THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

LXXI

(1939-1940)

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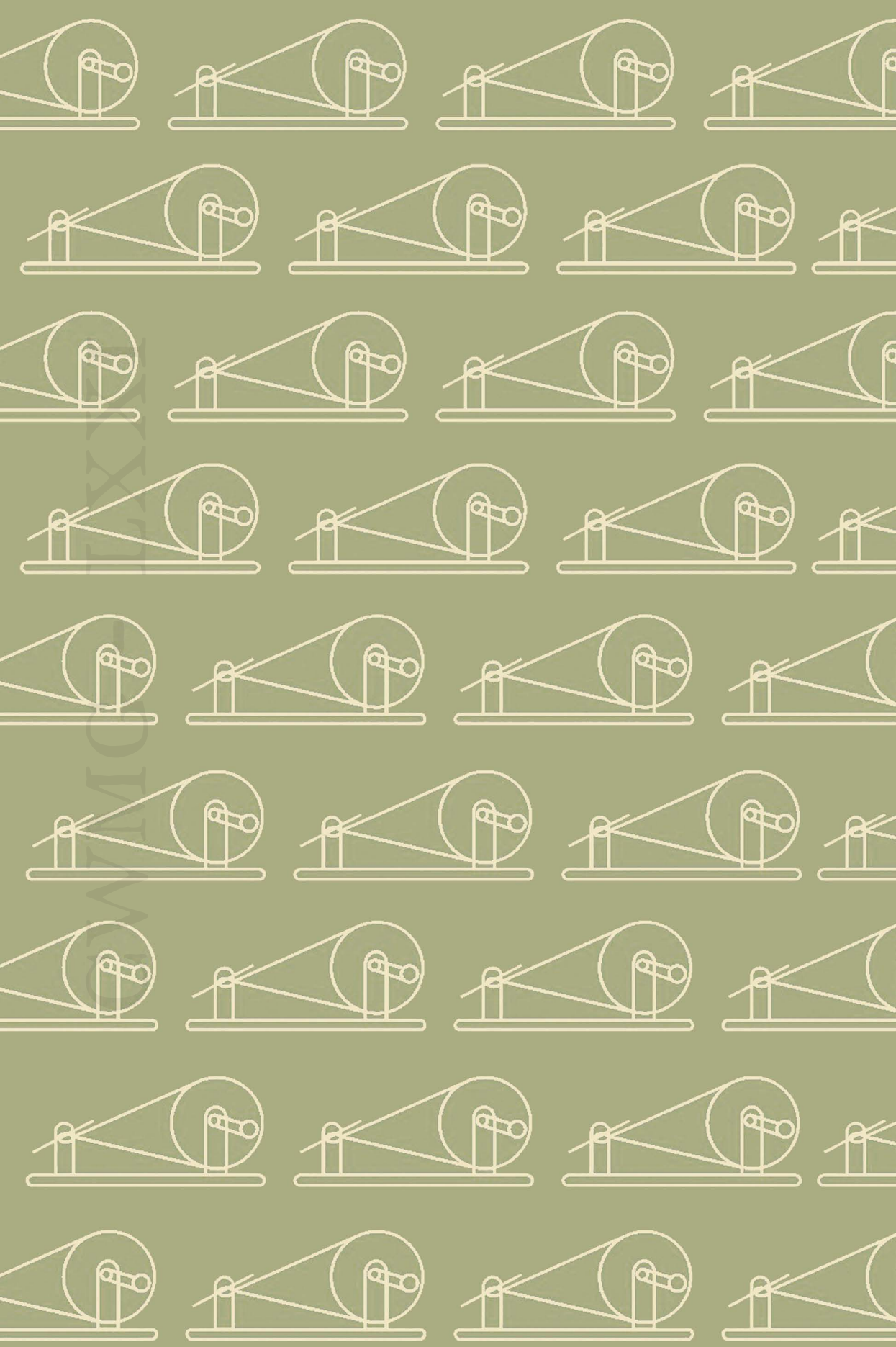
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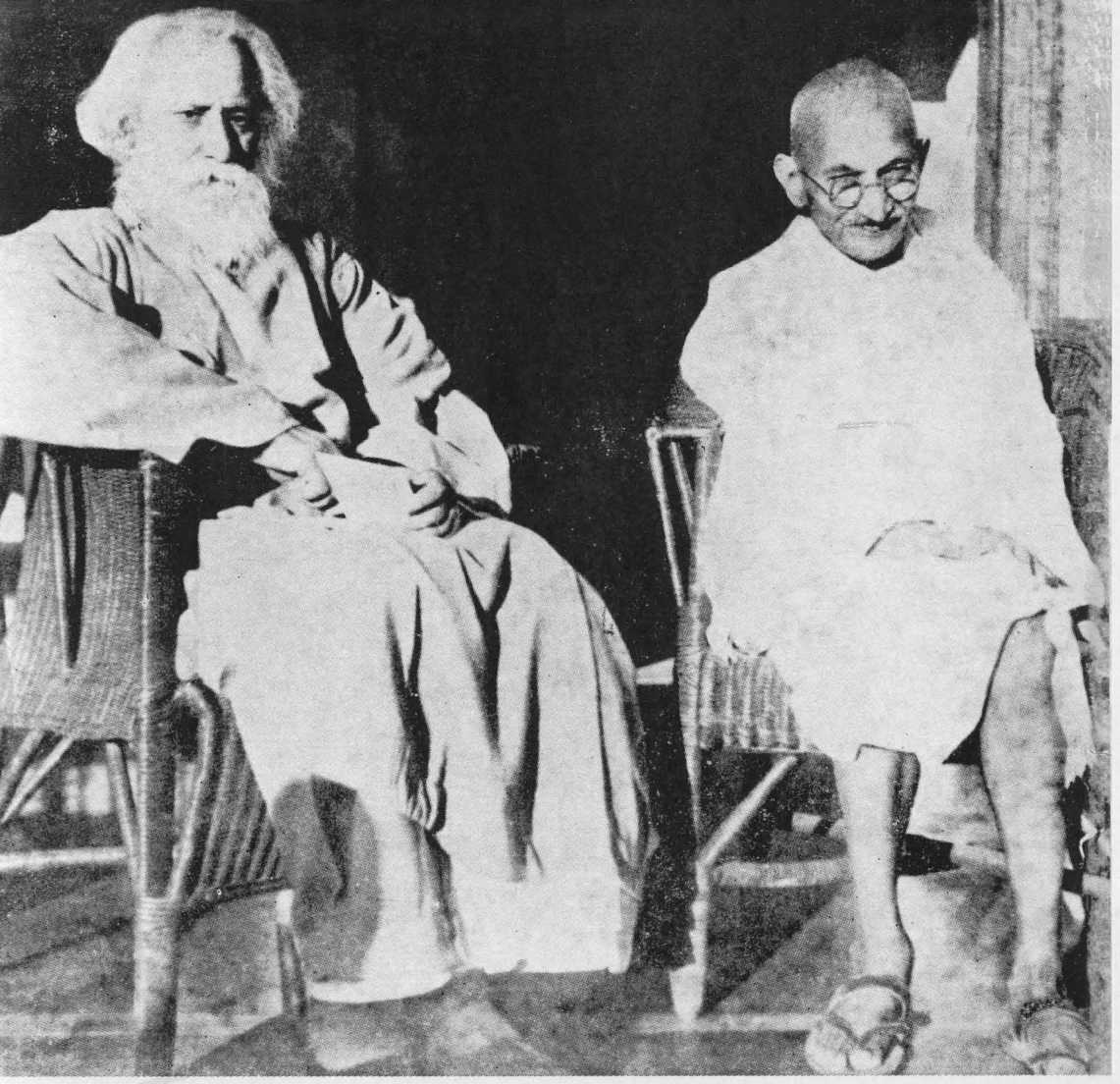


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LXXI

(December 1, 1939 – April 15, 1940)

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WITH RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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The debate over the Congress demand for a declaration of Britain's war aims continued during the period of this volume (December 1, 1939 to April 15, 1940) and Gandhiji, believing in the sincerity of British leaders, went on "wooing them", as he said, while "wooing" the Indian people at the same time "to build up their power". "I am preparing for a fight, if it must come," he explained, "but I am trying my level best to stave it off" (p. 84). On January 10, 1940, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, in Bombay made a seemingly conciliatory speech in which he declared that the British Government's "objective for India" was "full Dominion Status . . . of the Statute of Westminster variety . . ." (p. 433). The speech prompted Gandhiji to suggest a meeting between them (p. 107), which took place on February 5. The meeting, however, brought out "the vital difference between the Congress demand and the Viceregal offer", for the latter contemplated "the final determination of India's destiny by the British Government" whereas the Congress insisted on India's right "to determine her own constitution and her status" (pp. 186-7). The Secretary of State, Lord Zetland's interview to *The Sunday Times* on February 11, 1940, put upon the nationalists the burden "of solving the minorities question and the like" and wiped out the conciliatory effect of the Viceroy's speech. This, in Gandhiji's words, amounted to "a declaration of war" against the nationalists who were "out to destroy the empire spirit" (p. 216). At its annual session at Ramgarh on March 20 the Congress declared that Great Britain was "carrying on the war fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire" and that, therefore, the Congress could not "in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the war. . . ." The resolution also stated that "India's constitution must be based on independence, democracy and national unity" and repudiated "attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood." (pp. 440-1). Three days later, on March 23, 1940, the annual session of the Muslim League at Lahore passed a resolution demanding that "geographically contiguous units" in the north-western and eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute "independent States", (p. 444). The deadlock was now complete.

Lord Linlithgow had in his speech of January 10 referred to the difficulties arising out of "the insistent claims of the

minorities", particularly the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes, and to the guarantees given to them in the past which, he had said, "must be honoured" (p. 434). In a letter to him dated January 14, Gandhiji gently remonstrated with him for this reference, and expressed serious doubts about its implications, especially "the reference to the scheduled castes" (p. 107). In a private interview on January 12 to K. M. Munshi, Lord Linlithgow had explained: "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 point of view and my point of view. And it has a feeling that the Hindus as a community are against British interests" (p. 436). Gandhiji fully understood this guiding motive of British policy in India. In a trenchant rejoinder to Lord Zetland's observation on the need for "escape from the tyranny of phrases and a descent from idealism", Gandhiji suggested, with a touch of impatience unusual with him, that it was Lord Zetland "who refuses to face realities and is wandering in a forest of unrealities", though of course Gandhiji could not "accuse him of idealism" (p. 216).

The reality of British rule in India, as Gandhiji and nationalist India saw it, was that the Empire had been built on four pillars — "the European interest, the Army, the Princes and the Communal Divisions", the last three "to subserve the first" (p. 210). Thus all the problems which according to British spokesmen stood in the way of India's freedom were of Britain's own making and Gandhiji believed that once "the British Government are sure that they can no longer hold India, all the difficulties . . . will vanish like darkness before dawn" (p. 323). He was convinced that the war would ultimately be decided on moral issues (p. 25) and, "as a friend of Britain bound by many personal ties", he was anxious "that she should come out victorious not because of her superiority in the use of arms but because of her will to be just all along the line" (p. 7). Gandhiji therefore wanted Great Britain to make "a mighty effort" and decide to abandon "her immoral hold on India" (p. 193). "I do not wish Britain to win right or wrong", he told an English reporter, and explained: "If India were wrong, India must perish. I have often said that Hinduism will perish if Hinduism allows the practice of untouchability to remain." He would even "go so far as to pray for India's destruction if she went wrong, even as Stead prayed for England's defeat in the Boer War" (pp. 84-5). Gandhiji could not, therefore, conscientiously pray for the success of British arms if it meant a further lease of life to India's subjection to foreign

domination. "I write this last sentence with a heavy heart," he added (p. 211).

With this clear understanding of the character of British imperialism, Gandhiji's attitude to the question of Dominion Status also had changed, probably through the influence of Jawaharlal Nehru. He had once said in 1930 that he would be satisfied with the "substance of independence" and later told H.S.L. Polak in 1937 that "if Dominion Status with the right to secede was offered", he would accept it. But, he explained, "experience since gained and maturer reflection" had led him "to think that Dominion Status even of the Statute of Westminster variety cannot suit India's case", for Dominion Status had "associations which show that it is applicable to the whites only and does not exclude the exploitation of non-European races." "India," he said, "which is among the exploited nations, will be a misfit as a fellow-exploiter with, say, South Africa" (pp. 23 and 315-6). However, Gandhiji seems to have been hopeful of the transformation of the British Empire, for if India gained her freedom through "an honourable understanding between the two countries" he envisaged an "alliance with Great Britain and the Dominions" (p. 145). And that is why, probably, he pleaded guilty to Subhas Bose's charge that he was "eager to have a compromise with Britain" if it could be had with honour (p. 114).

There seemed, however, no prospect of freedom coming to India through any such honourable understanding with Great Britain. British leaders had made unity among Indian leaders one of the pre-conditions of any constitutional advance, and the Muslim League leaders seemed uncompromisingly opposed to the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly had been suggested, Gandhiji explained, "to draw up the charter of independence" and "as a means to obviate all clash of communal and class interest" (p. 63). Safeguards for the protection of minorities, he assured them, would be framed by their own representatives (p. 83); they would, he said, practically "dictate" or "determine" their own safeguards (pp. 330 and 366). But the Muslim League leaders did not seem interested in solving the communal problem through argument and persuasion. Jinnah called for the observance of December 22 "as a day of deliverance and thanks giving" when the "vast Muslim population" would be "made to recite before God" the gravest allegations against the Congress as if they were proved. Those allegations had been placed before the Viceroy and the Governors, but without waiting for their verdict Jinnah had "taken upon his

shoulders'', as Gandhiji explained, ''the tremendous responsibility of being both the accuser and the judge'' (pp. 18-9). Gandhiji pleaded for not merely justice but generosity to the Muslims, but Jinnah seemed to have made up his mind to have no settlement within the framework of united India. When Gandhiji congratulated him ''on forming pacts with parties . . . opposed to the Congress policies and politics'' and thereby ''lifting the Muslim League out of the communal rut and giving it a national character'' (p. 109), he promptly repudiated the meaning put upon his action by Gandhiji and argued, as the latter put it, that India was a ''continent'' made up of ''nations counted according to their religions'' (p. 133). This view of India logically led to the demand for partition.

Gandhiji was deeply hurt. The ''two nations'' theory, he said, was ''an untruth''. ''The vast majority of Muslims of India,'' he argued, ''are converts to Islam or are descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts.'' ''Hindus and Muslims of India are not two nations,'' he asserted. ''Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide.'' ''And is Islam such an exclusive religion,'' Gandhiji asked, ''as Quaid-e-Azam would have it? Is there nothing common between Islam and Hinduism or any other religion? Or is Islam merely an enemy of Hinduism?'' Jinnah had said that the ''misconception of one Indian nation . . . is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time''. Gandhiji warned that ''those who think like him are rendering no service to Islam; they are misinterpreting the message inherent in the very word Islam''. This warning, Gandhiji said, was a duty because he had faithfully served the Muslims of India in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity had been and was his life's mission (pp. 388-90). Gandhiji, therefore, could ''never be a willing party to the vivisection'' of India, for it would mean, he said, ''the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation.'' His whole soul rebelled against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represented two antagonistic creeds and cultures. The ''God of the Koran,'' he said, ''is also the God of the *Gita*'' and ''we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God.'' But though Gandhiji was thus opposed to the demand for partition, as a man of nonviolence he could not, he said, forcibly resist it if the Muslims really insisted upon it (p. 412). Nor could the Congress forcibly resist ''the express will of the Muslims of India'' (p. 345). ''If

the vast majority of Indian Muslims feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren, who will be able to resist them?'' Gandhiji asked (p. 372). Repudiating Liaquat Ali Khan's suggestion that Gandhiji's aim was ''the imposition of Hindu culture on all and sundry'', Gandhiji said: ''I claim to represent all the cultures, for my religion, whatever it may be called, demands the fulfilment of all cultures. I am at home wherever I go, for I regard all religions with the same respect as my own'' (p. 413).

Though Gandhiji was uncompromising in his demand for the right of self-determination for the people of India and felt that it was ''better for India, England and the world that a helpless sub-continent runs the greatest risk for coming into its own than that in its sickness it becomes a dead weight to itself and the world'' (p. 317), he resisted pressure from impatient Congressmen for immediate starting of civil disobedience (pp. 11, 51, 70-1, 201, 305-6 and 384). ''Without real non-violence there would be perfect anarchy'' and he would not ''undertake a fight that must end in anarchy and red ruin'' (p. 117). In order to create the requisite atmosphere of non-violence in the country, Gandhiji urged Congressmen to carry out the triple programme of khadi, communal unity and removal of untouchability, which he described as ''non-violence in action'' (p. 51). ''The power of non-violent resistance,'' Gandhiji believed, ''can only come from honest working of the constructive programme'', for ''non-violence cannot be sustained unless it is linked to conscious body-labour and finds expression in our daily contact with our neighbours'' (p. 132). The ''revival of the charkha and all it means'' was, according to Gandhiji, ''a mighty effort at co-operation and adult education of the correct type'', a ''visible expression of non-violence'' (pp. 410-1), and he would not, therefore, ''embark on direct action'' unless he had positive proof ''of successful khadi work all over India'' (p. 29).

The charkha had become for Gandhiji part of the ''programme of love'' which he had first enunciated in *Hind Swaraj* in 1909. With real insight into the condition of contemporary Europe he argued that it could be presumed that ''its cities, its monster factories and huge armaments are so intimately interrelated that the one cannot exist without the other''. The ''erstwhile village republic of India,'' Gandhiji believed, was ''the nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence. . . .'' Though that non-violence was not of Gandhiji's

"definition and conception", "the germ was there" and it was from that germ that he had developed his "technique of non-violence" (p. 95). It was therefore Gandhiji's conviction that "a country whose culture is based on non-violence will find it necessary to have every home as much self-contained as possible" (p. 4). This preference for cottage industries had an aesthetic reason too. Gandhiji saw man as "the most exquisite machine" and wanted "every man and woman . . . to realize what art and skill" were "hidden in their heads and hands" (p. 232). Only by "correlating the intellect with the hand", so that the villagers might "know the joy of work", could they be lifted from "the estate of the brute to the estate of man" (p. 336). Gandhiji, however, explained, in reply to a question by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, that his programme for a "social order of the future" did not exclude "electricity, ship-building, iron works, machine-making and the like", but that "order of dependence" would "be reversed" and industrialization would "subserve the villages and their crafts" (p. 130).

Gandhiji's idea of a just and democratic society differed fundamentally from that of Western socialists; he did "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." Though he recognized that their motive was the same as his, namely, "the greatest welfare of the whole society and the abolition of the hideous inequalities", Gandhiji believed 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." He was certain that "the coming into power of the proletariat through violence" was "bound to fail in the end", and warned that "those who play upon the passions of the masses injure them and the country's cause" (p. 130). Gandhiji believed not only that non-violence, purity, etc., "are not virtues to be cultivated in caves but to be practised in the midst of society" (p. 14), but also that "a predominantly non-violent society" was possible (p. 226). His "concept of non-violence", Gandhiji said, was "universal", it belonged "to the millions". Truth and non-violence, he asserted, "could become the policy of a group, a community, a nation" (p. 264). Even a State could be administered on a non-violent basis if the vast majority of the people were non-violent. Such application of non-violence "to large masses of mankind" was "a new experiment in the history of the world", and Gandhiji claimed

that if he succeeded and India evolved non-violently, "we shall represent the truest democracy in the world" (p. 398). He was, however, humble enough to recognize the possibility of his failure. Quoting a critic's view that he had only "succeeded in teaching disruptive disobedience" and that he had "signally failed in teaching people the very difficult art of non-violence", Gandhiji said: "I am but a poor mortal. I believe in my experiment and in my uttermost sincerity. But it may be that the only fitting epitaph after my death will be: 'He tried but signally failed' " (p. 403).

Gandhiji advised the Gandhi Seva Sangh to devote itself to research in the field of non-violence "to link the spinning-wheel and related activities with non-violence and ultimately with God" (pp. 243, 263 and 265). Gandhiji's was a poet's vision of true ahimsa which grew and unfolded itself gradually with practice and experience. "Ahimsa in theory," he said, "no one knows. It is as indefinable as God. But in its working we get glimpses of it as we have glimpses of the Almighty in His working amongst and through us." The members had the "laborious task" of discovering like scientists the meaning of ahimsa in relation to the constructive programme (p. 294). He himself was only experimenting and with "great patience . . . discovering and developing the science of satyagraha." In the course of the search he was "acquiring new knowledge and new light every day", "seeing ever new miracles of non-violence", having "a new vision" and experiencing "a new joy" (pp. 252 and 264). It gave him "ineffable joy", Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan*, "to make experiments proving that love is the supreme and only law of life" (p. 408).

Gandhiji knew from experience that genuine ahimsa was not a mechanical thing. It must be felt in the heart. "There must be within you," he said, "an upwelling of love and pity towards the wrongdoer" (p. 225). Only "the nectar" of such love could "destroy the poison of hate" (p. 284). But Gandhiji also knew from experience how difficult it was to cultivate such ahimsa. He himself, he confessed, was "full of *himsa*", in that he was "liable to anger". He had yet to attain perfect *brahmacharya*, when one should but think a thing and it would happen and one would not have to argue (p. 99). Even so, Gandhiji knew that he had made progress. In his former campaigns he had travelled through the length and breadth of India and "had to speak and argue day in and day out". But now, he was confident, "if a fight has to come,

you may be sure that I shall lead it from Segaon.'' Such Gandhiji believed to be the power of non-violent thought (pp. 99-100).

To an Englishman who contended that satyagraha ''only works with civilized people who are gentlemen''—an argument which was often advanced in Gandhiji's lifetime and has been advanced since—Gandhiji replied that real satyagraha was not such ''sob-stuff'' and that the partition separating the civilized from the uncivilized was very thin. ''Both act almost alike when their passions are roused'' (p. 202).

Replying to an English correspondent who had said that he hated and feared ''the present outlook on life of the Nazis'', Gandhiji reiterated his faith in human nature and said: ''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'' (pp. 37-8). To another Englishman who had appealed to Gandhiji to ''give a clarion call to the whole world, pointing to another way than the senseless gamble and destruction of war'', Gandhiji humbly replied: ''But who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. . . . We neither know Him nor His Law save through the glass darkly. But the faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope and faith in the future'' (pp. 9 and 11). That Law governed everything and the free will that man enjoyed, Gandhiji told a Christian missionary, was ''less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck.'' He however appreciated that little freedom, having imbibed ''the central teaching of the *Gita*'' that man was ''the maker of his own destiny'' and could progress towards full freedom by doing his duty without attachment to the fruits of action (p. 321).

Paying a loving tribute to C. F. Andrews who died in Calcutta on April 4, Gandhiji said: ''. . . Charlie Andrews was one of the greatest and best of Englishmen. And because he was a good son of England he became also a son of India. And he did it all for the sake of humanity and for his Lord and Master Jesus Christ'' (p. 394).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

Where an item has no date in the source, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the January 1969 edition.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G. N. refers to documents, M.M.U. to the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit available in the Gandhi National Museum and Library (Rashtriya Gandhi Sangrahalaya), New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

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1. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 1, 1939

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI,

Only yesterday I could read the whole of your letter. I am so busy. It was a great sacrifice on my part to take a leading part in the Ministers' resignations[1]. A number of things that the Ministers were doing were strengthening the nation; these included Nayee Talim and your experiment with it, but when our very independence was threatened I gave up all attachment for it. I do [hope][2] that [even][3] if you are out [of the Ministry] the experiment will go on all right. Khan Saheb is a very enthusiastic teacher.

Yes, the issue of socialism remains to be discussed. Now I have almost forgotten my queries also.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From the Hindi original: Sampurnanand Collection. Courtesy: National Archives of India

2. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON

WARDHA,
December 2, 1939

AGATHA HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON

IF RIGHT MEN COME UNOFFICIALLY THEY WILL RECEIVE ALL POSSIBLE HELP FROM CONGRESS. TERRIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING. IMPERIALISM NOT DEAD. NO PROGRESS

[1] For the Congress Working Committee's resolution of October 22, 1939, on the resignation of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces, *vide* Vol. LXX, Appendix XIII.

[2] & [3] The words are faded.

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POSSIBLE WITHOUT UNEQUIVOCAL DECLARATION INDEPENDENCE. ANDREWS[1] HERE. LOVE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 1513

3. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
Before retiring, December 2, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

What is this?[2] What can I do with it? Yet I must give some answer. Will you?

I wrote a letter in the afternoon. I hope you will shed the blues and sing. Count the many blessings. If you will begin the count, I defy you to complete the list. They are numberless. Try, if you doubt my word.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3952. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7261

4. LETTER TO K. SRINIVASAN

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 3, 1939

DEAR SRINIVASAN[3],

My good wishes on *The Hindu* reaching diamond jubilee. *The Hindu* is undoubtedly among India's best newspapers. May it continue its past record.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Hindu, 7-12-1939

[1] C. F. Andrews

[2] The National Committee of the Y. W. C. A. had requested Gandhiji to sponsor a Jubilee Fund in the name of Emily Kinnaird who for fifty years had been promoting the welfare of women in India.

[3] Editor, *The Hindu*

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5. LETTER TO MADALASA

SEGAON,
December 3, 1939

CHI. MADALASA[1],

It is a short but sweet letter that you have written. It is good that you have given up worrying about Janakibehn[2]. Remain perfectly cheerful and improve your health. Having been fortunate to win a husband like Shriman[3], you have to bring him and Jamnalal honour. Only a girl who has done many meritorious deeds gets a husband like Shriman. May God restore your health soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, between pp. 318 and 319

6. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 3, 1939

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I had your letter. May you live for 50 years more and fulfil your aspirations. Never lose heart. Live in peace there and improve your health. Everything is going on well here. Kamalnayan[4] was here and had a long talk with me. Ramkrishna[5] seems to have got interested in his studies. Om[6] is quite happy. Need I say anything about Shriman ? He remains absorbed in his duties. Rajaji arrived today. Andrews is here. Dr. Zakir Husain is arriving today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3006

[1] Jamnalal Bajaj's second daughter
[2] Addressee's mother
[3] Shriman Narayan
[4] Addressee's elder son
[5] Addressee's younger son
[6] Umadevi, addressee's youngest daughter

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7. *WHAT IT MEANS*

Those who believe that India can be freed and her freedom retained only through non-violence will surely believe that non-violence on a mass scale can only be observed by the masses being usefully and knowingly occupied for the sake of the country. What is that one thing which all can do easily without any capital worth the name and which in itself is calculated to soothe the nervous system? The answer will unequivocally be hand-spinning and its anterior processes. And it is indigenous to the soil. Millions can easily learn it, and its output is always current coin. If there were no mills, yarn would be as much valued as, say, ghee. Famine of yarn would be as much felt as that of staples. If the people have the will, they can produce their cloth without much labour.

In the States of Europe where war is a recognized institution, adult males are conscripted for military service for a given number of years. In a country that wants to defend itself and regulate its life without war preparation, people have to be conscripted for productive national service. If a country's vital requirements are produced through a centralized industry, it will find it necessary to guard them even as a capitalist guards his treasures. A country whose culture is based on non-violence will find it necessary to have every home as much self-contained as possible. Indian society was at one time unknowingly constituted on a non-violent basis. The home life, i.e., the village, was undisturbed by the periodical visitations from barbarous hordes. Mayne[1] has shown that India's villages were a congeries of republics. In them there were no ladies and gentlemen, or all were.

Unless this argument is accepted by the Congressmen, I hold it to be impossible to establish non-violence that will be proof against temptation and that will stand true no matter how heavy the odds may be against it. Without such non-violence the country cannot put up a fight in which there is no going back and there is no defeat. The Congress will never prove its non-violent intention before Britishers and the world.

The Congress non-violence is intended as well in respect of the rulers, as of all those who fear, distrust or despise the great

[1] Sir Henry Sumner Mayne, author of *Village Communities in the East and West*

institution. I have no doubt that want of this broad non-violence is responsible for our failure to reach communal unity. The fact is that Congressmen have not demonstrated that living non-violence in their dealings even among themselves. And I cannot resist the conviction that the deficiency of our non-violence can be measured by the deficiency in our khadi programme. Our belief in either has been half-hearted. I plead for full-hearted belief in both. And the Congress will be so invulnerable that it is highly likely that it will not have to go through the fire of civil resistance in order to win India's freedom.

With this background, let Congressmen carefully study the table (printed elsewhere in this issue[1]) prepared for me by Shri Krishnadas Gandhi[2] who is among the few khadi experts who have made a careful study of khadi in all its aspects. The figures are an interesting study for khadi-lovers. They are tentative and based on Krishnadas's experience. They will vary for inferior grades of cotton. But they are good enough as a workable index. Those who do not wish to take the trouble of studying the whole table should look at count 14 only. They will see that a self-spinner's khadi will cost him a little less than 3 as. per sq. yard. I have contemplated at least half an hour's spinning per day by every Congressman. Even a novice should easily spin 100 yards in 30 minutes. Many spin 200 yards with ease during that time. Supposing the self-spinner needs 20 yards per year, he will need to spin at the most for one hour per day. Thus one-fifth of the whole population would need to spin at the most for five hours per day for enough yarn to clothe the whole of India at the rate of 20 yards per head. The present average is said to be 15 yards per head. With greater efficiency the working hours can be considerably reduced. I hold that such distributed production of khadi requires minimum of effort and expenditure. It means voluntary co-operation on a scale never witnessed anywhere in modern times. Given the required will, the proposition is perfectly feasible. Anyway I expect every Congressman to put up his best effort to spin intelligently as much as he can and organize khadi sales among his neighbours; and this he should do in the belief that he is taking his due share in the preparation of the country for Independence.

SEGAON, December 4, 1939

Harijan, 9-12-1939

[1] Under the title "Khadi Figures"; it is not reproduced here.

[2] Chhaganlal Gandhi's son

8. *STATEMENT TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"*[1]

SEGAON,
December 4, 1939

Mr. Chamberlain[2] is reported to have said, "If imperialism means the assertion of racial superiority, suppression of political and economic freedom of other peoples, the exploitation of the resources of other countries for the benefit of an imperialist country, then I say these are not the characteristics of this country." This is pleasing to the ear but does not square with facts. The policy adopted in Kenya, the clove business in Zanzibar, the Ottawa Pact, not to speak of the Dominions which exploit the so-called uncivilized races of the earth, do not show as if the imperial spirit was dead. Coming nearer home, is the Paramountcy over Indian Princes consistent with even elementary democracy, let alone death of imperialism? Princes are made and unmade not for India's good. Millions of Indians remain under undiluted autocracy by reason of the Paramountcy.

Also I fail to see why Britain's intention about India[3] should be dependent upon Muslim, Hindu or any other opinion. The only opinion that counts is India's opinion, not even the Congress opinion. India's opinion can only be ascertained by the free vote of her people. The only true and democratic method is to ascertain their will through adult suffrage or any agreed equivalent. So far as the Congress is concerned, the people of Princes' India should be represented precisely on the same footing as those of British India. The Muslims and other accepted minorities may be represented by separate electorates, if necessary, and in the exact proportion of their numbers. They will determine what is required for their protection. In all matters of common interest a composite majority decision should prevail. If a better way than a Constituent Assembly[4] can be found for knowing the will of the people, so far as I know, the Congress will accept it without hesitation.

[1] This statement, cabled to London, appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Purely Moral Issue".

[2] The British Prime Minister

[3] &[4] For the Congress demand for a declaration of Britain's war aims, specially in regard to India, and formation of a Constituent Assembly, *vide* Vol. LXX, Appendices X and XI.

Neither the size of the country nor the illiteracy of the masses should be a bar against adult suffrage. The election campaign will itself be sufficient education for the purpose of broadly knowing the popular will.

The declaration of British policy about India is a purely moral issue, for freedom-loving India has neither the will nor the capacity to resort to armed revolt. Nevertheless, it is her right to know Britain's will about her. I am aware that Britain can impress men and money from India treated as her dependency, but she can get moral weight on her side only from an India conscious of her freedom. I am anxious, as a friend of Britain bound by many personal ties, that she should come out victorious not because of her superiority in the use of arms but because of her will to be just all along the line. She will then have the true friendship and sympathy of millions of people all over the world who have become sick of the wanton waste of precious life and of the palpable lies disseminated to sustain greed and hunger for dominion.

Harijan, 9-12-1939, and *The Hindu*, 7-12-1939

9. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 4, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

No letter from you either yesterday or today. We have the telephone now. M[ahadev] came in yesterday. Dr. Zakir came in last night over the H. M.[1] question. I asked him to come.

Rajaji is here.

Your note on Templin[2] is going in.

Prithvi Singh left yesterday for Burma, his home.

The patients doing well.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3663. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6472

[1] Hindu-Muslim

[2] Templin was accused of having broken the pledge which American missionaries had to sign before coming to India and was asked to leave India by the "High Command of the Church in India". In an open letter to the Viceroy he had denounced imperialism and justified India's aspiration for freedom. Condemning the missionaries' narrow-mindedness, the addressee had appealed to the Christians to support Templin for having spoken the truth. The addressee's note appeared in *Harijan*, 9-12-1939, under the title "Christians' Duty".

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10. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJEE

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 4, 1939

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I would certainly like it if Chhaganlal Joshi is given control of the verandah for khadi work. Chhaganlal is an old inmate of the Ashram.

The indifference of the State authorities is a painful affair.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4730. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarjee

11. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 4, 1939

CHI. SARU,

I have your letter. I hope you are keeping up your courage for going through your delivery. Have faith in God. Kanti[1] does not write to me. I am satisfied that I get news about him. What else do I desire than the welfare of you both? Ba has gone to Delhi because of Lakshmi's[2] illness. Kanu[3] is leaving for Rajkot today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6178. Also C.W. 3452. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

[1] Harilal Gandhi's son, addressee's husband
[2] Wife of Devdas Gandhi
[3] Younger son of Narandas Gandhi

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12. *IN GOD'S GOOD HANDS*

DEAR FRIEND,

I am unknown to you personally, but my wife and I came very near to being your host and hostess when you visited the Greenfield Mill at Darwen, Lancashire, in 1931. . . .

I read with deep interest and inspiration, in the early days of this war, a few lines written by you in *Harijan*[1], which have been a great help and comfort to me in these troubled times. They are as follows: "I personally would not purchase my own country's freedom by violence, even if such a thing were possible. My faith . . . that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword is imperishable." I have been encouraged, after mentioning my thoughts to my friend Agatha Harrison, to write and tell you what I have had so much in mind during these first distressful weeks of war. . . .

. . . I have wondered whether this is not the moment when such an acknowledged spiritual prophet and leader as you are might give a clarion call to the whole world, pointing to another way than the senseless gamble and destruction of war; another way, not merely for the settling of disputes but, far more important, for resistance to evil and even for the attainment of political aims. . . . It seems to me that a lead from one with your spiritual authority along the lines of a better way than war to help the stricken and oppressed, whether individuals or nations, might come with redeeming power to many who find themselves in the distress of a moral dilemma at the present time, and release spiritual energies which, because of this dilemma, are lamed and useless, or are prostituted in the attempt to supply uplift and inspiration for the pursuit of a holy war for civilization, freedom—or for the mere negative aim of destroying Hitlerism by successful rivalry in its own methods. . . .

My heart cries to you out of its distress and despair caused by the war. I have seen so much that is good in the German people, the self-giving idealism of its youth, whom I love, as well as the evil with which I am so intimately acquainted through trying to help the victims. I have been in a Nazi prison, and have believed that through my suffering there has been shown to me a nobler way to help the splendid young men of Germany and of my own country, than the way we are about to employ, of driving millions of them to slaughter one another. I believe that many people throughout the world are

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 126-7.

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longing to see the way out of this evil into which we are slowly slipping deeper and deeper, until it may soon be too late.

Perhaps you alone can help us. I write to you in deep concern to beg you to consider whether it may not be laid upon you to do so.

With deep esteem and love,

Your friend sincerely,
CORDER CATCHPOOL

49 PARLIAMENT HILL
LONDON N.W. 3

I know that this letter[1] reflects the attitude of many Englishmen who look to me for showing the better way. Sir Radhakrishnan's collection of tributes[2] on my completing seventy years has deepened the hope of thousands of peace-lovers. But I know what a poor instrument I am for the fulfilment of that hope. Admirers have given me credit I do not deserve. I am not able to testify that India furnishes the world with a good example of non-violence of the strong and therefore as a substitute for armed resistance against an aggressor. India undoubtedly has shown the efficacy of passive non-violence as a weapon of the weak. But useful as it is as a substitute of terrorism, I claim no newness or merit for it. It is no contribution to the peace movement.

It is no wonder that my identification with the Congress demand appears to contradict my previous writing quoted by my correspondent. There is, however, no contradiction. Even now as then I would not gain independence at the cost of non-violence. The critic might retort that, if the British Government made the required declaration, I would be helping the Allies and thereby taking part in violence. The retort would be reasonable but for the fact that the additional help that Britain would gain from the Congress would be purely moral. The Congress would contribute neither men nor money. The moral influence would be used on the side of peace. I have already said in these columns that my non-violence does recognize different species of violence—defensive and offensive. It is true that in the long run the difference is obliterated, but the initial merit persists. A non-violent person is bound, when the occasion arises, to say which side is just. Thus I wished success to the Abyssinians[3], the Spaniards[4], the Czechs[5], the

[1] Of which only extracts are reproduced here
[2] For Gandhiji's acknowledgement, *vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 221-2.
[3] *Vide* Vol. LXI, pp. 301-2.
[4] *Vide* Vol. LXVII, p. 428.
[5] ibid. pp. 404-6.

Chinese[1] and the Poles[2], though in each case I wished that they could have offered non-violent resistance. In the present case, if the Congress could justify the British case on the high ground professed by Mr. Chamberlain, India declared free would throw in her whole moral weight on the side of peace. The part I am playing is, in my opinion, strictly non-violent. There is no spirit of bargaining behind the Congress demand which itself is wholly moral. There is no desire to embarrass the Government. There is to be no precipitate civil disobedience. Care is being taken to meet every just objection to the Congress demand and to smooth every difficulty in the way of Great Britain making the requisite declaration. The greatest strain is being put upon impatient Congressmen spoiling for a fight though non-violent. I myself want to be able to play an effective part in bringing peace nearer. I might be able to do so if India becomes in fact an independent ally of Britain, though the legal process is delayed till the war is ended.

But who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral. If He holds me to be a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence in the place of the awful violence now ruling the earth, He will give me the strength and show me the way. My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands. Nothing can happen but by His will expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He. We neither know Him nor His Law save through the glass darkly. But the faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope and faith in the future.

SEGAON, December 5, 1939

Harijan, 9-12-1939

13. MESSAGE TO S. SATYAMURTI

[Before *December 6, 1939*][3]

Your Exhibition[4] should be a thorough success. For I believe that we can surely spin our way to swaraj through the charkha.

The Hindu, 6-12-1939

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXVII, pp. 250-2.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXX, p. 141; also pp. 163-4.

[3] The report is date-lined "Madras, December 6, 1939".

[4] The All-India Khadi and Swadeshi Exhibition which was to be held at Madras

14. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

December 6, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

Your letter today is consoling. Poor Nayakam[1] has lost his son Anand Rup otherwise Tongawala. He had convulsions yesterday. The parents have borne the grief bravely. No more time for more.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3953. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7262

15. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 7, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have not read the Muttra resolutions[2] or your speech[3]. I should like to have both.

[1] E. W. Aryanayakam, Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh

[2] The U. P. Political Conference, held at Mathura on November 28 and 29, passed resolutions relating to Indian States and the Tenancy Bill and another on the constructive programme.

[3] Jawaharlal Nehru spoke in Hindi for one and a half hours. Referring to the war in Europe, he was happy to state that its repercussions in India were most welcome as they had succeeded in composing their internal differences in Congress. He emphasized that their demand for swaraj was an old one and had nothing to do with the present war. The Congress sought clarification of British Government's war aims in relation to India. He regretted that the British Government's reply to their demand was most unsatisfactory and therefore the Congress Working Committee had no alternative but to call upon Congress Ministries to resign. He reiterated the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly to frame a suitable constitution for India and said that he saw no prospect of a settlement between the British Government and India so long as this main Congress demand was not accepted. The communal problem, he said, was not a major issue and was capable of solution if India's right to be treated as a free country was conceded.

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I note your gentle complaint in Mahadev's letter. What can I do? You have to take me as I am. I know you do[1]. I know also how gentle you are with me.

You may bring Cripps when you like.[2]

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1937. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

16. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

December 7, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

I have your letter. It is unfortunate but it is inevitable that you should go to Indore.[3] I shall keep Haksar's[4] letter for you.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3754. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7263

17. LETTER TO SURENDRA

December 7, 1939

CHI. SURENDRA,

The remark which has pained you is just plain truth. It is preferable to have several wives rather than secretly indulge in immoral practices.[5] This truth may seem bitter but its fruits would be very sweet. The relative praise of polygamy implicit in it is fully justified. The more I think the more clearly I see that the false fear of society ruins a man. Just as the test of non-violence lies in

---

He exhorted the gathering to follow the Congress constructive programme and take to swadeshi and khadi in particular. Concluding, Nehru remarked that they were in no hurry to launch a struggle and would not take the offensive, but at the same time they should prepare themselves from now for future contingencies.

[1] The source has "are".

[2] Sir Stafford Cripps met Gandhiji on December 19, 1939, at Wardha.

[3] To settle differences between two rival organizations, Praja Mandal and Praja Sangh, and guide their struggle in the State

[4] Col. Kailas Narain Haksar

[5] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 312-5.

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fighting against violence, similar is the case with purity and impurity. Non-violence, purity, etc., are not virtues to be cultivated in caves but to be practised in the midst of society. . . .[1] But I am digressing. Why argue? Silence is best.

[From Gujarati]

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

18. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 8, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I am saying I cannot sponsor the fund.[2] Of course you should. I am saying no in gentle terms.

I may not be ready with your cupboard. I am trying to procure one ready-made.

Did I tell you Ba had gone to Delhi for Lakshmi? You will look them up. Kashi[3] and Kanu leaving today. Rajaji went to Delhi today only for Lakshmi. You should build up your strength.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3955. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7264

19. LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

SEGAON,
December 8, 1939

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

Could the students come on Wednesday next at 7 a.m. or 4 p.m.?

Rs. 10,000 will be transferred.

Yours,
BAPU

[PS.]

What about your taking the phone seeing I have it?

B[APU]

From a photostat: G.N. 3591

[1] Omission as in the source
[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 2.
[3] Wife of Chhaganlal Gandhi

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20. LETTER TO MANUBEHN MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 8, 1939

CHI. MANUDI,

At last you have become a mother. Give the child whatever name you wish. I did not like at all the name[1] you gave Rami's[2] daughter. It is much too long. The girl still does not come near me. Manojna's[3] Shobhan took to me immediately. Kunvarji[4] is quite well now. The girl also is growing very well. Ba has gone to Delhi. Lakshmi is ill there. Write to them at Delhi.

I hope all three of you are keeping fine.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2674. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

21. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

December 8, 1939

CHI. DEVDAS,

Where is the need to guide you? You are not likely to neglect anything in Ba's service. Who can charge you with neglect if anything happens to Ba? She will pass away wherever she is destined to. No one protects another. God alone protects all. Ba will give you the details about the death of Ashalata's child. She was present there at the time. Gopalrao's[5] son died in a matter of a few minutes. He was stung by a black scorpion. He screamed and fell down dead. All of us live in the jaws of death. As long as it does not swallow us we may go about dancing.

[1] Navamalika
[2] Addressee's mother's sister
[3] Wife of Krishnadas Gandhi
[4] Kunvarji Parekh, Rami's husband
[5] Gopalrao Kulkarni, a teacher at the Ashram school

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J. has written to Jinnah. Now one may say this too is over.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2136

22. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 8, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

Your complaint is justified. What could I do? There was a long letter from Nanabhai[1]. I wanted to reply to him but could not and he went on a fast. Tell him never to do that again. Fasting is no remedy in such matters. Patience, trust and love are the only remedy. We should not mind even if no child attends [the school]. We should be satisfied even with one. However, we shouldn't yield, either, on the issue of Harijans. It would be advisable for Nanabhai to come and see me when you two can permit him to do so. If the medicinal paste has agreed with Manubhai[2] let him continue it. Give him enough ghee. You also must take it. You will be able to deserve Nanabhai's legacy only if both of you keep good health.

Ba has gone to Delhi to look after Lakshmi. Krishnadas is going today to Rajkot for a month. Perhaps he may return earlier.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. VIJAYABEHN
AMBLA, *Via* SONGARH

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7121. Also C.W. 4613. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

[1] Nrisimhaprasad Kalidas Bhatt, founder of Gram Dakshinamurty
[2] Addressee's husband

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23. LETTER TO A BISHOP

[After *December 8, 1939*][1]

DEAR BISHOP,

I am deeply grateful for your letter.

My object in writing in *Harijan* was to clear up misunderstandings. I see that I failed. I never knew that the verb 'cavil' had only the meaning you have explained.[2] I could never willingly attribute captious criticism to you. My imperfect language is responsible for the wrong done to you. Pray forgive.

I am trying to help the M. R. A.[3] in the best manner I can.

Of course our different viewpoints make no difference in my regard for you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

24. TELEGRAM TO RAIHANA TYABJI

December 9, 1939

RAIHANA TYABJI
CAMP BARODA

JUST HEARD FROM MAHADEV ABOUT MOTHER. SHE MUST NOT WORRY. MAY GOD GIVE HER STRENGTH. KEEP ME INFORMED HER PROGRESS. LOVE.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 9693

[1] The addressee's letter to which this is a reply is dated December 8, 1939.

[2] In his article "The Pity of It" Gandhiji had written, "The writer seems to cavil at the demand for independence as distinguished from Dominion Status". *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 385-8.

[3] Moral Rearmament initiated by Dr. Frank Buchman

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25. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 9, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

No more than to send a trainload of love to you and the family.

No letter from[1] you today.

BAPU

SMT. RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
JULLUNDUR CITY

From the original: C.W. 3956. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7265

26. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
December 9, 1939

I have read Janab Jinnah Saheb's exhortation[2] to "Mussalmans all over India to observe Friday, the 22nd December, as a day of deliverance and thanks giving—as a mark of relief that the Congress Governments have at last ceased to function." Prayers are to be offered for deliverance from the unjust Congress regime. The exhortation is followed by the text of a resolution that is to be passed at all meetings that will be held under the auspices of the Muslim League. I wish to appeal to Jinnah Saheb and Mussalmans associated with him to desist from the contemplated step.

The gravest allegations have been made against the Congress in the resolution. The vast Muslim population is to be made to recite before God allegations as if they were proved and on that account to thank the Almighty for the deliverance. At the same time, the Governors of Provinces are to be requested to examine the allegations and grant redress.

Will it not be right and proper to wait for the Governor's opinions before the serious step contemplated is taken? I call it

[1] The source has "for", but *Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur* has "from".
[2] Issued on December 6, 1939, at Bombay

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serious, because Muslims, who will be called upon to believe the allegations, cannot but harbour ill will against an old national organization, which is as much theirs as that of any other Indians. And this, at a time when Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Nehru are about to meet and expect to reach an honourable settlement.[1] If the Congress is as bad as described in the resolution, it should be unfit to have any negotiations with.

The only concrete allegations against the Congress Ministries that I know of are contained in the Muslim League Committee's[2] report called the Pirpur Report. I happen to know that the Parliamentary Sub-committee had referred the report to various Congress Ministries, and I know also that the Ministers concerned had made careful investigations and reported to the Sub-committee[3] that most of the complaints were without foundation.

It seems to me, therefore, that Jinnah Saheb has taken upon his shoulders the tremendous responsibility of being both the accuser and the judge. This too might not have mattered if he had not presented these complaints to the Muslims of India as if they were proved facts. I ask Jinnah Saheb and his colleagues to listen to the appeal of one who claims to be their friend and also a servant[4] of Muslim Indians and hence of Islam.

I heartily associate with Jinnah Saheb in his request to the Governors to examine the allegations that may be brought to their notice and give their opinion upon them. Jinnah Saheb has said in his letter[5] to Babu Rajendra Prasad that he had placed his allegations before His Excellency the Viceroy. I hope that His Excellency will take an early opportunity of pronouncing upon them. It is not too much to ask Jinnah Saheb to await Viceregal opinion and that of the Governors upon the serious allegations before a vast mass of Muslims are called upon to endorse them and to condemn the Congress.

The Hindu, 10-12-1939, and *The Hitavada*, 10-12-1939

[1] The Nehru-Jinnah talks were however abandoned.
[2] Formed under the Chairmanship of Raja of Pirpur
[3] The rest of the sentence is from *The Hitavada*.
[4] *The Hitavada* here has "co-servant".
[5] Dated October 6, 1939

27. MESSAGE TO JABALPORE DISTRICT POLITICAL CONFERENCE[1]

[Before *December 10, 1939*][2]

I am mad after khadi. My standard of success is khadi, and unless it is achieved, I cannot venture to launch a civil disobedience movement.

The Hindu, 12-12-1939

28. RAJKOT REFORMS[3]

I have seen the Rajkot State note on reforms. The contradiction makes no impression on me. I adhere to every word of what I have said.[4] Events will show what the reforms mean. Though I did not use Shri Dhebar's[5] name in my article, the framer of the State note has gratuitously brought him in to enable him to signify his displeasure towards the one man who has been admitted in my presence as a true and brave reformer. He will survive all the attacks made on him. If the reforms prove to be what they are claimed to be in the note, no one will be more glad than I. The authorities are, however, entitled to congratulations on their having secured the approval of six out of the ten nominees for the aborted Constitution Committee. That is indeed a defeat for the State Parishad and me. This *volte face* is a good specimen of Kathiawar politics. But I have no right to complain. Even if all the ten including Dhebarbhai had accepted the Rajkot reforms, my analysis, if it is true to facts—as I hold it is—would not be affected. Only it would be of no effect if all those who wanted something were satisfied with less than what they had. In that sense, therefore, Rajkot authorities have undoubtedly won.

SEGAON, December 10, 1939

Harijan, 16-12-1939

[1] & [2] The conference, held at Katni on December 10, 1939, passed resolutions appealing to every Indian to encourage khadi and indigenous industries, and calling upon them to prepare for all eventualities.

[3] This appeared under "Notes".

[4] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 366-7.

[5] U. N. Dhebar

29. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA (C. P.),
December 10, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

What is this cutting about? I should like to see your speech[1] and like you to reply to the article.

What an extraordinary *fatwa*[2] of Jinnah about Congress Ministries!

Love.

BAPU

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

30. LETTER TO J. Z. HODGE

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 10, 1939

DEAR MR. HODGE[3],

Will you please forward the enclosed[4] to Lady Hamilton. We shall all miss good Sir Daniel[5].

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 776

[1] Presumably, this refers to the addressee's speech at Agra on December 4, 1939, wherein *inter alia* he had referred to the Indian Civil Service and other Imperial Services and declared: "We have placed our cards on the table, and no useful purpose can be served by interviews, talks and statements unless the Government is prepared to accept the views expressed by the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi."

[2] A proclamation by religious authority, *vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 18-9.

[3] A British missionary

[4] Not available

[5] Sir Daniel Hamilton, a philanthropist, well known for his work in connection with the co-operative movement in Bengal, died in Scotland on December 9, 1939.

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31. LETTER TO RAMNIKLAL MODI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 10, 1939

CHI. RAMNIKLAL,

Balvantsinha gave me your letter last evening. You have had a narrow escape. I am glad. There was no non-violence in your action. But don't worry about it. Try hereafter to be non-violent. Resolve not to run away if such a thing happens again. You should, instead, embrace the person attacking you. Tara[1] also need not have got frightened. It is only on occasions like this that our non-violence is tested. If, in spite of yourself, you can't help running away when such an occasion arises again, you need not feel ashamed. We rise if we keep trying in spite of repeated falls. From the point of view of non-violence we are but infants. When we have not learnt even to raise ourselves on our feet, how can we expect to be able to keep standing erect?

Blessings from
BAPU

RAMNIKLAL MODI
SHANTINAGAR
ASHRAM ROAD, SABARMATI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4184

32. NOTES

DOMINION STATUS OR INDEPENDENCE

An English friend writes to say that he was pained to find me shifting my ground from Dominion Status to independence, for he has known me declare my satisfaction with Dominion Status in terms of the Statute of Westminster. The charge of shifting ground is not new. General Smuts had brought it against me in South Africa in the initial stages of satyagraha. But he was ultimately satisfied with what I had done. And as the reader knows I can count him among my many friends. The charge arises from my compromising nature, the desire "to agree with my adversary quickly"[2]. Thus,

[1] Addressee's wife
[2] *St. Matthew*, v. 25

when a newspaper interviewer came to me in Yeravda in 1930, I used the oft-quoted expression "substance of independence".[1] I told him that I should be satisfied with the substance, instead of the fleeting shadow, of independence. Similarly, I had said to a friend that, if Dominion Status was offered, I should take it and expect to carry India with me. This is, surely, not in conflict with my saying that I would not be satisfied with anything less than the best, when a definition of war aims is concerned. I should be a traitor to the country's cause if I lowered the goal. If, therefore, Dominion Status is less than independence I must claim the latter. If it is the same as independence, it is solely for India to decide what her status will be called. And in examining Dominion Status as India's status I have endeavoured to show that it will ill fit her case, as Dominion Status has associations which show that it is applicable to the whites only and does not exclude the exploitation of non-European races. India, which is among the exploited nations, will be a misfit as a fellow-exploiter with, say, South Africa. Free India's mission must be much higher, especially if she finally accepts non-violence as a substitute for war.

Sutra Yajna in Andhra

The following is the statement of contributions (in yarn and cash) voluntarily given by the workers and artisans of the Andhra branch, A. I. S. A., for the *Sutra yajna* in connection with the Charkha Jayanti[2]:

Total number of yards	94,39,750
Value of yarn	Rs. 590-0-0
Cash	Rs. 277-4-10
Total money value	Rs. 867-4-10

This should remind workers that for the next Jayanti the able-bodied have to spin the whole year round at least 160 yards per day.

Medical Practitioners and Speculation

A medical practitioner from Kenya asks whether medical practitioners can engage in money-lending business or speculation. I have long held the opinion that professional men, whether medical or legal or other, should not seek to add to their income by speculation or other pursuits. It tends to make them careless in their special work. There have been cases in which doctors and lawyers

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLIII, pp. 415-7.

[2] Gandhiji's birthday according to the Gujarati calendar, also known as *Rentia Baras*

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have ruined their reputation by going outside their profession to make money.

SEGAON, December 11, 1939

Harijan, 16-12-1939

33. THE PRINCES

Whatever may be said to the contrary, I must continue to claim to be a friend and well-wisher of the Princes. For, my picture of free India has a definite place for them. And hence it is that I have been drawing attention to the weakness of their position as it exists today. The small Princes would do well to abdicate the powers they should never have possessed, and the powers of the bigger ones should be regularized. I have also ventured to suggest the minimum required.[1]

No one in his wildest imagination thinks that the people of the States will for ever remain what they are. They will fight for their rights either non-violently or violently. In any case, the Princes cannot hold out against millions who have become conscious of their power, whether spiritual or physical.

If the Princes will not read the signs of the times, has the Paramount Power, which has 'rescued' or 'created' them, no duty towards the people of the States? Shri Pyarelal has examined this question and endeavoured to show, as the reader will find elsewhere in this issue of *Harijan*[2], that no treaty obligations absolve the Paramount Power from protecting the people against misrule, or compel it to recognize the Princes as co-equals with itself and free from all control. The very word 'Paramountcy' involves the final authority of the Paramount Power. The so-called treaties are not treaties between equals, but conditions and restrictions imposed upon those to whom they are given. They are so many grants made principally or wholly for the consolidation of Paramountcy. Lawyers will no doubt be found who would argue that treaties are solemn pledges which can be enforced by the Princes. How can a dwarf enforce rights against a giant?

Those who accuse the Congress of bargaining with England when she is engaged in a life-and-death struggle, do not know what they are saying. Anyway I can have no part in bargaining. It is against my nature. India's birthright may not be recognized

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 402-4.

[2] Under the title "The Acid Test"

today. It will be when the time comes. But the issue must be plainly understood.

I hold that, in the nature of things, it is impossible for the Congress to negotiate with the Princes directly. When the time has come, it will be found that the Paramount Power will have negotiated on their behalf with the Congress or whoever can deliver the goods. Princes must not be used or allowed to impede the march of India to freedom, even as the I.C.S., a British creation, cannot be allowed to do so. Both are bulwarks of the Empire, and both will either be found to yield willing assistance to free India or will be disbanded. This is not said to offend them. It is the naked truth. When Britain has shed imperialism, at least so far as India is concerned, it will be discovered that these two arms of imperialism were no hindrance on England's path towards the right act.

As I visualize the war at this stage, I see that it has not yet commenced with grim earnestness. Both parties are discovering and inventing new methods of destruction, but both are, I hope, evading the terrible slaughter which must result from any serious impact between the two. Awful as the indiscriminate sinking of ships with the attendant loss of life is, it will be found to be insignificant compared to what will happen when the fight commences in right earnest. Meanwhile moral issues are being decided for the combatants, whether they will or no. I observe that British statesmen have now begun to confine the war aims to the freedom of European nations. Unless the war comes to an abrupt end, they will find it necessary to go back to the original aim of saving the world for democracy. This war with the gigantic preparations it has necessitated will force the parties to cover much wider moral ground than they have perhaps contemplated. The war may, therefore, ultimately be decided on moral issues. At any rate, the Congress, which has voluntarily disarmed itself and chosen the path of peace or non-violence, is engaged in bringing the moral issue to the forefront. And if it keeps patient, it may, by its sheer insistence on the moral issue, play an important part in preventing the impending holocaust. A clear perception of the problem of the Princes is a big part of the moral issue. I invite the Princes and their advisers and, last but not least, the British statesmen to examine it dispassionately and without the old bias.

SEGAON, December 11, 1939

Harijan, 16-12-1939

34. "SPIN FOR SWARAJ"

Some boys and girls came to me the other day and asked for my autograph. They wanted some message in addition. To all of them I gave the message: "Spin for swaraj." For, just now I have nothing but spinning and swaraj on the brain. I had expected my young visitors to be distressed to find, instead of a copy-book maxim, a message that asked them to create something and that too so insipid as spinning. But on my inquiring, they told me they would spin. Shri Sitaram Sastri tells me people are asking for charkhas, etc. Another friend, an old jail bird, tells me I should definitely set apart one year for spinning work and universalization of khadi. But the following letter comes from a Bombay advocate as a counterblast:

> "If you will not laugh at me, I will unhesitatingly say, it is the programme of universal spinning."[1] In these words you addressed the U.P. Congressmen among whom, according to you, were some "who had laughed at the charkha and non-violence". But to your "utter astonishment you found them reconciled to both". This is what baffles you.
>
> Without claiming to speak for the U.P. Congressmen referred to, let me tell you why most Congressmen do not actively oppose such statements of yours as, "if millions spin for swaraj and in the spirit of non-violence, there will probably be no necessity for civil disobedience"[2], and your insistence on non-violence in word, deed and thought which they know is impossible and which you, the author of it, have not been able to attain, according to your own admission. The reason for this attitude is simply this that you have become a symbol of the might of the Congress and, to the general masses, the words 'Gandhi' and 'Congress' have become synonymous; and hence Congressmen are not ready to lose such a powerful weapon at this stage of the war of independence. The Congress minus Gandhi will not be half as powerful as its former self. This fact is realized by all and sundry, and that is why they would not willingly allow you to depart from the Congress even at the cost of rendering "obedience without faith", as you term it. This is, of course, the primary reason, but there are again wheels within the wheels of the Congress machinery. There are the 'rightists' and the 'leftists', apart from various other shades of opinion. The 'rightists' are terribly afraid

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, p. 377.
[2] ibid. pp. 388-90.

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of the 'leftists' and their socialistic doctrines. They know the power of your name and fully utilize it as a counterpoise to the leftists' economic approach to the masses. We witness the curious sight of absolutely ordinary human beings apparently acting against their own personal interests, when we see mill-owners support khadi. Why is it so? An eminent economist, who is in your good books, once told me that you are the last hope of the capitalists. They know fully well that khadi will never be cheap enough for the masses and hence no danger to their interests will accrue. On the contrary, by paying lip-service to your khadi and 'non-violence' doctrines, they can take advantage of your 'trusteeship' doctrine in their dealings with their workmen and make the ordinary working of trade unions impossible except those run on Ahmedabad lines. Capitalists, landlords and even the Princes (not all) freely fling about the words 'non-violence', 'truth', etc., so far as these suit their convenience. As for the 'leftists', they are in no way behind the 'rightists'. They too want your name as a means to approach the masses. That is why they are flocking to the Congress. They don't mind non-violence as a policy and, just to keep you in humour, they might as well say they are reconciled to it. I don't deny that there may be many Congressmen who are genuine adherents of your creed, but the vast majority have their own axes to grind.

I dare not say I know the Congressmen better than you do, but I am baffled no less, on my part, by your "utter astonishment" and "baffling", unless it is, as you say, that "being boxed up in Segaon", you have "no direct touch with the people". Let me assure you, dear Gandhiji, that, if only you will take cognizance of the elementary motives which move ordinary and even more than ordinary human beings (and Congressmen too are human beings), your "astonishment" and "baffling" will disappear as the morning mist does before the scorching rays of the sun.

I cannot deny the force of the writer's argument. But all my life I have taken co-workers' words at their face value, unless dishonesty has been patent. I have never lost by my trustfulness. On the contrary, I can recall instances of men who were lukewarm in the beginning but became enthusiastic in the end. When you have to deal with large numbers of men and women, it is bad policy to start with distrust.

The mill-owners who give me money even for the charkha tell me frankly that they do not fear its competition. Whatever motive they have is on the surface. Nothing is hidden. If the charkha economics are bad, it will die a natural death. But given the will of the nation, the charkha will live when the last mill has closed down. Khadi is dear in competition with the mills. It is cheaper

than mill-cloth, if it gives partial and profitable employment, as it does, to millions of the unemployed in India.

If what the Bombay advocate says is true, why is it that the masses cling to me and that I represent the power of the Congress? Is not that I represent undiluted non-violence ? The unsophisticated masses have unconsciously and instinctively accepted me as their friend, guide and servant. There never was the slightest difficulty in my feeling one with them or their feeling one with me. I never had to make any effort to draw them towards me, whether here or in South Africa. I cannot account for the bond except by attributing the phenomenon to the power of love.

I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me. They know that I desire to end capitalism almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced socialist or even communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ. My theory of 'trusteeship' is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with non-violence. In the non-violent method the wrongdoer compasses his own end, if he does not undo the wrong. For, either through non-violent non-co-operation he is made to see his error, or he finds himself completely isolated. And so the wise socialists and leftists, when the time for action arrives, are not likely to stand in my way. They know that the poor and the downtrodden will be happy if my method succeeds. They are not ready for action with their method; and they are too patriotic to interfere with me, so long as they believe in my honesty and love of the country.

Nevertheless, I have to guard against hypocrisy. The charkha is my test. There is no simple test whereby I can find out how much a Congressman has done in the way of communal unity or removal of untouchability. But I can easily find out how much he has spun and to what extent, in a particular area, khadi has become current coin. I have, therefore, not quite accepted the advice of the friend who wants me to set apart a period for exclusive khadi work. I propose to judge the total effort by the result. I have shown conclusively, by producing arithmetical calculations, that by self-spinning khadi can be worn by the poorest of villagers. No other village craft has the capacity that spinning and its ancillary processes have for putting so much money into the pockets of the largest number of villagers with the minimum of capital outlay and organizational effort.

Let Congressmen know that I should have no confidence in myself or them to embark on direct action, even when other difficulties were overcome, unless I had proof positive of successful khadi work all over India. This is not possible without serious, sustained and intelligent effort on the part of the vast mass of Congressmen. Therefore I say:

"Spin for swaraj."

SEGAON, December 11, 1939

Harijan, 16-12-1939

35. "GITA" JAYANTI

Thus writes Shri G. V. Ketkar of *Kesari*, Poona:[1]

I have hitherto resisted Shri Ketkar's request. I do not know that these jayantis serve the purpose for which they are intended. Spiritual matters do not admit of the ordinary method of advertisement. The best advertisement of things spiritual is corresponding action. I believe that all spiritual compositions owe their effect, first to their being a faithful record of the experiences of their authors, and secondly because of the life lived by the devotees, as far as possible, in accordance with their teachings. Thus the composers breathe life into their compositions, and the votaries nurse them into robustness by living them. That, to my mind, is the secret of the hold of the *Gita*, Tulsidas's *Ramayana* and such other works on the millions. In yielding to Shri Ketkar's pressure, therefore, I entertain the hope that those who take part in the forthcoming celebration[2] will approach it in the proper spirit and with a fixed intention to live up to the message of the noble song. I have endeavoured to show that its message consists in the performance of one's duty with detachment. The theme of the *Gita* is contained in the second chapter[3], and the way to carry out the message is to be found in the third chapter[4]. This is not to say that the other chapters have less merit. Indeed, every one of them has a merit of its own. The *Gita* has been called गीताई[5] (*Gitai*) by Vinoba

[1] The letter is not reproduced here. G. V. Ketkar had requested Gandhiji to write about *Gita* Jayanti and explain why he regarded "the second and third chapters as fundamental".

[2] On December 22

[3] & [4] Entitled "The Yoga of Knowledge" and "The Yoga of Action"

[5] Mother *Gita*

who has translated it verse for verse in very simple yet stately Marathi. The metre corresponds with that of the original. To thousands it is the real mother, for it yields the rich milk of consolation in difficulties. I have called it my spiritual dictionary, for it has never failed me in distress. It is moreover a book which is free from sectarianism and dogma. Its appeal is universal. I do not regard the *Gita* as an abstruse book. No doubt learned men can see abstruseness in everything they come across. But in my opinion a man with ordinary intelligence should find no difficulty in gathering the simple message of the *Gita*. Its Sanskrit is incredibly simple. I have read many English translations, but there is nothing to equal Edwin Arnold's metrical translation which he has beautifully and aptly called *The Song Celestial*.

SEGAON, December 11, 1939

Harijan, 16-12-1939

36. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHAGANJ,
December 11, 1939

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
JULLUNDUR CITY

AVOID INDORE.[1] COME STRAIGHT AFTER FINISHING OTHER UNDERTAKING. BRING BOOKS OTHER THINGS. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3957. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7266

37. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 11, 1939

MY DEAR STUPIDITY,

What made you think I was annoyed? I wrote in all innocence, all love.[2] Does a parent feel annoyed when he asks his child to be patient over something he needs? You don't [see] the care with which I am searching for a good cupboard. But you are so

[1] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 13.
[2] *Vide* p. 14.

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touchy, so stupid that you can easily misunderstand things. However, you must bring the books and the things that you need. You will offend me, if you do not. You will wire the date of your arrival.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3958. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7267

38. LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

SEGAON,
December 11, 1939

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

I shall be awaiting the students on Wednesday at 4 p.m.

Yes, the note went to you by mistake. I don't know whose. You may inquire about the cost of having the phone.[1]

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3590

39. CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO AMERICA

[After *December 11, 1939*][2]

On the Christmas Day the Christian world is supposed to rejoice over the birth of one whom they delight to call Prince of Peace. How I wish Christian America will rise to the occasion and deliver the message of peace to the warring nations.

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 14.

[2] The International News Service Correspondent, in his letter dated December 11, 1939, to Pyarelal, had asked him to request Gandhiji for a Christmas message for America.

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40. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 12, 1939

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I seem to be neglecting you. But it is not so. Work on the spot takes up all my time. And as a rule I have little more to say beyond what I write for *Harijan*. Everything is so open. I would like you not to worry. God disposes, not we. Everything is being done from the non-violent standpoint. It taxes me to the uttermost. Andrews went to Calcutta on Sunday.

Please pass on the enclosed[1] to Polak[2].

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1514

41. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

SEGAON,
December 13, 1939

CHI. KAKA,

If you feel that you had better not go and you can get out of it as you suggest, send a reply that you won't go. Or insist on speaking in Hindi if you go. Do what you think best. There will be no harm either way. If you can openly avoid having to go to Lucknow, I would prefer that from the point of view of your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5740

[1] This is not available.
[2] H. S. L. Polak

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42. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

MAGANWADI, WARDHA,
December 13, 1939

CHI. HARIBHAU,

I got your letter. Stay where your health can improve. I do not want to come in the way of your resolve. Do whatever your duty dictates. Ramnarayan[1] is here for the present. I get him to do the *Harijan Sevak* work. He does it carefully and conscientiously. He is learning khadi work and teaches Mirabehn Hindi. He says his heart has changed a lot. This is not quite impossible. He leads a straight and simple life here. Guide me in this matter; I cannot see for myself. He says he will do just what I want him to do. He is prepared to leave *Navajyoti*[2], etc., if I should think it desirable. I am proceeding warily.

Your decision to keep away from the Congress Committee is wise. You should only advise others.

Things do not appear to be improving in Indore and Gwalior. How many hours did those who did spinning for famine relief devote to it? I hope you see why I ask the question.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Haribhau Upadhyaya Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

43. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE[3]

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 14, 1939

MY DEAR BHIKSHU,

I wonder if you ever got the wire I sent you in reply to yours. In going through arrears I came across your letter. Don't think

[1] Ramnarayan Chaudhary
[2] A Hindi weekly
[3] Bhikshu Nirmalananda

of disengaging yourself from vows. Go on doing the work in hand. How is the temple-entry work going?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1390

44. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL MAJMUDAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 14, 1939

CHI. PARIKSHITLAL,

Draw from my account the Rs. 1,000 you want for Dr. Chandulal.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3964

45. LETTER TO DHARAMSHI B. KHAJA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 14, 1939

CHI. DHARAMSHI,

Your letter is excellent. What I have written is correct. My statement[1] that it is undoubtedly better to have more wives than secretly to indulge in immoral practices is not meaningless. One can attain perfect *brahmacharya* only when one remains undisturbed in spite of a woman's touch. We come across instances of this all over the world, though they are undoubtedly rare.

Blessings from
BAPU

KHAJA DHARAMSHI BHANJI
VINCHHIA
KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 19857

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 312-5.

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46. 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[1] has not yet returned. The kitchen is being looked after by A[mtul] S[alaam]. Zohra[2] 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

47. 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[3] 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

[1] Munnalal G. Shah, addressee's husband
[2] Dr. M. A. Ansari's daughter
[3] Mahadev Desai's son Narayan

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48. LETTER TO RUKMINI BAZAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 14, 1939

CHI. RUKMINI[1],

I had your letter. Yesterday I got Radhika's[2]. 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

49. THE MORAL ISSUE

I release the following correspondence[3] between a Western friend and me as of general interest.

> . . . The Congress resolution[4] 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 British, and that, if the British wanted India to help them, it was up

[1] Maganlal Gandhi's daughter, married to Benarsilal Bazaj
[2] Addressee's younger sister
[3] Only extracts from the correspondent's letter are reproduced here.
[4] Dated September 14, 1939; *vide* Vol. LXX, Appendix X.

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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 communication[1] 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 service to the non-European peoples or to the world.

[1] *Vide* pp. 6-7.

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 a 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.[1] 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।[2] 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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 112-4.

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII. 14

50. 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

51. NOTE TO A. B.

December 15, 1939

It is broken and also it belongs to Ra. Ku[1]. What right have you to use it?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4332

[1] Presumably Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

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52. *MY HANDICAP*[1]

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.[2] In my comment I said, "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.[3] 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

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 385-8.
[3] *Vide* "Letter to a Bishop", p. 17.

53. 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[1] 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

54. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 16, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

I am replying to you by return 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

[1] Addressee's mother

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55. 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*[1], 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*[2] 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

56. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 16, 1939

DAUGHTER RAIHANA[3],

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[4] that it was a shame to have taken ill at Wardha.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: S.N. 9676

[1] A stringed musical instrument
[2] A stringed musical instrument used as a drone to accompany the musician
[3] Daughter of Abbas Tyabji
[4] Sarojini Nanavati

57. TO CORRESPONDENTS AND MESSAGE-SEEKERS[1]

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 correspondents 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 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

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

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

58. 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

59. *FAITH* v. *REASON*

Circumstances have placed me here in the midst of some 'ultra-modern', '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[1] 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 been advanced against the very existence of God-the Sum of all that Is. Faith that transcends reason is our only Rock of Ages[2]. 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

[1] *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*; *vide* Vol. XXXIX.

[2] From a hymn by A. M. Toplady

60. A USEFUL PUBLICATION[1]

Shri Aryanayakam has just handed me a *Teachers' 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[2] is an original contribution. Shri Vinoba's original is in Marathi. It has been translated into Hindi too.[3] 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'.[4]

The chapters deal, among other things, with 'materials', 'classroom 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

61. 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

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] *Mool Udyog—Kantane*
[3] *Mool Udyog—Katna*
[4] Not reproduced here

62. *WHO IS A SANATANIST?*

सत्यं दमस्तपः शौचं संतोषः ह्रीः क्षमार्जवम्
ज्ञानं शमो दया ध्यानमेष धर्मः सनातनः ।
अद्रोहः सर्वभूतेषु कर्मणा मनसा गिरा
अनुग्रहश्च दानं च सतां धर्मः सनातनः ।[1]

– **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 sanatanists 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 to the Harijans. We have obtained *vyavasthas*[2] 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*[3] and *pujaris*[4] refuse the rights of

[1] 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.

[2] Injunctions

[3] Religious heads

[4] Priests

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devadarshan[1] to Harijans. You can well imagine how your article[2] 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[3] 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[4] 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-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

[1] Visit to a temple, literally, 'sight of deities'

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 182-4.

[3] Of 1933-34

[4] The Temple-Entry Authorization and Indemnity Bill was passed in the Madras Legislative Council on August 7, 1939.

63. LETTER TO NALINI RANJAN SARKAR

[After *December 19, 1939*][1]

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

64. TELEGRAM TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE[2]

December 22, 1939

YOUR WIRE WAS CONSIDERED BY WORKING COMMITTEE. WITH KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE THEY ARE UNABLE TO LIFT BAN.[3] MY PERSONAL OPINION IS YOU SHOULD ADVISE SUBHAS BABU SUBMIT DISCIPLINE IF BAN IS TO BE REMOVED. HOPE YOU ARE WELL.[4]

Rabindranath O Subhas Chandra, p. 195

65. THE PLEDGE

It is to be hoped that Congressmen will learn by heart, not merely store up in their memory, the resolution[5] of the Working Committee containing the pledge for 26th January next. The pledge was first taken in 1930.[6] 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

[1] On December 19, 1939, the addressee had resigned as Finance Minister of Bengal.

[2] 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."

[3] For the resolution declaring Subhas Chandra Bose ineligible for any elective post for three years, *vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 84-5.

[4] *Vide* also "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 15-1-1940.

[5] *Vide* Appendix I.

[6] *Vide* Vol. XLII, pp. 427-8.

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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 a 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 Congresswomen have to speak.

SEGAON, December 24, 1939

Harijan, 30-12-1939

66. WHAT IS NEUTRALITY?

An American missionary writes:[1]

> . . . 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 Thana 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.

[1] Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

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

67. DRILLS IN INDIA

I know of no other person who has done as much as Prof. Manikrao[1], who is popularizing drills and exercises 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

68. 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

[1] Rajaratna Gajanan Yashvant Tamhane of Baroda

69. *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*[1] 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

[1] Forced labour

which other village industries should revolve and be organized. Congressmen will discover the tremendous possibilities of this kind of service. It is chiefly mental 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

70. 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 the 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 Shri 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 Shri 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

71. A CASE FOR RELIEF[1]

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 a 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

[1] Only extracts from Verrier Elwin's article are reproduced here.

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these poor and simple iron-workers who ask 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

72. LETTER TO NALINI RANJAN SARKAR

SEGAON,
December 25, 1939

DEAR NALINI BABU,

I like your speech.[1] You will come when you think it necessary.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

73. 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

[1] The addressee had enclosed a copy of his statement in the Legislature on his resignation; *vide* letter to the addressee, p. 50.

74. 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 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

75. 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

76. 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

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77. 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

78. 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.[1] 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 Lakshmipati too when you come.

SHRI VALLABHRAM VAIDYA
DHANVANTARI BHAVAN
AKASHETH KUVA'S POLE
AHMEDABAD

From Gujarati: C.W. 2908. Courtesy: Vallabhram Vaidya

[1] *Vide* pp. 43-4.

79. *DISCUSSION WITH NAGPUR CONGRESS WORKERS*[1]

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.

[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

[1] 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."

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 question 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.[1] I will chant the khadi *mantra* as long as there is life in me, as I believe it will bring deliverance.

Settle your internal differences, organize yourselves and carry on the constructive programme of khadi, communal unity and Harijan *seva*[2].

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

[1] What follows is from *The Hindu*.
[2] Service

80. TALK TO NAGPUR CONGRESS WORKERS

SEGAON,
[On or after *December 27, 1939*][1]

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 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

81. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 28, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter. I shall preserve the Chinese letter.[2]

The deliverance day[3] has received a full-page advertisement in *The T[imes] of I[ndia]*. But in truth, it seems to have fallen flat everywhere.

[1] According to Mahadev Desai, the talk took place at Segaon after the discussion at Wardha; *vide* the preceding item.

[2] The addressee, in his letter dated December 25, had suggested that the letter from Chiang Kai-Shek might be preserved at Maganwadi. *Vide* p. 78.

[3] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 18-9.

Have you read Fazlul Haq's indictment[1]? Should nothing be said or done about it?

You have not sent me Kumarappa's[2] 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

82. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 28, 1939

DEAR DR. HARDIKAR[3],

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

83. LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 28, 1939

BHAI NANABHAI[4],

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

[1] 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."

[2] J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary, A. I. V. I. A.

[3] Head of the Congress Seva Dal

[4] Manilal Gandhi's father-in-law

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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

84. 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 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[1] and find out how she is.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

85. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

[After *December 28, 1939*][2]

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

[1] Vrajlal Gandhi's daughter who was unwell
[2] This appears to have been written some time after the preceding item.

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86. MESSAGE TO ALL-INDIA URDU CONFERENCE[1]

[Before *December 29, 1939*][2]

Every Hindu well-wisher of the country should learn Urdu and every Muslim well-wisher Hindi.

The Bombay Chronicle, 1-1-1940

87. 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[3]. God's will be done. . .[4]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3007

88. 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*[5] 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

[1] The Urdu original is not available.
[2] The Conference began on December 29.
[3] Who was unwell and due for her first delivery
[4] Text of the letter after this is not available.
[5] Marathi devotional poems

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89. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 29, 1939

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI,

There has been no change in the pledge[1] of [19]30. All that has happened is an addition[2] to the original. And the addition is also relevant. It can also be amended, sometimes such amendment becomes imperative. The Committee[3] 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

90. MESSAGE TO "KHADIR KATHA"

[*1939*][4]

Khadir Katha[5] 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

[1] The Independence Day Pledge; *vide* Vol. XLII, pp. 427-8; *vide* also "The Dissentients", pp. 114-7.
[2] *Vide* Appendix I.
[3] Congress Working Committee
[4] The source has this placed in the 1939 file.
[5] The story of khadi

91. 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_2O, 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 standpoint 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

92. SINDH TRAGEDY

I have before me several letters from Sindh and a longish report from Dr. Choithram[1] over the recent riots[2] in Sukkur and

[1] Dr. Choithram Gidwani, Vice-President of the Sind Provincial Congress Committee

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 391-2.

Shikarpur. The Sindh Hindus should remember that Sindh has a National Government. Though for the sake of brevity I have often used the 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[1]. 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 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

[1] Who was killed during the Hindu-Muslim riots in Kanpur on March 26/27, 1931. *Vide* Vol. XLV, pp. 353-4, 374 and 402.

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

93. CABLE TO ISMET INONU[1]

[On or before *January 2, 1940*][2]

MY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY IN YOUR TERRIBLE CALAMITY.[3]

GANDHI

The Hindu, 3-1-1940

[1] President of Turkey, 1938-50

[2] The report is date-lined "Wardha, January 2, 1940".

[3] 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", pp. 87-8.

94. 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

95. 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

96. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 3, 1940

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

You may build a house in the Harijan Colony if Bapa[1] 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

97. LETTER TO DR. BARETO

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 4, 1940

DEAR DR. BARETO[2],

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

[1] Amritlal V. Thakkar, Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh
[2] A dentist

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98. TELEGRAM TO PRIME MINISTER OF UDAIPUR

SEGAON,
January 5, 1940

PRIME MINISTER
UDAIPUR

WIFE[1] 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

99. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON,
January 5, 1940

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your letter makes me sad.[2] 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[3] 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

[1] Narayani Devi

[2] 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."

[3] *Vide* the following item.

100. 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

101. 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

102. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[After *January 5, 1940*][1]

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter. I know the possibility of misunderstandings. These and ignorant or interested criticism have never influenced

[1] From the reference to Kumarappa it is evident that this letter was written after the letter to the addressee dated January 5, 1940; *vide* p. 77.

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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

103. DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES[1]

[Before *January 6, 1940*][2]

[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.

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*[3], 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*[4]. 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

[1&2] Reproduced from Pyarelal's article "A Talk with Christian Friends" dated January 6, 1940

[3] *Vide* "What Is Neutrality?", pp. 52-3.

[4] A Westernized person

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 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.[1]

Harijan, 13-1-1940

104. ASHRAM NOTES[2]

January 6, 1940

Brahmadatta has gently brought it to my notice that some persons shirk work. Everyone should humbly examine his criticism.

[1] 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.

[2] This and the following Ashram Notes are extracted from a note-book which Gandhiji maintained "for the workers of Segaon" and in which he put down instructions as they occurred to him.

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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

105. LETTER TO YAKUB HASAN

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 6, 1940

DEAR YAKUB HASAN[1],

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

106. 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[2] carefully. It is regular spinning that is wanted, not daily.[3] 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

[1] Ex-Minister, Public Works, Madras
[2] *Vide* Appendix I.
[3] *Vide* letter to the addressee dated January 30, 1940.

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107. 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

108. INTERVIEW TO AN ENGLISH REPORTER[1]

SEGAON,
[Before *January 7, 1940*][2]

[REPORTER:] There seems to be a deadlock coming, indeed if one does not already exist. Cannot we take advantage of a 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?

[1&2] The report by Amrit Kaur, date-lined "Segaon, January 7, 1940", appeared under the caption "World Conscience the Supreme Arbiter".

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 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 *bona fides*. 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[1] that their supreme courts must be subject to the High Court of India.

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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 402-4.

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destruction if she went wrong, even as Stead[1] 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 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

109. 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

[1] A British journalist who publicly prayed and invited others to pray that God might decree the English a defeat in the Boer War. *Vide* Vol. XXIX, p. 18.

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110. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

January 7, 1940

CHI. JAMNA[1],

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

111. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

[*January 7, 1940*][2]

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

112. A TELEGRAM

[On or before *January 8, 1940*][3]

DEEPLY GRIEVED. GIVE MY CONDOLENCE TO LALA SHAMLAL'S[4] FAMILY.

The Hindu, 9-1-1940

[1] Wife of Narandas Gandhi
[2] This and the preceding item are written on the same sheet.
[3] The report is date-lined "Lahore, January 8, 1940".
[4] A Congress leader of the Punjab

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113. MESSAGE TO HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU[1]

[On or before *January 8, 1940*][2]

I loved Venkatasubbiah. His death is a great loss to the country. To meet him was to love him. I have not known a more unassuming man than him. Will you please convey my deep sympathy to his people?

The Hindu, 15-1-1940

114. 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[3] that has descended upon Turkey has commanded universal sympathy. President Inonu has gracefully acknowledged numerous messages of sympathy sent to him from India.[4] Dr. Rajendra Prasad has issued an appeal for funds for the sufferers. It is to be hoped that the appeal will receive an enthusiastic 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

[1] President of the Servants of India Society
[2] *Vide* the following item.
[3] Earthquake with rain and snow
[4] *Vide* "Cable to Ismet Inonu", p. 74.

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 fellowship 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 whole-heartedly 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.

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(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*[1] 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

115. 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

[1] Belonging to Government

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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;[1] 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.

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

[1] *Vide* "Discussion with Nagpur Congress Workers", pp. 62-4.

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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

116. ADULTERATION OF GHEE[1]

Shri Pannalal[2], 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

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

[2] Pannalal Jhaveri

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 cattled-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:[1]

> 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

117. 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 Segaon, haven't you? You want me to believe that you don't get a minute to spare in a week! How is that?

[1] Only an extract is reproduced here.

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

118. THE CHARKHA

The east bowed low before the blast
In patient deep disdain,
She let the thundering legions past
And plunged in thought again.[1]

I congratulate the Socialists, the Royists[2] 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 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

[1] Matthew Arnold
[2] Of the Radical Democratic Party of M. N. Roy

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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.[1] 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.[2] I maintain that I have acted towards them as I have acted towards those who

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 84-5.

[2] 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.

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[1] 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 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

[1] A slip for '1909'; *vide* Vol. X, pp. 6-68.

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[1] 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.

[1] 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?"

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[1] in all India. My opposition to the mills is unbending and uncompromising. But it is wholly non-violent, and I make 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

119. 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

[1] Majoor Mahajan, the textile labour union of Ahmedabad

120. TALK WITH BHAI PARAMANAND[1]

SEGAON,
[*January 9/10, 1940*][2]

[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[3] 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[4] 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, 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

[1] 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."

[2] Date and identity of the interviewer are from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.

[3] On July 2, 1909; *vide* Vol. IX, pp. 302-3.

[4] *Vide* Vol. LXVII, pp. 88-90.

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 has 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 then 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.[1]

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 have told them that Lord Krishna Himself has said that neither does the slayer slay nor is he whom he slays slain.[2]

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.

[1] 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."

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 19

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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

121. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

January 10, 1940

MY DEAR AMRIT,

Return well and fully able to share burdens.[1]
Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3664. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6473

122. 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

123. 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[2] letter is lying with me. I have nothing special to write. The final responsibility rests on you.

[1] The addressee had gone to Indore.
[2] Surendra Medh

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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

124. 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.[1]

I have the money.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3589

125. WHY ONLY KHADI?[2]

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

[1] *Vide* the following item.
[2] This appeared under "Notes".

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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 villages 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

126. 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.[1] 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[2] 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 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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIX.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 16-8.

127. 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 As. 5, i.e., 11 As.

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.

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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

128. ENGLISH OPINION ON INDIAN STRUGGLE

A friend forwards the following two cuttings from *The Cambridge Review*.[1] 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

[1] 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."

affairs and are unreservedly supporting the struggle for Indian Independence.

SEGAON, January 14, 1940

Harijan, 20-1-1940

129. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 14, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I have read and re-read your Bombay speech.[1] 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.[2] 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

130. 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

[1] For the Viceroy's speech dated January 10, *vide* Appendix II.

[2] In his reply dated January 17 the addressee invited Gandhiji for talks any day after January 29.

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will be nourishing and that will help the baby. Mix sago with milk.

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

131. DISCUSSION WITH ENGLISH PACIFISTS[1]

SEGAON,
[Before *January 15, 1940*][2]

. . . 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 deed.

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

[1] & [2] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's article "A Pacifist's Doubts" dated January 15, 1940

just if she is not just to India, i.e., if of her own accord and without reference to the 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

132. A WELCOME MOVE

On the Deliverance Thanksgiving Day declared by Jinnah Saheb[1] 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 congratulations 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 development 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

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 18-9.

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majority is made up of a combination of 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

133. 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

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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*[1] is not sufficient. It is necessary to incorporate in the resolution[2] 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 matters 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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 362-5.
[2] ibid. Appendix X.

freedom should take the form of adopting measures for and putting into practice the ideal 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[1] in consultation with the Ali Brothers[2] 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-operation of every single Congressman. In that sense the Congress is the largest instrument of political education in the country.

[1] On December 30, 1920; *vide* Vol. XIX, Appendix I.
[2] Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali

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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

134. TO CORRESPONDENTS AND MESSAGE-SEEKERS[1]

In spite of my notice[2] 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

135. 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[3] and anxiety about Bengal. I feel that Subhas is behaving like a spoilt child of the family. The only way to make up with him is to open his eyes. And then his politics show sharp differences. They seem to be unbridgeable. I am quite clear the

[1] This appeal was repeated in *Harijan*, 3-2-1940, 10-2-1940 and 17-2-1940.

[2] *Vide* "To Correspondents and Message-seekers", pp. 43-4.

[3] Dated December 20, 1939; *vide* footnote 2, p. 50.

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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

136. THE DISSENTIENTS

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan[1] and Shri Sampurnanand[2] have spoken in no uncertain terms against the addendum to the pledge[3] 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.[4] I believe in his sincerity. There are undoubted snags in that speech. Many *i*s have to be dotted, many *t*s 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:

> 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

[1] General Secretary of the All-India Congress Socialist Party
[2] Ex-Minister, Education, U.P.
[3] *Vide* Appendix I.
[4] *Vide* Appendix II.

> 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[1] and later during the hartal in Bombay over the Prince of Wales's visit[2].

[1] In 1919; *vide* Vol. XV.
[2] On November 17, 1921; *vide* Vol. XXI.

Shri Sampurnanand has raised a spiritual issue.[1] 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[2] 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 whole-heartedly 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.

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.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Sampurnanand," p. 69.
[2] Bal Gangadhar Tilak

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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 unfailing 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

137. 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 Abul Kalam 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[1] 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

[1] "A Welcome Move", *vide* pp. 109-10.

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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

Leaders' Correspondence with Mr. Jinnah, pp. 50-1

138. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

[*January 17, 1940*][1]

Since writing to you on the 14th instant I have had reports of the interviews you gave to Shris Bh. Desai[2], Munshi[3] and Kher[4]. These reports convey an impression different from the one made by a study of your speech[5]. 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 the 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. Somehow or other I feel that when we meet we should do so to come to a final settlement. But I must not anticipate.[6]

From a copy: C.W. 7836. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] From the addressee's letter dated January 21

[2] Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Opposition Party in the Central Assembly, who was granted an interview on January 13

[3] For the text of the interview with K.M. Munshi on January 12, *vide* Appendix III.

[4] B. G. Kher, ex-Premier of Bombay

[5] *Vide* Appendix II.

[6] *Vide* letter to the addressee, pp. 135-6, dated January 23, 1940.

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139. LETTER TO DR. CHOITHRAM GIDWANI

[Before *January 18, 1940*][1]

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

140. 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

[1] The report is date-lined "Bombay, January 18, 1940".

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141. 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 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

142. 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

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143. LETTER TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

[Before *January 19, 1940*][1]

Your opposition[2] is proper and you have expressed it in a language of restraint. You could not have done anything else.

The Hindu, 19-1-1940

144. 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

145. 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.

[1] The report is date-lined "Lucknow, January 19".

[2] To the addendum to the Independence Day Pledge; *vide* "The Dissentients", pp. 114-7.

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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[1],

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

SHRI RAMDAS GANDHI
DAKSHINAMOORTI
BHAVNAGAR, KATHIAWAR

From the Gujarati original: Nirmala Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

146. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
January 19, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. Vijaya's address is: Ambla *via* Songarh, Kathiawar.

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

[1] Daughter of Ramdas Gandhi

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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

147. LETTER TO KESHAVRAM R. TRIVEDI

January 19, 1940

BHAI KESHAVRAM,

I am very late in replying to your letter. You should consult Lakshmidasbhai[1].

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

148. 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.

[1] Lakshmidas Purushottam Asar, an Ashram inmate and khadi expert

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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[1] 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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LIX, p. 247.

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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

149. 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 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.[1]

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 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

[1] *Vide* Vol. XV, p. 188.

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 non-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

150. 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

151. 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

152. 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

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153. AHIMSA IN PRACTICE

Thus writes Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia[1]:

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 of it. It might perhaps be worth while for

[1](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

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

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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[1] 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 peasants of Bardoli who gave Vallabhbhai the title of 'Sardar' and won their battle[2], and of Borsad[3] and Kheda[4] who did likewise, have for years been working the constructive programme. They

[1] Phœnix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm
[2] In 1928; *vide* Vols. XXXVI and XXXVII.
[3] In 1923; *vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 381-3.
[4] In 1918; *vide* Vol. XIV.

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

154. 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. 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[1] 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 has 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

155. 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 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,

[1] *Vide* "A Welcome Move", pp. 109-10.

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'[1]? 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

[1] A metaphor for 'an absolute impossibility'

156. SARDAR PRITHVI SINGH[1]

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[2] 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

157. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 23, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I thank you for your two cordial letters[3], 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 Harijan Sevak Sangh in Segaon. I would appreciate a telegraphic

[1] This appeared under "My Notes".

[2] A mythological hero who succeeded in bringing the Ganga down to the earth

[3] Dated January 17 and 21

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reply, if you can conveniently send it.[1]

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 7838. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

158. 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

159. LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRAN

SEVAGRAM,
January 23, 1940

DEAR RAMACHANDRAN,

Yours to hand. Don't think that I am neglecting Travancore. He[2] was due to come here today. Now he says he will come a little later. I don't want to say anything in *Harijan* for the time being.[3]

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

[1] The addressee replied: "We meet at 11 a.m. on Monday 5th February, or Tuesday 6th February, as may be more convenient."

[2] The reference is presumably to C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan of Travancore State.

[3] *Vide* "Letter to C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar", 28-3-1940.

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160. 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.[1] 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

161. 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 Segaon intend doing something. Sukhabhau[2] may be consulted.

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 4674

[1] *Vide* "Ashram Notes", p. 127.

[2] Sukhabhau Choudhary, a co-worker who lived in Segaon village

162. LETTER TO DR. N. B. KHARE

January 24, 1940

DEAR DR. KHARE[1],

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

163. 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

[1] Ex-Premier of Central Provinces who was expelled from the Congress in 1938

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164. 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*[1], as also the practice of. . . .[2] His chest must expand.

BAPU

[PS.]

To be delivered now to Kanu N. Gandhi.[3]

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

165. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

[On or after *January 24, 1940*][4]

You need not go on rubbing in ghee for hours. I don't need it. If you are acquiring *punya*[5] thereby, it is another matter.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4562

166. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[6]

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.

[1] Breathing exercise
[2] Illegible
[3] This is evidently meant for the courier.
[4] This was written on an envelope bearing a postmark of this date.
[5] Spiritual merit
[6] In *Harijan*, this appeared under the title "Uncertified Khadi".

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

167. 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 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[1]. 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

168. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 25, 1940

MY DEAR C.R.,

The above is a translation of the letter received from J[2]. Shankerlal feels keenly in the matter. Nevertheless so far as I am concerned yours should be the final word. The Viceroy has fix[ed]

[1] With the Viceroy

[2] 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

5th, 10 a.m., for the meeting. There is talk of having the Sangh[1] meeting in Delhi earlier than 13th for the sake of . . .[2] elections. I shall wire from Delhi if I want you.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10885. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

169. LETTER TO MRS. K. L. RALLIA RAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 25, 1940

DEAR SISTER,

You have misread my note[3]. 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

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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."

[1] Harijan Sevak Sangh

[2] Illegible

[3] *Vide* "What Is Neutrality?", pp. 52-3.

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170. 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

171. 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*[1]. 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

172. 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.[2] Sushila was not in Segaon 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

[1] Muslim Prayer
[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 102.

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173. NOTE TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

[*January 26, 1940*][1]

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

174. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
Independence Day, [*January 26, 1940*][2]

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

What makes you say that you cannot even talk with me? The 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[3]. I had written to Jamnadas (Gandhi) but there is no reply.

Virawala[4] 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

[1] From *Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 226
[2] Year inferred from the subject-matter
[3] Vajubhai Shukla; *vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", p. 146.
[4] Dewan of Rajkot

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175. MESSAGE TO ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE[1]

[Before *January 27, 1940*][2]

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

176. NOTES

Curious Discipline

The manifesto of the Kerala socialists, one of whom is the General Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, is a 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[3] is on the war-path. He will enforce segregation by law. He will

[1&2] The Conference was held at Allahabad from January 27 to 31 under the presidentship of Begum Hamid Ali.

[3] Leader of the Nationalists in the South African Union Assembly

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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 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

177. 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[1] AT WARDHA.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 7840. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] Where the Gandhi Seva Sangh was to meet from February 20

178. 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[1] is true.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 938

179. 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[2]? 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

[1] *Vide* "Sindh Tragedy", pp. 71-4.
[2] Of Gandhiji's birthday fund; *vide* the following item.

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180. 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[1] 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

[1] Maganlal Gandhi

181. 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

182. 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

183. 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."[1] Only mahatmas

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, IV. 34

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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 a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1945

184. 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. . . .'s[1] arrival should save some of your time.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4335

185. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

January 27, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Read the enclosed[2]. Can't you save some time for Balvantsinha?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4336

[1] Illegible
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

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186. 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[1] to him. I can hear your voice from here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: S.N. 9677

187. FOURFOLD RUIN

Mr. F. E. James[2] 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

[1] The addressee used to compose and sing *bhajans.*
[2] Of the European group in the Central Legislative Assembly

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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[1] 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 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[2], Dadabhai[3], Wedderburn[4] 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

[1] Under the title "A Tissue of 'Foul and Abominable Lies' ", in *Harijan*, 6-1-1940

[2] William Digby, Congress Agent in England

[3] Dadabhoy Naoroji

[4] Sir William Wedderburn, Congress President, 1889

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 stockings 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*[1]. 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 bejewelled. And what about the latest circular reproduced in these columns[2] 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 themselves sufficiently in their own mother tongues, and that they have to transmit their inmost thoughts to their dear ones in the English language? I ask them to realize with me the enormity of the ruination of culture that this fact means. Many educated Indians have become *saheb-logs* 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

[1] Chef-cum-waiter

[2] *Vide* "Notes", sub-title "Imperialism Dies Hard", pp. 123-4.

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.[1]

SEGAON, January 28, 1940

Harijan, 3-2-1940

188. 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 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

189. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

[Before *January 29, 1940*][2]

CHI. PREMA,

Your letter was full of news. I gave it to the Congress President[3] and Kishorelal to read. It has made both of them think seriously.[4] Prabha's health cannot be said to be good. She has

[1] F. E. James's rejoinder to this appeared in *Harijan*, 9-3-1940, under the title "Unconvincing Apologia".

[2] From the addressee's introductory note to this letter in *Bapuna Patro –5: Premabehn Kantakne*, p. 271; *vide* also letter to the addressee p. 162.

[3] Rajendra Prasad

[4] The addressee had written about the involvement of a number of Congress and Gandhi Seva Sangh workers in the Bihar Forward Bloc. Kishorelal Mashruwala was the President of the Sangh.

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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.[1] 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

190. QUESTION BOX

In spite of my weekly warning[2], correspondence continues to be almost as heavy as before. I have no time to go through it all. Pyarelal 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

[1] The addressee wanted Prabhavati Devi to lead the proposed women volunteers' corps in Bihar.

[2] *Vide* "To Correspondents and Message-seekers", p. 113.

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 Mehta, 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[1], 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 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.

[1] Congress President

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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 believe in its efficacy and I have patience.

MALICIOUS FALSEHOOD

Q. In a book entitled 'खतरेका 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[1] 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 you to say in reply?

A. My answer is that every one of the statements is a malicious 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"[2] 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

[1] In July 1939
[2] *Vide* pp. 71-4.

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 them know that there are refugees from Limbdi[1] 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.[2] 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[3]. 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

[1] In Kathiawar

[2] 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.

[3] The Communal Award of 1932

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191. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 29, 1940

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I hope you had my note[1] about Bengal.

So I am to be in Santiniketan about 15th or 16th[2] 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

192. 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[3] and Co.

SMT. RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
ANAND BHAVAN
ALLAHABAD, U.P.

From the original: C.W. 3960. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7269

[1] *Vide* letter to the addressee, pp. 113-4.
[2] Gandhiji, however, reached Santiniketan on February 17.
[3] Vijayalakshmi Pandit

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193. 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[1]. The W.C.[2] 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 Papers. File No. XI/40. Courtesy: National Archives of India

194. 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.[3] 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

[1] For the inauguration of the Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition

[2] Congress Working Committee

[3] 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.

195. 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

196. 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,[1] how are you going to treat others? I am reaching Delhi on the 5th.

Blessings from
BAPU

DR. H. L. SHARMA
NAGLA NAWABAD
P. O. KHURJA, U.P.

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, between pp. 282 and 283

[1] The addressee's foot had been injured with a piece of glass.

197. SIROHI[1]

From Sirohi comes the welcome news that the arrests made last year[2] 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 pheris*[3], spinning, 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

198. 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

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 179-80.
[3] Morning processions

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199. 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

200. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 30, 1940

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have your two notes—one through M.[1] I am glad you have come so much nearer J.[2] 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.[3] 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

[1] Presumably Mahadev Desai
[2] Jawaharlal Nehru
[3] Anand Bhavan

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201. 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

202. 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[1] 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

[1] Wife of Mahadev Desai

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203. 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

204. TELEGRAM TO RAIHANA TYABJI

WARDHAGANJ,
January 31, 1940

RAIHANA TYABJI
CAMP BARODA

MAY GOD BE WITH YOU ALL DURING ORDEAL.[1] LOVE.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 9694

205. 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

[1] Addressee's mother was critically ill.

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206. INTERVIEW TO HOLMES SMITH[1]

[*January 31, 1940*][2]

[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.

[GANDHIJI:] 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 Tooley Street[3].

And now I must share with you what I told Mr. Keithahn[4]. 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

[1] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's report "Rediscovering Religion". 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.

[2] From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary

[3] Who addressed a petition to the British Parliament describing themselves as "We, the people of England"

[4] Rev. R. R. Keithahn, an American missionary; *vide* Vol. LXIV, pp. 419-20.

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[1] 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 economics. 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 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.

[1] Richard B. Gregg in his *Economics of Khaddar*

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

207. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ[1]

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

208. LETTER TO SARLA DEVI[2]

February 1, 1940

MY DEAR SARLA,

Take a few minutes tonight after prayer.
Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 9085

[1] 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."

[2] Of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh

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209. 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

210. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 1, 1940

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter and wire.[1] I have had talks with Shastriji[2]. 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[3] 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.

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

[1] *Vide* "Telegram to Jamnalal Bajaj", p. 170.
[2] Hiralal Shastri
[3] Of reply to the Home Minister of Jaipur

will know from Shastriji. I trust Janakidevi and Madalasa are doing fine.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 3010

211. 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?[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10843. Courtesy: Purushottam K. Jerajani

212. 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.[2]

BAPU

From the original: Dr. Rajendra Prasad Papers. File No. 2-1/40. Courtesy: National Archives of India

[1] 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*.

[2] 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."

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213. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS[1]

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 Segaon 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

[1] This was given in the morning when Gandhiji passed through Nagpur *en route* to Delhi.

214. TELEGRAM TO RAIHANA TYABJI

ITARSI,
February 3, 1940

RAIHANA TYABJI
CAMP BARODA

WIRE MOTHER'S CONDITION DELHI.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 9695

215. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,
February 3, 1940

MY DEAR J.L.,

Read the within letter.[1] You know best what to do. These things require attention.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1940. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

216. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE[2]

ON THE TRAIN,
February 3, 1940

DEAR BHIKSHU,

I can do nothing in the matter.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1392

[1] 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."

[2] Known also as Bhikshu Nirmalananda

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217. 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[1]. 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 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

[1] For his proposed physical culture activity

218. LETTER TO VIDYAVATI

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,
February 3, 1940

CHI. VIDYA[1],

I hope Chi. Virendra[2] 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

219. 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*.[3]

Such being my views on language, I was glad to get the following cutting[4] from Maganbhai.

[1] Rani Vidyavati of Hardoi

[2] Addressee's son

[3] The first two expressions, as they are, mean 'defecate' and 'die'; the third one is obscure. The correct spellings should be *heeng* (asafœtida), *mari* (pepper) and *toprun* (coconut kernel).

[4] 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.

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[1] 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

220. 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 India 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 not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam,

[1] *Sartha Jodanikosha*

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[1] 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

[1] Sushil Kumar Rudra, Principal, St. Stephens College, Delhi

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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.

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 false 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

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221. ADULTERATION OF GHEE[1]

Dr. Kailas Nath Katju[2] writes:[3]

> I have read with great interest in *Harijan* of 20th January your note[4] 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][5], 1940

Harijan, 17-2-1940

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

[2] Ex-Minister of Justice, Development, Agriculture and Veterinary in U.P.

[3] Only extracts are reproduced here.

[4] *Vide* pp. 91-2.

[5] The source has "February 5", evidently a slip. Gandhiji reached Delhi on February 4, 1940.

222. A TESTIMONY

Here is an extract[1] 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. 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[2], how he found the wheel a great solace to his jaded nerves when he span for half an hour before retiring. Compare Margarete's song in *Faust* as she sat at the wheel.[3]

NEW DELHI, February 5, 1940

Harijan, 10-2-1940

[1] 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 Conscription.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXVIII, p. 54; also Vol. XXX, p. 489.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXV, p. 77.

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223. 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 Vakils 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 swaraj 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 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

224. CABLE TO CARL HEATH[1]

NEW DELHI,
February 5, 1940

CARL HEATH
FRIENDS HOUSE
EUSTON, LONDON

THANKS. NO SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE. DIVERGENCE TOO GREAT.[2]

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1033

225. 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

[1] 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."

[2] For the communique issued after Gandhiji's meeting with the Viceroy on February 5, *vide* Appendix IV. *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", pp. 186-9.

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226. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

[*February 5, 1940*][1]

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

227. 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

[1] 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 IV.

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228. 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 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

229. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

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

[1] Reporting the interview under the title "Failure—Stepping-stone to Success" Mahadev Desai writes: "On the cold morning of 5th March in 1931, Gandhiji met an army of journalists within a few hours of the signing of the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. He was tired and but for these journalists might have been sleeping the sleep of the just. But as he began to dictate his statement he found freshness uprushing from within, and without a moment's pause he dictated a statement of several hundred words which required not a change of a comma or a colon. On the morning of the 6th February 1940 he again received an army of journalists — representatives of the London papers, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The News Chronicle*, *The Times*, and of the Associated Press of America. But for them he might have been sleeping the sleep of the just — after an equally momentous step which he had prayerfully taken. But he received them an hour before taking the train for Wardha, and dictated to them a statement pausing only once to correct a word or a sentence — of almost equal length as the one made in 1931."

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[1], 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 that a free India should be free to confiscate European

[1] The *Congress Bulletin* here has "interference".

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,"[1] 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.[2] 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

230. 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[3] 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 it represented too his own opinion.

[1] *Vide* Appendix IV.

[2] 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."

[3] *Vide* Appendix II.

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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 every 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

231. 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

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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

232. CABLE TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"[1]

[*February 7, 1940*][2]

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

233. STATEMENT TO "THE DAILY HERALD"[3]

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 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

[1] & [2] This appeared under the title "An Elucidation" with the date-line "Segaon, 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", pp. 186-9.

[3] 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".

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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 foothold 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

234. 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[1] has gone to her parents. It won't do for Kamu[2] 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

[1] Wife of Krishnadas Gandhi
[2] Kumi Adalja

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235. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
[*February*][1] *7, 1940*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I am sending the accompanying letter[2] 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

236. MESSAGE TO MILL-WORKERS

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 7, 1940

WORKER BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Bhai Gulzarilal[3] 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

[1] The source has May, which is evidently a slip since Gandhiji left for Santiniketan on February 15.

[2] From the Secretary, Tenants' Conference, which met in Ahmedabad

[3] Gulzarilal Nanda, Secretary, Majoor Mahajan, Ahmedabad

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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

237. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
[On or after *February 7, 1940*][1]

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I like your letters[2]. They give me information which I do not get otherwise. I knew nothing of the pan-Islamic movement.[3] It does not surprise me. You will have seen my statement[4] 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.[5] 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

Gandhi–Nehru Papers (Undated). Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] From the contents it is evident that this was written after Gandhiji's return to Segaon on February 7.

[2] Both were dated February 4; *vide* "The Old Game?", pp. 199-202.

[3] 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 Ministers 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."

[4] *Vide* pp. 186-9.

[5] The addressee had expressed concern about some recent speeches of C. Rajagopalachari because "they talk so compromisingly of Dominion Status and the like".

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238. 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[1]. How I wish I was with you to listen to your soulful recitation of the Koran!

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 9682

239. 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 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

[1] Of addressee's mother

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240. 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[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1929

241. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 8, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Your letter is good. Yes, body-labour constitutes one of our vows[2]. 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

[1] A member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh

[2] Namely, non-violence, truth, non-stealing, *brahmacharya*, non-possession, body-labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equality of religions, swadeshi and 'touchability'

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242. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEGAON, WARDHA,
[*February 9, 1940*][1]

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.[2] I miss you. I hope time is doing its healing work. I wonder if the Pundit[3] 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

243. 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

[1] From *Bapu's Letters to Mira*

[2] The addressee had gone to the Punjab.

[3] Jagat Ram Bharadwaj of the Ghadar Party. *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 26-2-1940.

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244. THE OLD GAME?

After my return from Delhi I have had a letter redirected from New Delhi. It is from a valued co-worker[1]. 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[2] 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 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

[1] Jawaharlal Nehru

[2] The original in Gandhi–Nehru Papers has "Property Tax".

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.

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> 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 nonviolent 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

245. 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 friend 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 are roused.

SEGAON, February 12, 1940

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A Curious Situation

The Secretary of the Valmiki Mandal, Ludhiana, says in a letter:

> Under the Poona Pact[1], 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:[2]

> 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 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

[1] Of 1932

[2] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

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246. *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"[1]. 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 entreaty by our friends. When requested to vacate the seats they not only refused but showed an inclination to fight.

[1] *Vide* pp. 150-3.

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

247. WHAT IS WOMAN'S ROLE?

With certain omissions I quote below the following[1] 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

[1] Of which only excerpts are reproduced here

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as your solution in the case of men and children, must come from within us. . . .

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 Segaon, 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[1], 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

248. 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

[1] In January 1924

249. 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 that 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[1] 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

[1] The reference is to Lord Zetland's interview to the *Sunday Times* on February 11, 1940. *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 215-6 and "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940.

250. 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,[1] 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[2] 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

[1] *Vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", p. 161.
[2] Narayan Desai

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251. 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 movements of the mind.[1] This time you may practise self-control.[2] 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

252. 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[3] 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

[1] *Yogasutra*, 1
[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 209.
[3] Where the addressee had organized a khadi centre

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[PS.]

It is good news that Bachu has completely recovered.

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 9869. Courtesy: Narayan J. Sampat

253. 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

254. 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

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255. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

SEGAON,
February 13, 1940

CHI. SHARMA,

Don't send the books[1] by post. Send them through some person. I have not followed the other hint in your letter. Why "merciless love"?[2] 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

256. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[3]

SEGAON,
February 14, 1940

Lord Zetland's recent pronouncement,[4] if reported correctly, sets at rest all speculation regarding the Government's attitude towards

[1] On nature cure, selected by Gandhiji

[2] Referring to Gandhiji's article "The Charkha", *vide* pp. 93-7, the addressee had pleaded with him not to be harsh with Subhas Chandra Bose who was then in indifferent health.

[3] This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Banging the Door".

[4] 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.

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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[1] how impossible this is without previous recognition of India's independence, no doubt subject to safeguards. His Lordship thinks that, because some Indians have 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[2] ? 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

257. 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

[1] *Vide* "Is It War?", pp. 210-1.
[2] In 1931

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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

258. QUESTION BOX

UNITY *v.* JUSTICE

Q. In your article "Unity *v.* Justice"[1] 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 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 contending 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

[1] *Vide* pp. 132-3.

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.[1] 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.[2] 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 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

259. 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:[3]

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 341-2.

[2] Abul Kalam Azad was President-elect of the forthcoming Congress session at Ramgarh.

[3] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

> 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 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

260. SPEECH AT SANTINIKETAN[1]

February 17, 1940

My uppermost feelings on arriving here are about Deenabandhu[2]. Perhaps you do not know that the first thing I did yesterday

[1] 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."

[2] C. F. Andrews

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.[1] 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 for me a '*niketan*' of '*shanti*'—an abode of peace.[2] I have come here leaving behind me all the cares and burdens of politics,[3] 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.[4]

Harijan, 9-3-1940, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18-2-1940

[1] This and the following sentence are from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

[2] 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."

[3] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has: "In Santiniketan I have come without the burdens of politics I usually carry."

[4] This sentence is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

261. 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[1] 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."[2] 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

262. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

SANTINIKETAN,
February 18, 1940

CHI. VALJI,

I trust you are doing well there. Do not leave Segaon 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

[1] *Vide* "Ashram Notes", p. 212.
[2] *St. Matthew*, VI, 3

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263. 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

264. 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

265. MESSAGE TO SANTINIKETAN

SANTINIKETAN,
February 18, 1940

All Santiniketan knows or should know what relationship subsisted between Boro Dada[1] 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

[1] Dwijendranath, elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore

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266. SPEECH AT SRINIKETAN[1]

February 18, 1940

Silence is good speech. There have been many developments here since my first visit.[2] 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

267. DISCUSSION WITH PACIFISTS[3]

[On or before *February 19, 1940*][4]

[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

[1] As Gandhiji was about to leave after visiting the rural reconstruction centre of the Visvabharati he was asked to say a few words.

[2] Earlier, Gandhiji had remarked: "The place has grown beyond recognition."

[3] 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.

[4] 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.

non-violent behaviour would then either make the bully feel ashamed of himself and prevent the insult, or 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.[1]

[1] *Yogasutra*

Can a State carry on strictly according to the principle of non-violence?

A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-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.[1]

Harijan, 9-3-1940

268. 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.[2] 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

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 186-9.

[2] The Congress Working Committee passed the resolution at Bombay in June 1934. *Vide* Vol. LVIII, Appendix I.

communities. Their number is insignificant. Their interest is protected by the British bayonet. Why should that interest have added strength given to it by 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

269. NOTE TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

February 19, 1940

A publication like this[1] 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

270. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ON THE WAY TO CALCUTTA,
February 19, 1940

DEAR GURUDEV,

The touching note[2] 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

[1] *To the Students*, a collection of Gandhiji's writings compiled by the addressee
[2] *Vide* "What I Saw in Santiniketan", 26-2-1940.

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271. 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*[1].

Love to you all.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3180

272. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON

CALCUTTA,
[*February 19, 1940*][2]

AGATHA HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON

ANDREWS SLOWLY IMPROVING. EVERY CARE BEING TAKEN. INFORM HIS SISTER.[3]

GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 10210. Courtesy: Visvabharati, Santiniketan

[1] Obviously a slip for *Yajnopavita*, the sacred thread. *Upanayan* is the ceremony of investing one with the sacred thread.

[2] During his day's stay at Calcutta *en route* to Malikanda, Gandhiji visited C. F. Andrews on February 19.

[3] The cable has the following note by the addressee: "Sent to sister. Informed Press 20-2-40".

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273. 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,[1] 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, 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

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLII, pp. 210-4.

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274. SPEECH AT KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES EXHIBITION[1]

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?

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.

[1] Gandhiji declared the Exhibition open soon after his arrival in Malikanda in the morning.

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. Man-made 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*, pp. 2-3

275. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING–I[1]

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 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

[1] The session started at 7.30 a.m. Shrikrishnadas Jaju took over as President in place of Kishorelal Mashruwala who was unwell.

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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[1] 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 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

[1] P. C. Ghosh

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.[1]

Kishorelal has joined us, disobeying orders.[2]

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[3] 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 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.

[1] At this stage Kishorelal Mashruwala arrived at the meeting.

[2] Kishorelal Mashruwala replied that he had come with the doctor's permission, because he could not hear properly from his bed.

[3] The session was being held on the bank of the river Padma.

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[1] 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 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,

[1] Author of *Arthashastra*, a treatise on political science

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[1] 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 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.

[1] R. S. Dhotre, Secretary and Trustee of the Gandhi Seva Sangh

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[1], 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*[2] neither to Santiniketan[3] nor to me. It could 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.[4] I

[1] Vasumati Pandit
[2] Peace
[3] Literally, 'abode of peace'
[4] *Vide* "Ashram Notes", p. 212.

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[1]. 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 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[2] 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

[1] 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 Phœnix 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* Vol. L, pp. 335-6.

[2] Jethalal Govindji Sampat

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 by-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.[1] 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 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 that 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

[1] Tulsidas's *Ramacharitmanas*, 'Aranyakanda'. In Valmiki's *Ramayana* this disappearance of the real Sita and appearance of a Maya Sita find no place.

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*[1], 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 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 our 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

[1] Control of the palate

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[1] 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 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.

[1] In 1937; *vide* Vol. LXV, pp. 99-106.

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[1]; 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 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.

[1] 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.

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.[1]

[1] 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.

Yes, it will be the same.[1]

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 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.[2]

One's own mind is the real touchstone. If our mind is clear, it is not necessary to ponder over other people's comments.[3]

[1] 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.

[2] Gopalrao Kale then asked how the spirit of service in politics could be tested. What if other people called it ambition?

[3] Narahari Parikh asked why politicians should be asked to leave the Sangh when the Congress 'creed' also spoke of 'peaceful and legitimate' means.

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If that is so, why did we at all create a separate organization? Jamnalalji 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?[1]

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.[2]

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 politics or else quit it.[3]

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.[4]

[1] Pyarelalji (Hapur) asked where those who worked in the Congress in a spirit of service could get spiritual strength and *satsanga*.

[2] Next, Lala Jagannath asked whether those who accepted Gandhism but were not members of the Sangh should stay in politics.

[3] Lala Jagannath then asked why members of the Sangh could not stay in politics on these terms.

[4] Referring to Gandhiji's Delang speeches of March 1938, *vide* Vol. LXVI, Prabhudas Gandhi asked whether disbanding the Sangh would not be contrary to their avowed aim of fighting anti-social elements in an organized way.

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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 Sukkur?[1] 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.[2] 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 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.[3]

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

[1] *Vide* "Sindh Tragedy", pp. 71-4.

[2] 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* Vol. XLV, pp. 353-4, 374 and 402.

[3] 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.

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.'[1] 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.[2]

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 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.[3]

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

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 35

[2] Ram Ratan Sharma explained the likely handicap of constructive workers who sought inspiration and guidance from the Sangh.

[3] Moolchand Agrawal asked whether the winding up of the Sangh would remove hatred and jealousy from the hearts of the members.

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.[1]

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 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].[2]

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.[3]

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

[1] Haribhau Upadhyaya asked whether the President had grounds to believe that politics had corrupted the members.

[2] Balubhai asked why the Sangh should not be retained for constructive work.

[3] Jyotiprakash asked why the Sangh could not continue as a forum for consultations.

276. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING–II[1]

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 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.

[1] At the evening session which began at 7.30 p.m.

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 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 Kishorelalbhai he would say he knows nothing about it and that you had better ask Sardar. The obvious reason for 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 Vallabhbhai. 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.[1]

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

[1] Dandekar then invited Vallabhbhai to express his opinion. After the latter had spoken at length, Gandhiji concluded his speech.

decide the manner in which the members of the Sangh may take part in politics. I have drafted this resolution[1] 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.[2]

[From Hindi]

Gandhi Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan (Malikanda–Bengal) ka Vivaran, pp. 25-33

277. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING–III[3]

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.

[1] The draft resolution is not available. For the final resolution, *vide* Appendix V.

[2] The Secretary read out the resolution drafted by Gandhiji. The session adjourned at 9 p.m.

[3] The session began at 7.30 a.m. with Shrikrishnadas Jaju, the new President, in the chair.

CWMG-LXXI

I have not studied socialism. I have read no books on the subject; I have read one[1] by Jayaprakash. I have also read one book given by Masani[2]. Sampurnanandji has written a very good book[3]. 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. 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 anything. 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

[1] *Why Socialism?* (1936)
[2] M. R . Masani
[3] *Samajvad* (1936)

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 then 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*[1] 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?

[1] A variety of cotton largely grown in the former Berar State

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 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 uninterrupted 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.[1] 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

[1] 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.

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 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[1]. 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.

[1] In 1922-23

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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 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 *adharma* 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 Bapu 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.[1]

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 programme. Most of the members are covered by these

[1] 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.

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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[1] 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?[2] 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 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

[1] In March 1930

[2] At this stage someone said some people believed that they were paid for this.

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is drawing everything in the universe towards itself. Love has this power. Do I not 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[1] 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 Pratishthan. 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 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.

[1] Shankerlal Banker, Secretary, Akhil Bharatiya Charkha 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[1]. 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 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,

[1] In 1934

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 AGRAWAL: 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.[1]

[From Hindi]

Gandhi Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan(Malikanda–Bengal)ka Vivaran, pp. 34-52

[1] 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.

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278. SPEECH AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING–IV

MALIKANDA,
February 22, 1940

We can say 'barring the members mentioned below, others should withdraw'.[1]

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 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.

[1] Before Gandhiji started his speech the resolution prepared by the subcommittee was being discussed. *Vide* Appendix V.

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*[1]? 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[2]. 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 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

[1] One's own duty

[2] In July 1933; *vide* Vol. LV, pp. 294-5.

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 forefront 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 bedfellow. 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 Gandhiites? 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]

Gandhi Seva Sanghke Chhathe Adhiveshan(Malikanda–Bengal)ka Vivaran, pp. 54-8

279. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

MALIKANDA,
February 23, 1940

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Though we have hostile slogans[1], on the whole, things have gone smooth. One never knows when they may grow worse. The atmosphere is undoubtedly bad. The weather is superb. I am keeping excellent and have regular hours. The b.p. is under control.

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition", pp. 231-2.

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Radical changes have been made in the working and composition of the Sangh.[1] This you will have already seen.

We are leaving here on Sunday and leaving Calcutta on Tuesday for Patna[2].

No more today. Mountain of work awaiting me.

Your reports about the family there are encouraging. Poonam Chand Ranka[3] told me he was going to correspond directly with Balkrishna about Chindwara. Evidently he has done nothing. This is unfortunate.

Love to all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3962. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7271

280. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

MALIKANDA,
February 24, 1940

CHI. MIRA,

I have been too busy to write to anybody. I had two cheery letters from you after you reached Hariana. It is good you are at peace with yourself and you found in the Pundit a true friend in need. I am glad too that you are keeping well.

The company here too is well. I am asking P[yarelal] to send you cuttings which will give you some idea.

We leave here tomorrow, in Calcutta till 27, Patna 28 to 1st at the most. Then Wardha, leaving W. on 9th for Ramgarh[4].

Prithvi Singh is here. He is going to Ramgarh in advance. He is taking Anand, the Japanese monk, with him.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Love to Panditji.

From the original: C.W. 6450. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 10045

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting–IV", pp. 277-81.
[2] For the Congress Working Committee meeting
[3] President, Provincial Congress Committee, Nagpur
[4] For the Congress session

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281. TALK WITH WORKERS[1]

MALIKANDA,
[*February 24, 1940*][2]

All incompatible mixtures are bound to explode.[3] You must resolve to act on the square, and whilst you should be prepared to compromise on non-essentials you should never be in the uncomfortable position of having to compromise truth. You should retire from all such positions. That is the essence of compromise. Let service without near or distant objective be your motto. You are surrounded by poverty on all sides. Serve those that are afflicted, whether they are Muslims, *Namasudras*[4] or others. Satyagraha transcends parties and divisions of class and creed. It should permeate the whole of our being and society. There is no question before you of enlisting members for the Congress. Give up all thought of gaining members for the sake of swelling your register. That is power politics. I would rather have no register than blacken it with bogus members. If you will thus become silent workers, even one of you will lead the Congress in the province without being in it.

I hope you will not now say, 'What will happen if the Congress is captured by the opponents?' You know the Upanishad precept तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथाः[5]. Enjoy by means of renunciation. Give up the Congress in order to 'enjoy' or have it. The moment I set my heart on some kind of capturing I am done for. No manoeuvring to keep your hold on the Congress, no descending from the right path, and you will disarm all opposition. A bogus Congress register can never lead you to swaraj any more than a paper boat can help you to sail across the Padma.

Harijan, 9-3-1940

[1] & [2] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's article "Gandhi Seva Sangh–II". Gandhiji had this talk immediately before he addressed the Bengal Workers' Conference. *Vide* the following item.

[3] According to Mahadev Desai Gandhiji was referring to the disruption in Bengal in spite of a long tradition of educated and self-sacrificing men and women.

[4] A Harijan caste from Bengal

[5] *Ishopanishad*, 1

282. ADDRESS AT BENGAL WORKERS' CONFERENCE[1]

MALIKANDA,
February 24, 1940

Gandhiji said that his time was limited and he wanted to say some things to them. The first question that struck him was: What was the meaning of the new manifestation which they were witnessing? Why did some people cry "Down with Gandhism"? (*Gandhibad Dhansa Hauk*).[2]

Let us understand that there is a kind of poison in the atmosphere. How are we to fight it? Whether the number of those who shout these slogans is 50 or 500, we may not ignore them. We must try to discover their grievance. We may not treat them with contempt, if we are believers in ahimsa. No *argumentum ad hominem* will do. It is no answer to say that they are mercenaries, for you may be sure that not any and everyone who is offered a train fare and a wage would consent to come here. They must to an extent believe in their mission.[3]

They should remember that these people must bear some ill-feeling against certain things. That was why they came. One thing they could understand was that these people wanted to destroy something which they wanted to create.

And at the back of their mind is the feeling that 'Gandhism' is out to destroy what they hold dear. If that is the case, they may well desire the destruction of Gandhism. When we see the thing in this light we can afford to keep our temper. We will then try to meet and plead with them and assure them that we do not desire to obstruct their work.[4] I do not say that you will immediately win them over, but you will certainly check the spread of the poison. Retaliation is counter poison, and poison breeds more poison. The nectar of love alone can destroy the poison of hate.[5]

[1] A conference of about 200 constructive workers of Bengal and volunteers of Malikanda was held in the morning.

[2] This paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

[3] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

[4] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* here has: "If they did not offer resistance it might be that they would go away after shouting to their hearts' content and the poison would not spread."

[5] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

These people were raising cries many times a day but afterwards they became silent of their own accord. It might be if they bore with it in silence their virulence might increase but they must be prepared for eventualities. They would bear in silence not on account of weakness but through patience out of which strength would grow.

Therefore let not the cries anger you. Let none of you think of drowning those cries in the cry of "*Mahatma Gandhiki Jai*". You have done well in not shouting counter slogans. You have thereby sterilized theirs, and very little mischief has been done. If the forbearance is based on ahimsa, I am sure they will ultimately be still.[1]

Gandhiji advised workers to devote themselves to constructive work and not to try to keep the Congress organization under their control by any means. They must be prepared to leave the Congress if they were hampered in carrying out the constructive work. The service of the Congress did not lie in four-anna membership. There were crores of people who were outside the Congress but they loved and respected the Congress and they served the Congress better than those who were in control of the Congress to secure power and position. Gandhiji said he would say that those who had silently taken to the charkha were serving the country better than those who were inside the Congress but did no constructive work.

Therefore I have told you that he who takes up the charkha with a knowledge of its implications serves the Congress cause better than Congressmen.[2]

He was glad to know that the constructive workers of Bengal had resolved to spin no less than 60,000 yards annually. If they regularly spun for half an hour daily it would not be difficult to spin one lakh yards annually. It was no big thing but out of consideration of self-interest they should do it. The cost of weaving was not much. If they spun they would serve the country. It was better that they took a vow that would give them strength and determination to perform work regularly.

If, however, there is the slightest hesitance on your part, I would ask you not to take the pledge but try to do your quota without taking it.[3]

Though spinning might seem monotonous Gandhiji said that he called charkha "*Daridranarayana Annapurna*". If 500 or 1000 people took the vow of doing constructive work, that would provide money for poor weavers. That was why he called the charkha "*Annapurna*".

[1] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*
[2] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*
[3] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

There is, however, a flaw in self-spinning to which I should like to draw your attention. You will of course spin to make your own cloth, but you will to that extent deprive the poor spinners.[1] The wheel is meant for them. But though there is this flaw in it I am asking you all to spin in order to universalize spinning.[2]

If they used khadi not only for wearing but also for other household purposes that would consume more khadi and give more bread to the poor people.

Those of you who are too poor to purchase khadi will of course card and spin for yourselves. But such of you as can afford to buy your khadi will send the 60,000 yards to the Spinners' Association, which will thus be able to reduce the price of khadi in its stock by adding to it the gift of your yarn[3]. That will enable poor people, who can neither spin for themselves nor purchase khadi today, to buy the khadi thus made cheaper for them.[4]

In other countries crores of people were conscripted for military service. One hour's spinning for service to the nation by all was conscription which he wanted his countrymen to impose on themselves.

This is what I call voluntary labour tax. In Europe there is compulsory military service. Let us have compulsory non-military service here.[5]

Their method was non-violence and they would not resort to violent methods but he merely asked everybody to give one hour's work for national service. This would provide bread for the poor and destitute.

All that you do, you will do intelligently, of your free will, and out of a spirit of service.[6]

Concluding, Gandhiji said the civil disobedience movement would not be possible unless they prepared themselves in this way. So far as he could see he would not be able to launch civil disobedience unless by constructive work they had succeeded in eschewing violence completely.

Along with khadi are the other cottage industries, Harijan service, and other items of constructive work, which, if solidly done

[1] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* here reports: "He conceded there was some truth in the argument that to the extent they used khadi they deprived the mill workers of their bread."

[2] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

[3] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* adds here: "and give more money to weavers".

[4] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

[5] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

[6] The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

will create the strength that political work, so called, cannot. That may preclude the necessity for civil disobedience and will automatically end the Hindu-Muslim tension, abolish untouchability, abolish the squabbles between the 'leftists' and the 'rightists' and break the chains of slavery. This to my mind is *rashtradharma*[1] *par excellence.*

Harijan, 9-3-1940, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25-2-1940

283. ADDRESS TO BENGAL WOMEN WORKERS

MALIKANDA,
February 24, 1940

Politics means not merely to sit on the Congress Executive. Real politics is in spinning.[2]

He drew their attention to the vow taken by the male workers to spin 60,000 yards yarn a year and said that women should spin more than that.

Menfolk have taken to spinning, but let me confess that the art comes more naturally to you than to them. One of the reasons is that men have many other avenues of employment. And if swaraj has to come through the charkha, your share in the fight for freedom is going to be greater. Again if swaraj has to come through non-violence, then too your place in the fight will be in the forefront, for Nature has given you a greater capacity for suffering than she has to men. In order also to wipe out the reproach of inferiority and subjection that man has imposed on woman, you will take your privileged part in the fight and prove to the world that you are better fighters for freedom than men.[3]

Mahatma Gandhi congratulated them on the management of the kitchen during the Seva Sangh Conference and urged them to engage all their spare time in spinning which he said would bring swaraj to India.

Harijan, 9-3-1940, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26-2-1940

[1] Duty towards nation
[2] This and the following paragraph are from *The Bombay Chronicle.*
[3] What follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle.*

284. LETTER TO RAMNARAYAN CHAUDHARI

February 25, 1940

CHI. RAMNARAYAN,

Your time is fully occupied. Do not take up any more work. Your main job is to attain proficiency in khadi work. It is not at all difficult to do the carding according to the Andhra method. Consult Krishnadas.

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bapu: Maine Kya Dekha, Kya Samjha, p. 133

285. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING[1]

MALIKANDA,
February 25, 1940

Mahatma Gandhi at the outset expressed gratification that he was able, after many years, to meet so many people here. Gandhiji said:

I have been presented a purse of Rs. 18,000.[2] This money will be spent in Bengal for the service of the poor. I have nothing to tell you new. Four resolutions were passed at the Nagpur Congress[3]. I regard them as four pillars of the country's independence. Those included Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability, prohibition and charkha. If we can give effect to those four resolutions, swaraj will be won automatically. I have the same if not more regard for those programmes today.[4] In that programme millions of the masses could take part. I hope the vast gathering here, which consists of Harijans and Muslims as well, will fulfil those programmes.

The programme of charkha can be taken up by everyone, including the old and the young. It is a matter of regret that

[1] Gandhiji addressed a gathering of 50,000 before his departure for Calcutta in the afternoon.

[2] This was the balance from the money collected for the session of Gandhi Seva Sangh.

[3] In December, 1920

[4] The following sentence is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

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the charkha has not yet been taken up by all. It pains me that most of you who have come here are not clad in khaddar. If you spin your yarn, you will not have to complain to me of the dearness of khadi. If you spin for half an hour daily you can meet your own requirements of cloth. If you are not prepared to devote one hour a day to spinning, how can we claim to attain swaraj?

People of other countries make huge sacrifices in retaining their independence. If we pin our faith on ahimsa we will not have to spend crores of rupees nor sacrifice millions of people for our independence. Till my death, I will talk of no other means of achieving independence. I would repeat the programme that I have laid before the country. Women can take more effective part than men in achieving independence through ahimsa. Women as much as men must work side by side for the country's independence. Whether in charkha or removal of untouchability, they must not lag behind men. From times immemorial, in India it had been the duty of women to spin. Even today women spin more than men. If charkha be the sole weapon for winning swaraj then women can certainly contribute more than men towards the country's independence[1].

My prayer to God is that women of India may be inspired with the ideal of the charkha and induce their relations to take to the charkha.

The Bombay Chronicle, 26-2-1940, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26-2-1940

286. QUESTION BOX

CONSTRUCTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Q. Since you have excluded politics from the Gandhi Seva Sangh,[2] what do you say of the Harijan Sevak Sangh? Should they fly the national flag on their various institutions?

A. I have no hesitation in saying that all the constructive organizations should eschew politics as we at present know it. It may sound strange but it is true that the more these organizations devote themselves exclusively to their own particular missions, the more they will flourish and the more they will serve the national cause. It should be enough that these organizations are mostly manned by Congressmen or Congress-minded men. But

[1] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* adds here: "and establish a precedent in world history".

[2] *Vide* "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting–III", pp. 256-76.

they are and should be untouched by party politics. They would and ought to welcome the co-operation of all parties. They provide a non-political meeting ground for persons representing diverse schools of political opinion. When party politics separate us from one another even in non-controversial matters, it is a sure sign that something is wrong in the State of Denmark. It is a sure sign of intolerance. It follows from what I have said that these constructive institutions ought not to fly the national flag, especially so when it has become a cause of quarrel between Muslims and Hindus.

CALCUTTA, February 26, 1940

Harijan, 2-3-1940

287. WHAT I SAW IN SANTINIKETAN

The visit to Santiniketan was a pilgrimage for me. I had long intended to go there, but the opportunity offered itself only on my way to Malikanda. Santiniketan is not new to me. I was first there in 1915 when it was yet taking shape, not that it is not doing so even now. Gurudev is himself growing. Old age has made no difference to the elasticity of his mind. Santiniketan will therefore never cease to grow so long as Gurudev's spirit broods over it. He is in everyone and everything in Santiniketan. The veneration in which he is held by everyone is uplifting because it is spontaneous. It certainly uplifted me. The title the grateful students and staff gave him accurately describes the position he commands in Santiniketan. He does so because he has lost himself to the place and the congregation. I saw that he was living for his dearest creation: Visvabharati. He wants it to prosper and to feel sure of its future. He had a long talk about it with me but that was not enough for him, and so as we parted he put into my hands the following precious letter:

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

You have just had a bird's-eye view this morning of our Visvabharati centre of activities. I do not know what estimate you have formed of its merit. You know that though this institution is national in its immediate aspect it is international in its spirit, offering according to the best of its means India's hospitality of culture to the rest of the world.

At one of its critical moments you have saved it from an utter breakdown and helped it to its legs.[1] We are ever thankful to you for this act of friendliness.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXII, p. 290.

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And, now, before you take your leave of Santiniketan I make my fervent appeal to you. Accept this institution under your protection, giving it an assurance of permanence if you consider it to be a national asset. Visvabharati is like a vessel which is carrying the cargo of my life's best treasure, and I hope it may claim special care from my countrymen for its preservation.

With love,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Who am I to take the institution under my protection ? It carries God's protection because it is the creation of an earnest soul. It is not a show thing. Gurudev himself is international because he is truly national. Therefore all his creation is international, and Visvabharati is the best of all. I have no doubt whatsoever that Gurudev deserves to be relieved of all anxiety about its future so far as the financial part is concerned. In my reply[1] to his touching appeal I have promised all the assistance I am capable of rendering. This note is the beginning of the effort.

CALCUTTA, February 26, 1940

Harijan, 2-3-1940

288. MY ADVICE TO NOAKHALI HINDUS

Manoranjan Babu and other friends from Noakhali came to see me during my stay in Malikanda about the difficulties of the Hindus in their locality. Manoranjan Babu has been in correspondence with me in the matter for some time. I have not examined the grievances. I had neither the time nor the wish to do so. That is the special province of the Provincial Congress Committee and finally the central body. But I had no difficulty in giving general advice. Their case is more or less like the Sukkur case.[2] There is a great difference in degree. But I feel sure that no popularly elected Government can successfully cope with widespread goondaism as it is alleged to be in Noakhali. It is essentially a case of self-defence. Self-respect and honour cannot be protected by others. They are for each individual himself or herself to guard. Governments can at best punish offenders after the offence has been committed. They cannot assure prevention except in so far as punishment acts as a deterrent. Self-defence can be violent or non-violent. I have always advised and

[1] *Vide* p. 228.

[2] *Vide* "Sind Tragedy", pp. 71-4.

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insisted on non-violent defence. But I recognize that it has to be learnt like violent defence. It requires a different training from that which is required for violent defence. Therefore, if the capacity for non-violent self-defence is lacking, there need be no hesitation in using violent means. But Manoranjan Babu being an old Congressman said, "You say I cannot retaliate even in self-defence?" "That is certainly my view," I replied. "There was, however, a resolution passed by the Gaya Congress[1] that the use of force in self-defence was permissible to Congressmen. I have never justified the resolution. Non-violence becomes meaningless if violence is permitted for self-defence. What is it but self-defence in national resistance against an aggressor nation? I would therefore advise secession from the Congress, if you contemplate the use of force in defending yourselves in the circumstances described by you."

"But," said Manoranjan Babu, "supposing I adopt the Gaya resolution, would I be accused of communalism if I defended the aggrieved Hindu?" "Certainly not," I replied. "In the first place, you do not cease to be Hindu because you are a Congressman. You will, however, be guilty of communalism, if you sided with Hindus right or wrong. In the case in point you will defend Hindus not because they are Hindus but because they are afflicted. I would expect you to defend Muslims if you found them molested by Hindus. A Congressman recognizes or should recognize [no] communal distinction."

The interviewers then discussed the Congress dissensions and told me that many Hindus despairing of Congress aid had joined the Hindu Mahasabha, and asked whether they could do likewise. I told them that in theory I could see no objection. Whether the local circumstances justified the step or not I could not judge. But if I was a Congressman and found that as such I could not act effectively, I should not hesitate to join an organization which could render effective assistance. I added, however, that no responsible Congressman could hold office in a Congress organization and yet be a member of the Hindu Mahasabha which is frankly a communal organization. The whole question bristles with difficulties. The occasion demands calmness, truthfulness and boldness. Communalism is bound to win, if the Congress cannot become effectively non-violent. It will itself become communal in action if it plays with non-violence. For the majority of Congressmen who are Hindus are bound to drift into violence, if they do not know the effective use of non-violence. I am quite clear in my mind that the Congress can

[1] In 1922

remain non-communal only if it becomes truly non-violent in all matters. It cannot be non-violent only towards the rulers and violent towards others. That way lie disgrace and disaster.

CALCUTTA, February 26, 1940

Harijan, 2-3-1940

289. THE RIGHT STEP

It was not without a pang that I advised the important step taken by the Gandhi Seva Sangh[1]. The *harakiri* was performed when the Sangh was in full bloom of life. Kishorelal Mashruwala is one of our rare workers. He is indefatigable. He is conscientious to a fault. No detail escapes his vigilant eye. He is a philosopher and popular writer in Gujarati. He is as good a Marathi scholar as he is a Gujarati scholar. He is singularly free from race, caste or provincial pride or prejudice. He is an independent thinker. He is no politician. He is a born reformer. He is a student of all religions. There is no trace of bigotry in him. He avoids responsibility and publicity. And yet there is no man who having undertaken responsibility would discharge it with greater thoroughness than he. It was with great difficulty that I succeeded in persuading him to become President of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. His industry and single-minded devotion brought the Sangh the importance and usefulness it has shown. In utter disregard of his health (I count this no merit but a demerit in a public worker), he made himself available to all seekers at all times. No wonder he became indispensable to the Sangh. With infinite care he produced a constitution for the Sangh which can be used as a model by any such organization.

I mention these details not to glorify Kishorelal. He needs no glorifying. I mention them for my own satisfaction and to show the reader and especially the retiring members and the numerous sympathizers of the Sangh that the step was not taken without the utmost deliberation. For the past two years we, its builders, have been groping. We have been feeling that it was not performing the function worthy of its ideals. It has ever remained untouched by party or power politics. It was born to support and popularize the constructive part of the Congress programme. Kishorelal was wearing himself out to make it effective. But we were not satisfied with the result. With our vaunted boast that as votaries of the *Gita* we were not concerned with results, there should have been no internal

[1] At its meeting on February 22, 1940; *vide* Appendix V.

dissatisfaction. But it was there. The cause, as it has turned out, was not poverty of results but poverty of the mission. We were, at least I was, groping for the exact mission of the Sangh apart from its function of being a distributing agency for funds donated or collected by Jamnalalji for the support of constructive Congress workers. It was in Malikanda that I discovered the central disease and the remedy. The Sangh was a superfluity so far as the mere carrying out of the constructive programme was concerned. For the necessity had brought into being the A. I. S. A., the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the A. I. V. I. A., and the Talimi Sangh. Was there nothing else for the Sangh to do which would be worthy of the ability and sacrifice of workers like Kishorelal?

Painfully the answer came in Malikanda. The Sangh has to explore the possibilities of ahimsa in all walks of life. It has to find out whether in reality the activities known as constructive have vital connection with, or are inevitable consequences of, the application of ahimsa to national life. Ahimsa in theory no one knows. It is as indefinable as God. But in its working we get glimpses of it as we have glimpses of the Almighty in His working amongst and through us. It is the function of the Sangh to apply their mind as scientists to this laborious task. The constructive activities of the different organizations furnish the Sangh with ample data for its investigations. When the mission was discovered we found that we were poor in missionaries for shouldering the tremendous responsibility. It is good that the discovery has been made. Without the past five years' incessant labour it might not have been made. The Sangh has been kept alive in the hope that the right men, maybe women, would be forthcoming to approach the mission than which no nobler is to be found. Let the retiring members know that for them, too, the work has only now begun. Let them become unseen and silent workers in the research laboratory and send their results to the Sangh. Their legal connection with Kishorelal is finished. The purer and unbreakable connection has only now begun. In the new president the Sangh has an equally well-tried and equally conscientious worker. Jajuji is no philosopher, he is no writer. But he is more practical. He has been in charge of the Maharashtra branch of the A. I. S. A. His labours have made of it the success it is.

The reconstruction is a right step. It must bear the right fruit.

CALCUTTA, February 26, 1940

Harijan, 2-3-1940

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290. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

CALCUTTA,
February 26, 1940

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have not been quite as forgetful of you as you think. I wrote a letter at Santiniketan[1] which P[yarelal] forgot to post till we reached Malikanda! I wrote another at M[alikanda].[2] But I have wanted to write every day. The thing has been impossible. Mira has been writing. She is better. P. is still on the brain. Her address is care Pandit Jagat Ram, Hariana. She has been moving about under his directions.

Charlie is better. I have not seen him yet. I shall tomorrow. Ba is laid up. Fever and severe cough. I shall have to leave her here. You will tell Sushila.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3963. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7272

291. MESSAGE TO PEOPLE OF MANIPUR[3]

[Before *February 27, 1940*][4]

Gandhiji sympathized with the plight of the people of Manipur, and expressed the opinion that they were justified in agitating for amelioration of their grievances.

Gandhiji, however, wanted them to realize his inability to render them any help except his moral support, and advised them to keep absolutely peaceful and non-violent in their agitation.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-2-1940

[1] *Vide* p. 222.
[2] *Vide* pp. 281-2.
[3] This was sent through Lalit Madhab Sarma and another leader of Manipur.
[4] The report is date-lined "Gauhati, February 27, 1940".

292. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

February 27, 1940

CHI. KANAIYO,

If you are insisting that you will eat bread in the morning only on condition that others also get it, you should give up such fussing. You need bread, others do not. Everyone may eat what he needs. If you have still any doubt, ask me.

BAPU

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

293. FAREWELL MESSAGE TO BENGAL[1]

CALCUTTA,
February 27, 1940

I give brilliant good wishes to Bengal from the bottom of my heart, because I consider myself as good a Bengali as I am a Gujarati.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 28-2-1940

294. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

CALCUTTA,
March 2, 1940

The question has come from London whether the Congress has closed the door to negotiation and compromise. My interpretation of the resolution[3] is that the Congress has not closed the door. It has been closed by Lord Zetland.[4] There can be no negotiation on his terms so far as the Congress is concerned. India will not be a helpless partner in her own exploitation and foreign domination.

[1] Gandhiji gave this to the Press reporters before his departure for Patna.
[2] This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "What Resolution Means".
[3] *Vide* Appendix VI.
[4] *Vide* "Is It War?", pp. 210-1, "Statement to the Press", pp. 215-6 and "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940.

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The Congress will not rest till India is a free country as Britain is. And if India accepts non-violence as her settled policy, she will be freer than Britain. Britain, which has ruled the waves, is in danger of losing her liberty. I have prescribed a remedy which is fool-proof. Whether the Congress will be instrumental in gaining India's freedom or not is a different question. The resolution states in unequivocal terms that the Congress will enter into no compromise that gives India less. The other thing that the Congress has made clear is that the British aim being known to be no other than the consolidation of the British Empire, the India that is influenced by the Congress can be no party to the war. In other words, the Congress cannot give Britain its moral support. The third thing the resolution makes clear is that the fight, whenever it comes, will be strictly non-violent and, therefore, under severe discipline. The choice will be Britain's, not that of the Congress, whether India is once more to be a prison house for those who will rather be prisoners and even go through greater sufferings than be helpless witnesses of their country's continuous subordination to Great Britain or any other Power.

CALCUTTA, March 2, 1940

Harijan, 9-3-1940, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3-3-1940

295. WHEN THE BRITISH WITHDRAW[1]

> Unless you adopt an all-party form of government, you are paving the way towards sowing Hindu-Muslim conflict after the British protection is withdrawn. It was not non-violence but your tremendous magnetism plus the backing of British bayonet that kept the Congress in power. Try non-violence without the latter for two or three months, and the truth of the above will be realized.

Thus writes an esteemed correspondent. I have no difficulty in endorsing the remark that it was the British bayonet that kept the Congress ministries in power. My "magnetism" may have had something to do with the victory at the polls. But it proved utterly useless to keep the ministries in power. The sustaining force was the British bayonet. This only shows that the people at large have not yet imbibed the lesson of non-violence.

The remedy is not an all-party government. Such will be no government of the people, for the people. It will be the government

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

of a caucus for its own ends. The caucus will have no smoother sailing than the Congress ministries had. It will also have to rely upon the British bayonet. There can be no manly peace in the land unless the British bayonet is withdrawn. The risk of riots has to be run. Non-violence will be born out of such risks, if at all it is to be part of national life. It is daily becoming crystal clear that real unity will not come so long as the British bayonet crushes the free spirit of the people. The peace it imposes is the peace of the grave. I feel that riots will be a welcome relief, if that is the price we have to pay for freedom. For out of them I can conceive the possibility of peace coming, not out of the present unreality. The way out of riots on the one hand and British bayonets on the other is frank acceptance of non-violence. To this my life is dedicated and my faith in its possibility and efficacy will survive the dissolution of my body.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, March 3, 1940

Harijan, 9-3-1940

296. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,
March 3, 1940

CHI. NIMU,

I have your letters. You will have the other news from the letter to Ra[mdas]. The train has stopped as if for you! Kanam will not surrender to force. Let us be satisfied by getting him to do as much as is possible by love. He certainly will progress.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Nirmala Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

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297. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

[*March 3, 1940*][1]

CHI. PRABHA,

I had your letter. I am very happy to know that you are quite well. Ba is better now. She is with me. She will not accompany me to Ramgarh. We shall be there on the 10th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3537

298. A VERY USEFUL PUBLICATION

Shri Satis Chandra Das Gupta of Khadi Pratishthan has just published a volume called *Home and Village Doctor* (price Rs. 5 cloth-bound, Rs. 6 leather-bound). It contains 1,384 pages, has 18 chapters on the human body, care of systems, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, nursing, accidents, home treatment, cheap remedies, diseases of the various organs, care of pregnant mother and child, infections and constitutional diseases as well as those relating specially to women. Particular contents are exhaustive, and it has a copious index at the end covering 32 pages. There are 219 instructive illustrations. It was during my second imprisonment here that I wrote and asked medical friends to give me a book after the style of the excellent publication *Moore's Family Medicine.* I wanted, however, something better and more indigenous in the sense that a layman serving in villages could handle with ease. A book was promised but the promise could not be fulfilled. Satis Babu came to the rescue and with his amazing industry has produced a book which should meet my requirements. As he says in his introduction he would not publish it till I had read it through and certified it as satisfactory. He supplied me with the chapters as they were getting ready; then when he had finished the whole volume he bound it and sent it to me. I carried it with me for one year or longer but could never get the time required. In despair I wrote to Satis Babu to publish the book as it was. He was quite content to leave the

[1] From the G.N. Register

work unpublished, but I could not think of allowing such labour of love given with infinite care to be lost. I confess that I do not quite like the bulk of the volume. If I could have revised it, probably it would have been curtailed. But Satis Babu has erred, if he has erred at all, on the safe side. I hope that every village worker knowing English will make it a point to possess a copy which can be had from the Khadi Pratishthan, 15 College Square, Calcutta.

SEVAGRAM, March 4, 1940

Harijan, 23-3-1940

299. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

After *12.30 a.m., March 5, 1940*

CHI. BALKRISHNA,

I have got up to write to Vinoba. I am, therefore, writing to you also. I have written to Vinoba about the Gandhi Seva Sangh. The answer to your question is as follows:

No general rule can be laid down regarding discharges. If the nerves have become weak, discharges would occur even when no desire was felt. This would be a condition of extreme weakness. If discharges are the result of physical urge, they must be conquered. In either case, however, we have no option but to endure them. It is but obvious that the fewer the discharges the better for the person. To the question how many may be considered safe, there can be no reply. Some may be debilitated even by one. Some feel no visible effect even if they get one every week. I would, therefore, advise you not to worry about their number but go on, patiently and with faith, taking measures to control them. "Action alone is thy province, never the fruits thereof"[1] applies completely in this case, too.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I cannot conceive of any circumstances in which you may be justified in retiring to the Himalayas.

For the present, at any rate, there is no question of your going to jail. I have not as yet thought over the subject from all points of view.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 805. Courtesy: Balkrishna Bhave

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 47

300. QUESTION BOX

Is It Voluntary?

Q. The local officials have been collecting money from the people in aid of the war fund. But the way in which they have been raising money, though it is supposed to be voluntary giving, seems to be practical coercion. They arranged for a drama, but under instructions from the officials the village teachers (some of whom get about 12 or 15 rupees per month), the village munsif, bazaar-keepers, all had to buy tickets varying in price from one to fifteen rupees each. A petty shop-keeper whose income is only about Rs. 15 had to pay Rs. 5 for a ticket though the man never attended the drama. He told me he paid the money because the local Sub-collector, Tehsildar, Circle Inspector of Police were all there in person to collect the money. I am told Rs. 3,500 were raised in one night in my village. Will you advise what to do?

A. If what you say is true, it is naked coercion. There is nothing voluntary in the people's action. I can only hope that the higher authorities do not know anything about such high-handed procedure. Your duty is clear. You must tell the people that they ought not to submit to coercion. They are as free to refuse to buy tickets as they are free to buy them. You and they should run the risk involved; you in instructing the people, and they in refusing to pay.

A Young Man's Dilemma

Q. I am a young man of 22 years. Is it legitimate for me to refuse to oblige my father in the matter of marriage if I do not wish to marry?

A. According to the Shastras and also reason, children when they reach the age of discretion, which the former prescribe as 16, become their parents' friends, i.e., are free from parental dictation. They are still bound to consult them and defer to their wishes wherever they can. You are full-grown, and in a matter so vital as marriage you should respectfully refuse to marry if the match is not to your liking or for any other valid reason.

A Domestic Difficulty

Q. I am a young man of 23 years. For the last two years, I have been using pure khadi only. For the last 28 days I have been spinning regularly in my leisure time. But my wife refuses to wear khadi. She says it is too coarse. Should I compel her to use khadi? I may also mention that I find our temperaments are incompatible.

A. This is the common lot of life in India. I have often said that the husband, being the stronger and more educated party, has to act as tutor to his wife and put up with her defects, if any. In your case you have to bear the incompatibility and conquer your wife by love, never by compulsion. It follows that you cannot compel your wife to use khadi. But you should trust your love and example to make her do the right thing. Remember your wife is not your property any more than you are hers. She is your better half. Treat her as such. You will not regret the experiment.

Another Domestic Difficulty

Q. I am married. My wife is a good woman. We have children. We have lived together in peace hitherto. Unfortunately she came across someone whom she has adopted as her guru. She has received *gurumantra*[1] from her and her life has become a closed book for me. This has given rise to coolness between us. I do not know what I should do. Rama, as portrayed by Tulsidas, is my ideal hero. Should I not do what Rama did, and cut off all connection with my wife?

A. Tulsidas has taught us that we may not indiscriminately imitate the great. What they may do with impunity we may not. Think of Rama's love for Sita. Tulsidas tells us that before the appearance of the golden deer the real Sita at the behest of Rama disappeared in the clouds and the mere shadow remained. This fact was a close secret even from Lakshmana. The poet further tells us that Rama had a purpose which was divine. It was with this shadow of Sita that Rama dealt, after the appearance of the golden deer on the scene. Even so Sita never resented any single act of Rama. All such data would be lacking in any mundane case, as they are lacking in yours. Therefore my advice to you would be to bear with your wife and not interfere with her so long as you have no cause of complaint against her conduct. If you adopted someone as your guru and had your *gurumantra* and if you did not impart the secret to your wife, I am sure you would not relish her resenting your refusal to disclose the secret. I admit that between husband and wife there should be no secrets from one another. I have a very high opinion of the marriage tie. I hold that husband and wife merge in each other. They are one in two or two in one. But these things cannot be regulated mechanically. All things considered, therefore, since you are a liberal-minded husband, you should have no difficulty in respecting your wife's reluctance to share the secret with you.

[1] A mystic formula prescribed by a guru

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Muslim Weavers and Mill Yarn

Q. By insisting on the use of certified khadi only, you have delivered a very severe blow to the Muslim weavers on the one hand who are mostly using mill yarn, and on the other to the consumer who is thus induced to purchase certified khadi which is notoriously dear. I am a Muslim working for the uplift of the weaver class. I appeal to you to remove this double hardship by sanctioning the use of hand-woven mill yarn khadi.

A. There is no communalism in khadi. The A.I.S.A. has thousands of Muslim spinners and hundreds of Muslim weavers on its books. Khadi has as yet made little impression upon mill-yarn weavers. What it has done is to provide occupation to those Hindu and Muslim weavers who were thrown out of employment by mill competition. Those weavers who do not take to weaving hand-spun are cutting their own throats because the natural consequence of the spread of mills will be the destruction of weavers as it has been that of hand-spinners. The handloom weavers who have held their own are pattern weavers. If khadi became universal, Muslim and other weavers who are today weaving mill yarn would, as a matter of course, take to weaving hand-spun. Thus there is no case of khadi ever hitting a single weaver. In fact it is his sole protection.

A Ticklish Question

Q. I am a Hindu student. I have been great friends with a Muslim, but we have fallen out over the question of idol worship. I find solace in idol worship, but I cannot give an answer to my Muslim friend in terms of what may be called convincing. Will you say something on idol worship in *Harijan*?

A. My sympathies are both with you and your Muslim friend. I suggest your reading my writings on the question in *Young India* and, if you feel at all satisfied, let your Muslim friend read them, too. If your friend has real love for you, he will conquer his prejudice against idol worship. A friendship which exacts oneness of opinion and conduct is not worth much. Friends have to tolerate one another's ways of life and thought even though they may be different, except where the difference is fundamental. Maybe your friend has come to think that it is sinful to associate with you as you are an idolater. Idolatry is bad, not so idol worship. An idolater makes a fetish of his idol. An idol worshipper sees God even in a stone and therefore takes the help of an idol to establish his union with God. Every Hindu child knows that the stone in the famous temple in Benares is not Kashi

Vishwanath. But he believes that the Lord of the Universe does reside specially in that stone. This play of the imagination is permissible and healthy. Every edition of the *Gita* on a book-stall has not that sanctity which I ascribe to my own copy. Logic tells me there is no more sanctity in my copy than in any other. The sanctity is in my imagination. But that imagination brings about marvellous concrete results. It changes men's lives. I am of opinion that, whether we admit it or not, we are all idol worshippers or idolaters, if the distinction I have drawn is not allowed. A book, a building, a picture, a carving are surely all images in which God does reside, but they are not God. He who says they are errs.

Educated Unemployment

Q. The problem of unemployment among the educated is assuming alarming proportions. You of course condemn higher education, but those of us who have been to the University realize that we do develop mentally there. Why should you discourage anyone from learning? Would not a better solution be for unemployed graduates to go in for mass education and let the villagers give them food in return? And could not Provincial Governments come to their aid and help them with some money and clothing?

A. I am not against higher education. But I am against only a few lakhs of boys and girls receiving it at the expense of the poor tax-payer. Moreover I am against the type of higher education that is given. It is much cry and little wool. The whole system of higher education and for that matter all education needs radical overhauling. But your difficulty is about unemployment. In this you have my sympathy and co-operation. On the principle that every labourer is worthy of his hire, every graduate who goes to a village to serve it is entitled to be housed, fed and clothed by the villagers. And they do it too. But they will not when the graduate lives like *saheb log* and costs them ten times as much as they can afford. His life must accord as nearly as possible with that of the villagers and his mission must find appreciation among them.

Sevagram, March 5, 1940

Harijan, 9-3-1940

301. SEGAON BECOMES SEVAGRAM[1]

There is Segaon near Wardha where I am trying to be a villager. And there is Shegaon, a station on the main line about 132 miles west of Wardha. The result was that many letters and wires meant for Segaon, Wardha, went to the Shegaon station. In order to avoid this confusion an application was sent to the authorities on behalf of the villagers to change the name of Segaon to Sevagram. It is a name with a meaning. It means a village dedicated to service. The villagers who signed the application did so fully knowing what they were doing. Let us hope they will live up to the meaning of the name they have chosen to give to their village. Correspondents will please bear the change in mind.

SEVAGRAM, March 5, 1940

Harijan, 9-3-1940

302. WHEN?

Everybody is asking me not whether but when I am to call the country to civil disobedience. Some of my questioners are the most sober among co-workers. To them the Patna resolution[2] has no other meaning than that the struggle's coming is a question of days. It is proof that the country, or that part of it that has hitherto taken part in the struggle for freedom, is tired of waiting and suspense. It is heartening to think that there are in the country so many persons who count no sacrifice too dear for gaining independence.

While, therefore, I admire the zeal of my questioners, I must warn them against being impatient. There is nothing in the resolution to warrant the belief that the atmosphere is suitable for declaring civil disobedience. It will be suicidal to declare it when there is so much indiscipline and violence within the Congress itself. Congressmen will make a serious mistake if they do not give full weight to my words. I cannot, will not, start mass civil disobedience so long as I am not convinced that there is enough discipline and enough

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] *Vide* Appendix VI.

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non-violence in Congress ranks. The apathy about the constructive programme, i.e., spinning and sales of khadi, I take to be positive signs of unbelief. Battle through such instruments is foredoomed to failure. Such persons should know that I am not their man. If there is no hope of attaining the necessary measure of discipline and non-violence, it would be better to let me retire from leadership.

Let it be clearly understood that I cannot be hustled into precipitating the struggle. They err grievously who think that I can ever declare civil disobedience, having been driven thereto by the so-called leftists. I make no such distinction between rightists and leftists. Both are my co-workers and friends. He will be a bold man who can with any measure of certainty draw the line of demarcation between leftists and rightists. Congressmen and non-Congressmen should also know that, even if the whole country were to turn against me, I must, when the time comes, fight single-handed. The others have or may have weapons besides non-violence. I have no choice. Being the author of non-violent technique in the political field, I am bound to fight when I feel the urge from within.

It is inherent in the technique that I never know the time-table in advance. The call may come at any time. It need not be described as from God. The inner urge is a current phrase easily understood. Everybody sometimes acts upon the inner urge. Such action need not always be right. But there is no other explanation possible for certain actions.

The thought often comes to me that it would be a good thing if the Congress could forget me. I do sometimes feel that with my strange views of life I am a misfit in the Congress. Whatever special qualifications I may possess and for which the Congress and the country may have use, can perhaps be better utilized if I were wholly cut off from the Congress. But I know that this severance cannot be brought about mechanically or violently. It will come in its own time, if it has to come. Only Congressmen should know my limitations and should not be surprised or grieved if they find me stiff and unbending. I ask them to believe me when I say that I am incapable of acting without the fulfilment of the conditions laid down for declaring mass civil disobedience.

SEVAGRAM, March 5, 1940

Harijan, 9-3-1940

303. NOTE TO M. V. NAGALINGAM[1]

SEVAGRAM,
March 5, 1940[2]

The body is like a letter writ on water.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Tamil: G.N. 874

304. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,
[On or after *March 5, 1940*][3]

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I have Manilal's letter. Herewith a letter to Mrs. Fagson. I am glad I met her. She is a very good woman. How is West[4] doing? How is Sorabji? Give me all the news from there. Things are going on all right here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4873

305. TELEGRAM TO GUJARAT VIDYAPITH

[On or before *March 6, 1940*][5]

GLAD DR. MONTESSORI IS VISITING AHMEDABAD. HOPE THE VIDYAPITH WILL PROFIT BY THE DISTINGUISHED VISITOR'S PRESENCE.

BAPU

The Hindu, 7-3-1940

[1] The addressee was then rendering scavenging service at the Ashram.
[2] The date-line is in Devanagari.
[3] In the source the place name Segaon has been struck off and substituted by Sevagram. This change was notified on March 5, 1940; *vide* "Segaon Becomes Sevagram", p. 305.
[4] A. H. West, printer of *Indian Opinion* and a close associate of Gandhiji in South Africa
[5] The report is date-lined "Ahmedabad, March 6, 1940".

306. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 6, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. May God grant you enough strength to bear your new burden[1]. I have no doubt that you will acquit yourself well in the work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3538

307. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 7, 1940

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

Here is a letter from Lilian[2]. I have sent her a consoling reply. I have your note. You need have no worry about the sisters. I have told you about Kallenbach's money. But you will not use it for any other purpose no matter what requests for aid you might have.

I hope you are making steady progress.

Love from us all.

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 993

[1] In connection with women volunteers for the Congress session at Ramgarh. *Vide* footnote 3, p. 162.

[2] Addressee's sister

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308. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 7, 1940

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. Did you climb Mount Abu all alone? If you did not feel any after-effects, then your health must have greatly improved.

Has Nanabhai[1] recovered completely?

Ba is fully restored. I will most probably leave here on the 13th for Ramgarh. Ba is not going with me. It is good news that both the schools[2] are running well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7124. Also C.W. 4616. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

309. ASHRAM NOTES

SEVAGRAM,
March 7, 1940

I hear that many persons who forgo a meal do not inform the kitchen, with the result that food is wasted. It is therefore requested that whoever wants to forgo a particular meal should notify the kitchen in time.

This and such other notes issued from day to day should be displayed on the wall.

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 4674

[1] Nrisimhaprasad Kalidas Bhatt

[2] The Home School of Bhavnagar with which Nanabhai was connected and the school at Ambla where addressee's husband worked

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310. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 8, 1940

DEAR MARY,

. . . Bapu says you must give up spinning on the *takli* while reading. It is bad for your eyes. And you must concentrate on improving your speed which is very slow at the moment. . . .

Yours,
AMRIT

From a photostat: G.N. 6078. Also C.W. 3408. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur

311. LETTER TO VINAYAKPRASAD G. PANDYA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 8, 1940

BHAI VINAYAKPRASAD,

I could reach your letter only today. If you bear with the opposition and go on doing your work with single-minded devotion, a day will come when the spinning-wheel will have become popular.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI VINAYAKPRASAD G. PANDYA
BAJVADA, KHATRI POLE
BARODA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1368

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312. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 8, 1940

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I have your letters. Manilal's reproach is justified. I knew about the struggle there. But I did what I could. From here I could not give you any other advice. What could Jawahar have done? I cannot put such a burden on him. I do not regret what I did or the advice I gave. Does not the final decision rest with you there?

Medh writes and tells me that he wishes to come here and consult me. He is welcome to do so. I gather that in any case he has to come.

Ba is better. Whenever she makes the slightest mistake she falls ill. Kunvarji is well. Valjibhai is leaving today for Bombay and Ahmedabad.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4909

313. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

March 8, 1940

CHI. SITA[1],

I could reply to your letter, only today. You should write in ink. Your English handwriting is beautiful, but your spelling seems very poor. Not 'copisition' but 'composition', not 'georaphy' but 'geography'[2]. Your Gujarati handwriting is hardly legible. I shall wait and see what your reply is like.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4910

[1] Manilal Gandhi's daughter

[2] The source has these words in English.

314. LETTER TO RASIKLAL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 8, 1940

BHAI RASIKLAL,

I am reaching your letter of February 7, 1940, only today. The celebration is over now; I am watching your work. I am firm in my opinion. Those who will remain steadfast will not only keep their own self-respect but will also uphold the prestige of the people of Limbdi.[1] If . . .[2] workers keep themselves out, the number of workers counted by you is good. But strength lies in quality, not in numbers.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

315. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 10, 1940

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. May your faith bear fruit. Write to Sardar from time to time. I am sure you keep Nanalal informed, too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8571. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 144-5.
[2] The word is unintelligible.

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316. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

March 10, 1940

I can judge only when you tell me all that has been done. This much is of course true that our living here is getting quite luxurious. We should think how far it may be tolerated.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4339

317. FOR ENGLISHMEN

Thus writes a very responsible Englishman to a common friend. The receiver sends it to me for answer:[1]

> I have just been reading with very real concern the text of the resolution[2] which the Working Committee adopted yesterday. I am writing as a very ordinary Englishman who has been interested in India for a good many years. . . . I do not believe that my sympathy with or attitude towards Indian aspirations is in any way peculiar to myself; the views I hold . . . are pretty generally held by a large number of Englishmen. I can speak with some confidence on this point as I am in fairly close touch with several people who exercise some influence over English opinion and have been working with increasing success to create an atmosphere favourable to granting India's demand for full dominion status. What are we to make of the Committee's latest move and of what appears to be the rather sudden and drastic change from a demand for dominion status to one for complete independence? I have far too great a respect for Gandhiji and the other Congress leaders I have met to believe it is either bluff or arises from a hasty resentment at our regrettably unforthcoming attitude during the early negotiations. They ought to know us well enough by now to realize how difficult we find it to do the handsome thing in a handsome way; and yet on the whole I think it is our manners which are at fault more often than our intentions.
>
> If, therefore, the resolution must be taken to mean what it says and we are invited to remove ourselves bag and baggage forthwith, I cannot help asking you very seriously whether you are really able to rule

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.
[2] *Vide* Appendix VI.

India without any help from us. When I was up on the Frontier last summer I met a number of large and fierce gentlemen who were literally gloating at the prospect of enjoying themselves at India's expense once the English were gone. There are also, I believe, other parties who would not hesitate to exploit the difficulties of the new Indian Republic. Non-violence is, I admit, a powerful weapon against people with some prejudices against the physical coercion of those who do not defend themselves, but I doubt its effectiveness against those who regard the whole idea with contempt. Can you keep these forces in order or are we to contemplate handing India over to administrative chaos and possible, even probable, civil war? You may say that that is your affair and if such difficulties arise you will deal with them in your own way, but that does not ease my mind. I am not concerned to defend either the circumstances under which we got control over India—in view of her defenceless condition in the latter part of the 18th century some other power would no doubt have taken advantage of it, if we had not—nor the way we have treated her since, for the worse our record may be made to appear the more incumbent it is upon us, in my opinion, not to divest ourselves of our responsibilities, of the penalties of our own misdeeds, if you like, until there is an equally stable as well as a more enlightened administration ready to take over from us. I know that if I heard six months after we left India that Hindus and Muslims were killing one another in the face of an impotent government, I should not feel without blame, and I am certain that many Indians and other people as well would point to it as the evil legacy of British domination. I cannot therefore persuade myself that we English can fairly leave India until we have put her in a position to stand firmly on her own feet. When that time comes I will go gladly. I believed it was coming soon but my experience does not suggest that it has arrived yet. As dominion status seems to me to be a long step towards it, why is it unacceptable?

. . . I know the East End of London fairly well and I can assure you that it is the purest nonsense to say that the electors of Silvertown are fighting or voting to bolster up British imperialism. They realize that we are up against evil things and that life even under the conditions of dockland is a better thing than it would be under Nazism. They know too, or if they do not I am afraid they will know before they are much older, that this is going to be a desperate struggle and that victory, if and when it does come, will have been bought at a terribly high price. How are they going to feel towards those people in India who by trying to obstruct our war effort at this critical stage did their best to give that little push to the scales that might well have meant defeat?

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You may say, 'What do we owe to England and what do we care whether she is defeated or not? This is the opportunity we have been waiting for and we mean to take it.' . . . Civil disobedience and the troubles to which it will certainly give rise will embarrass us seriously and cause exasperation, if not much worse, between people who ought to be friends, but I do not see how by itself it is going to get rid of us, particularly when we are mobilized. If it is unsuccessful and we win the war in spite of it, the very people who, I firmly believe, would have recognized India's forbearance to add to our difficulties in the most generous way will feel a resentment which it will take a generation to dissipate. If on the other hand you are able to make us lose the war, do you really believe that the Germans or Russians will either keep their hands off India or will be more active in giving her complete independence than we have been? If your answer is 'no', then would you sooner be ruled by Nazis or Bolsheviks than by us?

I do believe I have been honestly sympathetic towards Congress aspirations and so far as my limited experience goes have tried honestly to interpret them to friends in England. But this latest development I cannot understand or justify either on grounds of logic or even of expediency. Can you help me? I know I shall be getting enquiries from home before long and should like to answer them fairly. At the same time while the generals are manoeuvring, is there any way in which a private soldier like myself could be of assistance? There is so much goodwill in danger of being wasted.

The letter represents the thoughts of many Englishmen who are well disposed towards the Congress. And yet it betrays a tragic ignorance of Indian thought. Thus the writer says, "What are we to make of the Committee's latest move and of what appears to be the rather sudden and drastic change from a demand for dominion status to one for complete independence?" Now complete independence has been the definite goal of the Congress since 1929,[1] and has been repeated every year from thousands of platforms. From that year to this the Congress has never even so much as mentioned Dominion Status. There is, therefore, no change whatsoever in the Congress demand. The question of suddenness or drasticness simply does not arise. Confusion arises from my oft-quoted letter to Mr. H. S. L. Polak wherein I said in 1937, that if Dominion Status with the right to secede was offered, I for one would accept it.[2] I had no authority to bind anyone else to that statement. Needless to say the offer was never made.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLII, pp. 320, 345 *et seq.*
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXIV, p. 322.

Whatever may be said of me, no charge of change of policy can be brought against the Congress. So far as I am concerned, I have changed. Experience since gained and maturer reflection have led me to think that Dominion Status even of the Statute of Westminster variety cannot suit India's case. I have only recently given[1] my reasons for the change of opinion which I need not repeat here.

When the writer thinks that India cannot yet stand on her own legs, he has not even Dominion Status in contemplation. For Dominion Status is nothing if it does not mean the ability of the Dominion in question to stand by itself.

What the Congress has definitely asked for is Britain's declaration that it will give effect to the decisions of a duly elected Constituent Assembly. In other words, Britain should recognize the right of India without any outside interference or influence to determine her own future. It may be even Dominion Status. It may be less than independence or a modified form of it. It may also be complete independence. The Congress will not lower its flag. But the Constituent Assembly is not synonymous with the Congress. This Assembly will include representatives of all parties who can secure sufficient votes. Therefore all minorities will be represented in their full strength.

It is a great pity that even the best of Englishmen are, as a rule, woefully ignorant of the Indian claim. They are too self-satisfied to take the trouble of studying the Indian case. They will not read nationalist papers. They take their opinions from the Anglo-Indian papers which themselves generally betray amazing ignorance about the thoughts, aspirations and acts of nationalist India. It has been the lot of the Congress to be misrepresented from its inception. I suggest that responsible Englishmen should meet, say, the best-known Congressmen of the left and the right schools of thought, and I promise that much misunderstanding will be removed. It may be that even then there will be honest differences of opinion. These will always exist.

The writer dreads to think what will happen to India if Englishmen were to vacate the country bag and baggage. Such a contingency is inconceivable in a non-violent struggle. The end of non-violent action is a friendly settlement. If he means merely the English soldiers, they will certainly go if they will not serve independent India or if they are not wanted because they are too expensive or for any other cause. It must not be forgotten that the Indian struggle is not anti-British, it is anti-exploitation,

[1] *Vide* "Notes", pp. 22-3.

anti-foreign-rule, not anti-foreigners. Underlying the writer's fear is the possibility of India deciding upon something beyond its capacity. This honest English belief in the incapacity of India to come to a sane judgment or to defend herself against civil war or foreign aggression is perhaps the greatest stumbling-block in the way of an honourable settlement. If the fear is justified, the only antidote is to run the risk and let India learn wisdom and the art of self-defence by becoming free. Any other course means almost perpetual helplessness and foreign domination. Surely it is better for India, England and the world that a helpless sub-continent runs the greatest risk for coming into its own than that in its sickness it becomes a dead weight to itself and the world. The distinguished writer seems to admit the wrong Britain has done. It will not be undone by Britain being the judge of India's destiny and cherishing the distant hope that one day India will be fit enough to shoulder full responsibility for internal and external defence. The very argument advanced by the writer against India determining her future seems to me to be conclusive for ending British rule at the earliest moment possible.

If the position taken up by me is the correct one, the Nazi or Bolshevik menace can have no meaning for nationalist India, especially as its defence is rooted in non-violence.

But the writer evidently has no faith in non-violence of the strong. I must wholly disagree with him when he says, "Non-violence, I admit, is a powerful weapon against people with some prejudices against the physical coercion of those who do not defend themselves, but I doubt its efficacy against those who regard the whole idea with contempt." The real test of non-violence lies in its being brought in contact with just those who have contempt for it. The writer would be right if he were to say that such unadulterated non-violence has not yet been used by the Congress. The answer would be that I am trying my utmost to present India and through it the world with a completed example of non-violence. I may fail. But I invite Englishmen to assist the experiment if they have even a faint belief in the possibility of the exercise of such non-violence.

With the poor opinion the writer has of the working of non-violence, it is no wonder that he trembles at the thought, when the British retire from India, "of a number of large and fierce gentlemen who were literally gloating at the prospect of enjoying themselves at India's expense once the English were gone". Is it likely that an assembly of elected men and women who had such a fear would sign their death warrant by asking the English

to retire in order that they may be devoured by "large and fierce gentlemen" of the Frontier? I suggest to the writer that, if and when the English retire, both the Muslims and the Hindus will find it profitable to live in peace as they used to do before the British advent. If there had been perpetual quarrels, one or the other would have been wiped out. When real independence comes to India, Congresses and Leagues will be nowhere unless they represent the real opinion of the country. The presence of the British bayonet has created an artificial condition which suppresses the natural play of human action and demoralizes both the suppressed and the suppressors. Let me also add that the presence of the British forces has not prevented riots such as were seen in Sukkur or kidnappings and raids on the Frontier. Whatever success the forces achieve is after the events have happened. The sufferers are no better off for the punitive measures, nor is it possible to say that at least in the majority of such cases full reparation is made.

That the Congress resistance at this stage will embitter the English mind and will be remembered against India, is a possibility. But my own experience of human nature, not excluding the British, is that bitternesses are forgotten when parties wish to come together. The suggestion presupposes the crushing of civil disobedience. There is no such thing in the civil disobedience dictionary. If there is violence, it will certainly be crushed because violence can only end in a disgraceful rout. There never has been previous preparation; the people themselves will be bewildered. They would not know what to do. But if, in spite of all the precautions I may take for a non-violent struggle, bitterness is still to be the residue, even that risk has to be run. Before the throne of the Almighty man will be judged not by his acts but by his intentions. For God alone reads our hearts. Freedom's battles are not fought without paying heavy prices. Just as man would not cherish the thought of living in a body other than his own, so do nations not like to live under other nations however noble and great the latter may be. Englishmen who are undergoing tremendous sacrifices for preserving their freedom should not fail to appreciate India's travail. The Congress does not say: 'Give us Congressmen what we want.' It says to the Rulers: 'Not you but the elected representatives of the nation should decide its fate.' If such a reasonable proposition is circumvented, what should the Congress do?

SEVAGRAM, March 11, 1940

Harijan, 16-3-1940

318. WOMEN AND VOLUNTARY ENDEAVOUR

Shrimati Rajkumari Amrit Kaur writes:[1]

> . . . I have recently addressed all our branches of the All-India Women's Conference[2] and asked them to take up what you have termed "sacrificial spinning" as a practical way of helping khadi. If women of the leisured classes would spin regularly and give their yarn to the A.I.S.A., it could be utilized for sustaining the recent increase in the wages of spinners which the Association has introduced. . . . Spinners are women; they live if khadi lives; if we can help to raise their earnings to a living wage, we are at once not only giving them economic independence but we also raise the dignity of their labour.
>
> . . . While it is open to those who will not spin to help by donations, the value of work which makes us one in spirit with the poor, which enhances the dignity of all labour, especially women's labour, and which develops within us a love of hand-woven and hand-spun cloth as nothing else can, is something which cannot be reckoned in terms of money.
>
> Girl students in colleges often ask me in what way they can serve the country. Each one of them could contribute her quota in this manner too.
>
> I shall be very grateful if you will give your blessing and approval to this scheme and thereby strengthen my appeal. We ought of course to be able to raise many more than 3,000 volunteers to join hands in this endeavour. . . .

I heartily endorse this appeal. It will be a shame if even three thousand sisters cannot be found who would labour for the starving millions. It is well that the Rajkumari has laid stress on identification with the poor through labour willingly and cheerfully done.

SEVAGRAM, March 11, 1940

Harijan, 23-3-1940

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

[2] The annual session of which was held at Allahabad from January 27 to 31, 1940

319. KHADI BANKS[1]

A correspondent writes:[2]

> I believe in khadi. . . . But my means are limited. So I made it a point to lay aside Re. 1 per month. Yet I am afraid the saving is within easy reach of pressing needs. So I conceive a scheme of 'Khadi Banks', . . . An amount of money may be deposited at a time or at suitable intervals with a certified A.I.S.A. khadi bhandar. Such a bank would differ from a money bank in that the money once deposited cannot be withdrawn except through khadi purchase equivalent in value. The A.I.S.A. may issue *hundi*[3] books to such customers who may from time to time draw *hundis* of appropriate denominations on the bhandars and purchase khadi.
>
> The advantages of having such banks are obvious. . . . the A.I.S.A. would be in a position to guarantee the wages of the wage-earners. . . . the interest earned by the A.I.S.A. would be capitalized and utilized towards reduction of the cost of khadi to purchasers without in any way injuring the wages of the wage-earners. . . .

The suggestion reads attractive. Let the A.I.S.A. experts consider it. If the purchasers will forgo interest and a sufficient number subscribe, it should be possible to cheapen khadi.

SEVAGRAM, March 11, 1940

Harijan, 16-3-1940

320. DISCUSSION WITH A MISSIONARY[4]

SEVAGRAM,
[Before *March 12, 1940*][5]

[Q.] Could you tell me the things one should avoid in order to present the gospel of Christ?

[A.] Cease to think that you want to convert the whole world to your interpretation of Christianity. At the end of

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] Only extracts are reproduced here.
[3] Promissory note
[4] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "Occasional Notes"
[5] The discussion took place before Gandhiji left for Ramgarh on March 12.

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reading the Bible, let me tell you, it did not leave on my mind the impression that Jesus ever meant Christians to do what the bulk of those who take his name do. The moment you adopt the attitude I suggest, the field of service becomes limitless. You limit your own capacity by thinking and saying that you must proselytize.

I see what you mean. We have been cumbered by creeds and man-made things. We feel that we should be in a place where all barriers have broken down.

Gandhiji instanced a few Christians who, he said, saw the central fact that, if they wanted to live this Christian life, they should literally follow the words: "Not he that sayeth 'Lord, Lord', but he that doeth His will."[1]

You are living a guided life. Could you kindly tell me your experience of guidance?

I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's Law and God are not different things or facts, in the sense that an earthly king and his law are different, because God is an Idea, Law Himself. Therefore it is impossible to conceive God as breaking the Law. He therefore does not rule our actions and withdraw Himself. When we say He rules our actions, we are simply using human language and we try to limit Him. Otherwise He and His Law abide everywhere and govern everything. Therefore I do not think that He answers in every detail every request of ours, but there is no doubt that He rules our action, and I literally believe that not a blade of grass grows or moves without His will. The free will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck.

Do you feel a sense of freedom in your communion with God?

I do. I do not feel cramped as I would on a boat full of passengers. Although I know that my freedom is less than that of a passenger, I appreciate that freedom as I have imbibed through and through the central teaching of the *Gita* that man is the maker of his own destiny[2] in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom. But he is no controller of results. The moment he thinks he is, he comes to grief.

Harijan, 23-3-1940

[1] *St. Matthew*, VII. 21

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 5

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321. JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN[1]

The arrest of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan is unfortunate. He is no ordinary worker. He is an authority on socialism. It may be said that what he does not know of Western socialism nobody else in India does. He is a fine fighter. He has forsaken all for the sake of the deliverance of his country. His industry is tireless. His capacity for suffering is not to be excelled. I do not know what speech has brought him within the law.[2] But if 124 A or the highly artificial Sections of the Defence of India Act are to be inspanned for catching inconvenient persons, then any person whom the authorities want can be easily brought within the law. I have said before now that it is open to the Government to precipitate a crisis if they wish to. They have every right to do so. But I have hugged the hope that the fight will be allowed to develop along its natural course so long as it keeps strictly non-violent. Let there be no camouflage. If Shri Jayaprakash Narayan is guilty of violence, violence should be proved. What the arrest has done is to make the people believe that the British Government want to force the issue. History will then have repeated itself. During the first civil disobedience the Government had forced the issue by arresting the Ali Brothers[3]. Is this arrest a prearranged plan, or is it a blunder committed by an over-zealous officer? If it is the latter, it should be set right.

SEVAGRAM, March 12, 1940

Harijan, 16-3-1940

322. QUESTION BOX

DO I DISTRUST THE VICEROY?

Q. Does not your identifying yourself with the Patna resolution[4] of the Working Committee betray distrust in Lord Linlithgow, although you have professed to believe in his sincerity?

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] *Vide* "A Brave Statement", 26-3-1940.
[3] They were sentenced to two years' imprisonment on November 1, 1921.
[4] *Vide* Appendix VI.

A. You have read into the resolution what is wholly unwarranted by the text. I do not doubt the Viceroy's sincerity. I have not known a Viceroy who has weighed his word as Lord Linlithgow does. It is a pleasure to have a talk with him. For he speaks with the greatest deliberation. His speech is, therefore, always brief and to the point. I adhere to the remark I made about our last meeting that, although we could not agree, we had come nearer each other.[1] We might have gone on talking for a few days, but we would only have talked round the subject and repeatedly come to the same point of disagreement. I was under no handicap for I was speaking for myself. He was under a severe handicap. He was speaking under orders. He had no authority to go outside his instructions. And so we parted the best of friends. But so far as I am concerned, I expect many more meetings. The resolution makes the Congress position clear beyond doubt. It represents also my own position. If the British Government really mean full-hearted Dominion Status with the right to secede, then they can have no difficulty in accepting the Congress position. Unfortunately Lord Zetland's interview[2] shows that it is not India which is to determine her future but Britain will do so for her. This is not even Dominion Status of any known variety. Once the British Government are sure that they can no longer hold India, all the difficulties that are now being put forth on their behalf will vanish like darkness before dawn. For they are all of their creation. They are inherent in exploitation. I hope you now see that there is no question of distrust of the Viceroy. Events had to move to where they are.

Fear of 'Isms'

Q. You say that no such thing as Gandhism exists, and that what you stand for is nothing new. I am a Muslim. I see flashes of Islamic glory in Gandhism. As a student of theology I see the grandeur of Hinduism and the vigour of Christianity amply expounded in Gandhism. It includes also to a considerable extent the chaste philosophy of the entire East. I search the pages of India's past history, but your creed I do not find. Why, therefore, is it not new, and why may it not be termed Gandhism for those of us who believe in you and therefore it?

A. I have a horror of 'isms', especially when they are attached to proper names. Even if all that you say of me is true,

[1] *Vide* "Task Before Us", pp. 189-91.

[2] *Vide* "Is It War?", pp. 210-1, "Statement to the Press", pp. 215-6 and "Another Englishman's Letter", pp. 340-3.

it does not make a new sect. My effort is to avoid not only new sects but even to do away with old and superfluous ones. Ahimsa abhors sects. Ahimsa is a unifying force. It discovers unity in diversity. All that you say is derivable from ahimsa. To bring into being a new cult is repugnant to ahimsa, to the very experiment I am making. Thus you will, I hope, see that there is no room for 'Gandhism'.

Women and Their Work

Q. You say, "It is degrading both for man and woman that woman 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."[1] But what about the millions of female labourers in fields, factories, etc.? They are forced to forsake the hearth and become "bread-winners". Would you abolish the industrial system and revert to the stone age? Would that not be a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end? What is the new order that you envisage where the sin of making women work will be absent?

A. If millions of women are forced to forsake their hearth and become bread-winners, it is wrong, but not so wrong as shouldering the rifle. There is nothing inherently barbarous in labour. I see no barbarity in women voluntarily working on their fields whilst they are looking after their homes. In the new order of my imagination all will work according to their capacity for an adequate return for their labour. Women in the new order will be part-time workers, their primary function being to look after the home. Since I do not regard the rifle as a permanent feature in the new order, its use will be progressively restricted even so far as men are concerned. It will be tolerated as a necessary evil while it lasts. But I would not deliberately contaminate women with the evil.

Roman Script

Q. Why may not the illiterate masses be taught the Roman script? This would eliminate the existing controversy between Urdu and Hindi.

A. To teach the Roman script in the place of Hindi and Urdu would be like putting the cart before the horse. Our children have first to learn both Hindi and Urdu scripts. Difficult questions cannot be solved by ignoring them or suggesting apparently easy substitutes. So long as hearts are divided the Roman scripts will not cement them. It would be an additional burden.

[1] *Vide* "What Is Woman's Role?", pp. 206-9.

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The learning of the two scripts is the best and the easiest way of at least solving the national language riddle. It opens Hindi and Urdu thought to both Hindu and Muslim boys and girls who will be the men and women of the future generation. The Roman script will be learnt at its proper time, i.e., when our boys and girls are taught the English language, as some undoubtedly will be.

How to Begin?

Q. Congress clamours for unity, but the principles which must be followed to attain that unity, viz., Hindu-Muslim fellow-feeling, no caste distinctions, no hatred towards each other and towards foreigners, co-operative endeavour, all these are presented to audiences through the microphone but not acted upon. Tell me, what are the duties of a Congress member? I would love to join and will put forth all my energy to do my bit for the country.

A. You need not mind what others do or ought to do. Charity begins at home. Let yours begin with yourself. Abolish all caste and religious or race distinctions from your heart. Be true to everyone—Hindu, Muslim, Harijan, English, etc., as you are, I hope, to yourself, and you will find that so far as you are concerned your difficulty will be solved and your example will be copied by others. Be sure that you have banished all hate from your heart, and that you have no political or other objective in loving and serving your neighbour as if he was your own self.

Sevagram, March 12, 1940

Harijan, 16-3-1940

323. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Sevagram, Wardha,
March 12, 1940

CHI. MIRA,

I have your second letter. I have given you all the details I knew of P[1]. You are not to defy any orders. There is no C.D. for anybody as yet. When it is declared those engaged in constructive activities will be unaffected. You are engaged in such. Why do you anticipate my orders? Last time you were engaged in political activities. This time you are not. A satyagrahi is

[1] Presumably, Prithvi Singh

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always prepared for, but does not anticipate, repression. He imputes no evil to his opponent. Here is an interruption.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6451. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 10046

324. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 12, 1940

CHI. VIJAYA,

I had your letter from Ambla about Abu. I have already replied[1] to it. Yesterday I got your letter written from Varad. Father[2] is suffering very much. May God release him. I hope he remains perfectly calm. I am leaving for Ramgarh this evening. Ba will remain here. Amritlal has returned from his tour. He must be writing to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. VIJAYABEHN
[C/O] NARANBHAI PATEL
VARAD, *via* BARDOLI, T. V. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7125. Also C.W. 4617. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

325. LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNADAS JAJU

SEVAGRAM,
March 12, 1940

CHI. JAJUJI,

The khadi problem has always been before me right from the beginning. In the past I used to insist that those who do sacrificial spinning must spin a fine count. We had come up to 40 count. Later I stopped insisting on it. The first thing now is that we must revive the practice and, secondly, we must teach

[1] *Vide* p. 309.
[2] Naranbhai Vallabhbhai Patel

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the women spinners and ourselves to spin fine-count yarn of good quality. We should also effect improvements in the means necessary for fine spinning.

An annual conference would of course be a good thing. I see no objection to its being held under the auspices of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Why and where should we search for another body for that purpose? You are right in what you say about the expenses. The centre must not bear them. The province which wishes to do so may bear them. The delegates' expenses, if any, should be borne by the respective provinces. This will ensure greater selflessness. Communicate these fresh conditions and reply to all those who have asked for [the conference]. We will decide the venue after we hear from them. I will try to attend.

Replacing Kishorelal by Gopabandhu Babu[1] will be all right.

I should like to point out the following, if not more, for research.[2]

(1) The problem, of how to popularize khadi, etc., is there, no doubt.

(2) Is there any necessary connection between village crafts like spinning, etc., and ahimsa? If there is, what is the nature of that connection?

(3) What are the crafts which cannot be carried on without ahimsa? And what are the ones in which violence is unavoidable? Or is there no such distinction?

(4) Does India have any special gift in regard to ahimsa?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

[1] Gopabandhu Chaudhri
[2] This sentence is in Hindi.

326. DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES[1]

SEVAGRAM,
[*March 12, 1940*][2]

[Q.] What started you on your career of leadership?

[A.] It came to me, unsought, unasked. I do not know, though, what sort of leader I am, and whether what I am doing is leadership or service. But whatever it is, it came to me unasked.

But the friends who came were sure that they were leaders, and they asked for guidance as leaders of Christian thought.

All I can say is that there should be less of theology and more of truth in all that you say and do.

Will you kindly explain it?

How can I explain the obvious? Amongst agents of the many untruths that are propounded in the world one of the foremost is theology. I do not say that there is no demand for it. There is a demand in the world for many a questionable thing. But even those who have to do with theology as part of their work have to survive their theology. I have two good Christian friends[3] who gave up theology and decided to live the gospel of Christ.

Are you sure that no great result has come through your own study of Jesus?

Why? There is no doubt that it has come, but not, let me tell you, through theology or through the ordinary interpretation of theologists. For many of them contend that the Sermon on the Mount does not apply to mundane things, and that it was only meant for the twelve disciples. Well, I do not believe this. I think the Sermon on the Mount has no meaning if it is not of vital use in everyday life to everyone.

Is there not to be found a solution to the present-day problems in the teaching of Jesus?

[1] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "Occasional Notes".

[2] The discussion took place on March 12, the day Gandhiji left for Ramgarh.

[3] Samuel E. Stokes and C. F. Andrews

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Well, you are now dragging me in deeper waters, and you will drown me.

What is the present trend of the thought of young India?

It would take a brave and knowing man to answer this question. But I must tell you that you have overstayed your time already.[1] And if you go on questioning and cross-questioning me, I dare say you will floor me without being any the wiser for having done so.

Harijan, 23-3-1940

327. CABLE TO CARL HEATH

March [*13*][2],*1940*

CARL HEATH
FRIENDS HOUSE, EUSTON, LONDON

YOUR LETTER[3]. CONGRESS DOES NOT DICTATE. CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OR EQUIVALENT INCLUDES ALL MINDS CONGRESS MUSLIM LEAGUE AND PRINCES IF THEY WILL COME AS ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES. SUCH ASSEMBLY ITSELF INVOLVES AGREEMENT NOT IMPOSITION. SITUATION NOW BAFFLING WAS NOT SO MONTHS AGO. HOLD CONGRESS ATTITUDE HONEST REASONABLE ANSWERS PRESENT REQUIREMENTS. NO OBJECTION PRELIMINARY SMALL MEETING REPRESENTATIVES. DIFFICULTY WHO WILL CHOOSE THEM. WE ALL WANT SETTLEMENT BUT OMENS POINT CONTRARIWISE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1035

[1] Gandhiji had promised the missionaries five minutes although he was busy preparing to leave for Ramgarh.

[2] The source has "March 14". However, from the reference to this cable in the letter to Agatha Harrison dated March 13 it is evident that this was drafted on March 13 and despatched on March 14 from Hazaribagh.

[3] *Vide* "Another Englishman's Letter", pp. 340-3.

328. LETTER TO CARL HEATH

ON TRAIN TO RAMGARH,
March 13, 1940

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have read yours[1] of 23rd February many times.

There should never be any difference of opinion between us, for there is complete heart contact and agreement as to the end and the means. If therefore there is any difference left, it can be due only to an incomplete appreciation of facts.

The Congress does not dictate or claim to be infallible. It does, however, deny dictatorship to the Muslim League, for example, and even dares to deny it to the British Government though as a matter of fact the latter is the dictator. Hence if the British Government will not resign the dictatorship, the Congress has perforce to use its only non-violent sanction to dislodge it from the position it should never have occupied.

What does the Congress ask? It asks that all the interested parties appoint a tribunal which cannot err as to what is right, viz., a constituent assembly of representatives elected on the basis of adult suffrage or an equivalent. Independence or even dominion status of the sincere type means nothing if it does not mean self-determination by the people of India. The minorities represented on the Assembly will practically dictate their own safeguards. Neither the Congress nor the Muslim League can be allowed to obstruct the proceedings of such an elected Assembly. Whoever does, adopts the role of a dictator.

There remain the Princes. They are free to come if they are elected not by the common vote but by the vote of their [own][2] people on the basis of adult suffrage. Pray remember they are a creation of the British Government. The treaties that are adverse to the rights of the people have no value but the Congress has not suggested any breach of treaty obligations. The page of British History in India is soiled with narratives of broken treaties, pledges and promises. But I personally recognize the British Government's difficulty in the matter. They have raised a

[1] *Vide* "Another Englishman's Letter", pp. 340-3.
[2] Illegible in the source

monster, they cannot all of a sudden abolish him. There[fore] I have said: 'Deal with British India only.' The British Government have without reference to the Princes given to Provinces, i.e., British India, not real autonomy but a kind of glorified municipal self-government as it has turned out to be in practice. Let them now allow the people of British India the right of determining their mode of government through representatives elected as suggested above.

You have said "a small private but very responsible conference of a dozen representative Indian men work out to agreement[1] the main points of the desired constitution". The suggestion was discussed by the Viceroy. The difficulty is who will select the men? Anything short of elected men will lead to nothing new in the present artificial atmosphere. Such a committee will naturally be elected by the larger constituent assembly.

What I have said can only be done by agreement, never by dictation. The question shorn of all camouflage resolves itself into this. Are the British Government prepared to make a declaration to convene at the earliest opportunity, not later than the termination of the war, a constituent assembly of representatives elected on the basis of adult suffrage or an equivalent for the purpose of determining the mode of the Government of India including Princes' India, if possible, and without if they won't agree? Pending the convening of such an assembly the Government of India will be conducted, as far as possible, as if it was responsible to the Central Assembly without the official[2] bloc and the Viceroy's Council shall contain a majority of elected representatives from the Assembly.

If in all I have said above you see dictation or want of the spirit of accommodation or disinclination to recognize British difficulty, you will please say so and tell me in what way the test fails and I shall try to give you satisfaction. There is no desire on the part of responsible Congressmen to pick a quarrel with the British Government. On the contrary there is keen desire to explore every means of conciliation.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1034

[1] This should perhaps read: "work out by agreement"; *vide* also p. 341.

[2] The source, however, has "non-official".

329. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

ON THE TRAIN,
March 13, 1940

MY DEAR AGATHA,

A cable is going to friend Carl Heath in answer to his letter. I enclose copy of my letter[1] and cable[2].

Things are sliding. I am trying hard but perhaps the slide is not preventible. They are afraid to part with power. I would however ask you not to worry. I am not. If we act rightly, we need not be anxious about results. After all we don't control them. So long as the Princes and the Muslim League are put forth as obstacles, there can be no meeting-ground. The Princes are a new creation. They were never before brought into the picture. The Muslim League with its impossible demands cannot be allowed to interfere with the progress of the country. There are many private organizations. But they do not count, for they, more or less, support the Congress. What more can be said or done to placate them than that their duly elected representatives should determine their safeguards? The war preoccupation is there. But the Indian claim is part of the war cares[3]. You accuse the Congress of ungratefulness because it raises a legitimate issue; well, what can I say? Am I to repent of my having taken up a high stand? Can the Congress pretend to have the non-violence it has not? But I must not bother you with the troubles here. You have enough there. I know you are doing all you can and I am happy over the thought. Charlie is doing well.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1516

[1] &[2] *Vide* the two preceding items.
[3] The source has "care".

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330. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,
March 13, 1940

BA,

I did not at all like leaving you. Follow Sushila's instructions as regards your medicine and food. I slept a great deal on the way. There wasn't much disturbance at the stations. There are about twelve girls with me from the Mahila Ashram. Do not worry about me.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

331. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

March 13, 1940

CHI. BABUDI,

Anand[1] must be fine. You can safely carry him and go out. Sushila may help you to carry him. The child's feet and stomach should be properly covered. You should go out for walks twice a day. Shakaribehn also must go for walks. Give Ba as much of your company as possible, sing *bhajans* to her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10027. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

332. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

ON THE TRAIN,
March 13, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I am not often guilty of working beyond my strength. I mean ahimsa does not permit working beyond limits. One who knows no limits knows no ahimsa. I too have my shortcomings.

[1] Addressee's son

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It is certainly one's duty to speak pleasant words; but this entails a risk of slipping into untruth. I have a habit of speaking pleasant truth, it is a good habit. That is why I wrote of the possibility of my overdoing it. Is this enough?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4340

333. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

RAMGARH,
March 14, 1940

The news of the death of Sir Michael O'Dwyer[2] and of the injuries to Lord Zetland, Lord Lamington and Sir Louis Bane has caused me deep pain. I offer my condolences to the deceased's family, and hope that the injured will soon recover. I regard this act as one of insanity. Such acts have been proved to be injurious to the causes for which they are committed. I hope this will not be allowed to affect political judgment.[3]

Harijan, 23-3-1940

334. SPEECH AT KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES EXHIBITION

MAZHARPURI, RAMGARH,
March 14, 1940

Opening the Exhibition . . . Mahatma Gandhi said:

I believe through khadi we can make the villagers of India self-conscious and self-sufficient and give them such strength that they will be able to take steps for their uplift.[4]

[1] This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "An Insane Act".

[2] Formerly Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. He was shot dead by Udham Singh on March 13, 1940, at a meeting of the East India Association in Caxton Hall, London.

[3] The Congress Working Committee, which met at Ramgarh from March 15 to 19, passed the following resolution:

"The Working Committee has learnt with deep regret of the assassination of Sir Michael O'Dwyer and the wounding of Marquess of Zetland and others by a person said to be an Indian. The Committee does not attach any political significance to this unfortunate act of violence. Nevertheless it wishes to reiterate its conviction that all such acts are injurious to the national cause."

[4] The following paragraph is from *Harijan.*

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You can show the villagers that they have in their possession crafts that can stand the invasion of bombs from aeroplanes. But they are ignorant of their treasures which have been mostly looted, and are on the brink of extinction. We have to awaken them to a sense of those treasures and dispel their ignorance and darkness. That is the function of these exhibitions.

Mahatma Gandhi . . . paid a tribute to Mr. Shankerlal Banker of A.I.S.A. who had worked with zeal for the improvement of khaddar and village industries. Expressing his appreciation of the numerous exhibits, he declared that India had made an onward march with regard to cottage industries. Despite the forces of obstruction good progress had been maintained. The economic potentialities of village industries were indeed very great.

He urged that villagers should be enlightened with regard to the position obtaining in the world at large and how they were being exploited. Rich people had a great responsibility inasmuch as they could uplift and enrich rural life by supporting village industries. The Congress, for fifty years now, had been actively engaged in rendering such assistance.

No struggle was needed for swaraj, it could be obtained very easily and peacefully as also communal unity, he added.

Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the need for educating the villagers in making them conscious of their own potentialities. If they had been rendered unemployed or been exploited, it was mostly due to ignorance, which must be removed and the people made to understand that they need not live always as they had been in the past and unable to get out of the Slough of Despond. They should be made to know something of the outside world and how their land was being exploited. The most effective way to prevent such exploitation lay in reviving the village industries, specially the charkha. The Congress, for the last fifty years, attempted to uplift the villages. These gave birth to the Khadi Sangh and the Talimi Sangh. The former propagated the cult of the charkha while the Talimi Sangh illustrated how communal unity could be achieved.[1]

The true Indian civilization is in the Indian villages. The modern city civilization you find in Europe and America, and in a handful of our cities which are copies of the Western cities and which were built for the foreigner, and by him. But they cannot last. It is only the handicraft civilization that will endure and stand the test of time. But it can do so only if we can correlate the intellect with the hand. The late Madhusudan Das used to say that our peasants and workers had, by reason of working with bullocks, become like bullocks; and he was right. We have to

[1] The following paragraph is from *Harijan*.

lift them from the estate of the brute to the estate of man, and that we can do only by correlating the intellect with the hand. Not until they learn to work intelligently and make something new every day, not until they are taught to know the joy of work, can we raise them from their low estate.

A Bombay or a Calcutta did not represent true India, but it was the seven lakhs of villages that were spread throughout the country which were real India. The villagers must be made to realize their own inherent strength and capacities and taught to depend on themselves for their vital needs. They should be made to produce their own food and clothing, which could be done by successfully working out the programmes of khadi and village industries.

Proceeding, Mahatma Gandhi laid particular emphasis on the Talimi Sangh (basic education), which he claimed could solve the communal problem. As a matter of fact the working of the scheme so far had clearly demonstrated that this end could be achieved. The scheme of basic education, he asserted, was not inspired by any partisan motive. It was absolutely non-communal. The scheme had been often criticized by various people from different points of view, but he was convinced that this scheme was capable of bringing about complete harmony between the Hindus and Muslims.

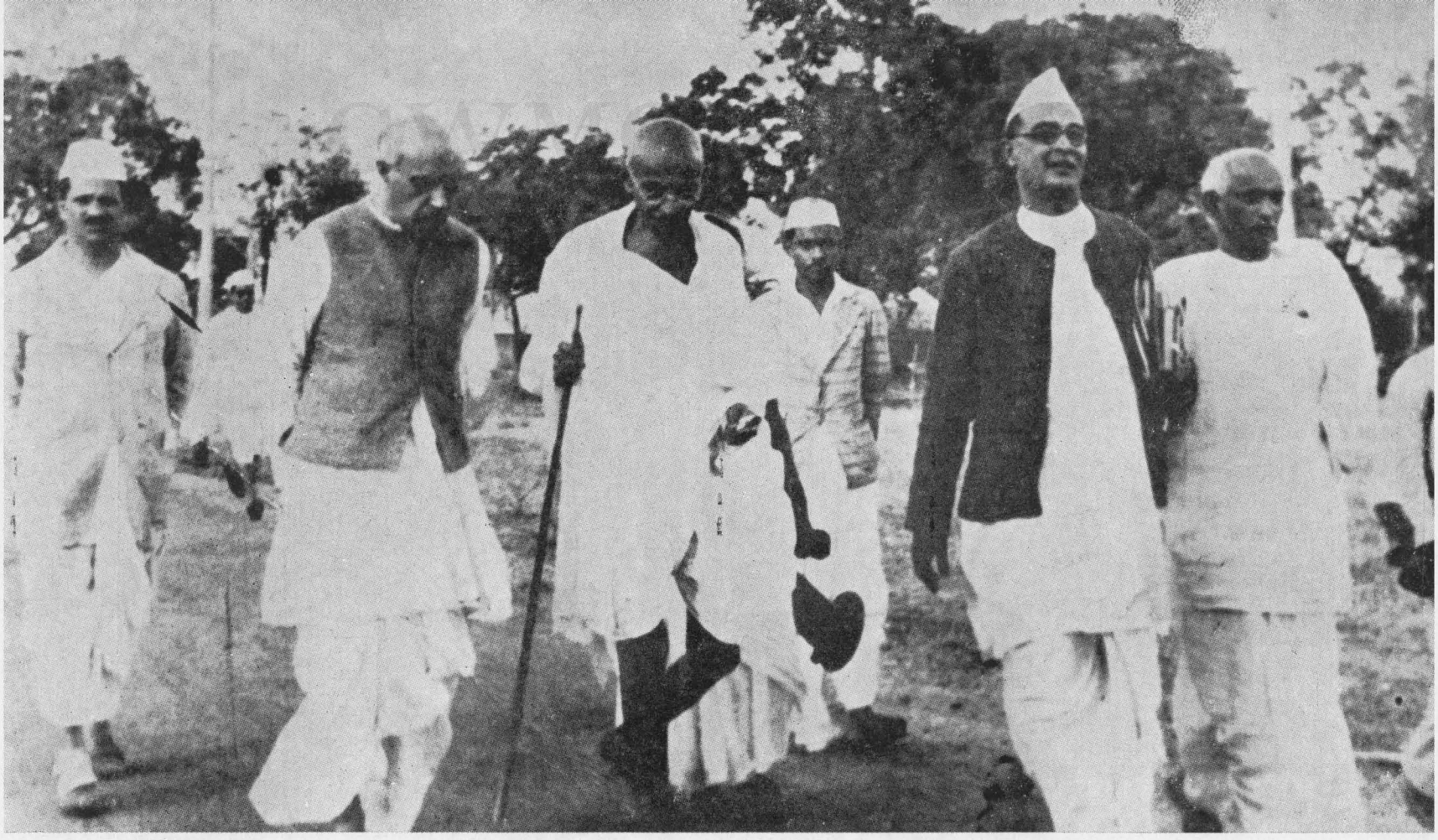
Continuing his speech, Gandhiji said, any reform in India must begin with the villages. . . .

Gandhiji conceded that village crafts could not be exported. He did not want it. He wanted to make the poor villagers get food and clothing. Since 1919, the message of khadi had been placed before the country. The Charkha Sangh, the village uplift scheme as also the new Talimi Sangh were the outcome of the same. He hoped people would devote more time to the exhibition.

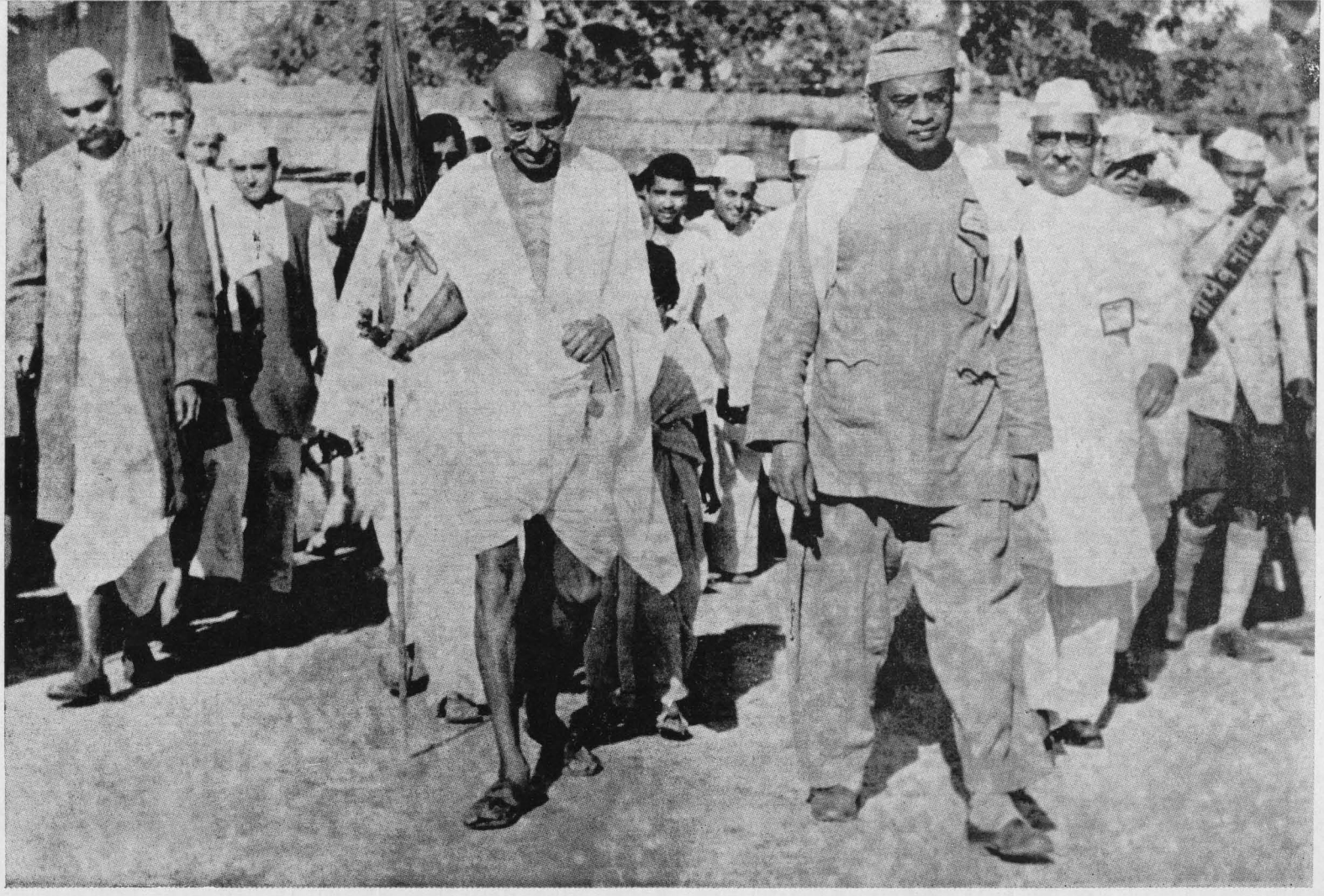
Reiterating the importance of village industries, Mahatma Gandhi earnestly pleaded that everyone in this country should take to them seriously for the emancipation of India.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-3-1940, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1940

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ON WAY TO WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING AT WARDHA



WITH DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD AT RAMGARH CONGRESS

335. DISCUSSION AT WORKING COMMITTEE[1]

RAMGARH,
March 15, 1940

GANDHIJI: If some such statement[2] is made on behalf of the Congress it will help to educate the masses. It will place before the country a picture of the kind of freedom we aim at. . . .[3]

Gandhiji dropped the proposal. He, however, still held that a declaration would not be amiss in the present situation. It may do us good to tell the people what the meaning and content of our freedom is.

Gandhiji asked the members of the Committee to enlighten him on three questions, viz., (1) what should the Congress stand be if they were confronted with the demand for a division of India into Hindu India and Muslim India, (2) was the country prepared for civil disobedience, (3) what was their precise conception of Constituent Assembly.[4]

GANDHIJI: I want to give you a picture of what I understand by Constituent Assembly. In the transition period we will lay down no conditions for the British Government. The army will remain and so will their administrative machinery. There will be an agreement with the British Government before and after the Constituent Assembly. If we are in a minority we will accept the decisions of the Constituent Assembly, whatever they be, for discipline's sake if for nothing else. If they want the army to remain, we shall not resist. I may not even press for the withdrawal of the army if a minority wants it. If impossible demands are put forward, we will have to submit to them. If corrupt men come and spoil the show we are helpless. The larger the scale of franchise for the Constituent Assembly the better. Mutual goodwill

[1] The meeting was attended by Abul Kalam Azad, Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Jamnalal Bajaj, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Bhulabhai Desai, Shankerrao Deo, Profulla Chandra Ghosh, Harekrushna Mehtab and J. B. Kripalani. Rajendra Prasad presided. C. Rajagopalachari and Gandhiji were present by special invitation. The Working Committee met from March 15 to 19, 1940.

[2] Earlier, Gandhiji had read out a draft resolution sent by Jayaprakash Narayan, for the text of which, *vide* "Jayaprakash's Picture", 14-4-1940.

[3] The proposal was opposed by Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel.

[4] This was followed by speeches of Bhulabhai Desai, P. C. Ghosh, Pattabhi Sitaramayya and others including Rajendra Prasad.

is necessary for the Constituent Assembly to come into being and function efficiently. Without this the British Government may very well use the Princes and the Muslims as counterweight against us.

All that I have heard from you has strengthened my belief that the country is not ready for civil disobedience. I do not see much chance of improving our preparations. Whatever has been done in U.P. is good but I cannot evolve non-violence from the awakening created there by Jawaharlalji. Khadi will create non-violent strength in the people. I have no doubt we can get complete independence through non-violence. I can fight a whole world with a small disciplined Congress, but the big Congress we have is unwieldy. If the C. D. is started, 'disobedience' will remain and 'civil' disappear. As things are, I dare not start C. D. I may find a way out if [my] present relation with the Congress is severed. I cannot leave my programme. I am not obstinate. I am given no alternative programme. I cannot produce a non-violent army from the agitation that is created by propaganda. The people have to be disciplined by work. Such an army will not go astray. Non-violence in the masses can be easily created.

Sir Maurice Gwyer said to Bhulabhai in an interview with him that Gandhiji has grown stiffer about the goal. It is true. I do not find any honest response from the other side.

Inside the country I have my difficulties. I find no suitable material for fight. I shall not start a fight unless my conditions are fulfilled. I don't want people to be crushed. If a fight is launched without proper preparations, it is the poor who will suffer. I had to withdraw from Rajkot as there was no internal strength. Whatever strength there was, was theatrical in character. My withdrawal was a great service to the people of Rajkot; but for it there would have been reaction and suffering. I don't want to do anything which will bring about demoralization. If the struggle is started and discipline is slack, and every group does what it likes there will be disaster and the cause will suffer. Everybody admits that there is indiscipline in the Congress and yet everybody participates in it. I don't mind if people get demoralized on account of waiting. That will be a lesser evil.

An alternative occurs to me. I should be freed from the burden of my connection with you and you go ahead. I will keep myself in reserve. If necessary I may join later.[1] I may be a

[1] The report in *Harijan* here adds: "It would free them from what might be acting upon them as an incubus, and it would at the same time leave him free to pursue his experiment of ahimsa more intensively and without thought of the millions who looked to him for direction."

broken reed and may land you into unexpected troubles. I might not begin the movement for an indefinite length of time, and I might stop it abruptly. However much you may agree with me, your ahimsa does not go as far as mine. And if after twenty years of practice of it I have not been able to win the affection and trust of the Mussalmans, my ahimsa must be of a very poor quality indeed. Why not then let me further examine myself, and make further researches in non-violence?

Turning to the Maulana he said:

I have not the slightest doubt that the Congress and the nation can have nothing to lose and everything to gain by the step. There is no question of my distrusting you or other members of the Working Committee or the nation. It is a question of my distrust in myself. I am sure that, if you release me, I may be able to give civil disobedience a purer and a nobler shape.

But the Maulana demurred. He somehow could not reconcile himself to the proposal. "You must not forget," he said, "that it was at your command that I accepted to serve this year, and you cannot now forsake me. One cannot think of civil disobedience without you."

RAJAJI: Is civil disobedience the only way? Can we not try another method? If we think our strength is small we must relate our demand to our strength.

GANDHIJI: I have not given up the idea of resistance but I don't find any suitable atmosphere for it. The man who has tried the experiment throughout his whole life will certainly try it once again. But I have to carry on my shoulders the burden of the Congress organization. I will not think in terms of this organization if you release me. I can start struggle when I find my men ready. I may even do it alone at a pinch. This is what I did at Champaran[1]. I did not have behind me then the prestige and the influence of the Congress. I am giving you my mind as it is necessary that you should know my position. The resolution is not yet passed.

MAULANA SAHIB: Your always telling the people that they are not ready for a fight demoralizes them.

GANDHIJI: If it does I cannot help. I cannot lower the demand, from the people or the Government. We are asking for a Constituent Assembly today. I am no more talking in terms of dominion status. That has not been the Congress position. That

[1] In 1917

was my position. The Britishers are unwilling to go even so far. I am however giving up that position now.[1]

Wardha Office Satyagraha File, 1940-41. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

336. ANOTHER ENGLISHMAN'S LETTER

Last week I dealt with a letter from a well-known Englishman who is in India[2]. Now I have a letter from a responsible English friend[3] in England, from which I give below all that the readers need to know:

> We are quite certain that no such thing as 'banging the door' has happened. The Government still anxiously desires a settlement to be reached. Even if normally it did not want this, it is bound to do so at the present time, in view of the terrific war in which this country is engaged. The feeling, however, is growing amongst Government people that the Congress is increasingly regarding 'settlement' as meaning what it alone considers right. Apart from the fact that that is not of the nature of a settlement, but rather of a one-sided dictation, I am bound to remind you that a war condition does not increase the liberal-mindedness of men, but on the contrary tends to strengthen a certain fear and rigidity in politics, when men become of necessity concentrated on the terrible effort in hand, and more and more unable to allow for opposition.
>
> Hence, if the Congress rejects conciliation and follows a line of immovable opposition, it is more than probable that the British War Cabinet will do the same. The time for peaceful settlement will pass —a disaster for both India and Great Britain. I need not labour this. Its consequences are obvious. But I may say that it is felt here, by many most sympathetic to the cause of freedom in India, that the Congress is not wise in taking so rigid a position and ignoring the grave and indeed enormous problems Great Britain is facing that make so difficult a satisfactory answer to the Congress claim.
>
> India claims her freedom in the sense, first, of self-determination. Here the question is asked: What is this Government of India that *all* India wants—Congress Party, Muslims and other communities, and Princes included? The Congress demands a Constituent Assembly to determine

[1] The meeting was then addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad and C. Rajagopalachari.

[2] *Vide* "For Englishmen", pp. 313-8.

[3] *Vide* "Letter to Carl Heath", pp. 330-1.

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this. But it seems clear that before such an Assembly could usefully attempt to tackle this question, with any hope of reaching agreement, prior work has to be done. Should not, first, a small, private but very responsible conference of a dozen representative Indian men work out to agreement the main points of the desired constitution?

Given that this small conference was representative, and was accepted by both India and Great Britain as a responsible body, and given the reaching of reasonable agreement, it is practically certain that the British Government would accept its decision. And it is to be supposed that a national assembly of all India, whatever the minor modifications it might desire, would substantially do so too.

This would not be all that the Congress High Command is envisaging. But unless the Congress is prepared for 'war' there must be some meeting of the views of other parties, and some willingness to meet the *de facto* Government on procedure.

There is a great desire and willingness here to reach a solution. Everything demands it, and there never was a greater amount of discussion over British-Indian relations than at the present time. On the other hand, there is developing a certain grim determination not to accept dictation from what, it is otherwise agreed of course, is the major political party in India,—but whose decision can neither oust Great Britain from participation in the solution, nor release her from treaties, undertakings and promises.

The gravity of the situation now is such that I most deeply pray you not to turn from the wonderful path of patient seeking of understanding that has always been yours and return to a past situation of a kind we both equally hate.

May I add as a long friend of Indian freedom my deep conviction that this struggle must and can be ended in friendship and equality—accepting all the implications of both these words. For this, England has to return to India the domination and control she has exercised, not asking a price; and India has to claim England's *consent*, not demand her surrender. So only can a lasting peace be reached. But if this is so, the steps thereto must be *agreed* steps.

I can well believe that "the Government people" did not wish to bang the door, but Lord Zetland's interview left no room for doubt. These were his words:

Referring to Mr. Gandhi's statement that, if the British Government would leave the framing of the constitution to Indians themselves, the questions of defence, minorities, Princes and European interests would automatically be resolved, Lord Zetland said that, while he greatly admired Mr. Gandhi's optimism, he was unhappily quite unable to share

it and felt that, as long as the leaders of the Congress maintained their present attitude, the obstacles in the way of an honourable understanding would be greatly increased.

Lord Zetland said that it was unfortunate that Congress spokesmen made a fetish of the word 'independence', since he was convinced that this had created a false impression in Great Britain of the aim which the vast majority of Indians had in view. "That they desire freedom to govern themselves I do not doubt; that they contemplate India swinging from the orbit of British Commonwealth, I do not for a moment believe. In a mad world, they are far too appreciative of the protection afforded to them by the armed strength of Great Britain on land and sea."

My correspondent is a careful student of contemporary events in India. He chooses his words before using them. Yet he has evidently felt unable to correct the impression in Government circles that the Congress "is increasingly regarding 'settlement' as meaning what it alone considers right". The Congress has never taken up an uncompromising attitude and within the four corners of its demand has always shown its readiness for a 'settlement'. Its demand is unequivocal. It says to the British Government: 'If you really mean to part with power and your war is not for consolidating your Empire but for democracy all round, then you will declare India a free country and let a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage decide upon the form and content of her own Government. No doubt there are difficulties, e.g., about defence, about minorities, and the Princes. The burden of solving these difficulties will be shifted from you to the Constituent Assembly. If the Assembly cannot solve these satisfactorily, it will prove its insolvency. You will have done your duty.' Surely in this there is no one-sided dictation.

The writer reminds me of the war condition and suggests in effect that it does not improve one's temper. I should say that a problem like India is a direct issue in the war; perhaps the fortunes of war will turn upon the conduct of nationalist India. People engaged in a war do not lose temper over matters which affect the fortunes of war.

I have no difficulty in endorsing the suggestion that some work prior to the Constituent Assembly should be done. The writer suggests "a very responsible conference of a dozen representatives". The difficulty is of choosing the representatives. Who will choose them? They cannot command confidence unless they are duly elected. Such a committee, so far as I can see, can only be appointed by the members of the Constituent Assembly. I think

the day is gone when any party worth the name will accept as representatives Government nominees as was done at the Round Table Conference.

The Congress has to be and is prepared for 'war'. But it wants to avoid 'war'. It will not wantonly act so as to be the cause of endless suffering to the people. The Congress is ever ready to "meet the *de facto* Government on procedure". Is the latter willing and ready to recognize India as a free country? The Congress history shows that it has always met and is today ready to meet the views of other parties on most matters. What it is not ready to do is to alter the goal. It must be content to be reduced to a hopeless minority for the sake of preserving its goal. It is a trust which it cannot abandon without being disloyal to its past. The end of non-violent 'war' is always an agreement, never dictation, much less humiliation of the opponent. There can be no question of the Congress asking or expecting Britain to dishonour just obligations or treaties.

What, however, I miss is a sincere desire on the part of Britain to do unto India what she would wish done to her if the position were reversed. The Congress is unreasonable, if it is wrong for it to refuse to abate the passion for freedom for which Dadabhai laboured, which Tilak taught India to regard as her birthright, and for which thousands of men and women have cheerfully suffered imprisonment and loss of their possessions. If it is allowed as a worthy passion, the Congress has no fear as to the verdict of being regarded as eminently reasonable in everything else.

RAMGARH, March 16, 1940

Harijan, 23-3-1940

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337. QUESTION BOX

PRINCES

Q. You have, I fear, evaded the question of the Princes. Generally you go straight to your subject, but somehow or other you seem to have walked round this subject.

A. Apparently, but not really, there is some truth in the taunt. The fact is that the Princes have never before now been presented as a difficulty. They are a new arrow from the British quiver. It is British India that is fighting for freedom. The States people are fighting their own battle in their own States against overwhelming odds. The people in the States and in British India are one. For them the artificial boundaries do not exist. But for the administrators the boundaries are very real. British law has allowed the Princes to regard as foreigners people from British India going to the States or people from one State to another. And yet the Princes exist only on British sufferance. They cannot move without British permission. Their heirs have to be approved by the British Raj. Their tuition is also under the same supervision. They can be deposed at will. Thus so far as the British control is concerned, they are worse off than the ordinary British subject. But so far as their people are concerned, the Princes have unlimited control over them. They can imprison them at will and even put them to death. Theoretically British Raj has a duty by the people also. But it is rarely exercised. Therefore the people of the States labour under a double handicap. It must be clear to you from the foregoing narrative that the Congress cannot influence the Princes except through the British Government. Indeed, the latter will not permit any real approach to the Princes. I personally do not desire the extinction of the Princely order. But I do want the Princes to recognize the signs of the times and shed a large part of their autocracy. In spite of the powerful British bayonet, the march of the people of both the Indias cannot be stayed. I am hoping that the combined wisdom of all, including the Princes and the present rulers, will prevent the march from running mad, which it is bound to do unless a smooth passage is made for it. I am putting forth the best non-violent effort I can, but my non-violence, because of my

imperfections, may fail. I ask for the helping hand of those who would see India win her goal without a blood bath.

But if the Princes will not listen, I do not ask for their coercion. Let British India have her independence, and I know, the Princes know, that true freedom of British India means freedom of their people also. For as I have said the two are one. No power on earth can keep them in separation for all time.

Use of Force against Muslims

Q. You talk of complete independence from Britain and at the same time of settling the question of minorities through a Constituent Assembly. This means that, if Muslims do not listen to you, you would want to use British forces to compel them to submit to your will.

A. This question simply ignores my own position and, so far as I know, the Congress position. The Congress cannot want independence and the use of British forces at the same time. But that is not all. The Congress will not coerce Muslims or any minority. That would not be a non-violent approach. The greatest coercion is British coercion. And the Congress is impatient to get out of that coercion. My hope in desiring a Constituent Assembly is that whether the Muslims are represented by the Muslim League mentality or any other, the representatives when they are face to face with the reality will not think of cutting up India according to religions but will regard India as an indivisible whole and discover a national, i.e., Indian solution of even specially Muslim questions. But if the hope is frustrated, the Congress cannot forcibly resist the express will of the Muslims of India. Needless to say the Congress can never seek the assistance of British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force singly or with British assistance on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them for it would still be Indian rule. In other words, the Congress will have only a non-violent approach to every question and difficulty arising. But just as it is possible that Muslim representatives to the Constituent Assembly may wear another hue than that of the Muslim League, it is also possible that the others may be non-Congressmen. In that event, the British will be where they are, only they will be wooed by both the parties alternately and will remain the architects of India's destiny. For then, with the Congress swept away, non-violence will be blown to the winds and naturally the infinitely superior violence of the British aided by the willing co-operation of the wooing party will easily rule India. For

the only force matched against British force is that of non-violence, incomplete though it is, of the Congress.

Neglect of Sanskrit

Q. Do you know that the Patna University has practically tabooed the study of Sanskrit? Do you approve of the step? If you do not, will you express your opinion in *Harijan*?

A. I do not know what the Patna University has done. But I quite agree with you that the study of Sanskrit is being sadly neglected. I belong to a generation which believed in the study of the ancient languages. I do not believe that such a study is a waste of time and effort. I believe it is an aid to the study of modern languages. This is truer of Sanskrit than of any other ancient language so far as India is concerned, and every nationalist should study it because it makes a study of the provincial languages easier than otherwise. It is the language in which our forefathers thought and wrote. No Hindu boy or girl should be without a knowledge of the rudiments of Sanskrit, if he will imbibe the spirit of his religion. Thus the *Gayatri*[1] is untranslatable. No translation can give the music of the original which I hold has a meaning all its own. The *Gayatri* is but one example of what I have said.

Ramgarh, March 17, 1940

Harijan, 23-3-1940

338. NOTES

The London Assassination

Further details that have come through the Press of the assassination of Sir Michael O'Dwyer[2] and the attempted assassination of Lord Zetland, Lord Lamington and Sir Louis Dane confirm my opinion that it was a work of insanity. It is none the less reprehensible on that account. We had our differences with Sir Michael O'Dwyer, but that should not prevent us from being grieved over his assassination or condoling with Lady O'Dwyer and her family. I would like every Indian patriot to share with me the shame of the act and the joy that the lives of the three distinguished Englishmen were saved. We have our grievance against Lord Zetland. We must fight his reactionary policy. But there should be no malice or vindictiveness in our resistance. The papers tell us that the accused acted with

[1] A Vedic *mantra* invoking the creative energy of the sun

[2] *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", p. 334.

amused nonchalance when he faced the court and the spectators. This does not command my admiration. It is to me a sure sign of continuing insanity. The accused is intoxicated with the thought of his bravery. I have known drunken men act with a recklessness of which they would be incapable in a sober state. I understand that extra rum is issued to soldiers who are sent to specially hazardous tasks. What am I to praise, the rum or its after-effect? The word assassin owes its origin to the hasheesh that was administered to the would-be assassins in order to deaden their conscience. This continuing insanity of the accused should fill us with pity and grief.

If we are to fight fairly and squarely, we must, as far as is humanly possible, make every Englishman feel that he is as safe in our midst as he is in his own home. It fills me with shame and sorrow that for some time at least every Indian face in London will be suspect. Is it not possible for us all to realize that the masses will never mount to freedom through murder? I would like every reader of these lines to know that every such act harms our non-violent struggle and therefore to dissociate himself in the secret of his heart and openly from such acts of insanity.

The National Week

From 6th April to 13th April has been observed as the National Week from year to year. On the 6th April 1919 the masses of India found their feet.[1] It was the inauguration of Civil Disobedience. Its non-violent character was signalized by fasting and prayer. Hindus and Muslims fraternized as they had never done before. The vow of swadeshi was taken by tens of thousands. The 13th April 1919 saw the Jallianwala massacre in which Hindu, Muslim and Sikh blood flowed promiscuously. The National Week is observed as a week of self-purification, in which sales of khadi and other products of village industries are organized on a large scale. I have said and I repeat that there is no swaraj for the masses except through khadi and other village crafts. For there is no non-violent disobedience without sustained constructive effort. A living, continuous mass contact is impossible without some constructive programme requiring almost daily contact of the workers with the masses. I hope, therefore, that the forthcoming Week will be celebrated by all earnest workers with due solemnity and with intensive sales of khadi and other products of village handicrafts.

Ramgarh, March 17, 1940

Harijan, 23-3-1940

[1] *Vide* Vol. XV, pp. 183-8.

339. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 17, 1940

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I read your letter as well as your note.[1] I share your unhappiness. I am confident that nothing less can satisfy us on this occasion. I see no defect in my scheme. It is for their good also. Their unwillingness proves that they do not like independence for India. The report about the Princes is intolerable. Who told you that I do not wish to see them? I shall meet them at the slightest hint. The fact is they do not want to see me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am prepared to go to Calcutta for the Seva Sadan, if you so desire.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8035. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

340. SPEECH AT SUBJECTS COMMITTEE[2]

RAMGARH,
March 18, 1940

Since I went out of the Congress at Bombay[3], there has been an understanding between me and the Working Committee that I should not be asked to speak at the A. I. C. C. or the Subjects Committee or the open session, and[4] should be allowed to conserve the little strength that is left in me. I have usually been attending the meetings of the Working Committee. On this occasion, I myself

[1] Both were addressed to Mahadev Desai, wherein among other things the addressee had said: "I had no other business except to press it again on Bapu that in my opinion we are going the wrong way and as the position is very critical, he should reconsider the position in the light of the views held by some of us."

[2] Gandhiji spoke in Hindi.

[3] In October 1934; *vide* Vol. LIX.

[4] *Congress Bulletin* here has: "I should be allowed to serve the country in my own way with whatever strength is left to me."

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suggested that I should address the Subjects Committee and also the delegates. The Working Committee agreed to this and, although I wanted to address you before the resolution[1] was adopted, the Committee suggested that I do so after the resolution was disposed of.

It was my desire to see the faces of you all, and also to give you an opportunity of looking at me and finding out if there had been any change in me since my retirement in Bombay. Fifty years of public life have given me the capacity to read your faces. I have during these years created many institutions, met thousands and tens of thousands of people. Besides, I have been in contact with the Working Committee and many of you have been in correspondence with me.[2] And it should not therefore be difficult for me to get at the back of your minds.[3] But my desire to see you was in order to find out where I was.

You have, I see, made considerable progress in the art of debate and I congratulate you, for in a democratic organization powers of persuasion and a high level of debate are essential. I have also seen that the number of amendments you move has also increased, and it is well that you should all be anxious to press new points of view,[4] though I cannot congratulate you on some of the amendments which were either frivolous or absurd.

You have adopted the resolution practically unanimously as there were only seven or eight dissentients.[5] That adds to my responsibility, for I have been witness to debate. If I had so desired, I should have warned you before voting, but I accepted the suggestion of the Working Committee that I should not address the house before the resolution was passed.

I do not want to reply to what has been said by some of you in the course of the debate. But I do want to say that, though there was a time in my life when I launched movements even if some of my conditions had not been fulfilled, I am now going to be hard, not for the sake of being hard, but because a General who has to lead the army must let the army know his conditions beforehand.

Let me then tell you that I do not see at the present moment conditions propitious for an immediate launching of the campaign. We are hemmed in with difficulties greater than those we had to

[1] *Vide* Appendix VI.

[2] This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin.*

[3] *Congress Bulletin* has: "It should, therefore, not be difficult for me to remember you."

[4] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "So that any point that is not accepted today may be accepted tomorrow."

[5] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "They had every right to do so."

face in the past. They are external and internal. The external difficulties are due to the fact that we have declared unmistakably what we want and the Government have also declared their intentions as clearly as possible. Then there is the fact that the British Government are engaged in a world war and naturally, if we engage them in a fight, we ask for enough trouble. This is the first difficulty.[1]

What, however, appals me is our internal difficulties. I have often said that external difficulties need never frighten a satyagrahi. On the contrary, he flourishes on external difficulties and faces them with redoubled zeal and vigour. Today the situation is almost the reverse. Our external difficulties do not find us stronger and more united. Our internal difficulties are increasing. Our Congress registers are full of bogus members and members who have swelled them because they know that getting into the Congress means getting to power. Those who therefore never before thought of entering the Congress have come into it and corrupted it. And how can we prevent people from coming into a democratic organization because they come from selfish motives? We have not that discipline, and not the strength and purity of public opinion which would compel such people to stay out.

And this strength and purity cannot come so long as we approach the primary members only once in a year for the vote. There is no discipline in our ranks, they have been divided up into groups which strive to gain more and more power. Non-violence as between ourselves does not seem to us to be necessary.[2] Wherever I go I hear the same complaint. My conception of democracy is not the formation of groups quarrelling with one another to such an extent as would destroy the organization itself. There may be groups, but they should strengthen and not weaken and destroy the organization.

Ours has been both a democratic organization and a fighting one, ever since we reorganized it in 1920.[3] We have used even military language, though in a non-violent sense. Well, then, I want to repeat what I have said times without number that, if you will be soldiers in my army, understand that there is no room for democracy in that organization. The army may be a part of a democratic organization, but there can be no democracy in it, as there can be none in its ranks, as there is none in our various

[1] This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin.*

[2] The following two sentences are from *Congress Bulletin.*

[3] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "Our fight is not yet over."

organizations, A. I. S. A., A.I.V.I.A. and so on. In an army the General's word is law, and his conditions cannot be relaxed.

I am supposed to be your General,[1] but I do not know a more feeble General in history. I have no sanctions.[2] My only sanction is the love and affection in which you hold me. But it has its weakness as it has its strength. I know that you love me. Does your love translate itself into action?[3] If it does not, if it does not mean ever-increasing discipline and ever-increasing response to what I say, let me declare to you that I cannot launch civil disobedience, and you must select another General. You cannot make me your General on your terms.[4] You must fulfil the conditions set down in the Independence Pledge. You must allow me to tell you that if you do not fulfil those conditions it will not be possible for me to launch a struggle. . . .You cannot compel me to lead you against my will. When you appoint me as your General, you must obey my command. There can be no argument about it. Know, therefore, that I will insist on my conditions. They are inexorable, and if you do not observe them, I will automatically withdraw.

The General of a military army insists on strict discipline. I go on arguing with you, because my only sanction is love. I say to you, therefore, that unless you accept my conditions, unless you have faith in them as you have in me, you should not think of going to jail. If you will go to jail, you have to pay the price.[5] Ours is a civil fight, and imprisonment as a civil prisoner has got to be earned by strict observance of the programme. For thieves and dacoits also fill the jails but they do not carry the country to freedom.

Well, then, I laid down the conditions in 1920 and have never ceased to repeat them. You may not believe in the programme, you may have grown wiser since then, but I have not. My faith in it has increased with the years. I see more virtues in it than I saw before.[6]

[1] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "It should not mean that I should keep you in the dark regarding my feelings."

[2] This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin.*

[3] *Congress Bulletin* here has: "In one way it is a great thing but in another sense it can also be worthless. I can say I cherish love for all in my heart. Perhaps you also do so but your love must be active."

[4] The following five sentences are from *Congress Bulletin.*

[5] *Congress Bulletin* here has: "For love must be characterized by patience. I have heard friends criticizing the charkha. I know you are all ready to go to jail but you must earn the right and pay the price for going to jail. You will not be going to jail as criminals."

[6] *Congress Bulletin* here has: "The more I think about non-violence, the greater the virtues I find in it."

I turned a rebel against this Government in 1919, but before that I was as loyal to it as any Britisher.[1] It is that unique loyalty that gave me the unique power of civil disobedience, and the unquenchable spirit of search. I therefore go on making my experiments and also go on declaring my mistakes whenever I discover them. I am an erring mortal like you.[2] I have never even in my dream thought that I was a *maha-atma* (great soul) and that others were *alpa-atma* (little souls). We are all equal before our Maker—Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, worshippers of one God. Why then do we fight among ourselves?

We are all brothers—even the Quaid-e-Azam is my brother. I have meant all that I have said about him, never has a frivolous word escaped my lips, and I say that I want to win him over. A speaker said that I would not fight until I had won him over, and he was right.[3] There was a time when there was not a Muslim whose confidence I did not enjoy. Today I have forfeited that confidence and most of the Urdu Press pours abuse on me.[4] But I am not sorry for it. It only confirms me in my belief that there is no swaraj without a settlement with the Mussalmans.

You will perhaps ask, in that case, why I am talking of a fight. I do so in order to have a Constituent Assembly which means agreement and settlement. But if the Mussalmans will have nothing to do with it, I will understand that there is no settlement.[5] I am also a reader of the Koran like them, and I will tell them that the Koran makes no distinction between the Hindus and the

[1] *Congress Bulletin* here reports: "I have been an outlaw since 1918. Before that I was so loyal to the Empire that I wrote to Lord Chelmsford that I longed to have the same loyalty towards the Empire as a Britisher has in his heart. I wrote those words because I am a believer in truth. Truth is my God and I could not have written anything else if I wanted to be true to myself."

[2] *Congress Bulletin* here has: "You may have other ways than truth and non-violence but mine is the same old path and, being just a human being like you, I also commit mistakes."

[3] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "I would be happy indeed if he could keep me in his pocket."

[4] *Congress Bulletin* here reports: "I do not read all that appears in the Urdu Press; but perhaps I get a lot of abuses there."

[5] *Congress Bulletin* here has: "If Muslims who came to the Constituent Assembly through Muslim votes declare that there is nothing common between Hindus and Muslims, then alone would I give up hope, but even then I would argue with them because they read the Koran and I have also studied something of that holy book."

Mussalmans.[1] But if they feel that they should have the Heaven without the Hindus, I will not grudge it to them.

I have no ill will towards Englishmen. When I heard that Lord Zetland was wounded, my heart was wounded. That is my temperament.[2] I therefore always work with and for goodwill for them. That I want to destroy British imperialism is another matter, but I want to do so by converting those who are associated with it.[3] If non-violence has the power that I attribute to it, it is sure to react on the opponent. If it does not, the fault will be mine, not that of non-violence.

You must therefore understand that you have to deal with a dangerous man who will land you in unexpected situations. Compromise is part and parcel of my nature. I will go to the Viceroy fifty times, if I feel like it. I went to Lord Reading whilst non-co-operation was going on.[4] I would not only go to the Viceroy when invited, but I would even seek opportunities to go to him, if necessary. You must know that, if I do so, I do it in order to strengthen our cause and not weaken it. It happened so with General Smuts. At the last moment I telephoned to him.[5] He put the receiver down in anger, but I thrust myself on him. As a result he relented and I was in a stronger position. Today we are friends. The basis of my fight is love for the opponent.[6] I could not have fought the Dutch and the English[7] without love in my heart for them, and without a readiness for compromise. But my compromise will never be at the cost of the cause or of the country.

One of the amendments was to the effect that the word 'mass' be inserted before 'civil disobedience'. Well, if it is not mass civil disobedience is it to be the civil disobedience of a handful? In that case I should not have come to you.[8] You might perhaps not be taking these things seriously, but in my mind there is no other thought. My mind is wholly concentrated on trying this great experiment with your help and support, because it will not only benefit

[1] *Congress Bulletin* here reports: "I will tell them that God makes no distinction between Hindus and Muslims."

[2] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "These are my ways. You may call them weakness. If you want me you must understand this."

[3] *Congress Bulletin* here has: "I fight British imperialism but I have no quarrel with those who run the imperialist machine. I do not want to destroy them but I want to bring about a change in them."

[4] On May 13 and 14, 1921; *vide* Vol. XX, p. 463.

[5] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "to try and see if the fight could be abandoned."

[6] This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin.*

[7] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "in South Africa".

[8] The following two sentences are from *Congress Bulletin.*

India but the whole world. It is the thought of mass civil disobedience that keeps my mind awake all the twenty-four hours. Why should a man of 70 trifle with a thing of this kind?

Therefore let me tell you that there is no civil disobedience until I feel that you are ready. You have therefore to purify every Congress Committee and make it a satyagrahi unit. To that extent it will have to cease to be a democracy, because my word will be law. But if it does not become such a unit, millions of our dumb countrymen will be sacrificed. None of my campaigns has crushed or ruined the masses. They have increased their stature, and it is in order to take it still higher that I want to live. There was in the earlier campaigns enough of violence of thought and word, but there was non-violence in act, and therefore the masses were saved. I would not light-heartedly imperil those masses today, and that is why I insist on strictest non-violence and the fulfilment of my conditions. For that is the only link that binds them and me.[1] I may have to lay down my life for preserving the power that has accrued to India. You may not be able to analyse that power but it is there. It is the power of ahimsa.

If I am your General, your pulse should be in my hands. Otherwise I cannot fight through you. I can fight single-handed, but for that fight I need not come and argue with you.

One last word before I close. I do not want to stand in the way of those who want to fight at once. But if they have any sense of honour, I should advise them to do so after getting out of the Congress. Let me assure them that, if they put up a non-violent fight and carry it through, I shall follow their lead. Of course it is open to them to remain in the Congress and to defy it, but it will not be satyagraha[2]. Those who are impatient today do not know the power of satyagraha.

The resolution does not bind you. If you do not accept the conditions, you can still say you do not accept them, and you can have the resolution reversed. That will free you and me both. But if you accept the conditions and will all observe them, you may be sure that it need not take me a month to launch the struggle.[3]

Harijan, 30-3-1940, and *Congress Bulletin*, 12-4-1940, Vol. No. 1, pp. 10-6

[1] The rest of the paragraph is from *Congress Bulletin.*

[2] *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "which never harms the man who uses the weapon."

[3] *Congress Bulletin* here reports: "You may have other methods, but so far as I am concerned I have only the same old programme. I know that that method has never harmed anyone who has followed it and even now if I can get your whole-hearted support and co-operation, I can show you what can be achieved within even a month."

341. SPEECH AT EXHIBITION[1]

MAZHARPURI, RAMGARH,
March 18, 1940

Addressing the gathering after prayer, Mr. Gandhi stressed the importance of khadi and said for those who were not regular members of the Congress, an exhibition held on such occasions was a substitute for the Congress. Members of the Congress might attend the Congress Session out of a sense of duty but an exhibition provided at least an attraction for those who were not Congressmen. Such men could come and buy something for their use at the exhibition.[2]

This Exhibition is the real Congress for the masses. Our chosen delegates will attend the Congress, and pass resolutions there as to what we have to do during the year. But what are the masses to do? The Exhibition serves to provide intellectual pabulum for the masses, and those who visit the Exhibition owe it to them to take to them what they learn here. There is no institution where 35 crores of our people can go. The Kumbh Mela[3] is attended by several lakhs of people, but what is that number in a population of 35 crores? But if you who attend the Exhibition can take some of the crafts which are being demonstrated here to the villagers, you can reach the millions who inhabit the villages and revolutionize their lives. . . .

Urging his hearers to buy khadi he said that they would thus be carrying the message of khadi to the remotest corners of the land. He wanted khadi to be associated with everyone and unify the largest gathering in the country. Lakhs of people assembled at the Kumbh Mela or other functions, but khadi, when carried to every village home, would mean the largest congregation representing the urge for truth and nationhood in the immediate present; they would be helping thousands of poor and widowed womanhood who depended for their livelihood on khadi. They would be doing something more. They would in reality be participating in the struggle for swaraj. Swaraj was not to be attained by violence. There was a talk of launching civil disobedience but who would launch civil disobedience and how? When

[1] Gandhiji addressed over ten thousand people who had attended the evening prayer held on the Exhibition grounds.

[2] The following paragraph is from *Harijan*.

[3] A religious fair held once in twelve years in Allahabad, Hardwar, Ujjain and Nasik

they spun, wore and bought khadi they would demonstrate their determination to stand by truth and peacefulness steadfastly, for khadi symbolized these. If they thought they had to achieve a goal and attain an objective, it was khadi that would show them the way to their goal and carry them through. By following other methods they would be deviating from the path they had set before themselves and not attain independence.[1]

There is the talk of civil disobedience in the air. But who is fit to practise civil disobedience? Not those who will not spin, who will not wear khadi, who do not care for the handicrafts. They will do some other kind of disobedience, but it will be anything but civil. That is not the disobedience I would like to teach or would care to live for. I want to turn the quiet and living strength that spinning gives you into the channel of civil disobedience. If you will, therefore, see the exhibition with my eyes, you will carry the gospel of khadi and the spinning-wheel to the villages, and lay the foundation of a handicraft civilization and universalize khadi and handicrafts. If you do so, I assure you there will be no necessity for civil disobedience. If you will not do so, if you do not spin, do not universalize khadi, I may go to jail and be there for a number of years, but it will be all in vain. Without khadi and without handicrafts the Congress boat, far from carrying us to the port, will sink in midstream.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 20-3-1940, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1940

342. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS[2]

RAMGARH,
March 19, 1940[3]

It was a soul-stirring sight to see people standing knee-deep in water awaiting instructions to disperse. I feel God ranged Himself on the side of the people and gave them a foretaste of the suffering to be voluntarily undergone as the price of freedom.

Every session has its lesson. This has a lesson for workers to choose a site which will be proof against bad weather. Not that the slightest reflection can be cast on those who chose Ramgarh as their site. They have had no reason to fear rain at this time of the

[1] What follows is from *Harijan*.

[2] According to *The Hitavada*, 21-3-1940, Gandhiji was pacing up and down the verandah of his hut and listening to reports regarding the rain.

[3] The date-line is from *The Hitavada*, 21-3-1940.

year. I feel for Rajen Babu, who, with his band of workers, slaved night and day to make the session a success so far as the arrangements are concerned.

The Hindu, 20-3-1940

343. SPEECH AT CONGRESS SESSION[1]

RAMGARH,
March 20, 1940

I am pleased to have been here to hear all these discussions today. When I see that all those who have spoken had the word 'civil disobedience' on their tongue, I am reminded of the Biblical saying: "Not everyone that sayeth to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven."[2] (Cheers) I do not need your cheers, I want to win your hearts and your intellects, and cheers and acclamations stand in the way of winning them.[3] It is not those who shout the word civil disobedience that can launch civil disobedience. It is only those who work for civil disobedience that are capable of launching the movement. Real civil disobedience makes it binding on those who join it to do what they are enjoined to do and avoid what is prohibited. Civil disobedience properly launched and conducted is bound to lead to freedom.

I feel you are not prepared.[4] Therefore when I saw you acclaiming the speakers who said that we are ready I was shocked. For I know that we are not ready. It is true that we all know and realize that we are slaves in our own land. We also realize that freedom is essential for us. Further we all realize that we will have to fight for freedom. I may also join you in applauding the speakers who have demanded immediate launching of civil disobedience. A thief has come and turned me out of my house. I will have to fight him and get it back, but before I can do this, I must be prepared. (Applause) Your claps only demonstrate that you do not understand what this preparation means. Your General finds that you are not ready, that you are not real soldiers and that if we proceed on the lines suggested by you, we are bound to

[1] Gandhiji spoke in Hindi.
[2] *St. Matthew*, VII. 21
[3] This sentence is from *Harijan*.
[4] The following two sentences are from *Harijan*.

be defeated.[1] And knowing this, how can I ask you to fight? I know that with such as you I can only have defeat.

I must make it clear that I am not prepared to do anything for which I will have to repent. I have never acknowledged defeat throughout all these years in any of my struggles. Though some people may point out to Rajkot, I maintain that it was not a defeat for me. Future history alone can make this clear.[2] The word 'defeat' is not to be found in my dictionary, and everyone who is selected as a recruit in my army may be sure that there is no defeat for a satyagrahi.

I can assure you and I promise you and publicly announce it, that when you are ready I shall march forth and then I [shall] have no doubt about victory. I said this before the Subjects Committee and I repeat it again here. Purify your mind and heart. Some people here have been asserting that it is not necessary for us to concentrate on the charkha before launching a fight. I do not doubt their sincerity and bravery, but, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has told you, they betray certain weakness of mind.[3] Well, I tell you, as I have been telling you these 20 years, that there is a vital connection between satyagraha and the charkha, and the more I find that belief challenged the more I am confirmed in it. Otherwise I am no fool to persist in turning the charkha, day in and day out, at home and even on trains, in the teeth of medical advice. Doctors want me to leave the charkha. But I am devoting greater attention to it, because I have to prepare myself.[4] I want you too to be turning the charkha with the same faith. And unless you do it and unless you habitually use khadi you will deceive me and deceive the world. No one who does not believe in the charkha can be a soldier under me.

With me there is no other alternative than non-violence.[5] I shall of course die with non-violence on my lips, but you are not wedded to it in the sense I am, and so it is open to you to have another programme and to make our country free. But if you will not do this, nor turn the charkha, and want me to fight, it will be an impossible situation. If you feel that you are to fight, and you must fight now, and immediately, and feel convinced that there is some other method of winning the fight, I would ask you to go ahead and I shall be the first to applaud your victory. But if you do not want to leave me and yet are not prepared to follow my methods and

[1] The following two sentences are from *Harijan.*
[2] This sentence is from *Harijan.*
[3], [4] & [5] The following two sentences are from *Harijan.*

instructions, then I would like to know what kind of generalship is this that you offer me.

Those who clamour for immediate launching of civil disobedience want to have me with them. Why? Because they are conscious that the masses are with me. I unhesitatingly say that I am a people's man. Every moment of my life I feel for the starving millions. I live and am prepared to lay down my life to relieve their sufferings and mitigate their miseries. I claim to have some influence with the millions, because I have been a faithful servant of theirs.[1] My loyalty to them is greater than any other loyalty, and it is for them that I would not give up the charkha even if you were to forsake me or kill me. For I know that, if I were to relax the condition of the charkha, I should bring ruin upon those dumb millions for whom I have to answer before God. If, therefore, you do not believe in the charkha in the sense I believe in it, I implore you to leave me. Even if you stone me to death I will still work for the masses. This is my way. If you think there is any other way please leave me alone.

Without the charkha I cannot lead you to jail in the course of the fight for freedom. I will not have anyone under me who does not believe in the charkha. I shall go ahead only when I am satisfied that you have faith in the charkha. Remember if we, who are assembled here, blunder [we] shall cause untold suffering to the dumb millions by our mistake. The delegates to the Congress bear a heavy responsibility and as your General my responsibility is still greater. As a General I have to be a sort of beacon-light to you and warn you against possible disaster. Therefore, I have to proceed cautiously.

Many speakers dilated on the evils of British imperialism. I do not wish to elaborate that point except to state that we must get rid of it. I have told you the cue. Before I agree to launch satyagraha I must be convinced that you have understood my remedy.

It is no use going to a doctor and asking for a medicine if you do not propose to take it according to his instructions. I would much rather ask you to seek another doctor for your ailment. All the sermons you have heard today against British imperialism will not help you to remove it. They will only make you angry. This will not solve our problem. Anger is opposed to satyagraha. We have no quarrel with the British people. We want to be their friends and retain their goodwill, not on the basis of their domination, but on the basis of a free and equal India.

[1] The following three sentences are from *Harijan*.

As a free country India will bear no malice to anyone, nor attempt to enslave any people. We shall march with the rest of the world, just as we shall desire the rest of the world to march with us.[1] Remember therefore, that you have to fulfil both the internal and external conditions. If you fulfil the internal condition, you will cease to hate your opponent, you will not seek or work for his destruction, but pray to God to have mercy on him. Do not, therefore, concentrate on showing the misdeed of the Government, for we have to convert and befriend those who run it. And after all no one is wicked by nature. And if others are wicked, are we the less so? That attitude is inherent in satyagraha, and if you do not subscribe to it, even then I would ask you to leave me. For without a belief in my programme and without an acceptance of my condition you will ruin me, ruin yourselves and ruin the cause.

Satyagraha is the path of truth at all costs. If you are not prepared to follow this path please leave me alone. You can pronounce me worthless and I shall not resent it. If I do not make this clear here and now, I shall be ruined and along with me the country. Truth and ahimsa are the essence of satyagraha, and the charkha is their symbol. Just as the General of any army insists that his soldiers should wear a particular uniform, I as your General must insist on your taking to the charkha which will be your uniform. Without full faith in truth, non-violence and the charkha, you cannot be my soldiers. And I repeat again that if you do not believe in this, you must leave me alone and you can try your own methods.

The Indian Annual Register, 1940, Vol. I, pp. 230-1, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1940

344. INTERVIEW TO CEYLONESE DELEGATION[2]

RAMGARH,
March 20, 1940

Mahatmaji's first words were:

It is an unfortunate thing that is happening to Indians in Ceylon.

We explained to him that the problem was an economic one and that Indians in Ceylon, apart from labourers and a few others, were mainly exploiters.

[1] The rest of the paragraph is from *Harijan*.

[2] This was reported to the United Press. The Ceylonese National Congress delegation consisting Jayawardhana, S. Jayasekara and Amaratunga met Gandhiji in the afternoon.

Petty traders and Chettiars have captured the entire import and export trade and many estates from peasants in distress. The people of Lanka only see this side of India. Gandhiji replied:

Yes, that is too true. The fault is on both sides.

We told him that there was no racial animosity against Indians as was made clear by the receptions accorded to Pandit Nehru. Till Poet Tagore and Gandhiji and Mr. Nehru and a few other eminent Indians came to Lanka, our people met only exploiting Chettiars and immigrant Indian labourers. Gandhiji replied:

Unfortunately, we haven't many Nehrus and many men of similar calibre. The wrong people, if sent, might spoil everything.

We asked him what Ceylon could expect from a free India. Many in Lanka prefer to remain as a Dominion in the British Empire than to be free and run the risk of being exploited by India which could easily swamp Lanka. Gandhiji laughed and said:

Ceylon has nothing to fear from a free India.[1]

The Hindu, 21-3-1940

345. LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI

March 21, 1940

DEAR SIR AKBAR[2],

I do not know if you are responsible for the orders against the State Congress. They leave a bad taste in the mouth. But there was a technical flaw in the Congress action. And so I advised unqualified apology. How I wish justice could be done in this case![3]

Hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 8017

[1] The delegation presented Gandhiji a book entitled *The Work of the Buddha* by a Buddhist Bhikku of Ceylon.

[2] President, Ministers' Committee, Hyderabad State

[3] *Vide* also letter to the addressee, p. 426.

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346. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

ON THE TRAIN,
March 21, 1940

MY DEAR C. R.,

I saw so little of you in Ramgarh. It is bad. Did not see Aiyamuthu[1]. I understand you have gone to Delhi. Therefore on your return you should break the journey and stay a few days in Sevagram or Wardha whichever suits you better. There are things to discuss.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 2079

347. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

ON THE TRAIN,
March 21, 1940

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I got your letter just now. I am glad that you feel at home there. Write to me regularly. I wrote[2] to Rami. She has not answered.

Do you get any newspapers there?

Teach Kanchan.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9740. Also C.W. 720. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

[1] C. A. Aiyamuthu, Secretary, Tamilnad branch of the A. I. S. A.
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Ramibehn K. Parekh", p. 193.

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348. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

ON THE TRAIN,
March 21, 1940

CHI. KANCHAN,

I had asked Mahadev to reply to your letter. The service you are doing there is, according to me, no mean education. I look upon it as true education. Do continue your studies, however. Write to me regularly.

Won't you agree that you are gaining a hundred times more there than you would have by accompanying me to Ramgarh? Besides, you escaped the drenching we got at Ramgarh. There are twelve girls from the Mahila Ashram in this carriage. Ashadevi and her Mithu also are in the party.

We shall reach tomorrow morning.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8285. Also C.W. 7077. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

349. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

ON THE TRAIN,
March 21, 1940

CHI. VALJI,

I had your postcard. In Bombay there are less chances of your constipation and fever disappearing. Still, if you are obliged to stay there I may send a note to a homoeopath who has been offering to help. Both the complaints must be cured.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI VALJI DESAI
C/O SHRI B. J. REGE
GOVERNMENT PRESS
CHARNI ROAD, BOMBAY 4

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7491. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

350. LETTER TO ABDUL MAJID CHAUDHRI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 23, 1940

DEAR CHAUDHRI SAHIB,

I have very carefully read your letter. In the Congress itself there is no Hindu raj. A Muslim divine[1] rules it. There is no hypocrisy about the Congress. Englishmen, Christians, Parsis and Muslims have dominated the Congress. In any case the Congress will never coerce any community to remain within its fold.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

CHAUDHRI SAHIB ABDUL MAJID, B.A., LL.B.
GUJRAT, PUNJAB

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

351. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 23, 1940

CHI. MANILAL,

Read the accompanying letter. I have written to Haji Ismail Bhabha and asked him to see you and discuss the matter with you. You are brothers, not enemies. I have also informed him that I do not interfere with you in your policy. You yourself should try to meet him.

You know about things here through newspapers. I will ask Pyarelal to give you some news.

Ba is fine, and so am I.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4911

[1] Abul Kalam Azad who was elected Congress President on February 16, 1940

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352. *HOW TO EVOKE THE BEST?*

An Indian protagonist of Britain writes:[1]

> If our aim is to arouse the best in Englishmen through our non-violence and thus create mutual trust, we have signally failed. . . . Our best period of non-violence . . . was the period of Congress regime in provinces. . . . Now the whole atmosphere is again getting surcharged with nothing but hatred towards England. Cordiality is being replaced by bitterness and trust by distrust. . . . What visible demonstration have we given of our non-violence or of our desire to cultivate goodwill? . . . Is not a compromise based on give-and-take a more appropriate machinery for (1) creating a non-violent atmosphere, (2) creating goodwill, (3) rousing the best in the Englishmen, and (4) creating a short cut to independence through mutual co-operation?

The argument does credit to the heart of the writer, but he misses the method of non-violence. He has started with a half premise. Our aim is not merely to arouse the best in Englishmen but to do so whilst we are prosecuting our cause. If we cease to pursue our course, we do not evoke the best in him but we pander to the evil in him. The best must not be confounded with good temper. When we are dealing with any evil, we may have to ruffle the evil-doer. We have to run the risk, if we are to bring the best out of him. I have likened non-violence to aseptic and violence to antiseptic treatment. Both are intended to ward off the evil, and therefore cause a kind of disturbance which is often inevitable. The first never harms the evil-doer.

Whilst I agree with the critic that our non-violence has not been unadulterated, I must dissent from the view that we have signally failed. I am unable to agree that the best period of non-violence was the period of Congress regime. During that period non-violence was inactive. For each tried to please the other. Both were seemingly pursuing a common policy, though each had known reservations. The visible demonstration we have given of non-violence is that violent action has been successfully and entirely avoided through Congress influence. Being too near the event we are not able to have a true measure of the great restraint exercised by millions of men and women. I grant that we

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

have not yet shed violence of the heart. But the amazing self-restraint exercised by the people fills me with the hope that violence of the heart will in due course give place to goodwill towards the opponent. It will never come if the critic's plan of the policy of timidity, as I should call it, is pursued. Hatred will melt when restraint has been exercised sufficiently long to starve it. The effect of it on the English mind will also be equally wholesome in the long run. Englishmen will perceive that non-violence was real in so far as it went, and that masses of people could act with great restraint in spite of their nursing a grievance against them.

All compromise is based on give and take, but there can be no give and take on fundamentals. Any compromise on fundamentals is a surrender. For it is all give and no take. The time for compromise can only come when both are of one mind on fundamentals, i.e., when the British Government have made up their mind that not they but Indians will determine the constitution under which the latter will be governed. There is a dangerous snag in the reluctance to refer the question of constitution to an assembly of elected Indian representatives. Minorities need have no fear, for they will determine their own safeguards through their own representatives. The Princes need have none, for they need not come in, if they do not wish to. The only party that can effectively obstruct and does obstruct is the dominating, i.e., the ruling party. There will be no compromise until that party has sincerely come to the conclusion that it cannot or does not want to rule.

SEVAGRAM, March 24, 1940
Harijan, 30-3-1940

353. A CHIEF JUDGE DESCENDS

A correspondent sends me a newspaper report of a speech delivered by the Chief Judge of Mysore at a meeting recently held in Bangalore to help the war. He is reported to have said:[1]

> The Allies were not fighting for democracy or any particular form of government. . . . They were fighting to put an end to all forms of aggression by one nation against others. . . . The leaders of a certain political party in this country had decided that this was the proper occasion for them to bargain for their political ends, had threatened that,

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

> if what they asked for was not granted, they would create trouble in India and so help the enemy. . . . He was sure that when the history of India came to be written, Indian children of the future would skip over with shame that part relating to the tactics of such politicians as he had referred to. . . .

It is hardly likely that His Honour the Chief Judge knows of the secrets of the British Cabinet. In any event, if Britain is fighting against mere aggression, it can hardly be called a worthy aim. Having been the foremost aggressor in the world, Britain could not justify her fight against Germany on the pretext put forth by the learned Chief Judge.

My correspondent in sending the cutting says in his covering letter:

> 1. He ought not to have entered into matters of political controversy at a *non-party* meeting convened under *royal* auspices.
>
> 2. He, being the Chief Justice of a High Court, overstepped the bounds of propriety in publicly attacking the politics of a particular party.
>
> 3. He, being a judicial officer of an Indian State, ought not to have gone out of the way and meddled with the party politics of British India.

I think the criticism is just. The Congress will survive the attack. But I do not know whether the Paramount Power should not take notice of the Chief Judge's extraordinary utterance. Surely he misuses the word bargain when he applies it to the Congress policy. What is there to be ashamed of in the Congress seeking the deliverance of the country from foreign rule even when the foreigner is in distress? If the Congress was not committed to the method of peace, it would have been not only justified but would have deemed it its duty to take advantage of Britain's difficulty by creating a state of rebellion in the country by every means at its disposal. But the Congress has adopted the policy of peace. No doubt it would have done better if it could have honestly accepted my advice. The choice before the Congress was not between two evils but between good and better. The better was beyond its ability and would therefore have harmed and weakened it. Thus 'good' was the best for the Congress, and so I threw in my lot with it. I would have been a traitor if, having led the Congress to accept non-violence as its policy, I had remained on my pedestal and refused to guide the great organization. It ill becomes those who believe in war as an accepted institution to charge the Congress with the spirit of bargaining. The word

is a misfit when it is applied to the life-and-death struggle of a nation bent upon vindicating its right to freedom.

SEVAGRAM, March 25, 1940
Harijan, 30-3-1940

354. EVERY CONGRESS COMMITTEE A SATYAGRAHA COMMITTEE

When I said at the Subjects Committee meeting[1] at Ramgarh that every Congress Committee should become a Satyagraha Committee, I meant every word of what I said, as I meant every word of everything else I said. I would like every Congressman who desires to serve in the Satyagraha *Sena*[2] to read my two speeches[3] made at Ramgarh as well as whatever else I may write in *Harijan* on the struggle, and to carry out the instructions meant for him or her.

In the coming struggle, if it must come, no half-hearted loyalty will answer the purpose. Imagine a General marching to battle with doubting, ill-prepared soldiers. He will surely march to defeat. I will not consciously make any such fatal experiment. This is not meant to frighten Congressmen. If they have the will, they will not find my instructions difficult to follow. Correspondents tell me that, though they have no faith in me or the charkha, they ply the latter for the sake of discipline. I do not understand this language. Can a General fight on the strength of soldiers who, he knows, have no faith in him? The plain meaning of this language is that the correspondents believe in mass action but do not believe in the connection I see between it and the charkha, etc., if the action is to be non-violent.

They believe in my hold on the masses, but they do not believe in the things which I believe have given me that hold. They merely want to exploit me and will grudgingly pay the price which my ignorance or obstinacy (according to them) demands. I do not call this discipline. True discipline gives enthusiastic obedience to instructions even though they do not satisfy reason. A volunteer exercises his reason when he chooses his General, but after having made the choice, he does not waste his time and energy

[1] On March 18
[2] Army
[3] *Vide* "Speech at Subjects Committee", pp. 348-54, and "Speech at Congress Session", pp. 357-60.

in scanning every instruction and testing it on the anvil of his reason before following it. His is "not to reason why".

Now for my instructions.

Every Congress Committee should become a Satyagraha Committee and register such Congressmen who believe in the cultivation of the spirit of goodwill towards all, who have no untouchability in them in any shape or form, who would spin regularly, and who habitually use khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth. I would expect those who thus register their names with their Committees to devote the whole of their spare time to the constructive programme. If the response is sincere, these Satyagraha Committees would become busy spinning depots. They will work in conjunction with and under the guidance of A.I.S.A. branches in a businesslike manner so that there remain, in the jurisdiction of the Committees, no Congressmen who have not adopted khadi for exclusive use. I shall expect businesslike reports to be sent from provincial headquarters to the A.I.C.C. as to the progress of the work of the Satyagraha Committees. Seeing that this registration is to be purely voluntary, the reports would mention the numbers both of those who give their names for registration and those who do not.

The registered satyagrahis will keep a diary of the work that they do from day to day. Their work, besides their own spinning, will consist in visiting the primary members and inducing them to use khadi, spin and register themselves. Whether they do so or not, contact should be maintained with them.

There should be visits paid to Harijan homes and their difficulties removed so far as possible.

Needless to say that names should be registered only of those who are willing and able to suffer imprisonment.

No financial assistance is to be expected by satyagrahi prisoners whether for themselves or their dependents.

So much for the active satyagrahis. But there is a much larger class of men and women who, though they will not spin or court or suffer imprisonment, believe in the two cardinal principles of satyagraha and welcome and wish well to the struggle. These I will call passive satyagrahis. They will help equally with the active ones, if they will not interfere with the course of the struggle by themselves courting imprisonment or aiding or precipitating strikes of labourers or students. Those who out of overzeal or for any other cause will act contrary to these instructions will harm the struggle and may even compel me to suspend it. When the forces of violence are let loose all over the world and when

nations reputed to be most civilized cannot think of any force other than that of arms for the settlement of their disputes, I hope that it will be possible to say of India that she fought and won the battle of freedom by purely peaceful means.

I am quite clear in my mind that, given the co-operation of politically-minded India, the attainment of India's freedom is perfectly possible through unmixed non-violence. The world does not believe our pretension of non-violence. Let alone the world, I, the self-styled General, have repeatedly admitted that we have violence in our hearts, that we are often violent to one another in our mutual dealings. I must confess that I will not be able to fight so long as we have violence in our midst. But I will fight if the proposed register is honest and if those who courageously keep out will not disturb the even course of the struggle.

Non-violent action means mobilization of world opinion in our favour. I know that a growing number of thinking men and women of the world are sick of the war spirit, they are longing for a way of peace, and they are looking to India to point that way. We cannot have that opinion on our side if we are not honestly non-violent. Let me repeat what I have said in these columns, that I shall be able to fight with a very small army of honest satyagrahis and shall feel powerless and embarrassed if I have a huge army in which I can have no trust or as to whose behaviour I am not always sure.

I expect the A.I.C.C. to organize Satyagraha Committees and report to me from time to time of the progress made.

If there is an enthusiastic response, inside of one month it should be possible to forecast the exact period required to put the Satyagraha Committees in working order.

SEVAGRAM, March 25, 1940

Harijan, 30-3-1940

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355. MY ANSWER TO QUAID-E-AZAM

Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah is reported to have said[1]:

> Mr. Gandhi has been saying for the last 20 years that there cannot be any swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. Mr. Gandhi is fighting for a Constituent Assembly. May I point out to Mr. Gandhi and the Congress that they are fighting for a Constituent Assembly which we cannot accept? Therefore, the idea of a Constituent Assembly is impracticable and unacceptable. Mr. Gandhi wants a Constituent Assembly for purposes of ascertaining the views of Muslims, and if they do not agree, he would then give up all hope and then would agree with us.[2] If there exists the will to come to a settlement with the Muslim League, then why does not Mr. Gandhi, as I have said more than once, honestly agree that the Congress is a Hindu organization and that it does not represent anything but the solid body of Hindus? Why should Mr. Gandhi not be proud to say: 'I am a Hindu and the Congress is a Hindu body'? I am not ashamed of saying that I am a Muslim and that the Muslim League is the representative of Muslims. Why all this camouflage, why this threat of civil disobedience, and why this fight for a Constituent Assembly?
>
> Why should not Mr. Gandhi come as a Hindu leader and let me meet him proudly representing the Mussalmans?

My position is and has been clear. I am proud of being a Hindu, but I have never gone to anybody as a Hindu to secure Hindu-Muslim unity. My Hinduism demands no pacts. My support of the Khilafat was unconditional. I am no politician in the accepted sense. But whatever talks I had with Quaid-e-Azam or any other have been on behalf of the Congress which is not a Hindu organization. Can a Hindu organization have a Muslim divine as President, and can its Working Committee have four Muslim members out of 15? I still maintain that there is no swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. I can never be party to the coercion of Muslims or any other minority. The Constituent Assembly as conceived by me is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal

[1] In his Presidential address at the Lahore session of the All-India Muslim League on March 22

[2] *Vide* "Speech at Subjects Committee", pp. 348-54.

questions. If there is no agreement, the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved. The Constituent Assembly or any body of elected representatives can alone have a fully representative status. The Congress representative capacity has been and can be questioned. But who can question the sole representative capacity of the elected delegates to the Constituent Assembly? I cannot understand the Muslim opposition to the proposed Constituent Assembly. Are the opponents afraid that the Muslim League will not be elected by Muslim voters? Do they not realize that any Muslim demand made by the Muslim delegates will be irresistible? If the vast majority of Indian Muslims feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren, who will be able to resist them? But surely it is permissible to dispute the authority of the 50,000 Muslims who listened to Quaid-e-Azam to represent the feelings of eight crores of Indian Muslims.

SEVAGRAM, March 26, 1940

Harijan, 30-3-1940

356. A BRAVE STATEMENT

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan sent me a copy of his statement[1] before the court which is printed below. It is worthy of him, brave, brief and to the point. It is an irony of fate, as he himself has said, that his patriotism should be penalized. What tens of thousands think and thousands say in their talks, Shri Jayaprakash has said in public and before the very men who are producing war material. It is true that, if his words take effect and they are repeated, the Government would be embarrassed. But such embarrassment should set them thinking about their treatment of India instead of punishing a patriot for his open thinking.

The concluding portion of the statement proves the author's intense humanitarianism. He has no malice in him. He wants to end Imperialism and Nazism. He has no quarrel with Englishmen or Germans and says truly that, if England were to shed imperialism, not only India but the freedom-loving people of the whole world would exert themselves to see the defeat of Nazism and the victory of freedom and democracy.

SEVAGRAM, March 26, 1940

Harijan, 30-3-1940

[1] *Vide* Appendix VII.

357. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

WARDHA,
March 26, 1940

MY DEAR CHILD,

It seems ages when I heard from you last. Therefore it gave me joy to see your letter to Charlie who has forwarded it to me for disposal. Why have you not been writing to me? I know you are careful about my time. But I do want an occasional line from you.

The girls are the biggest problem for you. But there too you have to trust God to lead you. No use fretting about things we cannot mend.

How are you keeping yourself?

Charlie had a narrow escape. He is still bed-ridden but out of danger. I saw him often enough when I was in Calcutta. Mahadev, who has just returned from Calcutta, brings news of slow but steady progress.

For the family here, I am keeping fit, Ba has a persistent cough and is weak, Mahadev is living here. The place is fairly crowded. Mary[1] is still in the village of her choice sticking to it in spite of difficulties.

M. writes to me now and then.

Love.

BAPU

My Dear Child, p. 115

358. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM,
March 26, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Su[shila]behn's remarks were relevant because she was explaining what I meant. I showed your letter to A.S. Sushila also saw it. Both should have seen it. Why don't you see that your giving the details does not help matters. Whatever he has taken is not for his personal use. There is no friend in Chhindwara

[1] F. Mary Barr

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who would provide everything. That is why I sent Munnalal [once] in advance and [then] also accompanying him. There is no harm if he has taken with him more than he should have. If he had gone alone he would have taken neither grain nor utensils.

Your criticism of me is quite correct. My life-style has become grandiose. It is getting rather difficult to check it. The items for my use can only be carried from here. Only fruit may be available for me on the way. All the same there is too much fuss in preparing things for me. Doing so in the case of others would seem to be merely swimming with the current. In any case, neither thing has my approval.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4341

359. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

WARDHA,
[After *March 26, 1940*][1]

MY DEAR CHILD,

You must trust God and be cheerful. Everything pales before the tragedy that is taking place in Europe. Can nothing be done for Tangai[2]?

Love.

BAPU

My Dear Child, p. 116

360. TELEGRAM TO MRS. YAKUB HASAN

[On or before *March 27, 1940*][3]

MY SINCERE CONDOLENCES ON YOUR BEREAVEMENT.[4] MAY GOD GIVE YOU STRENGTH TO BEAR THE LOSS.

The Hindu, 27-3-1940

[1] In the source this letter is placed after the one dated March 26, 1940.
[2] Addressee's daughter
[3] The report is date-lined "Madras, March 27, 1940".
[4] The addressee's husband, former Minister of Public Works in Madras, had passed away.

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361. LETTER TO C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

SEVAGRAM,
March 28, 1940

DEAR FRIEND,

You will have observed that I have written nothing in *Harijan* of late about Travancore. My silence has been due to the fact that Kurup and Rangaswamy wrote to me that you were coming to Sevagram to have a chat with me. I have been looking forward to the event. Much time has gone by after the last intimation received by me. I shall be obliged if you could drop me a line whether there is likely to be a meeting between us in the near future.

Meanwhile I send you the latest note I have received about Travancore.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

362. LETTER TO CHIMANDAS I. JAGTIANI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 28, 1940

DEAR CHIMANDAS,

Your quotation[1] is good. I hope your charkha work will flourish.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5738

[1] From Shet Letiff, a Sufi poet of Sind, which read: "Those who spin with the spirit of competition, their yarn is not accepted, while those who spin with love in their hearts, their yarn is accepted. . . ."

363. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

March 29, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Nothing has been decided about the hospital. Sushila says that the work continues up to 3 o'clock. So if you can work from 10 to 2 without break, you can take off some time for meals. If you need some rest, you can have that also during mealtime. That is, all you can get is three-fourths of an hour or an hour at the most. See if you find this worth considering.

I fully approve of what you write about the library. Discuss the suggestion with Chimanlal and implement it immediately if possible. If you need any help from me, ask for it. The library must be made a fine one.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8548. Also C.W. 7078. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

364. A MESSAGE

March 30, 1940

It should be a matter of shame for us as long as all men and women cannot read and write well.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9561

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365. SPEECH AT KHADI YATRA[1]

SEVAGRAM,
March 30, 1940

Just now you recited the eleven vows as part of your prayers. It is our formula for gaining internal and external emancipation. Working within its orbit success may appear at times difficult, but there need be no despair, if we have faith. The greater the difficulties, the greater should be our faith. Even so, faith is needed for the prosecution of the khadi programme.

Although the people of Sevagram gave an invitation and I agreed to the holding of the *yatra* here, that does not mean that I consider this place to be fit for the holding of such *yatra*. My test would require a high percentage of adoption of khadi. As it is, perhaps, not more than 20 per cent of the Sevagram folk wear khadi. Those that do, have not adopted it fully and with an understanding of all its implications. The adoption of khadi with all its implications means revolution in one's life. It means purity in its wide sense and a readiness to lay down one's life for the sake of the country's freedom. Do the people of Sevagram come up to that test? I am afraid, not. I confess the failure is partly mine. I have not put forth sufficient effort to give them the needed education. I would like you to hold the next *yatra* in a place which comes at least within a measurable distance of the ideal that I have laid down.

At Malikanda we reduced the size and scope of the Gandhi Seva Sangh and turned it into an institute for carrying out experimental research into the principles for which the Sangh stands, as for instance, truth, ahimsa, khadi, and their interrelationship. I have said that there is a vital connection between khadi and ahimsa. But I have not fully proved it. My reason follows my heart. Without the latter it would go astray. Faith is the function of the heart. It must be enforced by reason. The two are not antagonistic as some think. The more intense one's faith is, the more it whets one's reason. And so, although my faith in

[1] Reproduced from the article "Sevagram Khadi *Yatra*". Khadi *yatra* or pilgrimage was an annual conference of the khadi-lovers of Wardha district organized by Gram Seva Mandal under the inspiration and guidance of Vinoba Bhave.

khadi is daily growing, I have not put my reason in cold storage. I listen carefully to all adverse criticism with an open and receptive mind, extract from it what is worth extracting and reject the chaff. I am always ready to correct my mistakes. A full and candid admission of one's mistake should make one proof against its repetition. A full realization of one's mistake is also the highest form of expiation. I would like all co-workers to test with their reason all I say. When faith becomes blind it dies. It is a drawback in khadi work that many workers do not apply their reason to their work. We must find out why the progress in khadi is slow. It may be that we have erred in detail, we may find that we have hereafter to place more emphasis on self-spinning than on production for sale. At one time I myself had suggested the ideal of immediate introduction of a standard wage of eight annas a day for the spinners. But under the advice of experienced khadi workers, we satisfied ourselves with three annas standard wage for the time being, keeping the higher figure before us as our goal. Even this rise is phenomenal. Shall we be able to sustain this wage?

Take now the political aspect. I have said that we can get swaraj through khadi. If you have real faith in it, you will not rest till you have proved it to the whole world by your reason. The link between khadi economics, politics and sociology cannot depend on unreasoned faith. The wheel is the one thing that can become universal and replace the use of arms. If the millions co-operate in plying the charkha for the sake of their economic liberation, the mere fact will give them an invincible power to achieve political independence. You must have noticed how insistent I have become about the fulfilment of the khadi programme as a condition precedent to the launching of civil disobedience. If our preparation is complete, the struggle may be rendered unnecessary. And if it does become necessary, it will be invincible and of a short duration. But if only a few take to the charkha, it becomes necessary for them to sacrifice their all in order to quicken the conscience of their compatriots and the English rulers. The efficacy of their sacrifice will depend upon the degree of their purity and innocence. Mere wearing of khadi without knowing its implications cannot help. For, when it becomes the vogue even evil-doers will wear it. Khadi like God's sunshine and air is for all alike, but all do not thereby become eligible for satyagraha. Khadi, purity and readiness to sacrifice oneself are the three essential conditions for a satyagrahi. The charkha is the external symbol. Without it your sacrifice will not be non-violent. I have no cut-and-dry plan of fight before

me. I only know that I must be ready for it unless I am a hypocrite or a fool.

Lastly, since the *yatra* has taken place here, I suggest that you draw up a programme for making the whole of the village of Sevagram khadi-clad within a year. The experiment will exercise your faith and your reason and may give you the key for making khadi universal.

Harijan, 6-4-1940

366. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

SEVAGRAM,
March 31, 1940

MY DEAR KU[MARAPPA],

Gajanan[1] is an evergreen. He has sent me a long note and has seen me too. He says you do not approve of his turning palm *gur* to commercial uses and you want to control the method of expenditure already sanctioned. I have told him that you could not object to his turning *gur* to commercial uses so long as the process does not involve loss and you would not interfere with his expending moneys according to sanctioned budget. If I have interpreted you correctly, you have only to confirm this note. If I have misinterpreted you and if you have the time, come along on Thursday at 4.30 p.m. and we shall jointly waste 30 minutes between us.

I wonder if that returned bottle was re-returned with tomato delicacy put in.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10150

367. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM,
March 31, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your wire and letter, also the one from Jayaprakash. I had expected a longer sentence. In a way I welcome this

[1] Gajanan Naik, Supervisor, jaggery department of A. I. V. I. A.

imprisonment.[1] It will surely give him rest. See that he takes proper care about his food. As for you, you should engross yourself in the work there. Know the names and addresses of all your women friends and arrange for their spinning-wheels, etc. See that they get lessons in reading and writing in their homes. Send *Harijan Sevak* and other literature to those who can read. Train them in sanitation. Create in them a desire to discard the *purdah*. But don't be in a hurry about this.

I am all right.

Pass on the letter to Jayaprakash.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3544

368. LETTER TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

SEVAGRAM,
March 31, 1940

CHI. JAYAPRAKASH,

I have your letter. I shall not ignore your view. I shall publish your resolution, and write about it.[2] I accept your view that I should not at any rate be caught napping.

They are all lax about District Boards, etc. They have not been able to decide anything. I am myself full of doubts after listening to their comments. I have no personal experience and therefore I cannot say things emphatically. I shall get more elucidation about this from Narendra Dev[3].

I shall encourage Prabha to stick to the work she has undertaken.

Preserve your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2219

[1] *Vide* "A Brave Statement", p. 372.

[2] *Vide* "Jayaprakash's Picture", 422-5.

[3] Acharya Narendra Dev (1889-1956); President, All-India Kisan Sabha, 1939 and 1942; leading member of the Socialist Party of India and Praja Socialist Party; Vice-Chancellor, Lucknow University, and later, Banaras Hindu University

CWMG - LXXI

369. DISCUSSION AT KHADI YATRA[1]

SEVAGRAM,
March 31, 1940

Q. Has *takli* been introduced into the basic education scheme with the economic, i.e., self-support, or the educative end in view?

A. Anything introduced in basic education can only have one end in view, i.e., the educative. The object of basic education is the physical, intellectual and moral development of the children through the medium of a handicraft. But I hold that any scheme, which is sound from the educative point of view and is efficiently managed, is bound to be sound economically. For instance, we can teach our children to make clay toys that are to be destroyed afterwards. That too will develop their intellect. But it will neglect a very important moral principle, viz., that human labour and material should never be used in a wasteful or unproductive way. The emphasis laid on the principle of spending every minute of one's life usefully is the best education for citizenship and incidentally makes basic education self-sufficient.

Q. How can khadi and spinning lead to swaraj?

A. If millions co-operate, it cannot but generate tremendous strength which can be put to any use one likes. The charkha provides the best medium for such co-operation. It provides dignified employment and food and clothing for *Daridranarayana.* This cannot but produce mass consciousness and non-violent strength for gaining swaraj.

Q. Must one who takes to khadi take to spinning as well?

A. From the economic point of view it is enough to take to khadi. But if khadi is to be our weapon for winning swaraj, spinning is of equal necessity. Khadi gives us economic self-sufficiency, whereas spinning links us with the lowest paid labour. In militarized countries everyone gives a certain time for military purposes. Ours being a non-violent basis, everyone should do sacrificial spinning for a

[1] Reproduced from the article "Sevagram Khadi *Yatra*". The report is prefaced as follows: "The khadi *yatra* was over at 5 p. m. on 31st March, but as Gandhiji had agreed to answer questions, if there were any, after the evening prayer, many people stayed on for the night."

minimum period from year to year. Maulana Mohamed Ali used to call the *takli* and the yarn our arms and ammunition for winning swaraj. The analogy is telling. Is it too much for us to give half an hour or one hour per day to spinning as a measure of voluntary conscription? I remember, at the beginning of the last war when I was in England I was given pyjama suits to stitch for the soldiers. Many others from the most aristocratic families including some venerable old ladies and gentlemen were doing such work. We all finished our quota of work as we were required to. No one considered it beneath his or her dignity to do so. Towards the end of the war far more work was given by the whole nation. Yet no one complained. I warn you that, although today I am asking you only to give half an hour or one hour per day to spinning, I may have to be more exacting as the situation develops.

Q. Should civil resister prisoners offer satyagraha in order to get the permission to wear khadi and spin regularly in jail?

A. A satyagrahi willingly submits to all jail discipline. He never wishes to embarrass the authorities. To insist on being allowed to spin in jail when you do not do so with religious regularity outside, would be a species of violence. I would not recommend that course to anybody although I can conceive of exceptional cases. Appa Patwardhan for instance—who might go to the extreme length in order to secure that permission.[1] We have not behaved as ideal prisoners in the past. There has been violence and untruth in our actions. I do not want that to be repeated. We may plead with the jail authorities. I would be faced with a dilemma if I were not allowed these facilities. What I have said of spinning applies equally to khadi.[2]

Replying to another question, Gandhiji said that workers should mix with villagers, identify with them, endear them and serve them. If we get a number of *sevaks* (workers) we can have swaraj early.

Q. Do you like cheering when you enter or speak and also shouts of '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*'?

A. I have a small organization here. No cheering or *jai* takes place here in Sevagram. What you say does not sound nice. It is a rude thing and also avoidable. There is no need of praising in a family. I regard my country as a big family. I am not a mahatma but try to be a true servant. God alone can testify to this.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LII, pp. 94-5, 142-3 and 145.
[2] What follows is from *The Hitavada*.

Q. Should the truth of one man be considered as such by all?

A. Truth is indefinable. Truth is another form of God. To serve God–Truth is satyagraha. Truth is a relative term. For worshipping liberty we require truth and non-violence as our means. We can reach or realize truth by non-violence.

Q. Will you insist on charkha even after swaraj?

A. As soon as swaraj is won, I cease to be your General. You will then be called upon to elect your President. After that you may or may not decide to spin. But if I am alive then, I will insist on it. Because you know we cannot give up the means by which we achieve our independence. This is illustrated from the example of England, or Germany which never gave up arms (violent means) after she conquered her enemies. The charkha is our ammunition—guns and artillery—and so we cannot afford to forsake it. If you don't ply the charkha you cannot enlist in my army. There is no compulsion. But these are my conditions when you have selected me as your General.

Replying to a question whether several families devoting to spinning whole time could maintain themselves and educate their children, etc., Gandhiji said:

I never say this, nor is it possible. It is likely that we can maintain ourselves by khadi wages, but if all take to it, khaddar will be dearer. It is not possible to provide work for all. We should spin in spare time. Khadi is our *Annapurna*[1] (supplier of food), i.e., we can purchase some things out of its earning. If one crore people spin it will be great power and strength.

Answering a query whether he was opposed to machinery, Gandhiji said:

We should not use machinery for producing things which we can produce without its aid and have got the capacity to do so. As machinery makes you its slave, we want to be independent and self-supporting; so we should not take the help of machinery when we can do without it. We want to make our villages free and self-sufficient and through them achieve our goal—liberty—and also protect it. I have no interest in the machine nor [do] I oppose it. If I can produce my things myself, I become my master and so need no machinery.

Harijan, 6-4-1940, and *The Hitavada*, 5-4-1940

[1] One of the names of Siva's consort

370. QUESTION BOX

Are You Not Moved?

Q. You have written about Shri Jayaprakash Narayan.[1] But are you not moved by his sentence? Is it not a call to arms? Will you even now wait till your impossible conditions are fulfilled?

A. I fear I must wait till my conditions are fulfilled. You should allow me to know more than you of the way in which satyagraha works. Of course I am moved by the sentence pronounced against that brave co-worker. I wish I could move you as I am moved. If you were, you would silently and more persistently spread the charkha cult by yourself spinning full-heartedly and by taking its message to your neighbours. Jayaprakash having gone to jail, has had his reward. He had the inner urge. He deserved the reward. Believe me, it will produce its own effect. If I become impatient and resort to precipitate action, the good done by Jayaprakash's imprisonment is likely to be undone partly or wholly. I will not be party to producing an anarchical condition in India, nor will any good purpose be served by my inviting individuals to follow Jayaprakash's example and court imprisonment. This jail-going in satyagraha does not admit of arithmetical application. Only one person's going may be most appropriate. Suffice it to say that Jayaprakash's imprisonment is engaging my serious attention. I wish all Congressmen would follow with redoubled zeal the task set before them.

Constructive Work and C.D.

Q. You have tabooed power politics from Gandhi Seva Sangh and similar institutions for the sake of constructive work. Does this mean that no workers engaged in these institutions can take part in civil disobedience? I am afraid this watertight division between civil resistance and constructive work will result in a crippling of the latter as no first-rate worker would take to it by renouncing civil resistance.

A. Those who argue like you do not know the value of constructive work. It is any day superior to civil disobedience. Civil disobedience without the backing of constructive effort is neither civil nor non-violent. Those who do constructive work merely for the

[1] *Vide* "Jayaprakash Narayan", p. 322, and "A Brave Statement", p. 372.

sake of civil disobedience look at things topsy-turvy. At the present moment all satyagrahis have to hold themselves in readiness. But all may not be called. A soldier in reserve is as good as one on active duty. If the battle must come, I may say at once that my present plan is to disturb the constructive work as little as possible. Your question, I take it, has reference to those only who are working in organizations such as the A. I. S. A., A. I. V. I. A., H. S. S.[1] and H. T. S.[2] These will be as little disturbed as possible. But all Congressmen without exception, if they want to help the struggle, must take up constructive work in their persons.

Khadi and Politics

Q. Are you not endangering the khadi movement by identifying it with the political programme, especially the civil disobedience part of it?

A. Most certainly not. I would be, if khadi was confined only to Congressmen or civil resisters. Khadi is prescribed as national wear for all, whether Congressmen or others. It is used even by some Englishmen, Americans and other Westerners. Your objection, if it was valid, would apply even to communal unity, removal of untouchability and temperance. These four have gained importance and momentum since they were incorporated in the Congress constructive programme. They can all become illegal if they become mixed up with violence. If they did become illegal, it would be found that the movements as such were not suppressed but the organizations masquerading under innocent labels were in reality covering violence.

Confusion of Thought

Q. You will be responsible for a gross injustice if you persist in giving to India a majority Government with only 'safeguards' for the minorities. The latter ought to have an effective part in the actual government of the country.

A. You have evidently confused majority rule with Hindu rule implying that the Hindu majority is irremovable. The fact is that the majority in all the provinces is a mixed majority. The parties are not Muslims and Hindus; they are Congressmen, independents, Muslim Leaguers, Muslim independents, labourites, etc. The Congress majority everywhere is a mixed majority and could be better balanced if there was no tension. The tension is a distemper. A distemper can never be a permanent feature of any growing society

[1] Harijan Sevak Sangh
[2] Hindustani Talimi Sangh

which India is. Whatever the outcome of the Muslim League demonstration and its claim, some day or other there will be a solution of the issues raised. The outcome will never be pure Muslim or Hindu majorities in any single province. The parties will be mixed and aligned according to different policies, unless democracy is crushed and autocracy reigns supreme in India as a whole or India is vivisected into two or more dead parts. If you have followed my argument, it must be clear to you that there will never be a denial of power to any party or group so far as the Congress is concerned. Minorities are entitled to full protection of their rights, for so long as they have to divide power with others, they run the risk of their special rights being adulterated.

A Dilemma

Q. My father is an employee in the S.I. Railway. He has four children, all younger than I. He wants me to take an apprenticeship course. If I take part in the coming civil disobedience struggle, he may be dismissed and the family will starve. He says I can serve the nation by doing my share of constructive work. What is your advice?

A. Your father is right. If you are the only bread-winner, you cannot leave the family to its fate for the sake of taking part in civil disobedience. You will certainly serve the nation quite as effectively as civil resisters if you zealously carry out the constructive programme.

Vain Repetitions

Q. All agree that mechanical repetition of prayers is worse than useless. It acts as an opiate on the soul. I often wonder why you encourage repetition morning and evening of the eleven great vows as a matter of routine. May not this have a dulling effect on the moral consciousness of our boys? Is there no better way of inculcating these vows?

A. Repetitions when they are not mechanical produce marvellous results. Thus I do not regard the rosary as a superstition. It is an aid to the pacification of a wandering brain. Daily repetition of the vows falls under a different category. It is a daily reminder to the earnest seeker as he rises and retires that he is under the eleven vows which are to regulate his conduct. No doubt it will lose its effect if a person repeats the vows mechanically under the delusion that the mere repetition will bring him merit. You may ask: 'Why repeat the vows at all?' You know that you have taken them and are expected to observe them. There is force in the argument. But experience has shown that a deliberate repetition gives stimulus to the resolution. Vows are to the weak mind

and soul what tonics are to a weak body. Just as a healthy body needs no tonics, a strong mind may retain its health without the need of vows and the daily reminder thereof. An examination of the vows will, however, show that most of us are weak enough to need their assistance.

On Behalf of Disabled People

Q. You stand for the poor and helpless. Would you not include the providing of at least one daily meal to disabled beggars as an item of the daily routine of a 'constructive worker'? A large number of the former are lepers. There is not a city in India of any note without its quota of these hapless creatures. Their condition is deserving of your pity and consideration.

A. Valuable as this work undoubtedly is, it cannot become part of the constructive programme. It is not every form of social relief that can be made part of the Congress constructive programme. Such programme can only cover that part, the omission of which would make the attainment of swaraj through non-violence impossible. Who can deny that Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, temperance and the charkha are essential for achieving our object? My answer, however, does not mean that disabled humanity does not need any attention. No man or woman, whether of the Congress or not, can be worth much if he or she neglects to do his or her part of social service in the widest sense of the term.

Sevagram, April 1, 1940

Harijan, 6-4-1940

371. A BAFFLING SITUATION

A question has been put to me:

> Do you intend to start general civil disobedience although Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah has declared war against Hindus and has got the Muslim League to pass a resolution[1] favouring vivisection of India into two? If you do, what becomes of your formula that there is no swaraj without communal unity?

I admit that the step taken by the Muslim League at Lahore creates a baffling situation. But I do not regard it so baffling as to make civil disobedience an impossibility. Supposing that the Congress is reduced to a hopeless minority, it will still be open to

[1] At its Lahore session in March; *vide* Appendix VIII.

it, indeed it may be its duty, to resort to civil disobedience. The struggle will not be against the majority, it will be against the foreign ruler. If the struggle succeeds, the fruits thereof will be reaped as well by the Congress as by the opposing majority. Let me, however, say in parenthesis that, until the conditions I have mentioned for starting civil disobedience are fulfilled, civil disobedience cannot be started in any case. In the present instance there is nothing to prevent the imperial rulers from declaring their will in unequivocal terms that henceforth India will govern herself according to her own will, not that of the rulers as has happened hitherto. Neither the Muslim League nor any other party can oppose such a declaration. For the Muslims will be entitled to dictate their own terms. Unless the rest of India wishes to engage in internal fratricide, the others will have to submit to Muslim dictation if the Muslims will resort to it. I know no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Muslims to the will of the rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Muslims must have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division.

Thus, so far as I am concerned, my proposition that there is no swaraj without communal unity holds as good today as when I first enunciated it in 1919.

But civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It is open even to one single person to offer it, if he feels the call. It will not be offered for the Congress alone or for any particular group. Whatever benefit accrues from it will belong to the whole of India. The injury, if there is any, will belong only to the civil disobedience party.

But I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them. Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which the partition would mean. The "two nations" theory is an untruth. The vast majority of Muslims of India are converts to Islam or are descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts. A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue that a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food, has the same amusements as his Hindu neighbour. They dress alike. I have often found it difficult to distinguish by outward sign between a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. The same phenomenon is observable more or less in the South among the poor who constitute the masses of India. When I first met the late Sir Ali Imam I did not know that he was not a

Hindu. His speech, his dress, his manners, his food were the same as of the majority of the Hindus in whose midst I found him. His name alone betrayed him. Not even that with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. For his name could be that of any Hindu. When I first met him, I did not know that he was a Muslim. I came to know his religion when I had his full name given to me. His nationality was written in his face and manner. The reader will be surprised to know that for days, if not months, I used to think of the late Vithalbhai Patel as a Muslim as he used to sport a beard and a Turkish cap. The Hindu law of inheritance governs many Muslim groups. Sir Mahommed Iqbal used to speak with pride of his Brahmanical descent. Iqbal and Kitchlew are names common to Hindus and Muslims. Hindus and Muslims of India are not two nations. Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide.

And is Islam such an exclusive religion as Quaid-e-Azam would have it? Is there nothing in common between Islam and Hinduism or any other religion? Or is Islam merely an enemy of Hinduism? Were the Ali Brothers and their associates wrong when they hugged Hindus as blood brothers and saw so much in common between the two? I am not now thinking of individual Hindus who may have disillusioned the Muslim friends. Quaid-e-Azam has, however, raised a fundamental issue. This is his thesis[1]:

> It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time.
>
> The Hindus and Muslims have two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. They neither intermarry, nor dine together, and indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and they have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single State, one as a numerical minority and the other as majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a State.

[1] As expounded in his Presidential address at Lahore

He does not say some Hindus are bad; he says Hindus as such have nothing in common with Muslims. I make bold to say that he and those who think like him are rendering no service to Islam; they are misinterpreting the message inherent in the very word Islam. I say this because I feel deeply hurt over what is now going on in the name of the Muslim League. I should be failing in my duty, if I did not warn the Muslims of India against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission.

SEVAGRAM, April 1, 1940

Harijan, 6-4-1940

372. AN UNJUDICIAL DICTUM[1]

A correspondent sends me a Press cutting containing a report of an Allahabad judgment of two English judges sitting as appellate court. In delivering their judgment allowing the appeal their Lordships are reported to have said:

> The case is unsatisfactory because we have no less than five persons who were in effect, if their evidence can be relied upon, eye-witnesses, and yet, having regard to the slight value placed upon truth in this country, we have seriously to apply our minds as to whether they can be believed.

This is an extraordinary pronouncement from a bench of judges. What legal basis had these two judges for the sweeping statement made by them as to the character of a whole nation? The inference is that in other countries a higher value is placed upon truth. Now if this was a universally accepted proposition, perhaps the judges would have been justified in taking legal notice of it. There is, however, not only no such acceptance but experienced observers have testified that, on the whole, greater value is put upon truth in India than elsewhere. But no judge should be influenced one way or the other by such observations as have no judicial value. I would go further and say that such observations ought not to be made by any responsible person, even on political platforms. They can never be proved. But when they are made by judges they vitiate their

[1] Though written on April 2, this was published only on May 4; *vide* "Letter to Sri Prakasa", p. 418.

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judgments and may lead to miscarriage of justice. Be it noted that the Allahabad judges have made use of their bias in coming to their decision and have thus proved their incapacity to hold responsible posts. The case in which the observation was made affected poor people. But the fact that only poor persons were involved makes it all the more necessary to take public notice of the judges' strictures. Who knows in how many cases this bias of theirs has resulted in defeating justice?

SEVAGRAM, April 2, 1940
Harijan, 4-5-1940

373. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON

WARDHAGANJ,
April 2, 1940

HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON

OPERATION[1] SUNDAY SUCCESSFUL.

GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 10251. Courtesy: Visvabharati, Santiniketan

374. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 4, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad writes a long letter from which I enclose herewith the relevant portion.[2]

[1] C. F. Andrews was operated upon at Dr. Riordan's Nursing Home on Sunday, March 31.

[2] The letter dated March 30, 1940, *inter alia*, read: "A friend from Delhi, who very often meets the Viceroy, has sent a letter to me. He says that the impression left by your last interview on Linlithgow was that at first you wanted to lead him up to a certain point, and when he tried to reach it, then you left him altogether. He further writes that if you had cleared the position from the very beginning that the Dominion Status of the Westminster variety would not be acceptable to you, the Viceroy would have comprehended the situation. But it was not done. You insisted on the reply of the question whether the Status conferred on India would be of the Westminster variety or not. Linlithgow drew the conclusion that if he would get this

I shall be painfully surprised if you can confirm the report received by the Maulana Saheb. Mine was a simple inquiry. We had come so near each other that there was no mental reservation between us. And if anything was left obscure there was no difficulty about going straight to the point and clearing obscurities. That Dominion Status was not acceptable to the Congress had been cleared at the interview[1] which led to my inquiry. The object was to know where each party exactly stood. I should be very sorry indeed to discover that I left on your mind the impression that if Dominion Status of the Statute of Westminster variety was meant, the Congress would accept it.

I must refuse to give any credence to the suggestion that you had lost caste with the Cabinet because you had allowed yourself to be overreached by me as the report implies. I have not known British statecraft to be so easily moved from its dispositions as suggested by Maulana Saheb's correspondent. And I shall hope that you could never consider me guilty of wanting to overreach you.

Whilst I am writing to you, I want to have another thing also off my mind. I have already told you that in my son Devdas you have a warm-hearted champion. He has been writing long letters to me trying to convince me that I did you a gross injustice in abruptly terminating our last conversation. He discounts my assurance that the conversation ended because both you and I saw that the gulf between us was found to be too unbridgeable to be handled at that moment by prolonging conversations. Indeed it was your expression that it would be more manly for us to end the conversations the very day we began them and make the confession to the public. I at once accepted the accuracy of your characterization.

---

point cleared, a way for further negotiation would be opened. He drew the attention of the Home Government to this fact with all emphasis, and assured her that his position would be strengthened if he gets a chance of making such a statement. He also insisted that so far as that declaration was concerned, it should not be mixed up with the communal problem. The League may be opposed to it to any extent, but the political destiny of India could not be now changed. But when the basis of negotiation was clarified, and he (the Viceroy) made an announcement with the surest hope of your approval, then all of a sudden you changed your attitude and declared quite unequivocally that India could not accept it. This weakened the position of Linlithgow, and the Home Government considered him to be incapable of understanding and dealing with Indian situation. In short, Linlithgow had a deep grievance against your attitude.

"Here ends the letter. When I was in Delhi last time, I had come to know of similar things through other sources. . . ."

[1] Held on February 5, 1940

Devdas says, that was said out of courtesy if not British pride, and that you were eager to prolong the conversations. He is thus most disconsolate and thinks that my interpretation of your attitude is wrong. You alone can help me to settle this domestic dispute.[1]

M. K. G.

From a copy: C.W. 7843. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

375. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 4, 1940

DEAR MAULANA SAHEB,

You shall address me as you like.[2] I do not know that you addressed me differently.

I have written[3] to Lord Linlithgow as suggested by you.

I quite agree with you about the Pattabhi episode.

I am inclined to think that there should be a considered reply from you to the Lahore resolution[4].

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 7842 a. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

376. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON

WARDHAGANJ,
April 5, 1940

HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON

ANDREWS DIED PEACEFULLY.[5] HOPE YOU LILIAN BE COURAGEOUS. MAHADEV IN CALCUTTA SINCE SUNDAY. LOVE.

GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 10252. Courtesy: Visvabharati, Santiniketan

[1] For the addressee's reply, *vide* Appendix IX.

[2] In his letter dated March 30, 1940, the addressee had addressed Gandhiji as "My Dear Mahatmaji".

[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

[4] Of the Muslim League; *vide* Appendix VIII.

[5] C. F. Andrews died at 1.40 a.m.

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377. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SEVAGRAM,
April 5, 1940

In the death of C. F. Andrews not only England, not only India, but humanity has lost a true son and servant. And yet his death is a deliverance from pain and a fulfilment of his mission on this earth. He will live through those thousands who have enriched themselves by personal contact or contact with his writings. In my opinion Charlie Andrews was one of the greatest and best of Englishmen. And because he was a good son of England he became also son of India. And he did it all for the sake of humanity and for his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. I have not known a better man or a better Christian than C. F. Andrews. India bestowed on him the title of Deenabandhu. He deserved it because he was a true friend of the poor and downtrodden in all climes.

Harijan, 13-4-1940, and *The Hindu*, 5-4-1940

378. LETTER TO S. RADHAKRISHNAN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 5, 1940

DEAR SIR RADHAKRISHNAN,

I could not reply per return. Mass C. D. may or may not come. There is room for two or more opinions. I shall not be precipitate. But so far as the national claim is concerned, there can be no abatement. There is ample room for compromise after the mind becomes one. So long as the British Government think that they should have the decisive voice, the Congress should be the opposing body. I know the choice lies between two courses, opposition or acceptance of what can be had today. My whole life has been cast in the first mould, to yield nothing on the fundamentals, no matter how weak one may feel. Up to now I

[1] This appeared in *Harijan* under "Notes", sub-title "A True Friend of the Poor".

have had no cause for regret in having adopted that course. This unbending attitude of the British grieves me. I was going to use the word 'irritation'. But it is not to be found in the non-violence dictionary. Do you not see that Princes have no power to treat with us? I ask you to be patient and firm.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 7844. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

379. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

SEVAGRAM,
April 5, 1940

MY DEAR MALKANI,

Wardha wants you badly for the new college[1]. If your feet are not firmly fixed there, I want you to help. If the call is definitely there, you must turn a deaf ear to the call from Wardha. In that case have you any good man in view?

I have purposely not responded to your appeal. I am sad over the Sind affairs.[2] I thought therefore that I would observe silence and let you do the best you could alone.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 937

380. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

SEVAGRAM,
April 5, 1940

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I have your letter. The heat must not be unbearable. Sushilabehn tells me that you overexercise a little. You should feel no pain in any part of your body. In a disease like yours, one benefits by doing as little exercise as possible. You must not exceed the limit.

[1] Seksaria College of Commerce
[2] *Vide* "Sindh Tragedy", pp. 71-4.

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Rami writes to Ba. She must be writing to you, too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9735. Also C.W. 715. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

381. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

SEVAGRAM,
April 5, 1940

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have written more than one letter to you. You are doing well. You are getting trained to be a good public worker. Study carefully whatever you can. Here it is beginning to be very hot. Mahadev is still in Calcutta. Deenabandhu Andrews has passed away. The burial takes place today. [Mahadev] will return after that.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8284. Also C.W. 7079. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

382. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SEVAGRAM,
April 5, 1940

I am not congratulating you.[1] You have taken upon yourself a heavy responsibility. May God give you the strength to discharge it well. Till now you had been making Mayors. There was more fun in it and less responsibility. Now there will be no more fun but only responsibility. See that you do not get crushed under its weight. If you think that everything you do is dedicated to God, you will not feel the burden.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 175

[1] The addressee had been elected Mayor of Bombay.

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383. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 5, 1940

CHI. ANAND,

Why English? I thought you wanted a few lines for some book. What can I say about the whole series? Shall I praise a collection of my own writings? My blessings are always with you. Why are you not satisfied with this?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi. Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

384. DISCUSSION WITH A CHINESE VISITOR

SEVAGRAM,
[Before *April 7, 1940*][1]

[Q.] Do you believe that the British, knowing them as you do, will give you independence without a fight?

[A.] It all depends. I do not think they would want to have a fight if they were conscious of our strength. But today they do not feel our strength.

Have you any means other than civil disobedience to enforce your will?

Yes. If we had no internecine quarrels, the British Government would not be able to resist us.

You are aware that in China we have paid heavily for unity. We have had to suffer 25 years of civil war. Might not India have to suffer the same horrors if the British withdrew?

It is impossible to say definitely what will happen. It is, however, not necessary that there should be internal war. I imagine conditions in China were different. The whole populace there was fired with the spirit of revolt. Here we in our

[1] The report of the discussion by Amrit Kaur is date-lined "Sevagram, April 7, 1940".

seven hundred thousand villages do not fly at each other's throats. There are no sharp divisions between us. But non-violence applied to large masses of mankind is a new experiment in the history of the world. I am buoyed up by my faith in its efficacy; the millions may not have caught that faith, and it may be that civil war will be the price we have to pay for our liberty. But if we win truly non-violently against the British, I am sure there will be no civil war.

After 25 years of civil war in China we have now found one person to represent us in our Generalissimo[1]. Is it not possible that the Indian people will need someone more martial than you with your spiritual leadership?

If there is civil war, it will have proved my bankruptcy. A militarist will then be the need.

In the event of Indian independence would India develop along republican lines? Is democracy suited to the character of the Indian people?

These are problematical questions and it is difficult to say definitely one way or the other. If we evolve non-violently, democracy will not only suit us but we shall represent the truest democracy in the world.

If the British withdrew, could you protect yourselves?

Yes, if both Hindus and Muslims evolve non-violently.

Is it true to say that the majority of Indians of the upper class do lip loyalty only to nationalism and in their heart of hearts want British rule?

I am of opinion that the vast majority does not want British rule. They want freedom from foreign domination.

If the British withdrew, would you keep any Englishmen here?

Yes, if they will transfer their allegiance to us and if they will serve India with their great ability, their technical knowledge and powers of research.

Would you receive the help of a third party to free you from your yoke?

Never. We have to find ourselves through our own inner strength, otherwise we must fall. Any structure built with outside help must of necessity be weak.

The British are a bargaining nation, are they not? Have you anything with which to bargain with them?

[1] Chiang Kai-Shek

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Very little. And in any case I would not bargain for my liberty.

Do you believe conscience can make a man good?

Yes, but it can make a coward of him too!

Can religion make a man moral?

Yes, but it must be real religion, that which inspires one from within with a spirit of love and service.

In China we used to think that communism would never take any root, but it has now got a definite hold. Can the same be said of India?

I may say that communists have not made much headway yet in India, and I somehow feel that the character of our people will not easily lend itself to communist methods.

Is it true that an Indian is a Hindu or a Muslim first and an Indian afterwards?

It is not true, generally speaking, though neither will sell his religion for his country.

Religion plays no part in our political life, and this applies to Chinese Muslims too. Is India likely to develop more as an Eastern nation, or will the bond with the English be a difficult thing to get rid of? It seems to me that English modes of life and thought have taken deep root here.

You are right where cities are concerned. But you will find, if you were to go there, that the villages, which are the real India, are wholly untouched. All the same, English ways and customs, their methods of administration, language and thought have had a devastating effect on so-called educated India. And this cultural conquest may perhaps never be wholly got rid of.

India is a nation of so many races. Do you think that should prove to be an obstacle to unity?

None whatever.

It is strange how we and you have the same problems, social and otherwise.

Yes, and that is why we are really so close to each other —friends in distress.

And here Gandhiji related... how well he knew the Chinese colony in South Africa, how he was their lawyer, what close contact he had with them, how they became his comrades in the fight for vindication of the rights of

Easterners there. He laughingly twitted the Chinese friend of the proverbial inscrutability of the Chinese as well as of the Japanese. He told him how Sevagram Ashram had the good fortune to have a Japanese monk at the moment:

Quiet, disciplined, kind, but with a characteristic reserve which does not enable any of us to know his real mind. It may be a good thing, it adds to his dignity, it certainly adds to his peace of mind, and he is untouched, unruffled, by domestic difficulties and quarrels. I felt the same with the Chinese friends in South Africa. I addressed them hundreds of times. I made no distinction between them and Indians, but I always felt that your people had built a wall round themselves. You are so highly cultured and perhaps, therefore, artificial.

Gandhiji pointed to a lovely picture of hand-woven silk, framed and hanging on the wall, which the Chinese mission of goodwill had given him recently.

Take your art. It is a work of beauty and joy, but that art is inscrutable to me. But I do not mean this in a bad sense. I have trusted my Chinese co-workers and they were loyal and I am much drawn to China and the Chinese.

May I ask one or two more important questions before leaving? Do you expect to see India independent?

Yes, of course. I want to see India free in my lifetime. But God may not consider me fit enough to see the dream of life fulfilled. Then I shall quarrel, not with Him but with myself.

But without an army how can you ever succeed?

Well, we have done so thus far. We are nearing our goal without having fired a single shot. It will be a miracle if we succeed. But there is nothing to make me doubt the efficacy of the weapon of non-violence. Whether, however, we have the requisite degree of it within us has yet to be proved.

Is there hatred against the British?

Yes—alas—but if we remain non-violent, hatred will die as everything does from disuse.

It is very hard for us to get rid of hatred against Japan?

Yes, it will take generations for you as you are using violence against them. I do not say that you should not have defended yourselves violently, but under those circumstances hatred cannot die.

Are the British easier to deal with than any other people?

They are as easy, in terms of non-violence, to deal with as anyone else. But not having dealt with anyone else I cannot say from practical experience. All conquerors of India have reacted to what is noble in Indian culture and in Indian nature, the Muslims included. I believe the Germans would have done likewise. It may even be that the English reaction has been less than what others' may have been because of their insularity and colour prejudice.

Before getting into the car the visitor said, "My half hour has been the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream. I shall never forget it."

Harijan, 13-4-1940

385. QUESTION BOX

A Domestic Difficulty

Q. You have rightly said that no one who has not renounced untouchability in every shape and form can take part in satyagraha. Supposing a Congressman's wife does not share his conviction in this regard and won't let him bring Harijans into his house, what should he do—coerce his wife into conformity with his views, renounce her, or renounce the satyagraha struggle?

A. No occasion for coercing your wife. You should let her go her way and you should go yours. This would mean her having a separate kitchen for herself and, if she likes, also a separate room. Thus there is no question of renouncing the struggle.

Teachers and Satyagraha

Q. What part should a teacher who has faith in your constructive work play in the coming struggle, that of an active satyagrahi or a passive satyagrahi only?

A. The data given by you are insufficient, but from what you have given I can say that you should play the passive part.

State Praja Mandals

Q. What is the duty, in the event of civil disobedience, of members of Praja Mandals in the States and the rest of the people of the States?

A. If civil disobedience is started by the Congress, it will be as against the British Government. The people of the States

cannot and ought not to offer any civil disobedience in the States. Hence it follows that the Praja Mandals will remain unaffected by the Congress civil disobedience. But individuals of the States can, if they wish, join the civil disobedience campaign in British India. They can, therefore, send in their names to the nearest Congress Committee outside their State.

The More Essential

Q. Which is the more essential requirement in your mind for starting civil disobedience—your inner urge which may make you fight even single-handed or the fulfilment of your conditions by Congressmen? What will be the position if they are prepared and you have not felt the call?

A. There can be no inner urge if my conditions are not fulfilled. It is possible that there may be apparent fulfilment of conditions but there may be no inner response in me. In such a case, I cannot declare civil disobedience; but it will be open to the Congress to repudiate me and declare civil disobedience independently of me.

Non-Congressmen

Q. Will those who are not now either Congress members or active satyagrahis be asked to join the movement? If so, how?

A. They should become Congress members and have their names registered as satyagrahis.

A.B.C. Classes

Q. Why should not all satyagrahis ask to be included in 'C' class only?

A. There is a great deal to be said in favour of your suggestion.

Secrecy

Q. You should give your opinion clearly about secrecy. During the last struggle there was a great deal of secrecy to outwit the authorities.

A. I am quite clear that secrecy does no good to our cause. It certainly gave joy to those who were able successfully to outwit the police. Their cleverness was undoubted. But satyagraha is more than cleverness. Secrecy takes away from its dignity. Satyagrahis have no reason to have secret books or secret funds. I am aware that my opinion has not found favour among many co-workers. But I have seen no reason to change it. I admit I was lukewarm before. Experience has taught me that I should have been firm.

Damage to Property

Q. You know that many Congressmen openly preached that there was no violence in damaging property, i.e., destroying rails, burning *thanas*[1] when they are not occupied, cutting telegraph poles, burning post-boxes, etc.

A. I have never been able to understand this reasoning. It is pure violence. Satyagraha is self-suffering and not inflicting suffering on others. There is surely often more violence in burning a man's property than doing him physical injury. Have not so-called satyagrahis preferred imprisonment to fines or confiscation of their property? Well has one of my critics said that I have succeeded in teaching disruptive disobedience till at last it has come home to roost, but that I have signally failed in teaching people the very difficult art of non-violence. He has also said that in my haste I have put the cart before the horse and therefore all my talk of civil disobedience is folly if not worse. I am not able to give a satisfactory reply to this criticism. I am but a poor mortal. I believe in my experiment and in my uttermost sincerity. But it may be that the only fitting epitaph after my death will be: 'He tried but signally failed.'

Sevagram, April 7, 1940

Harijan, 13-4-1940

386. LETTER TO NARENDRA DEV

Sevagram,
April 7, 1940

BHAI NARENDRA DEV,

I do not know whether you have been invited to attend the meeting of the Working Committee. If not, please solve a problem for me by writing a letter. You will recall that you, Jayaprakash and Lohia had proposed a resolution to the effect that Congressmen should withdraw from District Boards and similar other bodies. I had approved of the resolution, but in the Working Committee no one except Jawahar and the Maulana had any . . .[2] argument. As for me, I had no other material except my own personal view. I have no experience in such matters. Jayaprakash has some. I should not ignore

[1] Police stations
[2] The word is unintelligible.

this question. Will you help me in some way? You can show this letter to Dr. Lohia and other friends.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

387. ALL ON TRIAL

. . . What has taken place in Lahore is well known to you.[1] The Khaksar movement has been declared to be an unlawful association. I enclose a synopsis of the writings and speeches of Allama Mashriqui[2]. . . . It is feared that the ban may be removed. If that happens, we will attribute it to what appears to us to be an impossible attitude adopted by the Congress—creating deadlock in seven provinces out of eleven. . . . The suppression of a violent movement like that of the Khaksars falls within the special responsibilities of the Governor under Section 52(1). . . . If the ban is removed, Hindu and Sikh organizations will be formed on the same lines as that of the Khaksars. The Akalis assembled at Attari the other day resolved to enlist a lakh of men to the ranks of their 'Dal'. If that plan materializes, there will be bloodshed in the land. . . . What do you propose to do to prevent such a catastrophe?

This is an extract[3] from a well-known Punjabi. He is right in surmising that I must have received Khaksar literature. I am not publishing what my correspondent has sent.

I am studying the papers and hope to be able as soon as possible to give a *resume* of the literature in my possession. There is no doubt that it is a military and militant organization. No Government can allow private military organizations to function without endangering public peace. I am quite sure that the Punjab Government will not permit the Khaksar organization to be revived in its original form. I quite agree with my correspondent that, if the Khaksars are permitted to function as before, the Sikhs and others will have to be treated likewise. This cannot but lead to a clash.

My correspondent, however, suggests that, if the ban is removed, "we will attribute it to what appears to us to be an

[1] On March 19 twenty-three Khaksars and two constables were killed in a clash. Later, four more Khaksars succumbed to their injuries.

[2] Inayatullah, founder of the Khaksar movement

[3] Of which only excerpts are reproduced here

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impossible attitude adopted by the Congress—creating a deadlock in seven provinces out of eleven." I am unable to subscribe to the view. The Congress resignations had nothing to do with the communal tension. They were an honourable protest against the British Government making India a belligerent country over the responsible heads of the eleven provinces which were supposed to be autonomous and resorting to other arbitrary acts in connection with the war. The resignations were the least and the mildest step the Congress could have taken. But events have justified the step on other grounds too. Communal bitterness would have increased if the Congress ministries had continued. So long as the Congress retains its non-violent policy, it cannot administer the affairs of the country except with the willing consent of the vast majority of the people. Mere majority through the ballot box does not count. If I have my way with the Congress, I would not allow it to hold power with the aid of the British bayonet. I did not hesitate to express my dissent publicly[1] when the Congress ministers were obliged to make use of the police and even the military to suppress public violence. They were bound to use them if they were to remain in power. My point was that, having suppressed violence as they were bound to, the Congress might have made a public declaration that it had not attained non-violent control over the people and that, therefore, consistently with its policy, it should abdicate.

But I fear that in holding this view I am in a minority of one. My non-violence is not exhausted with the effort to displace the British Government. Such non-violence would be poor stuff, hardly deserving the name. Therefore, if I can help it, there will be no Congress ministry without a substantial communal settlement. I am quite clear that real independence is impossible without a consistent non-violent technique. I am equally clear that there is hope of India gaining real independence if the Congress will refuse to compromise on it and will adhere to the means and for so doing dare to wander in the wilderness.

The Khaksar menace is no menace in itself. As a symptom of a deeper disease it is a portent. To bring into being rival organizations is a simple thing, but it is no remedy. It merely multiplies the evil. If I had my way, I would ask the people to meet the Khaksar violence with non-violence. But from the

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXVI, pp. 405-7, and Vol. LXVII, p. 72.

papers and the correspondence before me, I observe that the people seek outside protection against the danger, real or imaginary. That means the consolidation of existing authority, supplemented perhaps by private defensive preparations. I am interested in neither.

I have not discussed the terrible toll of deaths the Khaksars had to pay. My sympathies are wholly with the bereaved families. I say nothing about the shooting. A special tribunal is inquiring into the whole affair. If the tragedy leads to a searching of hearts, whatever the finding of the Committee, it will not have been enacted in vain.

SEVAGRAM, April 8, 1940

Harijan, 13-4-1940

388. TWO QUESTIONS FROM AMERICA

A friend writing from America propounds the following two questions[1]:

> 1. Granted that satyagraha is capable of winning India's independence, what are the chances of its being accepted as a principle of State policy in a free India? . . . Is satyagraha likely to be accepted only in an up-hill battle, when the phenomenon of martyrdom is fully effective, or is it also to be the instrument of a sovereign authority which has neither the need nor the scope of behaving on the principle of martyrdom?
>
> 2. Suppose a free India adopts satyagraha as an instrument of State policy, how would she defend herself against probable aggression by another sovereign State? . . . What would be the satyagrahic action-patterns to meet the invading army at the frontier? . . .

The questions are admittedly theoretical. They are also premature for the reason that I have not mastered the whole technique of non-violence. The experiment is still in the making. It is not even in its advanced stage. The nature of the experiment requires one to be satisfied with one step at a time. The distant scene is not for him to see. Therefore my answers can only be speculative.

In truth, as I have said before, now we are not having unadulterated non-violence even in our struggle to win independence.

[1] Of which only extracts are reproduced here

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As to the first question, I fear that the chances of non-violence being accepted as a principle of State policy are very slight, so far as I can see at present. If India does not accept non-violence as her policy after winning independence, the second question becomes superfluous.

But I may state my own individual view of the potency of non-violence. I believe that a State can be administered on a non-violent basis if the vast majority of the people are non-violent. So far as I know, India is the only country which has a possibility of being such a State. I am conducting my experiment in that faith. Supposing, therefore, that India attained independence through pure non-violence, India could retain it too by the same means. A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession but non-cooperate with the aggressor. Thus, supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State will let him in but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannons. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery. Practically speaking, there will be probably no greater loss in men than if forcible resistance was offered; there will be no expenditure in armaments and fortifications. The non-violent training received by the people will add inconceivably to their moral height. Such men and women will have shown personal bravery of a type far superior to that shown in armed warfare. In each case the bravery consists in dying, not in killing. Lastly, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violent resistance. That such a thing has not happened before is no answer to my speculation. I have drawn no impossible picture. History is replete with instances of individual non-violence of the type I have mentioned. There is no warrant for saying or thinking that a group of men and women cannot by sufficient training act non-violently as a group or nation. Indeed, the sum total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live

on. From which fact I infer that it is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e., hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence. It gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that love is the supreme and only law of life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith. Even the mixed non-violence of India has supported it. But if it is not enough to convince an unbeliever, it is enough to incline a friendly critic to view it with favour.

SEVAGRAM, April 8, 1940

Harijan, 13-4-1940

389. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

April 8, 1940

MY DEAR KU[MARAPPA],

Dr. Mehta gave a bad report of your gross misbehaviour. You must bring down your b.p. It is suggested that you should come and stay here for a few days and be under observation. Then during the hot season you should go up somewhere and rest. The brain requires more rest than the body. You can come today, if you will.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10151

390. NOTES

ANDREWS' LEGACY

Nobody probably knew Charlie Andrews as well as I did. Gurudev was guru—master—to him. When we met in South Africa, we simply met as brothers and remained as such to the end. There was no distance between us. It was not a friendship between an Englishman and an Indian. It was an unbreakable bond between two seekers and servants. But I am not giving my reminiscences of Andrews, sacred as they are. I want Englishmen and Indians, whilst the memory of the death of this servant of England and India is still fresh, to give a thought to the legacy he has left for us both. There is no doubt about his love for England being equal to that of the tallest of

Englishmen, nor can there be any doubt of his love for India being equal to that of the tallest of Indians. He said on his bed from which he was never to rise, "Mohan, swaraj is coming." Both Englishmen and Indians can make it come, if they will. Andrews was no stranger to the present rulers and most Englishmen whose opinion carries weight. He was known to every politically-minded Indian. At the present moment I do not wish to think of English misdeeds. They will be forgotten, but not one of the heroic deeds of Andrews will be forgotten so long as England and India live. If we really love Andrews' memory, we may not have hate in us for Englishmen, of whom Andrews was among the best and the noblest. It is possible, quite possible, for the best Englishmen and the best Indians to meet together and never to separate till they have evolved a formula acceptable to both. The legacy left by Andrews is worth the effort. That is the thought that rules me whilst I contemplate the benign face of Andrews and what innumerable deeds of love he performed so that India may take her independent place among the nations of the earth.

How Not to Do It

Prof. Ranga[1] is a co-worker whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for a long time. He is brave and good natured, but he has the knack of often saying things he ought not to and doing wrong things at the wrong time. He sent me a telegram when he had decided to break the order of internment served upon him. He knew that he was under discipline. If he had left me the time, I should have asked him to obey the order to confine himself to his place, Nidubrole. By compliance he would have shown a fine spirit of discipline and today he would be doing constructive work in his place and earning the privilege of joining the civil disobedience brigade. As it is, in my opinion, he has harmed the cause and done no good to himself or anybody. He has harmed the cause by setting a bad example to those who look up to him for guidance. If I could persuade him, I would certainly advise him to inform the authorities that he had committed a breach of internal discipline for which he was sorry and that, if he was discharged, he would gladly proceed to Nidubrole and remain there till the order of internment was withdrawn. I make bold to say that, if he followed my advice, he would help me and help the country's cause.

Sevagram, April 9, 1940

Harijan, 13-4-1940

[1] N. G. Ranga

391. CHARKHA–SWARAJ–AHIMSA

A correspondent says now that civil disobedience is in the air, I must once more, even at the risk of repeating myself, summarize in a single article my argument showing that there is a vital connection between the charkha, swaraj and ahimsa. I gladly make the attempt.

The spinning-wheel represents to me the hope of the masses. The masses lost their freedom, such as it was, with the loss of the charkha. The charkha supplemented the agriculture of the villagers and gave it dignity. It was the friend and solace of the widow. It kept the villagers from idleness. For the charkha included all the anterior and posterior industries—ginning, carding, warping, sizing, dyeing and weaving. These in their turn kept the village carpenter and the blacksmith busy. The charkha enabled the seven hundred thousand villages to become self-contained. With the exit of the charkha went the other village industries, such as the oil-press. Nothing took the place of these industries. Therefore the villages were drained of their varied occupations and their creative talent and what little wealth these brought them.

The analogy of the other countries in which too village handicrafts were destroyed will not serve us because, whereas the villagers there had some compensating advantages, India's villagers had practically none. The industrialized countries of the West were exploiting other nations. India is herself an exploited country. Hence, if the villagers are to come into their own, the most natural thing that suggests itself is the revival of the charkha and all it means.

This revival cannot take place without an army of selfless Indians of intelligence and patriotism working with a single mind in the villages to spread the message of the charkha and bring a ray of hope and light into their lustreless eyes. This is a mighty effort at co-operation and adult education of the correct type. It brings about a silent and sure revolution like the silent but sure and life-giving revolution of the charkha.

Twenty years' experience of charkha work has convinced me of the correctness of the argument here advanced by me. The charkha has served the poor Muslims and Hindus in almost an equal measure. Nearly five crores of rupees have been put into

the pockets of these lakhs of village artisans without fuss and tom-tomming.

Hence I say without hesitation that the charkha must lead us to swaraj in terms of the masses belonging to all faiths. The charkha restores the villages to their rightful place and abolishes distinctions between high and low.

But the charkha cannot bring swaraj, in fact it will not move, unless the nation has faith in non-violence. It is not exciting enough. Patriots yearning for freedom are apt to look down upon the charkha. They will look in vain to find it in history books. Lovers of liberty are fired with the zeal to fight and banish the foreign ruler. They impute all the vices to him and see none in themselves. They cite instances of countries having gained their freedom through seas of blood. The charkha devoid of violence seems an utterly tame affair.

In 1919 the lovers of the liberty of India were introduced to non-violence as the only and sure means to swaraj and to the charkha as a symbol of non-violence. The charkha found its proud place on the national flag in 1921. But non-violence had not gone deep into the heart of India, and so the charkha never came into its own. It will never come into its own unless the vast body of Congressmen develop a living faith in non-violence. When they do so they will, without needing any argument, discover for themselves that there is no other symbol of non-violence than the charkha, and that without its universalization there will be no visible expression of non-violence. It is common ground that without non-violence there can be no non-violent disobedience. My argument may be false, my data may be faulty. But, holding the views I do, let me proclaim that without fulfilment of the conditions prescribed by me I simply cannot declare civil disobedience.

SEVAGRAM, April 9, 1940

Harijan, 13-4-1940

392. MY POSITION

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan has, in his criticism[1] of my reply[2] to Quaid-e-Azam, put some questions which I gladly answer. I must adhere to my statement that I have never spoken to anybody on the communal question as a Hindu. I have no authority. Whenever I have spoken to anybody I have spoken as a Congressman, but often only as an individual. No Congressman, not even the President, can always speak as a representative. Big things have always been transacted on this planet by persons belonging to different organizations coming together and talking informally in their non-representative capacity. I fear that even the answer I am about to give must be taken as representing nobody but myself. In the present instance I have reason to say that probably I do not represent any single member of the Working Committee. I am answering as a peacemaker, as a friend (and may I say brother) of the Mussalmans.

As a man of non-violence I cannot forcibly resist the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it. For it means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation. Partition means a patent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines. To assent to such a doctrine is for me denial of God. For I believe with my whole soul that the God of the Koran is also the God of the *Gita*, and that we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God. I must rebel against the idea that millions of Indians who were Hindus the other day changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion.

But that is my belief. I cannot thrust it down the throats of the Muslims who think that they are a different nation. I refuse, however, to believe that the eight crores of Muslims will say that they have nothing in common with their Hindu and other brethren. Their mind can only be known by a referendum duly made to them on that clear issue. The contemplated Constituent Assembly can easily decide the question. Naturally on an issue

[1] For extracts from Liaquat Ali Khan's statement, *vide* Appendix X.
[2] *Vide* pp. 371-2.

such as this there can be no arbitration. It is purely and simply a matter of self-determination. I know of no other conclusive method of ascertaining the mind of the eight crores of Muslims.

But the contemplated Constituent Assembly will have the framing of a constitution as its main function. It cannot do this until the communal question is settled.

I still believe that there can be no swaraj by non-violent means without communal unity. And eight crores of Muslims can certainly bar the way to peaceful freedom.

If then I still talk of civil disobedience, it is because I believe that the Muslim masses want freedom as much as the rest of the population of this country. And assuming that they do not, civil disobedience will be a powerful means of educating public opinion whether Muslim, Hindu or any other. It will also be an education of world opinion. But I will not embark upon it unless I am, as far as is humanly possible, sure that non-violence will be observed both in spirit and in the letter. I hope the Nawabzada has no difficulty in believing that whatever is gained by civil disobedience will be gained for all. When India gets the power to frame her own constitution, the Muslims will surely have a decisive voice in shaping their own future. It will not be, cannot be, decided by the vote of the majority.

Lastly, I suggest to the Nawabzada that he wrote in haste the lines about the President of the Congress. For they are contrary to the history of our own times. And he was equally in haste in suggesting that "the sole objective of the Congress under Mr. Gandhi's fostering care has been the revival of Hinduism and the imposition of Hindu culture on all and sundry." My own objective is not the issue in the terrible indictment. The objective of the Congress is wholly political. Nothing is to be gained by making statements that are incapable of proof. So far as my own objective is concerned my life is an open book. I claim to represent all the cultures, for my religion, whatever it may be called, demands the fulfilment of all cultures. I am at home wherever I go, for I regard all religions with the same respect as my own.

SEVAGRAM, April 9, 1940

Harijan, 13-4-1940

393. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 10, 1940

MY DEAR MALKANI,

Our letters[1] crossed. In view of your ever-increasing liabilities there, you must be glued to Sind. Don't be in a hurry to join the Satyagraha Committee. You are of it without being a member. There is no struggle in sight yet. Silent work is what is needed to give me courage.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 936

394. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

SEVAGRAM,
April 10, 1940

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I have your letter. If you go to Panchgani, I think it would be better for all of you to go. I will make inquiries at Panchgani. If proper arrangements cannot be made in Panchgani, then, I think, it would be better to pass the summer where you are. There will be no harm if the temperature does not go above 102°. But if your health deteriorates, we will have to find out some other way. I am not writing separately to Balkrishna and Kanchanbehn.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9736. Also C.W. 716. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

[1] *Vide* p. 395.

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395. LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 10, 1940

CHI. PRITHVI SINGH,

I have your letter. Must you write in English ? I merely passed on the telegram I had received from Guntur. I did not suggest that you should go. But that is over now.

You need not feel concerned if anybody distorts what I write. What certificate need I give you? Need I give one to Mahadev? I do not intend to write anything. Get on with your job and everything will be all right. Do not move about much.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5637. Also C.W. 2948. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

396. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 11, 1940

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I do not know what to say or how to console you. Perhaps C.F.A.'s death has hit you the hardest. But you are a brave woman. Let us all forget his death and make him live by working in his spirit at the legacy he has left to us. Here is a copy of my note[1] about it. I can't realize that C.F.A. is gone. He was an institution. He was love incarnate.

You will guide me about his sister's wants and the like. I told him when I was last with him that he must not worry about this part of his obligation. What about his copyright? You have to be my eyes in every business matter regarding C.F.A.

I want you not to worry about the Indian situation. Apparently it is as bad as it can be! Nevertheless, I have no worry in me about it. My trust is wholly in God. He will give the right guidance if we will let Him. Fancy, He has left us the choice! What a Democrat?

[1] *Vide* pp. 408-9.

Let us do what may seem to us to be best and then rejoice in the thought that the disposition is with Him.

In the concrete I have nothing to impart just now. There is no C. D. just yet, so far as I can see.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1515

397. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 11, 1940

DEAR DR. HARDIKAR,

I have your letter. The chord that is once broken is not easily joined. There was a time when I had thought our hearts had met. Neither the blend nor the breach is a mechanical act. My desire and effort must be to gain as many co-workers as I can get and by whom I can swear. How that confidence can come I do not know. I hope you realize that the barrier does not make the slightest difference in my regarding you as an esteemed co-worker. The difficulty, if there is one, is more moral than practical.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

398. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 11, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. I am glad that you have come to like the place. Take care of your health. Rajendra Babu has recovered. I am quite well.

I am writing to Jayaprakash.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3539

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399. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 11, 1940

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. I understand what you say about Father. Why did Manubhai undertake the fast? Why are your letters incomplete?

Amritlal is coming here for some work. I am sending him your letter. Everyone here is fine. We are having a stream of guests. It is quite hot here.

Blessings to both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7126. Also C.W. 4618. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

400. LETTER TO DINESH SINGH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 11, 1940

CHI. DINESH,

I had your letter. Some days ago Dadu wrote to me that he wished to stay with Mother. I had also written to Mother accordingly. I do not know what happened afterwards. Normally, no one would shift Dadu in a hurry. Keep me informed of whatever happens. Does Dadu really wish to stay with Mother?

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI DINESH SINGH KALAKANKAR
THE DOON SCHOOL
DEHRA DOON, U.P.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8674

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401. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 11, 1940

BHAI SRI PRAKASA,

I had sent to *Harijan* my criticism[1] of the judgment on the basis of your report. Subsequently I learnt that the judges had not made those statements and that you had withdrawn your comments. Although I have not seen these reports, I have withheld my comments. Was it some mistake on the part of the *Leader*?

Blessings from
BAPU

SRI PRAKASA
SEVASHRAM
BENARES

From the Hindi original: C.W. 9759. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

402. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

WARDHA,
April 12, 1940

JAMNALAL BAJAJ
JAIPUR

CONGRATULATIONS[2]. STAY AS LONG AS NECESSARY.

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 233

[1] *Vide* "An Unjudicial Dictum", pp. 390-1.

[2] On the settlement between the Jaipur State and the Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal. *Vide* p. 426.

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403. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

WARDHA,
April 12, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I hasten to acknowledge with thanks your very prompt and clear reply[1] to my letter of 4th instant. It frees me from anxiety, and ought to set at rest the domestic difference.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm: No. 109: Linlithgow Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

404. LETTER TO ATULANAND CHAKRABARTY

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 12, 1940

DEAR ATULANAND,

I have your second letter. I finished reading the book today. On the whole I like it. I have a lurking fear that you have not always adhered to truth. For any departure from it to prove one's thesis in the end damages it.

There are some howlers. Look at p. 135, 2nd para. "The instance of the Emperor Jehangir alone should eloquently prove the point." How can one instance prove a general point?

At p. 151, you say India is "thousands of miles wide". Is it? As a matter of fact not more than 1,500.

Then you have not given the dates to your quotations in the appendix except in one case.

For the student there are not the necessary verifying references. What you have given is not enough.

And think of the spelling mistakes! Unpardonable.

But the book should serve a useful purpose in spite of the defects, if you have adhered to truth.

[1] *Vide* Appendix IX.

You should go on canvassing opinion as you are doing. I hope to refer to your book in *Harijan*.[1]

Don't be in a hurry. Why not approach even Q.A. Jinnah?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 1482. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

405. LETTER TO DEVCHAND U. PAREKH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 12, 1940

CHI. DEVCHANDBHAI,

Chandrabehn may come any time towards the end of the month. Tell her that it is quite hot here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5703

406. LETTER TO VITHTHALBHAI M. PATEL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 12, 1940

CHI. VITHTHALBHAI,

I have your letter. I could read it only today. Pay no attention to others' criticism but go on doing whatever Harijan work you can.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 83

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXII, "Hindu-Muslim Tangle", 29-4-1940.

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407. LETTER TO DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 13, 1940

DEAR DR. GOPICHAND[1],

What do you say to this?[2]

Yours,
BAPU

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

408. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 13, 1940

DEAR SATYAMURTI,

I have your letter. I think we both mean the same thing. I shall bear your letter in mind.

You must not be ill.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SRI SATYAMURTI, MAYOR
RIPON BLDGS.
MADRAS

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

[1] Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly

[2] The reference is to a letter from Tarachand Jhingan taking exception to the addressee's support to Khaksars. The addressee had voted against the Government on the adjournment motion on the Khaksar police clash at Lahore on March 19, 1940.

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409. LETTER TO JANG BAHADUR SINGH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 13, 1940

BHAI JANG BAHADUR SINGH,

Your letter. You are right; plying the charkha is not enough. It should go with all the things that it implies.

I hope Krishna is doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1337

410. JAYAPRAKASH'S PICTURE

The following draft resolution was sent to me by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. He asked me, if I accepted his picture, to put it before the Working Committee at Ramgarh.

> The Congress and the country are on the eve of a great national upheaval. The final battle for freedom is soon to be fought. This will happen when the whole world is being shaken by mighty forces of change. Out of the catastrophe of the European War, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world—a world based on the co-operative goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers it necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the uttermost sufferings.
>
> The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through some international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory.
>
> The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people.
>
> The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be

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no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.

The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social status or the State.

The political and economic organization of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organization shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalizing heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralized.

The life of the villages shall be reorganized and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

The State shall protect the interests of the classes, but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and downtrodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises, the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government.

In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established, and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs.

This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish. The Congress firmly believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation.

I liked it and read his letter and the draft to the Working Committee[1]. The Committee, however, thought that the idea of having

[1] On March 15; *vide* p. 337.

only one resolution for the Ramgarh Congress should be strictly adhered to, and that the original, as framed at Patna[1], should not be tampered with. The reasoning of the Committee was unexceptionable, and the draft resolution was dropped without any discussion on merits. I informed Shri Jayaprakash of the result of my effort. He wrote back suggesting that he would be satisfied if I could do the next best thing, namely, publish it with full concurrence or such as I could give it.[2]

I have no difficulty in complying with Shri Jayaprakash's wishes. As an ideal to be reduced to practice as soon as possible after India comes into her own, I endorse in general all except one of the propositions enunciated by Shri Jayaprakash.

I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.

It therefore gladdens me to find Shri Jayaprakash accepting, as I read his draft, non-violence for the purpose of establishing the order envisaged by him. I am quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrong-doers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.

Shri Jayaprakash's propositions about land may appear frightful. In reality they are not. No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that

[1] On March 1; *vide* Appendix VI.
[2] *Vide* p. 380.

the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?

But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the haves and the have-nots. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The have-nots must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e., self-suffering. If the end in view is to be achieved, the education I have adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses.

Whilst, therefore, I have no difficulty in generally endorsing Shri Jayaprakash's proposition in terms of non-violence, I cannot endorse his proposition about the Princes. In law they are independent. It is true that their independence is not worth much, for it is guaranteed by a stronger party. But as against us they are able to assert their independence. If we come into our own through non-violent means, as is implied in Shri Jayaprakash's draft proposals, I do not imagine a settlement in which the Princes will have effaced themselves. Whatever settlement is arrived at the nation will have to carry out in full. I can therefore only conceive a settlement in which the big States will retain their status. In one way this will be far superior to what it is today; but in another it will be limited so as to give the people of the States the same right of self-government within their States as the people of the other parts of India will enjoy. They will have freedom of speech, a free Press and pure justice guaranteed to them. Perhaps Shri Jayaprakash has no faith in the Princes automatically surrendering their autocracy. I have. First because they are just as good human beings as we are, and secondly because of my belief in the potency of genuine non-violence. Let me conclude, therefore, by saying that the Princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present we are half-hearted. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness. Non-violence begins and ends by turning the searchlight inward.

SEVAGRAM, April 14, 1940

Harijan, 20-4-1940

411. JAIPUR STATE AND PRAJA MANDAL

At last a settlement has been reached between the State and the Praja Mandal in Jaipur. The credit for this happy consummation belongs both to the authorities and Sheth Jamnalalji. Let us hope that the settlement will lead to cordial relations between the authorities and the Praja Mandal, and that the co-operation will result in progressive betterment of the people of the State in every respect. For this the State will have to show toleration and the Mandal restraint in all its doings and utterances.

SEVAGRAM, April 14, 1940

Harijan, 20-4-1940

412. LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI

April 14, 1940

DEAR SIR AKBAR,

You have given me stone when I had asked for bread.[1]

I fail to see the slightest connection between a simple performance of a promise and the big question of communal unity. And how can unity be brought about in the face of events like Bidar,[2] if the papers are to be believed? As you know I have put a gag on myself regarding Hyderabad but I feel that I must not do so now, if I am to do my duty by the people of Hyderabad. This treatment of the State Congress and the reported happenings in Bidar have filled me with misgivings.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 10253

[1] In reply to Gandhiji's letter dated March 21, the addressee wrote: "There is only one problem before us all and that is the removal of communal tension. Here in Hyderabad we are working in the face of great obstacles to bring contending parties together so that they move jointly in a truly national endeavour. Our attitude towards the National Conference has been determined by this more than by any other consideration."

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXII, "Wanton Destruction in Bidar", 30-4-1940.

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413. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
April 14, 1940

CHI. NARANDAS,

What is the correct position regarding this[1] ? Behcharbhai was saying that Gokibehn used to get the amount regularly. If there has been any change please let me know. The amount should of course be sent to her. Show her this letter. Since when has the remittance been discontinued?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8572. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

414. QUESTION BOX

DANGER OF DELAY

Q. You say you will not launch civil disobedience till Congressmen are fully trained in non-violence and disciplined. That is right. But in the meantime the country is being bled white. Increased railway fares, duty on sugar, the reduction of sugarcane prices are only a few instances in point. Is it right to delay the struggle till our best workers are picked off one by one, and thus lose the fight without 'striking a blow'?

A. I can cite far more telling instances than you have given for justifying civil disobedience. But civil disobedience is not being delayed for want of justification. It is being delayed for want of preparation. I should be a stupid General if I began the fight in spite of my knowledge that my resources are poor. If the leaders are picked off by the Government without just cause, it would mean an invitation to the Congress to fight. I would not answer the invitation if I were not ready. The leaders being picked off can do the country no harm. For we know that disciplined jail-going is itself a part of the struggle. Moreover, the imprisonment of

[1] The reference is to a letter from Manubehn Mashruwala to Gandhiji written at the instance of Gandhiji's sister, Raliatbehn *alias* Gokibehn.

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leaders will test our strength as an organization. A non-violent organization implies the equal education and therefore equal fitness of all units. That we have not arrived at that stage shows our ignorance of the working of non-violence.

Authorized and Unauthorized Strikes

Q. In your leading article[1] of March 30, you have hoped that passive satyagrahis will not interfere with the course of the struggle by "precipitating strikes of labourers". There is just this cryptic word "precipitating" and nothing more. When I read it first, I did not particularly notice it. But I had to do a lot of explaining later. Unless a very careful reader or trained to understand your way of thought and expression, one is likely to go astray. One may miss the force of the word "precipitating" and understand it as if you frowned upon all strikes of labourers.

With the recent Ahmedabad fight for a war bonus, no one would be entitled to regard you as an opponent of labourers' strikes as such. The strike in Ahmedabad was indeed averted, but you had approved of it and the workers realized their demands. The work in Ahmedabad was done methodically. There was proper presentation and working out of labourers' demands, completing of arbitration, full notice and balloting of the over hundred thousand votes on the question of the strike. I believe that, if after such methodical work a strike cannot be averted, you will approve of it and only assure yourself that there is no violence.

A. You are right. I consider myself to be an expert in organized strikes. My first successful attempt was made in South Africa under most adverse circumstances. I improved the technique in Ahmedabad. I do not claim to have reached perfection. I know that strikes can be made irresistible. I have discountenanced only unauthorized strikes. The Congress has not gained control over labour. Some Congressmen have. Almost all the strike leaders have their own methods. All of them are not non-violent. Some are ruled by selfish considerations. Some others are unscrupulous. What I, therefore, ask for is at least passive, if not active, co-operation. I shall not need strikes for the purpose of the struggle. What shape mass civil disobedience will take, if it ever comes, I cannot say. But I can say what it will never do if I have anything to do with it. I know that, if the Congress had non-violent control over all labour in India, the Congress could become far more powerful than it is today. That control will come when the congress has one policy about labour and has enough workers to give effect to it.

[1] *Vide* "Every Congress Committee a Satyagraha Committee", pp. 368-70.

UNTOUCHABILITY AND CONVERSION

Q. If the object of the Congress in the liquidation of untouchability is to give Harijans a status of equality with the rest, is this not achieved by their conversion to Islam? Why does the Independence Pledge allocate the programme of the removal of untouchability to the Hindus only? Does this not show that the Congress is anxious to maintain a Hindu majority and therefore denies to the Mussalmans their right of conversion?

A. Liquidation of untouchability cannot be attained by the conversion of untouchables to Islam or any other religion. For it is the so-called caste Hindu who has to rid himself of the sin of untouchability. He can wash away the stain only by doing justice, however tardy, to the outcaste. You will thus see why Muslims are not invited by the Congress to share the burden with the Hindus. They have committed no sin against the untouchables. I cannot prevent you from looking at a simple but necessary social reform as a political dodge to maintain a majority. Tens of thousands of Hindus who are doing penance have no thought of majority. All they want is to do justice to those whom, under the guise of religion, caste Hindus have reduced to a state worse than slavery. Lastly, you are hopelessly wrong in suggesting that the Congress denies the right to Muslims to convert 'untouchables'. The Congress cannot prevent anybody from doing conversion work. Whether you will exercise the right in the right manner or wrong is for you to consider.

SEVAGRAM, April 15, 1940

Harijan, 20-4-1940

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415. CABLE TO H. G. WELLS[1]

[Before *April 16, 1940*]

RECEIVED YOUR CABLE[2]. HAVE CAREFULLY READ YOUR FIVE ARTICLES[3]. YOU WILL PERMIT ME TO SAY YOU ARE ON THE WRONG TRACK. I FEEL SURE THAT I CAN DRAW UP A BETTER CHARTER OF RIGHTS THAN YOU HAVE DRAWN UP. BUT OF WHAT GOOD WILL IT BE? WHO WILL BECOME ITS GUARDIAN? IF YOU MEAN PROPAGANDA OR POPULAR EDUCATION YOU HAVE BEGUN AT THE WRONG END. I SUGGEST THE RIGHT WAY. BEGIN WITH A CHARTER OF DUTIES OF MAN (BOTH D AND M CAPITALS) AND I PROMISE THE RIGHTS WILL FOLLOW AS SPRING FOLLOWS WINTER. I WRITE FROM EXPERIENCE. AS A YOUNG MAN I BEGAN LIFE BY SEEKING TO ASSERT MY RIGHTS AND I SOON DISCOVERED I HAD NONE NOT EVEN OVER MY WIFE. SO I BEGAN BY DISCOVERING AND PERFORMING MY DUTY BY MY WIFE MY CHILDREN FRIENDS COMPANIONS AND SOCIETY AND I FIND TODAY THAT I HAVE GREATER RIGHTS, PERHAPS THAN ANY LIVING MAN I KNOW. IF THIS IS TOO TALL A CLAIM THEN I SAY I DO NOT KNOW ANYONE WHO POSSESSES GREATER RIGHTS THAN I.

The Hindustan Times, 16-4-1940

[1] Herbert George Wells (1866-1946); English novelist, sociological writer and historian; author of *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The Shape of Things to Come*, *The Outline of History*, *The Invisible Man* and various other works

[2] The addressee had sought Gandhiji's opinion on the "Rights of Man" drawn up by him, a public discussion on which was going on in the British and Indian Press.

[3] Published in *The Hindustan Times*

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTION ON INDEPENDENCE DAY PLEDGE[1]

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 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

[1] *Vide* pp. 50, 69, 81.

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 the 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, and 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 II

VICEROY'S SPEECH[1]

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 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

[1] *Vide* pp. 107, 114, 118 and 189.

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 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 III

K. M. MUNSHI'S INTERVIEW WITH LORD LINLITHGOW[1]

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 of coming to an agreed formula on the point. Fourth, there is the question of direct elections to the Assembly.

[1] *Vide* p. 118.

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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 IV

GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE[1]

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[2], the Federal Scheme of the 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

[1] *Vide* pp. 184, 185 and 189.
[2] On January 17, 1940

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 V

RESOLUTION AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH[1]

February 22, 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 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

[1] *Vide* pp. 256, 277 and 293.

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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

APPENDIX VI

A RESOLUTION[1]

PATNA,
March 1, 1940

This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the War in Europe and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the resolutions passed and the action taken on the War situation by the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee. The Congress considers the declaration by the British Government of India as a belligerent country, without any reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of India's resources in this war, as an affront to them which no self-respecting and freedom-loving people can accept or tolerate. The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the war fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the war, which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The Congress, therefore, strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the war. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen, and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material.

[1] Gandhiji's draft was approved by the Working Committee and recommended for adoption at the Congress Session at Ramgarh. It appeared in *Harijan* under the title "India and the War". *Vide* pp. 296, 305, 313, 322, 349 and 424.

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The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism and Dominion Status or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

The Congress is further of opinion that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognized minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on any point. Any alternative will lack finality. India's constitution must be based on independence, democracy and national unity, and the Congress repudiates attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood. The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities of development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a juster social order.

The Congress cannot admit the right of the Rulers of Indian States, or of foreign vested interests, to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the States or the Provinces, and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests. The Congress holds that the difficulty raised in regard to the States is of British creation, and it will not be satisfactorily solved unless the declaration of the freedom of India from foreign rule is unequivocally made. Foreign interests, if they are not in conflict with the interests of the Indian people, will be protected.

The Congress withdrew the Ministries from the Provinces where the Congress had a majority in order to dissociate India from the war and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from foreign domination. This preliminary step must naturally be followed by civil disobedience, to which the Congress will unhesitatingly resort as soon as the Congress organization is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis. The Congress desires to draw the attention of Congressmen to Gandhiji's declaration that he can only undertake the responsibility of declaring civil disobedience when he is satisfied that they are strictly observing discipline and are carrying out the constructive programme prescribed in the Independence Pledge.

The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction of race or religion, and the struggle for Indian independence is for the freedom of the whole nation. Hence the Congress cherishes the

hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of civil disobedience is to evoke the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation.

The Congress hereby authorizes the All-India Congress Committee, and in the event of this being necessary, the Working Committee, to take all steps to implement the foregoing resolution as the Committee concerned may deem necessary.

Harijan, 9-3-1940

APPENDIX VII

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S STATEMENT[1]

I have been charged with trying to impede the production of munitions and other supplies essential to the efficient prosecution of the war, and with trying to influence the conduct and attitude of the public in a manner prejudicial to the defence of British India and the efficient prosecution of the war. I plead guilty to these charges.

These charges, however, do not constitute a guilt for me but a duty which I discharge regardless of the consequence. That they also constitute an offence under certain laws of the foreign Government, established by force in this country, does not concern me. The object of these laws is diametrically opposed to the object of nationalist India of which I am but an humble representative. That we should come in conflict is only natural.

My country is not a party to this war in any manner, for it regards both German Nazism and British Imperialism as evils and enemies. It finds that both the sides in this war are driven by selfish ends of conquest and domination, exploitation and oppression. Great Britain is fighting not to destroy Nazism, which it has nurtured, but to curb a rival whose might can no longer be allowed to grow unchallenged. It is fighting to maintain its dominant place in the world and to preserve its imperial power and glory. As far as India is concerned, Great Britain is fighting to perpetuate the Indian Empire.

Plainly, India can have no truck with such a war. No Indian can permit the resources of his country to be utilized to buttress up imperialism, and to be converted through the processes of the war into the chains of his country's slavery. The Congress, the only representative voice of nationalist India, has already pointed out this sacred duty to the people of this country. I, as an humble servant of the Congress, have only tried to fulfil this duty.

The British Government on the other hand, in utter disregard for Indian opinion, has declared India a belligerent power and is utilizing Indian men, money and materials for a war to which we have pledged our

[1] *Vide* p. 372.

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uncompromising opposition. This is in the nature of an aggression against India, no less serious in the circumstances than German aggression against Poland. India cannot but resist this aggression. It therefore becomes the patriotic duty of every Indian to oppose the attempt of the British Government to use the country's resources for its imperialist ends. Thus the charge framed against me of trying to impede the efficient prosecution of the war is only the fulfilment of a patriotic duty. That the British Government should consider what is a duty for patriotic India to be an offence, only proves further its imperialist character.

Regarding the speech for which I am being prosecuted, I cannot say how far it succeeded in achieving its ends. But nothing would please me more than to learn that it did have some success in impeding the effective prosecution of the war. I shall deem the heaviest punishment well earned if I am found to have succeeded in this.

As for the charge of endangering the defence of British India, I think the irony of it cannot be lost upon us. A slave has no obligation to defend his slavery. His only obligation is to destroy his bondage. I hope we shall know how to defend ourselves when we have achieved our freedom.

I consider it fortunate that I have been prosecuted for a Jamshedpur speech. This important industrial centre, which I consider the most important in the country, is peculiarly backward politically and from the point of view of the labour movement. I shall derive some satisfaction in prison, where I expect inevitably to find myself, from the thought that my arrest and incarceration for a speech delivered there has attracted to that city the notice of the political and labour leaders of my country. It seems scandalous to me that the country's most vital resources should be so wasted in a war to which we are so firmly opposed. And it seems no less scandalous to me that while labour throughout the country should be reacting vigorously to the conditions created by the war, Jamshedpur labour should carry on as if nothing extraordinary has happened. May, at least, the demand for a war bonus gain some momentum from this prosecution.

Before concluding I should like to add that, lest as an Englishman you should misunderstand me, I should make it clear that in impeding the prosecution of the war I have no desire to help Germany or to see Germany victorious. I desire the victory neither of Imperialism nor of Nazism. Yet, as a Congressman and a socialist I have nothing but goodwill for the British and German people. If India's opposition to Britain's imperialist war ensures a Nazi victory, it is for the British people to decide whether they would have Nazi hegemony or victory with real democracy at home and in India. If the people of Great Britain remove their present rule and renounce imperialism with its capitalist rulers, not only India but the freedom-loving people of the whole world would exert themselves to see the defeat of Nazism and the victory of freedom and democracy. In the present

circumstances, however, India has no alternative but to fight and end British imperialism. Only in that manner can it contribute to the peace and progress of the world.

I am conscious, Sir, that I have made your task easier by this statement. I do not regret it.

In the end I thank you for your courtesy and consideration during the trial.

Harijan, 30-3-1940

APPENDIX VIII

RESOLUTION PASSED BY ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE[1]

March 23, 1940

1. While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council and the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, as indicated in their resolutions dated the 27th of August, 17th and 18th of September and 22nd of October 1939 and 3rd of February 1940 on the constitutional issue, this session of the All-India Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of Federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, is totally unsuited to and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.

2. It further records its emphatic view that while the declaration dated the 18th of October 1939, made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government, is reassuring in so far as it declares that the policy and plan on which the Government of India Act, 1935, is based will be reconsidered in consultation with the various parties, interests and communities in India, Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered *de novo* and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent.

3. Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "independent states" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

[1] *Vide* pp. 387 and 393.

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That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

This session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary.

The Indian Annual Register, January-June 1940, Vol. I, pp. 311-2

APPENDIX IX

LETTER FROM LORD LINLITHGOW[1]

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
April 9, 1940

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your letter of 4th April and for your kindness in sending me the extract enclosed in it from a letter from Maulana A. K. Azad.

2. It is obvious that the extract in question reveals some misunderstanding. When we met on 4th November you asked me specifically, as you have indicated in your letter, whether the Dominion Status which His Majesty's Government had in view for India was the Dominion Status of the Statute of Westminster variety. I explained the position, and I took the steps at once to ask the Secretary of State to arrange in the House of Lords (as he did on 7th November 1939) to place the position beyond any question. When we met on 5th February I again made the offer of His Majesty's Government clear and stated the limits within which I could conduct negotiation. You equally made your position clear, and I have no complaint whatever that you failed to do so. That, in the light of my speech at Orient Club and of your first reaction to it, I was disappointed that the gulf between us should at our meeting on 5th February have proved to be so wide, you know as well as I do. But there is no question of misunderstanding.

[1] *Vide* pp. 393 and 419.

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3. As for His Majesty's Government, I have never failed to keep them fully informed of what had passed between us, and I am sure there is no misapprehension in their minds. I only wish that as the result of our various conversations I had found myself in a position to report that the hopes, indeed the confident hopes, I had at various times entertained and which, in accordance with my duty, I had not concealed from them, of a friendly settlement had been realized.

4. I am sorry too that I should all unwittingly have involved you in, in your own words, this domestic dispute with your son. For his friendly interest in the promotion of a settlement I am indeed grateful. But you put the matter correctly when you say, as you say in your letter, that the gap revealed between the offer I was empowered to make on behalf of His Majesty's Government and the full demand which you put forward to me was clearly shown, as we both recognized, to be too great to be handled at that moment by prolonging conversations; and disappointed as I frankly was myself that that should have been the case, I think we were both right in feeling that the straightforward and courageous course in the circumstances that had disclosed themselves was to conclude those conversations as we did rather than to protract them.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

From a microfilm: No. 109: Lord Linlithgow Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

APPENDIX X

EXTRACTS FROM LIAQUAT ALI KHAN'S STATEMENT[1]

NEW DELHI,
April 4, 1940

. . . Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Hon. Secretary, All-India Muslim League, in a statement to the Press . . . refers to the article by Gandhiji in the *Harijan* under the caption, "My Reply to Quaid-e-Azam" and says:

Of course a politician who has a dual role, like Mr. Gandhi who is not even a four-anna member of the Congress and yet its virtual dictator, has always a greater advantage over ordinary mortals. He tells us for the first time that "Whatever talks I had with Quaid-e-Azam or any other have been on behalf of the Congress. . . ."

Yet in his letter dated the 8th March 1938 addressed to Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Gandhi stated as follows:

[1] *Vide* "My Position", p. 412.

"You expect me to be able to speak on behalf of the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country. I am afraid I cannot fulfil the test. I cannot represent either the Congress or the Hindus in the sense you mean; but I would exert to the utmost all the moral influence I could have with them in order to secure an honourable settlement."

It is indeed very difficult to know exactly when Mr. Gandhi speaks for himself and when he speaks for the Congress. . . .

Mr. Gandhi goes on to say in his article that the Congress is not a Hindu organization and in support of this he puts forward the following argument. "Can a Hindu organization have a Muslim divine as President . . .?"

He would have the world believe that because Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has been elected President of the Congress therefore the true Hindu character of that body has changed. May I point out to Mr. Gandhi that one swallow does not make a summer and the world cannot be so easily fooled.

Maulana Azad's election as President of the Congress at this time is a tactical device to mislead the ignorant and the credulous. And what does the "Muslim divine" himself think about his election? At the time of Maulana Azad's election to the Presidentship of the Congress he is reported to have said that "he regarded his election as a vote of confidence in the leadership of Mr. Gandhi and the country's approval of his programme."

Mr. Gandhi goes on to say that "I still maintain that there is no swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. I can never be a party to the coercion of Muslims or any other minority. The Constituent Assembly as conceived by me is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal question. If there is no agreement the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved."

Further he goes on to say that "if the vast majority of Indian Muslims feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren who will be able to resist them?"

There are a few pertinent questions which arise out of the above statement of Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi has been saying for the last 20 years that there is no swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity and yet the Hindus and Muslims have never been so far apart from each other as they are today owing to the policy that has been followed by the Congress under the fostering care of Mr. Gandhi having for its sole objective the revival of Hinduism and the imposition of Hindu culture on all and sundry.

Mr. Gandhi's description of the Constituent Assembly as conceived by him needs a great deal of clarification and explanation. One would like to know if the Congress conception of the Constituent Assembly is the same as his own, as the resolution of the Congress is couched in different language to what Mr. Gandhi states in his article.

Mr. Gandhi now says "that if there is no agreement the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved"; but not very long ago he had

laid down that in the event of disagreement the matter will be referred to the highest and most impartial tribunal that the world can conceive of. Mr. Gandhi's statement that "if the vast majority of Indian Muslims feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren who will be able to resist them?" is rather interesting.

Is he prepared, that if the majority of Mussalmans declare in favour of the proposals of the Muslim League as laid down in the resolution passed at the Lahore session he and the Congress will give their whole-hearted support to them?

If so, let him and the Congress declare it unequivocally and in the plainest language to that effect. If the object of the Constituent Assembly is only to ascertain whether the Mussalmans are in favour of the resolution of the Muslim League or not then why go to all the trouble of dragging the whole country into a turmoil, as Mr. Gandhi threatens to do by resorting to civil disobedience, to secure a Constituent Assembly from the British Government?

We have no doubt in our mind . . . that the resolution passed at the Lahore session has the solid support of an overwhelming majority of Mussalmans. Nevertheless let Mr. Gandhi and the Congress and the British Government declare unequivocally that if the majority of the Mussalmans express themselves in favour of the Lahore resolution they would agree to the demand contained in it and give effect to it, and the Muslim League, I have no doubt about it, will be prepared to satisfy any reasonable test; and in order to do that a Constituent Assembly is not necessary.

May I now most earnestly request Mr. Gandhi to lay down the test which would satisfy him in the first instance and describe the procedure categorically by means of which the Mussalmans could prove to the hilt that the Lahore resolution is the voice of Muslim India from one end of the country to the other?

But if Mr. Gandhi wants that we should pull the chestnuts out of the fire for him and the Congress and save their faces by setting up some sort of Constituent Assembly then he is greatly mistaken.

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-4-1940

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CHRONOLOGY

(*December 1, 1939—April 15, 1940*)

December 1: Gandhiji was at Segaon.

December 2: In cable to Agatha Harrison stated that "no progress possible without unequivocal declaration independence".

December 3: Sent message to *The Hindu* on its diamond jubilee. Had discussion with C. Rajagopalachari.

December 4: Sent cable to *The News Chronicle* stating that declaration of British policy about India was a purely moral issue.

December 6: M. A. Jinnah issued statement calling upon Mussalmans to observe December 22 as "Day of Deliverance" from Congress Ministries.

December 7: Sir Stafford Cripps arrived at Karachi.

December 8: Gandhiji met Hirday Nath Kunzru.

December 9: In statement to Press appealed to M. A. Jinnah to desist from observing "Day of Deliverance" in view of unity talks and await Viceroy's and Governor's opinion on allegations made by Muslim League against Congress.
Sir Daniel Hamilton died in Scotland.

Before *December 10:* Gandhiji sent message to Jabalpore District Political Conference.

December 10: Sent condolences to Lady Hamilton.

December 17: Through *Harijan* appealed to correspondents and message-seekers to spare him.

December 18: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

December 19: Congress Working Committee meeting continued. Sir Stafford Cripps called on Gandhiji.

December 20: Gandhiji continued discussion with Sir Stafford Cripps.

Before *December 22:* Congress Working Committee passed resolution on Independence Day Pledge.

December 22: Gandhiji sent telegram to Rabindranath Tagore intimating Working Committee's inability to lift ban against

Subhas Chandra Bose.
Congress Working Committee session concluded.
Muslim League observed "Day of Deliverance".

December 27: Gandhiji addressed Nagpur Provincial Congress Workers at Wardha.

1940

On or before *January 2:* Sent cable to Ismet Inonu expressing sympathy on earthquake in Turkey.

Before *January 6:* Had discussion with Christian missionaries.

Before *January 7:* Gave interview to an English reporter.

On or before *January 8:* Sent condolences on Lala Shamlal's death.
Sent condolences to Hirday Nath Kunzru on Venkatasubbiah's death.

January 8: In *Harijan* paid tribute to Venkatasubbiah.

January 9 and *10:* Had discussion with Bhai Paramanand.

January 13: Met C. Rajagopalachari.

January 14: Wrote to Lord Linlithgow regarding his Bombay speech and expressed willingness to see him if so desired.

Before *January 15:* Had discussion with English Pacifists.

January 15: Had discussion with Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari.
In *Harijan* congratulated M. A. Jinnah on forming pact with other political parties.

January 17: Expressed doubt in letter to Lord Linlithgow whether time had "arrived for our meeting" in view of interviews the Viceroy had with Bhulabhai Desai, K. M. Munshi and B. G. Kher.

January 19: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

January 20: Had discussion with Bengal leaders.
C.W.C. meeting continued.

January 21: C.W.C. session concluded.

January 22: Gandhiji had discussion with Subhas Chandra Bose.

January 23: Wrote to Lord Linlithgow that he could reach Delhi any day after February 4.

January 25: Through Press issued warning against sale and purchase of uncertified khadi.

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January 26: Independence Day celebrated.

Before *January 27:* Gandhiji sent message to All-India Women's Conference.

January 31: Gave interview to Holmes Smith.

February 3: Left Wardha for Delhi.
En route gave interview to Associated Press at Nagpur.

February 4: Reached Delhi.
Met Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan.

February 5: Had interview with Viceroy at 11 a.m.
Government communique on interview issued in evening.

February 6: Gave statement to Press about difference between Congress demand and Viceregal offer.
Left Delhi for Wardha.
En route gave interview to Press at Jhansi.

February 7: Sent cable to *The News Chronicle*.
Cabled statement to *The Daily Herald*, London.
Sent message to mill-workers, Ahmedabad.

February 8: Had discussion with Gulzarilal Nanda.

February 9: Gave interview to Harbans Singh.

February 14: Issued statement to Press on Zetland's interview to *The Sunday Times*.

February 15: Left Wardha in evening.

February 17: Reached Calcutta in morning; later proceeded to Santiniketan.
At Santiniketan spoke in reply to address in afternoon.

February 18: Visited Sriniketan.
Had discussion with Rabindranath Tagore. Attended dramatic performance of "Chandalika".

On or before *February 19:* Had discussion with Pacifists.

February 19: Left Santiniketan.
Reached Calcutta in afternoon.
Visited C. F. Andrews at Presidency General Hospital.
Called on N. R. Sarkar.
Left Calcutta at night.

February 20: Reached Malikanda.
Opened Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition; visited injured volunteers at hospital.

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Made will in favour of "Navajivan" about copyrights of his writings.

February 21: Addressed Gandhi Seva Sangh and advised it to give up politics.

February 22: Spoke at Gandhi Seva Sangh meeting.
Gandhi Seva Sangh passed resolution eschewing politics and confining itself to constructive programme.

February 24: Spoke at Bengal Workers' Conference.
Addressed Bengal women workers.

February 25: Spoke at public meeting.
Left Malikanda.

February 26: Reached Calcutta.

Before *February 27:* Sent message to people of Manipur.

February 27: Gave message to Press for Bengal.
Left for Patna.

February 28: Reached Patna.
Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Had discussion with Socialists.

February 29: C.W.C. meeting continued.
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee suspended.

March 1: Gandhiji attended C.W.C. meeting.
Met Scheduled Caste representatives.
C.W.C. approved resolution to launch civil disobedience as soon as organization was considered fit enough or "in case circumstances so shaped themselves as to precipitate a crisis" and recommended it for Congress session at Ramgarh.

March 2: Gandhiji reached Calcutta.
Issued statement to Press on Patna Resolution clarifying that Congress had not closed door on negotiation but it could not be on Zetland's terms.

March 3: Arrived in Segaon.

March 5: Notified in *Harijan* change of name from 'Segaon' to 'Sevagram'.

March 7: Jayaprakash Narayan was arrested.

Before *March 12:* Gandhiji had discussion with a missionary.

March 12: Had discussion with Christian missionaries.
Left for Ramgarh in evening.

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March 13: Sir Michael O'Dwyer shot dead and Zetland, Lamington and Sir Louis Dane wounded in London.

March 14: At Ramgarh Gandhiji opened Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition.
Issued statement to Press condemning Michael O'Dwyer's assassination.
Sent condolences to Michael O'Dwyer's family.

March 15 and *16:* Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

March 17: Attended Subjects Committee meeting.

March 18: Addressed Subjects Committee.
Spoke at Exhibition.

March 19: At Ranchi opened Thakkar Bhavan and Industrial Home for Harijans and Aborigines in morning.
Returned to Ramgarh.
Gave interview to Associated Press.

March 20: Spoke at Congress session.
Gave interview to Ceylonese National Congress delegation.
Patna Resolution passed.

March 21: On way to Wardha.

March 22: Arrived at Wardha in morning.
At All-India Muslim League's session at Lahore M. A. Jinnah suggested division of India "into autonomous national States".

March 26: In *Harijan* Gandhiji refuted M. A. Jinnah's allegation that Congress was a Hindu organization.

March 30: Spoke at Khadi *Yatra.*

March 31: Had discussion with delegates of Khadi *Yatra.*

April 1: Had discussion with Gandhi Seva Sangh Committee.

April 3: Met Ghanshyamsingh Gupta.

April 5: C. F. Andrews died.
In statement to Press Gandhiji paid tribute to C. F. Andrews.

Before *April 7:* Had discussion with a Chinese visitor.

April 12: Telegraphed congratulations to Jamnalal Bajaj on settlement between Jaipur State and Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal.

April 15: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

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ERRATA

PAGE	FOR	READ
8 *Item 10, line 2	register	verandah
28 Paragraph 2, line 3	Is not that	Is not the question clearly answered by the blazing fact that

* Due correction made.

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