadi-lover says:

Now that the Ministers have resigned in what are called Congress provinces, will they not be most usefully employed if they will make it a point to sell khadi by hawking or otherwise? Khadi is in the centre of the Congress programme. Thousands of Congressmen can occupy themselves with it as with no other. Will you not put my humble suggestion before the ex-Ministers in particular and all Congressmen in general? In every province there is a surplus stock. Spinning is consequently being cut down. It should not be so.

I endorse every word of what the khadi-lover suggests. Congressmen should make it their duty to see that all surplus khadi is sold without delay.

ALLAHABAD, November 20, 1939

*Harijan*, 25-11-1939

*150. LETTER TO SHUMSHERE SINGH*

*November 20, 1939*

MY DEAR SHUMMY,

Have mercy on poor Amrit. She finds her soul with me. She has got what she has been yearning for years. With her it is not a question of what service I want from her, it is a question with her of how she can serve me, i. e., my cause. She wants to be near me. To be near me, to be of use to me is her joy and solace. It is cruel to resist her. You should not be cross with her for wanting to be better, fitting herself for the service of humanity. You should encourage her, make her way smooth. She loves you with rare devotion. She freezes, if you are angry with her. She rejoices to see you in good humour. She has become inconsolable because you are cross with her. Do please assuage your wrath and let her come to Segaoon with a willing heart. She really keeps well in Segaoon. She eats with relish. Sometimes most healthy people will be unwell. She has worn herself out by overwork and anxiety. Any strain tells on her. She puts herself to inconvenience without cause. I shall take greater care of her health. After all the spirit is more than the flesh. Her spirit invariably prospers in Segaoon. You should let her travel so long as your purse allows it. She gains experience. But she shall not travel if you do not want her to. Do wire to me that you have made up with her and that you are no longer angry with her. I am likely to be in Allahabad till Wednesday. I shall await your wire, if of course you can send it with the conviction that what I say is right and proper.

With love to you all,

BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai



## 151. CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

[November 22, 1939]<sup>2</sup>

The Working Committee have noted with pleasure the response of the country to the policy enunciated<sup>3</sup> by them regarding the war in Europe and its repercussions in India. This policy, based on numerous declarations of the Congress, was laid down in a statement<sup>4</sup> issued by the Committee on September 14, and subsequent events have amply justified its wisdom and expediency. The course of the war and the policy pursued by the British and French Governments, in particular the declarations made on behalf of the British Government regarding India, seem to demonstrate that the present war, like the World War of 1914-18, is being carried on for imperialist ends, and British imperialism is to remain entrenched in India. With such a war and with this policy the Congress cannot associate itself, and it cannot countenance the exploitation of India's resources to this end.

The Working Committee's unequivocal demand was for a declaration of war aims in regard to democracy and imperialism and, in particular, how these aims were going to be applied to India. These aims could only be considered worthy, if they included the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as an independent nation whose policy would be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people. The answer to this demand has been entirely unsatisfactory, and an attempt has been made on behalf of the British Government to create misunderstandings and to befog the main and moral issue. In justification of this refusal to make a declaration in terms of the Working Committee's resolution, communal pleas have been advanced and the rights of the minorities and of the Princes pleaded as barriers to India's freedom.

The Committee wish to declare with all emphasis that no communal considerations arise in meeting the demand of the

<sup>1</sup> A report dated "Allahabad, November 22" in *The Hindustan Times* read; "The Congress Working Committee considered for seven hours today the draft resolution prepared by Mahatma Gandhi on the present political crisis in India."

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Congress Working Committee Resolution", after 18-7-1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Working Committee's Manifesto", 14-9-1939.

Congress, and the minorities, whatever their other differences might be, do not oppose India's right to freedom and independence. The Princes are represented by, and are emblems of, the Paramount Power in India. In the end, it will be the people of the Indian States who will determine what part they will take in a free India, though the British Government have consistently ignored their wishes in the matter which vitally affects them. In any event, the wishes of those who may oppose India's independence are, and must be, irrelevant to the declaration of the British Government's intentions. The Committee can only interpret this attempt to avoid a statement of their war aims and Indian freedom by taking shelter under irrelevant issues, as a desire to maintain their imperialist domination in India in alliance with reactionary elements in the country.

The Congress has looked upon the war crisis and the problems it raises as essentially a moral issue, and has not sought to profit by it in any spirit of bargaining. The moral and dominant issue of war aims and India's freedom have to be settled satisfactorily before any other subsidiary question can be considered.

In no event can the Congress accept responsibility of the Government, even in the transitional period, without real power being given to popular representatives. The Working Committee, therefore, approve of and endorse the reply dated November 3<sup>1</sup>, 1939, sent by the Congress President to the Viceroy.

The Committee wish to declare again that recognition of India's independence and the right of her people to frame their constitution through a Constituent Assembly is essential in order to remove the taint of imperialism from Britain's policy and to enable the Congress to consider further co-operation. They hold that the Constituent Assembly is the only democratic method of determining the constitution of a free country, and no one who believes in democracy and freedom can possibly take exception to it. The Working Committee believe, too, that the Constituent Assembly alone is the adequate instrument for solving communal and other difficulties. This, however, does not mean that the Working Committee will relax their efforts for arriving at a solution of the communal problem. This Assembly can frame a constitution in which the rights of accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction and, in the event of

<sup>1</sup> The source, however, has "4"; *vide* Appendix "Letter from the Congress President to the Viceroy", 3-11-1939.

some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration. The Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, the existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desire them. The number of these members in the Assembly should reflect their numerical strength.

The declarations<sup>1</sup> made on behalf of the British Government, being inadequate, have compelled the Congress to dissociate itself from British policy and war efforts, and, as a first step in non-co-operation, to bring about the resignations of all the Congress Governments in the Provinces. That policy of non-co-operation continues and must continue unless the British Government revises its policy and accepts the Congress contention.

The Working Committee would remind Congressmen that it is inherent in every form of satyagraha that no effort is spared to achieve an honourable settlement with the opponent. While a satyagrahi is ever ready for a non-violent fight, if it has to come, he never relaxes his efforts for peace and always works for its attainment. The Working Committee will, therefore, continue to explore the means of arriving at an honourable settlement, even though the British Government have banged the door in the face of the Congress. The Committee must, however, resist, by the non-violent methods of the Congress, all attempts to coerce the people of India along paths which are not of their choice and everything that is against the dignity and freedom of India.

The Working Committee appreciate and express their pleasure at the readiness exhibited by Congressmen for launching civil disobedience, should this become necessary. But civil disobedience requires the same strict discipline as an army organized for an armed conflict. The army is helpless unless it possesses its weapons of destruction and knows how to use them; so also an army of non-violent soldiers is ineffective unless it understands and possesses the essentials of non-violence.

The Working Committee desire to make it clear that the true test of preparedness for civil disobedience lies in Congressmen themselves

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendices “Viceroy’s Declaration”, 17-10-1939, “Sir Samuel Hoare’s Speech”, 26-10-1939, “Viceroy’s Broadcast Declaration”, 5-11-1939, “Viceroy’s Prefatory Remarks on Correspondence with Leaders”, 5-11-1939 and “Lord Zetland’s Statement”, 7-11-1939.

spinning and promoting the cause of khadi to the exclusion of mill-cloth, and deeming it their duty to establish harmony between the communities by personal acts of service to those other than members of their own community, and individual Hindu Congressmen seeking an occasion for fraternizing with the Harijans as often as possible. The Congress organizations and Congressmen should, therefore, prepare for future action by promoting this programme. They should explain to the people the message and policy and implications of the Constituent Assembly which is the crux of the Congress programme for the future.

*Harijan, 2-12-1939*

### *152. TESTIMONIAL TO MUNNILAL*

ANAND BHAVAN, ALLAHABAD,

[*November 23, 1939*]<sup>1</sup>

Bhai Munnial has given me a good shave today and done it with great affection. His razor is village-made and it needs no soap.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 7484

### *153. LETTER TO SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE*

ANAND BHAVAN, ALLAHABAD,

*November 23, 1939*

MY DEAR SUBHAS,

It is only today that I find a moment to acknowledge your letter and wire. As you know, I attend the Working Committee only when required and deal with only those matters that are referred to me. But having received a letter, I read it to them and told them that if they had no confidence in the present Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and had sufficient reason for it, I agreed with you that they should dissolve it. Any piecemeal measure would fail and only cause irritation.

But I confess that your letter has appeared to me to be a challenge. You have evidently no confidence in the Working

<sup>1</sup> From *Gandhi—1915-1948: A Detailed Chronology*

Committee. You regard its ban on you as a vendetta. As you know, I am party to the ban which was voted unanimously. Who is to decide between you and the Working Committee? You have never submitted to the ban.

As to action by the Working Committee, I dissent from you. Your way is not mine. For the time being you are my lost sheep. Some day I shall find you returning to the fold, if I am right and my love is pure.

*Ever yours,*

BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

### *154. DISCUSSION WITH U.P.P.C.C. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS<sup>1</sup>*

ALLAHABAD,

[*November 23, 1939*]<sup>2</sup>

QUESTION: You seem to be placing an exaggerated emphasis on non-violence today. Surely you will not suggest that we were more ready or more non-violent in 1920-21 and in 1930? Or will you say that your standard has now gone up?

ANSWER: Both. There was not then so much violence as is to be seen on the surface today. And my standard too has gone up. I was not so rigid in my conditions then as I am now. If you accept my generalship, you have to accept not only my conditions but my judgment as to whether we are ready or not. It is quite likely that there is really no difference between the conditions of those days and of today; but it is equally true that I did not know then that I was walking on a mine, today I am haunted by that consciousness and I cannot help it.

Is there not a fear that, if we do not strike the nail while it is hot, we may never be able to do so at all? There is that psychology of readiness among the people. If we do not seize the opportunity, their enthusiasm may be damped and their readiness may vanish. The best thing, therefore, today is for you to suggest a programme whereby we may prepare the field and yet keep up the spirit of the people.

I have always been impatient of this kind of language. I cannot understand a readiness which would vanish if it was not availed of at once. That is no readiness at all. Ready is he who is ready at all times

<sup>1</sup> The discussion appeared under the title "The Task before Us", as summarized by Mahadev Desai.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* 2nd footnote of "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 14-11-1939.

and at all places—whenever and wherever he is called. The only meaning of readiness is readiness to carry out the command of the general. To use military language, we should be so prepared as to make war unnecessary. What is essential is the attainment of independence, not the time and the ways and means of civil disobedience. I expect from you enough faith and discipline to instinctively await and obey your general's word. Don't expect me to say anything more. Do not expect me to reveal *how*, if ever, I shall launch civil disobedience. I have nothing up my sleeve, and I will have no knowledge until the last moment. I am not made that way. I knew nothing of the Salt March<sup>1</sup> until practically the moment it was decided upon. This I know that God has rarely made me repeat history and he may not do so this time. There is one thing, however. I may, for reasons you may not reveal to me, be unfit as a general. In that case you must give me up, and I shall not in the least be sorry for it.

Now for the last point in your question. You want a programme which may be directly connected with civil disobedience. If you will not laugh at me, I will unhesitatingly say it is the programme of universal spinning. Listening to the alarms and advice of the doctors I had given it up for some time. I began it in response to Narandas Gandhi's call, and I do not think I shall ever give it up, until of course my hands are paralysed. So I would say that the more you spin the better soldiers you will be. If that is my conviction, why should I be ashamed of declaring it? There cannot be two parts in my advice, one of which you may accept and the other you may reject. My condition is a vital one. It is likely that there may not be the necessary intellectual conviction, but it will follow faith as a necessary consequence. I say this because I have acted in that spirit. I have marched miles upon miles, through bush and briar and along unbeaten tracks, acting on the word of command, during the Zulu Rebellion<sup>2</sup>. But as I have said the whole thing may strike you as chimerical or quixotic. In that case you have but to give up my leadership. I have led for twenty years, and it may be well for me to rest on my oars. It is possible that you may be able to evolve some new technique of satyagraha. In that case the moment I am convinced I shall be ready to follow you. Whatever you do, do not accept my leadership with a mental reservation. You will by doing so betray both me and the country. If I get your co-operation, it must be full and hearty. I have argued the thing for twenty years; I can advance no fresh argument now.

<sup>1</sup> On March 12, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> In Natal; Gandhiji led an Indian Stretcher-bearer Corps.

We have proceeded on an altogether different ideology.

Well, there's the rub. That is why I am repeating again and again my suggestion of a change in the leadership.

But if the charkha is with some of us a symbol of your leadership and nothing more?

No, it must be a symbol of non-violence and a specific condition of preparation for a non-violent struggle. I would suggest even a better course—a course I suggested<sup>1</sup> in 1934. Banish spinning and khadi from the Congress programme, so that I automatically drop out. If you do so, the mistake will not be yours but mine. For it is my duty to convince you that there is a vital connection between the charkha and non-violence<sup>2</sup>

What was the duty of the Congressmen when there was a riot going on ?

To die in quelling it. We had one Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi<sup>2</sup> in 1931, and have had none to copy his example since. So many die during the riots, but they do not offer of themselves willing sacrifices. Those who do not accept this programme should leave me.

But must we allow them to hold up the movement assuming that there will be Hindu-Muslim riots?

They cannot indefinitely do so. I have enough faith in Mussalmans to hope that they would rebel against being an obstacle in the way of independence. There is enough love of freedom and democracy in them to make them ashamed of that state of things.

In view of the little time at our disposal, could you tell us what you would regard as the minimum preparation necessary from the point of view of spinning ?

Why little time? Is it essential that we should start the movement in three months or six months? Let it take six years. What is essential is the preparation, I would ask you to get rid of impatience. The test for me is not a formal spinning by you all for half an hour or even an hour a day in order to satisfy me or to secure my leadership, but the universalization of spinning so that there may be no mill-cloth—indigenous or foreign—in your province. If I feel that we have made rapid strides in that direction, I shall be satisfied. You boast of several hundred thousand Congress members. If all of these took up the programme and became voluntary workers on behalf of the A. I. S. A., there would be no mill-cloth in the province. It should be part of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 17-9-1934.

<sup>2</sup> Who was killed in the Kanpur Hindu-Muslim riots in March 1931.

your daily life. Just as an Afridi cannot do without his rifle, even so every one of you non-violent soldiers should not be able to do without your spinning. And all this, not because this old man wants it, but because you want independence. When you realize this you will not come to me with questions like the one you have asked.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan, 2-12-1939*

### 155. LETTER TO BARIN GHOSH

*November 24, 1939*

BARIN GHOSH,

The difference about the charkha is not immaterial. My whole life is wound up with it. If you cannot support it, you cannot wholeheartedly support non-violence. And of what use am I without non-violence?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

### 156. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO PEOPLE OF MYSORE

*November 24, 1939*

You should do what you think is proper under the circumstances. I should not advise without first-hand knowledge. Here I have no intuitive opinion. You have shown your mettle, you have suffered and [are] prepared to suffer. The people evidently are trained in the art of suffering, and so I should not interfere in Mysore affairs<sup>2</sup>. Forest Satyagraha<sup>3</sup> I certainly did disapprove for thereby we injure our own property. I led the campaign in cutting date-palm trees and took fiendish delight in cutting down thousands of trees. Fiendish because I see now that I acted hastily. I would not now cut down a single tree. *Gur-nira*—even the trunk is useful for hedges, leaves for mats, tree requires no nurture, it grows by itself. I therefore swear by the palm.

And even if this stopping of Forest Satyagraha affected

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Baffling Situation", 28-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to N. S. Hardikar", 14-10-1939 and 21-10-1939.

<sup>3</sup> In the Central Provinces



adversely the number of jail-goers, you should not mind it [at] all.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

### 157. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI

November 25, 1939

CHI. SARU,

I got your letter. I hope you are well. I am glad that Kanti has arrived. Keep writing to me. I am writing this on the train. We shall reach Wardha today.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6176. Also C. W. 3450. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

### 158. LETTER TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

ON THE TRAIN,  
November 25, 1939

BHAISAHEB,

Mahadev gave me your message overflowing with love. He also showed the *sloka*<sup>1</sup> in the eleventh canto of *Bhagavata*. I had come to know of this *sloka* in South Africa. I was much impressed by the eleventh canto. But I do not consider all the sayings in our Shastras as gospel truth. One who becomes lustful just by merely touching a woman is not a *brahmachari*. I believe that one who is not moved by passion even after intentionally touching a woman is the only *brahmachari*. And I have spent my *brahmachari* life like this. It is true that I am still not perfect. Kindly give your blessings that I become perfect in this life. My effort is going on every moment. Of course this experiment will be judged only after my death. I have understood the meaning behind your message. I am cautious and shall try to be more so.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably, 11, VIII. 13, which reads :

पदापि युवतीं भिक्षुर्न स्पृशेत् दारवीमपि  
स्पृशन् करीव बध्येत करिण्या अङ्गसङ्गतः

A *bhikshu* may not touch even with his feet even a wooden figure of a woman. The elephant itself is caught through contact with an elephant cow.

What shall I say about the message you have conveyed about women in menses? I have never observed or made anyone adhere to such [restrictions]. I do not consider it a sin to touch woman during that period. My humble opinion is that there is room for change in our customs.

I am with you regarding observing silence. I shall go on increasing the duration.

*Your indebted brother,*  
MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: Padmakant Malaviya Collection. Courtesy: National Archives of India

*159. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR<sup>1</sup>*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*November 26, 1939*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your three letters. I gave all letters to Mahadev Desai. I can't account for the understamping and bad sticking. I am ashamed. Shall inquire. The rest of your letters I understand. We must leave some things in God's hands. I had no difficulty in Allahabad. Jawaharlal was quite nice. I had no particular talks. He was too busy for them.

There was a good reply from Shummy.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3948. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7257

*160. LETTER TO TRIAMBAKLAL POPATLAL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*November 26, 1939*

BHAI TRIAMBAKLAL,

I had got the *hundi* for Rs. 4,401-6-9. And now I have received another for Rs. 13-6-0. You should get an official receipt from Delhi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI TRIAMBAKLAL POPATLAL  
121 MOGHAL STREET  
RANGOON<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 9830. Courtesy: Triambaklal Popatlal

<sup>1</sup> For Gandhiji's letter, *vide* "Letter to Shumshere Singh", 20-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> The address is in English.

## 161. SWARAJ THROUGH WOMEN

Now that the Working Committee has accepted<sup>1</sup> spinning as an indispensable condition of civil disobedience, the women of India have a rare opportunity of serving the country. The salt campaign brought out tens of thousands from their seclusion and showed that they could serve the country on equal terms with men. It gave the village woman a dignity which she had never enjoyed before. The restoration of spinning to its central place in India's peaceful campaign for deliverance from the imperial yoke gives her women a special status. In spinning they have a natural advantage over men.

Since the beginning of time there has been a division of labour between men and women. Adam wove and Eve spun. The distinction persists to the present day. Men spinners are an exception. In the Punjab when during 1920-21 I asked men to spin, they used to tell me that men considered spinning to be beneath their dignity and that it was solely women's occupation. Men nowadays do not object on the ground of dignity. There are thousands who spin for sacrifice. It was when men took up spinning from a patriotic motive that spinning was reduced to a science and inventions as great as in any other field were made. Nevertheless experience shows that spinning will remain woman's speciality. I believe there is a good reason behind the experience. Spinning is essentially a slow and comparatively silent process. Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and therefore non-violence. Her occupations must therefore be, as they are, more conducive to peace than war. That she is now being dragged down for purposes of violent war is no credit to modern civilization. I have no doubt that violence so ill becomes woman that presently she will rebel against the violation of her fundamental nature. I feel that man too will repent of his folly. Equality of the sexes does not mean equality of occupations. There may be no legal bar against a woman hunting or wielding a lance. But she instinctively recoils from a function that belongs to man. Nature has created sexes as complements of each other. Their functions are defined as are their forms.

But a proof of the different functions of the sexes is unnecessary for my purpose. The fact stands, at any rate in India, that millions of women regard spinning as their natural occupation. The Working Committee's resolution automatically shifts the burden from

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-11-1939.

men to women and gives to them an opportunity of showing their mettle. I would love to find that my future army contained a vast preponderance of women over men. If the fight came, I should then approach it with much greater confidence than if men predominated. I would dread the latter's violence. Women would be my guarantee against such an outbreak.

SEGAON, November 27, 1939

*Haijan*, 2-12-1939

## 162. NOTES

### WHY NOT HINDU MAHASABH?

A correspondent writes :

I have read your comments<sup>1</sup> on the speech delivered by Lord Zetland in the Lords' debate on India in which he declared the Congress to be a Hindu organization. I cannot help saying that the attitude of the Congress itself is partly responsible for the mistake into which Lord Zetland has fallen. If the Congress is a national organization, as it undoubtedly is, with what propriety did it enter into a discussion with the Muslim League alone, which is a purely communal organization, for solving the communal question generally and the Hindu-Muslim question particularly? The Congress ought to have remained neutral and permitted Jinnah Saheb to negotiate with Shri Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, or, if it was not practicable, to convene a conference of the representatives of the several communal organizations in the country and to play the role of umpire at such a conference. Any attempt on the part of the Congress leaders to have direct and exclusive talks with the leaders of a single community with a view to the solution of Hindu-Muslim problem was bound to give a handle to the opponents of the Congress, of which they could not be expected to be slow to take full advantage. In my opinion this step on the part of the Congress has lowered the status of the Congress as a national organization.

I have already admitted the force of the correspondent's argument. I have also shown how the Congress could not shirk a duty devolving upon it. I must dissent from the view that the status of the Congress has been lowered by its attempt to solve a difficult national problem. I invite all well-wishers to refrain from doing anything to

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Interview to *The Manchester Guardian*", 4-11-1939 and "Is Congress a Hindu Organization", 13-11-1939 .

hinder the progress of the talks that are about to take place between Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

#### COMMUNAL DECISION AGAIN

I gladly publish the following from Shri Radhakant Malaviya :

In your article "Good and Bad"<sup>1</sup> you have stated: ". . . I have very bitter memories of the Award which was being hatched during the Round Table Conference. . . . I regard the Award as discreditable for all parties. . . . But the Congress has loyally accepted it because I was party to the request made to the late Mr. MacDonald to arbitrate."

Is it that, as immediately after your return from the Round Table Conference you were imprisoned, you are not aware of the subsequent developments in connection with the negotiations for the settlement of the communal question? The Communal Decision by Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald is dated 17th August, 1932. That there was not to be an award but a decision by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was made clear by His Excellency the Viceroy on 24th Februray, 1932. The poceedings of the Consultative Committee of the Round Table Conference held at the Viceroy's House at Delhi on 22nd and 24th February, 1932, should be looked into.

There in the proceedings you will find that in the Committee meeting held on 22nd February, 1932, Mr. (now Sir) Zafarulla Khan stated ". . .that the difficulty could only be solved by a decision by the British Government itself. . . . Your Excellency might well press upon the British Government the necessity of pronouncing an immediate decision upon those questions. . . ." Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan stated: ". . . I have urged your Excellency to ask the Prime Minister to give us a decision." Again, in the meeting held on 24th February, Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan stated: "The Muslim delegation never mentioned the word 'arbitration'. We have said all along that it is for His Majesty's Government to give a decision. Of course we have never asked for arbitration." Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru [said]: "What was said was that the Prime Minister would give a decision." Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan again stated, ". . . he (Prime Minister) will give a decision. . . . We are not asking for his arbitration; we request the decision of His Majesty's Government." Sardar Ujjal Singh stated: ". . . In the Minorities Sub-committee the Prime Minister undertook to decide that question if all the communities submitted it to him for arbitration. That was entirely a different thing. Some members did send him letters on behalf of their respective communities, but the offer was not

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Good and Bad", 30-10-1939. The source, however, has "Hindu-Muslim Unity".

accepted by all. . . . There is not question of arbitration now.” At the end, His Excellency the Viceroy, as Chairman, stated: “I am advised that at that time the Prime Minister made an offer, as Chairman of the Committee, but that was not accepted.”

If you think it proper, you may publish this in an early issue of *Harijan* so that the wrong impression which has been created by your above remarks may be removed.

I have admitted<sup>1</sup> my lapse of memory. It does one good to record the facts which Shri Radhakant has narrated. They cannot be altered by any error I may have committed. It is fortunate that my error does not in any way weaken the force of my complaint against Sir Samuel Hoare.

#### WHEN IS PICKETING PEACEFUL?

A correspondent writes :

I find that here in Bombay this weapon of ‘peaceful picketing’ is being misused on the ground that peaceful picketing, with whatsoever just or unjust object it may be resorted to, is no offence. The aggrieved party against whom such picketing is aimed at, fails to get any protection either from the police or law. For instance, A happens to be a shopkeeper. B, an employee of A, having no legal claim against A, threatens A with picketing his shop in case A does not accede to B’s demands and actually, with the help of C and D posing as ‘leaders’, starts picketing A’s shop, and misleads A’s customers, with a view to dissuading them from patronising A’s shop. Would such picketing, even though there be no actual physical force used, be termed ‘peaceful’?

I cannot speak about the legality of such picketing, but I can say that such picketing cannot be called peaceful, i. e., non-violent. All picketing without indubitably just cause is violent even though no physical force is used. Picketing without such cause becomes a nuisance and interferes with the exercise of private right. Generally no picketing should be resorted to by individuals unless it is promoted by a responsible organization. Picketing like civil disobedience has its well-defined limits without a strict observance of which it becomes illegitimate and reprehensible.

SEGAON, November 27, 1939

*Harijan*, 2-12-1939

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Notes”, sub-title, “Award or Decision”, 14-11-1939.

### 163. MESSAGE FOR THAKKAR BAPA BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS<sup>1</sup>

[November 27, 1939]<sup>2</sup>

I should have been present at the seventieth birthday celebration of Thakkar Bapa, but I am physically unfit for such functions. It is my heartfelt hope that he may live a hundred years. Bapa was born only to serve the downtrodden, whether they be untouchables or Bhils, Santhals or Khasis. Even the appreciation of his service means some little service of these downtrodden. His services have carried India considerably forward towards the goal.<sup>3</sup>

*Harijan*, 2-12-1939

### 164. THE PITY OF IT

The following is taken from a letter by a wise and learned Englishman to an English friend who has forwarded it to me :

Gandhiji seems to me to have completely departed from his original position which was that he would not tolerate any bargaining with the British Government to which in this war he was prepared to give complete support. He seems to me now to have veered round completely to the Congress extreme position, namely, that unless complete and unconditional independence is promised to India now, they will not co-operate in any way with the Government, but where they are in power will resign thus to dissociate themselves completely from the Government which has declared that India is at war with Germany. This seems to me to be sheer bargaining, the exploiting of British need, to secure not only Dominion Status which has been promised in clear and unmistakable terms but absolute independence. Further, I find it hard to reconcile Congress assertion that it contemplates no constitution which does not carry with it the protection of real minorities to their satisfaction and the complete failure of the Congress to come to an understanding with the Muslim League. Surely this failure gives little encouragement to the Muslims to believe and trust the Congress with the supreme power that Indian independence would give them.

<sup>1</sup> The message is extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "Bapa Jayanti in Bombay."

<sup>2</sup> From *Bhil Seva Mandal Seva Smriti Granth*, 1966, p. 16

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* also "Bapa Jayanti", 16-10-1939.

As I have stated before<sup>1</sup> I have not departed a tittle from my original position which was taken, as I then said, because I was an out-and-out believer in non-violence. In offering my sympathy (I did not use the word 'support') I had the same end in view that the Congress has. I put my position before the Working Committee. It could not honestly adopt it. Desiring independence, it could not take up any other attitude. The Congress position was as good from its own, as mine from my premises. The Congress had a perfect right to know British intentions, if the British Government desired its help in the prosecution of the war. As a subject nation, India, if she was resolved upon securing her liberty, could not be expected willingly to help the dominant nation without knowing where she stood. If India was violently inclined and had the strength, she would be bound to take advantage of Britain's difficulty and declare her independence and defend it with arms if she was resisted. And she would have commanded the admiration of the world including Britain for seizing the opportunity. But the Congress has chosen the better way—the way of non-violence, however diluted it is. I own too that India is not ready for armed revolt. But this is no matter of credit either for Britain or for India. India is too weak for armed revolt. Britain's connection has made her weaker. Her disarmament is a black chapter in British history.

God has blessed me with the mission to place non-violence before the nation for adoption. For better or for worse the Congress has adopted it and, for the past nineteen years the Congress, admittedly the most popular and powerful organization, has consistently and to the best of its ability tried to act up to it. Hence the sting of forced disarmament has not been felt as it would have been otherwise. It is futile to guess what it would have done if it had not accepted non-violence as its chief means for the attainment of swaraj. The Congress has allowed itself to be judged from the non-violent standpoint. It is possible to question the propriety of the Congress attitude only from that standpoint. Judged according to the ordinary standard, the Congress stands fully justified in the attitude it has taken.

I hope the learned critic does not wish to suggest that as the Congress did not accept my position I should have dissociated myself entirely from the Congress and refused to guide it. My association enables the Congress to pursue the technique of corporate non-violent

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Source of my Sympathy", 11-9-1939.



action.

The writer seems to cavil at the demand for independence as distinguished from Dominion Status. Surely India cannot be satisfied with anything less if she is to rank as a free nation. I had thought that Dominion Status according to the Status of Westminster was equivalent to independence. The expression Dominion Status has a special connotation. It refers to a commonwealth of whites who are themselves pillars of imperialism engaged in exploiting the non-European races whom they regard as uncivilized. India free will be no party to such exploitation. But there is nothing to prevent free India from entering into an alliance with British for the protection of the freedom of all, whether black, brown or white. Therefore, if Dominion Status is less than independence, India cannot be satisfied with less. If it is synonymous with independence, then India has to choose how she would describe her status.

The critic then condemns the Congress for not coming to terms with the Muslim League. It is a pity that even responsible Englishmen will not take the trouble to study questions which they judge freely. The Congress has never given up the effort to solve the communal question. It is even now engaged in the difficult task. But it is wrong to use Congress inability to reach a solution for keeping India from her destined goal. British officials including Viceroys have admitted that they have ruled by following the policy of 'divide and rule'. The British established themselves by taking advantage of our internal quarrels and have remained by keeping them alive. It is unnecessary for my argument to prove that the policy is being followed deliberately.

The British have made themselves believe that they are ruling because of our quarrels, and that they will gladly retire when we have ceased to quarrel. Thus they are moving in a vicious circle. The British rule must be permanent if the adjustment of the communal quarrel is a condition precedent to India becoming independent. It is a purely domestic problem which we are bound to solve if we are to live at peace with one another. May I remind the critic and those who argue like him that only a short while ago it was said that if the British withdrew, Hindus would be left to the mercy of the virile races from the north, that not a virgin would be safe or a monied man retain his wealth? Now Princes and Muslims, who are able enough to protect themselves against the unarmed millions whom the Congress claims

specially to represent, are sought to be protected by the British bayonet against the latter! Be that as it may, the Congress must pursue its even course. It must work for communal unity in spite of odds against it. It is a plank in its programme. It is part of the non-violent technique.

Another English critic has put the problem in a truer way. He says among many other things: "British people feel that Great Britain needs to carry the Muslim world with her at this time of immense struggle." I have no difficulty in sympathizing with this position. Only let us clear the issues. Great Britain cannot afford to risk defeat for the sake of doing justice. This is just what an overwhelming number of Indians feel. The Congress, before it can offer ungrudging support to Britain, wants to feel sure that hers is an absolutely just cause. The recent events have created a grave doubt about it. Absolute protection of the rights of minorities is a greater concern of the Congress than it ever can be of Great Britain. The Congress dare not seek and cannot get justice, if it is not prepared to do it itself. To be above suspicion is the only way open to non-violent organizations. But British policy may make a just solution impossible at the present moment.

SEGAON, November 28, 1939

*Harijan*, 2-12-1939

### 165. BAFFLING SITUATION

Jawaharlal, born democrat as he is, had arranged for a free talk<sup>1</sup> between the Executive Council of the U. P. P. C. C. and me. We had three such talks. I had expected that the talks would result in a parting of the ways. Among the Congressmen whom I was facing there were some who had laughed at the charkha and non-violence. But to my utter astonishment I found them reconciled to both. It is a baffling situation both for Congressmen and me.

I do not know whether I am wise in bearing the heavy responsibility of leading Congressmen who only the other day had no faith in me. Are they not paying too great a price for my leadership in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Discussion with U.P.P.C.C. Executive Council Members", 23-11-1939.

a battle? If they render obedience without faith, is it good for them or me? Can I lead them to success? If I was not good enough in peace, how can I be good in war? There was no peace. The Congress is at war with Great Britain till independence is won. War had never ceased; only civil disobedience had been suspended for better and greater preparation. Congressmen who did not obey instructions during the preparatory period were surely not fit soldiers on active duty. And yet I could not distrust the responsible men who faced me in Allahabad. What is true of them is true of the other Congressmen in the other provinces. And so I am shouldering the burden.

Let me then think aloud. I hope that Congressmen will make it a point to read *Harijan* as if it was a weekly bulletin containing instructions for them.

To the impatient Congressmen I say: I see no immediate prospect of declaring civil disobedience. There can be no civil disobedience for the sake of embarrassing Great Britain. It will come when it becomes clearly inevitable. Probably it will come by the goading of the official world. I do not doubt the honesty of the Viceroy or that of the Secretary of State. At the same time I have no doubt whatsoever that they are in error because they cannot get out of the old rut to which they are used. We must give them time to collect themselves. We must do real propaganda by way of educating the public both here and abroad. We cannot all of a sudden dispel the surrounding misunderstandings, not merely on the part of the British people but of our own countrymen. There is no mistaking the fact that many non-Congress Muslims honestly think that the Congress Ministers did not pay enough heed to Muslim complaints. Congressmen wedded to non-violence have to give special heed to the complaints of non-Congress Muslims. It is no use saying that they are frivolous. I know myself that many complaints have been frivolous. But we have to be patient and courteous enough to take them seriously and endeavour to show clearly that they are frivolous. I do not wish to suggest that pains were not taken to deal with them. I am just now concerned with the phenomenon that the complaints persist. We must, therefore, give time to demonstrating that there never has been anything in the complaints. If in the course of further investigation we discover errors, we must make amends. We must prove to the Muslim countrymen and to the world that the Congress does not want independence at the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest, be it Muslim or other. We may leave no stone unturned to

carry the minorities with us. This meticulous care for the rights of the least among us is the *sine qua non* of non-violence.

If it is true, as it is, that for the British Government to plead want of communal unity as a bar to independence is wrong, it is equally true that this discord is, nevertheless, a serious handicap in our march towards swaraj. If we had the Muslim League and others with us, our demand would become irresistible.

So much for the external difficulties. Not till we have given sufficient time to their solution, can we possibly think of civil disobedience.

The internal weakness is no less great. I see a vital connection between the charkha and non-violence. Even as certain minimum qualifications are indispensable in a soldier in arms, so are certain other and even opposite qualifications indispensable in a non-violent soldier, i. e., a satyagrahi. One of these latter is adequate skill in spinning and its anterior processes. A satyagrahi occupies himself in productive work. There is no easier and better productive work for millions than spinning. What is more, it has been an integral part of the non-violent programme since its commencement. Civilization based on non-violence must be different from that organized for violence. Let not Congressmen trifle with this fundamental fact. I repeat what I have said a thousand times that, if millions spun for swaraj and in the spirit of non-violence, there will probably be no necessity for civil disobedience. It will be a constructive effort such as the world has not witnessed before. It is the surest method of converting the 'enemy'.

The Working Committee desired to appoint me as its sole representative to carry on negotiations that may be necessary and to conduct the campaign of civil disobedience if they failed. It was a burden I could not carry. Being boxed up in Segaoon, I have no direct touch with the people. I have no confidence, I should have none, in my unaided judgment requiring an accurate first-hand knowledge of many facts. I could only act with the constant guidance and direction of the Working Committee. I shall carry on no negotiations to finality. I should be pleased if I was relieved of the burden. But I shall not shrink from any responsibility, so long as I carry the confidence and affection of the Working Committee and Congressmen in general and so long as I feel that I have the requisite qualifications.

SEGAON, November 28, 1939

*Harijan*, 2-12-1939

## 166. SIND RIOTS

I have been following the riots<sup>1</sup> in Sind with painful interest. Many people delude themselves with the belief that I possess powers to remedy all wrongs. I wish I had them, though I am not sure that such possession will be an unmixed blessing. I should make people helpless if I made an indiscriminate use of such powers. And they would be of no use, if I might not use them freely. As it is, I use what powers I have to the fullest extent. Thank God, they are too limited to be harmful. My chief work, however, is to teach people to help themselves.

Here is a pathetic wire from Shikarpur :

Riots, loot, incendiarism, Sukkur District villages Hindus mercilessly butchered, women and girls raped and kidnapped. Hindu life, property unsafe. Situation most critical. Government policy not firm. Pray send enquiry committee immediately to see situation personally.

It is the third of its kind from Sind. I took no notice of the first two mainly because I was preoccupied in Allahabad and I had no concrete consolation to offer. The Shikarpur Panchayat has come to the wrong person for help. For I am myself helpless. The Congress has not yet sufficiently advanced in non-violence to deal with riots and the like. It must develop it enough to deal with such situations if it is to retain its prestige. I suggested 'peace brigades', but the suggestion proved premature if not unworkable. No doubt the Sind Government should be able to protect life and property of the people within their jurisdiction. Evidently the matter has gone beyond their control. Sind is nominally autonomous and to that extent less able to protect life and property than the preceding Government. For it has never had previous training in the police or the military arts. I have shown in previous writings that the Central Government is impotent to prevent loss of life, property and worse during riots. It is able to check their spread and punish the wrongdoers when it wishes. It is organized solely for the protection of imperial trade and therefore for the maintenance of peace in so far as it is necessary for the safety of that

<sup>1</sup> The riots broke out on October 1, 1939, when Muslims at Sukkur launched a satyagraha with a view to securing possession of Manzalgaah and, on November 20, the Sind Government had to meet the acts of violence by opening of fire.

trade. Hence it is ill-equipped for real protection of the people. Such protection involves the training of the people in the art of self-defence and securing their co-operation in quelling riots, etc. This would be putting imperial rule in jeopardy.

Now the only effective way in which I can help the Sindhis is to show them the way of non-violence. But that cannot be learnt in a day. The other way is the way the world has followed hitherto, i. e., armed defence of life and property. God helps only those who help themselves. The Sindhis are no exception. They must learn the art of defending themselves against robbers, raiders and the like. If they do not feel safe and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in.

SEGAON, November 28, 1939

*Harijan*, 2-12-1939

### 167. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*November 28, 1939*

MY DEAR AMRIT,

I have only a moment to send you a line. Mahadev has gone to Bombay for Bapa<sup>1</sup>. I am over head and ears in work. Weather superb.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3949. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7258

<sup>1</sup> To participate in the seventieth birthday celebrations of Amritlal V. Thakkar

168. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA, C.P.,  
November 29, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Strange, no letters from you for three days running! But I am putting the best construction possible, i. e., the post has been misdirected or sent too late and all is well. All's well here. The patients [are] keeping fairly well. I have some time today to overtake postal arrears.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Just received your two letters at the same time. Yours of 25th is in a sad mood—quite unnecessary. The cupboard you shall have but it will be made or bought after your arrival. There is no dictatorship. What is, is as serious. I can't say that J. L. has been a willing party. Time will tell its own tale. *Harijan* is a true reflex of things. You really therefore do not need anything more.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3950. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7259

169. *LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA*

November 29, 1939

DEAR BHARATAN,

Herewith note for Kelappan if he is still there.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 3588

170. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
November 30, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

Today again I have two letters from you. This letter<sup>1</sup> (at the back) with the appeal of which you have sent me copy from *Hindustan Times*, came to your address today by book post. Your note<sup>2</sup> I have kept. I shall see whether it should go in. I have kept your note<sup>3</sup> on education. I have not yet read it. If it is good enough it will go in some day. You have to be patient with me. As to Nayakam<sup>4</sup> and Ashawe have to bear with one another.

Mahadev has not yet returned. He should, tomorrow. He did extraordinarily well in Bombay—collected more than Rs. 15,000<sup>5</sup>. The purse amounted to one lac seventeen thousand.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

I hope your boil has disappeared.

From the original: C. W. 3951. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7260

<sup>1</sup> It was an undated, printed circular signed by J. N. Wilson, Secretary, Kristagraha Committee, inviting Christians “to enlist in a crusade against the underlying causes of war” and urging them to “stand in this crisis against all oppression and exploitation”. With it was also enclosed a manifesto to the Viceroy.

<sup>2</sup> This was published under the title “Christian Duty” in *Harijan*, 9-12-1939.

<sup>3</sup> This was published under the title “A Lay Woman’s Impression”, in *Harijan*, 30-12-1939.

<sup>4</sup> E. W. Aryanayakam and his wife

<sup>5</sup> For the Thakkar Bapa purse



*171. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
December 14, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have your letter. What are you doing there? Return completely restored. Munnalal<sup>1</sup> has not yet returned. The kitchen is being looked after by A[mtul] S[alaam]. Zohra<sup>2</sup> helps her. Ba has gone to Delhi. Kanu has gone to Rajkot.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SMT. KANCHANBEHN  
C/O SUDHABAI  
LADY BUTLER HOSPITAL, KHANDWA

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8287. Also C.W. 7065. Courtesy :  
Munnalal G. Shah

*172. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

SEGAON, WARDHA  
December 14, 1939

CHI. LILA,

I have your letter. What shall I write? There isn't even a minute to spare. Mahadev was here to see me only recently. Now he is in Mysore. He left on Sunday. Probably he will return on Sunday. Bablo<sup>3</sup> has gone with him. Ba is still in Delhi. Lakshmi is better. All the patients are improving.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Study attentively during the holidays and pass your examination.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9378

<sup>1</sup> Munnalal G. Shah, addressee's husband

<sup>2</sup> Dr. M. A. Ansari's daughter

<sup>3</sup> Mahadev Desai's son Narayan

### 173. LETTER TO RUKMINI BAZAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 14, 1939

CHI. RUKMINI<sup>1</sup>

I had your letter. Yesterday I got Radhika's<sup>2</sup>. I learnt more from it. May you have a safe delivery.

*Blessings to you both from*

BAPU

SMT. RUKMINIBEHN  
C/O SHRI BENARSI BAZAJ  
THATHERI BAZAAR  
BENARES CITY

From Gujarati: C.W. 2829. Courtesy : Benarsilal Bazaj

### 174. THE MORAL ISSUE

I release the following correspondence<sup>3</sup> between a Western friend and me as of general interest.

. . . The Congress resolution<sup>4</sup> calling upon the British to define their objectives, especially as regards the subordinated peoples of the Empire, and India in particular, seemed to me very fine. It put the moral issues squarely up to the Imperial Government, and made India stand forth with a wonderful dignity in the midst of the evil atmosphere of selfish and unidealistic expediency that seems at present to govern statesmen in their handling of world relations. . . .

I find myself cent per cent at one with the attitude and action of the Congress. But there are certain other matters in which I am unable to see quite eye to eye. . . .

To begin with it seems to me that there has been a certain tendency to treat the question as if it were merely one of "helping" the

<sup>1</sup> Maganlal Gandhi's daughter, married to Benarsilal Bazaj

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's younger sister

<sup>3</sup> Only extracts from the correspondent's letter are reproduced here.

<sup>4</sup> Dated September 14, 1939; *vide* Appendix "Working Committee's Manifesto", 14-9-1939.

British, and that, if the British wanted India to help them, it was up to them to give way to India's just demands. It has seemed implied that prevention of a victory by the Germans was a matter primarily of concern to the British, and that, if India gave her whole-hearted support, it would be a sort of "favour" that would only be given if she considered them worthy of it—a "worthiness" which they were to prove by demonstrating their *bona fides* in their relations with this country. . . .

. . . I hold it is not for their "deservingness" that we should look, or that their lack of it should in the slightest degree keep us from rendering all the help we can to the Western "democracies" at this juncture. . . .

. . . It is not a question of our doing a favour to the British by helping them to win a victory over Germany; rather it is one of joining others to insure that Nazi Germany does not win the world empire by the defeat of the only powers that, humanly speaking, can prevent her from taking it. *We*, at the present exploited and subordinated peoples of the world, cannot afford to have the Germans win, and I fear that, if she should, as a result of our refusing to do our share in obstructing her at this time, we could not escape our moral responsibility for the consequences to the world, and especially to the militarily weak non-European peoples of Asia and Africa, despite the fact that we are innocent of producing the situation which has brought about the war.

Today I saw your communicational<sup>1</sup> to *The News Chronicle*. How wonderfully you bring out the issues, and how very essential it is that these issues should be constantly confronting the West ! Yet I feel that at the same time the future demands of us that we do not remain inactive at this critical time, waiting for the British to give way to our just demands. The outcome of the war may depend upon the line this country takes *now*—not what line she may ultimately take.

I do not for a moment hate the Germans; on the contrary I have profound sympathy for them. . . . But I do hate and fear the present outlook on life of the Nazis, especially as it touches their relations with those which they look upon as "inferior races". . . . The German outlook has the most sinister implications for all of us, and I think it would be madness on our part to take any chances with it.

Meanwhile the precious days and hours are passing, and the sight of an India that has not definitely shown that she will not become a source of embarrassment to the British may encourage and strengthen the forces throughout the world that make for Nazism. This does not seem to me a

<sup>1</sup>Vide "Statement to *The News Chronicle*", 4-12-1939.

service to the non-European peoples or to the world.

To this I replied as follows :

I cling to an old superstition, if it may be so called. When in doubt on a matter involving no immorality either way, I toss and actually read in it divine guidance. I have no other scientific basis. To attribute residuary powers to God is scientific mode in my opinion. In this crisis, too I have resorted to a kind of toss. If I had my way, you know what would have happened. That was not to be. The Congress way was not only not immoral, for it, it was the only moral way. Hence I kept myself with the Congress.<sup>1</sup> My object was and still is to push forth the non-violent way as it was in my own proposal. The Congress way made room for the interpretation you have put upon it. But I do not regard it as a condition. It is a toss. If the British intention is pure, says the Congress, we plunge. The way to test the intention is to know the British mind about India. If it is pure, then it is clear that God wants the Congress to throw its whole weight on the side of Britain, so that ultimately the victory may go not to the strongest arms but to the strongest cause. What you want is already at Britain's disposal. She draws men and money without let or hindrance. Unless violence breaks out, she will continue to get these. The Congress won't tolerate violence, let us assume. Then Britain has nothing to fear from the Congress in the violent way. And I hold that considered from the non-violent standpoint, which in my opinion is the only point worth considering, it would be immoral for the Congress to give her moral support to Britain unless the latter's moral position is made clear.

I do not lay down the law as you do about Nazism. Germans are as much human beings as you and I are. Nazism like other 'isms' is a toy of today. It will share the same fate as the other 'isms'.

I fancy I see the distinction between you and me. You, as a Westerner, cannot subordinate reason to faith. I, as an Indian, cannot subordinate faith to reason even if I will. You tempt the Lord God with your reason; I won't. As the *Gita* says, दैवं चैवात्र पंचमम्<sup>2</sup> God is the fifth or the unknown, deciding factor.

In spite of our intellectual differences, our hearts have always been and shall be one.

SEGAON, December 15, 1939

*Harijan*, 23-12-1939

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 23-8-1939.

175. LETTER TO DILKHUSH DIWANJI

SEGAON, WARDHA  
December 15, 1939

BHAI DILKHUSH,

Your work seems so good that I should very much like to relieve you of all worry with regard to finances. But I feel that perhaps it would be better that you progress under the strain of such worries. In any case Lakshmidas is there by your side.

I do not have the least doubt that your weaving should be done there only. Don't mind if it takes time to train the men. It is necessary for the final success of khadi that all the processes should be carried out in the same village.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI DILKHUSH DIWANJI  
GANDHI KUTIR  
KARADI *via* NAVASARI

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 2644

176. NOTE TO A. B.

December 15, 1939

It is broken and also it belongs to Ra. Ku<sup>1</sup> What right have you to use it?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4332

177. MY HANDICAP<sup>1</sup>

I wonder if all journalists, having to write in English, feel the handicap which I do. The reflection arises from a stupid use I made of the verb 'cavil' in my note on a learned Englishman's letter partly reproduced in *Harijan* of 2nd December.<sup>2</sup> In my comment I said,

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "The Pity of It", 28-11-1939.

“The writer seems to cavil at the demand for independence as distinguished from Dominion Status.” The learned writer draws my attention to the meaning of the word ‘cavil’ as implying captious criticism of which, he says, he was wholly unconscious. I take great care in the use of English words. With all my care, however, I cannot make up for my imperfect knowledge of a foreign tongue. I had never known the dictionary meaning of the word. I must have picked up the word in the course of reading or hearing. I had hitherto given it an innocent meaning in the sense of strongly objecting. Knowing the writer as I do, I could never think of him as raising captious objection. I have apologized to him for the unconscious error.<sup>3</sup> It is good that he drew my attention to it. Heaven only knows how often, though wholly unconsciously, I must have offended persons simply because of my ignorance of the English language and its subtle idiom and usage. The language expands with the expansion of its people. I must struggle in the best manner I can and expect the indulgence of the English readers who, knowing my limitations, should believe that, where my language seems to offend, the offence is wholly unintended.

SEGAON, December 16, 1939

*Harijan*, 23-12-1939

### 178. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 16, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

What a shame ! Why did you let asthma attack you? And even if it did, why did you get frightened? Don't you see you upset Shakaribehn's<sup>1</sup> programme? You should keep in the house a kettle with a spout, and also secure a rubber tube of sufficient length. That will serve your purpose. Get a brass or copper kettle.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10019. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's mother

179. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 16, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

I am replying to you by returns of post. You will be able to go wherever you want. But you can devote your time exclusively to study only in Vithal Kanya Vidyalaya. Stay there as long as it is necessary. Come over when you feel inclined. See that your health does not suffer. My visit to Bardoli seems to be off for the present.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8286. Also C.W. 7066. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah.

180. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 16, 1939

CHI. KANAIYO,

Radhabehn gave me the news about you. Wasn't it good that she was present? Did you suffer much? Do not be impatient. Till yesterday Ashadevi, with the *dilruba*<sup>1</sup>, led the recitations from the *Ramayana* and the *bhajans*. She left today, for about ten days. We may, therefore, miss her in the evening. If Krishno holds the *tanpura*<sup>2</sup> we shall be able to carry on. Su. behn leads the morning recitations from the *Gita* and the *bhajans*.

Last time all *Harijan* work was finished on Tuesday. Pyarelal typed the articles. I suppose you know that. The typewriter was lying with Kakasaheb. So there was no difficulty. Rajkumaribehn is likely to take some time still. Mahadevbhai is expected to return on Sunday or Monday.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II

<sup>1</sup> A stringed musical instrument

<sup>2</sup> A stringed musical instrument used as a drone to accompany the musician

## 181. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 16, 1939

DAUGHTER RAIHANA<sup>1</sup>,

You have sent very happy tidings. I got a shock when I heard of Mother's illness. God has been gracious. You too must be keeping fit. Tell Saroj<sup>2</sup> that it was a shame to have taken ill at Wardha.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : S.N. 9676

## 182. TO CORRESPONDENTS AND MESSAGE-SEEKERS<sup>3</sup>

I have often enough said in these columns that I am not in a position to read or acknowledge letters or send messages for numerous celebrations or functions. I have neither the time nor energy for the task. My helpers too cannot cope with the volume of correspondence that comes daily. Often there are pamphlets and reports accompanying the correspondence in the various languages of India besides English. The result is that only the correspondence that must be seen by me is placed before me. The balance is disposed of by Mahadev Desai, Pyarelal and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, when she happens to be with me, or Dr. Sushila Nayyar when she has time from her medical work and when there is an overflow. In these circumstances I must ask my correspondence to spare me. Time was when I used to read every letter that was received and acknowledge most. That gave me an insight into the Indian mind that I would never have had otherwise. But I was then in possession of youth and health. Age has now overtaken me, and health requires a watchful care. Yet both the correspondence and the problems have increased. I would request correspondents to write only when there is something which, in their opinion, I alone can attend to. But what is more needed is forbearance on their part. If they do not receive answers or

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Abbas Tyabji

<sup>2</sup> Sarojini Nanavati

<sup>3</sup> This appeared under "Notes".



acknowledgements, they should not take it amiss. I have an angry letter in my possession which has prompted this note. The writer had sent a pamphlet with his first letter. I was not able to cope with it. I had nothing new to say on it. I knew, moreover, that Pandit Nehru was dealing with the subject-matter; and so I spared myself by not dealing with the matter. Very often letters are sent to me which are meant for members of the Working Committee. The public know that I am not a member of the Working Committee. They should know too that I do not interest myself in its routine work. Only that part of its work comes to me in which it may need my advice. The best course, therefore, is not to write to me on any matter which the Working Committee can and does deal with. Correspondents should forgive me when they find that they receive no acknowledgement. It is sheer want of ability that prevents me from dealing with all the correspondence. As to messages, I should be regarded as unfit for sending them. My blessing must be assumed for all good work. Friends should help me to conserve what energy is left in me for the work God has called me to.

SEGAON, December 17, 1939

*Harijan*, 23-12-1939

### 183. INDEPENDENCE

From a correspondent's letter I take the following extract:

While you ask for India's independence you promise nothing in return. Don't you think a promise of active partnership would show a spirit of reciprocity and may well be given? Co-operation and interdependence, is the law of life. India is in no position, even if it gets independence, to be able to retain it. In Anglo-Indian partnership is our best hope, and a 'Constituent Assembly' on a wide franchise will only make confusion worse confounded. This work can only be rightly done by a few wise men.

In the first place, the Congress has not asked for independence. It has asked for a declaration of Britain's war aims. Secondly, independence, when it comes, will come because India is ripe for it. Therefore there can be no consideration to be given for it. It is not a marketable thing. It is a status. This, however, does not mean a frog-in-the-well status. There may or may not be an alliance with Britain. My hope is that there will be. So long as I have a share in the attainment of independence, it will be through non-violent means and,

therefore, a result of an honourable treaty or settlement with Britain.

I must dissent from the correspondent's view that "India is in no position, even if it gets independence, to be able to retain it." This is surely a contradiction in terms. The correspondent has involved himself in it because he thinks that independence can be a gift from someone. India will never have it until it is able to keep it against the whole world. The alliance with Britain will be not for India's protection but for mutual benefit. So long as she needs Britain's protection for whatever cause, her status will be less than independence. We see the mockery of it going on in Europe today among the small nations. Their independence is on the sufferance of big nations. I attach little importance to such independence. So long as the basis of society is force, smaller nations must hold their status on sufferance. I should not be interested in India being in such a position. And India is not a small nation. I would far rather have India engaged indefinitely in a non-violent fight for gaining her independence than be satisfied with anything less as her goal. She can settle down to peace only when she has independence which she can hold against any combination. This is possible only on a non-violent basis. It may be far off. It may not be realized in my lifetime. It may even take generations. I have patience enough to wait. Joy lies in the fight, in the attempt, in the suffering involved, not in the victory itself. For, victory is implied in such an attempt.

I see no difficulty in a Constituent Assembly elected on a wide franchise. But I do in an Assembly of wise men. Where are they? Who will certify to their wisdom?

SEGAON, December 17, 1939

*Harijan*, 23-12-1939

#### 184. FAITH v. REASON

Circumstances have placed me here in the midst of some 'ultramodern', 'rational-minded' young officers, who jeer at me, pooh-pooh me and consider me a brainless idiot for I cannot fall in with them and consider 'good' and 'bad', vice and virtue as mere matters of social expediency. Something in me tells me that they are wrong and I am right. I still believe that a moral code on the basis of something like 'absolute good' does exist. My friends argue with me to convince me that drinking of wine is as bad as drinking of tea or coffee. They insist that morality cannot depend on what a person eats or drinks.

Further,—and it is on this point chiefly that I would pray for your advice—they say that sex taboo was meant to keep the social structure safe. Their contention is that sex-enjoyment, which harms no person and leads to no trouble is perfectly natural and hence moral. Too much indulgence, they say, is as bad as overeating oneself and nothing more. A principle which is justifiable with one's wife cannot be inherently immoral with another person. Circumstances must decide, and it is always a question of more or less. There is nothing like an absolute code of morals.

Though my faith gets a shock and I sense some flaw in their argument, yet in actual combat they always corner me, and I have to take shelter under my sixth sense which they call blind prejudice.

In fact, they have smashed my intellectual comprehension of the matter, and I have begun to doubt the soundness of my position. Yet I told them I would prefer to be with men like you and go to hell rather than be with them and enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven.

So please, Mahatmaji, save me from this intellectual and spiritual torment with a bit of your mind. I do hope you would not fail me.

This is almost the whole of a young officer's letter. His case is typical of many. Those who have read my book of experiments<sup>1</sup> know how I had to pass through similar experiences. I would refer all who have difficulties like my correspondent's to read the relevant chapters in those 'experiments'. Reason is a poor thing in the midst of temptation. Faith alone can save us. Reason *appears* to be on the side of those who indulge in drink and free love. The fact is that reason is blurred on such occasions. It follows the instinct. Do not lawyers ranged on opposite sides make reason appear to be on their side? And yet one of them must be wrong, or it may be that both are. Hence faith in the rightness of one's moral position is the only bulwark against the attack of reason.

The arguments advanced by my correspondent's tempters are plausible. There is no such thing as absolute morality for all times. But there is a relative morality which is absolute enough for imperfect mortals that we are. Thus, it is absolutely immoral to drink spirituous liquors except as medicine, in medicinal doses and under medical advice. Similarly, it is absolutely wrong to see lustfully any woman other than one's wife. Both these positions have been proved by cold reason. Counter-arguments have always been advanced. They have

<sup>1</sup> *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth.*

been advanced against the very existence of God—the Sum of all that Is. Faith that transcends reason is our only Rock of Ages<sup>1</sup>. I present it to all those who are in the same difficulty as this young officer. My faith has saved me and is still saving me from pitfalls. It has never betrayed me. It has never been known to betray anyone.

SEGAON, December 18, 1939

*Harijan*, 23-12-1939

### 185. A USEFUL PUBLICATION<sup>2</sup>

Shri Aryanayakam has just handed me a *Teacher's Handbook of Basic Education through Cardboard Modelling* by Shri Lakshmiswar Sinha who had his experience in Europe. He was working in Santiniketan and had kindly come to Wardha to introduce cardboard modelling in the training school. The book, like Shri Vinoba's on spinning<sup>3</sup> is an original contribution. Shri Vinoba's original is in Marathi. It has been translated into Hindi too.<sup>4</sup> There is hardly a superfluous word in it. The volume before me is in a different style, but it is none the less attractive and instructive. It has five chapters and two appendices. The second appendix contains correlated lessons on preparatory models. As a specimen I give below the lesson entitled 'Cubic Box'

The chapters deal, among other things, with 'materials', 'class-room and equipment', 'fundamental techniques', 'a few suggestions about correlated teaching' and 'how to work with children'. The book is profusely illustrated. The price is As. 12 only. It should be in the hands not only of every teacher of 'Nayee Talim' but also of all teachers who would like their pupils to learn a simple craft. For every advanced student it provides a useful and instructive hobby which he can teach himself.

SEGAON, December 18, 1939

*Harijan*, 23-12-1939

<sup>1</sup> From a hymn by A. M. Toplady

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>3</sup> *Mool Udyog—Kantane*

<sup>4</sup> *Mool Udyog—Katna*

## 186. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

Monday, December 18, 1939

Valjibhai needs massage. He does not get it these days. Devote half an hour to this service.

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4333

## 187. WHO IS A SANATANIST ?

,ल्यं दमस्तपः शौचं संतोष हीः क्षमार्जवम्  
ज्ञानं शमो दया ध्यानमेष धर्मः सनातनः ।  
अद्रोहः सर्वभूतेषु कर्मणा मनसा गिरा  
अनुग्रहश्च दानं च सतां धर्मः सनातनः १

—महाभारत, शांतिपर्व,

A sanatanist is one who follows the sanatana dharma. According to *Mahabharata* it means observance of ahimsa, *satya*, non-stealing, cleanliness and self-restraint. As I have been endeavouring to follow these to the best of my ability, I have not hesitated to describe myself as a sanatanist. But during the anti-untouchability campaign my description of myself as a sanatanist was resented by those who opposed me. They styled themselves sanatanists. I did not engage in a quarrel over the name. And so I have described the opponents by the name they have chosen for themselves. Now a letter has been received by me from a correspondent writing on behalf of the Sanatana Dharma Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab, protesting against my calling the opponents sanatanist which, they say, would imply that all sanatanists believe in untouchability and take delight in painting me in black colours. The letter proceeds :

To tell the truth it has pained us very much, and we are afraid our religious and social work in the Punjab will suffer. Mahatmaji, you being nearer to Deccan know more of the sanatanists of the South than of us of the North. Here, in the Punjab, we have been advocating temple-entry and other facilities

<sup>1</sup> Truth, self-restraint, penance, purity, contentment, modesty, forbearance, uprightness, knowledge, serenity, compassion and meditation—this is the eternal (sanatana) dharma.

Freedom from malice towards all creatures, in thought, word and deed, kindness and charity— this is the eternal dharma of the good.

to the Harijans. We have obtained *vyavasthas*<sup>1</sup> to this effect from the All-India Sanatana Dharma Pratinidhi Sabha Parishad. Our organization, with its 600 branches and 300 Mahabir Dals, has itself worked for this cause. In this province there are very few temples whose *mahants*<sup>2</sup> and *pujaris*<sup>3</sup> refuse the rights of *devadarshan*<sup>4</sup> to Harijans. You can well imagine how your article<sup>5</sup> can affect our work. The ignorant masses, who cannot differentiate between one sanatanist and another have taken us to be your opponents. Our statements and contradictions are of no avail. Your word carries more weight than hundreds of our lectures. We are and have been working for the uplift of Harijans under the guidance of Pt. M. M. Malaviya and Goswami Ganesh Dattaji. I request you to find some other word for those who oppose the Harijan movement. The word 'sanatanist' does not fit in.

My correspondent is wrong in thinking that I do not know the sanatanists of the North. If Kashi may be considered to be in the North, Kashi has produced stubborn opponents of the reform. The correspondent would be on safe ground if he would confine his remarks to the sanatanists of the Punjab. But I should not have thought that anybody could fail to understand the limited sense in which I was using the term. I hope that he has exaggerated the mischief done by my reference to the anti-reformists as sanatanists. Surely, there should be no difficulty in the Punjab sanatanists making their own position clear. In any case, they may use this writing in their support. Indeed, not all the sanatanists in the South are opposed to the reform or to me. During the Harijan tour<sup>6</sup> I discovered that the opposition was confined to a microscopic minority, no matter where I went. Their number has been further reduced during the intervening years. Rajaji could not have carried his Temple-Entry Bill<sup>7</sup> if he was not supported by overwhelming Hindu opinion. Nor could the great temples of the South have been opened to Harijans if the sanatanist opposition had been at all extensive. When, therefore, I refer to sanatanist opposition it can only apply to the minority that delights to call itself sanatanist and whose occupation is to oppose anti-

<sup>1</sup> Injunctions

<sup>2</sup> Religious heads

<sup>3</sup> Priests

<sup>4</sup> Visit to a temple, literally, 'sight of deities'

<sup>5</sup> Vide "Temple Entry", 18-9-1939.

<sup>6</sup> Of 1933-34

<sup>7</sup> The Temple-Entry Authorization and Indemnity Bill was passed in the Madras Legislative Council on August 7, 1939.

untouchability reform and blacken my character. I can only pray that their eyes will some day be opened and they will range themselves on the side of reform, which is no less than purification of Hinduism of the taint of untouchability.

SEGAON, December 19, 1939

*Harijan*, 23-12-1939

### 188. LETTER TO NALINI RANJAN SARKAR

[After December 19, 1939]<sup>1</sup>

Maulana Saheb told me that you had given up your portfolio in the Bengal Cabinet. I think you have done a patriotic thing.

*The Hindu*, 26-12-1939

### 189. TELEGRAM TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE<sup>2</sup>

December 22, 1939

YOUR WIRE WAS CONSIDERED BY WORKING COMMITTEE.  
WITH KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE THEY ARE UNABLE  
TO LIFT BAN.<sup>3</sup> MY PERSONAL OPINION IS YOU  
SHOULD ADVISE SUBHAS BABU SUBMIT DISCIPLINE IF  
BAN IS TO BE REMOVED. HOPE YOU ARE WELL.<sup>4</sup>

*Rabindranath O Subhas Chandra*, p. 195

### 190. THE PLEDGE

It is to be hoped that Congressmen will learn by heart, not merely store up in their memory, the resolution<sup>5</sup> of the Working Committee containing the pledge for 26th January next. The pledge

<sup>1</sup> On December 19, 1939, the addressee had resigned as Finance Minister of Bengal.

<sup>2</sup> In reply to the addressee's telegram, dated December 20, 1939, which read : "Owing gravely critical situation all over India and specially in Bengal would urge Congress Working Committee immediately remove ban against Subhas and invite his cordial co-operation in supreme interest national unity."

<sup>3</sup> For the resolution declaring Subhas Chandra Bose ineligible for any elective post for three years, *vide* "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 11-8-1939.

<sup>4</sup> *vide* also "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 15-1-1940

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Resolution on Independence Day Pledge", 30-12-1939.

was first taken in 1930<sup>1</sup> Ten years is not a short time. If Congressmen had honestly lived up to the constructive programme of 1920, there would be *purna swaraj* today. There would be communal harmony, there would be purification of Hinduism and smiling faces in India's villages. These together would produce such a momentum that independence could not be resisted. But the painful fact must be admitted that Congressmen have not carried out the programme as they should have. They have not believed that the triple programme is non-violence in action. They have not believed that civil disobedience could not be successfully carried out without fulfilling it.

Therefore I have not hesitated to remark in these columns that our non-violence has been non-violent conduct born of impotence. Hence we witness the sorry spectacle of us confessing that, though this non-violence of the weak may bring us freedom from English rule, it cannot enable us to resist foreign invasion. This fact—and it is a fact—shows that, if the English yield to the non-violence, miscalled, of the weak, it would prove that they had almost made up their mind to surrender power and would not hold on to it at the cost of creating frightfulness. Congressmen should not be surprised, if I would not declare civil disobedience unless I was morally certain that they had understood the full significance of non-violence and that they were carrying out the triple programme with as much zest as they would offer civil disobedience, so called. They would perhaps now understand why I call the three items of the programme essentials of non-violence.

What do I mean by communal fellowship? How is it to be obtained when the Jinnah-Nehru talks have failed? They may or may not have failed. Pacts are meant for big people. They do not affect men in the street, the ground-down millions. In cultivating fellowship among these, written pacts are not needed. Do Congressmen cultivate goodwill towards all without political motive? This fellow-feeling should be natural, not born out of fear or expedience, even as fellowship between blood-brothers, not being born out of any ulterior motive, is natural and lasting. Nor is it to be applied only as between Hindus and Muslims. It has to be universal. It must be extended to the least among us. It is to be extended to Englishmen. It is to be extended to political opponents. Removal of untouchability again has deep significance. The very idea of high and low among Hindus should be rooted out. Caste solidarity should give place to national



solidarity. In Congress ranks these distinctions should be relics of the past.

Then the charkha. For nearly twenty years now it has adorned the National Flag which is made of khadi. And yet khadi has not become universal. Khadi having been adopted by the Congress, Congressmen may not rest till it has penetrated every home in the remotest part of India. Only then will it become a mighty symbol of voluntary co-operation and one purpose. It is a symbol of identification with the poorest in the land. Hitherto Congressmen have played with khadi. They have not believed in its message. They have used it often unwillingly, for mere show. It must become reality if true non-violence is to permeate us.

Let Congressmen note the preamble to the Working Committee's resolution on the pledge. Those who do not believe in it are not bound to take the pledge. Indeed, those who have not the belief are bound not to take it. For the pledge this time is to be taken for a definite purpose. A grave responsibility rests on my shoulders. A vast organization like the Congress will not move in the direction of civil resistance unless I give the word. It is no matter of pride or joy to me. I should break under the weight of that responsibility, if I were not conscious of the fact that I am nothing. Congressmen have trust in my judgement which is dictated by the living Law of Truth and Love which is God. God speaks through acts of men and women. In this case acts of Congressmen and Congress-women have to speak.

SEGAON, December 24, 1939

*Harijan*, 30-12-1939

### *191. WHAT IS NEUTRALITY ?*

An American missionary writes :<sup>1</sup>

. . . Are you and the Congress generally neutral in regard to which religion a person belongs to? I believe the congress claim to be neutral, but my contention is that they are not.

Your friend, the late Prime Minister of Madras, sent a wire of congratulation to Christians who became Hindus. Is that being neutral? And just the other day, here near Bombay in Thana District, when about fifty hill people returned to Hinduism, the leaders in making them Hindus were the Congress leaders of Than a

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

District. So this plainly shows that the Congress leaders favour Hinduism. Under such a Government what chance would the small minority of Christians stand when *purna swaraj* is given to be monopolized by the Hindu majority? . . . Are they to be placed at the mercy of anti-Christian leaders? Will it be possible for the Congress Government to be impartial and neutral in religious matters as the British Government has been? If not, we certainly would not hail it as a blessing.

I am not aware of what Shri Rajagopalachari said. He is well able to take care of himself. But I can give my idea of neutrality. In free India every religion should prosper on terms of equality, unlike what is happening today. Christianity being the nominal religion of the rulers, it receives favours which no other religion enjoys. A Government responsible to the people dare not favour one religion over another. But I should see nothing wrong in Hindus congratulating those who having left them may return to their fold. I think that the Christians of free America would rejoice at the return to their ancestral Christianity of Americans of the slums—if there are any in America—temporarily calling themselves Hindus under the influence of a plausible Hindu missionary. I have already complained of the methods adopted by some missionaries to wean ignorant people from the religion of their forefathers. It is one thing to preach one's religion to whomsoever may choose to adopt it, another to entice masses. And if those thus enticed, on being undeceived, go back to their old love, their return will give natural joy to those whom they had forsaken. The missionary friend errs in regarding the Congress as a Hindu organization. It has on its roll perhaps three million men and women. Its register is open to all. As a matter of fact it has on it men and women belonging to all religions. There is no reason why Christians or Muslims should not capture the Congress. It is true, however, that a national democratic Government will represent the majority of Hindu voters in the aggregate. But owing to unequal distribution of population in the various provinces, Bengal, Punjab, Frontier and Sind have a preponderance of Muslims, as the other provinces of Hindus.

I hold that it is wrong to look at the question from the narrow sectarian standpoint. The only true standpoint is national. Therefore the American missionary seems to me to labour under a threefold mistake when he mistakes a natural joy for want of neutrality, regards the Congress as a Hindu organization, and views India as divided religiously into parts hostile to and suspicious of one another. But economic and political aspirations of all the communities are surely the same except that the privileged ones will find their privileges melting in the sunshine of freedom. It seems to me to be wrong to

import religious differences into a political discussion. Common law should prevent any injustice.

SEGAON, December 24, 1939  
*Harijan*, 30-12-1939

### 192. DRILLS IN INDIA

I know of no other person who has done as much as Prof. Manikrao<sup>1</sup>, who is popularizing drills and exercise with single-minded devotion. He has always insisted upon uniform terms of command in drills all over India. We often see people using a hodge-podge of English terms. Prof. Manikrao has discontinued them and prepared a technical terminology [of his own]. He has now published them with their explanations in Gujarati. This compilation deserves to be read and studied by those interested in drills and exercise. It is priced twelve annas.

[From Gujarati]  
*Harijanbandhu*, 24-12-1939

### 193. LETTER TO MANUBEHN S. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 24, 1939

CHI. MANUDI,

I like the name Urmi. But choose a name approved by your mother's sisters. The final choice rests with you two, of course.

Ramibehn feels quite happy here for the present. Her little daughter also is becoming chubby. Rami says she can leave this place only after Kunvarji has completely recovered. It is all right if she stays on here. Why should you, too, go to a place where there is scarcity of water and thereby create more scarcity? But who can convince one's mother's sisters? Kindness demands that you should not go to Rajkot unless it is absolutely necessary.

*Blessings to both from*  
BAPU

SMT. MANUBEHN MASHRUWALA  
BALKIRAN, SOUTH AVENUE  
SANTA CRUZ  
B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C.W. 2676. Courtesy : Manubehn S. Mashruwala

<sup>1</sup> Rajaratna Gaianan Yashvant Tamhane of Baroda

### 194. SPINNING-WHEELS v. MILLS

Congressmen should not weary of my filling these columns with everything about the charkha and khadi. Heart peace among communities and reinstatement of the wheel in every home are my politics, for I expect to gain the freedom of the country from political and economic bondage through these means in the place of red rebellion.

The problem before every Congressman is how to displace mill-cloth, whether foreign or indigenous. It is often believed in Congress circles that indigenous mill-cloth is as good as khadi and superior because of its cheapness. The cheapness theory in terms of the crores of artisans has been exploded. Mill-spun for these millions is dearer than hand-spun. The former means deprivation of their wages. Imagine what would happen if, on the score of foreign wheat being cheaper, the wheat-grower was displaced !

If the village spinners and weavers are to come into their own, and that quickly, every Congressman has to become a master spinner and master weaver. He should be able to teach and guide the poor villagers. He has to be a khadi technician. He has to spin for the sake of the country. I have shown that khadi cannot be made cheap enough for the middle class unless there is enough sacrificial yarn or unless the spinner is put upon the old *begar*<sup>1</sup> wage of one pice to one anna for eight hours' strenuous spinning.

No congressman would put in the required labour and skill unless he believed that the indigenous factory, mills had to be and could be replaced by the charkha and the handloom.

If Congressmen have this faith, all congress organizations will become efficient spinning and weaving schools. I remember how in 1921 Congress offices used to collect indifferently spun yarn and expect it to be woven somehow. It was all a huge waste. Nobody knew how to deal with it nor what to do to ensure good spinning. Things are different now. Much knowledge and experience have been gained by the A. I. S. A. Some literature has also been published. Every Congress office should become a model laboratory and spinning and weaving institute for the organization of villages. And, as I have suggested, khadi is the centre round which other village industries should revolve and be organized. Congressmen will discover the tremendous possibilities of this kind of service. It is chiefly mental

<sup>1</sup> Forced labour

lethargy that is in the way of quick and successful organization of villages. I suggest that, if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less risk of foreign invasion than urbanized India, well equipped with military, naval and air forces. Assuming then that Congressmen have understood the meaning and implications of the charkha, they would, without a moment's delay, set about qualifying themselves for the service. Assume further that they are novices. Then they will procure some cotton, preferably grown in their villages, taluks or districts. They should gin it with the hand or at the most on a board with the help of a rod. They will keep the seed and, when they have enough, either sell it or use it for their cattle if they have any. They will card the cotton with a hand-bow, costing next to nothing. They can improvise one themselves. This carded cotton should be turned into slivers. These will be spun on the *takli*. When they have fairly mastered these processes, they can proceed to speedier ones. They will also put themselves and the members of their families right regarding the use of khadi. They will keep an accurate record of their daily progress and will learn the arithmetic of yarn.

Congress committees will rearrange their offices with the help of the local A. I. S. A. branch and convert them into spinning and weaving depots. I must warn Congressmen against the fatal error of sending to distant depots their yarn for weaving. The economics of khadi require that from cultivation of cotton to the manufacture of khadi and its disposal all the processes should, as far as possible, be gone through in the same village or centre. Thus, it is wrong to spin yarn in the Punjab, weave it in Bombay, and sell in Malabar the khadi thus manufactured. If Congressmen and committees attend to this simple rule when beginning khadi work, they will not find themselves appalled by the difficulty of the task. If they succeed in their own district, there is no reason why the other 249 districts should not be successfully organized. The reasoning is valid even if villages were treated as units. It must be confessed that we have not as yet one single village organized in that fashion. Certainly Segaon is not, even though I am supposed to be living in it. My failure, however, need not dismay a worker who will make the organization of his own village his sole occupation.

SEGAON, December 25, 1939

*Harijan*, 30-12- 1939

## 195. NOTES

### THE LATE ACHARYA RAMDEVJI

The death of Acharya Ramdev removes from our midst a notable Arya Samaj leader and worker. Next to Swami Shraddhanandji he was maker of Kangri Gurukul. So far as I know he was the Swamiji's right-hand man. As a teacher he was very popular. Latterly he had thrown himself with his characteristic energy in the running of the Kanya Gurukul in Dehradun and was the guide and supporter of Kumari Vidyavati. He was her only collector whilst he was alive. She did not have to worry over the financial side of the institution. I know what an irreparable deprivation his death is to her and her institution. The Gurukul should be put beyond financial stress by those who knew the late Acharya, who value female education, and who know the worth of Kumari Vidyavati and the institution. Such a collection would be a most suitable memorial to the departed Acharya.

### SAD NEWS FROM BIHAR

I had a wire from Bihar complaining that Harijans, who have hitherto had no complaints against Congressmen, had not been put forward as they might have been as Congress nominees during the recent local board elections, and that those who had come forward had not received fair play. The wire further complained that Shri Rajendra Babu who was informed of the fact had interested himself but was not listened to. It seems that almost the same thing may be said about Muslims. There were honourable exceptions, no doubt. The complaint is that the congress has failed to fulfil the expectations raised by it. Congressmen have to go out of their way to justify their claim for being national-minded and impartial. In a matter so simple as this Rajendra Babu's energy should not be taxed at all. Self-seekers who want to serve their ends should have no place in the national organization. It is any day better for the Congress to do without their influence. I suggest that even at this juncture, if the complaint has foundation, the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee might redress the injustice by withdrawing some members to make room for deserving Muslims and Harijans. It is never too late to be just.

SEGAON, December 25, 1939

*Harijan*, 30-12-1939

## 196. A CASE FOR RELIEF<sup>1</sup>

In many parts of India the competition of imported iron has killed the old village industry of iron-smelting. All round the village of Thettupalli in Chittoor, for example, where fifty years ago the smiths were active, lie ruined iron kilns. Bazaar-iron has successfully competed with the village-iron of the Salahuva Vakkalu of Mysore, and has killed the smelting industry of the Telugu Kammaras. In the Central Provinces, the small tribe of Agaria Gonds are in danger of suffering the same fate.

The Agaria Gonds are an aboriginal tribe of charcoal-burners, iron-smelters and blacksmiths who live along the heights of the Maikal Hills mainly in the Mandla and Bilaspur Districts, where excellent surface ore may be obtained. In their case it is not the competition of foreign iron but an unimaginative and excessive tax that has almost ruined their once flourishing industry and brought its allied institutions to decay. In 1867 the Agarias paid a sort of levy of four annas a kiln; today they have to pay ten rupees, or forty times as much. . . .

Now these people are among the poorest in the world. Innocent of possessions, undernourished, malaria-ridden, they cannot afford such heavy taxes . . .

This is not only disastrous for the economic life of the tribe, but it has had serious repercussions on its religious and social institutions. For the iron kiln is the centre, the living focus of the religion and traditions of the Agarias. . . . The disappearance of the kilns has had a depressing and disintegrating effect; if the process continues, it will mean not only the loss of useful village industry, but the extinction of a tribe.

Government is spending vast sums of money on village uplift and on the reorganization of village industries. Here is an industry that can be revived immediately and at ridiculously small cost. . . . As there are only about one hundred kilns, this reduction of tax will mean a loss to Government of under five hundred rupees. Surely this is not an excessive price to pay for the revitalization of a whole tribe.

. . . At a time when the world is spending crores daily on iron that is destined to destroy mankind, let us be liberal and generous to these poor and simple iron-workers who no more than to be allowed to live in peace.

I hope the required relief will be quickly granted and the poor Agaria Gonds will be saved from the impending disaster.

SEGAON, December 25, 1939

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts from Verrier Elwin's article are reproduced here.

*197. LETTER TO NALINI RANJAN SARKAR*

SEGAON,  
*December 25, 1939*

DEAR NALINI BABU,

I like your speech.<sup>1</sup> You will come when you think it necessary.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

*198. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*December 25, 1939*

BHAI JETHALAL,

Only today I was able to read with care the article which you sent on October 3. The arguments are good but there is nothing in the article to make it worthy of inclusion in *Harijanbandhu*. The arguments can be answered. I didn't follow one argument. You say that if mill-cloth is not exported the people here cannot buy it. How are they to pay for it, [you ask]. How is this ? People can exchange surplus grain for cloth. I am returning the article. How are you getting on ? Do you make ghee ? How do you meet your expenses ?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : C.W. 9868. Courtesy : Narayan J. Sampat

*199. LETTER TO LAKSHMI GANDHI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*December 25, 1939*

CHI. LAKSHMI,

What sort of a person you are ! You go on falling ill and making

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had enclosed a copy of his statement in the Legislature on his resignation; *vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Nalini Ranjan Sarkar", after 19-12-1939.



us all anxious. Now take plenty of rest and get well. The weather is very good here if you would come here now.

*Blessings from*  
**BAPU**

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 2135

*200. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*December 25, 1939*

DEAR SISTER,

I got your letter. I have read the Punjab resolutions and also the Planning Committee's. I was a little unhappy to read the Committee's. Everything will be all right if a wise lady is not carried away by this current. I understand the other things.

Keep writing to me. I hope you are well.

Mahadev has gone to Madras. He ought to be back by now.

*Blessings from*  
**BAPU**

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 7989

*201. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*December 26, 1939*

MY DEAR BHIKSHU,

Mrs. Gurjale can come after the cold season if there is elbow room at the time. The place is crowded.

*Yours,*  
**BAPU**

From a photostat : G.N. 1391

*202. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*December 26, 1939*

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. What is the point in my writing to you, since this is how you behave every time ? I even wired as desired by you.

Somebody will come to receive you at the station on the 2nd. Take care of your health. Ba is still in Delhi. Everything else is all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3530

### 203. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 26, 1939

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

I got your letter too late, but that is only an excuse. There was time enough for my message to reach you, but you must have seen in *Harijan*, that I have reduced to the minimum writing letters and sending messages.<sup>1</sup> I do still send [messages] where I cannot escape having to do so. Won't that too stop one day ? The leprosy patient is doing well at present. See him when you happen to come here some time. I shall tell you about Lakshmiapati too when you come.

SHRI VALLABHRAM VAIDYA  
DHANVANTARI BHAVAN  
AKASHETH KUVA'S POLE  
AHMEDABAD

From Gujarati : C.W. 2908. Courtesy : Vallabhram Vaidya

### 204. DISCUSSION WITH NAGPUR CONGRESS WORKERS<sup>2</sup>

WARDHA,  
December 27, 1939

One of the things that seemed to trouble [the Nagpur Congressmen] was how, if it was wrong to offer satyagraha to an opponent in difficulty, we could ever offer it against the British Government, for so long as the present war continued, they were bound to be in difficulty.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "To Correspondents and Message-Seekers", 17-12-1939.

<sup>2</sup> Mahadev Desai's summary, from which this and the following item are reproduced, appeared with the note : "Gandhiji's talks to the Congressmen who came to Wardha from surrounding places were not meant for publication. But as incomplete and inaccurate paragraphs have crept into the Press, it has been thought advisable to give the foregoing summary."

[GANDHIJI :] Satyagraha is a universal principle of which civil disobedience is one of the many applications. Satyagraha goes on no matter whether the opponent is in difficulty or not, for offered in the proper spirit it is service of the opponent. What is essential is that we should not embarrass an opponent who is in difficulty and make his difficulty our opportunity. That is why civil disobedience, which can be applied only under certain conditions and circumstances, may not be applied against an opponent in difficulty. Civil disobedience is not the law of life; satyagraha is. Satyagraha, therefore, never ceases; civil disobedience can cease and ought to when there is no occasion for it. Then there are two kinds of civil disobedience—aggressive and defensive. Defensive civil disobedience becomes a duty when insult or humiliation is imposed upon us by an opponent. That duty would have to be done whether the opponent is in difficulty or not. An opponent in difficulty may not expect people to obey unjust or humiliating laws or orders. Aggressive civil disobedience embarrasses the opponent, whether we mean to embarrass him or not. Travelling in a railway train without a ticket—assuming for a moment that it is civil disobedience, which it is not—would be taboo, for it would be merely to embarrass the opponent. In brief, there is nothing which being normally justifiable and conducive to swaraj would be taboo even if it seems to embarrass the opponent. To do what is morally necessary and beneficial is a duty and quite a different thing from that which may not be morally indefensible but calculated to vex and embarrass an opponent in difficulty. To make his difficulty one's opportunity is in no case justifiable.

What do you mean by saying that direct action will be a prelude to the Constituent Assembly ?

GANDHIJI : I do not remember having either said or written this. It is likely that you have torn something from its context. All that I have said is that we may have to go through the fire of civil resistance in order to win India's freedom, and even that I am straining every nerve to avoid. The Constituent Assembly is a prelude to independence and a natural prelude. It has been suggested as a means to obviate all clash of communal and class interest. Its main function is to draw up the charter of independence. Direct action would be necessary when all progress towards independence becomes impossible and all negotiations with the Government prove fruitless.

When the M.L.A.s are now unemployed, why should they accept their monthly

allowance ?

GANDHIJI : I have no doubt that they ought not to draw these allowances. It is no use our saying it is Government money. There is nothing that belongs to Government. There are people who when they go to jail make all kinds of demands and do not hesitate to misuse jail property. But they forget that the jails and everything there belongs to us, and that we have to make as sparing use of those things as we do of what we call ours. I have, therefore, no doubt that allowances should not be taken and, if they must be, they should be handed to the Congress office. It is an essentially moral question to be considered by every Congressman. We would enhance our prestige if we decide not to draw these allowances. I have hitherto refrained from expressing my opinion because I felt that it might be against the general trend of Congress opinion. But now that you have raised the question I would ask you to approach the Congress President and the Working Committee.

These questions answered, Gandhiji said :

I must now come to my favourite theme. To take the questions of communal unity first. The essence of it is to give to all communities what is their due without their asking or having to fight for it. Satyagraha, as I have said, is the law of life. It begins not by assertion of rights but by correct recognition of the rights of our neighbours. As regards the Harijans I would put up with their kicks and worse, if they should choose to resort to them. For it will take time for them to be convinced that, having used them ill for centuries, we shall now treat them as blood-brothers.

To come to the charkha, my pet obsession, I am not going to be content until you act truly. As I came in I heard you haggling about 640 yards or 640 rounds (i. e., 840 yards). This will not do. We have to set the charkha humming in every home and khadi must become universal. The sure proof that spinning has become universal will be afforded by the fact that khadi becomes current coin. I am thankful that the country will not think of launching civil disobedience until I as General give the signal for it. I shall not give the signal until my conditions are fulfilled. We need 200 crores of rupees worth of cloth. How much do we produce today on our wheels and looms ? Not more than a crore of rupees worth. How then can I be satisfied by your promise to spin 100 or even 200 yards a day ?

If people insist on wearing khadi exclusively, they will be

content with even a loin-cloth if no more khadi is available. I should be content even with that predicament if we cannot produce all the cloth we need. But I am sure that, if the demand is there, there will be an automatic supply. The universalization will come if we are all true. But the fact is that those who profess to believe in khadi will not work for it. Maulana Mahomed Ali, when he declared that our yarn cones were the bullets with which we would win swaraj, uttered a great truth and explained for all time the meaning of winning swaraj non-violently.<sup>1</sup> I will chant the khadi *mantra* as long as there is life in me, as I believe it will bring deliverance.

Settle your internal difference, organize yourselves and carry on the constructive programme of khadi, communal unity and Harijan *seva*<sup>2</sup>.

Addressing the women present, Gandhiji said :

Khadi has a unifying influence. So, sisters, devote yourselves to it, as you hold the key to swaraj.

On the question of picketing of liquor shops, he said that there should be no violence. He asked them to keep a watch at liquor shops, approach addicts, study their surroundings, and persuade them to give up the evil.

I am a General, but a taskmaster as well. Hence, I appeal to you for complete devotion to the constructive programme before the signal for a fight is given.

*Harijan*, 6-1-1940, and *The Hindu*, 28-12-1939

## 205. TALK TO NAGPUR CONGRESS WORKERS

SEGAON,

[On or after *December 27, 1939*]<sup>3</sup>

Gandhiji asked them individually how many knew how to spin, how many were regular spinners and so on, and said :

I am asking you all these questions because I want you all to be true. We have professed to believe in spinning all these years. We have the flag ceremony everywhere and on stated days. The flag is made of khadi and the wheel occupies the central place on it. We are disloyal

<sup>1</sup> What follows is from *The Hindu*.

<sup>2</sup> Service

<sup>3</sup> According to Mahadev Desai, the talk took place at Segaoon after the discussion at Wardha; *vide* the preceding item.

to it so long as we do not strain every nerve to spread the message of the charkha. We have now to prove our loyalty by our concrete action. The General of a violent army insists on certain qualifications to be satisfied by his soldiers. May not I, the General of our non-violent army, insist on my soldiers being true to their creed ? I suggest to you that, if you will all be true to the creed, there will be no surplus khadi in the khadi shops, there will be no unemployment and there will be no mill-cloth, foreign or indigenous. You do not want me to say anything more, do you ?

*Harijan*, 6-1-1940

### 206. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 28, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter. I shall preserve the Chinese letter.<sup>1</sup>

The deliverance day<sup>2</sup> has received a full-page advertisement in *The Times of India*. But in truth, it seems to have fallen flat everywhere.

Have you read Fazlul Haq's indictment<sup>3</sup> ? Should nothing be said or done about it ?

You have not sent me Kumarappa's<sup>4</sup> letters to which you had raised strong objection. He is here. I asked him and he says he sent nothing recently. Do please send me what you may have.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> The addressee, in his letter dated December 25, had suggested that the letter from Chiang Kai-Shek might be preserved at Maganwadi. *Vide* "Letter to Chiang Kai-Shek", 5-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 9-12-1939.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably this refers to the Bengal Premier's speech in the Assembly on December 18, alleging that it was the majority, the Indian National Congress, that had stood in the way of India's political progress. "They are a selfish lot. They are dishonest."

<sup>4</sup> J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary, A. I. V. I. A.

207. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 28, 1939

DEAR DR. HARDIKAR<sup>1</sup>,

I think you have taken the right step. But I do not like your language. Read the marked passages. They betray anger and ill will. Much of the grace has gone out of the resignation.

I hope the Mysore friends have been keeping you informed of the events there.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From the original : N. S. Hardikar Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

208. LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 28, 1939

BHAI NANABHAI<sup>2</sup>,

I am writing this under the pretext of acknowledging your letter, for though I do inquire and get news about you, I seldom write to you. Today, therefore, I have scribbled these few lines. How nice it would be if you got well completely !

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 6692. Also C.W. 4337. Courtesy : Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

209. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 28, 1939

CHI. KANAIYO,

You are certainly lazy in the matter of writing letters. You know that at present I would expect letters from you. There has been

<sup>1</sup> Head of the Congress Seva Dal

<sup>2</sup> Manilal Gandhi's father-in-law

nothing from Radha, either, after two letters from her.

Don't you think you have been hasty in resuming the use of your throat ? If we consult a doctor and if his instructions are not contrary to dharma, we should follow them. Now write to me in detail. Can you use your throat for all purposes ? Do you find any difficulty in talking or singing ? Remember that if there is scarcity of water, etc., it is the duty of all those who are not needed there to leave the place. I did not remember this, otherwise perhaps I would have dissuaded you from going to Rajkot. Now keep this in mind while you are there.

Inquire about Manjula<sup>1</sup> and find out how she is.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II

## 210. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
December 28, 1939

CHI. LILA,

You should really not expect letters from me. There should be letters only when there is no other alternative. We should save even a minute if it can be saved. What does it matter if I do not write letters? And what is particularly significant if I write? What kind of love is it that needs the support of letters? You should think about nothing except your studies. Yes, you must also give thought to the question of money. Being away from me you should reflect more and should become serious. You have taken up studies. All this should be included in it. Your speech should be marked with seriousness, greater firmness and restraint. "Education without thought is false." You are not studying for the sake of the examination. Rather, you are using the examination as an inducement to study. The real purpose of education should be self-development. Therefore, concentrate well on your studies and come after passing your examination. Mahadev came the day before yesterday. Ba is still in Delhi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

<sup>1</sup> Vrajlal Gandhi's daughter who was unwell



## 211. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

[After December 28, 1939]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. KANAIYO,

You don't write anything. That is not proper. How is Manjula ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II

## 212. MESSAGE TO ALL-INDIA URDU CONFERENCE<sup>2</sup>

[Before December 29, 1939]<sup>3</sup>

Every Hindu well-wisher of the country should learn Urdu and every Muslim well-wisher Hindi.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 1-1-1940

## 213. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

*December 29, 1939*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have had talks with Shastriji. A few revisions have been made.

I have telephoned about Madalasa<sup>4</sup>. God's will be done. . .<sup>5</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3007

<sup>1</sup> This appears to have been written some time after the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> The Urdu original is not available.

<sup>3</sup> The Conference began on December 29.

<sup>4</sup> Who was unwell and due for her first delivery

<sup>5</sup> Text of the letter after this is not available.

## 214. LETTER TO MADALASA

December 29, 1939

CHI. MADALASA,

What tricks are you up to ? Let what will be, be. Don't worry. Make proper use of all the *abhangas*<sup>1</sup> you have learnt and all the knowledge that you have imbibed from Vinoba. Follow the doctors' instructions.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 319

## 215. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

SEGAON, WARDHA,

December 29, 1939

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI,

There has been no change in the pledge<sup>2</sup> of [19]30. All that has happened is an addition<sup>3</sup> to the original. And the addition is also relevant. It can also be amended, sometimes such amendment becomes imperative. The Committee<sup>4</sup> is not entitled to make changes in the original. Surely you will not say that suggestions may not be offered even in support of the original. There can be a difference of opinion regarding the usefulness of a suggestion. All I want to say is that it was necessary to offer the suggestion.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From the Hindi original : Sampurnanand Collection. Courtesy : National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> Marathi devotional poems

<sup>2</sup> The Independence Day Pledge; *vide* "Things to Remember for 26th", 23-1-1930; *vide* also "The Dissentients", 16-1-1940.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Resolution of Independence Day Pledge", 30-12-1939.

<sup>4</sup> Congress Working Committee

## 216. NOTE TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

*December 29, 1939*

To keep you purely for my own sake would be a crime in my view and a denial of my whole life. But I want your presence for a number of reasons. These include Pyarelal, you yourself, and looking after the sick. If along with these, you continue looking after my physical well-being, it will be acceptable to me. I cannot be concerned with your reason for staying. I can even understand that you can stay here only to serve me. For you it would even be creditable. In practice, it makes no difference so long as I am in Segaoon. But when I go out and feel that your presence is necessary here and you feel the opposite you must give in to my view. This, as I see it, means that your duty lies in not leaving me. Since you consider serving me your primary duty, if there is any difference of opinion when I have to go out, you must bear with me. In that alone lie your good and my peace.

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

## 217. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

*Friday [1939]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. SUSHILA,

I have received all your letters. You are making a grave mistake! I suspect myself. There is no remedy for suspicion. Wisdom suggests that notwithstanding this suspicion you should give me all the services that I need. How can the suspicion go when you are staying so far away? I do not want to beat about the bush. This much I know, that no matter what happens, you should not leave me and should be with me even if on my conditions. Even Devdas's doubt or fear or whatever you call it would be dispelled if you stayed with me. So I say you should come over for my work. You will be rendering great help thereby and it is possible that if I have any illusion, it will be dispelled.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

<sup>1</sup> From the contents the letter appears to have been written in 1939.

## 218. NOTE TO PYARELAL

[1939]<sup>1</sup>

What have you written for *Harijan*? Does it have an article by you this time? And does that mean you need not write anything more?

Sushila told me last night while going to bed that you were preparing to give up everything within eight days. That is a different thing. But you are not going to run away leaving me in the lurch, are you? I did not give it any importance when she told me about it. But I woke up half an hour ago and felt uneasy. Hence I woke you up.

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

## 219. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
[1939]

CHI. SUSHILA,

I hope you got all my letters. Your letter of the 23rd causes some anxiety. As regards your mother, it is for you to consider what your duty and mine is because you alone know all the facts. On the other hand, I am counting the days for your arrival. Prakash is leaving tomorrow. She did a good job of checking the blood-pressure. She accompanies me on my constitutionals, both morning and evening. She has mixed well with everybody. Yesterday Krishnadas came to stay. Manojna is with him. Anand Gyolo arrived the day before yesterday. You have not acknowledged, nor even given me a hint of, the papers I sent you regarding Sankaran's case.

*Blessings from*  
**BAPU**

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

<sup>1</sup> This and the following two items have been placed in the source among letters of 1939.

## 220. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

SEGAON WARDHA,  
[1939]

CHI. SUSHILA,

What is this I hear? You have fallen ill because of carelessness about food and insufficient sleep. Why was this and how? We had agreed that you would return from there after putting on some weight and gaining some energy. Why should you succumb if people press you to eat this and that? Do you not have the strength to refuse?

Your article in *The Statesman* was good. Do you realize that you have tied yourself down in that article?

The dairy, the cows, etc., have to be taken nearer to the well. The dairy has a *pucca* building. There is a proposal to set up a hospital for you there. Enclosed is Mirabehn's plan. Have a look at it and give it thought. Whatever has to be done will be done only after you return.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

## 221. LETTER TO "KHADIR KATHA"

[1939]<sup>1</sup>

*Khadir Katha*<sup>2</sup> must not be a mere magazine, an addition to the unwanted monthly publications. It should be a true record of khadi work from month to month. It should investigate causes of decline if there is any. And it should bring together all the khadi workers. If they cannot work as one mind, universal use of the charkha must remain an empty dream.

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The source has this placed in the 1939 file.

<sup>2</sup> The story of khadi

## 222. *THE WHEEL ABIDES*

A collegiate from Baroda tells me that the high school and college students in Baroda rarely use khadi. Hardly anyone spins. An earnest worker of Berar argues : “Do you not think that swaraj is an impossibility if your condition about khadi is seriously meant ? Your second condition about fellowship too seems to be equally incapable of fulfilment.” This friend is himself a lover of khadi, spins regularly, and cultivates fellowship with everybody. But he has the honest doubt expressed above. The friend could have said with equal force the same thing about non-violence apart from the charkha. Perhaps he had no doubt about the charkha and goodwill being external and internal signs of non-violence. My answer to the collegiate and the Berar friend is the same. I am not blind to what they say. I know the difficulty of fulfilling the conditions within the implied time-limit. I am helpless. I am not obstinate. For my own reputation, if for nothing else, I should prescribe other and more feasible conditions, if it were at all possible. But even as the condition of producing water is the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O, so are the charkha and goodwill conditions and signs of non-violence. Such being my fixed view, I have to insist upon the fulfilment of the two conditions before I can declare mass civil disobedience with any confidence.

My faith is in God and therefore in the people. If He wants me to put up another fight, He will change people’s hearts. The conditions prescribed by me are not physically impossible. If the people will it, they can take to spinning and khadi today. If they will it, they can be good to the whole of mankind. The age of miracles is not past. But supposing that the conditions are not fulfilled, I shall cheerfully become the laughing-stock of India and the world and descend from the pedestal of Generalship. I shall have the supreme satisfaction of being true to myself. I shall read in the apparent failure a sign from God that the conditions were a hallucination produced by Him to save the nation from a disastrous career. Thinking from the purely practical stand- point and even apart from my conditions, the Congress organization shows signs of disintegration. The Bengal Committee is frankly defiant. Orissa is split up into two camps. Things are no better in Karnatak. A Kerala correspondent says that the Provincial Committee does not believe in the present policy and command and is trying by every means to undermine the influence of

the Working Committee by ridiculing its programme. Things are not rosy in the Punjab. I know things are, however, not beyond repair. I cherish the hope that they will right themselves. But if they do not, I cannot lead an indisciplined army to victory. I must refuse to subscribe to the easy doctrine that I have but to declare 'war' and everything and everybody will be found to be in order.

Another view has been suggested. If there is indiscipline in so many provinces, may it not be that the fault lies with the High Command rather than with the different committees ? I am not prepared to reject the hypothesis. But what is the High Command to do ? They do what they think is their best. They cannot abdicate so long as a large majority continues to put faith in them. When during the early days of non-co-operation I had suggested abdication, Maulana Mahomed Ali said, "How can we, if the people want us ? Abdication would be cowardly. It will be bravery to be kicked out." I did not go the whole length with him then as I do not now. But there is much force in that argument. The Congress command has to be held lightly. There should be no wire-pulling, no attempt made to hold on to office. There should be readiness to give up the command at a moment's notice. The Congress command is no command. It is an act of service. The President is the first servant. So far as I know the members of the Working Committee, I believe that they would be glad to be relieved of the responsibility. The fresh elections are on. The Congressmen's choice is unfettered. Let younger men come forward to take charge. But if they will not and will still retain the old team, they should give them implicit obedience. The critical situation in the country demands courageous and decisive handling.

SEGAON, January 1, 1940

*Harijan*, 6-1-1940

### 223. *SINDH TRAGEDY*

I have before me several letters from Sindh and a longish report from Dr. Choithram<sup>1</sup> over the recent riots<sup>2</sup> in Sukkur and Shikarpur. The Sindh Hindus should remember that Sindh has a National Government. Though for the sake of brevity I have often used the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Choithram Gidwani, Vice-President of the Sind Provincial Congress Committee

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Sind Riots", 28-11-1939.

term Congress Government, the proper expression is National Democratic Government as distinguished from Foreign Bureaucratic Government, which it replaces. Whilst in discussing domestic differences and party politics we have to speak of Congress and Muslim League Governments, we must for all other purposes think and speak in terms of National Government. And so those who feel aggrieved must appeal to their Provincial National Governments and cultivate public opinion in favour of justice and public tranquillity. It would be wrong always to think in communal terms. I know that we may not shut our eyes to hard facts. But to attribute everything to the communal spirit is a sign of inferiority complex. It may well perpetuate what is yet a temporary distemper in the national life.

But as I have already suggested, contrasted with irresponsible bureaucracy, National Governments would be found to be weak in action because of their responsibility to the people in whose name and by whose goodwill alone they can rule. They can, therefore, deal with crimes with more or less success, but they will be found to be powerless to deal with popular upheavals which communal riots are. British military aid will not always be at their disposal. National Governments will cease to be national if they have to depend on British military aid. Moreover, if the Congress policy of non-violence becomes universal among all parties, military and even police aid must become taboo. Before the other parties can be expected to become non-violent, Congressmen have to express non-violence in ample measure in their daily conduct. Be that, however, as it may, I can only advise the afflicted people of Sindh in terms of non-violence.

The question in Sindh is not really one between Hindus and Muslims. It is essentially one between weak people and strong. Muslims fight among themselves as badly as with Hindus. Hindus have also been known to fight among themselves. It will be wrong to weigh ferocity in golden scales.

Hinduism has become a synonym for weakness and Islam for physical strength. Hindus, although they have been taught to believe in ahimsa, have not shown *en masse* the strength of ahimsa, have never shown its superiority, when matched against physical strength. I have maintained that superiority over physical strength, however overwhelming, is the core of ahimsa, and I have further maintained that this non-violence can be exercised as well by individuals as by groups of them, yea, even by millions together. The experiment is still



in the making. Sufficient evidence has accumulated during the past twenty years to show that the experiment is worth making. Nothing can possibly be lost by continuing it, provided of course that the non-violence is of the standard brand.

Nothing has come under my observation to show that there was in Sukkur or Shikarpur even one person who believed in and practised non-violence of the strong. Had there been one, we would surely have known of him as we know of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.<sup>1</sup> One such person can any day give a better account of himself than one armed to the teeth.

There are many Congressmen in Sukkur and Shikarpur, but they are not non-violently organized. It is not their fault. They know no better. As I have been repeatedly saying nowadays, our non-violence has not been of the strong. Weak people cannot develop it all of a sudden. But I have no other drug in my chest. I can only prescribe what I have and what has never failed. I can only, therefore, say : 'Try and try again until you succeed.' In the composition of the truly brave there should be no malice, no anger, no distrust, no fear of death or physical hurt. Non-violence is certainly not for those who lack these essential qualities. Wherever there are such persons they should be able to cover the weak ones, provided of course that they would listen to their helpers.

Let the weak ones never rely upon armed help. Such help will only make them weaker. If they have not the capacity for non-violent resistance, they should learn the art of defending themselves. It does not require a strong body; it requires a stout heart. The African Negroes have become, or were 25 years ago, so terror-stricken that they could not face a white lad—a pigmy compared to the giant-framed Negroes. White children were trained from their infancy not to fear the Negroes. The first lesson, therefore, for those who will learn how to defend themselves is to shed the fear of being hurt or being killed. I would like them to observe the laws of the game. Just as there is such a thing as honour among thieves, there should surely be honour between combatants. One hears so often of children and old men being butchered, women being outraged. If men must become beasts, there might even then be some decency observed. Religion is

<sup>1</sup> Who was killed during the Hindu-Muslim riots in Kanpur on March 26/27, 1931. *Vide* "Speech on Kanpur Riots, Subjects Committee Meeting, Karachi", 27-3-1931, "Telegram to Balkrishna Sharma", 1-4-1931 and "Notes", 9-4-1931.

outraged when an outrage is perpetrated in its name. Almost all the riots in this unhappy land take place in the name of religion, though they might have a political motive behind them. My chief point is that the existing situation is intolerable. Cowardice should have no place in the national dictionary.

I have suggested *hijrat*. I repeat the suggestion. It is not unpractical. People do not know its value. High and mighty have been known to have resorted to it before now. Planned *hijrat* requires courage and forethought. The second book of the Old Testament is known as *Exodus*. It is an account of the planned flight of the Israelites. In exile they prepared for a military career. In modern times we have the example of the flight of the Doukhobours from Russia owing to persecution. Theirs was no military career. On the contrary they were non-violent. There is, therefore, nothing wrong, dishonourable or cowardly in self-imposed exile. India is a vast country. Though poor, it is well able to admit of inter-migration especially of those who are capable, hard-working and honest. The people of Sukkur and Shikarpur have all the three qualities. They must appeal to the Government. Only they can give very little help. Apart from political pacts local heads among Hindus and Muslims may meet with mutual profit. It can do nobody or party any good to promote mutual slaughter and consequent increase in the existing ill will. But if no honourable local settlement is arrived at, and if the local residents do not feel able to defend themselves and their families and possessions non-violently or violently, I have no doubt that they should vacate the place in which they live in perpetual fear of their lives and the honour of their womenfolk.

SEGAON, January 1, 1940

*Harijan*, 6-1-1940

## 224. CABLE TO ISMET INONU<sup>1</sup>

[On or before *January 2, 1940*]<sup>2</sup>

MY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY IN YOUR TERRIBLE CALAMITY.<sup>3</sup>

GANDHI

*The Hindu*, 3-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> President of Turkey, 1938-50

<sup>2</sup> The report is date-lined "Wardha, January 2, 1940".

<sup>3</sup> An earthquake had rocked Turkey on December 27, 1939, resulting in 30,000 deaths. Fifteen towns and ninety villages were reduced to ruins. *Vide* "Notes", sub-title "Afflicted Turkey", 8-1-1940.

225. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*January 3, 1940*

CHI. LILA,

I had your letter. Do come after your work is over. One must finish what one has undertaken. Mahadev is at Baramati. He will return in about five days. Durga has gone to Surat. Sharda has given birth to a son. Kanchan, who had gone out, has returned. All the patients are improving.

*Blessings from*

**BAPU**

SMT. LILAVATIBEHN ASAR

NEW ERA SCHOOL

HUGHES ROAD, BOMBAY 7

From a copy of the Gujarati : C.W. 9934. Courtesy : Lilavati Asar

226. *LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*January 3, 1940*

CHI. BABUDI,

At last you have become a mother. I never saw Govardhandas's telegram. I learnt the news only when I got the letter today. The telegram was received, but Pyarelal did not give it to me thinking that I must have heard the news. The telegram was received as late as yesterday. By the time you get this letter, you will have even become strong enough to be able to write to me. Be careful about food and keep yourself and the baby in fine health. Durgabehn seems to have reached there quite in time. Here the place has almost been turned into a hospital.

*Blessings to all three from*

**BAPU**

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 10024. Courtesy : Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

227. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 3, 1940

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

You may build a house in the Harijan Colony if Bapa<sup>1</sup> and others approve. I have understood the other matters. Do whatever you think right. I understand what you say about spinning. Has the spinning programme undertaken by the Congress helped khadi work?

I am all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 2482

228. LETTER TO DR. BARETO

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 4, 1940

DEAR DR. BARETO<sup>2</sup>,

I sent you the message that Asha Devi, being a member of my growing family of national beggars, was not to pay for your services. But I have discovered that not to pay would be an injustice to you. You will therefore please hold me responsible for your fees on the poor man's scale if you have two scales. Up to now I have carried the impression that you belong to that class of doctors who pay persons like me for sending them beggar patients.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 132

<sup>1</sup> Amritlal V. Thakkar, Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh

<sup>2</sup> A dentist

229. TELEGRAM TO PRIME MINISTER OF UDAIPUR

SEGAON,  
January 5, 1940

PRIME MINISTER  
UDAIPUR

WIFE<sup>1</sup> OF MANIKLAL VARMA SECRETARY MARWAR  
PRAJA MANDAL SAYS HEALTH OF HUSBAND WHO IS  
POLITICAL PRISONER SERIOUSLY DECLINING. WOULD URGE  
PRISONER'S RELEASE IF NO VITAL OBJECTION.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

230. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON,  
January 5, 1940

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your letter makes me sad.<sup>2</sup> You said in indignant tones that Ku [marappa] was a worthless man. And this you did on the flimsiest testimony. I asked you for the correspondence and you said you had not it with you but would send it to me. Now I see you accepted the interpretation of others. My point is not that the interpretation was incorrect but that it was wrong to judge a co-worker on such hearsay. I suggest your securing the correspondence and sending it to me.

Herewith my letter<sup>3</sup> to the Generalissimo. I have not released his to the Press. You will do so if you think it necessary.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> Narayani Devi

<sup>2</sup> In his letter dated January 3, 1940, the addressee had written : "About Kumarappa's correspondence with the Planning Committee, I was told by Ambalal and Dr. Nazir Ahmad that they had approached him for certain information in regard to cottage industries and sought his co-operation on some other matters connected therewith. Both of them were very much hurt at the reply received from Kumarappa which seemed to them to refuse any kind of co-operation or help."

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the following item.

231. LETTER TO CHIANG KAI-SHEK

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 5, 1940

DEAR GENERALISSIMO,

Many thanks for your very kind invitation. If I could accept it, I would be fulfilling a long-cherished wish. But my present mission forbids my responding to your invitation.

With renewed good wishes,

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. CHIANG KAI-SHEK

From a copy : Jawaharlal Nehru Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

232. LETTER TO MADALASA

SEGAON,  
January 5, 1940

CHI. MADALASA,

How silly you are ! Now that Shriman is coming, get well soon. Keep Ramanama engraved in your heart. He will see that everything ends well. Don't lose heart. You needn't reply. Shriman will do that.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 319

### 233. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[After January 5, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter. I know the possibility of misunderstandings. These and ignorant or interested criticism have never influenced me. I know that all would be well, if we are strong within. For the external affairs you are my guide. Your letter therefore helps me.

You have made more than ample amends about Kumarappa. You will like to see his letter. You may destroy it after perusal. Yes, we have very few workers like him.

Love.

BAPU

From the original : Jawaharlal Nehru Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 234. DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES<sup>2</sup>

[Before January 6, 1940]<sup>3</sup>

[A PROFESSOR] . . . Will you under swaraj allow Christians to go on with their proselytizing activity without any hindrance ?

[GANDHIJI :] No legal hindrance can be put in the way of any Christian or of anybody preaching for the acceptance of his doctrine.

The visitor was anxious to know whether the freedom they were having under the British regime would be allowed to them under the national Government without any interference.

I can't answer that question categorically because I do not know what is exactly allowed and what is not allowed under the British regime today. That is a legal question. Besides, what is permitted may not necessarily be the same thing as what is *permissible* under the law. All, therefore, I can say is that you should enjoy all the freedom you are entitled to under the law today.

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Kumarappa it is evident that this letter was written after the letter to the addressee dated January 5, 1940; *vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 5-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Reproduced from Pyarelal's article "A Talk with Christian Friends" dated January 6, 1940

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

Some of us are under an apprehension that they may have hereafter to labour under. . . disabilities. Is there any guarantee that such a thing would not happen ?

As I wrote in *Harijan*<sup>1</sup>, you do not seem to realize that Christians are today enjoying privileges because they are Christians. The moment a person here turns Christian, he becomes a *Sahib log*<sup>2</sup> .

He almost changes his nationality. He gets a job and position which he could not have otherwise got. He adopts foreign dress and ways of living. He cuts himself off from his own people and begins to fancy himself a limb of the ruling class. What the Christians are afraid of losing, therefore, is not their rights but anomalous privileges.

The visitor admitted the truth of Gandhiji's remarks, but assured him that whatever might have been the case in the past Christians as a class no longer wished to retain any exceptional privileges.

Another missionary friend recalling Gandhiji's well-known objection to the prevailing proselytizing practices chimed in : "Why may not I share with others my experience of Jesus Christ which has given me such an ineffable peace ?"

Because you cannot possibly say that what is best for you is best for all. Quinine may be the only means of saving life in your case, but a dangerous poison in the case of another. And again, is it not superarrogation to assume that you alone possess the key to spiritual joy and peace, and that an adherent of a different faith cannot get the same in equal measure from a study of his scriptures ?

I enjoy a peace and equanimity of spirit which has excited the envy of many Christian friends. I have got it principally through the *Gita*.

Your difficulty lies in your considering the other faiths as false or so adulterated as to amount to falsity. And you shut your eyes to the truth that shines in other faiths and which gives equal joy and peace to their votaries. I have not hesitated, therefore, to recommend to my Christian friends a prayerful and sympathetic study of the other scriptures of the world.

I can give my own humble testimony that, whilst such study has enabled me to give the same respect to them that I give to my own, it has enriched my own faith and broadened my vision.

Gandhiji's interlocutor was silent. "What would be your message to a

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "What Is Neutrality ?", 24-12-1939.

<sup>2</sup> A Westernized person



Christian like me and my fellows ?” the professor finally asked.

Become worthy of the message that is imbedded in the Sermon on the Mount and join the spinning brigade.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 13-1-1940

### 235. ASHRAM NOTES<sup>2</sup>

*January 6, 1940*

Brahmadatta has gently brought it to my notice that some persons shirk work. Everyone should humbly examine his criticism. No one should feel bad about it. It is likely that not being well acquainted with all the activities of the Ashram, he has formed some wrong notions. If so, they should be removed.

2. I suggest that everyone should participate regularly in sacrificial spinning. We must be very particular in this respect.

BAPU

From Hindi : C.W. 4674

### 236. LETTER TO YAKUB HASAN

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*January 6, 1940*

DEAR YAKUB HASAN<sup>3</sup>,

Your two letters show your deep anxiety for unity. I am working at it in my own way. The problem has become too complicated for an easy solution. Do, however, pass on suggestions whenever you have any.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

YAKUB HASAN  
RUTLAND GATE, (CATHEDRAL P. O.)

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The professor had brought for Gandhiji a khadi scarf made of yarn spun by his wife and his pupils—a gift which Gandhiji much appreciated.

<sup>2</sup> This and the following Ashram Notes are extracted from a note-book which Gandhiji maintained “for the workers of Segaoon” and in which he put down instructions as they occurred to him.

<sup>3</sup> Ex-Minister, Public Works, Madras

237. *LETTER TO H. V. KAMATH*

SEGAON, *via* WARDHA (C. P.),  
January 6, 1940

DEAR KAMATH,

You are in a hurry, you are hard. Hurry because you have not read the pledge<sup>1</sup> carefully. It is regular spinning that is wanted, not daily.<sup>2</sup> Hard because there is nothing wrong in others spinning. This time the real test is to be whether khadi has become current coin.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI H. V. KAMATH  
MEHERABAD  
ORGANIZING SECRETARY, FORWARD BLOC  
WORLI, BOMBAY

From a facsimile in *Mahatma*, Vol. V (1962 ed.), between pp. 176 and 177

238. *LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

January 6, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. It is enough for me that you reached there safe. We shall meet again when God wills. Go on doing your work without worrying. How is Rajendra Babu's health? Sushila has left. Rajkumari has arrived but will go to Madras on the 9th and return after the 15th. Ba is well enough. I am of course all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3540

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Resolution on Independence day Pledge", 30-12-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee dated January 30, 1940.

## 239. INTERVIEW TO AN ENGLISH REPORTER<sup>1</sup>

SEGAON,

[Before *January 7, 1940*]<sup>2</sup>

[REPORTER:] There seems to be a deadlock coming, indeed if one does not already exist. Cannot we take advantage of nominated group of a really representative character to come to some sort of an agreed solution ?

GANDHIJI: A nominated group of a really representative character is a contradiction in terms. Such a group can only represent the nominator. For the purpose of discussion the nominator would be finally the Viceroy. You will not call such a group one of a really representative character. If you have in mind a small number of representatives, I for one would accept only one representative, say Jinnah Saheb, provided he is elected by the free vote of the millions as, say, is the President of the U.S.A.

REPORTER: Would you really ?

GANDHIJI: Why not ? Is there any flaw in this statement ? I claim to be the greatest democrat of modern times. My faith is built on non-violence and therefore I have faith in human nature.

REPORTER: But while the minorities are deadly opposed to a Constituent Assembly, can you offer them this form of representation now with any hope of their accepting the position ?

GANDHIJI: Anyone who objects to the right thing, puts himself in the wrong. British statesmen have induced the belief that they want to end the imperialistic system and treat those under them as free. Having induced that belief the Congress naturally wanted to test its sincerity. The answer must, therefore, be irrespective of what India wants or does not want. Now the question arises to whom is the answer to be given. If there were a rebel power trying to seize the reins of government, it would be the rebel power. But here there is no rebellion. The Congress is the main organization. But I confess that in view of rival organizations, power cannot be transferred to it. If then Britain is to make good her declaration, she can easily do it by summoning a Constituent Assembly of elected representatives and enforce the constitution framed by it. Representatives of minorities

<sup>1</sup> The report by Amrit Kaur, date-lined "Segaon, January 7, 1940", appeared under the caption "World Conscience the Supreme Arbiter".

will frame safeguards for their protection. It is possible that even the representatives may fail to reach a constitution acceptable to an overwhelming majority, including safeguards for minorities. Even so, Britain will have proved her *bonafides*. I hold, however, that a properly elected assembly is bound to produce a workable constitution.

REPORTER : Supposing a referendum were taken and it was found that a Constituent Assembly was not wanted, would you accept the verdict ?

GANDHIJI : I must.

REPORTER : If a generally accepted scheme is prepared by nominated persons, would you accept it ? Or do you object to nomination as such ?

GANDHIJI : There is no meaning in my acceptance or rejection. Acceptance to be valid must be by a properly elected body. It takes the place of the existing Government or their nominee or nominees.

REPORTER : Supposing you could be sure of achieving democracy through a nominated assembly, would you reject it ? Why not wait and see what form of nomination could be offered ?

GANDHIJI : I would always suspect nomination, for it can never satisfy all. Election is the only satisfactory method. In spite of Congress claim and boast the Congress is an organization representing only 3 million voters out of a population of over 300 millions. Therefore the Secretary of State would be justified if he said that the Congress was not representative of the whole nation. And therefore the Congress challenges all to go to the people. Even the Princes can as individuals, and so can Europeans domiciled in India. That they will not is not our fault.

REPORTER : What place would you assign to the Princes in democratic India ?

GANDHIJI : I would give them a fat commission as trustees of their people. I would say to them, however, that they must work for this commission. They would have the same privileges as the British King enjoys. They are after all his vassals. They cannot be greater than he. The King of England cannot hang a man. He can only act through proper channels. He is a private citizen, though the first one. If I can like monarchy at all, I would like the limited monarchy of England. And why should not the people of the States determine what they want ? As far as justice for the people is concerned, I have already said<sup>1</sup> that their supreme courts must be subject to the High Court of India.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "To the Princes", 8-7-1939

REPORTER : Might it not be that the English form of democracy will be unsuited to India ?

GANDHIJI : That is for the Constituent Assembly to decide. The time when self-styled representatives or nominees could decide for India is gone for ever.

REPORTER : Do you think the Assembly would suggest an economic form of democracy ?

GANDHIJI : I give the Assembly credit for sanity. So far as I can see this is the best method. But if a better can be produced, I would accept it.

REPORTER : May it not be that, while Britain is sincere, the delay is due to the terrible situation of war in which she finds herself today ?

GANDHIJI : I have not lost faith in their sincerity and that is why I am still wooing them. I am wooing my own people to build up their power. I am preparing for a fight, if it must come, but I am doing my level best to stave it off. I believe that Britain's past is responsible for all the prevailing dissensions.

REPORTER : What if Britain lost the war ?

GANDHIJI : I would be sorry if Britain lost. But I would not feel helpless. Supposing Russia, Germany, Italy and Japan formed a combination to seize India, I should not feel perturbed if India, as a whole, had accepted non-violence as her fixed policy. Through non-co-operation India could defy any combination. So you see my sympathy for Britain is absolutely selfless. If Britain is really right, God will inspire her to make the declaration about India and put herself right with India. I do not wish Britain to win right or wrong. If India were wrong, India must perish. I have often said that Hinduism will perish if Hinduism allows the practice of untouchability to remain. I would go so far as to pray for India's

destruction if she went wrong, even as Stead<sup>1</sup> prayed for England's defeat in the Boer War. In spite of all her great resources it is wrong on Britain's part to strain too much her faith in her strong arm. I rejoice that she still prays to the God of love and not to the God of gunpowder, and therefore I still hope that she will call to her aid the moral support of a free India. She gets today material support from

<sup>1</sup> A British journalist who publicly prayed and invited others to pray that God might decree the English a defeat in the Boer War. *Vide* "Satyagraha in South Africa-Chapter II".

India because she is a dependency. What I want Britain to do is to get the moral support of India and win. Would to God that the war ended on a moral issue and the conscience of the world became the final arbiter ! That can only happen if Britain had the moral support of a free India. Anyway, that is my view.

*Harijan*, 13-1-1940

#### 240. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

*January 7, 1940*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I am not dissatisfied with you. I would indeed miss you if you were to leave this place. I know your virtues, but have become impatient to see that you get rid of your shortcomings. Get rid of them. My criticism was made good-humouredly, for didn't I say nine hours ? The facts which you have stated are correct.

And now about the other letter. I will inquire about the damage to the books. That was a terrible thing. The money matter too was a terrible thing. I will inquire about that also. There is lack of order, no doubt. The blame for that is primarily mine. This is the simple truth. The disorder that you see is all due to me. I will see. If you recover your peace of mind, you can give me much help.

*Blessings from*  
**BAPU**

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8555. Also C.W. 7070. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

#### 241. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

*January 7, 1940*

CHI. JAMNA<sup>1</sup>,

If Kanaiyo stays there longer of his own free will, he has my permission to do so.

*Blessings from*  
**BAPU**

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Narandas Gandhi

## 242. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

[January 7, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. KANAIYO,

If the elders are likely to be pained by your coming away so soon and if you feel like it you may stay on for some time. But then what about the water scarcity ? Won't you have to stop both eating and drinking water ? Water is required even for cooking. If you don't eat at all, an additional advantage will be that Narandas will be able to contribute to famine relief !

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II

## 243. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SEGAON, WARDHA,

January 7, 1940

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Sonavate, a Harijan, is a clerk in your office on a salary of Rs. 79. He is a B. A., LL.B. Is it possible to give him a promotion there? What are the reports about his behaviour? As no Hindus are offering him any accommodation, he is staying with a Muslim family. Should not the Corporation reserve a *chawl* or a building for such people? Would there be any opposition to it?

It should not entail financial loss. But even if it does, I think we should bear it. Think about it from all points of view and write to me. I hope your mind is at rest and you are getting along well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

<sup>1</sup> This and the preceding item are written on the same sheet.

## 244. A TELEGRAM

[On or before *January 8, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

DEEPLY GRIEVED. GIVE MY CONDOLENCE TO LALA  
SHAMLAL'S<sup>2</sup> FAMILY.

*The Hindu*, 9-1-1940

## 245. MESSAGE TO HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU<sup>3</sup>

[On or before *January 8, 1940*]<sup>4</sup>

I loved Venkatasubbiah. His death is a great loss to the country. To meet him was to love him. I have not know a more unassuming man than him. Will you please convey my deep sympathy to his people ?

*The Hindu*, 15-1-1940

## 246. NOTES

### ANOTHER HARIJAN SEVAK GONE

I regret to have to report the death of Shri Venkatasubbiah, an old member of the Servants of India Society. He was the Secretary of the Madras Harijan Sevak Sangh. He was a most unassuming and conscientious worker. He never spared himself in anything he took up. He was of a retiring nature. His opposition to untouchability was uncompromising. His death is a distinct loss to the Harijan cause. I tender my condolences to the deceased reformer's family.

### AFFLICTED TURKEY

The threefold calamity<sup>5</sup> that has descended upon Turkey has commanded universal sympathy. President Inonu has gracefully acknowledged numerous messages of sympathy sent to him from India.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Rajendra Prasad has issued an appeal for funds for the sufferers. It is to be hoped that the appeal will receive an enthusiastic

<sup>1</sup> The report is date-lined "Lahore, January 8, 1940".

<sup>2</sup> A Congress leader of the Punjab

<sup>3</sup> President of the Servants of India Society

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* the following item.

<sup>5</sup> Earthquake with rain and snow

<sup>6</sup> *Vide* "Cable to Ismet Inonu", on or before 2-1-1940.



response from the public. A correspondent has suggested the despatch of a medical mission to Turkey in order to relieve the sufferings of the distressed Turks. The Idea is worthy of consideration. If a mission is to be sent at all, it should be a national mission, not sectarian. In the face of the triple calamity all differences of religion must be sunk. Human distress knows no distinctions. Such unprecedented distress as Turkey has experienced makes one realize the oneness of the human family. This visitation should humble and chasten us. It should enable Hindus and Muslims to sink their differences and make them realize that though they profess different faiths they are all children of the same God, and as such it is theirs to live in perfect fellowships with one another.

#### A WISE STEP

The Hyderabad State Congress has had great difficulty in functioning. The State would not recognize it as a constitutional body so long as it continued to style itself Congress although it has no affiliation with the Indian National Congress. The word is nobody's monopoly. It is a common word used by many organizations in the world. But somehow or other the National Congress has become anathema in many States. Therefore the word itself has become suspect in Hyderabad. The matter was referred by the leaders to me, and I had no hesitation in advising them that there was no virtue in merely fighting for the name if their lawful activities were not otherwise interfered with. The leaders after correspondence with the authorities have acted according to my advice and adopted the name Hyderabad National Conference. Thus all's well that ends well. I hope that the Conference will concentrate on the many constructive activities that are healthful and necessary for mass uplift and consciousness. They should find the authorities co-operating wholeheartedly with them in such work. Their goal of responsible government under the aegis of H. E. H. the Nizam remains the same as before. I am sure every activity that promotes co-operation among the people, their education and their economic and social uplift brings them nearer their goal in a most solid manner one can think of.

#### THREE ITEMS

The Harijan Sevak Sangh has been for some time issuing a monthly circular letter containing a brief account of the Sangh's activities. Like Bapa, its Secretary, the letter is business-like. I take from the interesting letter for November and December the following

three most interesting items :

(1) History was made at Munyali, a Harijan village near Nand Prayag, when a Harijan bride was carried in a *dandi* (palanquin) for the first time in the locality with the consent of the caste Hindus.

(2) It is understood that the work of the Committee appointed by the last Congress Government for inquiry into the wages and living conditions of the sweepers has been suspended by the present Governor's Government.

(3) The Report of the Municipal Sweepers' Inquiry Committee, appointed by the C. P. Government in 1938 under the chairmanship of Shri A. V. Thakkar, has been published. Among the important recommendations are (1) a minimum wage of 4 as. per day, (2) an eight hours' working day, (3) employment of Welfare Officers for big municipalities, and (4) granting of privilege, casual and sick leave, and half holiday on week-ends. Regarding the housing of sweepers the Committee recommends as follows :

1. It should be obligatory on the Municipal Committee to provide houses to sweepers. 2. The Government should provide *nazul*<sup>1</sup> land for the purpose. The report costs Re. 1 and can be had from the Government Press, Nagpur.

When the taking of a Harijan bride in a *dandi* makes history we know how far we are from root-and-branch removal of untouchability. For the expiation of their sin against humanity the so-called caste Hindus should make it a point of themselves carrying in *dandis* Harijan brides in villages in all parts of India.

I hope the report in the item two is wrong, or that there is a sound reason for suspending the inquiry. One had hoped that no lawful activity inaugurated by the Congress Ministries would be stopped or suspended by the interim Governments.

The recommendations (item three) of the Municipal Sweepers' Committee (C.P.) are so sensible and moderate that there should be no delay in their being carried out in their entirety. The report should not share the fate that befalls many such reports, i. e., of being shelved. It should be remembered that Thakkar Bapa's was a labour of love. He does not put his hands to anything for praise or show.

SEGAON, January 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> Belonging to Government

## 247. CONGRESS M.L.A.S AND REMUNERATION

An M.L.A. from U. P. writes a letter which I abridge as follows :

In U. P. we are getting Rs. 75 a month. During the two and a half years in which the Congress was in power the Assembly sessions were sometimes concluded in six days, at others they lasted for some months. In addition, there were meetings of select, special and regular committees. Some of these are still working and constitute a heavy demand on our time. Moreover no one knows when the Assembly may be summoned again. Touring in our constituencies entails an expenditure of Rs. 200 a year. There are cases in which the constituencies are more than 200 miles away from Lucknow. Taking an average of three tours in a year, a member has to spend six weeks for this purpose. While at Lucknow, every member has to entertain people from his constituency. He also pays Rs. 4 per month to the Congress Legislature Party and the Provincial Congress Committee. In these circumstances business or professional life has to be sacrificed, and it is clear that unless a member has private means he is totally unable to give whole time work without some remuneration. This question has come up many times before the U.P. M.L.A.s. Many of us feel that either the allowance should be raised or the poor among us will have to go out, leaving the field to the rich. You were pained to know that some of the Assembly members were using the allowance for their own use;<sup>1</sup> but I have put before you another side of the picture so that you may guide us. It must also be remembered that many of us borrowed money to fight elections under order of the Congress.

The second point to which I wanted to draw your attention is the question of corruption in the Congress ranks. Along with other causes, the lure of M.L.A.-ship is a very strong one for the average Congress worker and often leads to underhand methods in the attempt to displace the sitting member. It would be a good thing if it were understood that members who have acquitted themselves well will be renominated. Such a policy would ensure a trained body of workers for legislative work. Members will further realize that constructive work outside the legislatures is also required of them.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Discussion with Nagpur Congress Workers", 27-12-1939.

The third point on which I will humbly request you to enlighten us is the strong trend, even among important Congressmen, towards Western modes of living, thought and culture. In spite of putting on khadi many of them are absolutely strangers to their own culture, and to them all light comes from the West. The letter leaves me unconvinced, so far as the remuneration is concerned. Of course there will be hard cases everywhere. But hard cases make bad law. It should be remembered that the Assemblies are not Congress monopolies. Many parties are represented on them. The Congress convenience cannot be the sole consideration. My correspondent assumes that every member devotes his whole time to the national service with special regard to legislative activity. This means that the legislators become professional politicians and the legislatures become their special preserves. If I had my way, I would manage these things through the parties. I know that the question bristles with difficulties and requires a thorough and quiet discussion. But the point I have raised is quite small. Why should the members draw anything while the Assemblies are in virtual suspension? If a census were taken, it would be found that many members were not earning before what they are earning as legislators. It is a dangerous thing to make legislatures a means of earning more than one's market price. Let the responsible men in the provinces put their heads together and come to a decision worthy of the Congress and the cause they represent.

The question raised by the correspondent as to making the present members permanent incumbents is beyond me. I have no experience in this matter. It is one for the Working Committee to probe. As to the habit of looking to the West for light, I can give little guidance if the whole of my life has not provided any. Light used to go out from the East. If the Eastern reservoir has become empty, naturally the East will have to borrow from the West. I wonder if light, if it is light and not a miasma can ever be exhausted. As a boy I learnt that it grew with the giving. Anyway I have acted in that belief and have, therefore, traded on the ancestral capital. It has never failed me. This, however, does not mean that I must act like a frog in the well. There is nothing to prevent me from profiting by the light that may come from the West. Only I must take care that I am not overpowered by the glamour of the West. I must not mistake the glamour for true light. The latter gives life, the former brings death.

SEGAON, January 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-1-1940

## 248. ADULTERATION OF GHEE<sup>1</sup>

Shri Pannalal<sup>2</sup>, an old member of Sabarmati Ashram, is a lover of cattle. He has for years been a lay farmer and dairyman. He has tried to study the cattle question. Very few people realize that conservation of cattle wealth of India is a major economic problem beset with many complexities. Adulteration of ghee has always been one of them. During the last few years it has become a growing menace, owing to the import of cheap vegetable oil miscalled ghee because of its having been congealed and otherwise processed so as to look like ghee. Shri Pannalal says that middlemen and sellers of dairy products profusely adulterate real ghee and thus undersell the farmer or cattle-keeper. He says that it is impossible for farmers to hold out against this competition if the mischief continues for any length of time, especially as such vegetable 'ghee' is being manufactured in Bombay and elsewhere on a large scale. Shri Pannalal rightly adds that agriculture without dairying and cattle-breeding for draught purposes will be an impossibility if real ghee disappears from the market. Cattle-keeping will then become a luxury instead of a paying occupation. Shri Pannalal, therefore, suggests that drastic measures should be taken to prevent adulteration. I heartily endorse the suggestion. There should be a well-regulated public agitation against adulteration, and preventive legislation should be passed if necessary. In addition to the economic, this adulteration has a medical aspect which is no less important than the economic. It is well known that vegetable 'ghee' has a much lower protective value than ghee. From the health point of view, doctors say, vegetable ghee can never be a substitute for real ghee. This is, therefore, a question for corporations, medical men and humanitarian leagues to tackle without delay. If corporations have not adequate powers, they should have them. Shri Pannalal says :<sup>3</sup>

It is quite feasible to make it compulsory by law to add some edible colour or flavour to each and every tin of vegetable ghee, whether imported or produced in India. This will readily distinguish the vegetable product from the genuine ghee and make detection easy.

SEGAON, January 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> Pannalal Jhaveri

<sup>3</sup> Only an extract is reproduced here.

## 249. LETTER TO NIRMALA AND RAMDAS GANDHI

January 8, 1940

CHI. NIMU,

What a girl you are ! Now that you have found a home you have completely forgotten Segaoon, haven't you ? You want me to believe that you don't get a minute to spare in a week ! How is that ?

CHI. RAMA,

How hard-hearted you have grown ? Ba is in Delhi. Lakshmi is unwell. It is as if I have opened a hospital here. You know about Valjibhai, Kunvarji, Jairamdas, Kishorelalbhai and Krishnadas. I have also admitted a woman from a nearby village. And there is one more recommended by Parachure Shastri. All the persons are improving.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : Nirmala Gandhi Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 250. THE CHARKHA

The east bowed low before the blast

In patient deep disdain,

She let the thundering legions past

And plunged in thought again.<sup>1</sup>

I congratulate the Socialists, the Royists<sup>2</sup> and others who have spoken out their minds on spinning. The situation that faces the country is most serious. If civil resistance is declared in right earnest, there should be no suspension unless there is a proper settlement. It therefore follows that, if the fight is to be non-violent, the non-violence must be unadulterated. I must not be weak in my statement of the requirements. If I hesitate, I would betray the national cause. I dare not lead an army that does not answer the qualifications which I regard as essential for success.

No half-hearted allegiance will do. Divided allegiance will lead

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold

<sup>2</sup> Of the Radical Democratic Party of M. N. Roy

to disaster. The critics should realize that I have not imposed myself on the Congress. I am no dictator though I have been given that nickname by unkind friends. I have no sanction for imposing my will on any person. Therefore I call myself truly a servant of the people. The public should know that I have not even been formally appointed 'Generalissimo'. Not that the Working Committee would not give me the formal appointment. But I suggested and the members agreed that there was no necessity for it. Thus if ever there can be a bond of unmixed love and confidence between a General and his men, this is such a one. There is nothing to prevent the Congress from ignoring me and passing any resolution it likes. There is nothing so far as I am concerned to prevent any person or any province or district from declaring civil disobedience at his or its own risk. They will be guilty of indiscipline towards the Congress. But I can do nothing in regard to such insubordination.

Hence it should be unnecessary for me to argue out the case for spinning. It should be enough that it is the requirement that every satyagrahi has to fulfil.

But I must continue to argue till I convert opponents or I own defeat. For my mission is to convert every Indian whether he is a Hindu, Muslim or any other, even Englishman and finally the world, to non-violence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, social or religious. If I am accused of being too ambitious, I should plead guilty. If I am told that my dream can never materialize, I would answer 'that is possible', and go my way. I am a seasoned soldier of non-violence, and I have evidence enough to sustain my faith. Whether, therefore, I have one comrade or more or none, I must continue my experiment.

The first thing I would like co-workers to realize is that I have no hate in me for a single Englishman. I am not interested in driving him out of India. I am interested in converting him into a servant of India instead of his being and believing himself to be a ruler or a member of the ruling race. I feel towards him precisely as I feel towards an Indian, no matter what his faith may be. Therefore those who do not share this elementary quality with me, cannot become co-satyagrahis.

My love of Englishmen is not of the drawing-room type. No one has painted their imperialism in more lurid colours than perhaps I have. But then I have done likewise in my domestic as also political

circle. The love of my conception, if it is as soft as a rose petal, can also be harder than flint. My wife has had to experience the hard variety. My eldest son is experiencing it even now. I had thought I had gained Subhas Babu for all time as a son. I have fallen from grace. I had the pain of wholly associating myself with the ban pronounced on him.<sup>1</sup> Time was when Dr. Khare and Vir Nariman used to say that my word was law for them. Alas, I can no longer claim that authority. Anyway I was party to the disciplinary measures taken against them.<sup>2</sup> I maintain that I have acted towards them as I have acted towards those who are considered nearest and dearest to me. In all my dealings love has dictated my actions. Even so have I acted towards Englishmen. Of course they have called me all kinds of names when I have fought them. Their bitter criticism of me had as much effect on me as their praise. I say all this not to claim or expect any certificate of merit. I want to show that because I have said hard things about British rule and methods, ill will against Englishmen must not be imputed to me. Those, therefore, who are filled with ill will against them will find me a misfit in the end.

I am enunciating no new ideas here. They are to be found in *Indian Home Rule (Hind Swaraj)* which was written in 1908<sup>3</sup> when the technique of satyagraha was still in the process of formation. The charkha had become part of this programme of love. As I was picturing life based on non-violence, I saw that it must be reduced to the simplest terms consistent with high thinking. Food and raiment will always remain the prime necessities of life. Life itself becomes impossible if these two are not assured. For non-violent defence, therefore, society has to be so constructed that its members may be able as far as possible to look after themselves in the face of an invasion from without or disturbances within. Just as a domestic kitchen is the easiest thing in such circumstances, the *takli* or at most the spinning-wheel and the loom are the simplest possessions for the manufacture of cloth. Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence. A society which anticipates and provides for meeting violence with violence will either

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 11-8-1939.

<sup>2</sup> They were debarred from holding any position of trust and responsibility in the Congress organization, K. F. Nariman in November 1937 and Dr. N. B. Khare in July 1938.

<sup>3</sup> A slip for '1909'; *vide* "Hind Swaraj", 22-11-1909.



lead a precarious life or create big cities and magazines for defence purposes. It is not unreasonable to presume from the state of Europe that its cities, its monster factories and huge armaments are so intimately interrelated that the one cannot exist without the other. The nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic of India. I admit that it was very crude. I know that there was in it no non-violence of my definition and conception. But the germ was there. All I have said may be pure folly. It behoves me as a faithful servant of the nation not to hide my folly. There is no doubt that we are on the eve of a big change. I hope it will be for the better, but it may be also for the worse. I must have the courage to share with my co-workers my innermost thoughts even though I may risk the loss of their co-operation.

To resume the argument. It is from that germ that I have developed the technique of non-violence. If the charkha can bear the ample interpretation I have put upon it, it becomes the most effective weapon in the armoury of satyagraha. The weak thread from the wheel binds the millions in an unbreakable cord. One yard of the thread may be useless, but millions of unending threads spun by willing and knowing hands will make a cord strong enough to bear any strain that may be put upon it. But between 1908 and 1914 the idea remained dormant. The whole scheme was conceived for India. Nevertheless the spirit of it was worked out even in South Africa. The life of the satyagrahis there was reduced to simplest terms. Whether barristers or others, they learnt the dignity of labour. They accepted voluntary poverty as their lot in life and identified themselves with the poor. On my arrival in India I began single-handed to work for revival of the charkha. In 1921 khadi became one of the chief items of the constructive programme of the Congress. The charkha occupied the centre of the Congress flag with its vital connection with non-violence. I am, therefore, today saying nothing new. But as has often happened, people have passed by what I have said until they have been compelled to take action.

I have great regard for all the comrades who have been writing against the charkha and its implications. They are rendering a service by guiding the country according to their lights. I do not want their mechanical assent to my requirements. I should take it if it served the national purpose, but I know that it cannot.

I must here consider Sir Chimanlal Setalvad's letter<sup>1</sup> to *The Times of India*. I know we have had political differences practically since my return to India in 1915. He is an eminent lawyer. But that no more entitles him to give an authoritative opinion on the economy of the charkha than on the use of infantry in modern warfare. I invite him to study the literature that has grown round it. I promise that he will revise his opinion on its potency. May I also remind him that I claim many mill-owners among my friends? They know my views about mills. They know too that I have had a share in promoting the prosperity of our mills in relation to foreign mills. Sir Chimanlal should also know that I am guiding the policy of the largest and most powerful labour union<sup>2</sup> in all India. My opposition to the mills is unbending and uncompromising. But it is wholly non-violent, and I made bold to say that the mill-owners will be the first to give me that certificate. My connection with the mills is a happy and complete illustration of non-violent resistance. I need not be reminded that they pamper me because they know that my activity cannot touch them. I flatter myself with the belief that they know better. They know that, if with my fixed views about mills I had violent intentions about them, my activity could cause so much trouble that they would be obliged to treat me as an enemy and to summon the assistance of the law against me.

But I like Sir Chimanlal's challenge to the ex-Ministers. Let them speak.

SEGAON, January 9, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> Wherein referring to Gandhiji's article "Spinning-wheel v. Mills", he wrote: "One is amazed at this pronouncement, which implies that if Mr. Gandhi had his way, the mechanized textile industry of this country would be abolished in order that the village spinners and weavers might come into their own. Mr. Gandhi may as well advocate the abolition of railways, aeroplane services and motor-cars in order that the bullock-cart may come into its own. The Congress Ministries have again and again professed their concern for the development of large-scale industries so that India may become self-sufficient and a committee presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru is functioning to evolve a plan of industrial and economic development in the country. One would like to know what the Congress leaders think of this latest pronouncement of Mr. Gandhi. At any rate, those engaged in the mill industry, which is at present the outstanding industry of India and specially of this province, are entitled to know whether the Congress Ministry, if and when it comes back to power, would work to attain the goal laid down by Mr. Gandhi of suppressing the mill industry of this country. Will any of the ex-Ministers of Bombay answer?"

<sup>2</sup> Majoor Mahajan, the textile labour union of Ahmedabad

## 251. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

January 9, 1940

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Just now you cannot give up the treatment and go to Jaipur. Write a letter to the Maharaja.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3008

## 252. TALK WITH BHAI PARAMANAND <sup>1</sup>

SEGAON,

[January 9/10, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

[GANDHIJI:] I have come across plenty of revolutionaries during my lifetime. I have been arguing with them ever since I wrote *Indian Home Rule* and ever since the murder of Curzon Wylie<sup>3</sup> when I was in England. They come to me knowing that they would get a patient hearing from me, and that in confiding their secrets to me they have a friend whom they can trust. As a result, quite a good number of them are today to be found fully converted and among my co-workers. So Prithvi Singh's case<sup>4</sup> was not the first one of the conversion of a revolutionary to non-violence, and it is my hope that it is not going to be the last.

Assuming that Hinduism sanctions violence, one great contribution of Hinduism to the world is its varnashrama dharma (not the travesty we see today) which confines the use of arms to Kshatriyas only. Therefore, to teach 350 millions of people how to wield the sword is a stupendous, almost an impossible task apart from the wrong and the frightfulness of it. Universal violence as a means of getting independence is certainly not easier than my way, as you say,

<sup>1</sup> Reporting the talk under the title "Talk with a Revolutionary", Mahadev Desai writes : "One could see from the talk what a havoc long and solitary confinement in prison works on people, and how instead of breaking their spirit it makes many of them all the more bitter and irreconcilable."

<sup>2</sup> Date and identity of the interviewer are from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.

<sup>3</sup> On July 2, 1909; vide "London", after 17-7-1909.

<sup>4</sup> Vide "Statement to the Press", 20-5-1938.

because mine is traditional and natural to India—apart again from the fact that mutual aid is the law of life and not mutual slaughter. If the latter had been the law, society would not have survived it.

[BHAI PARAMANAND :] But why not take in as many as possible in a fight which must be decisive ?

Oh yes. This must be my last fight, if we fight at all. It will be the last fight in any case. That makes it all the more necessary for me not to begin it unless I am sure that my army is fit to undergo the fiery ordeal in a completely non-violent manner. Think what would happen if all the 17 lakhs of the members in U.P. were to pass my test which after all is eminently simple—spinning and wearing khadi.

But why must they believe that khadi will bring swaraj ? They will spin because they want your Generalship and must yield obedience to you.

If they render implicit obedience to the General, they should believe with him that khadi will bring swaraj. Mere mechanical action will not bring the result by which I will have to judge their obedience—khadi bhandars to be emptied and unemployment to be liquidated. That cannot happen without the belief in the charkha. If there is no such belief, I will not call it real obedience. But I will not blame them, I will blame myself if I do not carry conviction to them. The fault will lie entirely with my defective ahimsa. As I have often said if there is *one* true satyagrahi it would be enough. I am trying to be that true satyagrahi. Not one of his thoughts would be in vain. I know that many of my thoughts do not go in vain, but I also know that what I have thought and said about khadi has not gone home. I know the cause. I am full of *himsa*. Though I can suppress my anger, the fact remains that I am liable to anger. I have been a conscious and persevering observer of the vow of *brahmacharya* since 1906, but I am not the perfect *brahmachari* I want to be. For with me perfect *brahmacharya* is the attainment of sexlessness—not impotence, but the state of *urdhwareta* in which the sexual energy is completely sublimated into spiritual energy. If I had attained that *nirvikara* (passionless) state, I should have but to think a thing and it would happen. I would not have to argue.

But God is *nirvikara*—free from all passions. Why does He not make us act as we ought to ? His influence must be all-powerful.

How do we know that He does not act ? But do not bring in God in this discussion. He has neither truth nor untruth, neither violence nor non-violence.

But it is due to Him that we have *vikaras*—passions. If it was wrong to have passions, He would not have filled us with them.

Oh yes, He had given us all that and yet endowed us with the sense of right and wrong and also given us a certain amount of choice—the choice between right and wrong, between good and evil.

But so far as we can judge, you are free from passions and comparatively perfect ?

No, I must be allowed to judge my limitations. If I was perfect, as I told you, I would not have to argue with you. My thought would be enough. I have fought many a fight. If anything I was less perfect than I am today. I had then to cover the length and breadth of India. I had to speak and argue day in and day out. Now if a fight has to come, you may be sure that I shall lead it from Segaon. I am speaking and arguing much less than I used to do. But the fact remains that I am far from my ideal yet.<sup>1</sup>

If there are so many volunteers ready, why should there have been so many riots ?

That is because they are provoked by the third party.

That is not the answer. Even if they were engineered, non-violent volunteers should be able to make them impossible. But what about you ? I have had accounts of you which are far from complimentary.

I have never in my life, even when I was an active revolutionary, countenanced violence. Let anybody prove that I advised anyone to strike police or Government officials down. In fact I used to denounce all such acts and attempts.

Did you ?

Yes.

Do you know Baba Ramachandra ?

Don't I know him ?

You do. Then do you know that Baba Ramachandra would not ask anyone to kill another ? But he believed that to pour boiling water down a man's throat was not violence. You may have preached non-violence of that kind.

No, but I have explained to the people the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*. I

<sup>1</sup> The following talk took place on the succeeding day. Mahadev Desai reports : “. . . Somehow the thought of thousands of satyagrahis in battle array obsessed [Bhai Paramanand]. Apart from the test of spinning, Gandhiji put another test before him.”

have told them that Lord Krishna Himself has said that neither does the slayer slay nor is he whom he slays slain.<sup>1</sup>

Oh ! That's all you have said.

The friend laughed at the absurdity of his own claim of non-violence. "But," he persisted, "does not Lord Krishna say it ?"

That does not mean that you or I may say it. If I kill a man, I should have the gallows. My saying 'I have not killed' won't save me.

But if you want us to forget the teaching of the *Gita*, do tell us so. We will then not take the name of the *Gita* and [will] follow a different precept.

No, there is *no* different precept to follow. You have to re-learn your *Gita*. You have misread it all these years.

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

### 253. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

January 10, 1940

MY DEAR AMRIT,

Return well and fully able to share burdens.<sup>2</sup>

Love.

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 3664. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6473

### 254. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

January 10, 1940

BA,

I have your letter. Prabha has given in her letter all the news. Tell Devdas that I don't at all like his falling ill. He doesn't take care to put in enough exercise. If he did that and kept regular hours for meals he would not fall ill. You may stay there as long as necessary.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./XXIV

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 19

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had gone to Indore.

255. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

January 12, 1940

CHI. MANILAL, SUSHILA,

I got your letters. I do make every possible effort to write, but there is so much work every day that something is always left over.

I have already written to you about your fighting there. I will write more when I get time. Medh's<sup>1</sup> letter is lying with me. I have nothing special to write. The final responsibility rests on you.

Kishorelalbhai is staying here at present. There are hopes of his improving. Jairamdas also is here. He is very much better. Kunvarji is gaining weight rapidly. Thus Segaon has turned into a hospital just now. I am not likely to start a struggle here immediately.

Ba is in Delhi. Lakshmi is very weak. She is improving.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 4907

256. LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

January 14, 1940

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

Even though the medicine might have been or was given to me personally, I cannot trace it. Please procure another sample and literature.

I can't draft the resolution. I began it and saw that it was not for the A. I. V. I. A. to pass a resolution, it was for me to deal with it in *Harijan*. This I shall do.<sup>2</sup>

I have the money.

Love.

BAPU

From a Photostat : G.N. 3589

<sup>1</sup> Surendra Medh

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the following item.

## 257. WHY ONLY KHADI ?<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Kumarappa has a grouse against me that although I am the author and guide of the A. I. V. I. A. I seem to treat it as a step-child. I have retorted that the grouse is due to superficial reasoning. He will not take a defeat lying down. He has returned to the charge again and again, and refuses to be satisfied till I proclaim to the world that the other village industries stand on the same footing with khadi. For me the proposition was so self-evident as not to need any enunciation. But Prof. Kumarappa is right so far as practical application is concerned. People are not governed by theory. Thus several people have recently complained to me that they know men who use khadi but use no other village articles. They suggest that many Congressmen wear khadi because it is required by the constitution. But having no belief in it they never think of anything but their convenience so far as other articles of use are concerned. This I call fulfilling the letter and killing the spirit. And where the spirit is killed the letter is of as much use as a body from which life has ebbed away. I have often said that khadi is the central sun round which the other village industries revolve like so many planets. They have no independent existence. Nor will khadi exist without the other industries. They are absolutely inter-dependent. The fact is that we have to make a choice between India of the villages that are as ancient as herself and India of the cities which are a creation of foreign domination. Today the cities dominate and drain the villages so that they are crumbling to ruin. My khadi mentality tells me that cities must subserve village when that domination goes. Exploiting of villages is itself organized violence. If we want swaraj to be built on non-violence, we will have to give the villages their proper place. This we will never do unless we revive village industries by using the products thereof in place of things produced in city factories, foreign or indigenous. Perhaps it is now clear why I identify khadi with non-violence. Khadi is the chief village handicraft. Kill khadi and you must kill the villages and with them non-violence. I cannot prove this by statistics. The proof is before our eyes.

SEGAON, January 14, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".



## 258. NO SUPPRESSION

A Bengali friend came to me during the week and said that though Bengal was ready for battle the Working Committee and especially I were suppressing it and thus damaging the nation's cause. This is a serious charge. The Working Committee can take care of itself. So far as I know, it has suppressed no province and no person. But I can say as the sole authority on satyagraha that I have never suppressed any body or organization. Satyagraha does not admit of such suppression. Thus though I have been ignorantly accused of suppressing the people of Rajkot, I never suppressed them. They were at liberty, as they are now, to civilly resist authority. Even one person could do so if he had the conviction. If he is wrong, he can only harm himself, not his opponent. Hence it is that I have called satyagraha the most harmless, if also the most potent, remedy against wrongs.

What, however, I did in the case of Rajkot was to use the authority the satyagrahis of Rajkot had given me, to suspend civil resistance. It was open to them to reject my advice—it could hardly be dignified by the name of command. If they had, and if they had got responsible government, they would have received my congratulations.

Some readers may remember that the Working Committee had refused to sanction civil resistance in Chirala Perala<sup>1</sup> but had left the Chirala people to declare it at their own risk. Likewise it is open to Bengal, as also to any other province, on its own initiative and at its own risk, to offer civil resistance. What it cannot have is my approval or support. And if the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee wholly repudiates the authority of the Working Committee, it can, with all the greater force and propriety, do as it likes. If it succeeds, it will cover itself with glory, overthrow the present leadership, and rule the Congress organization as it will deserve to. I have prescribed the conditions of successful civil resistance. But if the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee thinks that the Muslim masses are with the Congress, if it thinks that both Hindus and Muslims are ready for the fight, if it thinks that neither non-violence nor the charkha is necessary or that non-violence has no connection with the charkha, and if it fails to declare war, it will then be untrue to itself and to the country. What I have said applies to every province and part of India. But as the most experienced satyagrahi I must be allowed to utter a note of warning to all concerned that whoever declares civil resistance

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Chirala-Perala", 25-8-1921.

without the proper training and a full appreciation of the conditions of satyagraha is likely to bring disaster to the cause he espouses.

SEGAON, January 14, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

### 259. A VOLUNTARY LABOUR TAX

If all primary members of the Congress also become spinners for swaraj, how would it affect khadi ? I asked Shri Krishnadas Gandhi to answer the question for me, and he has produced the following figures :

1. The number of primary members : . . . 40 lakhs
2. The value of their annual donation, say, 12,000 yards per member, can be reckoned at Rs. 1-2-0 per head, but to be on the safe side is taken at Re. 1 per head . . . Rs. 40 lakhs
3. The Value of khadi produced from the subscribed yarn . . . Rs. 48 lakhs  
 The annual sale of khadi for 1939 is estimated at . . . Rs. 75 lakhs  
 Therefore, the total value of the A.I.S.A. khadi is equal to (Rs. 75 lakhs + Rs. 48 lakhs) . . . Rs. 123 lakhs  
 The cost to the A.I.S.A. (Rs. 123 lakhs – Rs. 40 lakhs) . . . Rs. 83 lakhs  
 This would mean in the production of khadi an increase of . . . 84%  
 Or, in the sale price of khadi, a possibility of reduction of . . . 32.5%  
 Or, in the alternative, the possibility of increasing the wages of spinners by . . . 80 to 100%
2. There is a provision in the rules of the A.I.S.A. which allows subscribers to purchase back their subscribed yarn at its value (Re. 1) minus the value of the cotton Rs. 5 i.e., 11 Rs.  
 If all members exercise this privilege, the A.I.S.A. will realize in cash . . . Rs. 27.5 lakhs  
 Consequently,  
 The cost price of the remaining stock of khadi with the A.I.S.A. will be (Rs. 75 lakhs — Rs. 27.5 lakhs) . . . Rs. 47.5 lakhs  
 This will enable the Association to reduce the sale price by about . . . 37%  
 instead of 32.5% mentioned in the first calculation.

If the total amount of yarn contributed be worth Rs. 40 lakhs, each member will pay out of pocket not more than 8 annas per annum, it being the

price of cotton and the cost of carding, when the member is not a carder. If he self-cards his own cotton, as he is expected to, the out-of-pocket expenses will be still further reduced. It must be remembered that the higher the count of yarn the less is the price of cotton and the greater is the contribution in the form of labour.

Those who are not prejudiced against khadi will find ample food for thought in the foregoing. Let them work out what it would mean if all wore khadi, if all spun not the miserable 33 yards per day but at least 100 yards. The price of khadi can be lowered by donating this to the A. I. S. A. or, which is the same thing, the poor learning the art of spinning for their own needs. This donation will be a kind of a voluntary labour tax.

SEGAON, January 14, 1940  
*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

## 260. ENGLISH OPINION ON INDIAN STRUGGLE

A friend forwards the following two cuttings from *The Cambridge Review*.<sup>1</sup> The signatories are distinguished men and women of letters. I publish them to show that thoughtful English men and women who used to be indifferent about India are now studying Indian affairs and are unreservedly supporting the struggle for Indian Independence.

SEGAON, January 14, 1940  
*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> Eileen Power, Susan Stebbing, M. H. Dobb, David Hardman, H. L. Elvin, Harold J. Laski, Joseph Needham and J. Robinson had in a letter expressed their keen sympathy with the Indians in their struggle "against indescribable poverty, the persistence of feudal anomalies" and their eagerness to extend their active co-operation to the Indian people. They had welcomed the setting up of an Indian Independence Committee in Cambridge to provide information about India and to explain and advocate the Congress policy.

In another letter R. R. Pittam and M. J. C. Hodgart had protested against the policy of the National Government towards India. "The Indian people," they wrote, "demand freedom and democracy in order to overcome the economic and political backwardness which 150 years of foreign rule has done little or nothing to alleviate. No formula which does not grant these things can be satisfactory, nor can it produce anything but conflict and disorder." The writers, advocating the proposal of the Indian National Congress to introduce universal adult franchise, had said, "No minority in India which genuinely believes in freedom objects to this, and it is a demand with which the British people are in full sympathy." Also, in their opinion, Dominion Status was meaningless, for "the Indian people have no cultural, religious or racial ties with Britain."

## 261. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,

January 14, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I have read and re-read your Bombay speech.<sup>1</sup> I write this, however, to put before you my difficulties. Dominion Status in terms of the Statute of Westminster and independence are taken to be equivalent terms. If so, should you not use the term that fits India's case ?

I have no doubt you had very good reasons for the way you have dealt with the question of minorities. But I have serious doubts about the implications of your reference to that question. I do not at all understand the reference to the scheduled castes.

If you think that you would like to see me you have but to wire or write.<sup>2</sup> I shall be with the Working Committee till perhaps the 22nd inst.

*I am,*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : C. W. 7835. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

## 262. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

January 14, 1940

CHI. BABUDI,

Sushila wrote to me about your baby. I have dictated a letter to Gangabehn and she will now write to you direct. You also may write to her. The best thing is that you should eat enough fruit and greens and take enough milk. If you do that your milk will be nourishing and that will help the baby. Mix sago with milk.

<sup>1</sup> For the Viceroy's speech dated January 10, *vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Speech", 10-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> In his reply dated January 17 the addressee invited Gandhiji for talks any day after January 29.

My yarn has still not been woven. If you want finer cloth still, I will send some from my dhotis. Both of you must be fine. Take complete rest.

*Blessings from  
BAPU*

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 10025. Courtesy : Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

### *263. DISCUSSION WITH ENGLISH PACIFISTS<sup>1</sup>*

SEGAON,

[Before January 15, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

. . . Whilst the pacifists appreciated the position taken up by India, their difficulty was how, if Gandhiji accepted the Allied cause as just and said that he would pray for the victory of Britain, he had advised the Congress not to offer its co-operation to Britain.

. . . Gandhiji explained that any co-operation or non-co-operation that the Congress could offer would be moral and not material. Materially Britain's position would not be affected by either attitude, for the contribution in men and money that Britain exacted from India as a subject nation would continue. When a non-violent India wished Britain victory it was not victory for Britain, right or wrong, but victory for Britain which in going to war against Germany was less in the wrong and more in the right. But if there was no satisfactory declaration of the war aims regarding India, the moral support that Britain would gain would not be forthcoming. The result would be quite different if the Congress were indifferent as to means. She would in that case foment a rebellion and offer effective obstruction.

[Q.] Now it would be mental violence and not physical violence ?

[A.] Maybe. But the non-co-operation that may come would be non-violent. Mental violence has no potency and injures only the person whose thoughts are violent. It is otherwise with mental non-violence. It has potency which the world does not yet know. And what I want is non-violence of thought and need.

Such non-violent support can be available to Britain only if her cause is demonstrably just, even though from a pacifist standpoint her means are violent and therefore bad. Her cause will not be just if she is not just to India, i.e., if of her own accord and without reference to the

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's article "A Pacifist's Doubts" date January 15, 1940

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

parties in India she does not wash her hands clean of the imperialist exploitation of India. Therefore, non-violent India's prayer will be for Britain's victory when she declares in unequivocal terms that India is a free nation in action now, and in law as soon as possible, maybe even during the war. This she will do from the heart only when she begins to rely more on the efficacy of the moral support of non-violent India than on her own strong arm. If England can take this step, the war will end in peace through moral force, rather than through superiority of arms.

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

### 264. A WELCOME MOVE

On the Deliverance Thanksgiving Day declared by Jinnah Saheb<sup>1</sup> I had the following wire from Gulbarga Muslims : "Deliverance Day greetings, Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah *Zindabad*". I took it as a message sent to ruffle my feelings. The senders little knew that the wire could not serve its purpose. When I received it, I silently joined the senders in the wish "Long Live Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah." The Quaid-e-Azam is an old comrade. What does it matter that today we do not see eye to eye in some matters ? That can make no difference in my goodwill towards him.

But the Quaid-e-Azam has given me special reason for congratulating him. I had the pleasure of wiring him congratulations on his excellent Id day broadcast. And now he commands further congratu-lations on forming pacts with parties who are opposed to the Congress policies and politics. He is thus lifting the Muslim League out of the communal rut and giving it a national character. I regard his step as perfectly legitimate. I observe that the Justice Party and Dr. Ambedkar's party have already joined Jinnah Saheb. The papers report too that Shri Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, is to see him presently. Jinnah Saheb himself has informed the public that many non-Congress Hindus have expressed their sympathy with him. I regard this develop-ment as thoroughly healthy. Nothing can be better than that we should have in the country mainly two parties—Congress and non-Congress or anti-Congress, if the latter expression is preferred. Jinnah Saheb is giving the word 'minority' a new and good content. The Congress majority is made up of a combination of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 9-12-1939

caste Hindus, non-caste Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews. Therefore it is a majority drawn from all classes, representing a particular body of opinion; and the proposed combination becomes a minority representing another body of opinion. This may any day convert itself into a majority by commending itself to the electorate. Such an alignment of parties is a consummation devoutly to be wished. If the Quaid-e-Azam can bring about the combination, not only I but the whole of India will shout with one acclamation : 'Long Live Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah.' For he will have brought about permanent and living unity for which I am sure the whole nation is thirsting.

SEGAON, January 15, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

### 265. MY SIN

The following is a summary of a long indictment from a Muslim official of a Punjab Congress Committee :

Your public statements show that you are deeply distressed over the differences among the major communities of India. Apart from the natural fear of the Mussalmans of a dominant majority at the Centre, it is chiefly your personality which is forcing the Mussalmans to ally themselves with the imperialist Government and thus array themselves against the Congress. The student of current events has to thank you for driving the brave and liberty-loving Mussalmans into the reactionary fold.

You claim that "from its very commencement the Congress has been a wholly political organization and never communal. It has proved its claim repeatedly and on every relevant occasion." You have written : "The Congress has refused to represent any but the national cause." Of course the Indian National Congress was organized as a non-communal body for the political emancipation of India. But when you say that "if untouchability exists Hinduism cannot survive", you admit that the uplift of the Harijans is a purely Hindu cause and is a question of the life and death of Hinduism. In spite of this for the twenty years of your life in India you have used the Congress platform for the removal of untouchability and have included it in the constructive programme of the Congress. The Mussalmans do not grudge you the right to work for the uplift of the

Harijans provided it is on a separate platform. But why should you include what you yourself admit to be a purely Hindu cause in the constructive programme of the Congress ? . . . You have thus made the background of the Congress so aggressively Hindu that it requires little effort to keep the Mussalmans away from the Congress. . . . The misfortune is that most of the Congressmen have been infused with the same narrow-mindedness and indiscretion as have characterized your leadership. To most of them freedom of India means going back to an age 2,500 years old and thrusting their religion and culture on eight crores of unwilling Mussalmans. . . .

But the communal question seen from the right perspective is not as insoluble as it appears to be. Even now prudence coupled with large-heartedness may undo the wrong done to the cause of national unity.

The Constituent Assembly is not only an expedient for the political problem facing India but is under the present circumstances the best and the only way out of the communal muddle. . . . But an article from your pen in *Harijan*<sup>1</sup> is not sufficient. It is necessary to incorporate in the resolution<sup>2</sup> on the Constituent Assembly a clear-worded clause assuring the Mussalmans that their representatives to the said Assembly would be elected on separate electorates, and that regarding matter relating to their religion and culture the decision of a two-third majority of their representatives would be accepted without hitch or hindrance.

Then again a mere resolution passed to the above effect would not suffice. It would be necessary to carry on continuous, systematic and intensive propaganda in order to bring home to every Mussalman the implication of the Constituent Assembly especially of the clause dealing with the election and powers of the representatives of the Mussalmans. Only in this way can the Congress gain the confidence of the Mussalman masses and cut the ground from under the feet of those who try to mislead them by creating the bogey of their religion and culture being in danger.

India can free itself the very day the Congress succeeds in winning the confidence of the Mussalmans. Britain dare not hold in bondage a united India. Therefore the fight for freedom should take the form of adopting measures for and putting into practice the ideal

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Only Way", 19-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*



of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Perhaps one thing has become clear to you now, namely, that Hindu-Muslim unity cannot come about by negotiating with the Muslim League or any other organization.

I have left out nothing relevant from the letter. The charge coming from a responsible Congressman is amazing. The programme of non-co-operation was passed<sup>1</sup> in consultation with the Ali Brothers<sup>2</sup> and at a time when the Congress had the full-hearted co-operation of the most influential Muslims. The programme contained removal of untouchability by Hindus. Should not non-Hindus rejoice in the purification of Hinduism? Why may not the Congress allow and encourage social and religious reform from the Congress platform? Non-violent politics cannot be divorced from moral uplift. And why does the correspondent forget that Khilafat itself was a purely religious cause? There were non-Congress Hindus then as there are now who thought and think that it was a grave mistake made by the Congress in taking up the Khilafat wrong. I have no doubt whatsoever as to the correctness of the Congress step. And if a similar thing occurred again, I should not hesitate to give my life in aiding my Muslim brethren. "A friend in need is a friend indeed." I hope, therefore, that my correspondent and those who think like him will correct their thought and believe with me that every act of purification in any sect or community promotes the well-being of the whole, of which they form a part, and therefore deserves encouragement from all platforms.

As to the Constituent Assembly everything the correspondent says has been conceded by the Congress. Propaganda is also going on. But Congressmen and especially Congress Muslims may not sit with folded hands and expect the Working Committee to carry on the work. The Working Committee's function is to supervise, guide and advise the organization and to administer its routine work. But propaganda can only be carried on if thousands of Congressmen interest themselves in it. If the programme mapped by the Congress is insipid, Congressmen can turn out the present guides in a moment. This is true especially because the Congress has accepted non-violence as its policy. Its success is dependent on the whole-hearted co-

<sup>1</sup> On December 30, 1920; *vide*, Appendix "Congress Resolution on Non-Co-Operation", December 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali

operation of every single Congressman. In that sense the Congress is the largest instrument of political education in the country. Everyone who comes on the Congress register becomes a candidate for political education. There should be a hand-book to impart such education. And since many Congressmen are illiterate it might be necessary to take up adult literacy and have a special department for carrying on the work. I commend this suggestion to my correspondent for adoption. He can commence with his own district in which he is Vice-president. Let him not distrust members of the Muslim League. They are both his countrymen and co-religionists. We need not be one another's enemies because we have different ideas or different policies.

SEGAON, January 15, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

#### 266. TO CORRESPONDENTS AND MESSAGE-SEEKERS<sup>1</sup>

In spite of my notice<sup>2</sup> in *Harijan* of December 23rd those who can spare me continue to write and ask for messages. I would refer them to the notice for further explanation. I know several intimate friends have not received acknowledgements or messages. They will forgive me. I have to harden my heart if I am to cope with the responsibility I am carrying. And what can be better than that I should commence with known friends ?

SEGAON, January 15, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-1-1940

#### 267. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

WARDHA (C.P.),

*January 15, 1940*

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

If you think it proper tell Gurudev that I have never ceased to think of his wire<sup>3</sup> and anxiety about Bengal. I feel that Subhas is behaving like a spoilt child of the family. The only way to make up

<sup>1</sup> This appeal was repeated in *Harijan*, 3-2-1940. 10-2-1940 and 17-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "To Correspondents and Message-seekers", 17-12-1939.

<sup>3</sup> Dated December 20, 1939; *vide* 1st footnote of "Telegram to Rabindranath Tagore", 22-12-1939.

with him is to open his eyes. And then his politics show sharp differences. They seem to be unbridgeable. I am quite clear the matter is too complicated for Gurudev to handle. Let him trust that no one in the Committee has anything personal against Subhas. For me, he is as my son. Hope you are well.

Love.

MOHAN

From a photostat : G.N. 8750

## 268. THE DISSENTIENTS

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan<sup>1</sup> and Shri Sampurnanand<sup>2</sup> have spoken in no uncertain terms against the addendum to the pledge<sup>3</sup> to be taken on the 26th inst. I have great regard for them. They are able and brave and have suffered for the country. I should count it a privilege to have them as companions in arms. I should love to win them over to my viewpoint. If the battle is to come and I am to lead it, I should not be able to do so with half-convinced or doubting lieutenants.

I am not spoiling for a fight. I am trying to avoid it. Whatever may be true of the members of the Working Committee, I wholly endorse Subhas Babu's charge that I am eager to have a compromise with Britain if it can be had with honour. Indeed satyagraha demands it. Therefore I am in no hurry. And yet if the time came and if I had no follower, I should be able to put up a single-handed fight. But I have not lost faith in Britain. I like the latest pronouncement of Lord Linlithgow.<sup>4</sup> I believe in his sincerity. There are undoubted snags in that speech. Many *is* have to be dotted, many *ts* have to be crossed. But it seems to contain germs of a settlement honourable to both nations. Those, therefore, who work with me have to appreciate this side of me. Perhaps from the standpoint of the dissentients this compromising nature of mine is a disqualification. If it is, the country should know it.

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan has done well to clear his and the Socialist Party's position. He says of the constructive programme :

<sup>1</sup> General Secretary of the All-India Congress Socialist Party

<sup>2</sup> Ex-Minister, Education, U.P.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Resolution on Independence Day Pledge", 30-12-1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Speech", 10-1-1940.

We have never accepted it as the only or even as an adequately effective weapon in our struggle. . . . Our views regarding these matters have remained unchanged. Rather they have been strengthened by the helplessness of the national leadership in the present crisis. . . . Let students come out of their schools and colleges on that day and let workers lay down their tools.

If the majority of Congressmen entertain the views that Shri Jayaprakash propounds on behalf of the Socialist Party, I can never hope to lead such an army to success. He has no faith either in the programme or in the present leadership. I suggest to him that he has quite unconsciously discredited the programme he would carry out merely “because the nation’s High Command desire it”. Imagine an army marching to battle without faith in the weapons to be used and in the leaders who have prescribed them. Such an army can only bring disaster to itself, its leaders and the cause. If I were in Shri Jayaprakash’s place and if I felt able to tender discipline, I would advise my party to remain indoors and silent. If I could not, I would preach open revolt and frustrate the designs of an ineffective leadership. Again, he would have the students come out of their colleges and schools and workmen lay down their tools, Now this is a lesson in indiscipline. If I had my way, I would invite every student to remain in his school or college unless he got leave or the Principal decided to close the college or school in order to take part in the celebration. I should give similar advice to the workmen. Shri Jayaprakash complains that the Working Committee has given no details about the work to be done on the Independence Day. I thought that with the programme of fraternizing and khadi there was no need for detailed instructions. I should expect Congress committees everywhere to arrange spinning demonstrations, khadi-hawking, and the like. I observe that some committees are doing so. I had expected Congress committees to make preparations from the day the Working Committee resolution was published. I shall measure the strength of the nation’s response not merely by the quantity of yarn spun but mainly by the khadi sales throughout the country.

Finally Shri Jayaprakash says : “We advanced for our part a new programme, that of labour and peasant organization, as the foundation of a revolutionary mass movement.” I dread the language used. I have organized both but not perhaps in the way Shri Jayaprakash has in mind. The sentence demands further elucidation. If they are not organized on a strictly peaceful footing, they may damage non-violent action as they did during the Rowlatt Act

Satyagraha<sup>1</sup> and later during the hartal in Bombay over the Prince of Wales's visit<sup>2</sup>.

Shri Sampurnanand has raised a spiritual issue.<sup>3</sup> He thinks that the original pledge should not have been tampered with though as he says, and rightly, it was discursive. I was its author. I wanted the people not merely to repeat the *mantra* of independence but to educate the people as to its why and wherefore. It was later amended when certain portions of the original had become meaningless. I admit the sacredness of the *mantra* of independence. That was given to us when the Lokamanya<sup>4</sup> first uttered: "Swaraj is my birthright." It was caught by thousands and is gaining strength from day to day. It is now enshrined in the hearts of millions. I hold that the addendum this year was necessary. It adds to the sacredness of the original and tells the people how everyone can contribute to the realization of national freedom.

I feel, therefore, that Shri Sampurnanand's objection really arises from his disbelief in the constructive programme. Thus he says :

If making it an integral part of the pledge means that we are definitely committing ourselves to a policy of village industries as opposed to mass production, then I, as a socialist, cannot accept it.

Of course I cannot give the legal interpretation of the pledge. It can only be given by the Working Committee. But as the General responsible for declaring and conducting a non-violent war I am bound to say that this mentality must interfere with mass propaganda. A leader like Sampurnanandji can either throw himself wholeheartedly in the struggle or not at all. He will create confusion in the mass mind by being half-hearted in his exposition of the addendum. If khadi has not an abiding place in the national programme, it should have no place in the addendum. If there is anything more effective, it should be put before the nation. There need be no hush-hush policy because a big fight is said to be impending. It is not necessary for all to be of one mind. But it is absolutely necessary that those who have to be in charge, as he would have to be, have a living faith in the programme they have to work out. No make-believe will answer the present requirements.

<sup>1</sup> In 1919.

<sup>2</sup> On November 17, 1921.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Sampurnanand," 29-12-1939.

<sup>4</sup> Bal Gangadhar Tilak

It has been suggested to me by a Congressman wielding great influence that as soon as I declare civil resistance I would find a staggering response this time. The whole labour world and the *kisans* in many parts of India will, he assures me, declare a simultaneous strike. I told him that, if that happened, I should be most embarrassed and all my plan would be upset. I must confess that I have no positive plan in front of me. Let me say that God will send me the plan when He gives the word as He has done before now. He has been my unflinching Guide and has sustained me throughout my stormy life. This, however, I know that no plan that I may put before the country will admit of unregulated and sporadic strikes, because that must lead to violence and therefore automatic suspension of the non-violent struggle. It would amount to my dismissal. I am sure that socialist leaders and other dissentients do not expect me to embark on a struggle which I know beforehand is likely to end in disaster. I ask for lieutenants and men who will act as one mind.

Even if somehow or other we achieve nominal independence, we cannot conduct national affairs with any degree of success unless we have won the struggle in the manner prescribed by me. Without real non-violence there would be perfect anarchy. I hope I am not expected knowingly to undertake a fight that must end in anarchy and red ruin.

SEGAON, January 16, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-1-1940

## 269. LETTER TO M. A. JINNAH

*January 16, 1940*

DEAR QUAID-E-AZAM,

I hate to write 'Mr.' before any Indian name. It is so unnatural. Hence I have been writing of you as 'Janab Jinnah Sahib', according to the usage taught to me by the late Hakim Sahib. But Amtul Salaam tells me that in the League circles you are always called "Quaid-e-Azam". And you will see from the enclosed how the finishing touch was given by a telegram I received from Gulburga. I hope you will accept my assurance that what I have done has been done in good faith and out of regard for you. If, however, you would have me address you otherwise, I shall respect your wishes.

The purpose of writing this letter is to send you the enclosed

advance copy of the article<sup>1</sup> I have sent to the *Harijan*. I have written it to further the end I have read in your recent messages and actions. I know you are quite capable of rising to the height required for the noble motive attributed to you. I do not mind your opposition to the Congress. But your plan to amalgamate all the parties opposed to the Congress at once gives your movement a national character. If you succeed you will free the country from communal incubus and, in my humble opinion, give a lead to the Muslims and others for which you will deserve the gratitude not only of the Muslims but of all the other communities. I hope that my interpretation is correct. If I am mistaken, you will please correct me.

It is a purely personal, private, friendly letter. But you are free to make public use of it if you think it necessary.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : C.W. 11340. Courtesy : Rizwan Ahmed

## 270. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

[January 17, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

Since writing to you on the 14th instant I have had reports of the interviews you gave to Shris Bh. Desai<sup>3</sup>, Munshi<sup>4</sup> and Kher<sup>5</sup>. These reports convey an impression different from the one made by a study of your speech<sup>6</sup>. If they are a correct reflection of your mind, a settlement may be more difficult than your speech has led me to believe and perhaps the time has not arrived for our meeting. But of this you shall be sole judge. I do not want to put you in a false position by your inviting me to meet you because of my letter of the 14th instant. Some-how or other I feel that when we meet we should do so to come to a final settlement. But I must not anticipate.<sup>7</sup>

From a copy : C.W. 7836. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A Welcome Move", 15-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> From the addressee's letter dated January 21

<sup>3</sup> Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Opposition Party in the Central Assembly, who was granted an interview on January 13

<sup>4</sup> For the text of the interview with K.M. Munshi on January 12, *vide* Appendix "K. M. Munshi's Interview with Lord Linlithgow", 12-1-1940.

<sup>5</sup> B. G. Kher, ex-Premier of Bombay

<sup>6</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Speech", 10-1-1940.

<sup>7</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 23-1-1940.

271. *LETTER TO DR. CHOITHRAM GIDWANI*

[Before *January 18, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi in a communication to Dr. Choithram P. Gidwani has contradicted the statement of the Secretary of the Sind Hindu Mahasabha that he (Mahatmaji) had called Mr. Virumal Begraj and Mr. Bhojraj Ajwani, President and Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, Sukkur, respectively, to Wardha to hear from them the Hindu viewpoint on the Sukkur riots. Mahatma Gandhi states that he had invited nobody from Sind to meet him.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 19-1-1940

272. *LETTER TO SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*January 18, 1940*

DEAR CAVEESHAR,

I am surprised at Gianiji so hopelessly misunderstanding me. What I said was that you never claimed to represent Sikhs in the sense that you were above sectarianism. What was said was said by way of a compliment to you. But you do not cease to be a Sikh even as I don't cease to be a Hindu because I refuse to represent those Hindus who believe untouchability to be part of Hinduism.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

273. *LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*January 18, 1940*

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. You did well in paying a visit to Bapa. This place has become a hospital. Jairamdas, Kunvarji, Kishorelal and Valjibhai are ill. They seem to be improving. Ba has not yet returned. Lakshmi is weak. Devdas was ill. Kanu will return on the 22nd. Perhaps I may have to go to Santiniketan. Nothing has been

<sup>1</sup> The report is date-lined "Bombay, January 18, 1940",



fixed yet.

*Blessings to you both from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 7122. Also C.W. 4614. Courtesy :  
Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

*274. LETTER TO ABDUL KHALIL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*January 18, 1940*

BHAI ABDUL KHALIL,

I could read your letter only today. If what you write is true, it is regrettable. I shall make inquiries.

M. K. GANDHI

BHAI ABDUL KHALIL  
C/O MUNSHI ABDUL WAHAB SAHEB  
VAIJANATH PARA  
RAIPUR (C. P.)

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 6861

*275. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

SEVAGRAM,

*January 19, 1940*

CHI. LILA,

I received your letter. I have taken so much burden upon myself that it is difficult to cope with letters from persons like you. But sitting here I am doing whatever needs to be done. Do not lose heart. What appears difficult will become easy and interesting with effort. I have no desire at all to go to Poona. Come during the holidays. Give up any other craving. Your duty is to study. We shall see about nursing, etc. Right now, the issue is the intermediate examination. Learning never goes waste.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

The rest from Mahadev's letter.

SHRILILAVATIBEHN UDESHI  
KANJI KHETSI CHHATRALAYA  
65 MINT ROAD  
BOMAY FORT

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

276. *LETTER TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN*

[Before *January 19, 1940*]<sup>2</sup>

Your opposition<sup>1</sup> is proper and you have expressed it in a language of restraint. You could not have done anything else.

*The Hindu*, 19-1-1940

277. *TELEGRAM TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA*

WARDHA,  
*January 19, 1940*

VALLABHRAM VAIDYA  
AKAS [H] ET [H] KUWANI POL [E]  
AHMEDABAD

EXAMINE SHANKERLAL BANKER AILING DYSPEPSIA AND  
REPORT. WIRE IF NECESSARY.

GANDHI

From C.W. 2912. Courtesy : Vallabhram Vaidya

278. *LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI AND FAMILY*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 19, 1940

CHI. RAMA,

I am satisfied to read your handwriting. Let us live as God wills.

CHI. NIMU,

After reading your letter I had only asked for a line from you on a postcard. You can certainly have the time every week.

CHI. SUMI,

I will say your letter is good. But you must use ink. And each letter should be like a pearl.

CHI. KANAM,

When you satisfy me with your studies as also with everything else you are sure to find sweets in your pockets.

CHI. USHA<sup>1</sup>,

Improve your handwriting. There are quite a number of patients here. Tell whoever from Valjibhai's is there not to worry about him. He is being properly looked after. And he also is cheerful. Ba is still in Delhi and will remain there for some time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRIRAMDAS GANDHI

DAKSHINAMOORTI

BHAVNAGAR, KATHIAWAR

From the Gujarati original : Nirmala Gandhi Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

279. *LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
January 19, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. Vijaya's address is : Ambla *via* Songarh, Kathiawar.

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Ramdas Gandhi

Your work will not suffer in the least if you stay here for a month. What would happen if you were bed-ridden, or if you had to go to help Father ? It will be better to come here now and improve your health than to be forced to come here after it has already broken down. If you ask Rajen Babu, he too will give you the same advice. As to your question how you should work there, the answer is simple enough. If you get even one or two women who will spin willingly and sincerely, you should labour for them as best as you can. You should also go from door to door selling as much khadi as possible. Get a few women together and form a *bhajan* party, and teach them how to read and write. Go among the poor women also and spread literacy among them. Go to the Harijan quarters and meet the women there. Thus you can widen the sphere of your work as much as you wish provided your health remains good enough. By and by other women also will join you. But the fact is that your health is not strong enough. Nor can you make adequate preparation. It appears to you that you have no work because you have not chalked out a programme.

We had a lot of rain here.

Sushila is in Delhi.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3543

## 280. LETTER TO KESHAVRAM R. TRIVEDI

*January 19, 1940*

BHAI KESHAVRAM,

I am very late in replying to your letter. You should consult Lakshmidasbhai<sup>1</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

KESHAVRAM RAMSHANKAR TRIVEDI SISODRAWALA

SHUDDHA KHADI BHANDAR

NAVASARI

B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./XXII

<sup>1</sup> Lakshmidas Purushottam Asar, an Ashram inmate and khadi expert

## 281. NOTES

### IMPERIALISM DIES HARD

As I do not read newspapers but merely glance through the headings now and then, Pyarelal collects for me cuttings from various sources. These I read when I get odd moments. I chance upon one which contains the following instructions for bowing for those who were to receive decorations at the hands of H. E. the Governor of the United Provinces on the 16th instant :

When your name is read out by the Secretary you will kindly move on to the edge of the carpet and you first bow to His Excellency.

Then advance to the centre of the carpet and bow again.

Then advance to the foot of the dais on which His Excellency will be standing and bow again.

You will then be invested by His Excellency. His Excellency will then shake hands with you. Then you should bow.

Then proceed four paces backwards and bow again.

Then turn about and proceed to your seat.

All officers, military or police. attending in head dress will salute and not bow.

N.B.—The bow should be made by bending the head forward only and should not be made from the waist.

Sir Samuel Hoare says imperialism is dead. Every Congressman knows that it is dying. These instructions show that it will die hard. I never knew that this process of humiliation still continued. Decorations themselves are a symbol of imperialism. They are a means of overawing and bribing people, a reward for so-called loyal services and sometimes for gaining the applause or the silent approbation of distinguished men and women. When these decorations are accompanied by humiliating ceremonial, they excite angry feelings and mad passions of those who come to know about them. It is to be hoped that, while a move towards real democracy is being made, those who are in charge will make it a point of removing everything that savours of superiority and the humiliating spirit.

## THE CONGRESS AND KHADI

I have letters complaining that the khadi clause<sup>1</sup> of the Congress Constitution is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. The correspondents' chief complaint is that, in selecting Congress candidates for municipalities and local boards, the Congress officials do not enforce the khadi clause. One correspondent says that the obligation to wear khadi is waived because the Congress officials do not find competent enough candidates among khadi-wearers. This would be, if the dearth of proper men can be proved, a sound reason for altering the clause, surely not for committing a deliberate breach of the Congress Constitution. A writer justifies the waiver by arguing that there is no connection between swaraj and khadi. This again may be reason for a change in the Constitution but not for disregarding it. Every Congressman is a potential civil resister. The right to civil disobedience accrues only to those who perform the duty of voluntarily obeying the laws of the State, more so the laws of their own making. Therefore congressmen are taking grave risks when they commit wilful breaches of the Constitution.

And is there no connection between swaraj and khadi ? Were the Congressmen who made themselves responsible for the khadi clause in the Constitution so dense that they did not see the fallacy which is so obvious to some critics ? I have not hesitated to say, and I make bold to repeat, that there is no swaraj for the millions, for the hungry and the naked and for the millions of illiterate women without khadi. Habitual use of khadi is a sign that the wearer identifies himself with the poorest in the land, and has patriotism and self-sacrifice enough in him to wear khadi even though it may not be so soft or elegant in appearance as foreign fineries, nor so cheap.

SEGAON, January 22, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-1-1940

## 282. THE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Though questions regarding the forthcoming Independence Day Pledge should be properly addressed to the congress Secretary and though the President alone can give authoritative answers, they are continually being addressed to me; and as I have undertaken the duty of declaring civil resistance and leading the army, should a struggle

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Constitution of the Indian National Congress-Qualifications", 28-10-1934.

become necessary, it becomes incumbent on me to answer certain questions before 26th January.

1. Let it be remembered that, if civil resistance is to be declared, it will have to be more civil and more non-violent than ever before, if only to show the warring nations of the earth that a big people like that of India can fight non-violently for regaining their freedom. Therefore I shall resolutely refuse to fight unless I have sufficient confidence that Congressmen will render implicit obedience.

2. There is as much valour in self-denial as there is in rushing into the furnace, provided that the motive is the same in either case.

3. The Independence Day is an annual feature in the Congress programme and is unconnected with civil resistance. Hence the forthcoming celebration must not be mistaken for declaration of civil resistance. Nevertheless it would serve as an index of the discipline among Congressmen and those millions who have hitherto answered the Congress call. There should on the one hand be the largest demonstration of all the previous ones we have had, and on the other it should be of a character so peaceful as to disarm all criticism and induce and enable women with babes, little children and aged people to join the demonstration. Such was the demonstration on 6th April, 1919, in Bombay.<sup>1</sup>

4. Students have asked me what they should do. I would expect them individually to take the pledge, for it means their determination to win independence for India through truthful non-violent means symbolized in the constructive programme in which the charkha is the central activity. The other items are harmony among different communities and eradication of untouchability. These do not constitute the struggle but their fulfilment is indispensable for it. If the struggle comes, the students will not strike. They will leave their schools or colleges for good. But the students will not strike on the 26th. It will be good if the authorities themselves, as they well might, close their institutions and lead their staff and students in processions and other items of the programme. The same thing applies to labour. Those who without leave absent themselves from their work will in my opinion be guilty of indiscipline and render themselves unfit for enlisting as soldiers in the satyagraha army. Non-violence is all

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech on Hindu-Muslim Friendship, Bombay", 6-4-1919.

discipline, wholly voluntary. It is clear from the foregoing that those who do not believe in and use khadi cannot take the pledge.

5. The pledge is not designed, as some fear, to eliminate strikes and no-tax campaigns. But I must at once confess that I have in my mind neither strikes nor no-tax campaigns as part of the forthcoming struggle, if it comes at all. In my opinion the present atmosphere is not conducive to non-violent strikes and non-violent no-tax campaigns on an extensive scale.

6. I expect the whole weight of the Congress organization to be devoted to popularizing khadi and clearing the existing stocks.

7. For me satyagraha is a method of self-purification. The word was first used in the A.I.C.C. resolution of 1921. The constructive programme has been designed for that purpose. Though the word has fallen into disrepute, I as the author of the programme must have the courage to repeat it. We began satyagraha with a 24 hours' fast in 1919. I propose to observe one myself on the 26th beginning in the evening of the 25th. And those who believe in its efficacy will do likewise.

8. Though I am preparing myself in the best manner I know and inviting the country to join me for a struggle for the overthrow of the imperialistic spirit and all it means, I am making a desperate effort to avoid the struggle. I believe that the best mind of England, nay, of the world, is sick of the exploitation by the strong of the less strong. I believe in the sincerity of Lord Linlithgow. In the immediate carrying out of policies it is the individuals who count. I have worked with faith and hope. And I have not lost the hope that we shall have an honourable settlement without a struggle which, no matter how-violent, must involve considerable suffering. I therefore invite all communities, all parties, including Englishmen, to join the effort.

SEGAON, January 22, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-1-1940

### 283. ASHRAM NOTES

SEGAON,

*January 22, 1940*

I had two shameful dreams yesterday and the day before. In one, I saw robbers and screamed in fright. Screaming woke me up. Amtul Salaam was pacifying me. Yesterday, I saw a scorpion near my



hand. It was running away from my hand. I called for Munnalal and woke up with a scream. Both these dreams are a matter of shame for me. My ahimsa was disgraced. I have noted that I can hurt my colleagues with my words as I have hurt Mirabehn and others too. Thirdly, this morning I was not very careful and slipped into speech. This does happen, though it ought not to. All this reveals that my *sadhana* is quite imperfect. I have therefore decided to observe silence as far as possible. I need introspection. I shall of course talk when nursing the sick or meeting officials, etc., and in connection with public work.

Everyone must observe restraint in eating. There should be a limit to the quantities of wheat, ghee, milk and vegetables that one consumes. Eight ounces of greens at a time should be deemed sufficient. All should observe silence, as far as possible, while working. Silence is obligatory at meals. It is uncivil and a form of violence to criticize while eating any badly cooked item of the food. Such criticism should be conveyed to the manager in writing after the meal. If some item is half-cooked, it should be rejected. Eating a little less would do no harm, but in no case should one get angry.

All work should be done with the utmost care. It must be informed with a feeling that all of us form one family.

From Hindi : C.W. 4674

#### 284. *LETTER TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*January 22, 1940*

MY DEAR DESHABHAKTA,

I have your letter. Your decision is correct. I think you should withdraw from all organizations and devote yourself to such service as you can render from your seat. May God keep you for many years.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 3224

## 285. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

*January 22, 1940*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

What shall I write to you ? Everybody complained that you talk too much. You should sit alone somewhere and spin. You may sit in that room only for doing library work. I have taken to prolonging my silence. It gives me joy and happiness. It is the only remedy for you. Wherever you go, you will find human nature the same. Whether we are happy or otherwise depends entirely on ourselves. Valjibhai is to be sent tomorrow to get his teeth extracted. Will you accompany him ? It may take about a week. Do see today's Ashram Note.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8554. Also C.W. 7071. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

## 286. NOTE TO PYARELAL

*January 22, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL

Look into the mystery concerning the khadi article. How was it left out? And how did it appear on your cushion today? See my note in the Ashram note-book. Lately I have been mostly observing silence.

Did you send the letter to Gajanan?

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushil Nayyar

## 287. AHIMSA IN PRACTICE

Thus writes Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia<sup>1</sup> :

Does the Independence Pledge necessitate belief in a social order for free India which will be based exclusively on the charkha and the present constructive programme ? I personally feel that it does not. The pledge is inclusive of the charkha and village crafts, but it is not exclusive of other industries and economic activities. Among these industries may be mentioned those of electricity, ship-building, machine-making and the like. The question of emphasis still remains. The pledge decides it only to the extent that belief in the charkha and village crafts as an integral part of the future social order is essential and cannot be superseded by other belief.

Does the pledge immediately necessitate abandonment of every other action except such as is based on the present constructive programme ? I personally feel that it does not. Agitation against land rents, taxes, interest and other economic obstructions to the advance of our people appears to be permissible. It is not, for instance, impossible that you should yourself decide upon a no-rent and no-tax campaign when you choose to start satyagraha. Whether you actually do so or not is not so important from the viewpoint of the pledge as the fact that you may do it. At any rate, agitation on economic lines is today permissible.

These two questions arise in so far as the negative aspect of the pledge is concerned. A third question arises in regard to its positive aspect. It is undoubtedly necessary that anyone who takes the pledge must be ready to express his positive faith in the principle of decentralized economy. The actual forms of this faith may, however, be decided by the march of history. Only in regard to the charkha it should be possible for anyone who takes the pledge to believe that the complete decentralization of the textile industry is possible and that it should be attempted.

I have not at all referred to irregularities of conduct due to indolence and similar causes; that happens in regard to all pledges and faiths. Only the wish must be there to remove these irregularities.

I do not know if this interpretation of the pledge is correct and can meet with your approval. I do not also know if my socialist comrades will approve

<sup>1</sup> (1910-1967); joined the Congress Socialist Party in 1934; Secretary, foreign department of the A.I.C.C., 1936-38; General Secretary, Praja Socialist Party, 1953-54; author of *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* and other works

of it. It might perhaps be worth while for the country to know soon your opinion. Perhaps it is already too late for the Independence Day.

I need hardly repeat, what I have said often, that the legal and authoritative interpretation of the pledge can only come from the Working Committee. My interpretation has as much authority as my questioners choose to give it.

On the whole I can say that I have no difficulty in accepting Dr. Lohia's interpretation.

Whatever the ultimate outcome of the Congress effort, the discussion that is going on over the pledge provides healthy political education for the public and crystallizes the opinions that rule the various schools of thought in the country.

Though I am in general agreement with Dr. Lohia, it will be well for me to give the interpretation in my own language. The pledge is not exhaustive. It represents the limit to which I could carry the Working Committee with me. If I can convert the country to my point of view, the social order of the future will be based predominantly on the charkha and all it implies. It will include everything that promotes the well-being of the villagers. It will not exclude the industries mentioned by my correspondent so long as they do not smother the villages and village life. I do visualize electricity, ship-building, ironworks, machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reversed. Hitherto the industrialization has been so planned as to destroy the villages and village crafts. In the State of the future it will subserve the villages and their crafts. I do not share the socialist belief that centralization of the necessaries of life will conduce to the common welfare when the centralized industries are planned and owned by the State. The socialistic conception of the West was born in an environment reeking with violence. The motive lying behind the Western type and the Eastern is the same—the greatest welfare of the whole society and the abolition of the hideous inequalities resulting in the existence of millions of have-nots and a handful of haves. I believe that this end can be achieved only when non-violence is accepted by the best mind of the world as the basis on which a just social order is to be constructed. I hold that the coming into power of the proletariat through violence is bound to fail in the end. What is gained by violence must be lost before superior violence. India is within an ace of achieving the end, if only Congressmen will be true to

their creed of non-violence and live up to it. The working of the constructive programme is the test. Those who play upon the passions of the masses injure them and the country's cause. That they have noble motives is irrelevant. Why will not Congressmen work out the programme fully and faithfully ? It will be time to consider other programmes when we have come into our own. But like the fabled men who quarrelled over the division of the buffalo before it was bought, we argue and quarrel over our different programmes before swaraj has come. Decency requires that when a programme is approved by the majority all should carry it out faithfully.

Most decidedly, the pledge does not necessitate the abandonment of the other items that have hitherto adorned the Congress programme and are adverted to by Dr. Lohia. Agitation against every form of injustice is the breath of political life. My contention is that, divorced from the constructive programme, it is bound to have the tinge of violence.

Let me illustrate my point. My experiments in ahimsa have taught me that non-violence in practice means common labour with the body. A Russian philosopher, Bondoref, has called it bread labour. It means closest co-operation. The first satyagrahis of South Africa laboured for the common good and the common purse and felt free like birds. They included Hindus, Muslims (Shias and Sunnis), Christians (Protestants and Roman Catholics), Parsis, and Jews. They included the English and the Germans. By profession they were lawyers and architects, engineers, electricians, printers and traders. Practice of truth and non-violence melted religious differences, and we learnt to see beauty in each religion. I do not remember a single religious quarrel in the two colonies<sup>1</sup> I founded in South Africa. The common labour consisted of printing, carpentry, shoe-making, gardening, house-building, and the like. Labour was no drudgery, it was a joy. The evenings were devoted to literary pursuits. These men, women and boys were the vanguard of the satyagraha army. I could not wish for braver or more loyal comrades. In India the South African experience was continued and, I trust, improved upon. Labour in Ahmedabad is by common consent the best organized in India. If it continues to work along the lines on which it began, it will ultimately own the mills in common with the present holders. If that is not the natural outcome, its non-violence will be found to contain flaws. The

<sup>1</sup> Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm

peasants of Bardoli who gave Vallabhbhai the title of ‘Sardar’ and won their battle<sup>3</sup> and of Borsad<sup>1</sup> and Kheda<sup>2</sup> who did likewise, have for years been working the constructive programme. They have not deteriorated as satyagrahis by working it. I am quite certain that Ahmedabad labour and the peasantry of Bardoli and Kheda will give as good an account of themselves as any other in India if there is civil resistance.

Thirty-four years of continuous experience and experimenting in truth and non-violence have convinced me that non-violence cannot be sustained unless it is linked to conscious body-labour and finds expression in our daily contact with our neighbours. This is the constructive programme. It is not an end, it is an indispensable means and therefore is almost convertible with the end. The power of non-violent resistance can only come from honest working of the constructive programme.

SEGAON, January 23, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-1-1940

### 288. *UNITY v. JUSTICE*

A visitor came the other day and said, “You have done an irreparable injury to India by saying that there is no swaraj without communal unity. You should say instead that there is no swaraj without justice between and to the different communities.” I reasoned with my visitor but he would not be consoled. He said, “You have offered to sell your soul to win the favour of your Muslim friends.” I protested and said, “Surely you know, the world knows, that I would not sell my soul to buy India’s freedom. And if I want Muslim friendship, it is not for personal gratification but for India’s sake. You are unjust to me.” My visitor retorted with some passion, “I know your love for the country. If I had not known it, I would not have come to you specially. But your love has blinded you to the mistake you have made and are making. You do not know what Hindus say and do. For fear of offending Muslims, they suffer because they believe in you. I do beseech you to replace ‘unity’ with ‘justice’.” It was no use my arguing with my friend. And I had no time. I promised to deal with the question in these columns. The promise soothed him.

<sup>1</sup> In 1923; *vide* “Gujarat’s Efforts”, 6-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> In 1918.

I do not know that my answer will.

My belief is unshaken that without communal unity swaraj cannot be attained through non-violence. But unity cannot be reached without justice between communities. Muslim or any other friendship cannot be bought with bribery. Bribery would itself mean cowardice and therefore violence. But if I give more than his due to my brother,

I do not bribe him nor do I do any injustice. I can disarm suspicion only by being generous.

Justice without generosity may easily become Shylock's justice.

I must, however, take care that the generosity is not done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done.

I cannot, therefore, drop the idea of unity or the effort for it. But what is wanted is not so much justice as right action. Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's reply to me, as published in the Press, however, dashes to the ground all hope of unity if he represents the Muslim mind. His repudiation of the natural meaning I put upon his action in making common cause with the different political groups<sup>1</sup> has created a unique situation. His picture of India as a continent containing nations counted according to their religions, if it is realized, would undo the effort the Congress had been making for over half a century. But I hope that Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's opinion is a temporary phase in the history of the Muslim League. Muslims of the different provinces can never cut themselves away from their Hindu or Christian brethren. Both Muslims and Christians are converts from Hinduism or are descendants of converts. They do not cease to belong to their provinces because of change of faith. Englishmen who become converts to Islam do not change their nationality. I hope Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah does not represent the considered opinion even of his colleagues.

SEGAON, January 23, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-1-1940

### 289. TO GUJARATIS

I do not forget even for a day that I should address at least something to you through *Harijanbandhu*. Although a lover of the language, I could never cultivate my love fully. I had entertained very

<sup>1</sup> Vide "A Welcome Move", 15-1-1940.

high hopes. Swami Anand would have had me express my views solely in my mother tongue if he could have his way. But neither he nor I could do anything. I had hoped to write equally for both the journals. But man proposes, God disposes. I will not admit that my love for my mother tongue was any the less. I have been silently thinking that the Lord wanted me to do something else. This is only a preface to what I have to say.

I had undertaken to stay at least for one month in Gujarat. I would love to fulfil Sardar's desire. But I wavered when the responsibility of planning for the struggle devolved on me. I wanted the solitude of Segaon. It is my experience that I get real inspiration at the place where I am permanently settled. Normally, however, wherever I stay I have formed a habit of making it my home. However, after the introduction or discovery of satyagraha, I have established ashrams at various places and I practise its disciplines there. I hesitate to call Segaon an ashram. I wanted to lead a solitary life at Segaon. But it has become an ashram without any rules and regulations. New buildings are springing up every day. I have made it into a hospital these days. I have humorously called Segaon a home for invalids. I am already an invalid in body and mind and I have collected quite a few invalids like myself. I have also compared Segaon to a mad-house. This too is an apt simile. The statement that swaraj can be achieved through the spinning-wheel can come only from the mouth of a madman ! But madmen are not aware of their madness and so I look upon myself as a wise man.

Had I gone there, you would have heard me talk only of the spinning-wheel and village industries. But do you still need to be told about all this ? And even if you do, Sardar is already there. Isn't he ? I would consider it his failing if you need my presence when he is among you. So had I come, I would have come for the pleasure of it. You know very well that I like to be with you. But this is the time neither for pleasure nor for doing what we like. It is the duty of all of us to do God's work by staying wherever He casts us. You should, therefore, rest assured that I have remained here solely as a matter of dharma and refrained from going there, again as a matter of dharma.

But remember that though I am away, I entertain very high hopes of you. Some of you might remember what I had said in 1916, namely, I would venture to launch satyagraha on the strength of Gujarat alone and win swaraj. Today I can repeat the statement with



greater force.

I am an optimist. I would build high hopes of a satisfactory settlement only when I am confident of our preparedness for the struggle. He whose base is not sound has nothing to stand on. What can such a person hope for except 'a flower in the sky' ?<sup>1</sup> I have built the castle of my hopes on the foundation of the dumb India, more particularly on Gujarat. But ultimately—?

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

SEGAON, January 23, 1940  
[From Gujarati]  
*Harijanbandhu*, 28-1-1940

### 290. SARDAR PRITHVI SINGH<sup>2</sup>

Sardar Prithvi Singh has eschewed violence and taken to ahimsa; but he says it is a new experience for him. He is making efforts like Bhagirath<sup>3</sup> to pass the test. The future alone can reveal what the outcome will be. A field for his experiments had to be chosen. During his underground days he worked to spread physical culture activities. Exercise may be either for violence or for non-violence. Ahimsa cannot grow to its full stature in an emaciated body. A vigorous body is essential for the expression of pure ahimsa. Up to a point the same kind of exercise can be useful for both types of body but finally a distinction has to be made. It is Sardar Prithvi Singh's job to explain how to do it. He proposes to start with Gujarat. I wish him success in his efforts.

SEGAON, January 23, 1940  
[From Gujarati]  
*Harijanbandhu*, 28-1-1940

<sup>1</sup> A metaphor for 'an absolute impossibility'.

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under "My Notes".

<sup>3</sup> A mythological hero who succeeded in bringing the Ganga down to the earth.

291. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 23, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I thank you for your two cordial letters<sup>4</sup> the last having just come in. I heartily endorse the sentiment I read in your letter that even if we fail to reach an agreement during the forthcoming talks, we must try again.

I can reach Delhi any day after the 4th February. I must leave Delhi on 11th at the latest to attend a meeting of the Hari- jan Sevak Sangh in Segaoon. I would appreciate a telegraphic reply, if you can conveniently send it.<sup>1</sup>

*I am,*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : C.W. 7838. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

292. LETTER TO GLADYS OWEN

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 23, 1940

MY DEAR GLADYS,

Your delightful letter. Your fault that you came only to hurry away. But I understand. You will keep me informed of your progress. Keep well and you will do well.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 6196

<sup>1</sup> The addressee replied : "We meet at 11 a.m. on Monday 5th February, or Tuesday 6th February, as may be more convenient."

293. LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRAN

SEVAGRAM,  
January 23, 1940

DEAR RAMACHANDRAN,

Yours to hand. Don't think that I am neglecting Travancore. He<sup>1</sup> was due to come here today. Now he says he will come a little latter. I don't want to say anything in *Harijan* for the time being.<sup>2</sup>

As to funds, I must harden my heart. What shall I do ? You must lose in the end if you have to beg for funds. I can beg but I should be harming your cause if I did. Don't use me for raising funds for the struggle. There is something wrong somewhere if the struggle collapses for want of funds.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

294. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

January 23, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I was brief in order to save time. Try again. Don't lose heart. I know that there is a lot of [suppressed] anger in A.S. All of us are imperfect and should, therefore, bear with one another. My own smallness has been exposed by my dreams.<sup>3</sup> But just as all of you tolerate me as I am, so also should you tolerate one another. Otherwise all of us will be put to shame.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8553. Also C.W. 7073. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> The reference is presumably to C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan of Travancore State.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar", 28-3-1940.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Ashram Notes", 22-1-1940.

## 295. ASHRAM NOTES

January 24, 1940

I shall undertake a 24 hour fast from tomorrow evening in honour of Independence Day. No one is bound to undertake it on this account. I am only passing on the information. Whoever wishes may undertake a fast. The sick must not.

I have talked to Sushilabehn about the quantities of milk. She will speak to those who do not need more than 1.5 lb of milk. The fact is, no one normally needs more than 1.5 lb. Since we are living on public funds and have taken a vow of austerity, we should take nothing more than we need.

Whatever I write these days may not be taken as orders. Only that should be considered right which one does in agreement with one's own reasoning. Independence Day can only be a day of self purification for us. Self-purification naturally includes discrimination, temperance, restraint, etc. A programme may be chalked out for the 26th. We should find out whether or no the villagers in Segaoon intend doing something. Sukhabhau<sup>1</sup> may be consulted.

BAPU

From Hindi : C.W. 4674

## 296. LETTER TO DR. N. B. KHARE

January 24, 1940

DEAR DR. KHARE<sup>2</sup>,

I was very glad to see your handwriting again. We may differ in our political opinions, but you are still the keeper of my body.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

*My Political Memoirs or Autobiography, p. 256*

<sup>1</sup> Sukhabhau Choudhary, a co-worker who lived in Segaoon village.

<sup>2</sup> Ex-Premier of Central Provinces who was expelled from the Congress in

## 297. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 24, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

This morning's exhibition was unforgettable. But all's well that ends well. I can best describe myself as a parent who exacts complete obedience. I may distrust all or many of my children. I may give erroneous judgments. But they may not distrust me. They may not doubt the correctness of my judgments. They should be incapable of seeing my faults. That others see them is a matter of no moment. Such surrender is almost impossible. But it must be possible for those who adopt me as their parent, both mother and father, as you have done. I have been the recipient of such obedience and faith. You can't give it mechanically but I can do nothing of you or with you unless you have the required faith.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

I am not exacting if naturally you have the faith. Such faith is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

From the original : C.W. 3665. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6474

## 298. NOTE TO KANU GANDHI

January 24, 1940

CHI. KANAIYO,

Start giving Valjibhai a massage from today at 9 or 9.30. The massage should be given gently to the whole body. As to the degree of force ask him. Pay more attention to the abdomen, apart from the chest and the back. Measure his chest. Teach him *pranayama* as also the practice of. . . .<sup>1</sup> His chest must expand.

BAPU

[PS.]

To be delivered now to Kanu . Gandhi.<sup>2</sup>

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II

<sup>1</sup> Illegible

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently meant for the courier.

### 299. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

[On or after *January 24, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

You need not go on rubbing in ghee for hours. I don't need it. If you are acquiring *punya*<sup>2</sup> thereby, it is another matter.

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4562

### 300. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>3</sup>

SEGAON,

*January 25, 1940*

I have a telegram from Lahore saying that uncertified khadi and flags are selling briskly on the eve of the Independence Day. It is likely that such undesirable transactions may take place in other places also. I must warn Congressmen against buying or selling such khadi and flags. In my opinion it would be contrary to the pledge.

Uncertified khadi means deprivation of the spinner's rightful wage and general injury to khadi work. That khadi and [those] articles made of khadi are certified which are sold by dealers certified by the All-India Spinners' Association.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 26-1-1940, and *Harijan*, 3-2-1940

### 301. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,

*January 25, 1940*

CHI. AMRIT,

Your letter was duly read and destroyed. I hope you got my letter of yesterday. I cannot accept your position. It is contradictory. Of course it is for you to surrender partly or wholly. It is not a mechanical act. So long as your mind does not endorse what I say or do, if only for the sake of honesty, you must at least warn me. My point is that full surrender excludes possibility of mind doubting the

<sup>1</sup> This was written on an envelope bearing a postmark of this date.

<sup>2</sup> Spiritual merit

<sup>3</sup> In *Harijan*, this appeared under the title "Uncertified Khadi".

correctness of the parent's judgment. But why argue about such things ? They are beyond argument.

I have your cheerful wire.

I have the appointment I reach Delhi on 5th February.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Mahadev looks after your post.

From the original : C.W. 3959. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7268

### 302. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,

January 25, 1940

MY DEAR C.R.,

The above is a translation of the letter received from J<sup>1</sup>. Shanker-lal feels keenly in the matter. Nevertheless so far as I am concerned yours should be final word. The Viceroy has fix [ed] 5th, 10 a.m., for the meeting. There is talk of having the Sangh<sup>2</sup> meeting in Delhi earlier than 13th for the sake of . . .<sup>3</sup> elections. I shall wire from Delhi if I want you.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : C.W. 10885. Courtesy : C. R. Narasimhan

<sup>1</sup> Shrikrishnadas Jaju. Seeking Gandhiji's advice on behalf of Shankerlal Banker, he had written "against retention of Aiyamuthu's services in his present capacity" because he was "not fit to be entrusted with such a responsibility". He had added : "Rajaji's view, of course, ought to receive due weight. But in this case it does not appeal to me. Shri Banker also fears that khadi work in Tamil Nad will suffer by his removal. But I do not think that in a matter like this we can afford to be ruled by our timidity. We ought to face up to any difficulty that might arise. It is quite possible that there will be some difficulty in finding a suitable substitute. But it must be done."

<sup>2</sup> Harijan Sevak Sangh

<sup>3</sup> Illegible

303. *LETTER TO MRS. K. L. RALLIA RAM*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*January 25, 1940*

DEAR SISTER,

You have misread my note<sup>4</sup> I have not invited converts to return to the original fold. But I would not prevent them from doing so and would even rejoice, if they were not converted but coerced. Moreover, India of the future would be what you and I can make it. No single individual will alone count however great he may be.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRIMATI K. L. RALLIA RAM  
6 GOULDING ROAD  
LAHORE  
PUNJAB

Gandhiji's papers received from outside Agencies, File No. 75. Courtesy : National Archives of India. Also G.N. 6834

304. *NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

*January 25, 1940*

It is not necessary to change the diet. No one can take more than 40 *tolas* of greens.

Don't devote more than 20 minutes to massage. You should rest, read or spin during the rest of the time. An hour-long inunction can only do harm and no good.

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4334

305. *LETTER TO ABDUL KHALIL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*January 25, 1940*

BHAI ABDUL KHALIL,

I have your letter. It seems your complaint is justified. I am making inquiries. One wrong should not be answered with another.



Nothing will come in the way of the Friday *namaz*<sup>1</sup>. The rest of the matter pertains to a judicial decision; does it not ?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 6862

### 306. *LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA*

*January 26, 1940*

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

I have sent a note of acknowledgement to R. B. Jesudasan. You will be glad to know that the first parcel was found in the dispensary safely put away.<sup>2</sup> Sushila was not in Segaoon when it was received and so I must have given it to the compounder. I could not have read the advertisement note, etc. However, all's well that ends well.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 3587

### 307. *NOTE TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ*

*[January 26, 1940]*<sup>3</sup>

I don't wish to write about Jaipur just now. According to me my coming visit to Delhi is a very important one. It is best, therefore, that I should say nothing just now. In Delhi, of course, I will discuss the matter. We are in no hurry. You should go only after completing your treatment.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3009

### 308. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*Independence Day, [January 26, 1940]*<sup>4</sup>

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

What makes you say that you cannot even talk with me ? The

<sup>1</sup> Muslim Prayer

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, 14-1-1940.

<sup>3</sup> From *Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 226

<sup>4</sup> Year inferred from the subject-matter

fact is that you never feel the need for talking with me. That has been your habit from the beginning.

It is best that you should not come to Delhi at present. I reach there on the 5th. If there is anything worth while I will send you a wire and will also send for others. This is my view. But if you feel strongly that you should come, do certainly come. Even if you do not come [now] keep yourself ready to start.

I will write to Narandas (Gandhi) about Vajubhai<sup>1</sup>. I had written to Jamnadas (Gandhi) but there is no reply.

Virawala<sup>2</sup> has passed away. Let us see who succeeds him. Everything seems to be peculiar in Mysore.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL  
68 MARINE DRIVE, BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 237-8*

### 309. MESSAGE TO ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE<sup>3</sup>

[Before January 27, 1940]<sup>4</sup>

I have already pointed out the royal road to swaraj to my sisters where they can go ahead of their brothers. By traversing this road, they can achieve fulfilment.

*The Hindu, 28-1-1940*

### 310. NOTES

#### CURIOUS DISCIPLINE

The manifesto of the Kerala socialists, one of whom is the General Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, is a

<sup>1</sup> Vajubhai Shukla; *vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 27-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Dewan of Rajkot

<sup>3</sup> The Conference was held at Allahabad from January 27 to 31 under the presidentship of Begum Hamid Ali.

<sup>4</sup> The Conference was held at Allahabad from January 27 to 31 under the presidentship of Begum Hamid Ali.

curious specimen of 'discipline'. Here are the choicest sentences from it :

The charkha cult is part of the policy of the Congress leadership, which consists in postponing the fight as long as possible, in keeping out all leftist forces when fight becomes inevitable, and in compromise.

The signatories to the statement do not believe in the cult of the charkha. But still they appeal, in the name of discipline, to all people in Kerala to take the new pledge.

Soldiers who criticize their Generals as the Kerala patrons of the Congress have done would be considered guilty of treason, for they would, if they could, bring their Generals into contempt with the soldiery. It would be more dignified and certainly braver on the part of these gentlemen to secede from the Congress and convert the country to their method than to remain in it although they have no faith in its programme. They are postponing the day of deliverance who are undermining the influence of the only fighting organization in the country by belittling its programme and its leaders.

#### DISTURBING NEWS

The news from South Africa is disturbing. Dr. Malan<sup>1</sup> is on the war-path. He will enforce segregation by law. He will prohibit legal unions between the Whites and Asiatics. He will tolerate the Indians' presence only as hewers of wood and drawers of water, never as human beings, having equal opportunities and rights with the Whites. Here in India, which is daily growing in consciousness of her self-respect and her right to be regarded as a free nation, this racial bar is resented. India's independence is coming sooner than many people think. So far as I can see nothing can stop her march to her natural destiny. I myself envisage alliance with Great Britain and the Dominions, if the freedom is to come as a result of an honourable understanding between the two countries. But if the statesmen of South Africa continue the attitude of race superiority, alliance between unequals would become an impossibility. I look upon this war as a divine judgment. The whole world is directly or indirectly affected by it. Every nation subordinate or free has to make its choice. Personal wishes of the present actors are likely to be confounded. I would urge Dr. Malan and those South Africans who think with him to take a long view of things. He is of course on the right track if he thinks, as many

<sup>1</sup> Leader of the Nationalists in the South African Union Assembly

Africans do, that God has created the White man to be lord and master of the coloured man. I hope that Dr. Malan is not one of them. Anyway I hope general Smuts will resist the pressure that is being put upon him to adopt the reactionary legislation suggested by Dr. Malan.

SEGAON, January 27, 1940

*Harijan*, 3-2-1940

### 311. A TELEGRAM

WARDHAGANJ,  
*January 27, 1940*

EITHER HARIJAN SEVAK MEETING HERE AS  
ANNOUNCED OR THERE FROM SIXTH. DON'T EXPECT  
ME THERE AFTER MY SPECIAL WORK FINISHED  
OR CHOOSE DATE AFTER MALIKANDA<sup>1</sup> AT WARDHA.

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 7840. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

### 312. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*January 27, 1940*

MY DEAR MALKANI,

Sindh tragedy has cut me to the quick. Write out something in the form of an appeal and I shall see what can be done. My remedy<sup>2</sup> is true.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 938

<sup>1</sup> Where the Gandhi Seva Sangh was to meet from February 20

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Sindh Tragedy", 1-1-1940.

### 313. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 27, 1940

CHI. NARANDAS,

Your work must be progressing well. Kanaiyo is engrossed in his work.

Herewith a letter from Chhaganlal. I should like you to get the matter clarified with him.

What is the difficulty about the account <sup>1</sup> ? Your accounts are always clear. Has not an abstract been published ? Give him the money received through him, as he writes; for instance the money received from Shantilal and others.

I see that the antipathy between you two persists. It may be better in such circumstances that you two should not work with each other.

Sardar thinks that your engaging Vajubhai in the work there shows that the latter's cleverness has succeeded. I too did not like it. He doesn't seem to me a clean man. Sardar believes that he wants to exploit your name for his gain.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8570. Courtesy : Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> Of Gandhiji's birthday fund; *vide* the following item.

314. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

SEGAON WARDHA,  
January 27, 1940

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. Workers who are attached to institutions should take the pledge after obtaining the permission of the head of the respective institutions. According to me, there is no harm in taking the pledge.

About the fund in connection with my birthday celebrations, my view is that you should respect Narandas's decision. The contributions collected by you for special purposes should be returned to you—for instance, the money received from Shantilal. I have written to Narandas accordingly.

I have no doubt that the accounts of the birthday fund should be published. I have said that also in my letter to Narandas.

I see that there isn't complete accord between you two even now. Differences of opinion seem to persist. That being so, it seems best that you should not be associated with each other in the same work. Such things often happen. Wasn't this true of Kakasaheb and Maganlal<sup>1</sup> also ?

I took care not to let them come into conflict with each other, but whenever there was a conflict it always led to bitterness.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Anand wrote to me again. I have given him an appropriate reply.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 5548

<sup>1</sup> Maganlal Gandhi

### 315. A NOTE

January 27, 1940

You may speak about the car in connection with Barot.

The simplest way seems to be to send for a car today for Rami. Balvantsinha or somebody else may accompany her to the station. I believe she will be going *via* Bombay.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 4568

### 316. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA

January 27, 1940

BHAI PRABHAKAR,

Your questions are such as would take me long to answer. Some time when you come here you may raise them. Meanwhile keep reading *Harijan*. That may incidentally provide you all the answers.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original : C.W. 10250. Courtesy : Bharat Kala Bhavan

### 317. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

January 27, 1940

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I do not wish to take you to the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference this time. Let us not worry over the cows in Bengal. I shall speak to Krishnachandra. But a seeker after knowledge may have to indulge in flattery [now and then]. When you become a mahatma like me, your teachers will try to flatter you. In the mean time remember these words of the *Gita* : “Learn it through humble homage and service and by repeated questioning.”<sup>1</sup> Only mahatmas can perhaps be exceptions to the *Gita* rules. However, the amount of flattery that I have to practise, I alone can know.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 1945

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, IV. 34

### 318. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

January 27, 1940

Sushila says she said just the opposite. If a patient needs rubbing of his soles for inducing sleep it may be continued for hours; not so in other cases. You do not need it at all. To do something unnecessary is spiritually harmful. Twenty minutes is therefore enough.

Meals should not take more than two hours in all.

You should teach Keshu in a quiet place. Give up some work to be able to spare time for Balvantsinha if necessary. . . .<sup>1</sup> arrival should save some of your time.

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4335

### 319. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

January 27, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Read the enclosed<sup>2</sup>. Can't you save some time for Balvantsinha ?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4336

### 320. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

January 27, 1940

DEAR DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

I was very happy to get your postcard informing me that the worry which was consuming Mother is being removed. How shall I explain ? I was very unhappy that Mother was so much tormented. Her blood-pressure is still high. Yes, Jamnalalji recounted all the stories of your heroism. He was here for two days. Even otherwise he used to write from Poona how you had become a cuckoo<sup>3</sup> to him. I can hear your voice from here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : S.N. 9677

<sup>1</sup> Illegible

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>3</sup> The addressee used to compose and sing *bhajans*.



### 321. FOURFOLD RUIN

Mr. F. E. James<sup>1</sup> is reported to have said as follows in a recent speech delivered by him at Madras :

Mr. James then referred to the Independence Pledge prescribed by the Congress and said that he did not like the following sentence in the pledge :

‘The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself upon the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually.’

“Now I have got many friends in the Congress ranks, and I do feel that I have a right to protest against a statement which to my mind is not really necessary for the pledge itself. It is a provocative statement and I very much doubt whether it is true in any case. You can’t prove it any more than I can disprove it.” The speaker emphasized that it was not just to put all the debits on one side. He was sure that those of his Congress friends who were free from hatred and prejudice could not repeat it without some mental reservation. If they were asked to repeat that statement, it might lead to a great deal of bitterness, hatred and misunderstanding. “I do feel,” he further pointed out, “that in this particular statement in the Independence Pledge there is to be found a contradiction between Gandhiji’s doctrine of non-violence and the particular violence of the statement.”

Mr. James is not alone in his condemnation of the part of the pledge quoted by him. *The Statesman* has called the paragraph “an abominable falsehood”. It should be remembered that this part was in the original and has stood without challenge all these ten years. That of course is no reason for not criticizing it today if the criticism is well-informed and sound. Prof. V. G. Desai recently showed in these columns<sup>2</sup> how unsound the criticism was. I revert to the subject because Mr. James sees a contradiction between my “doctrine of non-violence and the particular violence of the statement”. I presume that the statement will not be considered violent if it is believed by the maker. For non-violence does not consist in hiding the truth from oneself or the world; it consists in non-violent conduct towards the wrong-doer in spite of the most vivid knowledge of his misdeeds. My inculcation of non-violence has been effective because I have used

<sup>1</sup> Of the European group in the Central Legislative Assembly

<sup>2</sup> Under the title “A Tissue of ‘Foul and Abominable Lies’ ”, in *Harijan*, 6-1-1940

almost the same adjectives as the school of violence has in describing the effects of British Rule, and showed the most effective remedy for undoing them. There is no merit in loving those who do you no ill, merit lies in being loving or being non-violent towards those who ill-use you. When I described modern civilization symbolized in imperialism as godless in *Hind Swaraj* I know that I had nothing but goodwill towards those who represented it.

And is it not a fact staring one in the face that “the British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself upon the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually” ? A. O. Hume, Digby<sup>1</sup>, Dadabhai<sup>2</sup>, Wedderburn<sup>3</sup> and a host of other known and sober writers have taught the millions that the existing system of Government has drained the country of its wealth and reduced the peasantry to pauperism. Political subjection is patent. Cultural and spiritual conquest has at no time in India’s history been so complete as during the British Rule. It is none the less galling or degrading because there has been a voluntary surrender. A victim’s conquest is complete when he hugs the chains that bind him and begins to imitate the manners and customs of his captor. Our household was turned upside down when my father had to attend the Durbar during a Governor’s visit. He never wore stockings or boots or what were then called “whole boots”. His general foot-wear was soft leather slippers. If I was a painter, I could paint my father’s disgust and torture on his face as he was putting his legs into his stocking and feet into ill-fitting and uncomfortable boots. He had to do this! I happened to be in Calcutta when Lord Curzon was holding his levee. I was staying in the India Club. The toilet of the Rajas and Maharajas who were staying there was a study. They looked like second editions of *khansamas*<sup>4</sup>. Their ordinary dress was simple dhoti with the inimitable Bengali folds which only the Bengali wearers can produce and spotlessly white kurta and a thin shawl carelessly but gracefully flung round the body. But this was considered indecent dress for the levee of the Crown Representative. The big zamindars and the Princes must appear properly bedecked and jewelled. And what about the

<sup>1</sup> William Digby, Congress Agent in England

<sup>2</sup> Dadabhoj Naoroji

<sup>3</sup> Sir William Wedderburn, Congress President, 1889

<sup>4</sup> Chef-cum-waiter

latest circular reproduced in these columns<sup>1</sup> prescribing repeated bowings at an investiture ceremony in the U.P. ? Is not this cultural and spiritual degradation ? Mr. James says : “You cannot prove it any more than I can disprove it.” The last half is as true as the first half of the sentence is untrue. I have given only casual illustrations of the cultural conquest. The tragedy is much deeper than I have depicted. Should Englishmen take pride in the fact that many educated Indians cannot express them- selves sufficiently in their own mother tongues, and that they have to transmit their inmost thoughts to their dear ones in the English langu- age? I ask them to realize with me the enormity of the ruination of cul- ture that this fact means. Many educated Indians have become *sahebbls* in their own land, and there is no living contact between them and the masses. Thanks to the Congress, things are better, but they are only just better. It is highly likely that the unnatural method of education has kept India from reaching her goal as nothing else has. Educated India has been disabled from reaching the masses. There are signs that Englishmen have begun to believe that India should come to her own. But their conversion will not be complete if they do not realize the truth of the fourfold ruination of India. If they are proud of the conquest of India and all it has meant, the gulf that divides them from us remains. Real understanding of the heart between them and us will not come by hiding facts. That understanding means a voluntary abdication by Britain of the fourfold conquest of India. Without that India cannot make to the world peace the special contribution for which she is specially fitted<sup>2</sup>

SEGAON, January 28, 1940

*Harijan*, 3-2-1940

### 322. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

January 28, 1940

CHI. KANAIYO,

The bicycle incident yesterday was not a happy one. A carpenter will always keep his tools ready for use. A typist will keep

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Notes” sub-title “Imperialism Dies Hard” , 22-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> F. E. James’s rejoinder to this appeared in *Harijan*, 9-3-1940, under the title “Unconvincing Apologia”.

his typewriter in good repair and a rider will keep his horse in good stead. Similarly a bicycle should always be kept clean, oiled and ready for use. Otherwise don't have a bicycle at all. I cannot tolerate an accident caused by carelessness on your part. Such things are included in ahimsa.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II

### 323. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

[Before January 29, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. PREMA,

Your letter was full of news. I gave it to the Congress President<sup>2</sup> and Kishorelal to read. It has made both of them think seriously<sup>3</sup>. Prabha's health cannot be said to be good. She has come here. She does not have the same enthusiasm as before. She came only last night. I have had no talk with her yet. I can order her to go back today, but I am sure you would not want it.<sup>4</sup> Let her stay here for some time. I will think of the future after she has calmed down and her health has improved.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 10403. Also C.W. 6842. Courtesy : Premabehn Kantak

### 324. QUESTION BOX

In spite of my weekly warning<sup>5</sup>, correspondence continues to be almost as heavy as before. I have no time to go through it all. Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> From the addressee's introductory note to this letter in *Bapuna Patro -5 : Premabehn Kantakne*, . 271; vide also letter to the addressee "Letter to Premabehn Kantak", 29-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Rajendra Prasad

<sup>3</sup> The addressee had written about the involvement of a number of Congress and Gandhi Seva workers in the Bihar Forward Bloc. Kishorelal Mashruwala was the President of the Sangh.

<sup>4</sup> The addressee wanted Prabhavati Devi to lead the proposed women volunteers' corps in Bihar.

<sup>5</sup> Vide "To Correspondents and Message-Seekers", 15-1-1940.

puts before me those letters which he thinks I must see. I have therefore suggested to him that he should prepare from the mass of correspondence questions which he may consider to be of general importance and I should deal with them from week to week. I hope that the correspondents and the readers will appreciate the effort.

#### CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Q. Your Constituent Assembly will be elected by a vast majority of illiterate and ignorant voters who would vote for one side or another because that side is led by persons who cry slogans palatable to them. In such circumstances would not the decision of the Assembly be a farce, a tyranny of numbers ? Why cannot you settle by a discussion in the Press, or on the platform or in a private conference ?

A. There is risk always in every big experiment, but in my opinion it is the least in the proposed method. Underlying the proposal is the faith that the majority of candidates will be enlightened and selfless workers. In that case the elections will be concentrated political education on a stupendous scale. There is no question of tyranny of numbers. There is undoubtedly the risk of ignorant voters being betrayed into a wrong choice. Nevertheless the decision will be the verdict of the people. Discussion in the Press and on the platform cannot replace the elective method. The decision of a private conference will represent only those who compose it. What is wanted is not necessarily a wise but a representative decision. Today many societies claim to speak in the name of the masses. When the Constituent Assembly comes into being, it will silence all voices and be the sole instrument voicing the opinion of the nation.

#### AM I A REFORMIST ?

Q. Is not Subhas Babu right when he ascribes to the High Command, including of course you, the reformist and the liberal tendency ?

A. Of course he is right. Dadabhai was a great reformist. Gokhale was a great liberal; and so was Pherozeshah Metha, the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency. So too was Surendranath Banerjee. They were in their days the nation's tribunes. We are their heirs. We would not have been if they had not been. What Subhas Babu in his impatience to go forward forgets is that it is possible for men like me to compete with him in the love of the land in spite of our having reformist and liberal tendencies. But I have told him he has youth before him and he must have the dash of youth. He is not held down by me or anybody else. He is not the man to be so held. It is his own prudence that holds him. And in that way he is as much

reformist and liberal as I am. Only I with my age know it, and he in his youth is blind to the good that is in him. Let my correspondents rest assured that, in spite of our different outlooks and in spite of the Congress ban on him, when he leads in non-violent battle they will find me following him, as I shall find him following me, if I overtake him. But I must live in the hope that we shall gain our common end without another fight.

#### UNIVERSAL CONSCRIPTION

Q. You say millions are unarmed and unused to wielding arms. But what is the difficulty, when India is free, in training the whole nation in the use of arms by means of universal conscription ?

A. Of course in theory there is nothing to prevent the training by universal conscription. Only I think that the people of this land would not take to arms easily even though conscription may be resorted to. In any event arming of the millions, or even a few, is outside my province. It is repugnant to me. But what I would conscript is productive labour skilled and unskilled. This, I hold, would be the easiest and the most effective method of organizing society on a peaceful footing.

#### INDEPENDENCE PLEDGE

Q. The Independence pledge regarding khadi and village industries has been variously interpreted. What is one to do ? What is the meaning of 'regular spinning', 'habitual use of khadi' and of 'village products' ? Is it enough for me to fulfil the pledge, or does it apply to my family ? What am I to do if I cannot afford to buy khadi for the whole family ?

A. The Independence pledge has been made optional this time. The papers report that it has been taken by lakhs of men and women. I hope the reports are true. My own barometer is khadi sales. The pledge can be taken even now. I admit that it is capable of yielding various interpretations. But so are the Vedas. The authoritative interpretation can be given only by the Rashtrapati<sup>1</sup>, I do not propose to give you my own. You should be your own interpreter. Remember, where there's a will there's a way. Of course it is better if your whole family takes the pledge. But you are not your brother's keeper. So far as your purse is concerned, see if your wardrobe admits of reduced clothing whilst many millions go about in rags. I have a suspicion that many of my questioners have superfluous things which they consider

<sup>1</sup> Congress President

necessary for appearances. Appearances are not for those who want to sacrifice themselves for their own and their country's freedom. I have also suggested that those who cannot pay the full price of khadi can get it almost at mill price if they will spin their own yarn. Lastly, you need not take the pledge now. You can take it when you have prepared yourself for it. What is most needed is uttermost sincerity. Letters like yours fill me with hope. I can raise an indomitable army out of sincere men and women who are willing to come under discipline.

#### SPINNING-WHEEL AND INDEPENDENCE

Q. How do you connect the wheel with swaraj ? We were producing our own khadi when we lost our freedom.

A. We did not then know the pricelessness of the charkha. Now that we know it, we must restore it to its honoured place in our homes. Supposing people who have their rifles with them lose both their freedom and their rifles, will it be proper for them to resist the counsel of a wise man who might rise in their midst and advise them to rearm themselves, with the knowledge added to the rearmament that they were foolish in easily surrendering their rifles ? I verily believe that we cannot gain or retain our freedom by non-violent means unless we realize the necessity and the dignity of reviving the charkha with all its implications.

#### LUSTING WITH THE EYE

Q. I am a poor man employed in a mill. I am in a great fix. Whenever I go out, the sight of a fair face overwhelms me. I lose all self-control. I sometimes fear that I might be betrayed into indecorous behaviour. I once thought of committing suicide. But my good wife saved me. She suggested that I should take her with me whenever I stirred out of the house. The plan has worked but it is not always practicable. In desperation I often think that I should pluck out my offending eyes. But the consideration for my wife has deterred me. You are a man of God. Can't you suggest a remedy ?

A. You are honest and frank. You should know that there are many people in the same plight as you are. This lusting with the eye is a common disease. It is on the increase. It has even attained a kind of respectability. This, however, should be no consolation to you. You have a brave wife. You dare not be unfaithful to her. And lusting after another woman is the height of unfaithfulness. It reduces marriage to a mockery. You should resolutely fight against the enemy. Treasure the thought that all other women are like blood-sisters to you. Give up

the lewd literature, cinemas and lewd pictures that disfigure the Press. Walk with your eyes fixed to the earth; and whilst you are doing so pray to the God within that He may cleanse your heart, and believe that He will deliver you from the curse. If necessary, wear thickly smoked glasses. You will find in them a first-class external aid. There is really nothing to admire in the big cities with their oppressive hugeness and congestion and the same noises, and the same faces day in and day out. If we were not victims of the mighty force of inertia, our senses would sicken over the repetition of the same ugly phenomenon. In the daytime bury yourself in the duty before you, and at night do a little bit of star-gazing with the aid of a simple astronomical guide, and you have before your eyes a spectacle which no cinema in the world can provide; and, it may be, you will one day find God peeping through the myriads of stars, and if you attune yourself to the divine nightly manifestation, you will hear the soft and soothing music of the spheres. Try this every night and your eyes will act right and your heart will be sound. May God bless you.

#### UNCERTIFIED KHADI AND A. I. S. A

Q. I can quite understand your emphasis on the exclusive use of certified khadi. But certified khadi is dear. The result is that while on the one hand there are thousands of people who are too poor to purchase certified khadi, on the other there are thousands of spinners whom the A. I. S. A. cannot give employment on account of the standard wage. Would it not be advisable under the circumstances to employ the surplus spinners on a lower wage, pool the standard-wage and the non-standard-wage khadi, and thus at one stroke provide cheap khadi to the poor consumer and employment to the needy spinner ?

A. This is a good question. The executive of the A. I. S. A. is wide awake. Every effect of the arbitrary rise in the spinners' wages is being watched. The question of pooling has not escaped attention. Every effort is being made to keep prices within reach of the buyers. Selfish purveyors of uncertified khadi and the gullible or indifferent public are the greatest obstacle. The A. I. S. A. has to cut its difficult way through these obstacles.

#### DELEGATE'S FEE AND THE CONGRESS

Q. You have claimed the Congress members to be the spokesmen of the poor, toiling millions of India. How can you expect the representatives of the poorest, who must themselves be likewise poor, to pay the delegate's fee of Rs. 5 ? Does it then mean that the poor millions must choose their representatives from



among the monied class ? Is this your ideal of democracy ?

A. My ideal of democracy is quite sound. Without the delegate's fee the Congress cannot work. The fee also acts as some check on fraud. Every delegate has a large constituency. If the delegate is a *bona-fide* choice of the voters, they should find the delegate's fee and expenses. If the voters paid one pice per head for the expenses of their delegate, it would be possible for the poorest delegate to represent them. The fact is that the Congress is neither sufficiently democratic nor representative. There is too much wire-pulling and manoeuvring for seizing power rather than doing service. Congressmen have gone in for vastness at the expense of depth. The result is that we are skating on dangerously thin ice.

#### WHAT ABOUT YOUR SON ?

Q. I have a difficulty with you. You are out to conquer the whole world with love. How is it you could not conquer your own son ? You believe in the doctrine of beginning with yourself. Why not begin with your son ? There is no such thing as an irredeemably bad boy. I am sure you will succeed if you try.

A. You are right. But I have admitted my limitations. Complete non-violence, i.e., complete love, never fails. You may also know that I have not despaired of my son regaining his sanity. Superficially I seem to have hardened my heart. But my prayer for his reformation has never ceased. I believed in its efficacy and I have patience.

#### MALICIOUS FALSEHOOD

Q. In a book entitled 'खतरे का बिगुल' published by the Arya Sahitya Mandal Ltd., Ajmer, on page 30, I have come across the following statement which you are alleged to have made during your recent tour<sup>1</sup> of the Frontier Province : "The Pathan raiders have two kinds of needs, the physical, viz., those relating to food, clothing and shelter, and the sexual. The Hindus, therefore, ought to offer them all their property and womenfolk so that they might be satiated and give up their raiding habits." On page 31 of the same pamphlet it is stated that at the instance of Sir Akbar Hydari you wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of the Nagpur University not to admit to his University the students who had been rusticated from the Osmania University for singing *Vandemataram*. But the latter gave you a snub by retorting : "I am the Vice-Chancellor of the University, not you; I know my duty," and gave admission to the students in question. If these facts are true, they are a serious reflection on you. What have to say in reply ?

A. My answer is that every one of the statements is a malicious

<sup>1</sup> In July 1939

falsehood. I know that there is a campaign of lying propaganda going on against me. It grieves me, however, to find that an Arya Samaj publication should propagate such untruths. There is a *bhajan* in the *Ashram Bhajanavali* in which we pray for those that detract us Or I can say in the Biblical language : “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” The pity is that these friends of whom you write know what they are doing. My prayer goes out for them also. Lies have never hurt those against whom they are uttered. They do hurt those who utter them and they often confound society. The writer has libelled the Pathan and Sir Akbar. Badshah Khan, the servant of God, is a Pathan. Sir Akbar is not so simple as to expect me to do what is attributed to him.

#### THE SINDH TRAGEDY

Q. In your article “Sindh Tragedy”<sup>1</sup> you have advised the oppressed Hindus of Sindh to perform *hijrat* if they cannot protect their honour and self-respect by remaining in Sindh. Where do you expect them to go ? Who will provide them the wherewithal in their place of refuge ? May I further ask you if the remedy of *hijrat* is meant for the Hindus only ? Why do not you advise *hijrat* to the Mussalmans in the Congress provinces who complain so loudly of ‘oppression’ ? As it is you have given them weightage in provinces in which they are in a minority and a statutory majority in the Punjab where they are numerically superior.

A. My advice to migrate is for all who feel oppressed and cannot live without loss of self-respect in a particular place. If the Muslims where they are in a minority were really oppressed and they sought my advice, I should give them the same advice that I have given to the Sindh Hindus. But as a general rule they are capable of holding their own even when they are in a minority. I have already told the Sindhis that, if they have the bravery to defend themselves even though they are a handful, they should not leave the places where they are settled. My advice is meant for those who, though they are conscious of self-respect, lack the strength that comes from non-violence or the capacity to return blow for blow.

The question what the refugees should do after migration is surely secondary. A few thousand of them can be easily absorbed in a vast country like India. Sindhis are enterprising. They are scattered all over the world. I hardly think any public appeal will be necessary. Let

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Sindh Tragedy”, 1-1-1940.

them know that there are refugees from Limbdi<sup>1</sup> who are bravely and silently bearing their exile. A keen sense of honour turns every privation into a joy. But perhaps migration will be unnecessary. I see signs of Muslim leaders realizing their responsibility and making arrangements to create among the Hindus concerned a sense of security<sup>2</sup>. If this happens, it would be as it should be.

The question of my befriending the Ali Brothers is surely irrelevant to the great issue I have raised. I am not sorry for anything I have done in connection with communal unity. I should repeat the same thing under similar circumstances. Neither community has lost by the unity of the Khilafat days, temporary though it unfortunately proved to be. You are wrong in holding me responsible for the communal decision<sup>3</sup>. It has nothing to commend itself to any community except the solid fact that we are living under it and that we have not yet found an agreed formula to replace it.

SEGAON, January 29, 1940

*Harijan*, 3-2-1940

### 325. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SEGAON, WARDHA,

January 29, 1940

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I hope you had my note<sup>4</sup> about Bengal.

So I am to be in Santiniketan about 15th or 16th<sup>5</sup> and pass there two days. I may have to come from Delhi. It depends upon happenings there. I shall have a large family with me. It will probably include Rajkumari. Ba will of course be with the party. Will the crowd matter? If necessary you will wire. I leave for Delhi on 4th. You will of course pray.

Love.

MOHAN

From a photostat : G. N. 8751

<sup>1</sup> In Kathiawar

<sup>2</sup> The Sind Government had decided to set up a Court of Inquiry to investigate the causes of the riots and the measures taken by the authorities to preserve peace.

<sup>3</sup> The Communal Award of 1932

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 15-1-1940.

<sup>5</sup> Gandhiji, however, reached Santiniketan on February 19.

326. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 29, 1940

MY DEAR AMRIT,

Nothing from you for the past two days. Here it is all well. Hope you are free from cough and cold.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

My love to Sarup<sup>1</sup> and Co.

SMT. RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

ANAND BHAVAN

ALLAHABAD, U.P.

From the original C.W. 3960. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7269

327. *LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA*

SEGAON,  
January 29, 1940

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

The facts are these. I was and am still willing to present myself at Ramgarh on 10th March<sup>2</sup>. The W.C.<sup>3</sup> thought that it would be no use sending me to R[amgarh] three days in advance. The crowds gathering will interfere with the arrangements. They will rob the show of its newness when the presidential procession, etc., takes place. There were other similar arguments advanced. You may send this to your correspondent. I am entirely in the Rashtrapati's hands. I have an open mind. Naturally I want to do all I can to further the common purpose. But I do not know what is the best thing to do. Rajen Babu should be the proper judge.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy : Dr. Rajendra Prasad Paper. File No. XI/40. Courtesy : National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> Vijayalakshmi Pandit

<sup>2</sup> For the inauguration of the Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition

<sup>3</sup> Congress Working Committee

### 328. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

January 29, 1940

CHI. PREMA,

Prabha would have come there immediately if Ba had not specially wanted to see her. If you take care of her health, she will give you the work you want.<sup>1</sup> Not that you don't know this.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 10404. Also C.W. 6843. Courtesy : Premabehn Kantak

### 329. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 29, 1940

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI,

Your letter. You have been very close to me for so long. I understand what you say. I write with an open heart as far as possible, yet the soldiers' burden must continue. What you write regarding the charkha is enough. The work of adult literacy has been well accomplished. I could not deal with an earlier letter for want of time.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI SAMPURNANANDJI  
JALIPADEVI  
BANARAS

From the Hindi original : Sampurnanand Collection. Courtesy : National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had organized a camp to train women volunteers for the forthcoming Congress Session at Ramgarh. Considering Prabhavati to be the best person to head the women volunteers in Bihar, she prevailed upon the former, who was initially reluctant, to take up the responsibility.

### 330. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

January 29, 1940

CHI. SHARMA,

I shall order more when I get the list of books. Otherwise send the book received from Lahore. What is wrong with you ? If you yourself remain unwell,<sup>1</sup> how are you going to treat others ? I am reaching Delhi on the 5th.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

DR. H. L. SHARMA  
NAGLANAWABAD  
P. O. KHURJA U. P.

From a facsimile of the Hindi : *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh* between pp. 282 and 283

### 331. NOTE TO PYARELAL

January 29, 1940

CHI. PYARELAL,

Take this as my last note for now. Nothing should be left out. Show everything to me. I shall glance through it. Did you telephone Girdhari?

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

### 332. SIROHI<sup>2</sup>

From Sirohi comes the welcome news that the arrests made last year<sup>3</sup> of seven leaders did not break the spirit of the people. They have been observing the 22nd (the arrest day) of every month with due solemnity. They are having meetings, *Prabhat pheri*<sup>6</sup> spinning,

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's foot had been injured with a piece of glass.

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 18-9-1939.

selling khadi, etc. It is a good omen that workers in the States are, wherever possible, organizing themselves in a resolute and dignified manner. If on the one hand they learn the art of defying suffering however severe and on the other of remaining strictly within the limits prescribed in non-violent action, all would be well. All constructive effort means true education and organization of the people.

SEGAON, January 30, 1940

*Harijan*, 3-2-1940

### 333. ASHRAM NOTES

*January 30, 1940*

Balvantsinha's letter deserves to be read by all; everyone should read it. The remedy suggested therein may be ignored. Such remedies should be a matter of shame for us. Even in respect of salt, we should take only as much as we need. Even water should not be wasted. I hope everyone would look upon every article in the Ashram as his own or as belonging to the poor, and use it accordingly.

BAPU

From Hindi : C.W. 4674

### 334. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*January 30, 1940*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Padma Pant of Cawnpore has sent me copy of his letter to you. I hope you will probe the truth.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Have you seen the latest pamphlet of the Jamiat-Ulema-i-Hind ? They are dangerous friends. I wonder if the W[orking] C[ommittee] had a full talk with Moulvi Kifayatulla Saheb !

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1940. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

335. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*January 30, 1940*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have your two notes—one through M.<sup>1</sup> I am glad you have come so much nearer J.<sup>2</sup> than you have been. His buoyancy is infectious. But you have not caught the infection, nor has my talk gone home. If it had you won't be down in the dumps. However, may God do what man has failed to do. Of course they needed your presence. It is good you stayed at A.B.<sup>3</sup> I do not mind your defeat. Let them sell khadi.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original : C.W. 3961. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7270

336. *LETTER TO H. V. KAMATH*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*January 30, 1940*

MY DEAR KAMATH,

Have just seen the printed correspondence. I see Rajkumari said “daily” instead of “regularly”. It was purely a slip for which please accept my apology. R.K. is just now not here or she would have apologized.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a facsimile : *Mahatma*, Vol. V, between pp. 280 and 281

<sup>1</sup> Presumably Mahadev Desai

<sup>2</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>3</sup> Anand Bhavan



### 337. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
January 30, 1940

CHI. VIJAYA,

Have you become thin ? I hope both of you are in good health. Does Manubhai take enough ghee and milk ? Ba is still in Delhi. I am going there on the 4th. We are still running a hospital here. Ashadevi had all her teeth extracted. Valjibhai has been sent to get his extracted. Durga<sup>1</sup> arrived today. She has brought a tiny girl with her. Prabha is here.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 7123. Also C.W. 4615. Courtesy : Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

### 338. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

January 30, 1940

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

Your letter states the truth. All of you should put your heads together and find out a solution. The milk you are having you will continue to get. It was not intended to harm anyone's health by hasty reduction.

I notice no agitation in your letter, nor any exaggeration. I had already experienced what you describe.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 1928

### 339. TELEGRAM TO RAIHANA TYABJI

WARDHAGANJ,  
January 31, 1940

RAIHANA TYABJI  
CAMP BARODA

MAY GOD BE WITH YOU ALL DURING ORDEAL<sup>2</sup>. LOVE

BAPU

From a photostat : S.N. 9694

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Mahadev Desai

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's mother was critically ill.

### 340. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

WARDHAGANJ,  
*January 31, 1940*

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD  
PATNA

ADVERTISEMENTS MAY BE TAKEN.

BAPU

From the original : Dr. Rajendra Prasad Papers. File No. XI/40. Courtesy :  
National Archives of India

### 341. INTERVIEW TO HOLMES SMITH<sup>1</sup>

*[January 31, 1940]*<sup>2</sup>

[HOLMES SMITH :] I am now on my way to America where so far as it lies in our power we propose to start a twofold campaign by (1) opening the eyes of Missions against continuing an unholy alliance with imperialism (2) starting a movement to be organized by the friends of Indian freedom. I want your reaction to this programme and, if you approve of it, your blessings.

[GANDHI :] My strong advice to you would be not to have Indians in your society. You will seek information from them but not members. Their entry would make you suspects. I would like you to retain your spiritual and purely American character. You are interested in our movement, I understand, because it is claimed to be strictly non-violent. The hands of those who have fought for freedom all over the world are dyed red. But you, who claim to be Christians in a special sense because you insist on living according to the Sermon on the Mount, sympathize with us because of our unique claim.

And don't expect or accept a single pice from India, even if you may have to beg and are reduced to the level of the three tailors of

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's report "Rediscovering Religion". Holmes". Holmes Smith, the Acharya of the Lalbagh Ashram at Lucknow, and others had signed an open letter to the Viceroy challenging the missionary pledge of alliance with "the lawful authority of the country". In consequence Holmes Smith was asked by his Mission to resign.

<sup>2</sup> From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.

Tooley Street<sup>1</sup>.

And now I must share with you what I told Mr. Keithahn<sup>2</sup>. He, like you, has broken away from his Mission and chosen to work in the villages of India. I told him that I want every true Christian to make his contribution to the cause of non-violence. Our movement has been non-violent for 20 years or even 25, that is, ever since I returned to India and started work. Congress-minded India has been moving towards non-violence. And yet today I have to say that that non-violence has been non-violence not of the strong but of the weak. But you are attracted to it in the belief that our non-violence is of the strong. therefore, you should study the movement through and through, criticize it, find flaws in it. Thus I do not want you to spin unless you see an unbreakable connection between spinning or its equivalent and non-violence. It is likely that you will discover new methods of application or new argument, as Gregg<sup>3</sup> does, in support of mine.

Do you not mean economic non-violence by the charkha ?

Not economic non-violence, but I should say non-violent econo-mics. The charkha and handicrafts occupy a special place in a non-violent society, as centralized activities do in modern society constructed on militarism. My hands are feeble today, because I have not a full-hearted support for my conviction that India can retain her independence by non-violent means. So long as non-violence is a purely political battle-cry India cannot make a solid contribution to the peace of the world. Independence cannot be retained if it is a gift of the British. It can be retained when we have earned it and can retain it by our strength. We have not that non-violent strength, and we certainly have not the military strength. And so though I am going to Delhi I am going with my eyes open and in fear and trembling. But as I am practical I shall face the situation as it comes.

But you have to work non-violence out independently and not merely because I swear by it. I am but a sojourner on this earth for a few days—it may be for a few years, which does not really matter. I can only repeat what I have been saying all these years. And then I

<sup>1</sup> Who addressed a petition to the British Parliament describing themselves as “We, the people of England”

<sup>2</sup> Rev. R. R. Keithahn, an American missionary; *vide* “Discussion with R. R. Keithahn”, 5-3-1937.

<sup>3</sup> Richard B. Gregg in his *Economics of Khaddar*.

realize my limitations which to me are amazing. And so I want the help of all who have faith enough to work for non-violence—especially of Christians, for thousands of them believe that the message of Christ was that of peace on earth, goodwill to men. I mention Christians specially, because though there are individual Muslims who believe in non-violence, there are many who do not regard it as a special message of the Koran. And as you know there are Hindus who disown me because of my out-and-out belief in non-violence. Now the message of Jesus has been before the world for 1,900 years; but what are 1,900 years in the life of a religion or in the life of a message fraught with great consequence for mankind ? I therefore want you to be my fellow-workers testing everything I say on the anvil of cold reason. I want from you a spiritual effort.

In this matter we can only sit at your feet for years to come. I am getting in touch with fellow-seekers here, and I will seek out, on getting back home, men like Gregg. . . . We want to dig down through the accretions of centuries and rediscover Christianity. . . .

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

### 342. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJA<sup>1</sup>

WARDHA,  
*February 1, 1940*

JAMNALAL BAJAJ

NATURECURE CLINIC, POONA

DISINCLINED LET YOU GO. AWAIT DEVELOPMENTS. TAKE TREATMENT WITHOUT ANXIETY. WRITING.

BAPU

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 228

<sup>1</sup>This was in reply to the addressee's telegram dated January 31, 1940, which read : Fresh Jaipur news discouraging. State tactics terrorizing and unjust. Feel called upon to go Jaipur without delay. Wire permission. Shall take proper care of treatment."

343. *LETTER TO SARLA DEVI*

*February 1, 1940*

MY DEAR SARLA,

Take a few minutes tonight after prayer.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 9085

344. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*

SEGAON,  
*February 1, 1940*

CHI. KAKA,

I have read Beli's article which I am enclosing. There is nothing new in it. You must have noticed that the Hindustani he has suggested is nothing but Urdu. It is not worth adopting.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 6761

345. *LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*February 1, 1940*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter and wire.<sup>2</sup> I have had talks with Shastriji<sup>3</sup>. There is no need at all for you to cut short your stay there to go to Jaipur. There is no question, moreover, of your going till my Delhi visit is over. That will easily take us to the 15th. How many days remain then ? You should also realize that it is your duty to improve your health. The draft<sup>4</sup> prepared by you is not quite correct. Your complaint is against the Maharaja. I don't think it advisable to ask him to intervene. When you are all right you will be able to see him in person [if you wish]. After that, let events take their course.

<sup>1</sup> Of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Jamnalal Bajaj", 1-2-1940.

<sup>3</sup> Hiralal Shastri

<sup>4</sup> Of reply to the Home Minister of Jaipur

I won't be able to go as deep into the matter with the Viceroy as you wish me to do. I shall be able to go only as far as is consistent with the original issue. We will consider the question of your meeting him after my return from Delhi. I think I have now replied to all your questions. The rest you will know from Shastriji. I trust Janakidevi and Madalasa are doing fine.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 3010

*346. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM K. JERAJANI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*February 1, 1940*

BHAI KAKUBHAI,

Was there any remarkable sale of khadi on the 26th ? Have the sales improved lately ?<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C.W. 10843. Courtesy : Purushottam K. Jerajani

*347. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD*

WARDHAGANJ,  
*February 2, 1940*

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD

PATNA

WHAT ABOUT ILLNESS. WIRE WHAT WAS DONE ON  
REPORT VIOLENCE ENQUIRY PUBLISHED PAPERS. LEAVING  
FOR DELHI TOMORROW.<sup>2</sup>

BAPU

From the original : Dr. Rajendra Prasad papers. File No. 2-1/40. Courtesy : National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> In a postscript Mahadev Desai asked the addressee to send over the figures immediately so that he could make use of them for the statistics to be published in *Harijan*.

<sup>2</sup> In reply the addressee telegraphed : "Got influenza now gradually subsiding. Provincial Working Committee took precautions last year to prevent recurrence and was successful. No complaints received this year. Posting secretary's Press statement Delhi."

### 348. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS<sup>1</sup>

NAGPUR,  
*February 3, 1940*

Gandhiji was informed by the Associated Press that Mr. Jinnah was meeting the Viceroy on February 6. Asked if he would be meeting Mr. Jinnah, Gandhiji curtly replied he had not any enmity with Mr. Jinnah. But when asked if he would meet Mr. Jinnah in connection with the discussion on the political situation, Gandhiji said that he did not know.

Replying to an inquiry if it was again going to be a farce of interviews, Gandhiji gravely remarked that he did not hope so but also could not say anything about whether there was going to be a settlement of the present impasse as a result of the Viceregal interview. He added :

Only God knows about that.

“Our hopes are centred in you,” said the inquirer, whereto Gandhiji retorted :  
Have hopes in God alone.

When told that on return from Delhi he should give them news of settlement or order for fight, he said they should be prepared for both. Gandhiji told the Associated Press that if the interviews were finished early he would not wait in Delhi for attending the meeting of the Harijan Sevak Sangh as he wanted to return to Segaoon at the earliest possible moment whereafter he would leave for Santiniketan to meet Poet Tagore.

When the talk turned on the next President of the Congress, Gandhiji said that under the circumstances Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the best and hoped that his election would be unanimous.

*The Hitavada, 4-2-1940*

### 349. TELEGRAM TO RAIHANA TYABJI

ITARSI,  
*February 3, 1940*

RAIHANA TYABJI  
CAMP BARODA  
WIRE MOTHER'S CONDITION DELHI.

BAPU

From a photostat : S.N. 9695

<sup>1</sup> This was given in the morning when Gandhiji passed through Nagpur *en route* to Delhi.

350. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,  
*February 3, 1940*

MY DEAR J.L.,

Read the within letter.<sup>1</sup> You know best what to do. These things require attention.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1940. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

351. *LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE*<sup>2</sup>

ON THE TRAIN,  
*February 3, 1940*

DEAR BHIKSHU,

I can do nothing in the matter.

*Yours,*

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 1392

352. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,  
*February 3, 1940*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have gone through the figures. As far as I can see there are two points. It is not Prithvi Singh who is to find the thirty candidates<sup>5</sup> They will have to be selected and sent by you all or by you alone. You have shown the expenditure to be [Rs.] twenty for each person, but will there be nothing to be deducted from that ? If that is the position, the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Satyapal, in his letter to Rajendra Prasad dated January 24, described the communal activities of the Akalis and stated that "unless the High Command includes these also in the list of communalists there is a grave danger of the Punjab Congress being entirely under the thumb of Akalis, and they will be a serious danger for this organization because of their being neither believers in truth, nor non-violence, nor nationalism . . . nor Purna Swarajya."

<sup>2</sup> Known also as Bhikshu Nirmalananda



expense will not be twenty for each but will come to  $915/30 = 30\frac{1}{2}$ . We must consider whether this is all right. What do you think must be the figure in self-run boarding-houses ? The chief thing, however, is not the expense, but the selection of the candidates. My asking you to make such arrangements as Prithvi Singh may desire should not be interpreted to mean that you need give him no guidance at all. You must give it wherever necessary. The supervision will have to be yours. Pray for the success of my Delhi visit.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL  
SWARAJ ASHRAM  
BARDOLI

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 238-9*

### 353. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

ON THE TRAIN,  
February 3, 1940

CHI. SUSHILA,

What pain you caused me! And while leaving you threw the barb: "What is the good of letters?" So much anger? Consider. If I let you abandon the patients and take you with me for the sake of my health, I would be demeaning myself and lose the dharma I have followed all my life. Why can you not understand that it would not be right for me to take you with me, leaving Kishorelalbhai behind? Here the question is not of medical knowledge. The question is of my sentiment. But right now, I have lost my place in your eyes. You seem to be under the impression that I am purposely hurting you. What kind of weakness was it that you did not even walk with me? But I know that at the root of your odd behaviour was your unhappiness. If you leave me, out of obstinacy, you may be sure that I shall not run the dispensary as it is being run now. The instruments will go with you. What good will they be to me? You are forgetting your duty.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[P.S.]

Calm down. Think. Listen to me. Give up the idea of going away. Just because you would not be with me for a couple of months

in a year, will you give up serving me for the rest of the ten months? Give some thought to the matter. Have a little pity. What I have done is in your and my interest and in the interest of the Ashram. I shall be happy to receive a telegram that your mind is at peace.

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

### 354. LETTER TO VIDYAVATI

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,  
February 3, 1940

CHI. VIDYA<sup>1</sup>,

I hope Chi. Virendra<sup>2</sup> is all right. Address your reply to Birla House, New Delhi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

RANI VIDYAVATI  
5 SUDIRAM BUILDINGS  
GUNGE NAWABKA PARK  
AMINABAD, LUCKNOW

From the Hindi original : Rani Vidyavati Papers. Courtesy : Gandhi National Museum

### 355. GUJARATI SPELLING

The anarchy prevailing in Gujarati spelling is perhaps unparalleled in any other language. It is not found in Marathi, Bengali, Tamil or Urdu. I have not heard of it in any other Indian language. It is to be found in no European language. What epithet except barbarous can one apply to a people who speak a language with unorganized spelling ? Man's language develops as he progresses. A man can be judged in several matters by the language he speaks. It hardly takes any time to gauge the wisdom of a person writing such expressions as *hag, mar, tapar*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rani Vidyavati of Hardoi

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's son

<sup>3</sup> The first two expressions, as they are, mean 'defecate' and 'die'; the third one is obscure. The correct spellings should be *heeng* (asafoetida), *mari* (pepper) and *toprun* (coconut kernel)

Such being my views on language, I was glad to get the following cutting<sup>1</sup> from Maganbhai.

The Government of Bombay took quite some time to come to a decision, but they deserve to be congratulated on having at last arrived at one. I hope all journalists and authors will be guided by the dictionary<sup>2</sup> prepared by the Vidyapith. The Vidyapith should provide the necessary means to facilitate this. Every lover of language must have in his pocket or on his desk a Gujarati dictionary as he would have an English dictionary if he were writing English. Gujarati writers must be as proud of the purity of their language as the English are of theirs. An Englishman who cannot spell correctly is considered uncivilized. But let us leave aside English. Why should we not devote as much attention to our mother tongue as the students studying in our English schools give or are required to give to English spelling ? The Vidyapith should immediately provide facilities for this purpose. The Vidyapith dictionary is of course there. But a simpler and cheaper pocket edition should be prepared. An attempt has been made in the said dictionary to include as many words as possible along with their meanings in brief. It is enough if the pocket edition gives only the spelling and not all words need be included. Only words whose spelling is doubtful should be included. The set of rules should be made available separately at a price of a paisa or two. But one should not expect that all will take the trouble to study the rules. People need ready-made material and that can be provided by a dictionary only.

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 4-2-1940

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here. It contained a notification issued by the Government of Bombay approving the spellings standardized by the Gujarat Vidyapith and recommending their adoption by the State's educational and publishing institutions.

<sup>2</sup> Sartha Jodanikoshā

## 356. QUESTION BOX

### RELIGION AND POLITICS

Q. In your autobiography you have said that you cannot think of politics apart from religion. Do you still hold that view ? If so, how is it that in a country of many diverse religions like you expect a common political policy to be adopted ?

A. Yes, I still hold the view that I cannot conceive politics as divorced from religion. Indeed, religion should pervade every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is out less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.

Q. Is it true that you advised some Sikhs, who came to seek your advice on certain matters, that Guru Govind Singh taught the use of the sword while you stood for non-violence, and therefore the Sikhs must be ready to choose the one or the other ?

A. The question is badly, if not mischievously, put. What I did say was that, if they thought the teaching of Guru Govind Singh excluded implicit belief in non-violence, they could not be consistent Congressmen so long as the Congress creed remained what it was. I added that they would be compromising themselves if they joined or remained in the Congress and might even damage their own cause.

### NON-VIOLENCE, ISLAM AND SIKHISM

Q. By teaching respect for all religions you want to undermine the power of Islam. You want to emasculate the Pathans by taking away the rifle from them. There can be no meeting ground between us and you.

A. I do not know what you thought during the Khilafat days. Let me give you a bit of the history of our own times. The foundation of the Khilafat struggle was laid by me. I had a hand in the agitation for the release of the Ali Brothers. So when they came out, they, together with Khwaja Abdul Majid, Shuaib Qureshi and Moazam Ali, and I met together and devised the plan of action which the world knows. I discussed with them the implications of non-violence and told them that, if they could not accept non-violence as true Muslims,

I should be out of the picture. Their reason was satisfied, but they said they could not act without endorsement from Muslim divines, and so there was a conference of the *ulemas* at the late Principal Rudra's<sup>1</sup> house where I used to stay, when in Delhi, during his lifetime. This learned company included, among several others, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the late Maulana Abdul Bari. Led by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad they held that belief in non-violence was not only not inconsistent with Islam, but it was obligatory in the sense that Islam had always preferred it to violence. It is noteworthy that this took place before the acceptance of non-violence by the Congress in 1920. Many were the discourses given by learned Muslims on non-violence before crowded Muslim meetings. The Sikhs too came in later without any scruples and they listened with rapt attention to my exposition of non-violence. Those were great and glorious days. Non-violence proved infectious. Under its spell there was a mass awakening such as had never been seen before in this land. All communities felt as one, and they thought that non-violence had clothed them with an irresistible power. Those halcyon days are gone and now I am obliged seriously to answer questions like the above. I cannot give you the faith in non-violence you do not possess. God alone can give it to you. Mine remains unshaken. I do maintain, in spite of you and others like you suspecting my motives, that mutual respect for one another's religions is inherent in a peaceful society. Free impact of ideas is impossible on any other condition. Religions are meant to tame our savage nature, not to let it loose. God is only one though He has countless names. Don't you expect me to respect your faith? If you do, may I not expect the same respect from you for mine? You say Muslims have nothing in common with Hindus. In spite of your separatism, the world is moving towards universal brotherhood when mankind will be one nation. Neither you nor I can stop the march towards our common destiny. As for the emasculation of Pathans, let Badshah Khan answer. He had accepted non-violence before we met. He believes that the Pathan has no future save through non-violence. Without it, if nothing else, his blood-feuds will keep him from going forward. And he thinks that the Pathan found his feet in the Frontier Province after he accepted non-violence and became servant of God—Khudai Khidmatgar.

<sup>1</sup> Sushil Kumar Rudra, Principal, St. Stephens College, Delhi

## MORE CALUMNY

Q. You did not hesitate to join the Ali Brothers in their intrigue to invite Amanulla Khan to invade India and set up Muslim Raj. You drafted a wire for Maulana Mahomed Ali Advising the then Amir not to enter into a treaty with the British. The late Swami Shraddhanandji is reported to have seen the draft. And now you want the Hindus of Sindh to make a present of their hearths and homes to their Mussalman oppressors instead of demanding the re-amalgamation of Sindh with the Bombay Province, which alone can restore the reign of law to Sindh. Why won't you realize that in this age of enlightenment and progress what the minorities expect is effective protection of their due rights, not mere pious counsels of perfection ?

A. I have several such letters. Hitherto I have ignored them. But now I see that the news has gone through a revised and enlarged edition in the Hindu Mahasabha. An angry correspondent threatens that persons like him will begin to believe what has been stated so authoritatively. For the sake of my reputation, therefore, I must answer the question. But my correspondents should know that life for me would be a burden if I were to make it a point of controverting every report about me or distortion of my writing. A reputation that requires such a mud wall of protection is not worth keeping. So far as the charge of my intriguing with the Amir is concerned, I can say that there is no truth whatsoever in it. Further, I know that the Brothers stoutly denied the charge when it was brought to their notice. And I believed them implicitly. I do not remember having drafted any telegram on behalf of Maulana Mahomed Ali to the then Amir. The alleged telegram is harmless in itself and does not warrant the deduction drawn from it. The late Swamiji never referred the matter to me for confirmation. It is wrong to say anything against dead men unless one has positive proof and stating it is relevant. The romance has been woven round my writings in *Young India*. Deductions drawn from them are wholly unjustified. I would not be guilty of inviting any power to invade India for the purpose of expelling the English. For one thing, it would be contrary to my creed of non-violence. For another, I have too great a respect for English bravery and arms to think that an invasion of India can be successful without a strong combination of different powers. In any case, I have no desire to substitute British Rule with any other foreign rule. I want unadulterated Home Rule, however inferior in quality it may be. My position remains today what it was when I wrote the *Young India* paragraphs now sought to be used against me. Let me further remind

the readers that I do not believe in secret methods.

As for Sindh my advice stands. Reincorporation of Sindh in the Bombay Province may or may not be a good proposition on other grounds, but certainly it is not for the purpose of greater protection of life and property. Every Indian, be he Hindu or any other, must learn the art of protecting himself. It is the condition of real democracy. The State has a duty. But no State can protect those who will not share with it the duty of protecting themselves.

ON THE WAY TO DELHI, February 4, 1940

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

### 357. ADULTERATION OF GHEE

Dr. Kailas Nath Katju<sup>1</sup> writes :<sup>2</sup>

I have read with great interest in *Harijan* of 20th January your note<sup>3</sup> on adulteration of ghee. . . . The misfortune is that it is not only the ghee-dealer and the middleman who have taken to adulteration, but even the ghee producers in the villages are resorting to adulteration in their own homes before they bring ghee to the market. . . .

We had drafted and introduced in the U.P. Legislature a comprehensive bill to stop this mischief. It was at the committee stage when we resigned. The bill confers power on the Provincial Government to prescribe colouring or flavouring of artificial ghee or vegetable oils. But I think the more useful and really important provision in the bill for the purpose in hand is that which arms the Provincial Government with the power to prohibit sale of artificial or vegetable ghee in ghee-producing areas. . . . We thought that in such areas where vegetable ghee is really sold for these universal purposes the only proper method is to prohibit its sale altogether, and thus protect and foster the genuine ghee industry. . . .

The suggestion made by Dr. Katju about specially dealing with ghee-producing areas is worthy of consideration. Indeed the question of adulteration of this important article of national diet is so important that it requires all-India treatment. It need not wait for disposal of the so-called higher politics.

ON THE WAY TO DELHI, February [4]<sup>4</sup>, 1940

*Harijan*, 17-2-1940

<sup>1</sup> Ex-Minister of Justice, Development, Agriculture and Veterinary in U.P.

<sup>2</sup> Only extracts are reproduced here.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Adulteration of Ghee", 8-1-1940.

<sup>4</sup> The source has "February 5" evidently a slip. Gandhiji reached Delhi on February 4, 1940.

### 358. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

February 4, 1940

CHI. SUSHILA,

You will have received my letter of yesterday. I had been expecting your telegram today. It did not come. Well, I know this much that what I am saying is cent per cent true. What you are saying is cent per cent wrong. My only sorrow is that I am not able to convince you. I have talked with Pyarelal to my heart's content. Doing what you say will degrade me and cause you harm. You have to consider how far it is right for you to abandon me completely because I am not taking you with me on my tour.<sup>1</sup> It will be highly improper to run away on the 29th. Even if you have got to go, there should be some discretion and method about it. Abandon your stupidity and be alert. You should watch the diets of Valjibhai and Bharatanand. Kishorelalbhai should get well. I have attended to the Chhindwada affair. We shall have the information here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

### 359. A TESTIMONY

Here is an extract<sup>2</sup> from a letter from Shri Sarangdhar Das, Secretary of the Orissa States People's Conference :

I congratulate Sarangdhar Babu on his conversion. I suggest that his conversion will last and be infectious if he studies the implications of the wheel in all its aspects. He will then see that the stone-hub charkha, which I have seen and turned, is a very primitive contrivance for securing steady motion, but it is a great handicap on the speed. He will then apply himself to an improvement of the wheel so that the output of the spinners is doubled, if not trebled. This is only one of the many directions in which the charkha spirit can work.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was to leave Wardha on February 15 on a tour of Bengal and Bihar.

<sup>2</sup> Not reproduced here. It stated how the correspondent, though a believer in machinery and mass production, had become a convert to the cult of the charkha after reading Gandhiji's article on Moral Conscriptioin.



The charkha has its economic, social, political and spiritual aspect. It is the last aspect which makes it a symbol of non-violence. Years ago I reproduced the observations of a Scotch psychologist showing how he used the spinning-wheel for curing bad-tempered boys. He observed that the gentle motion of the wheel produced a soothing and sobering effect on the minds of the subjects. I reproduced also the experience of the late Sir Prabhashankar Pattani<sup>1</sup>, how he found the wheel a great solace to his jaded nerves when he spun for half an hour before retiring. Compare Margarete's song in *Faust* as she sat at the wheel.<sup>2</sup>

NEW DELHI, February 5, 1940

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

### 360. A GOOD SUGGESTION

Shrimati Kunverbai Vakil of the Pupils' Own School, Vile Parle, sends me a parcel of yarn spun by fifteen pupils of the middle class on the Independence Day. In a covering letter she says that the commencement in spinning was made by a Harijan pupil and his good example was copied by the others, though not all. But Shrimati Kunverbai's object in writing to me was to draw attention to the fact that for the last three years Principal Vakil and Shrimati Kunverbai Vakil with their pupils have been setting apart four hours for two days in the year to sell khadi. The result has been encouraging. They were able each time to sell khadi worth Rs. 500 per day. She is of opinion that, if all the educational institutions set apart certain days in the year for hawking khadi, there will be a great impetus given to khadi. She adds further that since the scholars began to spin and hawk khadi they have been able to introduce khadi in their homes most of which were untouched by it. There is no doubt that, if educational institutions take to khadi with the same sincerity and devotion that the Vakil's have done, the whole atmosphere will change and khadi will come to its own. I have not hesitated to say, and I wish to repeat, that everyone who spins for swaraj brings nearer by so many yards. Think what it means if millions were to take part in this grand effort. Let no one seek for a parallel in history. History has no record of a non-violent effort made for a nation's freedom. *Bona fide* non-violent effort presupposes the adoption of unique weapons. It is the violence within

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "My Notes", 9-8-1925; also "Spinning an Art", 27-5-1926.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 4-9-1924.

the breast and the newness of the technique which stand in the way of an appreciation of the charkha. I have, therefore, the fear lurking in me that even those who have taken to spinning have done so mechanically and for the sake of discipline. If such is the case, it will not do. If it is taken up earnestly, the earnestness should be reflected in the sales of khadi. Correspondents have been telling me of their having taken up spinning, but no one has been telling me of sales of khadi. For me a marked increase in sales is the surest index to the manner in which the khadi clause in the Independence Pledge has been taken by Congressmen.

NEW DELHI, February 5, 1940

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

*361. CABLE TO CARL HEATH*<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
*February 5, 1940*

CARL HEATH  
FRIENDS HOUSE  
EUSTON, LONDON

THANKS. NO SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE. DIVERGENCE TOO GREAT.<sup>2</sup>

GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 1033

*362. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

NEW DELHI  
*February 5, 1940*

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI  
MADRAS

NOTHING DOING. TAKING TOMORROW MORNING TRAIN.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 2078

<sup>1</sup> In reply to the addressee's cable dated February 2, 1940, which read : "Conciliation Group greatly hopes meeting fifth may find basis settlement. Sends you warm thoughts and prayers. Please keep us informed."

<sup>2</sup> For the communique issued after Gandhiji's meeting with the Viceroy on February 5, *vide* Appendix "Government Communique", 10-2-1940. *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", 6-2-1940.

363. *LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW*

[February 5, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I think the draft statement answers the purpose.  
I take it you do not want me to return the draft.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. G.

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

364. *LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRAN*

*February 5, 1940*

We leave here tomorrow morning for Wardha. I have just got your letter. I am biding my time. But do not pin your faith on negotiations. If you are exhausted you should say so and suspend the struggle without any weakening or yielding but recuperate yourselves in the midst of stormy weather. This is a possible feat in satyagraha. If on the other hand you can go on endlessly without money from outside, you have nothing to fear. I am at your back always as a purely moral force.

Is this enough for the time being ?

Love.

BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

365. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

[AS AT] SEGAON, WARDHA,

*February 5, 1940*

CHI. PREMA,

Here is Prabha. Now take charge of her. She will need milk, ghee and some fruit. She will not be able to keep up her health

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated February 5, 1940. The "draft statement" referred to is evidently the communique which was sent to Gandhiji before its release on February 5; *vide* Appendix "Government Communique", 10-2-1940.

without them. It would be very good indeed if she could do without them. But we may not undertake the experiment just now. Just now what is necessary is to take full work from her. Get from me whatever expense you incur on her food. The rest Prabha will tell you.

We are returning tomorrow morning. Ba is coming with us.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 10405. Also C.W. 6844. Courtesy : Premabehn Kantak

### *366. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

*February 5, 1940*

CHI. SUSHILA,

I cannot forget you even at night. How stupid you are! What things you had to say about the patients ! I was not at all prepared for such callousness. The more I think over what you said that day, the more I am distressed. Has your being with me only brought you harm? Your studies were abandoned. You had a good job which you lost only because of me. Your life was disorganized. Why should I blame only your stupidity for all this? Why not my selfishness? Had I not been caught in my own selfishness, would you have stayed with me? When you leave here, how will you explain it? How will I explain it? Should I say that you abandoned me because I could not take you with me on my tour? What will the patients think? What will Shankaran think? Whatever you want to do, do it in a systematic way. Mira must have taken Kunverji to the hut.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

### *367. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*

NEW DELHI,

*February 6, 1940*

The vital difference between the Congress demand and the Viceregal offer consists in the fact that the Viceroy's offer

contemplates the final determination of India's destiny by the British Government, whereas the Congress contemplates just the contrary. The Congress position is that the test of real freedom consists in the people of India determining their own destiny without any outside influence<sup>1</sup>, and I see no prospect whatsoever of a peaceful and honourable settlement between England and India unless the vital difference is obliterated and England decides upon the right course, viz., accepts the position that the time has come when India must be allowed to determine her own constitution and her status. When that is done, the question of Defence, the question of minorities, the question of the Princes and the question of the European interest will automatically resolve itself.

Let me make this a little clearer. The provision of safeguards for the rights of minorities is not only common cause between the British Government and the Congress, but the Representative Assembly of Indians cannot evolve a stable Constitution without fullest satisfaction being given to the *legitimate* minorities. I use the word 'legitimate' advisedly because I see that minorities crop up like mushrooms, till there will be no majority left. By fullest satisfaction I mean satisfaction which will not militate against the progress of the nation as a whole. I will, therefore, in the event of differences, refer the question to the highest and most impartial tribunal that can be conceived by human ingenuity. Its voice shall be final as to what will amount to the fullest satisfaction of minority interests.

So far as Defence is concerned, surely it will be the primary concern of free India to make her own arrangements. It may well be that India would want elaborate preparation and would want Britain's help, if it is given, in enabling her to do so. Thanks to Imperial policy, unarmed India is left wholly unprotected except by the British bayonet and Indian soldiers whom British power has brought into being. It is a position humiliating alike for Britain and for India. I am personally unconcerned because, if I could carry India with me, I would want nothing beyond a police force for protection against dacoits and the like. But so far as Defence is concerned unarmed peaceful India would rely upon the goodwill of the whole world. But I know that that is only a dream at the present moment.

So far as European interests are concerned, emphasis on the word 'European' must be entirely removed. But that does not mean

<sup>1</sup> The *Congress Bulletin* here has "interference".

that a free India should be free to confiscate European interests or any other interests. There would, as there should, be provision for reasonable compensation for any existing interests which are legitimate and not harmful to the nation. It follows that there can be no question of favouritism which is being enjoyed today by European interests. I would, therefore, regard them as big zamindars or capitalists. They will be put on the same footing as these.

So far as the Princes are concerned, they are free to join the national assembly which will determine India's fate not as individuals but as duly elected representatives of their own people. The Princes being vassals of the Crown, I fancy they have no status apart from the Crown, and certainly not superior to the Crown itself. And if the Crown parts with the power it today enjoys over the whole of India, naturally the Princes have—and it should be their pride—to look up to the successor of the Crown, i.e., the people of India, for the preservation of their status.

I hope this will not be regarded as a tall claim, for it is made not on behalf of the Congress, nor of any single party, but on behalf of the unrepresented dumb millions of India. No claim made on their behalf can be considered too tall. I am myself an insignificant being, but I am supposed to have some hold over these dumb millions. I know that in every fibre of my being I am also one of them; and without them I am nothing and I do not even want to exist.

I want on their behalf an honourable settlement with Britain without *even* a non-violent fight. My dictionary has no such expression as a violent fight. Yesterday I put this view before His Excellency in as courteous and friendly a language as I was capable of using. We approached the discussion as personal friends, each believing in the other's sincerity. We understood each other, and both recognized that there still existed a wide gulf between the Government's position and the position taken by the Congress which I put, though not as an accredited representative of the Congress but certainly as the self-appointed representative of the dumb millions.

We parted as friends. I have no disappointment in me that the negotiations have failed. That failure I am going to use, as I am sure H. E. the Viceroy is going to use, as a stepping-stone to success. But if that success does not come in the near future, I can only say Heaven help India, Britain and the world. The present war must not be decided by a clash of arms, but it must be decided by the moral strength that

each party can show. If Britain cannot recognize India's legitimate claim, what will it mean but Britain's moral bankruptcy ?

Asked regarding the meaning of the words "at this stage" in the sentence "they did not, in his view, at this stage, meet the Congress demand,"<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji said :

The phrase in the Government communique "at this stage" is a superfluous phrase. If it is interpreted to mean that the Congress may in future modify its demand, it is absolutely unwarranted.

Asked if there was a chance of the Congress Ministries going back, Gandhiji said :

I hope and expect that Congress Ministries will remain out until the main question is settled.

I don't see any chance at present of approach between the Congress and the Muslim League. I do not see any; because the Muslim League represented by Jinnah Saheb's letter to me takes up a position which is wholly inimical to the national cause.<sup>2</sup> He contemplates several Indias. The Congress contemplates only one India.

When told about the B. B. C. broadcast that Gandhiji was meeting Jinnah Saheb on the evening of the 5th, Gandhiji said :

It is staggering how they manufacture news. The inventive faculty of man for destruction is showing marvellous resources.

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940, and *Congress Bulletin*, 24-2-1940

### 368. TASK BEFORE US

There need be no disappointment among Congressmen for failure of the negotiations between H. E. the Viceroy and me. We had met to explore the possibilities of a settlement. I had seen the germs of it in the Viceregal pronouncement<sup>3</sup> in Bombay. But I discovered that I was mistaken. The Viceroy's hands were tied down. He was not to go beyond the four corners of the offer now before the country. Perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Government Communique", 10-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to his pact with other political parties M. A. Jinnah had written : "It was partly a case of 'adversity bringing strange bed-fellows together', and partly because common interest may lead Muslims and minorities to combine. I have no illusions in the matter, and let me say again that India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a sub-continent composed of nationalities, Hindus and Muslims being the two major nations."

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendix "'Viceroy's Speech", 10-1-1940.

it represented too his own opinion.

But nothing has been lost by our meeting. In spite of the failure we have come nearer each other. There is a clarification of the situation. Non-violence requires great patience. The failure is only apparent. There can be no failure since both the cause and the means are just. This meeting has brought us nearer to our goal. If the Viceroy was clear in his enunciation of the British policy, I was not less clear in enunciating that of the Congress. The negotiations, so far as I know, have not been closed. Meanwhile we have to educate the world as to what we stand for. India cannot be one of the many Dominions, i.e., partner in the exploitation of the non-European races of the earth. If hers is a non-violent fight, she must keep her hands clean. If India is not to be co-sharer in the exploitation of the Africans and the degradation of our own countrymen in the Dominions, she must have her own independent status. Its content and nature must not be dictated or determined by Britain. They must be determined by ourselves, meaning the elected representatives of the nation, call such an assembly what you will. Unless British statesmen definitely concede this, they do not mean to part with power. Neither the question of Defence nor that of the minorities, nor of the Princes, nor of the European interests need come in the way of her making this clear declaration. Not that the important matters just mentioned do not require serious consideration and adjustment. But they will yield to just and proper treatment only when the required declaration is made and followed up immediately by corresponding action in so far as it is possible. Without it, Britain's war with Germany cannot be claimed to be just, certainly not unselfish.

What is to be done then ? Declaration of civil resistance ? Not yet. I mean what I say when I ascribe sincerity to Lord Linlithgow. He is doing his best to understand us, and his duty to his superiors and his nation. With all his traditions he cannot be made to jump to our position. He cannot be hustled into it. And we must not despise our opponent or belittle his strength. It would be wrong to assume weakness in him and seek to take advantage of it. His weakness will not make us strong or fit. And his strength need not baffle us if we are strong. Our duty is, therefore, to make him feel our strength. This we shall do not by civil resistance but by putting our own house in order. Whilst we may not allow the British Government to plead the minorities and the like as a bar to right action on their part, we may not blind ourselves to the fact that these questions exist and demand



solution at our hands. We may dismiss from our minds the impossible and utterly anti-national stand taken by Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. We cannot dismiss the Muslims from our consideration. The same may be said about the other problems. We must educate public mind on these, clear our own minds and know where we stand in relation to them. Maulana Saheb tells me that Congressmen and Congress committees are not always considerate in regulating elections to popular bodies, and that local boards are not always dealing justly by all the communities. We have to be above suspicion. Congress committees have to take infinite pains to examine single complaint. None may be dismissed as too trivial for consideration. I have letters and telegrams bitterly complaining that at some elections for Congress committees, local boards and the like, Muslim, Harijan or Christian claims have been neglected. Wherever this happens a golden opportunity of doing justice is missed. We may not resort to civil resistance out of our impatience or to cover our shortcomings. It is not a panacea for all our ills, internal and external. It is a specific and sovereign remedy for extraordinary situations. But let us be ready for it. I say with a full sense of my responsibility that we are not ready. It is true that, even if we were ready, the time for it is not ripe. It may be any day. Let us not be found wanting when it comes.

ON THE WAY TO WARDHA, February 6, 1940

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

### 369. INTERVIEW AT JHANSI

*February 6, 1940*

There was a large gathering . . . at the station.

Mahatma Gandhi addressed the people briefly thanking them for the reception and asking them to strengthen the Congress.

Replying to a question whether the Delhi talks were definitely broken or suspended, Mahatma Gandhi said :

Born optimist as I am, I can't regard them as broken. I think and hope they are only suspended. I believe the more so because I entertain the firm belief that we are reaching the goal soon. None can stop us attaining independence.

To another question if India would reach her goal without a struggle, Mahatma Gandhi said :

That is the thing which we should patiently wait and watch, but I

am sure if Congressmen solidly support me, we would not require another struggle. I do not want to fight for the sake of a fight. I am not spoiling for a fight, I will make endeavours to avoid it if we could free India without it.

Asked if he proposed visiting Delhi in the near future, Mahatma Gandhi replied :

It is for the Viceroy to invite me any time he thinks fit.

*The Hindu*, 7-2-1940

### 370. CABLE TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"<sup>1</sup>

[February 7, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

SUPPOSING A MINORITY ADVANCES CLAIMS WHICH ARE REJECTED BY THE MAJORITY AS BEING HIGHLY INJURIOUS TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST, THEY SHOULD BE REFERRED FOR DECISION TO AN AGREED TRIBUNAL OF UNIMPEACHABLE IMPARTIALITY, SAY, THE FEDERAL. HIGH COURT.

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

### 371. STATEMENT TO "THE DAILY HERALD"<sup>3</sup>

SEGAON

February 7, 1940

My interview with the Viceroy shows what wide gulf exists between British Government and nationalist India. What is offered is not real independence. Reality demands that India should determine what she needs, not Britain. There could be no justice or virtue in Britain yielding to successful rebellion, violent or non-violent. Will present problems be then deemed to be dissolved? It is necessary for Britain to be just to declare her determination to recognize immediately the freedom of India in practice, and the constitution to

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the title "An Elucidation" with the date-line Segaoon, February 7, 1940". It was sent in reply to *The News Chronicle's* cable seeking elucidation of Gandhiji's statement that the minority differences would be referred "to the highest and most impartial tribunal", *vide* "Statement to the Press", 6-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> It appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Let Britain Abandon Her Immoral Hold". This was cabled in response to a request "for a special message on the interview with the Viceroy".

be framed by the Constituent Assembly or an equivalent as soon as practicable. There is no analogy between the Dominions and India. Hers is a case by itself and has to be treated as such. It should be clearly understood that every problem is of Britain's own making. What has happened was no doubt a necessity of imperialism. But if imperialism dies, the problems of Britain's making will be automatically dissolved. Defence is the greatest of all. Why did Britain disarm India ? Why have even Indian soldiers become foreigners in their own land ? Why did Britain create Princes and arm them with unheard-of powers ? Surely for making her foot-hold secure. Who created the gigantic European interests, and why ? Who created minorities ? There is no majority save the political majority. But these four were and still are bulwarks of imperialism. No jugglery of words can hide this naked truth. Britain's moral victory will be assured when she decides by a mighty effort to abandon her immoral hold on India; and then her other victory will follow as day follows night. For then, the conscience of the whole world will be on her side. No makeshift such as is now offered can stir India's heart or world conscience.

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

### 372. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

[February 7, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR PREMI,

I saw the Swami today on the train. In fact he travelled with us for an hour. I told him everything about Baba and he is prepared to go to Segaoon to examine and treat Baba, or to have him at Delhi for treatment. Bapu says we will do exactly as Baba wishes. So please discuss it with him and let me have a line in reply immediately so that I may inform the Swami. He is a busy man and I shall have to give him a few days' previous notice.

We had your telegram duly and we were all glad that Baba was feeling better there. I do hope the improvement is being maintained. Please let us have a wire again tomorrow. Bapu is always anxious about him, and a wire every alternate day may be just the thing to do.

*Yours affectionately,*

MAHADEV

From the original: C. W. 11047. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

<sup>1</sup> There are two dates noted at the head of the letter, February 7, 1940 and February 8, 1940. Gandhiji was on the train on this date, having left Delhi for Wardha.

373. *LETTER TO RAMIBEHN K. PAREKH*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*February 7, 1940*

CHI. RAMI,

I have your letter. I had Balibehn's also. We arrived today, Ba too has come. Prabhavati had accompanied us to Delhi. From there she went to Patna. Jairamdas has gone to Khandwa. He is all right. Kunvarji is fine. He has been lodged in Mirabehn's hut. It used to be [very] hot under the shed where he was. Manu's daughter should be given castor-oil to relieve her. Manojna<sup>1</sup> has gone to her parents. It won't do for Kamu<sup>2</sup> to look like an old woman. Tell her that she must get strong. Ask your daughter whether she won't talk with me now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI RAMIBEHN  
VORA VAKHATCHAND HARIDAS BUNGALOW  
BEHIND HIGH SCHOOL, RAJKOT C. S.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 9733. Also C.W. 713. Courtesy : Navajivan Trust

374. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*[February]<sup>3</sup> 7, 1940*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I am sending the accompanying letter<sup>4</sup> to you because you know more about the matter referred to by the correspondent. You know about my doings in Delhi. Now cables are being exchanged with London. I am leaving for Santiniketan on the night of the 15th. From there to Calcutta on the 19th.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 239*

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Krishnadas Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> Kumi Adalja

<sup>3</sup> The source has May, which is evidently a slip since Gandhiji left for Santiniketan on February 15.

<sup>4</sup> From the Secretary, Tenants' Conference, which met in Ahmedabad

### 375. MESSAGE TO MILL-WORKERS

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
February 7, 1940

WORKER BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Bhai Gulzarilal<sup>1</sup> has explained the position to me. Your demand seems just to me. If you fail to get justice either through the arbitrator or in any other way, we have no choice but to resort to a strike. That weapon must be used only after careful thinking. If we don't have the strength, we need not be ashamed of putting up with the injustice. But if we once use this weapon we must not yield till we have secured justice. I have shown [the workers] long ago the best means of doing it.

Every one of you must learn some other occupation so that you can tide over the period of unemployment. I have put before you the work of spinning, weaving, etc., which everybody can take up. I have no objection if you find out some other occupation.

Moreover, those among you with better means should help the weaker ones. Only thus can you be fearless. Even if you escape the necessity of a strike this time, start acting upon my suggestion.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C.W. 5823. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

### 376. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,

[On or after February 7, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I like your letter<sup>3</sup>. They give me information which I do not get otherwise. I knew nothing of the pan-Islamic movement.<sup>4</sup> It does not

<sup>1</sup> Gulzarilal Nanda, Secretary, Majoor Mahajan, Ahmedabad

<sup>2</sup> From the contents it is evident that this was written after Gandhiji's return to Segaoon on February 7.

<sup>3</sup> Both were dated February 4; *vide* "The Old Game ?", 11-2-1940.

<sup>4</sup> Regarding this the addressee had written : "I wonder if your attention has been drawn to a recent social function in London, organized by the Royal Central Asian Society. Lord Zetland presided and a number of Cabinet Minister were present. The ostensible object was to establish a centre of Muslim culture and religion in London; the real object was to encourage pan-Islamism and to exploit this sentiment in India and in the Islamic countries to the advantage of the allies in the war."

surprise me. You will have seen my statement<sup>1</sup> on the interview. My method you know. I gain strength from these meetings. It is for you and other co-workers to see that the country gets the proper interpretation of what I do. I would like you not to worry about C. R.<sup>2</sup> He is absolutely sound. Nevertheless I would like you to share your doubts with him. I leave for Santiniketan on 15th evening and thence on 19th for Malikanda.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhiji-Nehru Papers (Undated). Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 377. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

*February 8, 1940*

Your wire so characteristic of you was redirected from Delhi today. You must have got mine sent yesterday. Yes, death is the end of pain. May you all keep up the noble traditions left for you by Father and Mother. I expect your graphic description of the passing away<sup>3</sup>. How I wish I was with you to listen to your soulful recitation of the Koran !

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : S. N. 9682

### 378. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*February 8, 1940*

CHI. BABUDI,

Why are you afraid ? Come over. Ba will be very happy indeed to see you. I have to leave on the 15th. I will return on the 28th at the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 6-2-1940

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had expressed concern about some recent speeches of C. Rajagopalachari because "they talk so compromisingly of Dominion Status and the like".

<sup>3</sup> Of addressee's mother

latest. I may return even earlier. The children's pill need not be tried just now. If you take your baby in your arms and go out for a breath of fresh air and give it the morning sunlight, it will be all right. You can mix dill water in your own milk. This also may soothe the baby.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 10026. Courtesy : Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

### 379. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

*February 8, 1940*

CHI. BALVANTSINHA

If you are tired of this milk-drinking, it is another matter but I shall not be tired. Nor am I going to shift you from there. Stay here and do cheerfully whatever work I allot you. That is *sadhana* for you as well as service to the cow.

The lady's letter is good. You may read out to me whatever you want me to hear. I have written to Abhayadev<sup>1</sup>.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 1929

### 380. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

*February 8, 1940*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Your letter is good. Yes, body-labour constitutes one of our vows<sup>2</sup>. Its significance cannot be over-emphasized. Give to Chimanlal whatever time he needs. Hindi teaching should come only after that. Massage, etc., do constitute body-labour. It may be undertaken.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4337

<sup>1</sup> A member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh

<sup>2</sup> Namely, non-violence, truth, non-stealing, *brahmacharya*, non-possession body-labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equality of religion, swadeshi and 'touchability'

### 381. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEGAON, WARDHA  
[February 9, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MIRA,

I have been thinking of you all these days. I write this to tell you that you are not out of mind because you are out of sight.<sup>2</sup> I miss you. I hope time is doing its healing work. I wonder if the Pundit<sup>3</sup> came. You must write to me regularly.

We leave here on 15th by the cheaper train, reaching Calcutta 17th morning. We go to Santiniketan the same day and return on 19th to take the train for Malikanda.

Love.

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 6449. Courtesy : MirabeHN. Also G.N. 10044 and *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 318

### 382. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
February 9, 1940

CHI. PREMI,

I have your letter. I want a letter daily. There is no harm in staying on there as long as you like. We shall be leaving here for Calcutta on the 15th evening. We shall return on the 27th or the 28th. Are you able to read my handwriting? If you cannot, I shall write in English.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI PREMIBEN  
C/ODR. C. S. SAHNI  
KHANDWA, C.P.

From the Hindi original: C. W. 11048. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

<sup>1</sup> From *Bapu's Letter to Mira*

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had gone to the Punjab.

<sup>3</sup> Jagat Ram Bharadwaj of the Ghadar Party. *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur" 26-2-1940.



### 383. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

February 10, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. I have no objection to your coming over. If by spending Rs. 100 you can get peace of mind, the money will be well spent—whether it will be so is for you to consider.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8552. Also C.W. 7073. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

### 384. THE OLD GAME ?

After my return from Delhi I have had a letter redirected from New Delhi. It is from a valued co-worker<sup>1</sup>. I must share with all concerned the most important paragraphs in it :

Everything that has happened during the last month or so confirms me in the belief that there is not the slightest ground for hope that the British Government will accept our position. In fact many things have happened which demonstrate that they are following a very definite imperialist policy. You must have seen that the British Parliament has just passed a Bill amending the Government of India Act which limits the powers of Provincial Governments in regard to taxation. This was specially in view of the Professional Tax<sup>2</sup> in the U.P. which is thus vetoed. Apart from the demerit of such a decision which reduces the powers of the Provincial Assembly, the time and the method chosen for it are eloquent of the imperialist outlook of the British Government and indicate that the outlook has in no way changed.

It is not at all encouraging to find that you are going to New Delhi to interview the Viceroy. The same old game is played again, the background is the same, the various objectives are the same, the actors are the same, and the results must be the same.

There are, however, some unfortunate indirect results also. An atmosphere of approaching compromise pervades the country when, in effect, there is no ground for it. It is enervating and depressing because it does not come out of strength but, in the case of many individuals, from the excessive desire to avoid conflict at all costs and to get back to the shreds of power

<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>2</sup> The original in Gandhi-Nehru Papers has "Property Tax".

which we had previously. Conflict is undesirable, but obviously conflict cannot be avoided at all costs, for sometimes such avoidance itself is a more costly and harmful affair. For the moment, however, there is no immediate question of conflict. The question is of maintaining our position with dignity, and not weakening it in any way. I fear that the impression is widely prevalent in England as well as in India that we are going in no event to have any conflict and therefore we are going to accept such terms as we can get. This kind of impression is demoralizing. I have noticed during the last fortnight that even our Congress delegates' elections have been influenced by this. Many people who, for fear of possible conflict, were keeping in the background, have now pushed themselves in front again when the possibility of enjoying the plums of office and power seems to dangle again in front of them. The effort of several months to keep undesirables out of the Congress has partly failed because of this sudden change in the Indian atmosphere which led them to believe that the compromise was imminent.

The British Government is also reacting in a way unfavourable to us, though it may use soft language. Of course, it wants to come to terms with us because it wants our support in the war. But it is much more certain that it does not wish to give up any shred of real power or change its fundamental imperialist policy in order to come to terms with us. It is carrying on and will carry on its old intrigue on the communal issue, though occasionally it uses a few critical words against the Muslim League in order to soothe the Congress. So far as it is concerned, it will try to win us over, keeping its present position intact. If this is possible, well and good for it. If this does not take place, as seems likely even to it [*sic*], then to carry on from time to time conversations with Indian leaders, to prolong the issue, to make it appear that we are on the verge of a compromise, and thus to soothe both world opinion and Indian opinion. This second policy has the additional advantage, from their point of view, of exhausting our energy and toning us down, so that, if ultimately a conflict does come, the requisite atmosphere is lacking for it. It is the general belief among official circles in England that their policy of parleys and postponement has had this result and the situation in India, which was threatening when the Congress ministries resigned, is much easier now and no dangers are to be feared.

It seems to me that while we cannot and must not precipitate a conflict, and while we need not bang the door to a possible and honourable compromise, because your methods are never to bang the door, still we must make it crystal clear that there can be or will be no compromise except on the conditions stated by us previously. As a matter of fact, even these conditions have to be slightly reviewed from the point of view of developments in the war. We cannot now say, as we then said, that we want to know whether this war is imperialist or not. The British Government's answer to us as well as their consistent policy in the war and in foreign affairs has been one of full-

blooded imperialism. We must, therefore necessarily proceed on this admitted fact that it is an imperialist war, any profession to the contrary notwithstanding. The war and British policy grow more and more sinister every day, and I would hate to see India entangled in any way in this imperialist adventure from which India can only lose, not only materially but spiritually. This point seems to me of vital importance today.

Thus it seems to me that the most important thing for us to do is to make our position perfectly clear to the world, to the British Government and to the Indian people. There is too much misunderstanding on this issue of compromise, and this misunderstanding is entirely to our disadvantage and to the advantage of British imperialism which meanwhile is exploiting our resources for the war and even pretending to have a large amount of our goodwill. Approach by us to the British Government or to the Viceroy increases these misunderstandings and lead the British Government even further away from a right compromise.

The warning is sound. Perhaps I did not need it. But such warnings are never superfluous. It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err. And then, so far as I am concerned, I am so ignorant even of current events that I feel thankful when co-workers keep me posted with things I ought to know.

But whilst I value the warning given and admit the force of the argument advanced, I do not repent of my having visited H.E. the Viceroy and having had the prolonged talk. It has given me added strength. It is of great value to an army that its General gains added strength. I should therefore repeat the performance every time the Viceroy summons me, i.e., so long as I have faith in his sincerity. And every time I shall come out with greater strength than I go with. The method of satyagraha requires that the satyagrahi should never lose hope so long as there is the slightest ground left for it. For he never despairs of being able to evoke the best in his opponent, his mission being to convert the opponent, not humiliate or defeat him. He therefore even knocks at his opponent's door if it becomes necessary, as I did often with General Smuts. It so happened that the last opening, when even I had the least hope, proved the prelude to success.

There ought not to be demoralization among the ranks. It is up to the lieutenants to be in constant touch with them and explain to them the reason for, and the bearing on the struggle of, each step. For whether there is actual battle or merely preparation, the education of the masses continues without interruption. It is a great mistake to

suppose that the revolutionary instinct will die, if the garnered energies of the people have no outlet. This may be true of violent revolution but it is utterly wrong of non-violent revolution. I am quite convinced that we would put ourselves in the wrong if in our impatience we precipitate the battle or, which is the same thing, bang the door on negotiations. The battle will come at the right time when it is clear beyond doubt that there is no escape from it. Misunderstanding created in Britain or the world outside need not perturb us much for, being foundationless, it is sure to disappear in the face of our truth.

Nor need the prospect worry us, of the negotiations proving insincere in the sense of their being used as a screen to cover Britain's plans to consolidate her strength by misleading world opinion and creating and strengthening divisions among us. What does matter is our own weakness for which we alone should be to blame.

SEGAON, February 11, 1940

*Harijan*, 17-2-1940

### 385. NOTES

#### INDIA WITHOUT THE BRITISH

A retired English collector thus cables from England :

Please consider that India without British troops and the sure shield of the British navy would be at the mercy of Pathans, Afghans and Japan. The Constituent Assembly would all be in a concentration camp very quickly or killed. Satyagraha only works with civilized people who are gentlemen.

These are honest fears of an honest Englishman. But the fears are only imaginary. The English friends gives little credit to Indian nationalists when he thinks that they contemplate a Constituent Assembly in a vacuum which can be blown to pieces by any power. If there is an honourable settlement, the Constituent Assembly will meet in the presence of the British but without any interference from them. If there is no settlement, it will meet after a successful rebellion, in which case India will have made herself ready to face any emergency. There is no other contingency possible in which a Constituent Assembly can meet. These fears reflect no credit on the British regime in India. Whose fault is it that India has no army and navy of her own? But the absence of army and navy will not deter an awakened people from throwing over domination, foreign or indigenous. My

friend's ignorance of the working of satyagraha is quite excusable. I have no finished example of a nation having modelled her life on the basis of satyagraha. I can only assure him that it is not the sob-stuff he believes it to be. It is of little use if it can work only among the so-called civilized people. The partition separating the civilized from the uncivilized is very thin. Both act almost alike when their passions roused.

SEGAON, February 12, 1940

#### A CURIOUS SITUATION

The Secretary of the Valmiki Mandal, Ludhiana, says in a letter :

Under the Poona Pact<sup>1</sup>, eight seats were allotted to the Punjab Hindu Depressed Classes in the Punjab Legislative Assembly. These seats were deducted from Hindu seats. Sikh and other Depressed Class people were counted amongst their own co-religionists. The Sikh Harijans are fighting with their own high caste Sikh brethren for separate seats and we wish them full success. But we also wish that they should not encroach upon what has been allotted to us.

Consequently the Mandal has sent a petition to the Punjab Government, from which I take the relevant extracts :<sup>2</sup>

1. That, according to the Poona Pact . . . eight seats were allotted in the Punjab Legislative Assembly to Hindu Depressed Classes. . . .
2. That these seats were deducted from the total number of Hindu seats.
3. That the Sikh and Muslim Depressed Classes . . . could not become voters or members in the above-named eight constituencies.
4. That great confusion is prevalent regarding the third point.
5. That to ensure the right interpretation, and to avoid objection-petitions on a large scale, instructions may very kindly be issued, not to enlist Sikhs as voters in the above-named constituencies, or a column of religion may also be added.

The petitioner's objection is quite sound. But why should there be Sikh, Muslim or Christian untouchables ? Has the bait of power made the converts repent of their conversion ? If the problem is not carefully and justly handled, with all-round growing consciousness it may give rise to embarrassing complications. There need be no surprise if to be classed among the chosen Scheduled Classes becomes a coveted privilege instead of being a sign of reproach. Time was when those who were regarded by the Government or society as untouchables resented the appellation and were trying to avoid it. Now

<sup>1</sup> Of 1932

<sup>2</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

the emphasis is the other way. Let it be remembered in this connection that it is only Hinduism that has the dishonour of having untouchables legally known as Scheduled Classes.

SEGAON, February 12, 1940

*Harijan*, 17-2-1940

### 386. QUESTION BOX

#### UNTRUTH IN LAW COURTS

Q. I have followed with interest the controversy that has grown round your article in *Harijan* "The Fourfold Ruin"<sup>1</sup>. Whatever one may say about the arguments used on either side in this controversy, one thing I am in a position to assert without fear of contradiction, from my experience as a judicial officer of the present system of our law. Courts and the institution of lawyers are mainly responsible for the moral and spiritual degradation of our village peasantry in particular and the public in general. Even 'respectable' people, whom one has learnt to regard as the soul of honour in their ordinary everyday life, will tell barefaced lies for a trifle in a law court and think nothing of it. The canker is eating into the vitals of our village life. Would you suggest as to what a person in my position, (viz., a judge), who has to record evidence and give judicial decisions, can do to check this evil ?

A. What you say is too true. The atmosphere round law courts is debasing as any visitor passing through them can see. I hold radical views about the administration of justice. But mine, I know, is a voice in the wilderness. Vested interests will not allow radical reform unless India comes into her own through truthful and non-violent means. If that glorious event happens, the administration of law and medicine will be as cheap and healthy as it is today dear and unhealthy. The heroic advice will be for you to descend from the bench, embrace poverty and serve the poor. The prosaic will be for you to do the best you can in the very difficult circumstances in which you find yourself, reduce life to its simplest terms and devote your savings for the service of the poor.

#### AHIMSA v. SELF-RESPECT

Q. I am a university student. Yesterday evening some of us went to a cinema show. During the performance two of us went outside leaving our handkerchiefs behind on our seats. On our return we found that two British soldiers had taken possession of these seats unceremoniously in spite of the clearest warning and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Fourfold Ruin", 28-1-1940.

entreaty by our friends. When requested to vacate the seats they not only refused but showed an inclination to fight. They browbeat the cinema manager who, being Indian, was easily cowed down. In the end the garrison officer was called and they vacated their seats. If he had not appeared, there would have been only two alternatives before us, either to resort to violence and maintain our self-respect, or to allow ourselves to be browbeaten and quietly occupy some other seats. The latter would have been too humiliating. How would you apply the principle of non-violence under such circumstances ?

A. I must admit the difficulty of solving the riddle. Two ways occur to me of dealing with the situation non-violently. First, firmly to stand the ground till the seats are vacated; secondly, deliberately so to stand as to obstruct the view of the usurpers. In each case you run the risk of being beaten by the usurpers. I am not satisfied with my answers. But they meet the special circumstances in which we are placed. The ideal answer no doubt is not to bother about the usurpation of the personal right but to reason with the usurpers and, if they do not listen, to report such cases to the authorities concerned and, in case of failure, take them to the highest tribunal. This is the constitutional method which is not taboo in a non-violent conception of society. Not to take the law into one's own hands is essentially a non-violent method. But the ideal has no relation to reality in this country because the index of expectation of justice for Indians in cases where white men and specially white soldiers are concerned is almost zero. Hence it is necessary to resort to something like what I have suggested. But I know that when we have real non-violence in us a non-violent way out is bound, without effort, to occur to us when we find ourselves in a difficult situation.

#### STUDENTS AND THE COMING FIGHT

Q. Although a college student I am a four-anna member of the Congress. You say I may not take any active part in the coming struggle whilst I am studying. What part do you expect the student world to take in the freedom movement ?

A. There is a confusion of thought in the question. The fight is going on now and it will continue till the nation has come to her birthright. Civil disobedience is one of the many methods of fighting. So far as I can judge today, I have no intention of calling out students. Millions will not take part in civil disobedience, but millions will help in a variety of ways.

1. Students can, by learning the art of voluntary discipline, fit themselves for leadership in the various branches of the nation's

work.

2. They can aim not at finding lucrative careers but at becoming national servants after completing their studies.

3. They can set apart for the national coffers a certain sum from their allowances.

4. They can promote inter-communal, inter-provincial and inter-caste harmony among themselves and fraternize with Harijans by abolishing the least trace of untouchability from their lives.

5. They can spin regularly and use certified khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth as well as hawk khadi.

6. They can set apart a certain time every week, if not every day, for service in a village or villages nearest to their institutions and, during the vacation, devote a certain time daily for national service.

The time may of course come when it may be necessary to call out the students as I did before. Though the contingency is remote, it will never come, if I have any say in the matter, unless the students have qualified themselves previously in the manner above described.

SEGAON, February 12, 1940

*Harijan*, 17-2-1940

### 387. WHAT IS WOMAN'S ROLE ?

With certain omissions I quote below the following<sup>1</sup> from a highly educated sister :

You have shown the world, through ahimsa and satyagraha, the dignity of the soul. . . . But just as there is need for ahimsa and *brahmacharya* for a man to get rid of his aggressive spirit, lust . . . , etc., there is for woman need of certain principles that would enable her to get rid of her baser qualities, which are different from men's and commonly said to belong by nature to her. The natural qualities of her sex, the upbringing meted out to her because of her sex, and her environment which is created because of her sex, all are against her. And in her work these things, namely, her nature, upbringing and surroundings always get in the way and hinder her and give occasion for the hackneyed phrase, 'She is only a woman, after all' . . . I think that, if we only possess the correct solution, the correct method of improving ourselves, we could make our natural qualities, such as sympathy and tenderness, a help instead of a hindrance. The improvement just as your solution in the case of men and children, must come from within us. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Of which only excerpts are reproduced here



Your advice to me was to read *Harijan*. I do so eagerly. But so far I have not come across, well, the advice for the inner spirit. Spinning and fighting for the national freedom are only some aspects of the training. They do not seem to contain the whole solution. For I have seen women who do spin and do try to work out the Congress ideals and still commit blunders which are attributed to the fact of their being women.

. . . . Tell us, please, how to make the best use of our qualities, how to turn our disadvantages into advantages. . . .

I had flattered myself that my contribution to the woman's cause definitely began with the discovery of satyagraha. But the writer of the letter is of opinion that the fair sex requires treatment different from men. If it is so, I do not think any man will find the correct solution. No matter how much he tries, he must fail because nature has made him different from woman. Only the toad under the harrow knows where it pinches him. Therefore ultimately woman will have to determine with authority what she needs. My own opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help.

But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him. But the seers among men have recognized her equal status.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that at some point there is bifurcation. Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocations of the two must also be different. The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of women will always undertake, requires qualities which man need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the bread-winner, she is the keeper and distributor of the bread. She is the caretaker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care the race must become extinct.

In my opinion it is degrading both for man and woman that women should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end. In trying to ride the horse that

man rides, she brings herself and him down. The sin will be on man's head for tempting or compelling his companion to desert her special calling. There is as much bravery in keeping one's home in good order and condition as there is in defending it against attack from without.

As I have watched millions of peasants in their natural surroundings and as I watch them daily in little Segaoon, the natural division of spheres of work has forced itself on my attention. There are no women blacksmiths and carpenters. But men and women work on the fields, the heaviest work being done by the males. The women keep and manage the homes. They supplement the meagre resources of the family, but man remains the main bread-winner.

The division of the spheres of work being recognized, the general qualities and culture required are practically the same for both the sexes.

My contribution to the great problem lies in my presenting for acceptance truth and ahimsa in every walk of life, whether for individuals or nations. I have hugged the hope that in this woman will be the unquestioned leader and, having thus found her place in human evolution, will shed her inferiority complex. If she is able to do this successfully, she must resolutely refuse to believe in the modern teaching that everything is determined and regulated by the sex impulse. I fear I have put the proposition rather clumsily. But I hope my meaning is clear. I do not know that the millions of men who are taking an active part in the war are obsessed by the sex spectre. Nor are the peasants working together in their fields worried or dominated by it. This is not to say or suggest that they are free from the instinct implanted in man and woman. But it most certainly does not dominate their lives as it seems to dominate the lives of those who are saturated with the modern sex literature. Neither man nor woman has time for such things when he or she is faced with the hard fact of living life in its grim reality.

I have suggested in these columns that woman is the incarnation of ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure ? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour ? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who again suffers daily so

that her babe may wax from day to day ? Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.

My good nurse in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, as I was lying on a sick bed years ago<sup>1</sup>, told me the story of a woman who refused to take chloroform because she would not risk the life of the babe she was carrying. She had to undergo a painful operation. The only anaesthetic she had was her love for the babe, to save whom no suffering was too great. Let not women, who can count many such heroines among them, ever despise their sex or deplore that they were not born men. The contemplation of that heroine often makes me envy woman the status that is hers, if she only knew. There is as much reason for man to wish that he was born a woman as for woman to do otherwise. But the wish is fruitless. Let us be happy in the state to which we are born and do the duty for which nature has destined us.

SEGAON, February 12, 1940

*Harijan*, 24-2-1940

### 388. LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*February 12, 1940*

DEAR OLD SINGER,

If old women like you need blessings from young men like me, you have my blessings for one more year being written off the account against you. May your song never fade.

Love.

SPINNER

From the original: Padmaja Naidu Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

<sup>1</sup> In January 1924

389. *LETTER TO PYARELAL*

*February 12, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

My advice is that Sushila should accompany me and you should stay here. This arrangement is only for this occasion. You should not think that Sushila's intention or decision has anything to do with it. But if Sushila does not like it and you too do not like it and if Sushila has made up her mind immediately to leave Sevagram, you must go with her. If she can wait till I return from Ramgarh, then you should get ready to go with me.<sup>1</sup> If she is not willing to go with me to Ramgarh, then I insist that she should remain here till I get back. Let me know what you decide.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

390. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

*February 12, 1940*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

What advice shall I give you ? Kanchan wants to come to malikanda. If she comes, you should not come. The reason—just decency. Nevertheless I shall let you do what you wish. I should also like you yourself to think about [attending] the Congress.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Consider what dharma requires. It enjoins control of desires.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8551. Also C.W. 7071. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had to be present at Ramgarh for the Congress Working Committee discussions from March 15 to 19.

### 391. IS IT WAR ?

The Builders of the British Indian Empire have patiently built its four pillars—the European interest, the Army, the Princes and the Communal Divisions. The last three were to subserve the first. It is clear to the realist the Builders have to remove the four pillars before they can claim to have given up the Empire or the Empire spirit. But they say to the nationalists or the destroyers of the Empire spirit, ‘You have to deal with all the four pillars yourselves, before we can treat India as an independent nation instead of being our dependency.’ They say in other words, “Guarantee the European interests, make your own army, treat with the Princes and with the communalists otherwise known as minorities.’ The destroyers retort : ‘You imposed the European interest on us, for their defence you built an army and kept it a close preserve, you saw that you could use the then existing Princes for your own purpose, you made them and unmade them, you created new ones, you armed them with powers they could not enjoy before with safety, in fact you partitioned India so that it could never rise against you in one mass. You saw again that we were cursed with the caste spirit, you took advantage of our weakness and refined it till at last claims are made which, if they were satisfied, there would be no single Indian nation and no independence. Add to all this the fact that by your policy of disarmament you have emasculated a whole nation. But we do not blame you for the past. On the contrary we admire your bravery, skill and spirit of adventure. You have copied other Empire Builders who preceded you. You have improved upon them in a variety of ways. But if you profess, as you have professed, that you have decided to give India her due, then you have to remove from our way the obstacles you have created. You are entitled to ask us to recognize the difficulties in the way of your making delivery and even to help you. If you are honest, you will leave us to do the best. You must trust our sense of justice, not your strong arm, to make us do what is right and proper. Hitherto you have determined our fate for us. Now if you are earnest, you will not only let us determine the method and manner of governing ourselves but even help us to do so, if we want your help.’

Lord Zetland has given the answer<sup>1</sup> to the destroyers which I paraphrase as follows :

We mean to hold on to what we have. Within that orbit, we will let you have such freedom as we think is good for you. This war that we are fighting is to prevent the disruption of our Empire. We want your help, if you will give it on these terms. It is good for you and us. But we will do without your help if you will not give it. You are not the only party we have to deal with. There are many in India who recognize the benefits of British Rule and *pax Britannica*. We propose to win the war with the help we can command from India through the loyal agencies. Their services we shall recognize by the grant of further reforms when the time comes. This is what we mean when we say we shall make the world safe for democracy. For we are the most democratic power in the world. Therefore, if we are safe, so are those who are with us. Those like India who are under our tutelage will be initiated into the art of democracy in gradual stages so that their progress may be uninterrupted and they might not have to go through the travail we had to go through.

I hope the paraphrase does no injustice to Lord Zetland. If it is fairly correct, the issues are quite clear. Between the two—the Nationalist and the Imperialist—there is no meeting ground. If, therefore, Lord Zetland represents the British Government's considered view, it is a declaration of war against nationalist India. For all the four pillars stand firm, rock-like. The more the nationalists try to deal with them as if they were problems for which they were responsible, the firmer they must become. I cannot conscientiously pray for the success of British arms if it means a further lease of life to India's subjection to foreign domination. I write this last sentence with a heavy heart.

SEGAON, February 13, 1940

*Harijan*, 17-2-1940

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Lord Zetland's interview to the *Sunday Times* on February 11, 1940. *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 14-2-1940 and "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940.

### 392. ASHRAM NOTES

SEGAON,  
*February 13, 1940*

1. Everyone should know that Segaon is infested by poisonous snakes. Thank God, no one has been bitten so far. It is, however, our duty to be cautious. God helps only the alert. That is why I would advise everyone to make the maximum use of lanterns and to wear shoes while walking in the dark.

2. As far as possible we should make no use of servants for personal work.

3. I have been upset from the day the trip to Santiniketan was planned. I have been agitated for more than two days and today I am extremely uneasy. I feel I am failing in my duty. I am digressing from Truth in an insidious way. I have a tendency to please everyone. Not that I always succeed in doing it. But if this is overdone, it ceases to be a virtue and becomes a vice. I know that it is my duty to take with me the smallest number of persons to Malikanda and Santiniketan. Although I have obtained permission from Santiniketan to take more people,<sup>1</sup> I felt today in a flash that it would be wrong of me to take anyone whose presence was unnecessary. I have, therefore, decided that no one except Ba, Mahadev, Pyarelal, Kanu and Narayan<sup>2</sup> will accompany me. I have not been able to express a fraction of what has been going on in my heart. This is a serious decision for me. But I could not regain my peace without it.

BAPU

From Hindi : C.W. 4674

### 393. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

*February 13, 1940*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Never restrain [the prompting of] dharma. But always restrain desires. Bhagawan Patanjali has described yoga as control of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 29-1-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Narayan Desai

movements of the mind.<sup>1</sup> This time you may practise self-control.<sup>2</sup> But that does not mean that if you get another occasion of going to Santiniketan for the benefit of dharma, you should not go. My own view, though, is that as long as you do not adjust yourself to Segaon you will continue to feel restless. It is here that you will get peace sooner or later. You will not find any place where everything will be to your liking. Let us, therefore, learn the art of liking everything.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 8550. Also C.W. 7075. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

### 394. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*February 13, 1940*

CHI. JETHALAL,

Your complaints regarding management, etc., are quite just. There is no limit to our lack of order. It is also true that I have visited only a few centres. They too do not have much of life in them. How to infuse it ? One effective way of doing it is to show some extraordinary result through silent work. Anantpur<sup>3</sup> will then easily become a centre of pilgrimage. You know that that has been my dream. Never mind if God has not gifted you with literary powers, you do have faith. Other things will follow.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

It is good news that Bachu has completely recovered.

From a copy of the Gujarati : C.W. 9869. Courtesy : Narayan J. Sampat

<sup>1</sup> *Yogasutra*, 1

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah", 12-2-1940.

<sup>3</sup> Where the addressee had organized a khadi centre



### 395. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*February 13, 1940*

CHI. LILA,

I very much want to write to you, but what can I do ? Please think that Mahadev writing to you is as good as my writing.

If you cannot restrain yourself, by all means do come. But I won't be here. We leave on the 15th night.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Gujarati : C.W. 9935. Courtesy : Lilavati Asar

### 396. LETTER TO MADALASA

SEGAON,  
*February 13, 1940*

CHI. MADALASA,

So you are again down with fever, are you ? Do not feel dispirited. Get well soon. What we can gain from illness is to increase our faith in God and learn to control our nature. That also helps one to get well soon.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 320

### 397. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

SEGAON,  
*February 13, 1940*

CHI. SHARMA,

Don't send the books<sup>1</sup> by post. Send them through some person. I have not followed the other hint in your letter. Why

<sup>1</sup> On nature cure, selected by Gandhiji

“merciless love” ?<sup>1</sup> I am leaving for Bengal on the 15th.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I expect to return by the 28th.

From a facsimile of the Hindi : *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, between pp. 284 and 285

### 398. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>2</sup>

SEGAON,  
*February 14, 1940*

Lord Zetland's recent pronouncement,<sup>3</sup> if reported correctly, sets at rest all speculation regarding the Government's attitude towards the nationalist demand. I have been taught to believe that Dominion Status after the Statute of Westminster pattern is akin to independence and includes the right to secede. Therefore, I had thought there would be no difficulty about Britain allowing India to determine her own status. But Lord Zetland makes it clear that Britain, not India, has to determine it. In other words, the British hold on India must remain. He also puts the burden upon the nationalists of solving the minorities question and the like. I have shown<sup>4</sup> how impossible this is without previous recognition of India's independence, no doubt subject to safeguards. His Lordship thinks that, because some Indians have

<sup>1</sup> Referring to Gandhiji's article, *vide* "The Charkha", 9-1-1940, the addressee had pleaded with him not to be harsh with Subhas Chandra Bose who was then in indifferent health.

<sup>2</sup> This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Banging the Door".

<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of State for India said that experience of the working of the constitution in the Act of 1935 had made it clear that the problem of the minorities must be taken in hand by Indians themselves. "Long-range bombardment by leading personalities from platform and Press is little likely to lead anywhere. What is wanted is escape from the tyranny of phrases and a descent from idealism, from the abstract to the concrete. . . . I believe that only by means of discussions among those who can speak with authority for their followers, informal and in confidence in the first instance, is helpful appreciation of their respective standpoints and difficulties inherent in them to be hoped for. If such a discussion is to be faithful, there must be on all sides a genuine will to succeed and a real spirit of compromise. The British Government cannot compel these things : they can only plead for them as I most earnestly do." *Vide* also "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Is It War ?", 13-2-1940.

received the boon of English education and have learnt ideas of freedom from British writers, they will want always to be under British tutelage euphemistically called partnership. This is what I call banging the door upon the nationalist position. Does it mean a pact deadlier than was announced at the last Round Table Conference<sup>1</sup> ? If it does, it is a declaration of war against nationalists who are out to destroy the empire spirit. I submit that it is wrong to dismiss the Indian claim by accusing the nationalists of losing realities in idealism. I suggest that it is he who refuses to face realities and is wandering in a forest of unrealities. I cannot accuse him of idealism. I assure him that Nationalist India is dreadfully in earnest.

*Harijan*, 17-2-1940

### 399. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SEGAON,

*February 14, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I have picked up the pen but God alone knows if I shall be able to write what I have to write. My step is towards the quest of truth. It dawned on me that I was following the path of untruth. Yesterday the turmoil in my mind was beyond endurance. My decision has become a secondary matter. The great thing is the background of that decision. And what is the untruth? Well, there is Sushila. I take her as an example. It was an untruth to let her believe that I am keeping her as my physician. I wanted to draw her to me. The reasons are many. But all of them put together would not have attracted her. So I let her believe that she is with me as my physician. I would consider it sinful to have her principally as my physician. I would consider it the proper thing for her to give me medical care while doing my other work. This would not always include her travelling with me. Whatever work I entrusted to her would be service done to me. And while doing that work she could also look after my medical needs and be content. This attitude of 'all or nothing' is a great mistake. How long am I going to live? How can she have the heart to leave me? Why does she forget that she does so many other jobs for me? I consider it sheer obstinacy on her part even to overlook the fact that her presence will give you the satisfaction of being near her. You will please her. Now you guide

<sup>1</sup> In 1931

her in any way you think proper. I consider it your duty to accompany me. Now I come to the main point. If I have to lose Sushila it will be because of the untruth which I have mentioned. If I had not resorted to it, Sushila would not possibly have come. If that had happened, no harm would have come to her. Now if she leaves, there is danger of her being harmed. The blame then would be on me. There was untruth in saying 'yes' to Kanchan, etc. There was untruth in saying 'yes' to Rajkumari. It was softness on my part to give them the impression of being needed when I actually did not need them. There is no place for softness in truth, for otherwise there is no non-violence in it. If I did not see their good in their coming to Santiniketan and Malikanda it was my duty to firmly stop them. Yesterday God granted me the strength to follow that path of duty. I could not tell them so in the manner I wanted to. But take it as it is. My way will become easier if you follow this.

*Blessings from  
BAPU*

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

#### *400. LETTER TO PYARELAL*

*After 1.00 a.m. [Before February 15, 1940]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I am truly tormented. So I am up and write this.

The more I think the more I can see it as clearly as daylight that what Sushila demands or desires is incompatible with dharma. This is how I understand her position. She will stay with me only if she can accompany me as my physician wherever I go; otherwise she will leave. I must not accept this demand. Of course there are occasions when she has to go around with me for one reason or another. At present even that is not the case. I would look upon it as plain *adharma* if Sushila should leave me now because I cannot accept her demand. In my heart I can find no justification for her going away. This is a critical period for me. I need her services for other things if not for my body. And I need you. If Sushila is around she will

<sup>1</sup>From the contents it appears that the letter was written before Gandhiii left Wardha on February 15, 1940 for Calcutta.

certainly look after my bodily comforts. If both of you look upon it as your dharma to quit all this, then by all means Sushila may go. And surely you will take her. If you regard this as your dharma, you have to fulfil it. I see in it nothing but *adharma*. And I cannot bless what I regard as *adharma*. I can only pray that God may make both of you follow dharma. There is no place for sentiment here. I have only considered what is dharma for all three of us.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

#### 401. LETTER TO PYARELAL

*February 15, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I like your letter very much. I would like to make a few comments. But there is no time now. Your decision is not right. Sushila has got to be persuaded that she cannot accompany me on this tour. She is being unreasonably obstinate. She can be taken only at the cost of the truth I have discovered. I cannot explain this in a sentence or two. If she cannot be at peace and if you find it necessary for you to stay back you may do so. Of course, that would reveal Sushila's childishness. This thing is so clear that she must understand it. You should have the power to make her understand. Send a telegram to Prakash if you think it necessary. Maybe she will understand the point. All this hurts me a lot, but following the path of truth is more difficult than walking on the edge of a sword. May that truth be revealed to you. I am still hopeful that Sushila herself will realize this and give up the obstinacy.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Do Sushila Nayyar

#### 402. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

February 15, 1940

CHI. SUSHILA,

What can I write to you ? Whatever I have done has been out of a sense of duty. You must calm down. Accept my advice. Forget about leaving. Have trust in God. Ba is unhappy about the talk of your going. The matter came up while we were in the car. It is not at all proper for you to be obstinate.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

#### 403. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

SEVAGRAM,  
WARDHA,

[Before February 15, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. SUSHILA,

Received your two letters. How should I reply to you? You see everything in me from the wrong end. I have never said that you cannot move with me at all. It is likely that you would go with me from time to time. But I do not agree to the distinctions you made. The belief that Kanu is in one compartment and A. S. in another is incorrect for all times. It is I who must decide from time to time who would go with me and at what time. But your letters suggest that we are looking at it from different vantage points. May it be so.

I am sending three articles this time.

I see no meaning in the Prabhudas affair. How does it matter to you if Devdas has taken a distorted view? That image of three monkeys should be with you, not with me. Do you want it?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

<sup>1</sup> From the contents. In 1940, Gandhiji left Wardha for Calcutta on February 15 on a month-long tour and had been writing to the addressee, dissuading her from accompanying him on his tour; *vide* "Letter to Sushila Nayyar", 3-2-1940.

#### 404. LETTER TO SHAMBHUSHANKAR TRIVEDI

SEGAON,  
February 15, 1940

CHI. SHAMBHUSHANKAR,

I keep on getting news of you. Some friends write to me that I prompted you to undertake the fast. I hope you don't think so. Let me state my position. I have no right to recommend a fast to you or to anyone. A fast may be undertaken only when prompted from within. Hence this attitude on my part. You write that there was a clear breach of promise. You broke your fast after you had secured the promise. Then you asked me whether it was contrary to dharma to undertake it now that the promise was broken. And I replied that it was not so, in fact it could be your dharma. Hence if you have the slightest doubt please give up the fast. If you have no doubts, may God grant you the strength to hold fast to your resolve. I am happy to know that you are at peace. May your peace of mind last for ever.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

#### 405. QUESTION BOX

##### UNITY v. JUSTICE

Q. In your article "Unity v. Justice"<sup>1</sup> you say that, if you give more than his due to your brother, you neither bribe him nor do you do an injustice. You say : "I can disarm suspicion only by being generous. Justice without generosity is done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done." I submit that justice and generosity cannot go hand in hand. As Dryden has rightly observed, "Justice is blind, it knows nobody." Besides, you can be generous to the weak, meek and the humble, not to one who in the arrogance of his strength seeks to coerce you into submission. To give more than his due to such a person is not generosity but cowardly surrender. Though Hindus are numerically stronger, their majority, as you yourself have pointed out, is only fictitious and actually they are the weaker party. Besides, if generosity is to be shown to the Muslims, the only organization that is competent to offer it is the Hindu Mahasabha. What right has a third party to be generous to one of the two

<sup>1</sup>Vide "Unity v. Justice", 23-1-1940.

parties to a dispute at the other party's expense ?

A. In my article referred to by you I have dealt with general principles, not with particular minorities. Even as justice to be justice has to be generous, generosity in order to justify itself has got to be strictly just. Therefore it should not be at the expense of any single interest. Hence there cannot be any question of sacrificing some minority or minorities, for the benefit of any minority. You are right again in con-tending that generosity has to be shown to the weak and the humble, and not to the bully. Nevertheless I would say, on behalf of the bully, that even he is entitled to justice, for immediately you brush aside the bully and be unjust to him you justify his bullying. Thus the only safe—not to put it higher—rule of conduct is to do generous justice, irrespective of the character of the minority. I am quite sure that where there is strictest justice the question of a majority and minority would not arise. The bully is a portent and is an answer to some existing circumstance, as, for instance, cowardice. It is often forgotten that cowardice can be unjust. The fact is that cowards have no sense of justice. They yield only to threat, or actual use of force. I do not know that there is any question of choice between a coward and a bully. The one is as bad as the other, with this difference that the bully always follows the coward in point of time.

In a previous issue I have admitted that the proper organization to enter into settlements is the Hindu Mahasabha, so far as Hindus are concerned, or any such organization.<sup>1</sup> The Congress endeavours to represent all communities. It is not by design, but by the accident of Hindus being politically more conscious than the others, that the Congress contains a majority of Hindus. As history proves the Congress is a joint creation of Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Hindus, led by Englishmen, be it said to the credit of the latter. And the Congress, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, retains that character. At the present moment a Muslim divine is the unquestioned leader of the Congress and for the second time becomes its President.<sup>2</sup> The constant endeavour of Congressmen has been to have as many members as possible drawn from the various communities, and therefore the Congress has entered into pacts for the purpose of securing national solidarity. It cannot, therefore, divest itself of that

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Is Congress a Hindu Organisation?", 13-11-1939

<sup>2</sup> Abul Kalam Azad was President-elect of the forthcoming Congress session at Ramgarh.



function, and therefore, although I have made the admission that the Hindu Mahasabha or a similar Hindu organization can properly have communal settlements, the Congress cannot and must not plead incapacity for entering into political pacts so long as it commands general confidence.

ON THE TRAIN TO CALCUTTA, February 16, 1940

*Harijan*, 24-2-1940

#### 406. NOTES

##### CLEAR INJUSTICE

The Secretary of the Seng Khasi Free Morning School, Mawkhar, Shillong, has sent a circular letter to those who are concerned in matters educational and has favoured me also with a copy. I extract the following from it :<sup>1</sup>

The British Government gave education grants to the Christian missionaries for spreading education among the people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District. The missionaries printed the textbooks for schools according to their liking and choice. . . . They translated the Bible into Khasi language and made it a textbook for schools. . . . Some pure Khasi gentlemen . . . started the Seng Khasi Free Morning School as early as 1921, with a view to preserving Khasi national culture. . . . The Deputy Inspector of Schools, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, desired us to follow the curriculum prescribed by his department. I agreed to accept the curriculum provided that those books written or compiled by the missionaries are not included in the curriculum of the Seng Khasi School. The Deputy Inspector of Schools did not recommend this school for a grant from the Government on the plea that the curriculum was not followed in the school. . . . It is a matter of great regret that the Deputy Inspector of Schools compels this school to teach missionary books and frustrate the very object with which it was established.

If what is stated here is true, it enforces the argument often advanced by me that Christian missionary effort has been favoured by the ruling power. But I advertise the circular not for the sake of emphasizing my argument. I do so in order to ventilate the grievance of the Secretary of the school. Surely he has every right to object to teaching proselytizing literature prepared by the missionaries. It should be remembered that the school has been in receipt of a grant from Government. It is not clear why the question of the missionary books has now cropped up. It is to be hoped that the school will not

<sup>1</sup>Only excerpts are reproduced here,

be deprived of the grant because of the Secretary's very reasonable objection.

#### SKIMMED MILK

Prof. Warner of Allahabad Agricultural Institute sends me a copy of a note submitted by him to a Municipal Board in U. P. The Board has passed a bye-law requiring that "all skimmed milk sold in the city should be coloured in order that it may be easily identified as skimmed milk, thereby preventing its use in diluting or adulterating whole milk." Prof. Warner is of opinion that this is a dangerous bye-law whose effect would be total destruction of a valuable protective food. He has shown in the note, I think conclusively, that skimmed milk as an article of food is not to be despised, the only difference between whole milk and skimmed milk being that a large percentage of fat is removed from skimmed milk for preparing butter, but the milk retains all the salts and all the proteins. Adulteration, therefore, of whole milk with skimmed milk produces very little effect upon its nutritive value. Only the percentage of fat is reduced somewhat. He gives figures in support of his argument which I need not reproduce. He does not mind bye-laws preventing adulteration even with skimmed milk. But he strongly objects, and I think rightly, to destroying skimmed milk by colouring it, and he shows that not only is a valuable article of diet taken away from the mouths of poor people, but the danger of adulteration of milk with water increases. And this danger is very real, because the greater the percentage of water the lower is the nutritive value of milk. And add to this the fact that the water itself may be impure. Prof. Warner draws a distinction between requiring the colouring of vegetable ghee for preventing adulteration of real ghee, and the colouring of skimmed milk. It is wholly necessary that vegetable ghee should be coloured with some innocuous dye. Coloured vegetable ghee will be used by the people for its cheapness. But as there is already prejudice against skimmed milk people will refuse to take coloured skimmed milk, even though the colouring matter may be utterly innocuous. I would on my own behalf enforce Prof. Warner's argument by suggesting that municipalities will do well to popularize the use of skimmed milk. It can be sold very cheap and it is a perfectly wholesome thing both for the rich and the poor, and is a good sick man's diet, when whole milk is rejected by the digestive apparatus.

ON THE TRAIN TO CALCUTTA, February 16, 1940

*Harijan*, 9-3-1940

## 407. SPEECH AT SANTINIKETAN<sup>1</sup>

February 17, 1940

My uppermost feelings on arriving here are about Deenabandhu<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps you do not know that the first thing I did yesterday morning on alighting from the train at Calcutta was to pay him a visit in the hospital. Gurudev is a world poet, but Deenabandhu too has the spirit and temperament of a poet in him. He had long yearned to be present on the present occasion, to drink in and store up the memory of every word, movement and gesture relating to the meeting with Gurudev. But God had willed it otherwise and he now lies in Calcutta, stricken down and unable even to make full use of his speech. I would like you all to join me in the prayer that God may restore him to us soon, and, in any case, may grant his spirit peace.

I know what love Gurudev has for me.<sup>3</sup> I recollect the early days of the Ashram in 1915 when I had nowhere to lay my head. I have not come here as a stranger or a guest. Santiniketan has been more than a home to me. It was here that the members of my South African family found warm hospitality in 1914, pending my arrival from England, and I too found shelter here for nearly a month. The memories of those days crowd in upon me as I see you all here, assembled before me. It grieves me that I cannot prolong my stay here as I would have loved to. It is a question of duty. In a letter to a friend, the other day, I described my present trip to Santiniketan and Malikanda as a pilgrimage. Santiniketan has truly, this time, proved

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Pyarelal's "The Santiniketan Pilgrimage". Welcoming Gandhiji, Rabindranath Tagore said : "I hope we shall be able to keep close to a reticent expression of love in welcoming you into our Ashram and never allow it to overflow into any extravagant display of phrases. Homage to the great naturally seeks its manifestation in the language of simplicity and we offer you these few words to let you know that we accept you as our own, as one belonging to all humanity.

"Just at this moment there are problems that darken our destiny. These we know are crowding your path and none of us is free from their attack. Let us for a while pass beyond the bounds of this turmoil and make our meeting today a simple meeting of hearts whose memory will remain when all the moral confusions of our distracted politics will be allayed and the eternal value of our endeavour will be revealed."

<sup>2</sup> C. F. Andrews

<sup>3</sup> This and the following sentence are from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

for me a 'niketan' of 'shanti'—an abode of peace.<sup>1</sup> I have come here leaving behind me all the cares and burdens of politics,<sup>2</sup> simply to have Gurudev's *darshan* and blessings. I have often claimed myself to be an accomplished beggar. But a more precious gift has never dropped into my beggar's bowl than Gurudev's blessings today. I know his blessings are with me always. But it has been my privilege today to receive the same from him in person, and that fills me with joy. Words are useless when the relation is one of love.<sup>3</sup>

*Harijan*, 9-3-1940, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18-2-1940

#### 408. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SANTINIKETAN,  
February 18, 1940

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have your wires. My hand was not badly hurt. The slightest hurt to a Mahatma must be duly magnified. Nor was there any hostility shown anywhere.

The embargo<sup>4</sup> that was prompted by the voice within has justified itself as I can see.

You took it extraordinarily well and it was a great relief to me. I hope you are keeping well and the whole family is acting like a family. I want you to interest yourself in every detail without obtrusion. The interest must be after the Sir Gibbie style. "Let not thy right hand know what the left doeth."<sup>5</sup> Or does it begin with the 'left' ?

Poor Bablo got ill just when he might have enjoyed himself. M[ahadev] had to take him today to Calcutta.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original : C.W. 3666. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6475

<sup>1</sup> According to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Gandhiji when confronted by Press correspondents earlier had remarked, "I have come in quest of peace and refuse to be disturbed."

<sup>2</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has : "In Santiniketan I have come without the burdens of politics I usually carry."

<sup>3</sup> This sentence is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

<sup>4</sup> Vide "Ashram Notes", 13-2-1940.

<sup>5</sup> *St. Matthew*, vi, 3

*409. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI*

SANTINIKETAN,  
*February 18, 1940*

CHI. VALJI,

I trust you are doing well there. Do not leave Segaoon until you are fully restored. Mix with everybody with an open heart. Go for walks in company and talk [with everybody]. You must be having a good massage every day.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C.W 7490. Courtesy : Valji G. Desai

*410. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH*

SANTINIKETAN,  
*February 18, 1940*

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I trust you are doing well. Since Sushilabehn is there, I do not worry about anything. I hope you are well looked after. A[mtul] S[alaam]behn was worrying about you.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 9734. Also C.W. 714. Courtesy : Navajivan Trust

*411. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

SANTINIKETAN,  
*February 18, 1940*

STUPID DAUGHTER SUSHILA,

I think of you wherever I am. At the same time I can see that what seemed as harshness on my part was really not harshness. It was right not to have brought you and others here. The reasons were several. It is unnecessary to dilate upon them, I hope you are in good health and fine spirit. I have sent Mahadev to Calcutta today as Bablo has been taken ill. Poor Bablo could see nothing [here]. I am doing well. I could not have the massage. Other things are going on as usual. I go to bed early at night. I had my hand caught in the window. Now

it is all right. The injury was slight.

I hope Valjibhai and Kunverji are well. Zohra and Shirin met me. Zohra must have sent my message.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Dr. Sushila Nayyar

#### *412. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

SANTINIKETAN,

*February 18, 1940*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Your foot should improve. I hope Balkrishna is well. I am all right. The injury to my hand was not serious at all.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 4338

#### *413. MESSAGE TO SANTINIKETAN*

SANTINIKETAN,

*February 18, 1940*

All Santiniketan knows or should know what relationship subsisted between Boro Dada<sup>1</sup> and me. It was a deeply spiritual bond. Death has not dissolved it. It should therefore be taken for granted that I shall be with you all in spirit at the forthcoming function.

M. K. GANDHI

From the original : C.W. 10209. Courtesy : Visvabharati, Santiniketan

<sup>1</sup> Dwijendranath, elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore

#### 414. SPEECH AT SRINIKETAN<sup>1</sup>

February 18, 1940

Silence is good speech. There have been many developments here since my first visit.<sup>2</sup> I am glad to see the progress that has been made, both in Santiniketan and Sriniketan, and I pray that you may render service to the poor villagers and Santhals in the neighbouring areas.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19-2-1940

#### 415. DISCUSSION WITH PACIFISTS<sup>3</sup>

[On or before February 19, 1940]<sup>4</sup>

[Q.] Supposing in the presence of superior brute force one feels helpless, would one be justified in using just enough force to prevent the perpetration of wrong ?

[A.] Yes, but there need not be that feeling of helplessness if there is real non-violence in you. To feel helpless in the presence of violence is not non-violence but cowardice. Non-violence should not be mixed up with cowardice.

Suppose someone came and hurled insult at you, should you allow yourself to be thus humiliated ?

If you feel humiliated, you will be justified in slapping the bully in the face or taking whatever action you might deem necessary to vindicate your self-respect. The use of force, under the circumstances, would be the natural consequence if you are not a coward. But there should be no feeling of humiliation in you if you have assimilated the non-violence spirit. Your non-violent behaviour would then either make the bully feel ashamed of himself and prevent the insult, or

<sup>1</sup> As Gandhiji was about to leave after visiting the rural reconstruction centre of the Visvabharati he was asked to say a few words.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier, Gandhiji had remarked : "The place has grown beyond recognition."

<sup>3</sup> Reproduced from Pyarelal's "An Interlude at Santiniketan". A group of pacifists which included some Quaker friends, led by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, met Gandhiji at Santiniketan.

<sup>4</sup> The report is date-lined "On Train, February 17, 1940". Obviously February 17 is a slip since the discussion took place "during Gandhiji's two days' stay at Santiniketan from February 17 to 19.

make you immune against it so that the insult would remain only in the bully's mouth and not touch you at all.

Supposing there is a person with a diseased mind—a lunatic run amuck, bent upon murder, or you arrive on the scene of trouble when the situation has already advanced too far. An infuriated mob has got out of hand, and you feel helpless, would you justify the use of physical force to restrain the lunatic in the first case, or allow the use, say, of tear-gas in the latter ?

I will excuse it for all time. But I would not say it is justified from the non-violent standpoint. I would say that there was not that degree of non-violence in you to give you confidence in purely non-violent treatment. If you had, your simple presence would be sufficient to pacify the lunatic. Non-violence carries within it its own sanction. It is not a mechanical thing. You do not become non-violent by merely saying, 'I shall not use force.' It must be felt in the heart. There must be within you an upwelling of love and pity towards the wrongdoer. When there is that feeling it will express itself through some action. It may be a sign, a glance, even silence. But such as it is it will melt the heart of the wrongdoer and check the wrong.

The use of tear-gas is not justified in terms of the non-violent ideal. But I would defend its use against the whole world if I found myself in a corner when I could not save a helpless girl from violation or prevent an infuriated crowd from indulging in madness, except by its use. God would not excuse me if, on the Judgment Day, I were to plead before Him that I could not prevent these things from happening because I was held back by my creed of non-violence. Non-violence is self-acting. A fully non-violent person is by nature incapable of using violence or rather has no use for it. His non-violence is all-sufficing under all circumstances.

Therefore, when I say that the use of force is wrong in whatever degree and under whatever circumstances, I mean it in a relative sense. It is much better for me to say I have not sufficient non-violence in me, than to admit exceptions to an eternal principle. Moreover my refusal to admit exceptions spurs me to perfect myself in the technique of non-violence. I literally believe in Patanjali's aphorism that violence ceases in the presence of non-violence.<sup>1</sup>

Can a State carry on strictly according to the principle of non-violence ?

A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-

<sup>1</sup> *Yogasutra*



violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it. A Government representing such society will use the least amount of force. But no Government worth its name can suffer anarchy to prevail. Hence I have said that even under a Government based primarily on non-violence a small police force will be necessary.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 9-3-1940

#### 416. COMMUNAL DECISION

During my brief stay in Bengal I have been overwhelmed with questions on the Communal Decision. I have been told that neither the Working Committee nor I have pronounced decisive opinion on it. The Working Committee's decision is written in its records and has been published.<sup>2</sup> It has neither accepted nor rejected the Decision. There can be neither acceptance nor rejection of an imposed thing. A prisoner is not required to accept the sentence pronounced against him. His rejection would be meaningless. For he would soon find himself undeceived. The Communal Decision has been imposed upon India not for her own good but for strengthening the British imperial hold on India. The Working Committee has, therefore, as much accepted and as much rejected the Decision as Bengal has. There is this difference, however, that the Working Committee has not agitated against it like Bengal.

For me, I detest the Decision. It has benefited no single party in India but the British. If the Muslims flatter themselves with the belief that they have profited by it, they will soon find that they were sadly mistaken. If I could alter the Decision and make it what it should be, I should do so this very moment. But I have no such power. The power can only come if there is unity. Bengal is the most glaring instance of injustice. I can conceive of no just reason for putting the wedge of the tremendous European vote between the two major communities. Their number is insignificant. Their interest is protected by the British bayonet. Why should that interest have added strength given to it by

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 6-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> The Congress Working Committee passed the resolution at Bombay in June 1934. *Vide* Appendix "Resolution on White Paper and Communal Award", 18-6-1934.

its introduction in the legislature ? I can understand its representation without vote so as to enable it to put its case before the legislature. So long as it has the protection of the British bayonet, its over-representation on the legislature is a wholly unjust imposition. The whole face of the Bengal legislature would be changed if the European vote was withdrawn. Today that legislature is not wholly responsible to the people, the real voters. The European bloc gives peace neither to the Muslims nor the Hindus. Muslim ministers may flatter themselves with the belief that they are safe with the European vote. They may be safe as individuals, but the national interest cannot be safe if a body of persons who are numerically insignificant are given an artificially decisive voting strength in a democratic assembly. It deprives the latter of its democratic character.

Thus the evil contained in the Decision I know. But I do not know how to deal with it except by patient endeavour. This I do know that there can be no real swaraj so long as that Decision stands. Bengal is a glaring instance of the inequity. Assam is another. A critical examination of the Decision would show that it has very little to recommend itself from the national standpoint. It can be altered either by the British Government redressing the wrong or by successful rebellion. I was going to add by mutual agreement. But that seems an impossibility even if Hindus and Muslims agreed. Europeans have also to agree, and they have to agree to self-abnegation—an event unknown in politics. If there was self-abnegation, there would [be] no European interest in India which is hostile to the national interest. He will be a bold man who will assert and hope to prove that there was in India no European interest hostile to the nation.

ON THE TRAIN TO CALCUTTA, February 19, 1940

*Harijan*, 24-2-1940

#### 417. NOTE TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

*February 19, 1940*

A publication like this<sup>1</sup> should have an exhaustive index. Even the second edition [is] not having it. You should prepare one and sell it separately.

From a microfilm. Courtesy : National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

<sup>1</sup> To *the Students*, a collection of Gandhiji's writings compiled by the addressee

418. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ON THE WAY TO CALCUTTA,  
February 19, 1940

DEAR GURUDEV,

The touching note<sup>1</sup> that you put into my hands as we parted has gone straight into my heart. Of course Visvabharati is a national institution. It is undoubtedly also international. You may depend upon my doing all I can in the common endeavour to assure its permanence.

I look to you to keep your promise to sleep religiously for about an hour daily during the day.

Though I have always regarded Santiniketan as my second home, this visit has brought me nearer to it than ever before.

With reverence and love,

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 1535

419. LETTER TO V. A. SUNDARAM

ON THE TRAIN,  
February 19, 1940

MY DEAR SUNDARAM,

Your wire was received too late to send you a wire in time. Therefore this carries my blessings for the humble wearer of *upanayan*<sup>2</sup>.

Love to you all.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 3180

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "What I Saw in Santiniketan", 26-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Obviously a slip for *Yajnopavita*, the sacred thread. *Upanayan* is the ceremony of investing one with the sacred thread.

## 420. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON

CALCUTTA,  
[February 19, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

AGATHA HARRISON  
2 CRANBOURNE COURT  
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD  
LONDON

ANDREWS SLOWLY IMPROVING. EVERY CARE BEING  
TAKEN. INFORM HIS SISTER.<sup>2</sup>

GANDHI

From the original : C.W. 10210. Courtesy : Visvabharati, Santiniketan

## 421. A TESTAMENT

All the wills made by me previously may be treated as cancelled and this may be considered as my final Will.

I do not regard anything as my personal property. Nevertheless, of whatever may be regarded in custom and in law as my property, movable or immovable, and of the copyrights of the books and articles, published or unpublished, written by me hithertofore or that may be written by me hereafter, I appoint "Navajivan", of which Shri Mohanlal Maganlal Bhatt and I made a Declaration of Trust, which was registered on 26-11-1929,<sup>3</sup> and of which Shri Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, Shri Mahadev Haribhai Desai and Shri Narahari Dwarkadas Parikh are the present Trustees, as the sole heirs.

From the net profits accruing from the sale of the said books and from their copyrights "Navajivan" shall contribute twenty-five per cent every year to the Harijan Sevak Sangh for Harijan work.

I nominate Mahadev Haribhai Desai and Narahari Dwarkadas Parikh Executors for the purpose of this Will. In their absence,

<sup>1</sup> During his day's stay at Calcutta *en route* to Malikanda, Gandhiji visited C. F. Andrews on February 19.

<sup>2</sup> The cable has the following note by the addressee : "Sent to sister. Informed Press 20-2-40".

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Declaration of Trust", 26-11-1929.

through death or any other reason, others will have the right to administer the property.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

MALIKANDA, February 20, 1940

Witnesses :

PYARELAL NAYYAR, 20-2-40

KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA, 20-2-40

From Gujarati : C.W. 2686. Courtesy : Navajivan Trust

#### *422. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

SEGAON,

*February 20, 1940*

CHI. DEVDAS,

I like your advocacy of the Viceroy's case. But you have been so carried away that you have lost sense. I would certainly not be discourteous, you may be sure of it. There is no need to elaborate on what he has said.<sup>1</sup> I had already said I was ready to stay on till the 14th if that was necessary. As such, I had nothing more to offer. It was futile to prolong my stay. My firmness was about the case. What can I do about it? If I give the reason suggested by you, it would mean giving a wrong explanation for postponing civil disobedience. He liked what I said. I said that we ourselves were not prepared. Moreover, where is the question of a conflict so long as there is hope? What we have to see is whether my belief that he is a clean man turns out to be true or he is playing a double game. The newspapers and letters I receive raise a doubt. In reply to the remark "Bapu ruined everything in a hurry" you say that it was the situation in Bengal that did it. That is far from the truth and is unfair to me. What kind of a general would I be if I were so weak? During our talk I had in mind neither the Bengal situation nor the Working Committee. It was only my own inclination. If I think of our own weakness, I should ask for

<sup>1</sup>Gandhiji had met the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow in Delhi on February 5 for his statement to the press emphasizing the vital differences between the Congress demand for freedom and the Viceroy's offer; *vide* "Interview to *Deshabhimani*", 23-9-1921.

less. But is not my case altogether different? Is Great Britain herself prepared to do justice?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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*423. SPEECH AT KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES  
EXHIBITION<sup>1</sup>*

MALIKANDA,

*February 20, 1940*

If you remain quiet, my voice will reach you. I just now heard some people shouting “Down with Gandhism”. Those who want to put down Gandhism have every right to say so. Those who have come to hear me will please keep quiet and not get excited by hostile slogans nor shout counter-slogans of “*Gandhijiki Jai*”. If you are non-violent, you should calmly tolerate such slogans. If there is any trace of untruth in Gandhism, it must perish. If it contains truth, lakhs and crores of voices clamouring for its destruction will not destroy it. Allow freedom to those who want to say anything against Gandhism. That will cause no harm. Do not bear any grudge or malice against them. You cannot realize ahimsa unless you can calmly tolerate your opponents. In truth, I myself do not know what Gandhism means. I have not given anything new to the country. I have only given a new form to the traditional [wisdom] of India. It would therefore be wrong to call it Gandhism.

We have not assembled here for any political activity. We have come here to devise ways and means for fulfilling the principal objective of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. I cordially invite those who shouted hostile slogans to say whatever they like and give vent to their views. Why should we look upon each other as enemies? What if our views differ? We should remain friends because we all love India and want her to be free. One party follows one path and another party prefers a different path; but our goal remains the same. Why then should there be any enmity?

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji declared the Exhibition open soon after his arrival in Malikanda in the morning.

You have gathered here in such large numbers; but you remained orderly and disciplined to allow me to get here. I hope your discipline will set the model for others. If we do not cultivate discipline, we cannot attain swaraj for the millions.

Now I declare the Exhibition open. I have not yet seen it myself. It would have been right and proper for me to have seen it first.

The exhibits here have a special message. The Exhibition will remind you of industries the revival of which will enrich India. These days man takes pride in inert and lifeless machines. It is, however, my conviction that man is the most exquisite machine. Is there any machine in the world more miraculous and more minutely made than man ? God is its Maker. Manmade machines are lifeless. I do not understand why people should take pride in such machines. Man, the machine, is unique because it throbs with life. The ten fingers and two hands of man, with the brain he possesses, can work wonders beyond the ken of machines. I want every man and woman from every part of India to realize what art and skill are hidden in their heads and hands.

God has gifted us with hands not for fighting amongst ourselves. He has given them so that we may serve and help one another. He has given us brains so that we may use our hands to create things useful for each other. Those who use their hands and heads for this purpose can alone pursue peace. They can give a good account of their time to God.

With these words, I declare the Exhibition open. I hope thousands of you will visit the Exhibition and benefit from it.

[From Hindi]

*Gandhi Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan (Malikanda-Bengal) ka Vivaran.*

#### 424. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING—I<sup>1</sup>

MALIKANDA,  
*February 21, 1940*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Bhai Jajuji has already told you that Kishorelal was determined to attend this session, but I prevented him. He was keen on listening to what I have to say to you. I told him that he need not hear it. But his

<sup>1</sup> The session started at 7.30 a.m. Shrikrishnadas Jaju took over as President in place of Kishorelal Mashruwala who was unwell.

heart does not consent. So he said he would lie in his room and listen to my speech through the loudspeaker. He could listen to his own speech when it was being read out yesterday. Today he will listen to my speech, too, in the same manner. I am in two minds today. This does not normally happen—whatever I want to say, the words come to me spontaneously. I do not know if that will happen today. Although I am still thinking what advice I should give you, yet even at this moment I do not have a clear idea of the advice I am going to offer you.

First, I wish to say a few things about Prafulla Babu's<sup>1</sup> remarks. If his words really reflect the feelings in his heart, I would say he has fully understood my view. I have deliberately employed the word 'if' by way of caution. How can I probe the heart of any man? If he has uttered these words only in a fit of passion or being led away by his enthusiasm, if he has not weighed the meaning of every single word that he uttered, these words will benefit none. However, I hope and trust that his words are not empty utterances but reflect his [deep] faith. I too agree with him that if the Gandhi Seva Sangh were to confine itself exclusively to constructive activity, principally spinning, we can win swaraj. These are my views but I have not the courage to express them. Prafulla Babu dared to express them without hesitation.

He said that two or three hundred workers were not enough, we need at least a lakh of them. But we have a population of 30 crores. One lakh in thirty crores is like a drop in the ocean. However, if a lakh of workers act with faith, they can generate great power. This is a matter of faith, not of proof. It cannot be measured in figures. I am also keeping count of figures. It will have to be proved with figures how the charkha can clothe the country. I have asked Krishnadas Gandhi to work out these figures. I am myself working on them and have asked others to do likewise. I shall publish the results of these calculations when they are complete.

Prafulla Babu emphasized that every one of the workers should spin at least a hundred thousand yards [every year]. This is not a matter merely of figures. He went further and said he was convinced that the charkha was the symbol of non-violence. If a devoted man works with this faith, he will infect others. The infection of disease, too, spreads; but that is harmful. The infection of faith is fruitful. When a disease sets in, we get panicky because, as it spreads, it spells

<sup>1</sup> P. C. Ghosh



destruction. But there is no doubt that if everyone gets the infection of the charkha swaraj will be ours.

I however felt that the few of us who are sitting here hardly believe this. Perhaps my suspicion is well-founded. They doubt whether the charkha alone will win swaraj. But later this 'alone' ceases to be. The same charkha generates a great power. As I have said so often, the charkha is the sun round which all other planets revolve. The acorn is so tiny; but when it takes firm root and grows into an oak, it spreads and supports so much foliage. When the charkha mentality spreads, the charkha will not remain alone. It will accommodate so many other industries under its aegis. Its fragrance will pervade the whole world.

But above all the charkha is the symbol of non-violence and whoever takes it up must do so with faith in ahimsa. Sir Nil Ratan Sarkar said the same thing the other day. I had gone to see him. He is laid up with paralysis. He wept holding my hand. He talked about the charkha. He said : "If we develop faith in the charkha, our country will rise." I know invalid persons become sentimental, but there was truth in what Sir Nil Ratan said. All this means my non-violence is still imperfect. You are all participating in the attempt to perfect it. What Prafulla Babu said also means the same thing. If you accept the charkha with all this faith, the Sangh will have fulfilled its mission.<sup>1</sup>

Kishorelal has joined us, disobeying orders.<sup>2</sup>

Well, then, I shall turn to the main question, "What shall we do with the Sangh ?" I discussed this matter with Kishorelal. I cannot say that we arrived at a final conclusion. Nor do I propose to place any new argument before you. I am not clear in my mind what definite advice I should offer you. If things get clarified while exchanging ideas with you here, some definite advice may come from my lips. Otherwise the flow of my words will dry up. It is not like the flow of the Padma<sup>3</sup> which makes its way wherever it spreads.

The question is : 'Should we allow the Sangh to continue or not ?' And from this the second question arises : 'If yes, should we change its present form or maintain the *status quo* ?'

I can supply arguments in support of both the views. We are

<sup>1</sup> At this stage Kishorelal Mashruwala arrived at the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Kishorelal Mashruwala replied that he had come with the doctor's permission, because he could not hear properly from his bed.

<sup>3</sup> The session was being held on the bank of the river Padma.

going to lose nothing if we wind it up, and if we change it, we have to do so radically. But I am not yet quite definite about the nature of the change. Hence I shall first explain how we lose nothing by winding up the Sangh. Maybe, my ideas spring from cowardice. But I do not think so. I shall now explain how.

The slogan “Down with Gandhism”, which these people are shouting is not without meaning. For if Gandhism means simply a mechanical plying of the charkha, it deserves to be destroyed. When I explained the significance of Prafulla Babu’s suggestion of spinning a hundred thousand yards of yarn, we must not take it in the literal sense. I know the other side [of the argument] also. Mere plying of the wheel will lead the country nowhere. Even in old days many invalids and women used to spin, but they were steeped in slavery. While Kautilya<sup>1</sup> mentions that the charkha was plied during those days, he has also said that the charkha was made to ply under penal action by the State. The spinning was not voluntary but forced labour of the helpless. The women used to sit in a row for spinning, but all that was forced on them. All these are recorded facts; I am not reporting hearsay accounts. If we seek to revive the charkha, as it used to be, then it must be destroyed and along with it should go Gandhism which pins its faith on the efficacy of such spinning.

If our ahimsa is not of the brave but of the weak, and if it will bend before violence or if it will be put to shame or prove ineffective in the presence of violence, then Gandhism deserves to be destroyed. It is bound to be destroyed. We fought the British, but there we used ahimsa as the weapon of the weak. Now we want to make it the weapon of the strong. Ahimsa can be used, within limits, as a weapon by the weak; but only within those limits. But it can never be a weapon of the coward, the timid. If a coward wields the weapon of ahimsa, it will recoil on him.

We have to find out whether the plying of charkha gives us the power of ahimsa. When you spin from two to four during the session, do you link your spinning with ahimsa ? Does it enhance your power of ahimsa every day ? Some may spin six hundred yards in two hours and some others may do so in one hour. This fact, too, has its own value. But the most important issue is whether the spinning has added to our power of ahimsa. Has it widened our vision of ahimsa ? If our charkha does not constantly add to our power of ahimsa, nor widen

<sup>1</sup> Author of *Arthashastra*, a treatise on political science

our vision of it, then I would say, 'Down with Gandhism'. Those who are shouting slogans for the destruction of Gandhism are doing so in anger, in a fit of madness. But I am saying this deliberately. This is being said by a man who can discriminate, whose intellect is not blurred and who has successfully practised law. I testify that if we do not concentrate on spinning while linking it with ahimsa then Gandhism most certainly deserves to be destroyed, because then it would have lost all its power.

I shall give an illustration. There is a man. He is turning the beads of the rosary all right, but his mind is wandering away from God in all directions. In that case, the rosary brings about his downfall. He falsely believes that he is telling the beads. He has not linked the rosary with God. Whatever the time he spends on turning the beads, he will make no progress. Only his fingers will start aching. Not only is this rosary useless but it is also harmful. It is filled with hypocrisy. From times immemorial, many religions have prescribed the rosary for remembering the name of God. But where there is neither meditation nor a search within, what remains is mere hypocrisy. A man who turns the beads in this manner deceives God and the world too.

The same argument applies to the charkha. If you do not derive from the charkha the same strength that I do, if you do not have the same faith in it that I have, then the charkha itself will be the cause of your ruin. You may spin a hundred thousand yards because you are a member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Dhotre<sup>1</sup> will state in his report that so much yarn was spun. You will think that the Sangh is progressing. I shall say 'No'. These figures only add to your pride. If a lifeless turning of the beads is hypocrisy, then a mechanical plying of the charkha is self-deception, and since it gives rise to pride it is also hypocrisy. If that were not so, we would enroll the hundreds of thousands of women spinners as members of the Sangh. But we have never thought of doing so.

If you spin with devotion and with a heart enlightened with a clear understanding of the whole philosophy behind the charkha, it will illumine your reason and strengthen your heart. The power of your reason as also of your heart will grow day after day. Your yarn will become finer and you will start thinking how the charkha will bring swaraj. You will begin seeing new vistas every day. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Dhotre, Secretary and Trustee of the Gandhi Seva Sangh

charkha will take you ever nearer to your goal. I have dwelt briefly on how the charkha symbolizes ahimsa. I have also explained, in brief, the implications of Prafulla Babu's speech. I do not wish to expatiate on the subject. I am afraid those assembled here do not have this strength of ahimsa.

Let us therefore do some introspection. Are we non-violent as we should be ? Don't we become violent under stress of anger or hatred ? Do we really love the people with whom we sit and work ? I examine myself in this manner. I am convinced I am myself not non-violent in this sense. Recently, some four or five days ago, I have discovered that even untruth enters my conduct unawares. At Segaon, I usually observe silence. Silence gives me peace, like taking a burden off my chest. If I am asked to keep silent for ever, I shall dance for joy. In Segaon, often I write down whatever I have to say. But in spite of my long experience, I say that untruth has sometimes crept into my heart. Non-violence within a man urges him to please others. Even dharma prescribes that man must speak what is true and also what is pleasant. But this is a difficult task. The attempt to say what is pleasant leads to untruth. It is not one's duty to speak anything only because it would please others. I am not interpreting or elaborating what the seers have said. They have rightly said that we should speak what is true and also what is pleasant. But we do not understand its full import. We speak only pleasant things to please others. This is no dharma. Someone wants to come to Segaon. Suppose Premabehn wants to come. She asks me, 'Shall I come ?' I say 'yes' just to please her, without considering whether she has any work with me. You may look upon me as a doctor, a leader or a teacher, but in any case it is my duty not to practise untruth. When there is neither need nor desire to take personal service from others, I do so merely to please them. I had to go to Santiniketan the day before yesterday. Vasumati<sup>1</sup>, Anasuya and others wanted to accompany me. I thought this was a pilgrimage for me; why should I take so many people with me ? I felt a little embarrassed. I said, in order to please them, that Santiniketan friends might be consulted. Mahadev sent them a telegram. Could they say 'no' ? They said that all who wanted to come were welcome. But I would have been a fool if I had taken all who wanted to go. That would have given *shanti*<sup>2</sup> neither to Santiniketan<sup>3</sup> nor to me. It could

<sup>1</sup> Vasumati Pandit

<sup>2</sup> Peace

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'abode of peace'

never be my dharma to tax their hospitality in this manner. It was my duty to have said that I would take only those whom I needed for my work. But I did not have the courage. I failed in my truth as well as in my non-violence. But ultimately I mustered courage and wrote that I would cut down the party to the minimum.<sup>1</sup> I have the good fortune to have associates who put up with my vacillation in such matters.

If I have to retain this leadership, if I have to guide the millions, if I have to drag them into the ocean after me, I should not fight shy of practising truth. If I do, I shall be unfit to be a leader. This is an essential aspect of non-violence. I have looked upon the charkha as an outward symbol of the principle of non-violence. You may ask me when and where I got all this. My reply is : from my experience of rendering service. This principle had taken hold of me as far back as 1908. I did not know then the difference even between a loom and a wheel. But the potentialities of the charkha took hold of me. You may not perhaps be knowing for whom I wrote *Hind Swaraj*. The person is no more and hence there is no harm in disclosing his name. I wrote the entire *Hind Swaraj* for my dear friend Dr. Pranjivan Mehta.<sup>2</sup> All the argument in the book is reproduced almost as it took place with him. I stayed with Dr. Mehta for a month. Although he loved me, he had no opinion of my intellect [then]. He thought I was foolish and sentimental. But experience had made me a little bold, and a little vocal also. Dr. Mehta was an intellectual giant. How could I pit my wits against his ? But I did place my point of view before him. It appealed to his heart. His attitude changed. So I said let me write down the argument. I wrote down the discussion as it took place. I had not even seen a charkha then. The activity of spinning entered our programme at a later stage; and yet I had concluded the argument with the statement that a non-violent civilization must be based on universal spinning. This means my mind had linked the charkha with

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Ashram Notes", 13-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> A gold medallist of the Grant Medical College, Bombay, Bar-at-Law; was Gandhiji's "oldest friend". From the time he received Gandhiji in London in October 1888 he acted as his "guide and counsellor". A philanthropist, from whom "no deserving poor ever returned empty-handed", he rendered financial help to Gandhiji in his activities from the days of the Phoenix Settlement till his death in August, 1932. He was also author of *M. K. Gandhi and the South African Problem*. For Gandhiji's tribute to him, vide "Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta", 7-8-1932.

ahimsa even then. To the question ‘whence did the idea of charkha descend?’ the only answer is : ‘From God Almighty.’ The charkha should give us the strength to act according to truth. When I ply the wheel, I become almost crazy about it. If God had not bestowed upon me other aptitudes for service, I would have been content to be glued to the charkha. Jethalal<sup>1</sup> once asked me why, if I really felt and did not merely profess such faith in the charkha, I was not devoting all my time to the charkha. I have already said God has endowed me with other aptitudes for serving mankind, and I utilize them too. Hence I do not devote all my time to the charkha. Jethalal may say that my devotion too is half-hearted. He will be justified in asking why I do not surrender all my other aptitudes to the cause of the charkha. It is true that all my other activities have arisen from the charkha. The All-India Village Industries Association is a bye-product of the charkha. Basic Education and eradication of untouchability are also fruits of the charkha. The charkha is the sun among the planets of my other activities. I utilize my other aptitudes for working out the potentialities of the charkha. I conduct full-scale experiments too.

I would therefore assert that you should throw the charkha into the Padma or burn it to ashes, if you turn it without realizing all its implications. Then only can real Gandhism rise. If Gandhism is restricted to mere plying of the charkha, I shall also shout, ‘Down with Gandhism’.

Now a thought comes to me. Is it not better to wind up the Gandhi Seva Sangh at this session? It should cause no regrets. True Gandhism may perhaps rise after the disappearance of its physical form. The story of Sita indicates the same thing. When the illusory deer appeared on the scene, Rama told Sita that the time had come for her to disappear.<sup>2</sup> The real Sita vanished. Only her shadow was left behind. Then followed all the adventures of Rama. Should we not disappear like Sita? Those who wish to follow the path of truth and ahimsa will then persist in their efforts. Maybe this will give us real strength. Would it not therefore be better if we wind up the Sangh? Otherwise, I am afraid, we may exploit the existence of the Sangh and ignore its main objective. That way we may deceive ourselves and the world. If the Sangh functions in this manner and all of you spend all

<sup>1</sup> Jethalal Govindji Sampat

<sup>2</sup> Tulsidas’s *Ramacharitmanas*, ‘Aranyakanda’. In Valmiki’s *Ramayana* this disappearance of the real Sita and appearance of a Maya Sita find no place.

your lives in serving that Sangh, and if I alone survive while my associates die one by one in the service of the Sangh, I would not be in a position to say that they had fulfilled the mission of their lives. I would only say that my efforts were imperfect to the extent.

You will say : ‘Maybe our efforts are not perfect, but the Sangh gives us strength and support in our efforts. If the Sangh is not there, who will give us strength and guidance ?’ I am afraid this will make you weak and dependent. It will be a frightful result. I would therefore suggest that you let go this support. If we cannot do without the comfort and support from the Sangh, we needs must wind it up. Such a Sangh cannot add strength to your elbow. You have to follow the path of truth and ahimsa on your own strength.

Let us consider to what extent we act up to the ideals of the Sangh. Take, for instance, this Conference. How much do we spend on it ? I sent for Prafulla Babu and asked him, “How much do you spend on food ?” He says he will not spend more than five annas on food. But ghee flows like water. What I say may contain an element of humour or exaggeration. Very likely, I am not aware of the full facts. You should look only to the spirit behind my words.

I wish to suggest that we are a long way off from the ideal of poverty. Our living continues to be luxurious. We beguile our minds by pretending that all this milk and ghee is necessary for health, for preserving our strength to serve. I cheat my heart by suggesting that my energy will decline if I don’t take goat’s milk. Thus we deviate from the vow of *asvada*<sup>1</sup>, we start seeking pleasures. Prafulla Babu invited us all here. He collected funds from people. The people are somewhat enamoured of my name. Once the funds were collected Prafulla Babu thought of feeding us well. That is how it goes on. We accept it too. This is not the correct way of using public funds. We should utilize the funds like a miser. There should be no wasteful expenditure. Money is not the only wealth for us. Every useful commodity is real wealth. We may not throw away even water. If one glass of water would do, why take two ? Thus in all respects we should have our own point of view. We may not overeat a delicious dish. If we do, we cannot practise truth and ahimsa.

Take another example. I refer to yesterday’s incidents. Some people shouted “Down with Gandhism”. There were cases of assault. A few persons were beaten up. I ask : What effect did these incidents

<sup>1</sup> Control of the palate

have on your mind? If the two hundred delegates here were beaten to death in this manner, will that rouse your anger or pity? We pass the test merely by getting killed. We must feel compassion for our assailants. Love may not be right in this case. But we will not call down destruction on the assailants. It may be difficult to love them; but we can pity them—knowing that they are ignorant, we would pray to God to enlighten them. We would stand their blows. Words of pity would pour from hearts; not for making a show of it, but we will pity them in all sincerity. I shall claim to have acquired the non-violence of the brave when someone attacks me and I do not get angry; he delivers blows and I stand them; and there is no sign of pain but only a smile on my face even while dying; and my heart is filled with pity rather than anger. I pose this question to you. Do you feel pity for those who abuse you? Do we feel pity for those who believe in socialism and in other ‘isms’, who oppose us? Ahimsa has the strength to befriend the opponents and to win their affection. I am afraid, and for good reason, that we are not so non-violent. Those among us, who are not so, should honestly withdraw from the Sangh. If we are all equally at fault, we should all withdraw. Maybe, I might have to confess that I myself do not come up to the mark. It would then be appropriate to disperse from here after winding up the Sangh. Why burden Kishorelal with the management of the Sangh? Do we want to bury him here? Day and night, he worries over the Sangh. That impairs his health. Then there is Dhotre. He suffers under the weight of work. Why should we not release them from these burdens?

I tell you no harm would come if we wound up the Sangh. If there is anything worth while in the Sangh, its three hundred members are as good as its three hundred branches. And if our members cannot give proof of such energy, we shall have to confess that the Sangh was worthless. What, then, would be the use of perpetuating it? I am of the definite view that we should return from here after winding up the Sangh.

We do not propose to take this step out of any fear. We do so to mobilize our strength. If we take this step with pure motives, it will strengthen us and it will also remove the apprehension which is being generated by our very existence. If our strength causes fear in the hearts of people or provokes them to violence, then it is not based on non-violence. It would do us no good if, in these circumstances, we seek shelter in the Sangh. It cannot give us non-violent strength; nor can we add strength to it since we are ourselves seeking support. If we



seek such support for securing financial aid or collective strength, then we are unfit to practise truth and non-violence. If God is not succour enough for us then something is wrong somewhere.

When we end the present outer form of the organization, we will develop within us the strength of humility. There is a saying in English that he who knows that he knows nothing knows everything. The day we become so humble as to reduce ourselves to a cipher, we will start growing. Then the Gandhi Seva Sangh will become a wonderful invisible institution. The Sita who disappeared became immortal. To this day, we remember her name and purify ourselves. That Sita survives. The apparition of Sita has died. If indeed we want to become powerful, we should wind up the Sangh. This is a job for the strong. It also calls for courage and strength.

If you do not have the strength to do this, you should change the form of its organization. I am of the definite view that you should forget politics. I was the person who advised the Sangh in Hudli<sup>1</sup> to interest itself in parliamentary politics. I dragged you into politics; and I do not regret what I did. The advice was proper under the circumstances. We would not have otherwise gained the experience that we have today. Kishorelal has narrated to me many instances of how we fought for positions and power in this small Sangh. It only means we lack the strength of non-violence and fall very much short of truth too. If we had reflected truth and non-violence in our political behaviour, history would have taken a different turn.

We had in us the ambition to forge ahead and become leaders. But we did not grasp the essential meaning of leadership. 'I shall become the foremost leader' should really mean 'I shall become the foremost servant.' Service should be rendered to him who needs it. It is mere ostentation to serve someone who does not need any help. Indeed it is fraud.

I receive such unnecessary service. It is also an illustration of the untruth within me. How shall I enumerate my own untruths? It will be a long list. I do not need massaging of my legs. But I allow this unnecessary service because it pleases others. It degrades me. The other person thinks that he is acquiring merit. That too is not true. He derives some satisfaction. This is not service.

In the same manner, we pretend to serve through position and

<sup>1</sup> In 1937; *vide* "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting", Hudli-II", 17-4-1937.

power. We only want to make a show of service. Therefore it is our duty to forget politics. We should ignore politics till the time when all the parties in the country approach us saying : 'Please come ! You are needed. We cannot do without your help.' Till then, we should only serve. Not that we should become idle and useless. After all, those who occupy various positions of power would not be more than a hundred thousand. Let us not aspire to be included in that number. We should be one among the thirty crores. Why should we aspire to rise from the thirty crores to the level of the one lakh ? Let us efface ourselves from the one lakh. It is no small achievement to merge oneself in the thirty crores.

Vallabhbhai thinks that a majority of the members of the Sangh are perhaps involved in politics. If they all withdraw from the Sangh, how many will be left behind ? Hardly half a dozen members will be left. I do not know how many are involved in politics. I have called for a list from Dhotre. But that will make no difference to my advice. I have not said that they should run away from politics. If they stay in politics for the sake of power, self or prestige, then they should quit politics. If they are there to serve, they may continue. But who will judge the motive ? Neither I nor Kishorelal can do it. Kishorelal is no God. He cannot fathom the depths of anyone's heart. I am not asking anyone to give up politics. I am asking those who are in politics to stay there on their own strength. They should not expect any support from the Sangh. Therefore those who are in or wish to enter politics should withdraw from the Sangh. If all members belong to this category the Sangh will automatically close. Even if a few are left behind, it will not be necessary to continue the Sangh.

Whatever any member does, he should do it on his own responsibility. I am convinced that you should wind up the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Its outer form should vanish. Whether we are in the Congress or in constructive work, we stay there on our own. Why needlessly bring into disrepute Gandhi or Gandhism, if there be any such thing ? The existence of the Sangh creates a false pride that we are superior to others. In fact, we are no better than others in any respect. We are like all others, more or less. It is a shame for us to indulge in such comparisons. We have to merge with others and serve them. We have to merge with them like sugar dissolving in milk. Whatever we are, we should keep it within our hearts and in all

humility remain steadfast in our principles and serve others, effacing our individuality.

If you have the courage, you should wind up the Gandhi Seva Sangh; if you don't have this courage, withdraw yourself from politics. Then no member of the Sangh shall remain in any Congress Committee. Even when we wind up the Sangh as it is, an inner bond will keep us together. If we are tied together by the bonds of ideals and affection, we will have an invisible organization. That alone will be true organization. It does not mean that we are going in for some underground organization. We do not need any formal organization. Who can take away from us what we have gained from the Gandhi Seva Sangh ? We stand in no danger of losing what we have gained. No one can snatch away what has become part and parcel of your heart. We will never give up the principles we have stood for; we cast off an intolerable burden of untruth. When there is so much bitterness, so much poison around, we have no alternative but to work away silently.

I am not suggesting that whatever we have done so far was all wrong. It was of course necessary. From that we have gained new experience and learnt new lessons. Now we are entering a new phase. Those who can adhere to truth and non-violence in politics may stay in politics; but they should withdraw from the Sangh. There shall be no politics in the Sangh. What is left after eschewing politics is constructive work. But what constructive work can there be besides the activities undertaken by the Charkha Sangh and other such institutions ? This is the other aspect. I shall touch upon it later. My mind has become clear while explaining the problem to you. So I have placed one definite suggestion before you, namely, you should wind up the Sangh. Or, at least, drop all political activities from its programme. In that case, we shall have to decide what new form the Sangh should assume.

Let them stay in politics<sup>1</sup>; but not as members of the Sangh. If they cannot stand there on their own strength, I shall say, they are good for nothing. If Sardar and Rajendra Babu were to leave politics, I would prevent them from doing so. But they should not retain their membership of the Sangh. I know they can stay in politics on their own and in a spirit of service. If, however, there is a class of persons

<sup>1</sup> Shrikrishnadas Jaju had asked whether those participating in politics in a spirit of service should also leave the Sangh even if they constituted the majority.

who need one another's support, it is a matter which they have to settle among themselves. The Sangh is not going to lend them support. Non-violence is a force which seeks support from no one except God. If they cannot depend on Him, they are crippled. Cripples should not enter politics; because non-violence is put to the severest test there. Not so in the Sangh. Those playing with politics should need no one's help. God alone is sufficient shelter.

And if the number of those participating in politics as a form of service on their own strength is more, why should it matter ? Even if only half a dozen members are left behind, I shall dance for joy. If they are sincere, the six will become six crores; they will have the power. All I want to say is that those who are in politics, in a spirit of service, may stay there, but they should withdraw from the Sangh.

I shall explain this again. I am not saying that those who are in politics should get out of it. I am only suggesting that they should leave the Sangh. Their withdrawal will not weaken the Sangh; it will strengthen it. If those who are left behind are good for nothing, the Sangh will vanish. We have nothing extraordinary; we possess no extraordinary qualities. The unique virtue, which could be ours, we have not acquired as yet. If we impose ourselves on others as a superior class, the Sangh is sure to die an infamous death. If we do not possess any independent strength of our own, the Sangh will become a laughing-stock. If we have within us the spontaneous power of non-violence, we can render service even without the Sangh. This power cannot be acquired by retiring to the solitude of a forest or a cremation ground. I may learn not to be afraid of ghosts there, but how will that help me in developing my ability to render service ? That can develop only through silent constructive work.

Those who are in the midst of politics must also possess the strength of truth and non-violence because that is their 'creed'. I can testify that the Congress is the greatest power in the country. Is not the Congress enough for handling politics ? Why should we then have another organization ? There is an impression going round that our organization does the same work as the Congress but wants to keep its separate identity. This means that it is trying to equate itself with the Congress. Hence the advice which I have given is proper in the prevailing atmosphere. My advice at Hudli was appropriate for the conditions then prevailing. I have this trait. I speak out what my heart feels at the moment. I am saying what my heart feels today. I do not

know what I shall say after a month. I am a person who gathers wholesome impressions from my surroundings and leaves out the evil ones. All my *sadhana* has helped me to acquire better strength and gain good results. I cannot remain untouched by them.

My heart and head have become clear while thinking aloud before you. I had not sorted out my thoughts; but I have given you unambiguous advice. If anyone has any doubts or if anyone wants to tell me : ‘You were not aware of such and such an aspect and so you are giving this advice,’ he can do so. If anyone has to put forward an independent opinion, he too can express his views.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, it will be the same.<sup>2</sup>

If we are really dynamic, our power cannot be reduced; that is my faith. We will have our impact on social life all right. We will not succeed in carrying on our experiment through the Sangh as we have been doing till now. We do not get through the Sangh a full view of the potentialities of non-violence. Non-violence is self-generating energy. If it is not hampered by the label of the Sangh, it can do greater work. I have written : “Our objective will be fulfilled if India could produce even one perfect exponent of non-violence”; and this is a comprehensive statement. I do not suggest that he will do everything single-handed. Even God cannot do everything all by Himself. He has to assume many forms. This one exponent, I submit, will draw everyone to him. The organizational strength of the Sangh will weaken you. It thwarts the expression of your individuality. You merely reflect the strength of the Sangh, not that of your own *atman*. The strength of the Sangh is only a sum of your individual strength. The growth of non-violence does not require an organization of such collective strength. I do not see the utility of external aids. If those who call themselves Gandhians carry hatred or cowardice in their hearts, they cannot add glory to any Sangh. Gandhism will not survive that way. I have made all India my field of activity, or, say, God has assigned to me this field. There is a sound reason behind this. I believe that non-violence dwells in every Indian home. In Europe, you

<sup>1</sup> Here Gandhiji was asked by Ram Ratan Sharma whether the attitude to politics would be the same in the princely States as in British India.

<sup>2</sup> Swami Satyanandji’s question was : Since the spiritual bond between Gandhiji and the members would continue in spite of the winding up of the Sangh, hostile slogans would not be silenced. Besides, social life would be the poorer for want of the Sangh’s influence.

cannot find a group of three hundred persons like you, before whom I can express the ideas I am putting before you. That is why God has given me this field for making my experiments. How can I choose my field ? My powers are very limited. He has given it to me. Hence my definite advice to you that everything except non-violence is only a snare. My only reply to your question is that our independent non-violent strength will continue to have an impact on social life even without the Sangh.<sup>1</sup>

One's own mind is the real touchstone. If our mind is clear, it is not necessary to ponder over other people's comments.<sup>2</sup>

If that is so, why did we at all create a separate organization ? Jammalalji believed that those who looked upon truth and non-violence as mere policy had no place in the Sangh. But if the Congress 'creed' is religion also for us, the Congress should be a sufficient instrument for us. Where then is the need for the Sangh ?<sup>3</sup>

In the Congress itself. Spiritual strength is not a commodity which can be packed and sold at a grocer's shop. You look upon the Sangh as a spiritual congregation; but it does not remain so. It leads to sentimentalism and a feeling of self-righteousness creeps in. I beg to submit that the Sangh does not help in adding to our strength. Your strength grows by remaining in the Congress. I am quite sure that, comparing the Sangh and the Congress you will find that the Sangh can give you no strength, it will serve merely as a refuge. You can find warmth there; but it cannot be the field for testing your prowess. That field is the Congress. The Congress is a stormy ocean. If on that ocean, you can control your hatred and other passions, you may rest assured that your ship is sailing well. The Sangh is like a harbour. It provides no scope for testing one's strength. My own strength has grown in the Congress. I have gained no strength from the Sangh.<sup>4</sup>

If they cannot influence politics or if people do not approve of their presence, they should quit. The word 'Gandhism' itself is a product of politics. If we can brighten up its image, we may stay in

<sup>1</sup> Gopalrao Kale then asked how the spirit of service in politics could be tested. What if other people called it ambition ?

<sup>2</sup> Narahari Parikh asked why politicians should be asked to leave the Sangh when the Congress 'creed' also spoke of 'peaceful and legitimate' means.

<sup>3</sup> Pyarelalji (Hapur) asked where those who worked in the Congress in a spirit of service could get spiritual strength and *satsanga*.

<sup>4</sup> Next, Lala Jagannath asked whether those who accepted Gandhism but were not members of the Sangh should stay in politics.

politics or else quit it.<sup>1</sup>

A Gandhian is an individual; but the Sangh is a society. If persons participating in politics belong to an organization, it causes unnecessary bitterness. This Sangh was not created to influence politics. Those who participate in politics do not need any help from the Sangh nor do they derive any strength from it. If there is any other thing which you expect from the Sangh, you may mention it. If you say that the Sangh should continue because it provides you succour and support, I will insist that it must be wound up.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that I have spoken and written about Shanti Sena or Peace Brigade. Some persons have also striven in this direction. Hakim Alwai had organized one such Shanti Sena. I had congratulated him too. But now there is no trace of the organization. I see that such a thing too cannot work. You may form a Shanti Sena. Many will quietly sign your pledge and not act upon it. When the whole climate is so polluted, a clean move is also likely to go wrong. Hence we should move guardedly. If I have a jugful of Ganga water, I shall not commit the folly of believing that a tank of stinking water can be purified by pouring the Ganga water into it. Each one of you can form a peace corps of your own. But where do we find such people ? Were there no Congressmen in Shikarpur or Sukur ?<sup>3</sup> Why then was there not a single man who died, without hatred in his heart, in an attempt to pacify the rioting crowds ? In Kanpur, there is a host of admirers of Ganesh Shankar.<sup>4</sup> Why has his sect vanished ? I do not think, even then, that Ganesh Shankar's sacrifice was wasted. His spirit is working in my heart. When I remember him I envy him. This country has not produced another Ganesh Shankar. His tradition has stopped, but he has become immortal in history. His non-violence was tested and proved true. My non-violence will also be tested and

<sup>1</sup> Lala Jagannath then asked why members of the Sangh could not stay in politics on these terms.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to Gandhiji's Delang speeches of March 1938, Prabhudas Gandhi asked whether disbanding the Sangh would not be contrary to their avowed aim of fighting anti-social elements in an organized way.

<sup>3</sup> Vide "Sindh Tragedy", 1-1-1940.

<sup>4</sup> Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, founder-editor of the nationalist Hindi journal *Pratap*; met with a heroic death on March 26, 1931, while trying to restore peace during the communal riots in Kanpur. For Gandhiji's tribute to him, vide "Speech on Kanpur Riots, Subjects Committee Meeting, Karachi", 27-3-1931, "Telegram to BalKrishna Sharma", 1-4-1931 and "Notes", 9-4-1931.

proved when I die peacefully, like him, under an assassin's axe. I should die like him, that is my cherished dream—on one side an axe is raised to strike me down, on the other a dagger is pointed at me, a third person is wielding a club and a fourth is kicking and boxing me, I am standing peacefully in their midst, asking people to remain peaceful and I should die with a smile on my lips—I pray for such a good fortune. I wish I should get this opportunity and you, too.<sup>1</sup>

Did I ever say we should wind up because of public criticism ? I said that we might have perhaps deserved that criticism. I have many instances to prove it. If we really had the qualities of non-violent courage we would never have been or would never be in the plight in which we find ourselves today. A new energy would surge from within us. Then you would need neither my advice nor the Sangh's. They are not true Gandhians who suppress the promptings of their own heart and act on my advice or under my pressure. I did not expect this even from my own sons after they had attained the age of sixteen. I treated them as my friends as soon as they were sixteen years old. I asked them to follow what they considered to be their own duty—*swadharma*. 'Better is death in the discharge of one's duty.'<sup>2</sup> If they accept my ideals, they must make them their own; not because their father says so, but because they whole-heartedly subscribe to those very ideals. This cannot be said about the Gandhi Seva Sangh. You should think independently, each according to his lights. If your heart asserts that the Sangh should continue, it would mean that you are eager to face the severest of trials.<sup>3</sup>

I have already given the other alternative of eschewing all politics from the Sangh, if you do not wish to wind it up for these reasons. It was Jamnalalji's idea that the Sangh should be organized for the convenience and guidance of those who were not leaders, who did not adorn platforms and who did not wish to harangue. You may remain four-anna members of the Congress; but should accept no office in it. If you render honest service without occupying any position of authority, your ideals will produce their impact. I did not accept any position in the Congress; but still I have been saddled with

<sup>1</sup> Moolchand Agrawal argued that it was not ahimsa to wind up the Sangh in response to other people's criticism or hostility when the members' hearts were pure.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, III 35

<sup>3</sup> Ram Ratan Sharma explained the likely handicap of constructive workers who sought inspiration and guidance from the Sangh.



responsibility. All this means that constructive work should be the main mission of the Sangh. How this mission should be fulfilled, what should be the distinction between the Sangh's activities and those of other constructive organizations like the Charkha Sangh, etc., is the third question. It will have to be tackled by those few members of the Sangh who will be left behind after the politicians have withdrawn. I have already answered the arguments in favour of the continuance of the Gandhi Seva Sangh and it need not be repeated now.<sup>1</sup>

Our hatred and jealousies might not disappear; but at least an enormous fraud will disappear. Today the Sangh also is responsible for our hatred and jealousies. This imbroglio will at any rate disappear. This point has to be grasped. People believe that the Gandhi Seva Sangh seeks to organize truth and non-violence; that a man like Kishorelal is piloting that organization. If, however, we are not practising our principles, then the Sangh is instrumental in keeping up a fraud. If we have verily imbibed truth and non-violence, our behaviour within the family, with our neighbours or inside the Congress will evoke popular respect even in the absence of the Sangh. For this there is no need of the Sangh. It is true that none of us is born perfect. We need inspiration and guidance. But it is seriously doubted whether the Sangh provides such inspiration. I do not say this by way of criticism. When we see so much bitterness spreading, we should understand that something is wrong with us and we should do some introspection. This point deserves to be grasped. We must at least change the pattern of our work. I still think that winding up is the proper course.<sup>2</sup>

This is a question for Kishorelal to answer. I do not know all the facts, nor do I have his experience. I have come to believe that the Sangh's participation in politics has increased hatred and jealousy. How can I say whether or not corruption has crept in among the members? I do not know anyone. Kishorelal knows everyone. You may direct your question to him. I am advising you to wind up the Sangh in view of the prevailing climate in the country. When so much bitterness is generated, we must be at fault. If Kishorelal holds a different view, let him continue with the Sangh. Who am I to obstruct

<sup>1</sup> Moolchand Agrawal asked whether the winding up of the Sangh would remove hatred and jealousy from the hearts of the members.

<sup>2</sup> Haribhau Upadhyaya asked whether the President had grounds to believe that politics had corrupted the members.

the way ? Don't you have to work under his guidance ? I have heard so many things which have led me to conclude that we are responsible in no small measure [for what has overtaken us].<sup>1</sup>

For that we have to ascertain how many members are left behind. Constructive work will be devoid of sting. The atmosphere today is charged with untruth and violence. We cannot therefore stay in politics. In what form the Sangh should function for constructive work, is a matter which will come up later.<sup>2</sup>

This question has already been answered. In the existing situation, the Sangh cannot give this consolation. This attitude only weakens us.

[From Hindi]

*Gandhi Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan (Malikanda-Bengal) ka Vivaran,*  
pp. 6-22

#### 425. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING—II<sup>3</sup>

MALIKANDA,  
February 21, 1940

Let me reply to what Gokulbhai has said. There is some misunderstanding about the two things he mentioned. Let me clear those misunderstandings so as to avoid needless discussion.

I did not say that members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh should withdraw from politics. What I said was that they should not be in politics in their capacity as members of the Sangh. I said in the morning that no member of the Sangh should give up politics. I cited the examples of Sardar and Rajendra Babu and said that I would not ask them to leave politics. But I said that they should keep out of the Sangh. I wish politics has no place in the Sangh.

Gokulbhai's second question is : When our whole life is one and indivisible, how can we specify whether a particular thing comes under the category of politics or not ? I did say that we should not compartmentalize our lives since things are interwoven. That is why life is one and indivisible. But there is also another point of view. Our

<sup>1</sup> Balubhai asked why the Sangh should not be retained for constructive work.

<sup>2</sup> Jyotiprakash asked why the Sangh could not continue as a forum for consultations.

<sup>3</sup> At the evening session which began at 7-30 p.m.

body is one whole, but it has several organs such as eyes, ears, nose, etc. When we consider the body as a whole, we do not think of the separate organs. But when we have particular organs examined we think of each of them separately. They are parts of one and the same body but, none the less, we do think of them separately and make distinctions such as organs of perception and organs of action. Today we are looking at this thing from such an analytical point of view. Politics pervades all our activities. But I am not talking of retirement from politics in this broad sense. I am referring to the politics of the Congress and elections and to groupism. I have explained why power politics should be kept out of the Sangh. We are taking that step not out of cowardice but for the sake of self-purification. That is the way of non-violence. I have not forbidden all political activity. I know that in this country all constructive activities are part of politics. In my view that is true politics. Non-violence can have nothing to do with the politics of power.

The existence of the Sangh is not indispensable for non-violence. This is not to say that there can be no Sangh at all for a non-violent purpose. But our Sangh today is not such a one. We formed a Sangh and tasted its benefit. I at any rate have done so. We have seen that a non-violent Sangh cannot and should not function like other organizations. A non-violent Sangh should have some special features. Hence, from the experience I have of the Sangh, I suggest that we keep away from politics. If we do not, Gandhism is sure to perish.

We have adopted a novel policy. We must adopt novel means to follow that policy. I have been trying to find out what these means could be. I am only experimenting. I have to change my methods as situations change. But I have no ready-made formula. Our experiment is absolutely new. The order in which the steps may be taken is not fixed. I am a person with an inquiring mind. With great patience I am discovering and developing the science of satyagraha. In the course of this search I am acquiring new knowledge and new light every day.

It was because I was keen on this experimenting that I suggested at Hudli that we should appear on the political stage and gain experience in that role too, and put to test the strength of our truth and non-violence. It is possible that I was mistaken in giving this advice; but I do not regret having done it. It was just as well that we entered politics. We have had a very valuable experience. Had we not

had this experience, I would have been in two minds. I would have been always conscious of the fact that we had no political experience. Now, after that experience, I can positively advise you as members of the Sangh to retire from politics.

One more thing you should not forget. The Sangh has never accepted politics as its field. Remember, have we ever discussed politics during the conventions of the Sangh ? You will find no trace of politics in its reports and resolutions. This is the subject that matters to those members of the Sangh who are interested in politics. This is not a matter of interest to the Sangh. It is meant for Sardar who is involved in politics. For other members of the Sangh too it is an activity outside the purview of the Sangh. When do you ever discuss politics here ? Do you ever trouble Sardar and insist that he should explain to you how he conducts the affairs of the Parliamentary Board ? Do you ever ask me what I convey to the Viceroy ? We are no doubt curious to know about these things; but it is not as members of the Sangh, but in some other capacity. At Hudli we passed a resolution to take part in politics. But even after that we did not discuss politics during our conventions. We come here with an altogether different mind. Ours is a group of seekers of knowledge. We come here with a view to doing some introspection and correcting our mistakes. Hence, our conventions have quite a different atmosphere. Politics is an outer activity. Hence, we do not discuss it here. That is not the sphere of the Sangh.

Even after Hudli the inner character of the Sangh did not change. It is clear from this that the misunderstanding on the part of people that we are forming a political group is totally unfounded. For no reason are we dragging ourselves down. That is why I suggest we wind up the Sangh. I am not winding up political activity. But I am putting a stop to it as far as the Sangh is concerned; because that is none of our business. Even at Hudli we did not change the original character of the Sangh. The only mistake we made was that we permitted members of the Sangh to take part in parliamentary activities. But even after this I took very little direct interest in parliamentary work. As far as I am concerned I devote little time even to reading newspapers. If you ask Kishorelalabhai he would say he knows nothing about it and that you had better ask Sardar. The obvious reason of this is that the Sangh never considered politics as its sphere. We did not form the Sangh for that purpose. Then, why should we needlessly jump into that fire ? Let us withdraw from it.

This distinction was not clear to Gokulbhai. He thought I was forbidding political activity. But that is not the case. What I say is that the Sangh should not get involved in this.

The question now remains why we may not try to introduce truth and non-violence into politics. Why should the Sangh leave this field untouched ? I have already answered this question. The method of non-violence implies that when we do not have the capacity to undo an evil, we should keep away from it. This is non-co-operation. I have placed before India the great principle of non-co-operation. I am applying that very principle here.

Let me give an illustration. There is a protest demonstration going on here. Should we force ourselves to stand before the demonstrators and say : 'Well, here we are ! Do with us what you will.' This would be sheer folly. That is why the Shastras say that we need not rush to hear abuse of ourselves.

I do not know if you have heard about the figure of the three monkeys. It is in Kobe, Japan. Somebody had sent me a small figure—a replica of the original. It consists of the statuettes of the three monkeys. One of them has its mouth closed, the second its eyes and the third its ears. These monkeys teach the world to speak no evil, to see no evil, to hear no evil. This is the secret of non-co-operation. There is a protest demonstration going on here. If the demonstrators enter this pandal and attack us, I would ask you to stick to your places and take their blows. But I would certainly not ask you to go to the place of demonstration and invite their blows. This would mean deliberately inciting them. This is not non-violence. It is self-assertion.

I propose to adopt here this pattern of non-co-operation. Our entering politics will provoke them. It will be like feeding their wrath. Therefore, non-violence tells me that we should withdraw ourselves from politics. If people criticize, oppose or attack us even after we quit politics, we should put up with all this. After we have quit politics if anyone wishes to destroy us, let him do so.

In spite of all this, those who do not need the protection of the Sangh for their political work may continue there. For instance Vallabhbai. What does he need the Sangh for ? He does not enhance his prestige by remaining with the Sangh. He had established his political prestige even before the Sangh was born. Thus, it is the Sangh that acquires prestige by his being in it. Then he happens to be a born politician. Politics is in his blood. He is not born for the

constructive programme. In a way, he has accepted the constructive programme out of a sense of compulsion. It is not an inseparable part of his temperament as I claim it is in my case. Unlike me, he is not absorbed in the constructive programme. I was born for the constructive programme. It is part of my soul. Politics is a kind of botheration for me. I would dance for joy if I could shake it off. Sardar would hardly do any such thing. This is the main difference between us. He hears what I say and if I am making any mistake he can put me right.

But if there are many other members who derive prestige from their association with the Sangh and if this prestige proves helpful to them for political purposes, the only way out is that we should not let them have such prestige. They too ought to give up such borrowed prestige. If we lend them such prestige and they accept it, we deserve the charge that we are competing with the Congress socialists or the communists. When this is not actually the case, why should we lay ourselves open to such a charge ?

We do not wish to compete with anyone. We want to absorb even our opponents . If they are opposing us, it is because they do not understand us. But we know that we belong to them and they belong to us. Hence, let us take no active interest in politics so long as the people do not invite us. Let us carry on quietly our constructive programme. And let us, by withdrawing ourselves from politics, lend glory to non-violence. These are the words of an experienced person. You must understand and grasp its significance and pay attention to what it implies. Thus, your winding up the Sangh would be an object-lesson in non-violence. It is quite simple. There is no harm in it.

Now, why should he [Gokulbhai] feel hurt by my saying that I gained nothing from the Sangh ? Actually being in this place is like being in my home. You all love me. We form a family here. In a family, the children, wife, parents, brothers, sisters—all love one another. There is very little scope in a family to carry on an experiment in non-violence. Similarly, my non-violence cannot be tested in this Sangh. What can you teach me here ? My non-violence is tested in the Congress where I am opposed, censured and criticized. My proclivity to anger is nurtured and aroused. I put up with everything very respectfully. I have an opportunity to practise love and non-violence. There I grow. Hence I say that I had in the Congress opportunities to develop my abilities. I derived all my

[training] from the Congress. I learnt very little in the Sangh. I do not mean to suggest that the Sangh is something useless and hence deserves to be discarded. As a matter of fact I have only praised you. I have not criticized you. What can even Gokulbhai learn in a family where he finds only abundant love ? He can learn more outside. It is in the outside world that we are tested. We have to learn to keep smiling in the face of abuse. Whatever the provocation, there should be no anger in our hearts. The field for our test lies outside. All we have to do here is to charge our batteries. How we can charge our batteries is another question. For that purpose we shall have to change the character of the Sangh. You may, if you wish, express your view on this matter at a later stage. For the time being we are only considering the question of separating the Sangh from politics. I have cleared the misunderstanding in Gokulbhai's mind. I have clarified all the points. Now, if he wants, he may confess his fault or ask any other question if he so desires.<sup>1</sup>

I know Jajuji's temperament. He believes in doing everything methodically. He has said that it is easy to consider a matter when it is presented in definite terms. I too felt that it would be better if we could come to some decision. That is why a resolution has been drafted. Do wind up the Sangh if that is what you want. I still hold fast to my opinion in this regard and I have already offered my advice. If my suggestion is not acceptable to you, you can decide the manner in which the members of the Sangh may take part in politics. I have drafted this resolution<sup>2</sup> because I have a feeling that you would prefer such an arrangement. The draft will be presently read out to you. Think over it during the night. We must come to a final decision by tomorrow. Kishorelalbhai has drafted two resolutions twice over. I could not accept the points when he presented the resolutions for the first time. He has given fresh drafts today. I could not accept the points in these drafts either. But the spirit of the resolutions has been brought in.<sup>3</sup>

[From Hindi]

*Gandhi Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan (Malikanda—Bengal) ka Vivaran,*

<sup>1</sup> Dandekar then invited Vallabhbhai to express his opinion. After the latter had spoken at length, Gandhiji concluded his speech.

<sup>2</sup> The draft resolution is not available. For the final resolution, *vide* Appendix "Resolution at Gandhi Seva Sangh", 12-2-1940.

<sup>3</sup> The Secretary read out the resolution drafted by Gandhiji. The session adjourned at 9 p.m.

426. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING—III'

MALIKANDA,  
February 22, 1940

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Are those sitting at the far end able to hear me ? If not, please say so.

I was up by 3 o'clock this morning [and] started thinking about the Sangh. I am placing before you my conclusions. Later on you may express your views today itself if you so desire. Some sort of a tentative resolution was placed before you yesterday. I think I should say something about it and also something apart from it.

The views I had expressed on [taking part in] politics have been further confirmed. As I thought about it I felt that unwittingly we had acted wrongly. What I said last night was an indication of this. Hence it is that we have deliberately abjured power politics. If while remaining in the Sangh we wanted to enter into power politics we should have done so openly. For that matter we ought to have changed even the character of the Sangh. But we are not at all equipped for taking part in politics. In politics it is necessary to know what others also are doing and what they intend to do. It would also be necessary to be acquainted with the ideology and politics of the socialists. We do not have so much as a library of political literature.

I have not studied socialism. I have read no books on the subject; I have read one<sup>2</sup> by Jayaprakash. I have also read one book given by Masani<sup>3</sup>. Sampurnanandji has written a very good book<sup>4</sup>. He sent it to me very lovingly and I read that too. This is all my study of socialism. They say countless books have been written on socialism and communism. I have read nothing at all about communism. I do not know how many of you have read books about it.

This thing does not form part of my activity. My mental make up is quite different. They do not even accept my claim to intelligence. My intelligence is not recognized in the field of politics.

<sup>1</sup> The session began at 7.30 a.m. with Shrikrishnadas Jaju, the new President, in the chair.

<sup>2</sup> *Why Socialism ?* (1936)

<sup>3</sup> M. R. Masani

<sup>4</sup> *Samajvad* (1936)



Those who are deeply involved in politics laugh at me. They wonder if this is politics. I acquired some status in politics because I had been a fighter, not because of my intelligence. They don't credit me with intelligence capable of winning over others. I believe in socialism and also in communism. I believe in everything, but from my own point of view. I belong to everybody and I belong to none. A believer in non-violence cannot be anybody's opponent. He would wish to build up the science of non-violence with the help of everyone. His is not the politics of opposing or vanquishing anyone.

I do not wish to qualify myself or others for what goes by the name of politics. I had suggested at Hudli that we should enter politics. Unwittingly I made that mistake. You may as well say that unwittingly I followed untruth. Instead of doing well the task for which we were born, we took in hand something else. But whatever happened was for the good. We gained some experience. We discovered that we were not capable of engaging in politics. We have realized our incompetence. Now we are withdrawing our hands. We did commit a mistake, but now, the moment we have become conscious of our faults, we are being cautious. A mistake, when it is corrected, does not remain a mistake. Our strength grows if we acknowledge our mistakes. I am asking you to realize your limitations, and carry on thoroughly the work for which the Sangh was formed.

Some friends from Noakhali visited me today. They told me : "We accept everything you say. But we are unable to understand what your followers here say. We can agree to what you say. Call it Gandhism, spinning, village industries—we would accept any- thing. We are your followers. But we are not followers of your followers. Your followers have nothing [to offer]." Whatever these friends said sprang from sheer love. It is a matter over which we should ponder. We entered politics but we could do nothing in that field. Nor could we do our own work. We belonged neither here nor there. Now that we are aware of our folly let us try to remove it.

We used politics to put our principles into practice. Now after some experience we are renouncing politics. The politics which we are renouncing is the politics of acquiring positions of power within the Congress. We cannot take part in this politics. I am not talking about an individual; I am talking about the Sangh. Power politics has no place in the Sangh. An individual with a natural inclination and

qualification may remain in politics. But this power politics is such a dreadful snare that even individuals may have to quit it. Their non-violence would be put to the severest test there. They too will quit when they have some bitter experiences. But what I am saying today applies only to the Sangh. The Sangh must definitely renounce the Congress Committees, that is, elections and power politics. My opinion in this matter has hardened. This Sangh is not meant for this kind of politics. I am myself not qualified for it. Your Chairman is much less so. He is a philosopher, a moralist and a writer.

Let me mention the third point in just one sentence. As a matter of fact, you must give up the very name of Gandhism. If not, you will be falling into a blind well. Gandhism is sure to be wiped out. I love to hear the words : “Down with Gandhism.” An ‘ism’ deserves to be destroyed. It is a useless thing. The real thing is non-violence. It is immortal. It is enough for me if it remains alive. I am eager to see Gandhism wiped out at an early date. You should not give yourselves over to sectarianism. I did not belong to any sect. I have never dreamt of establishing any sect. If any sect is established in my name after my death, my soul would cry out in anguish. What we have carried on for all these years is not a sect. We do not have to subject ourselves to any ‘ism’. Rather, we have to serve in silence in keeping with our principles.

Whatever people might say, service can never be made into a sect. It is meant for everybody. We shall accept everyone. We shall try to fall in line with everyone. That is the way of non-violence. If we have any ‘ism’, it is just this. There is nothing like Gandhism. I have no followers. I am my own follower. No, no, even I have not succeeded in being my true follower, have I? Do I put my own thoughts into practice? How then can others be my followers ? I would like others keeping me company and walking the same way. But how can I know who would walk ahead and who would fall behind ? You are all my fellow-students and co-workers, fellow-servants and fellow-researchers. Forget the idea of being followers. Nobody is leading and nobody is following. Nobody is a leader and nobody is a follower. We are all going together in one line. I have said this quite often but I am repeating it in order to remind you.

We have to give up offices in the Congress. Let this point be absolutely clear in your minds. Then you would grasp the significance of what I am going to say. I am asked : “Should we

withdraw ourselves even from municipal bodies and similar organizations ?” I would say that we should withdraw even from municipal bodies. I know what had happened in the case of the Nagpur Municipality. I was amazed to find how much bitterness and hatred had crept into the Congress Municipal Party. I have very little information about it. Gopalrao knows the inside story. There are three factions in the Congress Municipal Party of Nagpur. They are always at daggers drawn. People belonging to all the three factions came to me and narrated their own versions. I was very deeply pained. There is a lot of animosity prevailing in the Provincial Congress Committee also. I told them that the Provincial Congress Committee was under the control of the A. I. C. C. Hence they should approach either Sardar or Rajendra Babu. I would be infinitely pained if any member of the Sangh chose to go into any such organization. What can he attain by going there ? We wish to establish rapport with 300 million people. This would happen only when we reduce ourselves to a cipher. What have we to do with rights ? Politics of power is unreal. We must tell the people what is real politics. We shall concentrate only on the constructive programme which others not only shun but regard with contempt. The Gandhi Seva Sangh would justify its existence by persistently devoting itself to the constructive programme. There are eighty-four persons among the members of the Sangh taking active part in politics. They would of course leave the Sangh. But I shall presently explain to you what shape the Sangh would take after that.

The Gandhi Seva Sangh has come into existence for the purpose of carrying on the constructive programme. That alone is real politics. We have to lend glory to this real politics by renouncing our rights. What do we care if they do not call it politics ? We shall remain within the Congress fold, but keep ourselves away from power and elections.

There is no need to have the Gandhi Seva Sangh for the sake of keeping a register of the list of persons who believe as I do in truth and non-violence. I see no need for such a list. I was thinking yesterday about the future form and functions of the Sangh. I shall now place before you my conclusions. In my view, the Gandhi Seva Sangh has now to become something like an organization for post-graduate studies. All the organizations in the country which carry my name or are run under my supervision or guidance are meant only for the constructive programme. The Charkha Sangh, Gramodyog Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Talimi Sangh—I guide the functions of all these organizations. I was responsible for the propagation of Hindi

throughout the country. For me, these are inseparable aspects of real politics. I also control the labour union of Ahmedabad. The Gandhi Seva Sangh can undertake a great deal of post-graduate study and research for these organizations. All these organizations cannot take up such work to the required extent as their field of activity is limited. Take for instance the Charkha Sangh. I have laid down its policy which is aimed at giving the maximum wages to the hungry and poor who are idle for nearly six months in a year, and persuading others to buy the khadi produced by these poor people by appealing to their altruism. Self-sufficiency is also one of the functions of the Charkha Sangh, but as auxiliary to its primary objective. It does not include that aspect of self-sufficiency which Prafulla Babu had placed before you. Prafulla Babu had correlated it with non-violence and swaraj. Self-sufficiency in that sense of the term is not included among the functions of the Charkha Sangh. I cannot expect Shankerlal to go and explain to the poor women spinners all the things that the spinning-wheel implies.

All that is your work. Prafulla Babu had said the other day that you should spin at least 100,000 yards of yarn in a year. On calculation I realized that it would mean spinning nearly 300 yards every day to produce 100,000 yards in a year. It would take 45 minutes to spin 300 yards if the wheel and the slivers are good. There are people who do it even in half an hour. I would of course expect the maximum from you. For you the art of spinning should be child's play, for, after all, you are in the post-graduate stage. You would spin sincerely and with great concentration. There are experts who can produce 300 yards of yarn in half an hour. But you would not stop at being expert spinners. You would try, as I am doing, to realize God through the spinning-wheel. Then alone would you pass my test. This is my explanation of Prafulla Babu's scheme.

People from the Charkha Sangh and the Gramodyog Sangh come to you for acquiring the expertise in their respective fields. You would have to achieve perfection and specialize in such things. Everyone cannot become an expert in every field. But everybody can specialize in one thing. Among doctors too some are physicians and some are surgeons. Even in the field of surgery some specialize in the eye, some in the nose and throat. Similarly we should take up some field for specialization. This is not a matter of making money. Other specialists go in for invention and research for the purpose of earning money. We have to become specialists for the purpose of serving the

poor and bettering their lot. The Gandhi Seva Sangh would justify its existence in future only if it undertakes such work. If you must continue the Sangh you should continue it in this form or wind it up. If this is not done, the whole world will laugh at us and Gandhism will be killed by our own hands. Let us not deceive ourselves.

We shall follow yet another programme. I have told the labour union people that they would be doomed if they meddled in politics. I have told the Charkha Sangh people that they have nothing to do with politics. I told them that if they got involved in the politics of swaraj, they would be spinning weak yarn as their attention would be divided. They would not be able to do their work properly and they would prove worthless. I told the Harijan Sevak Sangh that it had nothing at all to do with swaraj. If they stuck to their work, swaraj would issue from it automatically.

But what about you ? You will have to understand what Gandhi means when he says he sees God in the spinning-wheel. Should we take it literally or grasp its significance ? Or should we accept both ? I would suggest that you accept both the meanings. It means that you should see God in every thread [you draw] from the spinning-wheel. Acts of service such as spinning take us nearer to God, and therein lies its significance. You will thus find that all our activities have a far-reaching meaning.

Even its literal meaning has a wider sense. You are all going to do research and make discoveries in this post-graduate laboratory. For that purpose you should have expert knowledge not only of the science of the spinning-wheel but also of the art of spinning. Knowledge and skill would be especially expected of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Your spinning-wheel should work more efficiently than that of the Charkha Sangh. Your yarn should be fine, strong and may not snap. It would be a matter of shame if your thread snaps. For the expert, his tools should be of the highest quality. There should be something special about your slivers, your implements. I do not wish to make you just skilled labourers. I want to make you expert craftsmen and scientific researchers. I expect something unique from you. The difference between your spinning-wheel and that of the Charkha Sangh should be as much as that between my razor and a barber's. Your implements would be out of the ordinary.

Here you spin from the slivers made by others. But the slivers from which you would be spinning them would be no ordinary

slivers. You would improve the process of making slivers. You would make the best slivers yourself and make others improve theirs. Thus you would study the smallest detail just as Vinoba has done. After persistent experiments he has built up a science round everything. He has discovered a new method of making slivers. In Andhra fish-bones are used for this purpose. Vinoba's is a modification of the Andhra method, but the yarn spun from these slivers can well compete with the Andhra yarn. He has sent me cloth woven from the yarn of 40 counts spun from *verum*<sup>1</sup> cotton. It deserves to be displayed in the exhibition. It is made by a Muslim boy. Your carding process would also be such as to cause trouble to no one. Cotton fibres would not fly about from your carding-bow. Even one suffering from cough would be able to do the carding without a hitch. There would be something special even in your choice of cotton. How could you ever take cotton from the bales ? Your ginning process too would be special. For this one needs patience, talent for research and perseverance. If you have achieved all this, you would have followed my suggestion to the very letter.

After this you would have to see if the charkha increases your non-violent powers. Vinoba has composed a couplet comprising the eleven vows. You recite it every day. You would have to find out if the spinning-wheel in any way helps you in observing these vows. There may not be politics in the spinning-wheel of the Charkha Sangh; but you would have to see if it is there in your spinning-wheel. In other words you would have to see if it increases the strength of the people and whether, in free India, the economic provisions of swaraj could be based on the spinning-wheel. Would it turn people into mere automatons capable of physical labour or would it make them non-violent soldiers of swaraj ? You must think about all this. These things do not fall within the purview of the Charkha Sangh. The special task which lies beyond its scope would be your field.

You will have to consider if we can really win swaraj with the help of the spinning-wheel. Are you really convinced of it ? Or do you believe in it just because Gandhi says so ? Gandhi can see God through the spinning-wheel, or hope to find Him there. But it may as well be a personal matter with him. You will have to find out if this principle can be applied universally. Like Jagdish Chandra Bose you will have to become research scholars in your own field. He had even

<sup>1</sup> A variety of cotton largely grown in the former Berar State

devised a post-graduate course. I have seen how he remained deeply engrossed in it. This had become the main objective of his life. I used to be his close associate. I had stayed in his house for several days. He had a group of some twenty chosen men. But a few such men, if they are firm in their conviction, can work like millions. This is how experts work. The Charkha Sangh, Gramodyog Sangh, [etc.,] cannot do such work. There, too, there are experts and they also do research. But your field would be much wider and much more specialized. Through them I am trying to serve *Daridranarayana* in particular. Their development will be only along those lines. Your work however would be quite unusual. You would not merely improve the tools and implements, but also see their conformity with our principles. I shall exercise my mind to help you as your co-student; but I want to get the work mainly out of you.

In this way research and discoveries are undertaken everywhere. Look at Germany. How many specialists are there in that country ! There they are in need of specialists in the science of violence. We too could do research and make progress in the field of non-violence if we can have a small centre. We have to link the spinning-wheel and related activities with non-violence and ultimately with God.

You will have to consider if all these things are possible. You know that even a society based on violence functions only with the help of experts. We want to bring about a new social order based on truth and non-violence. We need experts to develop this into a science. The world as it functions today represents a mixture of violence and non-violence. The external surface of the world suggests its internal state. A country like Germany which regards violence as God is engaged only in developing violence and glorifying it. We are watching the efforts that the votaries of violence are making. We must also know that those given to violence are watching our activities. They are observing what we are doing for developing our science.

But the way of violence is old and established. It is not so difficult to do research in it. The way of non-violence is new. The science of non-violence is yet taking shape. We are still not conversant with all its aspects. There is a wide scope for research and experiment in this field. You can apply all your talents to it.

For me non-violence is something to be shunned if it is a private virtue. My concept of non-violence is universal. It belongs to the millions. I am here just to serve them. Anything that cannot reach the

millions is not for me. It should be so for my colleagues as well. We were born to prove that truth and non-violence are not just rules for personal conduct. They can become the policy of a group, a community, a nation. We have not yet proved this, but that alone can be the aim of our life. Those who do not have this faith or those who cannot acquire it should be good enough to remove themselves. But I have only this dream. I have regarded this alone as my duty. I shall not leave it even if the whole world abandons me. So profound is my faith. I would live only to attain this and die only in that endeavour. My faith gives me new visions every day. Now, in my old age, I am not likely to do anything else. It would be another thing if my mind is corrupted or I have a new vision. But today I am seeing ever new miracles of non-violence. Every day I have a new vision and I experience a new joy. I am certain that non-violence is meant for all time. It is an attribute of the *atman* and is, therefore, universal since the *atman* belongs to all. Non-violence is meant for everybody and for all time and at all places. If it is really an attribute of the *atman* it should be inherent in us. Nowadays it is said that truth cannot help in trade and politics. Then where can it be of help ? Truth is not worth a dime if it cannot be of help in all the fields of life, in all worldly dealings. Of what use would it be in life then ? I see every day that truth can be applied to life in all its practical aspects. I have been doing this *sadhana* for more than fifty years now. I have been conveying to you from time to time some of my experiences during this *sadhana*. You too can have glimpses of it.

If the Sangh has to continue it should be for this purpose. If you do not have this much inclination, earnestness or strength, disbanding the Sangh would itself be the pursuit of truth and non-violence. If we do not do so, we would prove guilty, we would be committing the sin of dishonesty. We would be committing yet another sin. We have in our midst a worker like Kishorelalbhai. He is a pure man given to uninter-rupted hard work. God has given him a keen intelligence. We would be misusing the services of such a man. Would we take his life even if he offered it himself ? But how can I press him ? What special work is now left for us ? We must relieve him of his responsibility right from today.

The other day I narrated to you the circumstances that should spell the doom of Gandhism. I repeat today that if Gandhism encourages any wrong thing it deserves to be doomed. Truth and non-violence are not just flowers in the sky. They should be manifest



in all our words, dealings and acts. Kishorelal does not wish to speak about all his bitter experiences in the Sangh. He is silent because he has forbearance. He conveys it to me just in passing when things go too far. This gives me some idea of the situation. Why is there such vicious estrangement amongst us ? We all form one family. We have adopted truth and non-violence. But we are given to strife and dogma and jealousy. Are not truth and non-violence things of this earth then ? Do they deserve only to be installed in the heavens ? We have learnt our lesson by entering politics. It created antagonism even among good people in the Sangh.<sup>1</sup> Oh, we are far away from Rama and Bharata. Kishorelalbhai is a poet too. He gave a poetic interpretation in terms of Rama and Bharata. But here no one is like Rama or Bharata. If we had Rama and Bharata amongst us would such things have happened ? What a world of difference between the love of Rama and Bharata and these feuds ! These people are miles away from Rama and Bharata.

Why should such differences arise among us when we all belong to the same Sangh and have come here with the sole idea of service ? There ought to be only love among us. Are all the people who have come here like this ? Do they have cordial relations with each other ? If your reply is in the affirmative, I shall have to put you to a very hard test. I am afraid we shall not pass that test. Ask the honest opinion of one another among yourselves. Ask yourselves, and you will realize that we are still far removed from non-violence. Why should we meddle with the Congress when we are so weak ? What service can we render there ? Why do we not withdraw when we are faced with a rival ? What have we to do with positions in the Congress ? Why should we think of defeating anyone in an election ?

If we are not possessed by the desire for power and a feeling of jealousy, why has so much bitterness spread round us ? Why do these people come to Malikanda and shout violent slogans ? Why is there so much bungling ? I would like to ask the Bengali workers present here: 'What gave rise to so much bitterness ? Why don't you try to win them over with love ? Why don't the leading workers among you go to them and talk to them lovingly ?' There are Prafulla Babu and Satis Babu. Let them go to the people who are raising the slogans, mix with

<sup>1</sup> Dhotre then pointed out that Kishorelal had discussed these feuds in an article "Rama aur Bharata" in *Sarvodaya*, a Hindi monthly edited by D. B. Kalelkar and Dada Dharmadhikari.

them and talk to them with love. I have tried this myself. It is nothing new for me. Surely I am not their rival. I do not want what they desire. They want power, and I have no desire for power at all. Rivalry is possible only when two persons want the same thing. We have to qualify ourselves for their love. That is why we must give up politics, and leave the field open for them. That is the way non-violence functions. For that very reason we must quit politics.

But are we going to remain idle, doing nothing ? We shall continue to spin and see if the spinning-wheel dulls our intelligence or sharpens it. We shall study the spinning-wheel. We shall find out what the spinning-wheel signifies, why and how it came into being and why it went out of use and in what way it can be useful to us. The Gandhi Seva Sangh should maintain a special library for this purpose. There will be no other library of its kind anywhere in the world. We shall be free from the bother of Gandhism only when we start working along these lines. Our present opponents will admire us for having such a programme and bless us, although today they are cursing us. Let me know if this thing is beyond your intelligence, strength or wishes. It would only prove that we are not yet qualified to form a new Sangh. But does this mean that what I have said is proved wrong thereby ?

I had not imagined this even when this Sangh was formed. Jamnalalji had set up the Sangh when I was in jail<sup>1</sup>. Jamnalalji is a worker with a pure heart. He opened his coffers when I started the non-co-operation movement. I had appealed to lawyers to give up their practice. Jamnalalji offered to support one hundred lawyers who would give up their practice and devote themselves to the service of the nation. This was not because he wanted to dominate the Congress but because he wanted to awaken the masses to the power of satyagraha. It was not his intention to send these gentlemen to the Congress. Every time he referred that matter to me he said that these people should be kept away from politics. Subsequently it was decided to use the money for the maintenance of constructive workers instead of the lawyers who had joined the non-co-operation movement. Out of this the Sangh was born. Jamnalalji had never intended to do political work through the Sangh. He was not agreeable again when I expanded the Sangh in 1934. Later on he also opposed my resolution at Hudli. If I am accused of dragging the Sangh into politics I would plead guilty. It would not be right to levy

<sup>1</sup> In 1922-23

such a charge against Jamnalalji.

Today I gave deep thought to the policy of the Sangh. I had not been able to do this with so much faith. Age has sapped my physical energy. I cannot observe things in all directions. I cannot be alert to all things and always. My body has become weak. I have somehow shouldered my responsibilities to this day. I even wanted to avoid coming to this convention; but I came because Prafulla Babu insisted. After coming here I concentrated my thoughts on the affairs of the Sangh. I placed the conclusions before you. Today my mind is saturated with these thoughts. Kishorelal carried this burden all these years. It was I who brought him into the Sangh. What is his condition today ? His body has become weak. I have read his speech. Now Kishorelal cannot work here. Hence I am placing this thing before you with so much concern.

In a way I am only casually mentioning this thing here. If you are not going to have in the Sangh any members who want to take part in politics independently, the Sangh would become quite small. But if it is genuine, it would grow into a huge tree, otherwise it would perish.

Because of politics, 84 out of 243 members go out of the Sangh. Not because they are worthless, but because they are useful in that field and are qualified for the task. How many from the remaining members can accomplish this ideal ? For this purpose you should form a committee with three or four members. This committee would prepare, with God as their witness, a list of persons who are qualified to carry on this work. This committee should also be empowered to decide on the future character of the Sangh. On this point you may also place your views before the committee in brief. But do not make speeches. In any case, the Sangh as it is functioning today has to be disbanded. It need not be considered whether or not it should function in future and if it should, in what shape. I have given you an outline of the shape it can take.

The question that now remains is : What would happen to the paid members who number nearly thirty ? It is a matter of settling accounts. But the Sangh does not exist for settling accounts, does it ? It is Jamnalalji's trust and this is a small matter. Dhotre and Jamnalalji can attend to it. It is not a matter for others to worry about. Let Jamnalalji and others concerned with him think about it. With this the matter comes to a close.

I am asking the rest of you if, in your view, the Gandhi Seva Sangh should continue to exist. If you want it to continue, it will have to be in the form I have indicated. You will have to study, do research and conduct experiments. And life will then be a grand thing. For that purpose all intellectual, physical and spiritual forces will have to be brought together. It will be a unique thing for the country, and for the world at large, which none may possibly envy. You will be placing before the country and the world the ideal of a new culture by this unity of body, mind and spirit. Can there be a goal loftier than this ?

I have placed this serious point before you. If this is beyond your capacity, it is only wise to wind up the Sangh. Only those who can pass the test of truth and non-violence and who are capable of working efficiently with a sense of complete dedication can manage the Sangh in its changed form.

I have explained my points at great length. Now you may express your views.

SWAMI ANAND : . . . Will communal unity also form part of the activities of the Sangh ? Or has it been kept out ?

GANDHIJI : It has not been kept out. It is there all right. Non-violence has no meaning without it. We have no programme for it right now, hence I deliberately omitted to mention it.

SWAMI : I am afraid if we get involved in the work of labour unions and communal unity it also may arouse jealousy and anger in other people. There too we shall come in conflict with them, and we shall have to withdraw from that field as well.

GANDHIJI : If feelings of jealousy and anger oblige us to withdraw it would be proved that we who are experimenting with non-violence are good for nothing. Some people may as well say that non-violence itself is meaningless. From their point of view non-violence would prove to be a great *adharmā* instead of a great dharma, for they say that the world functions because of the mixture of violence and non-violence. In their view, it is necessary that these two go hand in hand, otherwise the world would come to a standstill. Labourers have become cowards [they say] and it is necessary to train them in violent protest to build up their self-confidence. The Hindus are also cowards and for them non-violence is not the supreme dharma. I am still receiving letters to this effect. But we have to prove that we can solve labour disputes and communal problems by adopting non-violent methods.

RAM RATAN SHARMA : I wish to place before you one of my difficulties. I requested Kishorelalbhai to arrange for sending me somewhere to be given some training. He said that he had no provision for such training for me. I had also wanted to shape the Sangh in the manner Babu has suggested. For that purpose it is necessary that I get some expert training somewhere.

GANDHIJI : The Sangh about which I am thinking can come about after specialized training. It is a different question what we should do for training experts.<sup>1</sup>

SUDHAKAR : Are we giving up politics for good or for some time ?

GANDHIJI : Who can say it is for good ? We are not God, after all. We are talking only about the present.

KRISHNAN NAIR : People attached to the Charkha Sangh, the Gramodyog Sangh, etc., have their own organizations to lean on. But how should we organize those who do not belong to any of these five organizations ? Is it not necessary to have for them some kind of an old students' association ? Are all our members covered by these five organizations ?

GANDHIJI : If you have read the report carefully, you should know how many of our members are working in organizations devoted to constructive programme. This report is a thing which deserves to be studied. It is not an ordinary report. It indicates the number of the members in several ways. They are classified according to their Provinces, their activities and the organizations to which they belong. I was fascinated by the report. Look at the appendix. You find in the report an answer to every point. After reading the report you will realize that we are not going to achieve anything great by having an independent organization like the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Those who would work with complete dedication would not need frequent consultation or guidance at every step. Attaining freedom is not an ordinary thing. For that purpose we would need workers who could carry on their tasks independently and with a sense of dedication. Those who require supervision would work under the aegis of some organization or other. The Sangh does not have to exist for that purpose. We have five organizations devoted to the constructive

<sup>1</sup> Narahari Parikh, Dada Dharmadhikari and Gopabandhu Chaudhari then expressed concurrence with Gandhiji's suggestion to disband the present Sangh and to set up a new one.

programme. Most of the members are covered by these organizations. What more can we offer them by having them to continue in the Sangh ? The Sangh remains like a sixth finger. And how can we carry on supervision or inspection ? We have no means to do it.

KRISHNAN NAIR : This means that the Sangh ceases to exist physically from today.

GANDHIJI : Yes, that is so. Today we are pushing Sita down into the nether world.

PREMABEHN : At the time of the Dandi March<sup>1</sup> also you said that we were all worthless and disbanded the Ashram. Has a similar situation arisen now ? Is this also a preparation for some struggle ? Or is it merely an attempt at purification ?

GANDHIJI : I did not say that anyone was worthless. And how could I say such a thing so long as people like you are around ? But this is only by way of a joke. The fact is that we want to become purer. I do not consider anyone worthless nor call him so. I did not describe anyone in the Sabarmati Ashram as worthless. You would be doing me an injustice by putting such an interpretation on my speeches. All I say is that applying the yardstick we have chosen we have not passed the test. And if we have really followed the principles of truth and non-violence why have these people come here to shout slogans like “Down with Gandhism” ? They teach us a lesson that we are yet impure. Otherwise why would they raise such slogans ?<sup>2</sup> Neither you nor I know if they are being paid. But even if it is true it is a matter for us to think over. Why do people pay them to shout these slogans ? Why are they so bitter ? We must learn something from this. As far as I am concerned, I have learnt from these demonstrations what I could not learn by seeing you. They have set me thinking. Very few among us would have practised non-violence. In this matter we can have no guidance even from history, for we do not find there instances of such experiments. But if you have a sharp mind like mine, you would find proof of non-violence everywhere in the universe. This world changes every moment. There are so many forces of destruction that nothing remains steady. But the human race

<sup>1</sup> In March 1930

<sup>2</sup> At this stage someone said some people believed that they were paid for this.

is not destroyed in spite of this. It only suggests that non-violence prevails everywhere. I have vision of it. Like the force of gravitation, non-violence is drawing everything in the universe towards itself. Love has this power. Do I no call myself a scientist of non-violence ? That is why I am aware of its laws and see them [in action]. We cannot be votaries of non-violence if we do not cherish a feeling of equality for all. If you have such a feeling of equality, you would not resort to protest or violence when anybody raises slogans invoking doom on you. Let us abjure any such practice which creates violent reactions in others. We are changing the character of the Sangh from this point of view. So many people come here to have a glimpse of me. They think I am an incarnation of God. But nobody is an incarnation of God. Or, if anybody is, everybody is. If I am such an incarnation, all of them are also such incarnations. Then why are they drawn towards me like this ? It is the law of non-violence at work. There is in me some non-attachment also. Hence I am able to take the detached view that it is not my own power but the power of non-violence. What am I ? I am but an embodiment of a thousand faults. When I search my heart I discover nothing but faults. If you take to such introspection you too would go crazy. We must try to control every thought of ours. I try it myself. I have a glimpse of God even in my opponents. You should also have that glimpse of God.

PRABHUDAS : Kishorelalbhai has said in *Sarvodaya* that there should be an organization even of imperfect followers of non-violence. They too must acquire the strength of organization. But from your speeches it seems that there can be no organization of those who practise non-violence imperfectly.

GANDHIJI : I shall not accept your point in your own words. An organization like the Gandhi Seva Sangh cannot be an organization merely of non-violent people. The Sangh was formed under specific circumstances. It was formed with the idea of supervising the work of some twenty or thirty people by giving them financial assistance. Then it expanded, and it was necessary to make improvements in it. But that special purpose is no more. There is no need to have such an organization for the progress of people who follow non-violence imperfectly. An institution is formed only with imperfect people. If men were perfect, no organization would be needed. Non-violence is imbibed even in the Charkha Sangh and the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

These also want to follow the path of peace. The Gandhi Seva Sangh can become an organization of non-violent people only if it has some special programme. But what is the meaning of a mere organization of non-violent people ? It is an implied dharma. When we wish to attain non-violence through certain means, an organization is formed. The Gandhi Seva Sangh has adopted no such specific means. We have our institutions for each particular department, which organize various constructive activities. But it is not the function of these institutions to examine how far their activities have helped develop non-violence. I would ask Shankerlal <sup>1</sup> how many persons were paid wages. I would not ask how much progress he made in the direction of non-violence. I would ask a labour union how far it had improved the lot of the workers through peaceful methods. I shall not ask how the labour movement was related to non-violence. The same is true of the Gramodyog Sangh. The same is true of Satis Babu. He does not have to take the test about the progress of non-violence in the Khadi Pratishtan. He can be asked only about how much of good quality oil, paper, khadi or leather he has produced. After all this the point remaining to be considered is to find out in what way we can evolve through them a non-violent culture. We can have an organization for that purpose. But where is the need for an organization merely for those who believe in non-violence ? Whatever strength or guidance they need would be available to them from my actions. God Himself would guide them. They would be organized even without an institution.

JAJU : It should be realized that those who are in politics will definitely cease to be members. Now we have to think about the future of the Sangh.

DADA DHARMADHIKARI : Let us wind up this Sangh. The new committee which is to be formed can form a new Sangh if it thinks it necessary.

SHANKARRAO DEO : I support Dada's suggestion. It is not proper to discriminate and say that those involved in politics cease to be members of the Sangh and the Sangh continues with the rest of the members.

GANDHIJI : Let it not be forgotten that we are not discriminating when we keep the politically inclined people out of the Sangh. All that we want to do is to eschew politics in the name of the Sangh. Had we

<sup>1</sup> Shankerlal Banker, Secretary, Akhil Bharatiya Charkha Sangh



been regarding men who are active in politics as inferior persons, we would not allow those persons even to remain in politics. But we are not asking them to quit politics.

SHANKARRAO : We are confronted with this whole moral dilemma because we take part in politics even as we remain members of the Sangh. That is why Bapuji has suggested that we change the present character of the Sangh. The present form of the Sangh is not its original form. That is why I suggest we wind up the Sangh as it is functioning today, and restore it to its original form.

GANDHIJI : You may do that.

MAGANBHAI : Politics involves struggle for power which breeds jealousy. Hence the members of the Sangh are being asked to retire from politics or those in politics are being asked to leave the Sangh. But those who are inclined to pursue power will do the same in the field of the constructive programme. Even today it cannot be said that there is no power struggle or jealousy or bitterness in the field of constructive work. Nor do I see any need of even a research institute for those devoted solely to constructive work. People working in different fields would continue research in their respective fields while remaining with their own organizations. If they have any difficulty, they would consult their departmental head. Or, they would seek guidance from someone in whom they have a special faith. . . . For that no institution is needed. If you set up a research institute, it would undertake some stray research projects and exercise unnecessary control over other organizations. Apart from conducting research, its function would also be to correlate it with truth and non-violence. Hence it would become an organization exercising superior moral authority. I see no need for such a superior authority. In my view, you are discarding the shape you gave to the Sangh in 1934. And now when we clearly find that it can have no specific function under these conditions, why should we not disband it altogether ?

GANDHIJI : Maganbhai, I have understood your point. What you are saying is not quite relevant here. Krishnan Nair correctly observed the other day that this would be purely a research institute. It would place before the people the conclusions of its research. Anyone who is keen would be free to benefit from them. Those who do not find them useful can ignore them. Here the question of dominating others does not arise at all. There is nothing like 'superior moral authority' at the back of it. When there is no question of domination how can it give rise to quarrels ?

It is possible that organizations devoted to the constructive programme, such as the Charkha Sangh, etc., may to some extent suffer from bickerings, misuse of authority or arrogance resulting from power. But where do you find in it what we describe as power politics ? It is not a representative body formed after an election. It is an organization like a bank. How could power politics get into it ? The Congress is a vast organization. It belongs to the millions. It is a representative organization. There is plenty of scope in it for the politics of power. Today the Gandhi Seva Sangh has neither the equipment nor the strength to enter power politics in its own capacity. That is why we are suggesting that those who are taking active part in politics should not remain in the Sangh. Did we ever say that they should give up politics ? If they find that by their remaining in politics they are not serving any useful purpose but are instrumental in spreading poison, they would have to get out of it. But today we only ask them that they should not enter politics as members of the Sangh. We must deny them this much.

The question now is : What form should the Sangh take ? I have given an outline. I cannot think of an alternative method. Those who want to engage in other activities like the study of politics can do it independently. This does not fall within my purview. For me, true politics consists in linking up the constructive programme with swaraj. I have never studied what people describe as politics. I carried on agitation even in South Africa; but I did not study politics. For me whatever I did was politics. I do not say that I have never taken part in politics. On my arrival in India, as chance would have it, the reins of the Congress fell into my hands. I remained with the Congress so long as I could be of service and then retired from it<sup>1</sup>. It seems to me that I have rendered a great service by going out of the Congress. It was my attitude of non-violence. My non-violent attitude served its purpose well. Non-violence had its place in the Congress even after I went out of it. Now I leave the politics of the Congress to Rajendra Babu and Vallabhbhai. If they find poison spreading by their remaining there, they too should quit. But it is not easy to quit. If the people insist on their remaining in politics and if the Congress and its President find it

<sup>1</sup> In 1934

necessary that they should be there, then it becomes difficult for them to go out. But in that case they should not remain with the Sangh.

We have to keep the Sangh untouched by the politics of power and groupism. We have to work in studied silence. That alone would be the beginning of real politics. The field of constructive work is very vast. Let us study it. Let us do research and make discoveries in that field. Shankerlal [alone] cannot shoulder this responsibility. This is the only programme I have for the Sangh. I can only give you what I have. A new vista is opening before you for an experiment in non-violence. You can expand it as much as you choose. Even if you cannot expand it, its present scope itself is sufficient. Your work will inspire others in their research. I am not talking of ordinary inventions. Am I going to be satisfied by haphazard discoveries ? Only when someone has something great should he place it before the world. That thing should be so extraordinary that the world should be wonderstruck by it. For having such a Sangh we should also have people who would be crazy about it.

I have put before you everything in simple and straightforward words. Whatever work we do, we have to keep away from power politics and groupism. The Congress is guiding the politics of the whole nation. Those among us who want to render service by being on Congress committees will not be with the Sangh from now. It is possible to prepare for civil disobedience even by remaining out of the Congress. The Congress represents the whole nation. Hence it has to reflect its views in its programmes and resolutions. But we have to do silent service in our independent field.

KRISHNAN NAIR : If the Sangh is continued, there is the danger of the emergence of a sect in your name. Just as we are scared of groupism in politics, we should also be scared of a sect emerging in your name in the form of the Sangh. This Sangh which has carried your name has done no extraordinary work in your own lifetime. Who knows what would happen after you are gone ? Hence it is just as well that the Sangh be disbanded.

GANDHIJI : There is, no doubt, the danger of forming a sect. In this matter I take as much precaution as possible.

MULCHAND AGRWAAL : In these two or three days Bapuji has said the same things that he has been saying for the last ten or fifteen years. He has said nothing

new. All this trouble has arisen because the members of the Sangh were permitted to take part in politics. Hence it would be enough to correct this. It seems impracticable to wind up this Sangh and form another. Let there be some improvements in the present set-up. We need not have a new set-up.

JAJU : It is not a question of breaking up. We are reorganizing it. Even those who are in favour of closing it down desire its reconstitution. We had reconstituted the Sangh in 1934. We are now doing it again in 1940.

BABALBHAI : Inventors would be produced by organizations like the Charkha Sangh, etc. They alone would be the experts in their respective fields. No special research institute is needed for them. They can correlate their work with truth and non-violence.

GANDHIJI : You do not expect me to answer this point, do you ? The answer is contained in whatever I have said.

PUNDALIK : Does withdrawal from politics as members of the Sangh indicate that politics of power is a bad thing ? Why should we not take part in politics of power after remaining out of the Sangh ? Why should we not prove for the world that the best possible means can be employed even in politics of power ?

GANDHIJI : Why should we meddle with politics of power while we remain in the Sangh ? I do not wish to give my view even about one individual doing it or not doing it. I do not have enough material about it. I do not know how far those who accept power observe non-violence and stand for truth. You would be put to test if you take part in politics of power. I cannot say to what extent you would pass that test. Vallabhbhai is conducting the experiment by remaining in politics. He would leave it when he finds that it is not proper for him to be there. The Sangh does not wish to take any responsibility in this matter. It is left to the conscience of each individual. Each should regard his own conscience as the authority. No outsider can take any decision in the matter. For instance, Vallabhbhai is engaged in [political] work. But I do not know his mind. I do not know Vallabhbhai's feelings, nor yours. After all, I am no God, am I ?

SWAMI ANAND : The Government has set up Rural Reconstruction Boards. Should we withdraw from these Boards as well ? After two years these Boards will be elected bodies. The Bombay Board will be elected after six months.

GANDHIJI : We may remain with the Boards so long as they are not infected by power politics. If the politics of power starts affecting

them, we should quit. This is a matter to be decided independently for one's own self.

It is quite likely that the committee which we are going to form may not be able to finish its work here in Malikanda. But it should nevertheless fix a time-limit for submitting its conclusions. If people are not offering their names, Kishorelal is of course there. I am there too.<sup>1</sup>

[From Hindi]

*Gandhi Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan (Malikanda—Bengal) ka Vivaran,*  
pp. 34-52

#### 427. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING-VI

MALIKANDA,

February 22, 1940

We can say 'barring the members mentioned below, others should withdraw'.<sup>2</sup>

This change we have introduced today is not ideal. We could not give the Sangh the new shape we wanted to. The Committee which you formed wanted to give an idea of the future shape of the Sangh. But we realized our shortcoming when we actually started our deliberations. Where are the men who would be useful to the new Sangh ? It was with great difficulty that we could decide upon the names for the new Executive Committee. At the same time we also wondered whether there was any certainty that the capable persons, even if we could find them, would work together in harmony. It is a matter of shame for us. Why should there be any suspicion or discord among the people who are wedded to non-violence ? If this is the case, there is no such thing as Gandhism of which we may be proud. This one reason alone is sufficient for winding up the Sangh. That is why we have passed a tentative resolution. After the experience of our bankruptcy we can no more say that Gandhism is a pleasant name to hear. It is not a word which can touch our hearts. This becomes a

<sup>1</sup> A sub-committee consisting of Gandhiji, Kishorelal Mashruwala, Vallabhbhai Patel, Shrikrishnadas Jaju, Gopabandhu Chowdhary, Gangadharrao Deshpande, V. V. Dastane and Prafulla Chandra Ghosh was formed.

<sup>2</sup> Before Gandhiji started his speech the resolution prepared by the sub-committee was being discussed. *Vide* Appendix "Resolution at Gandhi Seva Sangh", 12-2-1940.

strong reason for winding up the Sangh. If you wind up the Sangh because I insist on it, it would be a matter of shame for me as well as for you. We must shine forth after freeing ourselves of the encumbrance that is the Sangh; we must prove our worth by some action. We must give evidence of the supremacy of non-violence at least before India. If we cannot do it, why needlessly form a Sangh only to bring it into disrepute? When I search my soul I realize that we have nothing worth offering to the people. The Sangh is then nothing but a burden. Its weight has crushed Kishorelal. Dhotre has gone to pieces working away at it. Non-violence should not have such a drawback. For the one who pursues non-violence, there should be enhanced joy. Let us examine ourselves and ask whether we pass the test. No. The discussions here have made no other impression on me. Whatever work we are doing do we do it with intellectual awareness and regarding it as our *swadharma*<sup>1</sup>? No. We do so many things merely because Gandhi says so.

That is why I say that it is in the interest of all of you that the Sangh should close down. You were under the impression that the Sangh was protecting you and inspiring you. But that was not the case. It was only an illusion. Now you are coming out of that illusion and becoming self-reliant and independent. True Gandhi Seva Sangh will be born only when you pursue non-violence independently. After the Sangh has closed down it will be known to what extent you can follow the path of non-violence on your own strength. Hence, disbanding the Sangh is for the good of all of us.

I was facing a similar situation when I closed down the Satyagraha Ashram<sup>2</sup>. There were the same problems and the same arguments. At first some inmates of the ashram used to quarrel with one another over petty matters. This was a slur on the name of the Satyagraha Ashram. I felt that one should realize at least one's own weaknesses if one wanted to follow the path of true worship. Honesty is the first step. I found that we did not live like one family. We were lost in strifes and feuds. We should have lived in complete amity at the Satyagraha Ashram. But it should have happened spontaneously, not as a result of compulsion or coercion. When I saw that we have failed to conquer our nature, I replaced the name Ashram by Udyog Mandir and changed its character. But I was not satisfied even with that. I

<sup>1</sup> One's own duty

<sup>2</sup> In July 1933; *vide* "Interview to Associated Press of India", 25-7-1933.

needed a different type of qualification for the Udyog Mandir. The Udyog Mandir too could not work and so it was later changed into the Harijan Ashram. It became a sacred place for the service of those who are considered as the worst sinners.

But I was talking about the time when I disbanded the Satyagraha Ashram. I said at that time that the Ashram was being transformed into something grand. I said that each one of the inmates was carrying the Satyagraha Ashram with him, each one of them had become a mobile ashram. Can there be any transformation greater and more wonderful ? Not all the inmates of the Ashram passed the test I gave. But how does it affect me ? As a result, everyone could discover his own path. Those who had imbibed the spirit of the Ashram in their nature and their way of life, are like a mobile ashram to this day. And those who had a different temperament and inclination were like prisoners set free. It was for the good of both.

Just as these inmates of the ashram who had faith in satyagraha became each one a mobile ashram, you who are members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh have to be mobile sanghs. You are all going to take the Gandhi Seva Sangh with you. Your burden has become lighter as well as heavier. You will now be your guides. Just as I am my own follower, however incompetent and imperfect, you too should become your own followers. I am an imperfect man. I do not like to be anybody's captive. But I do not run away from hard work. I try to go ahead slowly, step by step. You too should do the same. You need no one's help in this regard. God's help is enough.

Let every member be ready to carry out the task he may have set for himself. Let him seek help from God. We should remain in the fore-front among the [freedom] fighters of India and proceed regarding life as a death-bed. We should not sleep all alone in that bed but have the messenger of Death as our bed-fellow. Let us say to Death : 'You may take me away if that be your wish. But I am dancing in your jaws. I shall dance as long as you let me and when you would not, I shall go to sleep in your own lap.' This sangh will become immortal when you thus conquer your fear of death. And if you are men of this kind, what need is there for any sangh ? You are, in that case, each one a sangh by yourself.

We add to our strength by freeing ourselves from an illusion. You acquire new strength if you take this step with full knowledge. I am pleased to know that you do not wish to remain in a state of suspended animation. I am also pleased to learn that you have

cancelled the membership of all the members. Today you have brought to a close the sangh in its present form. If you have done this on an impulse, it will bring you no good. For it would then not be an act in keeping with the principles of truth and non-violence. But if you have done it after calm consideration and weighing the pros and cons, we are, without doubt, going to progress in our search for truth.

You had given full authority to the committee, but we had no means to exercise that authority. With great difficulty we could find half a dozen men. The burden now will be on their shoulders. But you also cannot escape responsibility. You should take the responsibility of providing the means for the new sangh. You are leaving the Sangh with the knowledge that while you were in the Sangh you accomplished nothing. We could not even equip ourselves for a new sangh. What then did this sangh achieve ? This should be a matter of deep thought for us. Why should we continue to be associated with such a sangh ? Do we want to form a sangh of the weak ? Let us realize all our imperfections. If we become aware of our own weakness as well as that of the sangh, we shall start moving towards perfection. No one in the world is born perfect. We must see our failings ourselves. How can others point them out to us ? How can others know our shortcomings as well as we do ? That is why I am embarrassed when somebody starts praising me. The imperfection of the sangh is the sum total of our own imperfections. We must wonder at the fact that we have remained so wanting. We must acquire new strength. Being conscious of our imperfections is the first step of progress. He who does not realize this knows nothing. He is the greatest fool.

You must write to the new President of the sangh that he should consider you as experts. Tell him that you wish to do research. For a year you should carry on research by keeping in touch with Jajuji or by staying at Wardha. You may render silent service, incognito. We can then expect to acquire the power we wish to have. We can also hope to produce some research scholars who would dedicate their lives to ceaseless research. They would come to me with the results of their research. I would dance for joy if I find that they have found something which I wanted but was incapable of finding. Then the sangh would grow and non-violence take one step forward.

Why should we believe in Gandhism if our work does not progress in this manner? What is the test of your being Gandhities? You know only the science of spinning. But that is not enough. The



people who have come here for the exhibition can spin much better than you. But they are happy with their daily wages of eight annas. They know nothing about the science of spinning. It is not enough to spin well. It must be developed into a science. That is, it should be correlated with non-violence.

Thus, the sangh becomes a tiny little something today. You can derive immense strength from it. In order to generate that strength we are dispensing with its physical structure. We are driving the Sangh down into the nether world. We are wiping it out of existence. It is no more a burden either for Jajuji or for you. If the Sangh had any power, you are carrying it along with you. You will use it to counteract the poison spreading in the country, thereby increasing your own strength and also the Sangh's. If you have realized this point, then we have not been hasty in disbanding the Sangh nor have we done it just for the fun of it. Whatever we have done, we have done knowingly and after careful thought. I have had my hand in framing the constitution of the Sangh. And I have been responsible in prevailing upon the reluctant Kishorelal to accept the presidentship. I know what pains Kishorelal has taken in drafting the constitution. That constitution could be a model for other organizations, and now I am scrapping it with my own hands. This is not a light matter.

It is a different matter if you think that I have grown senile and hence I blurt out whatever comes to my mind. But if you think that I am still sound of mind and have learnt something from my experience, I say you will learn more about truth and non-violence from this. Since the Sangh has been disbanded at my instance, know that there is something in it. If you look inward and think about the matter, your mind would awaken to the realization that under the circumstances this is the greatest, the best and the most proper thing that we could do.

And now I would seek your permission to leave. Prafulla Babu says that I should stay here till Sunday. I have come to Bengal but have not done much work for the Bengalis. There is no hope of my coming to Malikanda again. That is why I wish to devote some time for Bengal. There are other things also waiting. I shall have to give some time for those things also. That is why I want you to let me leave. I shall be able to join you only for the sacrificial spinning.

[From Hindi]

*Gandhiji Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan (Malikanda-Bengal)ka Vivaran,*  
pp. 54-8

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### LETTER FROM H.S.L. POLAK<sup>1</sup>

*November 23, 1939*

MY DEAR BHAI,

Pyarelal has been good enough to send us news of you and your message of love and affection, for which we are grateful to you and to him. Of course, we understand how busy you must be and how necessary it is for you to deal with immediate matters and correspondence first. We know, too, from old experience, that “the nearest and the dearest” must be prepared to make the hardest sacrifice! It is good to feel that in spite of time and circumstances, we are still included in that category. Indeed, it must have been in our karma that this close link between us, which has remained unbroken for so long, should have been forged.

We are three families here (Shiplake, near Henley-on-Thames, Oxon.) in a small house by the river Millie, Celie and I; Leon’s wife, Marie, and the two children (the elder, Rosemary, nearly five, a most energetic, exigent, and eager little girl, and the boy, Peter, aged 21 months, fat, fine, and full of good humour and intelligence); and Millie’s other sister and her husband; not to speak of a maid and two dogs. So you can well imagine how full of domestic activity and responsibility Millie is. Indeed, she is giving all her time to these duties. Her health, despite the fact that she had no holiday this summer, owing to the outbreak of war just after everyone else had one, and that she had a shocking scalding accident when visiting Mater in June (the latter is over 80 and in fairly good health and spirit, at Bexhill), is on the whole pretty good, though, naturally, as the strain does not get less, she has spells of fatigue, which affect the nerves and the heart, from time to time. She shares with you, though in a much less degree, a tendency to blood-pressure.

The war is in background of all our lives. When the worst will be reached none can say. But the general determination of the country to try to end the constant pressure of threats, aggression and violence is unmistakeable; and so, in spite of an undercurrent of anxiety and uncertainty, there is a deeply-ingrained satisfaction that a great effort is being made to establish once more the basis of something more than a nominal peace and a return to a more civilised handling of the problems of life, personal, rational, and international.

For ourselves, we are hoping to stay out at Shiplake till the end of the war. Leon is an Air Raid Protection Warden in charge of his area, near his house in Wimbledon, of some square miles. He comes down whenever possible at weekends, and sometimes instead, Marie goes up to him, to say that the house is still there and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to H. S. L. Polak”, August 30, 1941.

in order. Our London flat is closed, pending termination of the lease. For reasons of security, the firm has transferred most of the professional work and the records to new offices at Wimbledon, whilst retaining some of the old offices in the Strand, where we attend two days a week. But, in fact, work has largely dried up and is, at present, confined almost entirely to what was pending at the outbreak of war. How it will end is uncertain. I go to the office four days a week from Shiplake, and participate at the same time in my various public activities, including writing and lecturing. I am, among other things, the Treasurer of theosophical Society in England.

As you will no doubt have surmised, none of these jobs weighs more heavily upon me than our old problems of Indians overseas and, in particular, those of South Africa. So soon as General Hertzog resigned, I wrote to General Smuts and Dr.J.H. Hofmeyr, as you will see from the enclosed correspondence, and received from then the enclosed replies, which I have communicated to Lord Zetland, Mr.Anthony Eden at the Dominions Office ( who have both warmly acknowledged them), the Government of India, and the Indian Agent General (Sir B.Rama Rau); and this week I have discussed the situation in an intimate and informal talk with Colonel Deney's Reitz, the Union Minister attending the war conferences here, who was most sympathetic but inclined to be somewhat pessimistic as to any real change of sentiment on race and colour questions in the Union for a long time. I may say too that I have had the most cordial help and appreciation of the importance of these matters from the Dominions Office, under Sir Thomas Inskip (now Lord Caldecote, the Lord Chancellor) and the Duke of Devonshire, and Mr.Eden. At the Colonial Office, too, where the reactions in Ken are being watched with anxiety, I have had a good deal of encouragement from Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, your old friend, Ramsay's son. All this, of course, is for your personal information and not for publication. In view of your great interest in the South African question, I thought you would wish to know how things were being dealt with at this end. I expect that in South Africa, for the time being, things anti-Indian will be at a standstill, especially as Stuttaford is no longer Minister for the Interior and Hofmeyr is again in the cabinet. If Reitz can help in this, I am sure that he will use his influence in the right direction.

Pyarelal writes that you are wondering if I get any worthwhile news of Indian developments. Yes, as a journalist, as an old colleague of many public men in India, and as a member of the India Conciliation Group, I get practically all that there is and am kept fully informed of what I may miss by Agatha, who has a watchful eye. Moreover, after over thirty years of experience of the inside of Indian affairs, fortified by the observations taken during many visits to India since the historic initial one of 1909, it is not difficult for me to set things in something like a reasonable responsible perspective; though I much doubt whether you will approve of or agree with my general conclusions.

I am going to be quite frank in telling you there I disagree with what has been happening in India and the background of belief in which it has happened. I know, from old times, how loyally you depend upon colleagues and how you have tended to accept from those whom you have regarded as specialists in their particular line their

views of a given situation and the advice thereon that they have offered you. I see this again in your backing of Jawaharlal's statement of principles against your own better judgement. However much you are prepared to stand alone in affirmation of what you hold to be true, your loyalty (it appears to me from what I have long observed) often betrays you into contrary and contradictory courses. You took as I hold rightly the view that, in this tragic crisis, India's help to the Allied cause in the war should be unconditional. But when Jawaharlal, misled as always, by his ineradicable passion for Leftist ideological phraseology and his blindness to facts that did not square with his intellectual prepossessions (I don't in the least question his honesty, but only his judgement) carried the Working Committee with him in lying down conditions for collaboration with Britain, you could not or would not stand out in insistence upon India's taking what you regarded as the one right course. Jawaharlal could not get away from his mantram, "British imperialism" and I see that now you mutter it with equal fervour and iteration, as though it were both true and creative.

One reason why I was most anxious for you to come to the Round Table Conference (notwithstanding the conditions which you accepted upon which it was held) was that I wanted you to realise the intense and fundamental changes in public opinion here in the concept of Empire, even the most reactionary circles, which, however, did not and do not truly represent average sentiment in the country. I was deeply disappointed that you steadily averted your mind from any real contact with that sentiment. But the way in which you appeared before the Conference and the admissions of communal disunity that you were then compelled to confess did infinite harm to the cause of Indian constitutional progress. You knew before you came here or, if you did not, you must have been living in a world of unreality that unless communal accord could be reached, the end must be disastrous. Yet, though you could have brought with you a galaxy of talent drawn from Congress-minded Muslims, you left the Mussalman cause to be represented solely by the Muslim communalists, and the Hindu reactionaries at the Conference defeated every reposed solution based upon national interests. You failed publicly to carry the minorities with you, and your stand did not even have the practical consequence of dividing them effectively on the national issue.

Later still, the Congress Party, both in and out of office, instead of seeking to draw over to country's cause the best and most national-minded of the Muslim Leaguers, by getting them to work inside the League and to transform it from within into becoming a sort of Muslim Nationalist wing of the Congress, set about deliberately seeking to undermine its influence in the country, attacking it openly and thus driving it to defend itself by extreme anti-Hindu propoganda, and thus giving to the Mahasabha the very material, without which it was impotent, to stir up communal prejudice and hatred, until communal stir has become more bitter and menacing than at any time in the history of the national movement. You have yourself only recently admitted the danger of the position, from the point of view of the preservation of non-violence and the possibilities of a resort to civil disobedience.

Yet, at the same time, in recent statements in India and the British press, you have supported the Congress denial that communal discord has any validity in the present constitutional situation, its assertion that civil disobedience to attain the Congress objectives is not a distant possibility in spite of the probability of its accentuating communal hatreds and its resulting in some parts of the country in civil war; and the assertion that it is only Jawaharlal's pet bogey, "British imperialism" that prevents India's achievement of what you once called "the substance of independence", which you defined for me (and have reiterated and never repudiated) as Dominion Status, as interpreted in the Statute of Westminster. Both Mr. De Valera and General Hertzog have claimed that this involves the right to secede, and I have seen no authoritative denial of this claim of right. It is unlikely, for good reasons of a very practical character, to be exercised either by Eire or by South Africa. But if it were ever to be exercised, I am confident that no British Government would be found to constrain any Dominion by force to remain in the Empire. That is what "British imperialism" has now come to mean; and India could rid herself of her fears and suspicions, if she could bring herself to understand how a Dominion constitution is brought about and works in practice, if she could agree with reasonable unanimity upon any form of such a constitution, so British Government would be allowed by public opinion here to stand in the way. It would be hard for the taking. The Jawaharlals and the others, who pretend to speak on these subjects, experts without any real experience and with hardly any theoretical knowledge even of constitution-working, are constantly talking of a Constituent Assembly, to which the British Government ought to agree in advance, for the purpose of threshing out a constitution for India. But you ought to know better than anyone else there that that was not how the South Africa Constitution was made. There was no formal or official constituent Assembly. The party leaders in the separate Colonies agreed to meet and discuss. They hammered out a constitution and then presented it to the British Parliament, which passed it substantially unaltered. Even then, in its working out, the South African constitution has since been structurally altered by the will of the South African people without interference from the British Parliament, and reservations made and accepted at the time in all sincerity have disappeared by acts of ill-faith, but without effective objection from here. Similarly with Eire.

The fact is that your colleagues do not live in a world of reality but in one of theory and you yourself are so indifferent to constitutional theory, usage, and practice that you accept their declarations though these were based upon anything but vagueness and ignorance of the true spirit of British constitutional history. The Congress party lives in the past, in a realm of suspicion and fear; not in the present, in one of courage and self-assurance. It cannot convince either of its sincerity or of its understanding of major problems affecting the welfare of the nation large sections of the public. It affects a lofty superiority, whereas, indeed, it manifests quite obviously an inferiority-complex, both at home and abroad. It talks of democracy, but it practises the methods of totalitarianism, often unashamedly and ruthlessly overbearing all opposition because it fears for its prestige if it should modify its

policy to meet demand needs or because justice requires it.

I should have thought that, when the Allied countries are fighting a life-and-death struggle to destroy all that the Hitler regime stands for in brutality, aggression, lying, and violence, you, at least, would have understood that the greater naturally and inevitably includes the less, and that, with the ultimate resort once more to argument, reason, and conciliation in the solution of world problems, the problem of India's future, once her own leaders were in reasonable agreement as to principles and larger details, would be automatically solved.

I remember that old soldier Annie Besant, taking a very different line in 1911 on a subject very near to her heart. It was at the time of the Coronation of King George V, and the greatest women's suffrage demonstration ever held took place in London. Millie and I participated in it and marched with the Indian section, I carrying the symbolic elephant and some of the cane chairs! We wound up at the Albert Hall, where a great meeting was addressed by many of the most noteworthy of the feminist leaders. But the most striking speech was that of Annie Besant. She said, in brief (remember the date, 1911): "We have the franchise. That is not today the issue. The question is: How are we going to use it? If not better than the men, it is not worth having." It was not until years later, after the Great War in which the women contributed magnificently, that the women's Franchise Act was actually passed. But Annie Besant had vision and understanding. She knew that, in spirit, her cause had already triumphed, though form might yet be lacking for the spirit to inhabit. But the coming of the form was inevitable. And, before she died, she had the same certain vision regarding India's triumphant emergence to equality of status among the nations. She never doubted. But you and your colleagues, whilst professing, except in a purely academic sense, as when a good man may be said to represent all mankind have not this courage, this faith, this certainty. You doubt, you ask for assurances, you question whether there might not even be two kinds of Dominion Status, one white and one brown! which causes people here, who are instinctively aware of the true meaning of the things to smile, as at the pathetic innocence (or ignorance) of the young untutored mind! Where is the profound wisdom of India, for which the Rishis stood? And where is the true patience that has kept India alive and potent for such things through the centuries?

Two things have given me the most intense humiliation. The one is the gravity of the communal feud, inconceivable to me when I look back to conditions prevailing in India when I first went there thirty years ago. The second is the intrigue, the dishonesty the rancour and the dangerous authoritarianism in the Congress circles that has been condemned by none more vigorously than yourself. They display together not the spirit of unity which would, in itself, command successful realisation of the national aspiration, but one of tragic internal feud and discord, one of inferiority which, even in the absence (as I firmly believe) of external opposition would suffice to frustrate the fulfilment of India's hope.

And when I hear you echoing Jawaharlal's endless repetition of the mantram of "British imperialism", as though this had anything in common, either in theory or in

practice, with the calculated bestiality and horror of Nazi torture of the unoffending Jews, or persecution and terrorism of the Czechs and the Poles; when I see you hesitate even for a moment in throwing all the forces of India into the balance in order to destroy for ever a truly "Satanic Government" (to use an old and misapplied term of your own) I am amazed and shocked that either [of] you, trained in a knowledge of English and the use of language, should put your country to shame by confusing issues and misusing its trust in your guidance! If you had had a drop of Jewish blood in you, you could not have rested until, without hatred and without a desire for vengeance, but from the deepest and holiest sense of duty such as Sri Krishna spoke of to Arjuna, you had done your uttermost to destroy a locust regime that is seeking to devour every beautiful thing that mankind, intuitively realising its godly nature, has been developing during the ages of its development.

But as you are a Hindu by birth, an Indian by choice, and a citizen of the world by aspiration, I do adjure you to reflect once more upon the stupidity and the futility of abstention, even as Sri Krishna adjured Arjuna to remember that even if he were determined to renounce his duty, to resist evil and defend truth, yet his very nature would drive him irresistibly to the task.

I sometimes ask myself what changes in the . . .<sup>1</sup> each of us might have resulted had we remained together in common work.<sup>2</sup> I am sure that I should have been a better man. But, on my part, I would have told you faithfully what others have, in the main, concealed from you; I should have helped you to laugh things into their real proportions; I should have warned you loyally against misinterpreting the honest motives of others who did not agree with you, but whom your won "followers" have prevented from healthy contact with you. You have lately complained about many things that, though only now, apparently revealed to you, have long been known to and condemned by others who have been unscrupulously denounced as in British pay or under British influences, who have been virtually driven out of public life as traitors to the country's interest. You must accept your full share, it seems to me, of this lamentable state of affairs. And also for the weak and silly policy of withdrawal from the administration of affairs in the Congress Provinces. In India it seems so much easier to refrain, to stand aloof, to non-cooperate, than to join together to get things done, to gain experience, to create and construct and educate and provide opportunities for greater effort and the conquest of disease, poverty and ignorance. I know, of course, all the arguments for non-cooperation. I know, too, how they have been falsified in practice by your repeated admissions. I know all the arguments for positive non-violence. I know, too, how you yourself have been repeatedly deceived by those who have vowed themselves to it and betrayed both you and the ideal that they had sworn to defend. I know how hatred has spread throughout the country until its face has been unrecognisably distorted. Whose hatred was it that did this that of the British "Imperialists" or the Indian "nationalists"?

<sup>1</sup> Illegible in the source

<sup>2</sup> The sentence is as in the original.

Will you not reflect again that, in all this denunciation of British [']s motives and actions, you might after all, under God, have been wrong, and that what has to be done now is to work together to face the Devil and subdue him?

I have tried to write honestly and with restraint, and I am sure you will understand the spirit of love for you and for India with which I have done so.

Please write soon and tell me so.

*Yours affectionately,*

[PS.]

Today's papers tell us of the Working Committee's resolution stating, *inter alia*, that the British Government has slammed the door upon India! For sheer falseness and poverty of imagination it compared favourably even with Dr. Goebbels's propaganda bureau. I can tell you as a fact that this is all completely untrue and the exact opposite of the spirit in which the Indian situation is being faced in the most authoritative circles.

## APPENDIX II *VICEROY'S DECLARATION*<sup>1</sup>

*October 17, 1939*

Since the outbreak of war and more particularly during the last four weeks I have been in the closest touch with the leaders of political opinion in British India and with representatives of the Princely Order. . . . I have had the advantage of a full and frank discussion with no fewer than 52 people—with Mr. Gandhi, with the President and Members of the Congress Working Committee, with Mr. Jinnah and with representative members of the Muslim League Organization, with the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, and with a great variety of persons prominent in the political life of British India.

As was only to be expected, conversations with representatives of so many different points of view revealed marked differences of outlook, markedly different demands, and markedly different solutions for the problems that lie before us. . . .

The essential matters on which a clarification of the position is beyond any question desired are:

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 18-10-1939; "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 18-10-1939; "Letter to M. R. Masani", 18-10-1939; "Interview to *The Times of India*", 20-10-1939; "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 24-10-1939; "Cable to *The News Chronicle*", 28-10-1939 and "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939. Only extracts are reproduced here.



First, what are the objectives of His Majesty's Government in the war? To what extent are they of such a character that India with her long history and great traditions can, with a clear conscience, associate herself with them?

Second, what is the future that is contemplated in the constitutional sphere for the Indian Continent? What are the intentions of His Majesty's Government? Is it possible to define those intentions more precisely and in such a manner as to leave the world in no doubt as to the ultimate status envisaged for India as far as the British Commonwealth is concerned ?

Third, in what way can the desire of India and of Indian public opinion for a closer association, and an effective association, with the prosecution of the war best be satisfied ? . . . His Majesty's Government have not themselves yet defined with any ultimate precision their detailed objectives in the prosecution of the war. It is obvious that such a definition can come only at a later stage in the campaign, and that when it does come, it cannot be a statement of the aims of any single ally. There may be many changes in the world position and in the situation that confronts us before the war comes to an end, and much must depend on the circumstances in which it does come to an end, and on the intervening course of the campaign. . . .

We are fighting to resist aggression whether directed against ourselves or others. Our general aims have been stated by the Prime Minister within the last few days as follows:

We are seeking no material advantage for ourselves. We are not aiming only at victory, but looking beyond it to laying a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of each succeeding generation. We, like all the peoples of Europe, long for peace; but it must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and threats.

This statement, I think, clearly establishes the nature of the cause for which we are fighting, and justifies, if justification is needed, the extension by India of her moral support and her good will to the prosecution of that cause.

Let me turn now to the second question which has been put to me—the question of India's future and of the lines of her constitutional development. . . today, the constitutional position of India and the policy of His Majesty's Government are governed by the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Part III of that Act, which provides for the conferment of Provincial Autonomy on the Provinces of British India, has been implemented. For nearly 2 1/2 years now the Provinces have been conducting their own affairs under the scheme of the Act. That they have done so, on the whole, with great success, even if now and then difficulties have arisen, no one can question. Whatever the political party in power in those Provinces, all can look with satisfaction on distinguished record of public achievement during the last 2

$\frac{1}{2}$  years. The experience that they have had, has shown beyond any question that, whatever minor problems, the application of the scheme of the Act may have presented, whatever difficulties may have confronted us in the operation of the Act from time to time in the provincial sphere, the scheme of the Act is essentially sound, and that it transfers great power and gives opportunities to popularly elected governments dependent on the support of a majority in their legislatures.

The second stage contemplated by the Act was the reconstitution of the Central Government on such a basis as to achieve the essential goal of Indian unity. The method contemplated for that purpose was the achievement of a Federation of all India in which the representatives of all political parties in British India would, together with the Rulers of the Indian States, form a unified Government of India as a whole. . . . I have throughout believed that the federal scheme in its operation would have turned out as satisfactorily as, broadly speaking, we can all of us regard the scheme of Provincial Autonomy as having turned out. I will not dilate on that subject today, for our work in connection with the federal scheme has been suspended. But in reaffirming as I do my belief in the essential soundness of the federal aspects of the Act of 1935, I do so with the greater emphasis because of the evidence which the federal provisions of the Act constitute, of the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to achieve, with the minimum of delay, and on the basis which appears to represent the greatest amount of agreement between the various parties and interests affected, the unity of India, and to advance beyond a further and a most important milestone on the road to India's goal.

Such being the background against which we are working, what are the intentions and aims of His Majesty's Government in relation to India? I cannot do better in reply to that question than to refer to the statement made on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and with their full authority, by the late Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons on the 6th February, 1935. That statement makes the position clear beyond a shadow of doubt. . . . I need not dilate on the words of that statement. They are clear and positive. They are enshrined in the parliamentary record. They stand as a definite and categorical exposition of the policy of His Majesty's Government today, and of their intentions today in this end, the future constitutional development and position of India. I would add only that the Instrument of Instructions issued to me as Governor-General by His Majesty the King-Emperor in May 1937, lays upon me as Governor-General a direction so to exercise the trust which His Majesty has reposed in me "that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom with our Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among our Dominions."

That is the policy and that is the position. Those are the intentions of His

Majesty's Government. Let me go on to say another word about the Act of 1935. That Act was based on the greatest measure of common agreement which it was possible to obtain at the time when it was framed. It was based, as is well known to all of us, on the common labours of British and Indian statesmen, and of representatives of British India as well as of the Indian States over a long period of years. All parties were at one stage or other closely associated with those deliberations. . . .

Be that as it may, His Majesty's Government recognize that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future Federal Government of India, and of the plan destined to give effect to the assurances given in Parliament by the late Secretary of state, to which I have just referred, it will be necessary to reconsider in the light of the then circumstances to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remain appropriate.

And I am authorized now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests, in India, and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such modification as may seem desirable. I have, I trust, in what I have just said, made clear that the intention and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government is, as stated in the Instrument of Instruction to the Governor-General, to further the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within the Empire to the end that India may attain her due place among the great Dominions. The scheme of Government embodied in the Act of 1935 was designed as an essential stage in that process.

But I have made clear in what I have just said that His Majesty's Government will, at the end of the war, be prepared to regard the scheme of the Act as open to modification in the light of Indian views.

And I would make it clear, too, that it will be their object, as at all times in the past it has been, to spare no pains to further agreement by any means in their power in the hope of contributing to the ordered and harmonious progress of India towards her goal.

Let me in that connection add that in the conversation I have had, representatives of the minorities have urged most strongly on me the necessity of a clear assurance that full weight would be given to their views and to their interests in any modifications that may be contemplated. On that I need say no more than that over more than a decade, at the three Round Table Conferences, and at the Joint Select Committee, His Majesty's Government consulted with and had the assistances of the advice of representatives of all parties, and all interests in this country. It is unthinkable that we should now proceed to plan afresh, or to modify in any respect, any important part of India's future Constitution without again taking counsel with

those who have in the recent past been so closely associated in a like task with His Majesty's Government and with Parliament.

That some even more extensive scheme than I have mentioned, some even more widely phrased indication of the intentions of His Majesty's Government, is desired in certain quarters in this country, I am fully aware from the conversations I have had during these last few weeks.

That is a desire held with sincerity, and that those who hold it are convinced that it is in the manner in question that the future progress and development of India and the expressed intentions of His Majesty's Government can best be fulfilled, I fully and readily accept. I would utter one word only of caution. . . it is essential in matters of this nature, affecting the future of tens of millions of people, affecting the relations of the great communities, affecting the Princes of India, affecting the immense commercial and industrial enterprises, whether Indian or European, in this country that the largest measure of agreement practicable should be achieved. With the best will in the world, progress must be conditioned by practical consideration. . .

I would ask that these words of caution be not taken as indicating any lack of sympathy on the part of His Majesty's Government for the aspirations of India, or any indifference to the pace of her advance; and I would repeat that His Majesty's Government are but concerned to use their best endeavours, now as in the past, to bring about that measure of agreement and understanding between all parties and all interests in this country which is so essential a condition of progress to India's goal.

I turn now to the arrangements to be made to secure the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war. India's contribution has already been great to a degree which has impressed the imagination of the world. At the head of the list I would put the contribution which India has made in spiritual, and not in material, terms—the support of her peoples for a cause which they can regard as a good and a righteous cause. In the material field equally her contribution is already most significant, and may be greater still. And in the circumstances the desire, the anxiety of public opinion in India to be associated with the conduct of the war is naturally one with which I personally have throughout felt the greatest sympathy. In the circumstances I have described, the desirability of steps to ensure that leaders of public opinion should be in the closest touch with developments is of the first importance.

I have discussed with the utmost frankness with the leaders of the various parties who have been good enough to come to see me in connection with constitutional position, by what machinery we could best give effect to this desire. . .

I will only say that in the light of my conversations and of the views (by no

means always in accord) of representatives of the great parties and of the Princes, I am of opinion that the right solution would be the establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, over which the Governor-General would himself preside, which would be summoned at his invitation, and which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities.

This group, for practical reasons, would inevitably be limited in size. But His Majesty's Government contemplate that it should be fully representative, and in particular that its personnel should be drawn by the Governor-General from panels prepared by the various major political parties, from which a selection of individuals to attend meetings of the group would be made by the Governor-General.

I hope in the very near future to enter into consultation with political leaders and with the Princes on this question. I have no doubt whatever, that an arrangement of this nature will most materially contribute to associating the Indian States and British India with the steps which are being taken for the prosecution of the war, and with the arrangements that are being made in that connection; and I am confident, too, that in an association of this nature of representatives of all parties and all interests, there lies the germ of that fuller and broader association of all points of view in this country which contains in it the seeds of such advantage for the future of India as a whole.

When I spoke to the Central Legislature a month ago, I made an appeal for unity. I would repeat that appeal today. . . . We live in difficult and anxious days. Great ideals are in issue. Dangers real and imminent face our civilization. Those dangers are as real and as imminent in the case of India as of any other member of the British Commonwealth of nations. Those ideals are as precious to India as to any country in the Empire or in the world. At this grave moment in the destinies of nations my prayer to all parties would be not to dissociate themselves from the common effort, but to lend their co-operation and their assistance in the prosecution of the war. There could be no decisive proof of India's fidelity to her best traditions than the full use of the opportunities afforded to her by the war for concerted endeavour. The ideals we have set before us, the objects to secure which we are engaged in the present struggle, are such as to command widespread sympathy and widespread support in India. They are in harmony with her past history and her highest traditions. It is my hope that in the grave juncture which we face, India will go forward as a united country in support of a common cause.

*The Hindustan Times*, 18-10-1939

APPENDIX III  
*CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>*

*October 22, 1939*

The Working Committee are of opinion that the Viceregal statement in answer to the Committee's invitation for a clear declaration of Britain's war aims, particularly in their application to India, is wholly unsatisfactory and calculated to rouse resentment among all those who are anxious to gain, and are intent upon gaining India's independence. This invitation was made not only on behalf of the people of India, but for millions of people all over the world, who were weary of war and violence, and Fascist and imperialist systems which exploited nations and peoples and were ultimately the causes of war, and who yearned for a new order of peace and freedom. The Viceregal statement is an unequivocal reiteration of the old imperialistic policy. The Committee regard the mention of the differences among several parties as a screen to hide the true intention of Great Britain. What the Committee had asked for was a declaration of war aims as a test of Britain's *bona fides* regarding India, irrespective of the attitude of opposing parties and groups. The Congress has always stood for the amplest guarantee of the rights of minorities. The freedom the Congress claimed was not for the Congress or any particular group or community, but for the nation and for all communities in India that go to build that nation. The only way to establish this freedom and to ascertain the will of the nation as a whole is through a democratic process which gives full opportunity to all. The Committee must, therefore, regard the Viceroy's statement as in every way unfortunate. In the circumstances, the Committee cannot possibly give any support to Great Britain, for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end. As a first step in this direction the Committee call upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations.

The Committee earnestly appeal to the nation to end all internal controversies in this hour of great crisis, and to act unitedly in the cause of India's freedom. The committee call upon all Congress Committees and Congressmen generally to be prepared for all developments and eventualities, and to show restraint of word and deed so that nothing may be said or done which is not in keeping with India's honour or the principles for which the Congress stands. The Committee warn Congressmen against any hasty action in the shape of civil disobedience, political strikes and the like. The Committee will watch the situation and the activities of the British Government in India, and will not hesitate to guide the country to take further steps whenever the necessity for this arises. The Committee desire to impress upon all

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Statement to the Press", 18-10-1939; 27-10-1939; "A Letter", 23-10-1939; "Cable to *The News Chronicle*", 28-10-1939 and "Letter to Mathuradas Trikumji", 12-11-1939.

Congressmen that a programme of resistance, commensurate with the magnitude of the issue before the country, requires perfect discipline within Congress ranks and the consolidation of the Congress organization.

The Working Committee realize that the non-violent resistance offered by the Congress in the past has sometimes been mixed with violence. The Committee desire to impress upon all Congressmen that any resistance that may have to be offered must be purged of all violence, and to remind them of the pledges taken to this effect as early as 1921, during the Congress Session at Ahmedabad, and repeated on many subsequent occasions.

*Harijan*, 28-10-1939

#### APPENDIX IV *SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S SPEECH*<sup>1</sup>

*October 26, 1939*

Mr. Wedgwood Benn and I have very often confronted each other in the field of Indian debate. We have sometimes disagreed, and very strongly disagreed, but we have sometimes agreed. Tonight. . . let us for a few moments look back upon the occasions on which we have agreed. I very well remember one of them when he and I, some eight or nine years ago in this House, were defending Lord Irwin from criticisms of those who said, he ought not to have had conversations with Mahatma Gandhi. . . . I am sure that he and I are agreed that today it is a matter of satisfaction that the Viceroy should see leaders of the principal parties concerned, even the most extreme leaders, even my old fellow-Harrovian, Pandit Nehru.

Since Mr. Wedgwood Benn and I last took part in these Indian debates, many events of staggering importance have taken place in the world. . . . At a time when democracies were being destroyed in Europe, we have seen eleven great democratic Governments come into being in India and join their forces with democratic peoples of the world. These ought surely to be grounds for great satisfaction to every member of the House.

It was with this background on the Indian achievement that on September 3 of this year India and the British Commonwealth of Nations were faced with war. The crisis. . . found India united in its determination to resist brute force and in the realization that the danger was a common danger threatening every part of the British

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 27-10-1939; "Good and Bad", 30-10-1939; "Opinions Differ", 7-11-1939 and "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939. Only extracts are reproduced here.

Commonwealth of Nations. It was in the face of this unity that the Viceroy. . . showed his whole-hearted and sincere desire for Indian goodwill and co-operation. . . he. . . had a series of interviews with the leaders of Indian opinion and . . . he made two definite proposals. The first was rather in the nature of a pledge. It was a clear and definite statement that, at the end of the war, there would be a reconsideration of the constitutional problem in the light of the experience of recent years. Secondly, with a view to availing himself of Indian advice and with the intention of bringing Indian leaders within his confidence, he suggested that a Consultative Committee should be formed to discuss with him many problems arising out of the war, and to bring him into the closest and most constant contact with the trends of Indian opinion. . . .

The proposal regarding the Consultative Committee was made with the full desire to obtain the greatest possible co-operation with the principal bodies of Indian public opinion. The Congress, admittedly the greatest party in India, rejected it. Non-Congress India representing, it must be remembered, many millions of Indians, substantially accepted it. It may be asked, would it not have been possible for the Viceroy to have gone further and made some kind of proposal that would have avoided this division of opinion between Congress and non-Congress India? This is the first question, and it is a very important question, to which I would invite the attention of the House. If the members are to follow its implications, they must recall to their minds some of the most important discussions that took place over the Government of India Act. They centred round the pledge of Dominion Status and the aim of the India policy. These pledges, as Mr. Wedgwood Benn has said, were repeated time after time. They were reaffirmed in very precise terms in the speech with which I introduced the second reading of the Government of India Bill.

I made it clear, and I make it clear again today, that we stood by Lord Irwin's pledge and that when we spoke of Dominion Status we meant what we said, and did not mean some system of government that deprived India of the full status of equality with other members of the British Commonwealth.

There are no two kinds of Dominion Status as some people seem to think. The Dominion Status that we contemplated was the Dominion Status which has been described by Mr. Wedgwood Benn—the Dominion Status of 1926. I went on to state that Dominion Status is not a prize that is given to a deserving community, but is the recognition of the facts that actually exist. As soon as these facts exist in India, and in my view the sooner they exist the better, the aim of our policy will be achieved. If there are difficulties in the way, they are not of our making. They are inherent in the way they are between the classes and communities in the great sub-continent. It must be the aim of the Indians themselves to remove these divisions just as it should be our aim to help Indians in their task.



So far are we from wishing to divide and govern that we regard these divisions as a calamity and are ready to do our utmost to remove them. We have shown our good faith in the matter. We showed it when we made the Communal Award. At that time supposing we had wished to divide and conquer, we might very well have said: Settle your own communal differences first. Until you have settled them there can be no constitutional advance. We did not take that course, but at great risk to ourselves and in the face of much criticism, we made the Communal Award without which provincial autonomy would have been impossible.

But in spite of our Award, these divisions still exist, and, until they are removed, we have responsibilities to the minorities that we cannot repudiate. That was our position in 1935, and it is our position today. We wish to see these divisions removed, but we shall never get them removed if we shut our eyes to their existence and refuse to admit that they are there. It is these divisions that have made so difficult the task of setting up responsible government at the Centre and of achieving the great ideal of an All-India Federation.

The Princes are afraid of domination by British India, the Muslims are firmly opposed to a Hindu majority at the Center. The Depressed Classes and other minorities genuinely believe that responsible government meaning a Government dependent on the Hindu majority, will sacrifice their interests. These anxieties will exist. I wish they did not.

But as long as they exist, it is impossible for the Government to accept the demand for immediate and full responsibility at the Centre on a particular date. If we did so we should be false to the pledges that time after time we have given in the most solemn words to the Muslims, other minorities and the European community.

It may be said, 'Supposing that full and immediate responsibility at the Centre is impossible, are there not other steps that could be taken to show our good faith and to make clear to India that the goal is just as much in our minds today as it was when we made those pledges four years ago?' Mr. Wedgwood Benn himself made a number of these suggestions this afternoon and I will try to deal with them. Firstly, let me disabuse him of the idea which I think he held that we are contemplating in the near future on Imperial War Cabinet in London and that in it India ought to be represented by more than a single representative. At present there is no intention to set up an Imperial War Cabinet of that kind. If and when the time comes, I will certainly remember the observations he has made on the subject, and I imagine they will be given extremely careful attention. Next he spoke on the project that has been discussed more than once before. He asked: "Would it not be possible to introduce into the Viceroy's Council political leaders who would hold portfolios in certain of the great departments?" I have said, this is not a new proposal, as I remember its

being made during the discussions of the Joint Select Committee.

I think the Leader of the Opposition himself made it at one time. We went fully into it then and at that time we found ourselves confronted by certain difficulties in the way of its adoption. I do not enumerate those difficulties tonight. I wish to close no door, I wish to explore every possibility within the ambit of the Government of India Act. . . .

Mr. Wedgwood Benn then spoke of the discussions that took place in the last War on the Subject of the constitution. He mentioned the Montagu-Chelmsford discussions and asked whether it would be possible for discussions of that kind to take place in the course of this war.

I do not wish to give a final answer but I would point out that in certain respects the situation today differs a good deal from the situation at the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford discussions. The issues had not then become so bitter as they have today. I am thinking more particularly of the communal issue. Further, at any rate at the beginning of a war, it seems to me impossible for discussions of that kind to take place. The Montagu-Chelmsford discussions only took place I think, three years after the beginning of the last War. As I have said, however, I would rather not give a final answer tonight on a point of that kind.

Nor indeed would I give a final answer on another point, Mr. Wedgwood Benn has raised, namely, that there should be a general election in India. At any rate, at the beginning of a war general election would seem to me to be almost impossible. In India, officials are working night and day on war work. Moreover, there would be the fact that the communal feelings would, I am sure, be very much aroused in an election and while again I do not want to dogmatize and use terms like 'never' and 'in no circumstances' I would say that as things are today, a general election to the Central Legislature would in my opinion be impossible.

To come back to the broad question of consultation, the Viceroy has not tied himself down to the exact methods of this consultation. It is essentially a question to be settled between him and the political leaders. I am able to state that he is ready to discuss the method and details with the leaders, and he proposes without delay to send an invitation to meet him for these discussions. Until these and other discussions take place, I claim that it would be a blunder of the first magnitude to take up an irrevocable position. Let the Indian leaders weigh these possibilities. Let them meet and discuss them once again with the Viceroy, and let them also ponder once again upon the alternatives.

As regards the alternative of direct and immediate responsibility at the Centre, I hope I have convinced the House that in the present circumstances it is impossible

to accept an alternative of that kind.

I come to another alternative, and I would ask the Indian leaders seriously once again to ponder upon it. I wish indeed that I had not to make any reference to it at all. It is the alternative under which the Indian Congress goes its own way, and the British Government and the minority communities in India go theirs. If it came to this issue, we should have no choice. The King Emperor's Government must be carried on, and it would be carried on with efficiency, with strength and with justice. We, like any other Government in similar circumstances, would give the Viceroy our full support. But let every man of goodwill in India and Great Britain contemplate the waste that such a chapter of non co-operation would mean. There would be a waste of all our constitutional efforts with these many years of Round Table Conferences, Joint Select Committees and debates in this House. . . .

I hoped that when the Act came into force, this chapter would be brought to an end. But it is there now in the face of the greatest crisis that has ever confronted the world, a crisis in which our danger is India's and India's danger ours, in which our determination to set up new and better order in the world is as great as India's and India's is as great as ours. There is grave risk of our drifting into a position in which we shall be wrangling with each other instead of fighting the enemy on the common front.

I am told, though I can scarcely believe it, that it being said in some quarters in India that the British Government is searching for a conflict. I repudiate that suggestion with all the power I have. The British Government want co-operation and not conflict. The British Government want to see the aim of its policy achieved and conditions realized in which India can take its true place in the British Commonwealth of free peoples. Non-co-operation may put the clock back for years. Whether its promoters desire it or not, non-co-operation leads to civil disobedience, to breaches of law and order and to a vicious circle of riot and repression from which we had hoped to have escaped for ever.

Until these things actually happen, I will not believe that they are going to happen. I shall continue to believe that when these great peoples of our own and the peoples of India are faced with a common danger and inspired with a common ideal, non-co-operation of any large section of a community would be a calamity and futility of the first magnitude. Millions of Indians in British India and in the States agree with this view. They wish to co-operate with us just as much as we wish to work with them. And the Congress party itself—I quote the words of Mr. Gandhi spoken three days ago—“wanted to help Britain by giving her moral support which was its speciality. The Congress would not give this unless it was clear that Britain's

morality was wholly sound.”

I claim that our position is as sound as a bell. In good faith and perfect sincerity, we have started India on the greatest constitutional experiment that the world had ever seen. We have long ago set aside imperialistic ambitions. We believe that our mission in the world is not to govern other people but to help other people to govern themselves. It was in this spirit that Parliament passed a series of great Acts which gave the Dominions their free constitution. It was in this spirit that we passed the Government of India Act of 1935 and under which, of our own free will, we transferred wide authority to the Indian Government. It is in this spirit that we intend to administer the Act and during the war to do our utmost to remove the divisions that stand in the way of the full achievement. And when the war ends, and ends victoriously as a result of the Empire’s united efforts, we mean to proceed at once to deal with the constitutional difficulties that have emerged in the experience of recent years. Non-co-operation, and non-co-operation alone, will stop this swift and steady progress. . . . Such a breach in the common front would be a repudiation at once of the gravest moments in the world’s history of the call to both of us to resist the aggressor, to fight brute forces and to build by a new and better order in the world. . . .

“It was not”—I quote the Prime Minister’s weighty words of October 12—“with any vindictive purpose that we embarked on the war but simply in defence of freedom.” It is not alone freedom of small nations that is at stake. There is also in jeopardy the peaceful existence of Great Britain, the Dominions, India, the rest of the British Empire, France and indeed of all freedom-loving nations. Whatever may be the issue of the present struggle and in whatever way it may be brought to a conclusion, the world will not be the same world that we have known before. . . . In this new world India has a great part to play, perhaps in area the greatest of any Asiatic country, a great part also in the British Commonwealth of Nations, for it will be an outward and visible sign that with us there is no racial discrimination. It has a great part also to play in the world at large, for India should stand out as a model of a League of Nations from which war has for generations been banished and the rule of law and justice firmly set. With this great hope before us let us once and for all abandon the barren paths of non-co-operation and help each other to win the war and to win peace and in this double victory to take a great step towards the fruition of India’s hopes.

*The Hindustan Times*, 27-10-1939: also *The Indian Annual Register*, 1939, Vol. II, pp. 398-403

APPENDIX V  
*TRAVANCORE GOVERNMENT PRESS NOTE*<sup>1</sup>

In a communique issued on the 23rd September, 1939, the Travancore Government pointed out that they cannot permit an organized scheme of agitation at this juncture in view of the present situation and the industrial and economic position of the people who are affected by the adverse conditions produced by the war in a country so dependent on imports and exports as Travancore. They gave a warning that such a scheme of agitation is bound to give rise to serious repercussions, and the Government who have a duty to protect the law-abiding citizens of the State would be forced to take all necessary steps for maintaining normal conditions.

The Travancore State Congress have now arranged for the holding of public meetings on the 8th, 16th and 24th of every Malabar month, these days being styled as Civil Liberties Day, Responsible Government Day and Political Prisoners' Day respectively. Volunteer rallies, opening of training camps, and what is called organization work are also contemplated. It is noted that these demonstrations are timed to begin on the day preceding the commencement of the functions in celebration of the birthday of His Highness the Maharaja.

All persons are hereby warned not to take part in these demonstrations and rallies; and against attempts by means of pamphlets, leaflets, etc., to inflame public opinion and promote agitation and unrest. Persons organizing or taking part in such agitation and demonstrations are liable to be dealt with under the Defence of Travancore Proclamation and Rules without further notice.

CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

HUZUR CUTCHERRY, TRIVANDRUM,

October 30, 1939

*Harijan*, 11-11-1939

APPENDIX VI  
*VICEROY'S BROADCAST DECLARATION*<sup>2</sup>

*November 5, 1939*

It is with profound regret that I have to announce that the conversations which, at my instance, had been inaugurated between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League have so far not achieved what I had hoped. The country is entitled to know, in a matter of such moment and at a time of such gravity,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Travancore Again", 6-11-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 8-11-1939 and "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939.

what was the nature of the proposition which I invited my friends in those two organizations to consider. I shall tomorrow publish correspondence which will make the position perfectly clear. Let me only say that my object has been, in these discussions, to bring together the leaders of the great parties and to endeavour to secure, as a result of personal contact between them, and with what personal assistance I could myself give, that measure of agreement in the Provinces which, in their view, would enable them to put forward proposals for a constructive advance at the Centre for the period of the war, such as would be represented by some expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council and by the inclusion in it of political leaders.

My declaration of October 17<sup>1</sup> contemplated a consultative group. It offered an arrangement relatively so limited as that group only because of marked divergences of view between the great communities, divergences, the existence of which held out no hope of harmonious working at the Centre on the basis of joint membership of my Executive Council at a time when harmonious working was of first importance. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that that group holds out great possibilities for the future—possibilities, I feel sure, greater than are commonly realized.

I need not say that it is a profound disappointment to me, after so much endeavour on the part of His Majesty's Government, on the part of those leaders with whom I have conferred and of their friends, as well as on my own part, that we have no more to show and that in so many Provinces we should be left with no choice but to use the emergency provisions inserted for that purpose in the Government of India Act. As for those provisions, let me emphasize that they are an expedient and not a sanction. My own strong feeling in regard to their use I cannot better convey than by a paraphrase of the quotation that appears in Arabic characters upon the great gateway at Fatehpur Sikri. That quotation says: "Life is a bridge—a bridge that you shall pass over. You shall not build your house upon it."

Nor, in the wider field, do I propose to take this disappointment as final, or to abandon the efforts I am making to bring about a friendly adjustment of the differences in this country to the end that we can continue to co-operate over the achievement of our common objectives, differences and difficulties such as those which now threaten to retard—even reverse—the course of constitutional development in India and the earliest attainment of the common goal will not disappear spontaneously, nor will they be conjured away by any refusal to recognize their existence. They will be resolved only by negotiations, carried out in a spirit of mutual accommodation and trust and with a firm resolve to succeed.

I will say no more than that to-night. But I would ask for patience and for the

<sup>1</sup> The source, however, has "18"; *vide* Appendix "Viceroy's Declaration", 17-10-1939.

goodwill of the Indian people and of the great political organizations—their members and their leaders—in the efforts I propose to continue to make.

The difficulties are great. How great they are has been most clearly revealed by the events of the last six weeks. But the attempt to reconcile them is one which it is imperative to make and in which, whether I fail or I succeed, I shall spare no effort to bring about the result which is, I know, at the heart of all of those who care for India and for her future.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, p. 245*

APPENDIX VII  
*VICEROY'S PREFATORY REMARKS TO CORRESPONDENCE  
WITH LEADERS<sup>1</sup>*

*November 5, 1939*

I next invited Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah to come to see me on November 1, and discussed the whole position with them frankly. I had already in my previous conversations discussed with them, as with almost all my visitors, from various aspects the possibility of an expansion of the Governor-General's Council. I now told them that if in regard to association at the Centre, we had been unable to go further than the Consultative Group, it was because of the lack of prior agreement between the major communities such as would contribute to harmonious working in the Centre. I added that the manifestos issued on 22nd October, by the Congress Working Committee and the Muslim League, had shown only too clearly the gulf that existed between the attitude of these two great parties.

I begged my visitors in these circumstances to meet and to have discussions among themselves on the Provincial position, with a view thereafter to putting forward in agreement proposals which could be considered for some expansion of the Governor-General's Council at the Centre. I told them that I saw no necessity for every detail of the differences between them in the Provinces to be resolved. What was needed was a sufficient resolution of those differences to make the devising of scheme for harmonious co-operation at the Centre practicable. I begged them in the most earnest manner to spare no endeavour to reach agreement; and I emphasized that this was essentially a question affecting Indians on which agreement between Indians themselves was what I was anxious to secure. I repeated the profound anxiety not only

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 8-11-1939; "Unnecessary Alarm", 13-11-1939 and "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939. Only extracts are reproduced here.

of myself but of His Majesty's Government to leave nothing undone which would contribute to achieve that agreement.

The discussions which I suggested have taken place. But the result to me has been a profound disappointment. There remains today entire disagreement between the representatives of the major parties on fundamental issues. All I will say now is that I am not prepared to accept this failure. I propose in due course to try again, in consultation with the leaders of these great parties and the Princes, to see if even now there may still be the possibility of securing unity. During all the time I have been in India, there is nothing I have been more anxious to secure than unity, and unity matters far more to India than is perhaps always realized. Unity, too, means that Indians, whatever their community or whatever their party allegiance, and whether they dwell in British India or in the Indian States, must work together in a common scheme. It is worth a great deal to try to bring that about. I may have been unsuccessful so far but I will try again. And when I try again I would ask India to remember my difficulties, and give me credit for an earnest goodwill and an earnest desire to assist. We are dealing with a problem that has defeated the united endeavours of the greatest organizations in this country. There are grave differences of view which have to be taken into account, which should be bridged. There are strong and deeply rooted interests which are entitled to the fullest consideration and whose attitude is not a thing lightly to be brushed aside. There are minorities which are great in numbers as well as great in historic importance, and in culture. Those are all factors to which full weight has to be given. But complex as the problems are, I refuse to regard them as insoluble, and I prefer to believe that, like other human problems, they will yield to patient discussion in a spirit of goodwill. In this belief I am encouraged by the friendly feeling which has pervaded my discussions with the leaders of parties I would ask the country, and I would ask the leaders of the great political parties and their constituents, who I know have faith in those leaders, and are ably led by them, to give me the help which I so much need if there is to be any hope of overcoming our difficulties and reaching the result which I am sure that we all of us desire.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, p. 411*



APPENDIX VIII  
*LORD ZETLAND'S STATEMENT*<sup>1</sup>

*November 7, 1939*

I am grateful for this opportunity to make some observations on this matter and the House will, I hope, forgive me if my answer runs to some little length.

I need hardly say that His Majesty's Government share the profound regret of the Governor-General at the failure of the consultations which he had been holding during the last week to produce an agreement between representatives of the Congress on the one hand and the All-India Muslim League on the other. May I remind the House briefly that the previous discussions, which the Governor-General had been so patiently conducting for several weeks past, had convinced him that there was little, if any, prospect of securing an agreement on plans which he had been considering with the object of bringing Indians into association with the Central Government of India on the conduct of war, unless some accommodation could first be reached on the difficulties felt by the Moslems as to their position in the Provinces where the Congress Governments were in power?

As the House will have seen from the documents published yesterday, that the Congress has definitely refused to consider any concrete plans such as those outlined by the Governor-General, unless His Majesty's Government should be willing first to make a declaration to the effect that India is an independent nation and that His Majesty's Government will raise no opposition to her future form of Government being determined, without their intervention, by a Constituent Assembly called upon the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation. The Congress have further consistently taken the line which they still maintain that the fact there are racial and religious minorities in India is of no relevance in that connection and that it has always been the intention of the Congress to secure through the constitution to be framed by Indians themselves such protection for their rights as may prove acceptable to the minorities.

His Majesty's Government find it impossible to accept this position. The long standing British connection with India has left His Majesty's Government with obligation towards her which it is impossible for them to shed by disinteresting themselves wholly in the shaping of her future form of Government. Moreover, one outstanding result of the recent discussions in which the Governor-General has been engaged with representatives of all parties and interests in India has been to establish beyond doubt the fact that a declaration in the sense proposed with the summary

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 8-11-1939 and "Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22-10-1939.

abandonment by His Majesty's Government of their position in India would be far from acceptable to large sections of Indian population.

But this does not mean that we had in any sense weakened in our determination to assist India by such means as are in our power to reach without avoidable delay the position to the British Commonwealth of Nations to which we are pledged. Let me take this opportunity for removing some doubts and suspicions which appear to have been felt in India about reference in the recent India about in the House of Commons by Lord Privy Seal to "Dominion Status of 1926" as being the status we contemplate for India. The suggestion, I understand, has been made that the passage of the Statute of Westminster in 1931 has produced for the Dominions to which the Statute applies a status which is somewhat different from and is superior to the relationship described in the Balfour Declaration contained in the report of Imperial Conference of 1926.

This House at all events will have no difficulty in believing me when I say that there is no foundation for any such suggestion. My Right Honourable friend (Sir Samuel Hoare) referred to Dominion Status of 1926 because it was in that year the Imperial Conference described the status of the Dominions and the status so described has not been altered by anything which has since occurred, the Statute of Westminster having merely given legal effect to certain consequences of the constitutional position as was then recognized.

It was our hope that the plans which the Governor-General has indicated, including as they did the incorporation of the leaders of the main political parties in India in the Central Government, if they could have been brought into play, would have done much towards facilitating the hoping for a reconsideration by the parties interested and His Majesty's Government warmly approve the readiness which he has expressed to be of such service as he can whenever an opportunity occurs.

Meanwhile the position at the moment is that in Bengal, the Punjab and Sind Ministries which in those Provinces do not owe allegiance to the Congress Party remain in office; in five of the remaining eight Provinces where the Congress Governments have been in power, those Governments have now resigned and in the other three Provinces the Governments are expected to resign in the very near future. There appears to be in one Province—Assam—the possibility of an alternative government, but with this one exception the Governors have found or will very shortly find themselves with no option, since alternative Ministries in a position to command the confidence of the legislature are not forthcoming, but to assume to themselves by proclamation powers which the provisions in the Act enable them to assume in such a situation.

Let me make it plain that Section 93 of the Act under which this action has been taken is in no sense a penal provision; it simply provides a machinery the possible necessity for which Parliament in its wisdom foresaw if, to quote the words

of the Act, “a situation has arisen in which the Government of Province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Act for carrying on the King’s Government.”

It is our hope that in the absence of opposition from supporters of the Congress or from other quarters, the Governors with the aid of their official advisers and members of the public services will succeed in conducting smoothly and efficiently the administration of the Provinces, the difference being—obviously a fundamental difference—that their actions will be decided in responsibility to this House, to this Parliament; and not in pursuance of advice tendered to them by Ministers responsible to the Provincial legislature. We greatly regret that the Ministries which have with so much zeal been carrying on the Government of their great Provinces and tackling with energy and resource the many problems with which administration has naturally brought them into contact should have found it necessary to withhold their further services from their country, but we refuse to believe that this withdrawal will be for long and we shall continue to hope, so long as any grounds for such hope remain, that proclamations by the Governors need have only a temporary duration, for I can assure the House that the Governors will be only too ready to recall to their counsels responsible advisers as soon as they are available.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, pp. 411-3*

APPENDIX IX  
*LETTER FROM CONGRESS PRESIDENT TO THE  
VICEROY<sup>1</sup>*

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,  
*November 3, 1939*

I thank you for your letter of November 2, embodying in concrete form the proposition which you had placed before us when we saw you on November 1. My colleagues and I have given our earnest consideration to it. We have had also the advantage of full talks with Mr. M. A. Jinnah. But we find ourselves unable to vary the answer we gave you during the interview.

At the outset I would like to say that both Gandhiji and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about clarification of war aims without which it was impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal.

The present crisis has arisen owing to the outbreak of the war in Europe and the action of the British Government in declaring India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people. This crisis is entirely political and is not related to

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Congress Working Committee Resolution”, 22-10-1939.

the communal issue in India. It raised vital questions in regard to the war aims of the British Government and the position of India in relation to them. The Congress Working Committee, as you are aware, issued a lengthy statement on September 14, 1939, in which they invited the British Government to declare their war aims, and in particular how these aims were going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. It was further stated that the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference and should guide their own policy. On October 10, 1939, the All-India Congress Committee approved of and endorsed this statement, and stated that in the declaration to be made by the British Government, India must be declared an independent nation and present application should be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The Committee further added that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities.

Subsequent to this, the policy of the British Government was declared in the Viceregal statement, extracts from which you have been good enough to send me. This statement was considered by the Congress Working Committee soon after, and the Committee expressed their opinion that it was unfortunate and wholly unsatisfactory. As a consequence of this, they felt compelled to declare that they were unable to give any support to Great Britain and to call upon the Provincial Governments, in Provinces where the Congress is in a majority, to tender their resignation.

It is worthy of note that the Viceregal declaration of British policy met with disapproval of the overwhelming body of opinion in India, even outside the Congress.

Subsequent statements made on behalf of the British Government in Parliament have not made any essential difference to the policy outlined in the Viceregal statement and, as you have rightly pointed out, that policy is still governed by the extracts from it that you have kindly sent us. I am afraid it is quite impossible for us to accept this policy or to consider any steps to further co-operation unless the policy of the British Government is made clear in a declaration on the lines suggested by the Congress.

It has pained us to find the Communal question being dragged in this connection. It has clouded the main issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that it is our earnest desire to settle all points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out that this question does not in any respect come in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom as suggested above. Such a declaration applies to the whole of India and not to any particular community, and the Constituent Assembly which will frame India's constitution will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation, We are all agreed that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by

agreement between the parties concerned. The British Government talking of sharing the burden has, in our opinion, made a settlement of the question much more difficult than it should have been. It should allay all real anxiety on the part of the British Government when the Congress declares that it contemplates no constitution which does not carry with it the protection of real minorities to their satisfaction.

It seems to us that a clear declaration of the kind suggested is an essential preliminary to any further consideration of the matter, I should like to add that recent developments in the European war have made it all the more necessary for a clear enunciation of war aims. If a satisfactory declaration is made, a discussion of the proposal made by your Excellency will be appropriate and useful and we shall gladly discuss it with you.

It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Gandhiji is in full agreement with this letter. We propose to leave tomorrow evening for Wardha unless your Excellency desires otherwise.

*The Hindustan Times*, 6-11-1939

#### APPENDIX X *RESOLUTION ON INDEPENDENCE DAY PLEDGE*<sup>1</sup>

The Working Committee draw the attention of all Congress committees, Congressmen and the country to the necessity of observing properly and with due solemnity Independence Day on January 26, 1940. Ever since 1930 this day has been regularly observed all over the country, and it has become a landmark in our struggle for independence. Owing to the crisis through which India and the world are now passing and the possibility of our struggle for freedom being continued in an intenser form, the next celebration of this Day has a special significance attached to it. This celebration must, therefore, not only be the declaration of our national will for freedom, but a preparation for that struggle and a pledge to disciplined action.

The Working Committee, therefore, call upon all Congress committees and individual Congressmen to take the pledge prescribed below in public meetings called for the purpose. Where, owing to illness or other physical disability or to being in an out of way place, individual Congressmen are unable to attend a public meeting, they should take the pledge in their homes, individually or in groups. The Working Committee advise organizations and individuals to notify their Provincial Congress Committees of the meetings held as well as the individual or group pledges taken. The Committee hope that none who does not believe in the contents of the pledge will take it merely for the sake of form. Those Congressmen who do not believe in the prescribed pledge should notify their disapproval, stating reasons therefor, to the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Pledge" 24-12-1939; "Letter to Sampurnanand", 29-12-1939; "Letter to H. V. Kamath", 6-1-1940; "The Dissentients", 16-1-1940.

Provincial Congress Committee, giving their names and addresses. This information is required not for the purpose of any disciplinary action but for the purpose of ascertaining the strength of disapproval of anything contained in the pledge. The Working Committee have no desire to impose the pledge on unwilling Congressmen. In a non-violent organization compulsion can have little place. The launching of civil disobedience requires the disciplined fulfilment of the essential conditions therefor.

### PLEDGE

We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *purna* swaraj or COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE.

We recognize that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain independence.

We pledge ourselves anew to the independence of India, and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till *purna* swaraj is attained.

We believe that non-violent action in general, and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular, require successful working of the constructive programme of khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading goodwill among fellowmen without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance in every way the interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that distinctions between the caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faiths may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of Mother India, bound by common nationality and common political and economic interest.

Charkha and khadi are an integral part of our constructive programme for the resuscitation of the seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our

personal requirements nothing but khadi, and so far as possible products of village handicrafts only, endeavour to make others do likewise.

We pledge ourselves to a disciplined observance of Congress principles and policies and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress, whenever it may come, for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India.

*Harijan*, 30-12-1939

## APPENDIX XI *VICEROY'S SPEECH*<sup>1</sup>

BOMBAY

*January 10, 1940*

As you know, in response to requests for a clarification of the aims of His Majesty's Government and of their intentions towards India, His Majesty's Government have made it clear, both through statements issued by myself, and in Parliament, that their objective for India is full Dominion Status, Dominion Status, too, of the Statute of Westminster variety; that so far as the intermediate period is concerned (and it is their desire to make intermediate period the shortest practicable), they are ready to consider the reopening of the scheme of the Act of 1935, as soon as practicable, after the war with the aid of Indian opinion; that they are prepared in the mean time, subject to such local adjustments between the leaders of the great communities as may be necessary to ensure harmonious working, and as an immediate earnest of their intention, to expand the Executive Council of the Governor-General by the inclusion of a small number of political leaders; and that they are ready and anxious to give all the help they can to overcome the difficulties that confront us and that confront India today. But those assurances have not, to my profound regret, dissipated the doubts and the uncertainties which have led to the withdrawal from office of the Congress Ministries, and which have made it necessary in seven provinces to make use of the emergency provisions of the Act.

The pronouncements made on behalf of His Majesty's Government since the beginning of the war make clear, I think, beyond any question whatever, their intentions and their anxiety to help. The federal scheme of the Act was itself designed as a stage on the road to Dominion Status; and under that scheme, devised, I would remind you, long before there was any question of a war, very wide and extensive powers were to be placed in the hands of a Central Government representing the Indian States as well as British India, and constituted on a very broad basis indeed. There can be no question of the good faith and the sincerity of His Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 14-1-1940, 17-1-1940; "The Dissentients", 16-1-1940 and "Task Before Us", 6-2-1940.

Government in the efforts they have made to deal with the constitutional future of India. I well know that there are many people who press for swifter and more radical solutions of the problems before us. I do not question the sincerity or the good intentions of those who feel that way. But all those of us who have to deal with problems of this magnitude know only too well how often we are attracted by apparently simple solutions; how often those apparently simple solutions, when more closely investigated, reveal unexpected difficulties, and difficulties, too, of unexpected importance, anxious as we may all be to take what seems to be the shortest course.

Short cuts, as many of us know to our cost, are too often prone in experience to lead to a considerable waste of time. Nowhere I fear is that truer than of the political problems of India, for there are difficulties, of which we are all aware, and which we all regret. But they will not be avoided or disposed of by ignoring their existence. The wise course is to face those difficulties and to try to find a solution of them that will result in the subsequent co-operation of all the parties and interests concerned. We are, after all, dealing not with one political party only, but with many, nor must we forget the essential necessity, in the interests of Indian unity, of the inclusion of the Indian States in any constitutional scheme.

There are the insistent claims of the minorities. I need refer only to two of them—the great Muslim minority and the Scheduled Castes—there are the guarantees that have been given to the minorities in the past; the fact that their position must be safeguarded and that those guarantees must be honoured.

I know, gentlemen, that you appreciate the difficulty of the position of the Viceroy and the difficulty of the position of His Majesty's Government, faced as they are with with strong and conflicting claims advanced by bodies and interests to whose views the utmost attention must be paid, and whose position must receive the fullest consideration. Justice must be done as between the various parties, and His Majesty's Government are determined to see justice done. But I would ask my friends in the various parties to consider whether they cannot get together and reach some agreement between themselves which would facilitate my task, and the task of His Majesty's Government, in dealing with this vital question of Indian constitutional progress : and I would venture again to emphasize the case for compromise, the case for avoiding too rigid an approach to problems such as those with which we are dealing today.

As to the objective there is no dispute. I am ready to consider any practical suggestion that has general support, and I am ready, when the time comes, to give every help that I personally can. His Majesty's Government are not blind—nor can we be blind here—to the practical difficulties involved in moving at one step from the existing constitutional position into that constitutional position which is



represented by Dominion Status. But here, again, I can assure you that their concern and mine is to spare no effort to reduce to the minimum the interval between the existing state of things and the achievement of Dominion Status.

The offer is there. The responsibility that falls on the great political parties and their leaders is a heavy one, and one of which they are, I know, fully conscious. They have helped me in the past. I ask today that they will help me again and help India, and I ask for their co-operation and their assistance in terminating at as early a date as possible a state of things which all who have faith in the virtue of constitutional progress must deplore; a state of things which every lover of India—everyone who is concerned to advance her interests—must feel today to be a bitter disappointment.

*Indian Annual Register, 1940, Vol. I, pp. 374-5*

## APPENDIX XII

### *K. M. MUNSHI'S INTERVIEW WITH LORD LINLITHGOW*<sup>1</sup>

*January 12, 1940*

LINLITHGOW : We have met under different circumstances. Let me talk to you about the general situation. I am not going to wait till the end of the war for settling the Indian problem. Possibly the war will not be over till June 1941, and we are so far away that our problem could be adjusted by us here without being concerned with a battle or two in France.

There is another fact in which you are as much interested as I am. England is making a colossal effort to win the war and at the end of the war, as on the last occasion, it will be exhausted. At the time there will be a tendency to liberalize the institutions of the Empire. India should not then be found unprepared and disunited.

You must have seen my recent statement. Between Dominion Status of the Westminster variety and Independence there is only a difference in name. It will take time to Develop India's capacity, even for the work which will be cut out for you.

Take the Act of 1935. The word 'Federation' has become like a dried fish which stinks in everybody's nose. But take the main objections to it.

First there is Defence. You will admit that the military machine is now no longer the concern of one country. Its training and organization as at present must be under common control, and India must be prepared to wait to be able to take over charge. Second, Foreign affairs. They are in the same position. Third, the commercial safeguards, which you call discrimination. They could be adjusted. But as the world goes today, India cannot afford to have free trade party (*sic*). But I would not despair

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 17-1-1940.

of coming to an agreed formula on the point. Fourth, there is the question of direct elections to the Assembly.

K. M. MUNSHI : I am not sure whether Gandhiji is very particular about direct elections to the Assembly.

LINLITHGOW : Then the next question is that of the States. You can't have Dominion Status unless the States are brought in in some manner. If a proper effort is made I would not despair of settling their questions in some way unless you pitch your claim very high.

The next question is that of the Central Assembly. I won't like to argue when people claim something as a moral right. But, given goodwill on both sides, ways and means could be found to have a body which would serve the purpose.

K. M. MUNSHI : Gandhiji has already stated that he would be satisfied with an agreed equivalent. Perhaps a convention of all the legislatures might be a good substitute.

LINLITHGOW : That leaves the question of minorities. I will concede that the minorities have no right to block the progress.

K. M. MUNSHI : But by speaking in the way you do, you give them an instrument to put forward the highest demand. That makes our task difficult. That has been our past experience of the British statesmen. They gave the minorities such an undue importance that they were led to make extravagant claims. In 1916 Congress agreed to Jinnah's demands thinking that they would have communal peace thereafter. The Lucknow Pact was ripped open. The MacDonald Award came. Against Hindu opinion, Gandhiji got the Congress not to reject the communal award but to work it. And still when you call Gandhiji you must needs call Jinnah and fifty other gentlemen as a counterweight. And now in your speeches you throw the burden of settling with him upon us. How are we expected to do that ?

LINLITHGOW : I have to do so. I have not merely to speak to a public in India, I have also a public in England. That public is an important factor both from your and my point of view. And it has a feeling that the Hindus as a community are against British interests.

K. M. MUNSHI : But you see the result. There was a cordial atmosphere in your dealings with Gandhiji about the time we left office. Now you make pronouncements which look like preparations for a case to impress the world that, when we broke from you, you were right. I see a reaction to this on our side. Gandhiji's recent statements show a tendency to occupy a politically unassailable position when mass action is started. Instead of both of you coming nearer, I feel that you are drifting apart, and no settlement is likely if both of you continue to drift away from one another.

LINLITHGOW : You mean we are creating fences round ourselves ?

K. M. MUNSHI : Certainly. You hold Gandhiji in great respect. You told me at Simla that you want an alliance with Right Wing Congress. If you are serious about it why don't you help in this settlement ?

LINLITHGOW : Am I not doing it every hour of my life ?

K. M. MUNSHI : Why do you then let Mr. Jinnah make things impossible ? You have got the Aga Khan, you have got your friend Sir Sikandar. It is your actions which send up Mr. Jinnah's rates. That leads him to make absurd charges against us. You do not even reply to them. And he is so difficult now that any friendly approach to him has become impossible.

LINLITHGOW : I know that he has become very difficult, but that is only from a short view of things. For the present he has made himself into a rallying centre of minorities. Time alone can remove him from that position. But from a long view of things Jinnah cannot succeed. He would soon be found out as a stumbling-block to progress.

K. M. MUNSHI : If that is your view, why don't you set about discussing matters with Gandhiji ? This 'range artillery', as Sir Maurice Gwyer puts it, is scarcely helpful.

LINLITHGOW : I am going to do it as soon as I am ready.

K. M. MUNSHI : But it may be too late. For instance, on the 26th of January, there is bound to be somewhat 'war mentality' amongst us.

LINLITHGOW : I don't think there will be any trouble, but there would be considerable enthusiasm.

K. M. MUNSHI : Yes, they will follow the Congress. I feel the undercurrents amongst our ordinary Congressmen, and I wonder how long Gandhiji will be able to keep them in leash. For the moment he is exercising a strong restraining hand.

LINLITHGOW : Yes, he has become powerful. But do you seriously think that he will be able to carry Jawaharlal ?

K. M. MUNSHI : Jawaharlal is a great idealist and is therefore an idol of the masses. But the inspiration, organization, and technique are all Gandhiji's and Jawaharlal will not part company with Gandhiji.

LINLITHGOW : I think it was a mistake to have left office. Perhaps there were reasons on your side which I cannot appreciate.

K. M. MUNSHI : Yes, we could not have continued long in office and helped you in the war unless we had obtained a share in the Centre which could justify our being there. Otherwise it would have been a thankless job. For instance, Subhas would have made our task very difficult.

LINLITHGOW : You think Subhas formidable. I do not think so.

K. M. MUNSHI : Not in that sense, but if we had been in power he would have

got himself arrested only in order to make our position difficult. Now things are better from every point of view and things should be done early.

LINLITHGOW : I hope to make a move soon.

K. M. MUNSHI : You hold Gandhiji in great respect and Gandhiji, I am sure, holds you equally in great respect and if you both cannot settle the matter, nationalism will naturally go into wilderness.

LINLITHGOW : Well, you are putting a great and flattering burden on me.

K. M. MUNSHI : If there is no alliance between nationalist India and Britain it may be that we may go, maybe for a long time, but then Savarkar and Jinnah will fight it out.

LINLITHGOW : It will be a disaster.

*Pilgrimage to Freedom*, pp. 390-3

### APPENDIX XIII *GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE*<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
*February 5, 1940*

In response to an invitation from His Excellency, Mr. Gandhi today came to see the Viceroy. A prolonged and very friendly discussion took place in which the whole position was exhaustively examined. Mr. Gandhi made it clear at the outset of the conversation that he had no mandate from the Congress Working Committee, that he was not empowered to commit it in any way, and that he could speak on behalf of himself only.

His Excellency set out in some detail the intentions and the proposal of His Majesty's Government. He emphasized in the first place their earnest desire that India should attain Dominion Status at the earliest possible moment, and to facilitate the achievement of that status by all means in their power. He drew attention to the complexity and difficulty of certain of the issues that called for disposal in that connection, in particular the issue of defence in a Dominion position. He made it clear that His Majesty's Government were only too ready to examine the whole of the field in consultation with representatives of all parties and interests in India when the time came. He made clear also the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to shorten the transitional period and to bridge it as effectively as possible. His Excellency drew attention to the fact that as he recently repeated at Baroda<sup>2</sup>, the Federal Scheme of the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Cable to Carl Heath", 5-2-1940; "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 5-2-1940 and "Statement to the Press", 6-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> On January 17, 1940

Act, while at present in suspense, afforded the swiftest stepping-stone to Dominion Status, and that its adoption, with the consent of all concerned, would facilitate the solution of many of the problems that had to be faced in that connection. He added that the offer put forward by him in November last of an expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council on the lines and on the basis then indicated remained open and that His Majesty's Government were prepared to give immediate effect to that offer, subject to the consent of the parties affected. His Majesty's Government would be prepared also to re-open the Federal Scheme, so as to expedite the achievement of Dominion Status and to facilitate the settlement after the war of the issues to which it gave rise.

Mr. Gandhi expressed appreciation of the spirit in which these proposals were put forward, but made it clear that they did not, in his view, at this stage meet the full demand of the Congress Party. He suggested, and the Viceroy agreed, that in the circumstances it would be preferable to defer for the present further discussions with the object of a solution of the difficulties which had arisen.

*Harijan*, 10-2-1940

#### APPENDIX XIV *RESOLUTION AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH*<sup>1</sup>

*February 12, 1940*

Whereas past experience has shown that holding of responsible positions by members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh in political organizations is undesirable, this meeting of the Sangh resolves that such members of the Sangh as are on any elective bodies in such organizations and intend to serve on them should not continue as members of the Sangh. This does not by any means mean any reflection on such members or on political work. The resolution has to be taken because of the fact that the active participation of the members of the Sangh in politics has aroused bitterness which is proof of the fact that their practice of ahimsa has been inadequate. Pure ahimsa must by its very nature preclude a reaction in *himsa*.

It has always been the firm belief of the Sangh that the amelioration of the millions of India is impossible without constructive work in which alone the masses can directly participate. The Sangh's activity will, therefore, be confined in future to constructive work, and it will address itself to that part of the constructive programme which at present does not come within the province of the A.I.S.A., A.I.V.I.A., etc., e.g., the observation, study and research in the subject of the relation of constructive work to ahimsa and of the reaction of such work on individuals and society. And whereas there are not enough workers today capable of this special work, until men

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting—II", 21-2-1940; "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting—IV", 22-2-1940 and "The Right Step", 26-2-1940.

are available for the purpose of the study and research aforesaid, the activities of the Sangh will be suspended save for the administration and disbursement of the Sangh's funds among paid workers and otherwise and the publication of the monthly *Sarvodaya*.

The membership of the Sangh will be henceforth confined to the following who will also constitute the Executive Committee of the Sangh :

Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju—President and Trustee

„ R. S. Dhotre—Secretary and Trustee

Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala—Member and Trustee

„ Gopabandhu Chaudhri—Member

„ Abhaydevji—Member

„ Satis Chandra Das Gupta—Member

„ Dilkhush Diwanji—Member

„ Sitaram P. Patwardhan—Member

„ Krishnadas Gandhi—Member

And all the other members will be deemed to have resigned. It is also resolved that this Executive Committee will have all powers to amend or alter the constitution of the Sangh and will exercise all the other powers of the Sangh.

*Harijan*, 2-3-1940