

## 1. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

LIKANDA

February 23, 1940

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Though we have hostile slogans<sup>1</sup>, 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.

Radical changes have been made in the working and composition of the Sangh.<sup>2</sup> This you will have already seen.

We are leaving here on Sunday and leaving Calcutta on Tuesday for Patna<sup>3</sup>.

No more today. Mountain of work awaiting me.

Your reports about the family there are encouraging. Poonam Chand Ranka<sup>4</sup> 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

## 2. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

February 23, 1940

CHI. SUSHILA,

There is no news from you. How is Parachure Shastri? I have written to Biyaniji at Chhindwada. I hope Balkrishna and Kunverji are able to bear the heat.

I am keeping perfectly good health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition", 20-2-1940

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting—IV", pp. 22-2-1940

<sup>3</sup> For the Congress Working Committee meeting

<sup>4</sup> President, Provincial Congress Committee, Nagpur

### 3. TELEGRAM TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

GANDHI SEVA SANGH,  
*February 24, 1940*

SUSHILA  
SEGAON  
WARDHA

TELL VALJIBHAI TAKE MILK TREATMENT WITH REST.

BAPU

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

### 4. 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 Pandit 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<sup>1</sup>.

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

<sup>1</sup> For the Congress session

## 5. TALK WITH WORKERS<sup>1</sup>

MALIKANDA,

[February 24, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

All incompatible mixtures are bound to explode.<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>4</sup> 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 भुञ्जीयाः<sup>5</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> A Harijan caste from Bengal

<sup>5</sup> Ishopanishad, 1

## 6. ADDRESS AT BENGAL WORKERS' CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

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).<sup>2</sup>

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 to 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> A conference of about 200 constructive workers of Bengal and volunteers of Malikanda was held in the morning.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is from Amrita Bazar Patrika.

<sup>3</sup> The following paragraph is from Amrita Bazar Patrika.

<sup>4</sup> Amrit 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."

<sup>5</sup> The following paragraph is from Amrita Bazar Patrika.

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 counte 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 not 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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”.

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.<sup>4</sup> The wheel is meant for them. But though there is this flaw in it I am asking

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is from Amrita Bazar Patrika.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Amrita Bazar Patrika here reports : “He conceded there was some truth the argument that to the extent they used khadi they deprived the mill workers of their bread.”

you all to spin in order to universalize spinning.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>. That will enable poor people, who can neither spin for themselves nor purchase khadi today, to buy the khadi thus made cheaper for them.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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 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 rashtradharm<sup>6</sup> par excellence.

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

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Duty towards nation

## 7. ADDRESS TO BENGAL WOMEN WORKERS

MALIKANDA,

February 24, 1940

Politics means not merely to sit on the Congress Executive. Real politics is in spinning.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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

## 8. 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*

<sup>1</sup> This and the following paragraph are from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

<sup>2</sup> What follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

## 9. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup>. 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji addressed a gathering of 50,000 before his departure for Calcutta in the afternoon.

<sup>2</sup> This was the balance from the money collected for the session of Gandhi Seva Sangh

<sup>3</sup> In December, 1920

<sup>4</sup> The following sentence is from Amrita Bazar Patrika.

towards the country's independence<sup>1</sup>.

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

## *10. QUESTION BOX* CONSTRUCTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Q. Since you have excluded politics from the Gandhi Seva Sangh,<sup>2</sup> 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 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

## *11. 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

<sup>1</sup> Amrita Bazar Patrika adds here : "and establish a precedent in world history".

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting—III", 22-2-1940

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.<sup>1</sup> We are ever thankful to you for this act of friendliness.

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

<sup>1</sup>Vide "Letter to Rabindranath Tagore", 27-3-1936.

concerned. In my reply<sup>1</sup> 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

## 12. 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 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<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "What I Saw In Santiniketan", 2-3-1940

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Sind Tragedy" 6-1-1940

<sup>3</sup> In 1922

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 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

### 13. *THE RIGHT STEP*

It was not without a pang that I advised the important step taken by the Gandhi Seva Sangh<sup>1</sup>. 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.

<sup>1</sup> At its meeting on February 22, 1940; vide “Resolution at Gandhi Seva Sangh”, 12-2-1940

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 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 Jammalalji 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

#### 14. 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<sup>1</sup> which P[yarelal] forgot to post till we reached Malikanda ! I wrote another at M[alikanda].<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 18-2-1940

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 23-1940

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

### 15. MESSAGE TO PEOPLE OF MANIPUR<sup>1</sup>

[Before *February 27, 1940*]<sup>2</sup>

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*

### 16. 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

### 17. FAREWELL MESSAGE TO BENGAL<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> This was sent through Lalit Madhab Sharma and another leader of Manipur.

<sup>2</sup> The report is date-lined "Gauhati, February 27, 1940".

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji gave this to the Press reporters before his departure for Patna.

## 18. LETTER TO ABDUL MAJID KHAN

[February 1940]<sup>1</sup>

Since you have the support of all the eminent Congressmen, if you are defeated it will be because the majority of graduate voters are not Congress-minded.<sup>2</sup> It will also show that in your province at least the Congress hold oh the educated men is not as great as it should be. I hope you will win.

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayar and Dr. Sushila Nayar

## 19. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> is that the Congress has not closed the door. It has been closed by Lord Zetland.<sup>5</sup> 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. 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,

<sup>1</sup> As supplied in the source

<sup>2</sup> The addressee was a candidate for the Punjab University fellowship elections.

<sup>3</sup> This appeared in Harijan under the title "What Resolution Means".

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Resolution at Gandhi Seva Sangh", 12-2-1940

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* "Is It War?", 17-2-1940 "Statement to the Press", 14-2-1940 and "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940.

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

## 20. WHEN THE BRITISH WITHDRAW<sup>1</sup>

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 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

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

possibility and efficacy will survive the dissolution of my body.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, March 3, 1940

*Harijan*, 9-3-1940

## 21. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA,

*March 3, 1940*

CHI. PREMI,<sup>1</sup>

You have given me news regularly. I wonder if you are still there. I hope the progress continues.

Love to you all.

BAPU

SHRIPREMI BEHN

C/O. DR. C. S. SAHANI

KHANDWA

From the original: C. W. 11049. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

## 22. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,

*March 3, 1940*

CHI. NIMU,

I have your letter. 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

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

### 23. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

[March 3, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

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

### 24. A VERY USEFUL PUBLICATION

Shri Satis Chandra Das Gupta of Khadi Pratishtan 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 work unpublished, but I could not think of

<sup>1</sup> From the G.N. Register

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

## 25. 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"<sup>1</sup> 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 Bhawe

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavad Gita, II. 47

## 26. 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. Fro 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<sup>1</sup> 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.

#### 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

<sup>1</sup> A mystic formula prescribed by a guru

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 taxpayer. 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

### 27. *SEGAON BECOMES SEVAGRAM*<sup>1</sup>

There is Segaoon 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 Segaoon, 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 Segaoon 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.

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

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

## 28. *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<sup>1</sup> 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. Congress-men 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 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

<sup>1</sup>Vide Appendix VI.

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

### 29. NOTE TO M. V. NAGALINGAM<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,

*March 5, 1940*<sup>2</sup>

The body is like a letter writ on water.

M. K. GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee was then rendering scavenging service at the Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> The date-line is in Devanagari.

### 30. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,

[On or after *March 5, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 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

### 31. TELEGRAM TO GUJARAT VIDYAPITH

[On or before *March 6, 1940*]<sup>3</sup>

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

BAPU

The Hindu, 7-3-1940

### 32. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*March 6, 1940*

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. May God grant you enough strength to bear

<sup>1</sup> In the source the place name Segaoon has been struck off and substituted by Sevagram. This change was notified on March 5, 1940; vide "Segaoon Becomes Sevagram"

<sup>2</sup> A. H. West, printer of Indian Opinion and a close associate of Gandhiji in South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> The report is date-lined "Ahmedabad, 6-3-1940".

your new burden<sup>1</sup>. 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

### 33. *LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS*

SEVAGRAM, WARDH

*March 7, 1940*

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

Here is a letter from Lilian<sup>2</sup>. 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

### 34. *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<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> In connection with women volunteers for the Congress session at Ramgarh. *Vide* footnote , 29-1-1940

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

<sup>3</sup> Nrisimhaprasad Kalidas Bhatt

schools<sup>1</sup> are running well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 35. 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

### 36. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SEVAGRAM,

*March 7, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I have read your previous letter. My impression was correct. There was nothing in it to which I could object. I do not consider your second letter proper. Sushila is convinced that she is here to provide me medical care. Hence she considers it her duty to be wherever I may be. She says that it is of no consequence to her whether I accept this position or not. She will be content if I always keep her with me. She will be ready to make exceptions in cases of emergency sickness. If I take her along with me with any other thought, it will be sheer self-deception. Hence, as I view the situation, it presents a dilemma. Then, Sushila also says that she does not mind being considered the sixth in the same place as the other five. I would not be inviting any blame if I take it that way, because Sushila is useful to me in many ways other than medical services. But I do not

<sup>1</sup> The Home School of Bhavnagar with which Nanabhai was connected and the school at Ambla where addressee's husband worked

consider any of the other five indispensable. I can let any of them go whenever I desire. Actually, five are not like that. Just as I can relieve any of the five any time I wish, I can also relieve Sushila. But when I say so, she refuses to believe me because she does not trust me. That is the crux of the matter. The fact remains, however, that one may try to gloss it over with sweet words. How can I overcome this distrust? It is a pitiable situation.

Now about you. If I considered you someone separate, I would consider doing something by way of repentance. But that thought is not in my mind any longer. Now you are what Mahadev is.

So you must now guide Sushila in a manner you think fit. I am absolutely clear in my mind. Her decision to leave is a great mistake. But what I think is of no consequence. Whatever you two consider as dharma will be dharma.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 37. *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

### 38. *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

### 39. *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

### 40. *LETTER TO SITA GANDHI*

*March 8, 1940*

CHI. SITA<sup>1</sup>,

I could reply to your letter, only today. You should write in ink. Your English handwriting is beautiful, but your spelling seem very poor. Not 'coposition' but 'composition', not 'georaphy' but 'geography'

<sup>1</sup> Manilal Gandhi's daughter

'<sup>1</sup>. 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

#### 41. 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.<sup>2</sup> If . . .<sup>3</sup> 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

#### 42. LETTER TO PYARELAL

*March 8, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

Your letter is painful. It is strange. Maybe we are talking in different languages. No, your very first sentence is not correct.

I am totally against Sushila staying with me only as my physician and for my sake. I have never kept her with me on those terms and I am not keeping her like that today. I have kept her as my daughter and sister. I still wish to keep her. But I see that I have committed a grave fault. I followed the path of untruth. I let her believe that she is with me only as my physician. If she goes, it will be

<sup>1</sup> The source has these words in English

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Limbdi", 31-8-1939

<sup>3</sup> The word is unintelligible.

my expiation.

What else should I write? What can I do when language is ineffective? The circumstances have not changed. My untruth has come to light.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 43. 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

### 44. LETTER TO PYARELAL

*March 10, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

This letter is not a little painful. Though painful I shall bear it, as I am doing.

The words you put into my mouth express your belief not mine. Only the portion which seems superfluous is real. Neither S. nor anyone else is indispensable to me. Nor can anyone have a higher or a lower place. Such a fear can never be real. What I see is that I have lost the trust of both of you. Where is the question of argument where there is trust? If S. feels humiliated in staying here or if it will mean her undoing, I must put up with her departure. S. is not at all superfluous. She enjoys the same position which Mahadev and you enjoy. She is with me not as my physician, but as she happens to be with me, I avail myself of her medical skill.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 45. 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

#### 46. FOR ENGLISHMEN

Thus writes a very responsible Englishman to a common friend. The receiver sends it to me for answer :<sup>1</sup>

I have just been reading with very real concern the text of the resolution<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> Vide Appendix "A Resolution", 1-3-1940.

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 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 Silver-town 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 ?

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,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> I had no authority to bind anyone else to that statement. Needless to say the offer was never made. 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<sup>3</sup> 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,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Draft Resolution for A.I.C.C., Lahore", 26-12-1929; "Speech at Congress Session, Lahore—II", 31-12-1929 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to H. S. L. Polak", 27-1-1937.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 11-12-1939.

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, 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.' Is says to the Rulers : 'Not you but the elected representative 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

#### 47. WOMEN AND VOLUNTARY ENDEAVOUR

Shrimati Rajkumari Amrit Kaur writes :<sup>1</sup>

. . . I have recently addressed all our branches of the All-India Women's Conference<sup>2</sup> 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 only giving them economic independence but we also raise the dignity of their labour.

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

<sup>2</sup> The annual session of which was held at Allahabad from January 27 to 31, 1940

. . . 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 as laid stress on identification with the poor through labour willingly and cheerfully done.

SEVAGRAM, March 11, 1940

*Harijan*, 23-3-1940

#### 48. KHADI BANKS<sup>1</sup>

A correspondent writes :<sup>2</sup>

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*<sup>3</sup> books to such customers who may from time to time draw *hundis* of appropriate denominations on the bhandar 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. . . .

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> Only extracts are reproduced here.

<sup>3</sup> Promissory note

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

#### 49. *DISCUSSION WITH A MISSIONARY*<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,

[Before *March 12, 1940*]<sup>2</sup>

[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 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."<sup>3</sup>

You are living a guided life. Could you kindly tell me your experience or 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

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "Occasional Notes"

<sup>2</sup> The discussion took place before Gandhiji left for Ramgarh on March 12.

<sup>3</sup> *St. Matthew*, VII. 21

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<sup>1</sup> 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

#### 50. JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>4</sup>. Is this arrest a prearranged plan, or is it a

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, vi. 5

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "A Brave Statement", 26-3-1940.

<sup>4</sup> They were sentenced to two years' imprisonment on November 1, 1921.

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

## 51. QUESTION BOX

### DO I DISTRUST THE VICEROY ?

Q. Does not your identifying yourself with the Patna resolution<sup>1</sup> of the Working Committee betray distrust in Lord Linlithgow, although you have professed to believe in his sincerity ?

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.<sup>2</sup> 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 Zetlands' interview<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "A Resolution", 1-3-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Task Before Us", 6-2-1940

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Is It War ?", 13-2-1940, "Statement to the Press", 14-2-1940 and "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940.

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 exist, 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, 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."<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "What Is Woman's Role ?", 12-2-1940.

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.

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

## 52. 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<sup>1</sup>. 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 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

## 53. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
March 12, 1940

CHI. VIJAYA,

I had your letter from Ambla about Abu. I have already replied<sup>2</sup> to it. Yesterday I got your letter written from Varad. Father<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Presumbaly, Prithvi Singh

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Vijayabehn Pancholi", 7-3-1940.

<sup>3</sup> Naranbhai Vallabhbai Patel

## 54. 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 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<sup>1</sup> will be all right.

I should like to point out the following, if not more, for research.<sup>2</sup>

- (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

<sup>1</sup> Gopabandhu Chaudhri

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is in Hindi.

## 55. DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,  
[March 12, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

[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<sup>3</sup> 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 theologians. 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 ?

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.

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "Occasional Notes".

<sup>2</sup> The discussion took place on March 12, the day Gandhiji left for Ramgarh.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel E. Stokes and C. F. Andrews

But I must tell you that you have overstayed your time already.<sup>1</sup> 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*

### 56. CABLE TO CARL HEATH

*March [13]<sup>2</sup>, 1940*

CARL HEATH

FRIENDS HOUSE, EUSTON, LONDON

YOUR LETTER<sup>3</sup>. 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

### 57. LETTER TO CARL HEATH

ON TRAIN TO RAMGARH,

*March 13, 1940*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have read yours<sup>4</sup> of 23rd February many times.

There should never be any difference of opinion between us, for

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had promised the missionaries five minutes although he was busy preparing to leave for Ramgarh.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

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 safe-guards. 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]<sup>1</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> Illegible in the source

of a dozen representative Indian men work out to agreement<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> This should perhaps read : "work out by agreement"; *vide* also "Another Englishman's Letter", 16-3-1940

<sup>2</sup> The source, however, has "non-official".

## 58. 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<sup>1</sup> and cable.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the who preceding items.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> The source has "care".

59. *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

60. *LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA*

*March 13, 1940*

CHI. BABUDI,

Anand<sup>1</sup> 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

61. *LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

ON THE TRAIN,  
*March 13, 1940*

CHI. SUSHILA,

I do hope that you would not be able to go in spite of your wanting. It would be a great mistake to go. I have not the slightest

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

doubt about it. Ba also thinks the same. May God grant you forbearance and a sense of discrimination.

Satisfy Balwantsinha. Kishorelalbai will be well. Coax Amtussalaam to take something for her cough. Gaura I hope is doing well.

Zohra had been here. She had also brought food.

I slept thrice during the day. I was mentally quite fatigued.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 62. 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.

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

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

RAMGARH,

March 14, 1940

The news of the death of Sir Michael O'Dwyer<sup>2</sup> and of the injuries to Lord Zetland, Lord Lamington and Sir Louis Bane has

<sup>1</sup> This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "An Insane Act".

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 23-3-1940

#### 64. 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.”

<sup>2</sup> The following paragraph is from *Harijan*.

great responsibility in as much 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 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

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is from *Harijan*.

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 out come 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

## 65. DISCUSSION AT WORKING COMMITTEE<sup>1</sup>

RAMGARH,

March 15, 1940

GANDHIJI : If some such statement<sup>2</sup> 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. . . .<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier, Gandhiji had read out a draft resolution sent by Jayaprakash Narayan, for the text of which, *vide* "Jayaprakash's Picture", 14-4-1940.

<sup>3</sup> The proposal was opposed by Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel.

country prepared for civil disobedience, (3) what was their precise conception of Constituent Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

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 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

<sup>1</sup> This was followed by speeches of Bhulabhai Desai, P. C. Ghosh, Patabhi Sitaramayya and others including Rajendra Prasad.

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<sup>1</sup>. I may be a 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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."

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<sup>1</sup>. 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 was my position. The Britishers are unwilling to go even so far. I am however giving up that position now.<sup>2</sup>

Wardha Office Satyagraha File, 1940-41. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 66. ANOTHER ENGLISHMAN'S LETTER

Last week I dealt with a letter from a well-known Englishman who is in India<sup>3</sup>. Now I have a letter from a responsible English friend<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> In 1917

<sup>2</sup> The meeting was then addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad and C. Rajagopalachari.

<sup>3</sup> Vide "For Englishmen", "For Englishmen", 11-3-1940.

<sup>4</sup> Vide "Letter to Carl Heath", 13-3-1940.

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 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

## 67. 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*<sup>1</sup> 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

#### 68. NOTES

##### THE LONDON ASSASSINATION

Further details that have come through the press of the assassination of Sir Michael O'Dwyer<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> A Vedic *mantra* invoking the creative energy of the sun

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Statement to the press", 14-3-1940.

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 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<sup>1</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Chowpatty, Bombay", 6-4-1919

solemnity and with intensive sales of khadi and other products of village handicrafts.

RAMGARH, March 17, 1940

*Harijan*, 23-3-1940

### 69. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

*March 17, 1940*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I read your letter as well as your note.<sup>1</sup> 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.

*Blessins 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

### 70. SPEECH AT SUBJECTS COMMITTEE<sup>2</sup>

RAMGARH,

*March 18, 1940*

Since I went out of the Congress at Bombay<sup>3</sup>, 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<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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."

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji spoke in Hindi.

<sup>3</sup> In October 1934.

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here has : "I should be allowed to serve the country in my own way with whatever strength is left to me."

occasion, I myself 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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> And it should not therefore be difficult for me to get at the back of your minds.<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>4</sup>, 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "A Resolution", 1-3-1940.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*.

<sup>3</sup> *Congress Bulletin* has : "It should, therefore, not be difficult for me to remember you."

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "So that any point that is not accepted today may be accepted tomorrow."

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "They had every right to do so."

Let me then tell you that I do not see at the present moment conditions propitious for an immediate launching of campaign. We are hemmed in with difficulties greater than those we had to 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*.

<sup>2</sup> The following two sentences are from *Congress Bulletin*.

<sup>3</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds: "Our fight is not yet over".

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 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,<sup>1</sup> but I do not know a more feeble General in history. I have no sanctions.<sup>2</sup> 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 ?<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 condition, 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.<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds : "It should not mean that I should keep you in the dark regarding my feelings."

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*.

<sup>3</sup> *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."

<sup>4</sup> The following five sentences are from *Congress Bulletin*.

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here has : "For love must be characterized by patience. I have heard friends criticising 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."

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.<sup>1</sup>

I turned a rebel against this Government in 1919, but before that I was as loyal to it as any Britisher.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> I am also a

<sup>1</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here has : “The more I think about non-violence, the greater the virtues I find in it.”

<sup>2</sup> *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 I wanted to be true to myself.”

<sup>3</sup> *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.”

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds : “I would be happy indeed if he could keep me in his pocket.”

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here reports: “I do not read all that appears in the Urdu, Press ; but perhaps I get a lot of abuses there.”

<sup>6</sup> *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

reader of the Koran like them, and I will tell them that the Koran makes no distinction between the Hindus and the Mussalmans.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> I therefore always work with and for goodwill for them. That I want to destroy British imperialism in another matter, but I want to do so by converting those who are associated with it.<sup>3</sup> 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-cooperation was going on.<sup>4</sup> I would not only go to the Viceroy when invited, but I would 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.<sup>5</sup> He put the receiver down in anger, but I thrust myself on him. As a result he relented and I was in stronger position. Today we are friends. The basis of my fight is love for the opponent.<sup>6</sup> I could not have fought the Dutch and the English' 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.<sup>8</sup> You might perhaps not be taking these things seriously, but in my mind there is no other thought. My

<sup>1</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here reports : "I will tell them that God makes no distinction between Hindus and Muslims.

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds : "These are my ways. You may call them weakness. If you want me you must understand this."

<sup>3</sup> *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."

<sup>4</sup> On May 13 and 14, 1921; *vide* "Notes", 4-8-1921.

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds : "to try and see if the fight could be abandoned."

<sup>6</sup> This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*.

<sup>7</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds : "in South Africa".

<sup>8</sup> The following two sentences are from *Congress Bulletin*.

mind is wholly concentrated on trying this great experiment with your help and support, because it will not only benefit 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.<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> The rest of the paragraph is from *Congress Bulletin*.

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Bulletin* here adds : "which never harms the man who uses the weapon."

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.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 30-3-1940, and *Congress Bulletin*, 12-4-1940, Vol. No. 1, pp 10-6

## 71. SPEECH AT EXHIBITION<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *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."

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji addressed over ten thousand people who had attended the evening prayer held on the Exhibition grounds.

<sup>3</sup> The following paragraph is from *Harijan*.

<sup>4</sup> A religious fair held once in twelve years in Allahabad, Hardwar, Ujjain and Nasik

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 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

## 72. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS<sup>2</sup>

RAMGARH,

March 19, 1940<sup>3</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> What follows is from *Harijan*.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> The date-line is from *The Hitavada*, 21-3-1940.

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 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*

### 73. SPEECH AT CONGRESS SESSION

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."<sup>1</sup> (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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji spoke in Hindi.

<sup>2</sup> *St. Matthew*, VII. 21

<sup>3</sup> This sentence is from *Harijan*.

<sup>4</sup> The following two sentences are from *Harijan*.

come and turned me out of my house. I will have to fight him and get if 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 be defeated.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> The following two sentences are from *Harijan*.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is from *Harijan*.

<sup>3</sup> The following two sentences are from *Harijan*.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

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 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> The following three sentences are from *Harijan*.

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.

As a free country India will bear no malice to anyone, nor attempt to enslave any people. We shall march with the rest world, just as we shall desire the rest of the world to march with us.<sup>1</sup> 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 cost. 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

<sup>1</sup> The rest of the paragraph is from *Harijan*.

#### 74. INTERVIEW TO CEYLONese DELEGATION<sup>1</sup>

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.

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 Nehru 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.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindu*, 21-3-1940

#### 75. LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI

March 21, 1940

DEAR SIR AKBAR<sup>3</sup>,

I do not know if you are responsible for the orders against the

<sup>1</sup> This was reported to the United Press. The Ceylonese National Congress delegation consisting Jayawardhana, S. Jayasekara and Amaratunga met Gandhiji in the afternoon.

<sup>2</sup> The delegation presented Gandhiji a book entitled *The work of the Buddha* by a Buddhist Bhikku of Ceylon.

<sup>3</sup> President, Ministers' Committee, Hyderabad State

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!<sup>1</sup>

Hope you are keeping well.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 8017

*76. 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<sup>2</sup>. I understand you have gone to Delhi. Therefore on your return you should break the journey and say a few days in Sevagram or Wardha whichever suits you better. There are things to discuss.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 2079

*77. 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<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also letter to the addressee, "Letter to Akbar Hydari", 14-4-1940.

<sup>2</sup> C. A. Aiyamuthu, Secretary, Tamilnad branch of the A. I. S. A.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Ramibehn K. Parekh", 7-2-1940.

78. 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

79. 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

## 80. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,  
March 22, 1940

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

I have gone through your long letter regarding the idea I put forward at Malikanda.<sup>1</sup> There seems to have been some misunderstanding. If possible, I wish to give a daily wage of eight annas right from today. However, what should we do if those who will wear the cloth cannot afford [the resulting price]? Crores of people will have to purchase the khadi which they wear. Only if khadi is thus purchased and worn by people, will the sisters who spin may earn a living. If everybody were to spin the yarn required for his clothes himself, spinning as a profession would cease. The spinner would be unable to make a living. That would be the situation. I am asking Krishnadas to think over all these problems. You need to go deeper into the matter. I will try to solve your difficulty through correspondence. If you wish, you may come over when you get the time to do so. You had placed on my table some figures related to spinning. I do not find them. Send me the figures again.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : . S. N. 33054

## 81. 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<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> At the session of the Gandhi Seva Sangh held at Malikanda from February 20 to 25, 1940

<sup>2</sup> Abul Kalam Azad who was elected Congress President on February 16, 1940

## 82. LETTER TO REV. SATCHELL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

March 23, 1940

DEAR REV. SATCHELL,

I have kept your letter by me all these months. My experience tells me that no society can be held together unless it is ruled by truth and non-violence. To accept the rule of these two invisible forces is a difficult task. I hope therefore that in your society you will prefer quality to quantity.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10958. Courtesy: Prime Minister's Office

## 83. 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

## 84. HOW TO EVOKE THE BEST ?

An Indian protagonist of Britain writes :<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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 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

### 85. 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 :<sup>1</sup>

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, 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

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

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

### 86. EVERY CONGRESS COMMITTEE A SATYAGRAHA COMMITTEE

When I said at the Subjects Committee meeting<sup>1</sup> 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*<sup>2</sup> to read my two

<sup>1</sup> On March 18

<sup>2</sup> Army

speeches<sup>1</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Speech at Subjects Committee”, “Speech at Subjects Committee”, 18-3-1940, and “Speech at Congress Session”, 20-3-1940.

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

### 87. MY ANSWER TO QUAID-E-AZAM

Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah is reported to have said<sup>1</sup> :

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.<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> In his Presidential address at the Lahore session of the All-India Muslim League on March 22

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Subjects Committee", 18-3-1940.

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 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 feeling of eight crores of Indian Muslims.

SEVAGRAM, March 26, 1940

*Harijan*, 30-3-1940

### 88. A BRAVE STATEMENT

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan sent me a copy of his statement<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Jayaprakash Narayan's Statement", 30-3-1940.

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

### 89. 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<sup>1</sup> 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

### 90. 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

<sup>1</sup> F. Mary Barr

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 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

### 91. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

WARDHA,

[After *March 26, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ?

Love.

BAPU

*My Dear Child*, p. 116

### 92. TELEGRAM TO MRS. YAKUB HASAN

[On or before *March 27, 1940*]<sup>3</sup>

MY SINCERE CONDOLENCES ON YOUR BEREAVEMENT.<sup>4</sup> MAY GOD GIVE YOU STRENGTH TO BEAR THE LOSS.

*The Hindu*, 27-3-1940

<sup>1</sup> In the source this letter is placed after the one dated March 26, 1940.

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

<sup>3</sup> The report is date-lined "Madras, March 27, 1940".

<sup>4</sup> The addressee's husband, former Minister of Public Works in Madras, had passed away.

93. *LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*March 27, 1940*

CHI. PREMI,

I have your letter. Please give the enclosed to Father, if you think it should be given to him. Will it be safe to take him to Sindh in his present condition? Why not to Kashmir as he had originally planned? Somehow or other I dread the idea of going to Sindh especially at this time of year. You won't be remiss in writing to me. A postcard will do. I must have the latest condition.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 11050. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

94. *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

95. LETTER TO CHIMANDAS I. JAGTIANI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

March 28, 1940

DEAR CHIMANDAS,

Your quotation<sup>1</sup> is good. I hope your charkha work will flourish.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 5738

96. 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

97. 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

<sup>1</sup> 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. . . ."

## 98. SPEECH AT KHADI YATRA<sup>1</sup>

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 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

99. *LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA*

SEVAGRAM,

*March 31, 1940*

MY DEAR KU [MARAPPA],

Gajanan<sup>1</sup> 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

100. *LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS*

SEVAGRAM,

*March 31, 1940*

CHI. PREMI<sup>2</sup>,

Our letters crossed. I hope Father is none the worse for the journey nor the climate there. My letter contained the mala for you. I hope you got it safe. You will give me a detailed letter and guard Father against unwanted interviews.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 11052. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

<sup>1</sup> Gajanan Naik, Supervisor, jaggery department of A.I.V.I.A.

<sup>2</sup> This is in the Devanagari script.

## 101. 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 imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> 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

## 102. 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

I shall encourage Prabha to stick to the work she has

<sup>1</sup> Vide "A Brave Statement", 26-3-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Jayaprakash's Picture", 14-4-1940.

<sup>3</sup> 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

undertaken.

Preserve your health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 2219

### 103. DISCUSSION AT KHADI YATRA<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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."

In militarized countries everyone gives a certain time for military purposes. Ours being a non-violent basis, everyone should do sacrificial spinning for a 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to E. E. Doyle", 30-11-1932; "8-12-1932" and "Interview to Associated Press of India", 7-12-1932.

<sup>2</sup> What follows is from *The Hitavada*.

mahatma but try to be a true servant. God alone can testify to this.

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*<sup>1</sup> (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

<sup>1</sup> One of the names of Siva's consort

## 104. QUESTION BOX

### ARE YOU NOT MOVED ?

Q. You have written about Shri Jayaprakash Narayan.<sup>1</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Jayaprakash Narayan", 12-3-1940, and "A Brave Statement", 26-3-1940.

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.<sup>1</sup> and H. T. S.<sup>2</sup> 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 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.

<sup>1</sup> Harijan Sevak Sangh

<sup>2</sup> Hindustani Talimi Sangh

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

### 105. 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<sup>1</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> At its Lahore session in March; *vide* Appendix "Resolution Passed by All-India Muslim League", 23-3-1940.

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 Mohammed 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<sup>1</sup> :

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.

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

<sup>1</sup> As expounded in his Presidential address at Lahore

## 106. AN UNJUDICIAL DICTUM<sup>1</sup>

A correspondent sends me a Press cutting containing a report of an Allahabad judgement 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 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

<sup>1</sup> Though written on April 2, this was published only on May 4; *vide* "Letter to Sri Prakasa", 11-4-1940.

107. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON

WARDHAGANJ,  
April 2, 1940

HARRISON  
2 CRANBOURNE COURT  
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD  
LONDON

OPERATION<sup>1</sup>      SUNDAY      SUCCESSFUL.

GANDHI

From the original : C.W. 10251. Courtesy : Visvabharati, Santiniketan

108. 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.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Andrews was operated upon at Dr. Riordan's Nursing Home on Sunday, March 31.

<sup>2</sup> 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 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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.<sup>2</sup>

M. K. G.

From a copy : C.W. 7843. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

"Here ends the letter. When I was in Delhi last time, I had come to know of similar things through other sources. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Held on February 5, 1940

<sup>2</sup> For the addressee's reply, *vide* Appendix "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 9-4-1940.

*109. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 4, 1940*

DEAR MAULANA SAHEB,

You shall address me as you like.<sup>1</sup> I do not know that you addressed me differently.

I have written<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup>.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : C.W. 7812 a. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

*110. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON*

WARDHAGANJ,

*April 5, 1940*

HARRISON  
2 CRANBOURNE COURT  
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD  
LONDON

ANDREWS DIED PEACEFULLY.<sup>4</sup> HOPE YOU LILIAN BE COURAGEOUS.  
MAHADEV IN CALCUTTA SINCE SUNDAY. LOVE.

GANDHI

From the original : C.W. 10252. Courtesy : Visvabharati, Santiniketan

*111. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>5</sup>*

SEVAGRAM,

*April 5, 1940*

In the death of C. F. Andrews not only England, not only

<sup>1</sup> In his letter dated March 30, 1940, the addressee had addressed Gandhiji as "My Dear Mahatmaji".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>3</sup> Of the Muslim League; *vide* Appendix "Resolution Passed by All-India Muslim League", 23-3-1940.

<sup>4</sup> C. F. Andrews died at 1.40 a.m.

<sup>5</sup> This appeared in *Harijan* under "Notes", sub-title "A True Friend of the Poor".

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

### 112. 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 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

### 113. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

SEVAGRAM,  
April 5, 1940

MY DEAR MALKANI,

Wardha wants you badly for the new college<sup>1</sup>. If your feet are not firmly fixed there, I want you to help. If the call is

<sup>1</sup> Seksaria College of Commerce

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.<sup>1</sup> 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

#### 114. 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.

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

#### 115. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Sindh Tragedy", 1-1-1940.

*116. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

SEVAGRAM,  
*April 5, 1940*

I am not congratulating you.<sup>1</sup> 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

*117. 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

*118. DISCUSSION WITH A CHINESE VISITOR*

SEVAGRAM,  
[Before *April 7, 1940*]<sup>2</sup>

[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 ?

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had been elected Mayor of Bombay.

<sup>2</sup> The report of the discussion by Amrit Kaur is date-lined "Sevagram, April 7, 1940".

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 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<sup>1</sup>. 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.

<sup>1</sup> Chiang Kai-Shek

The British are a bargaining nation, are they not ? Have you anything with which to bargain with them ?

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

### 119. 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 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*<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Police stations

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

### 120. 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 . . .<sup>1</sup> 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 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

### 121. ALL ON TRIAL

. . . What has taken place in Lahore is well known to you.<sup>2</sup> The Khaksar movement has been declared to be an unlawful association. I enclose a synopsis of the writings and speeches of Allama Mashriqui<sup>3</sup>. . . It is feared

<sup>1</sup> The word is unintelligible.

<sup>2</sup> On March 19 twenty-three Khaksars and two constables were killed in a clash. Later, four more Khaksars succumbed to their injuries.

<sup>3</sup> Inayatullah, founder of the Khaksar movement

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<sup>1</sup> from a letter 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 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

<sup>1</sup> Of which only excerpts are reproduced here

to express my dissent publicly<sup>1</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "Our Failure", before 22-3-1938, and "Speech at Kalukhan", 21-5-1938.

## 122. TWO QUESTIONS FROM AMERICA

A friend writing from America propounds the following two questions<sup>1</sup> :

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.

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

<sup>1</sup> Of which only extracts are reproduced here

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

### 123. 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

### 124. 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<sup>1</sup> 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

#### 125. 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

<sup>1</sup> N. G. Ranga

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 tomtomming.

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

## 126. MY POSITION

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan has, in his criticism<sup>1</sup> of my reply<sup>2</sup> 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 questions 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

<sup>1</sup> For extracts from Liaquat Ali Khan's statement, *vide* Appendix "Extracts from Liaquat Ali Khan's Statement", 4-4-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "My Answer to Quaid-E-Azam", 30-3-1940.

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 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

### 127. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*April 10, 1940*

MY DEAR MALKANI,

Our letters<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to N. R. Malkani”, 5-4-1940.

*128. 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

*129. 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

### 130. 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<sup>1</sup> 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 ? 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

### 131. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 9-4-1940.

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

### *132. LETTER TO GLADYS OWEN*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 11, 1940*

MY DEAR GLADYS,

Though your question was urgent, I could not overtake it before now. I think you should hold on to the Ashram and do what you can. It is clear that you are wanted there.

You must have read all about C. F. A.<sup>1</sup> He was a man of God.

*Yours sincerely,*

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 11281. Courtesy: Dr. Priyamvada Mathur

### *133. 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

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Andrews had died in Calcutta on April 5; *vide* "Cable to Agatha Harrison", 5-4-1940.

*134. 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

*135. 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

136. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

April 11, 1940

BHAI SRI PRAKASA,

I had sent to *Harijan* my criticism<sup>1</sup> 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

137. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

WARDHA,

April 12, 1940

JAMNALAL BAJAJ  
JAIPUR

CONGRATULATIONS<sup>2</sup>. STAY AS LONG AS NECESSARY.

BAPU

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 233

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "An Unjudicial Dictum", "An Unjudicial Dictum", 2-4-1940.

<sup>2</sup> On the settlement between the Jaipur State and the Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal. *Vide* "Jaipur State and Praja Mandal", 14-4-1940.

138. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

WARDHA,  
April 12, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I hasten to acknowledge with thanks your very prompt and clear reply<sup>1</sup> 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

139. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Letter from Lord Linlithgow", 9-4-1940.

defects, if you have adhered to truth.

You should go on canvassing opinion as you are doing. I hope to refer to your book in *Harijan*.<sup>1</sup>

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

*140. 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

*141. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Hindu-Muslim Tangle", 29-4-1940.

*142. LETTER TO DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 13, 1940*

DEAR DR. GOPICHAND<sup>1</sup>,

What do you say to this ?<sup>2</sup>

*Yours,*

BAPU

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*143. 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

<sup>1</sup> Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly

<sup>2</sup> 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.

#### 144. 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

#### 145. 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 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<sup>1</sup>. The Committee, however, thought that the idea of having

<sup>1</sup> On March 15; *vide* "Discussion at Working Committee", 15-3-1940.

only one resolution for the Ramgarh Congress should be strictly adhered to, and that the original, as framed at Patna<sup>1</sup>, 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> On March 1; *vide* Appendix "A Resolution", 1-3-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jayaprakash Narayan", 31-3-1940.

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 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*, 20-4-1930

## 146. 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

## 147. LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI

April 14, 1940

DEAR SIR AKBAR,

You have given me stone when I had asked for bread.<sup>1</sup>

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,<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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."

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Wanton Destruction in Bidar", 30-4-1940.

## 148. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

April 14, 1940

CHI. NARANDAS,

What is the correct position regarding this<sup>1</sup> ? 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

## 149. 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 mean-time 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 leaders will test our strength as an organization. A non-violent organization implies the equal education

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to a letter from Manubehn Mashruwala to Gandhiji written at the instance of Gandhiji's sister, Raliatbehn *alias* Gokibehn.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

#### 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Every Congress Committee a Satyagraha Committee”, 25-3-1940.

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 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

### 150. LETTER TO MARGARET FIERCH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 15, 1940*

DEAR SISTER<sup>1</sup>,

I thank you for your clear answer to my letter. I realize that you cannot act otherwise than you have done.<sup>2</sup> Of course my effort will continue.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10940. Courtesy Marjorie Sykes

<sup>1</sup> A Quaker friend of Mary Barr who was at this time secretary of the Quaker group around Hoshangabad and Itarsi

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji had been working to obtain the release of a young German who had been interned by the Government of India as an "enemy alien" although he was firmly anti-Nazi. The Government was willing to grant the release of the internee provided the Quaker group with which he was connected would sponsor, employ and maintain him. The addressee had answered Gandhiji's enquiry in this regard, explaining the group's inability to undertake such a responsibility.

## 151. CABLE TO H. G. WELLS<sup>1</sup>

[Before April 16, 1940]

RECEIVED YOUR CABLE<sup>2</sup>. HAVE CAREFULLY READ YOUR FIVE ARTICLES<sup>3</sup>. 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

## 152. DANGER SIGNAL

The happenings in Ajmer are a danger signal if the facts received by me are correct. I have no reason to doubt their accuracy. The facts are these. There was a khadi exhibition held during the National Week by known workers. The promoters had arranged a series of lectures on the importance of khadi and other village

<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Published in *The Hindustan Times*

industries. The national flag was hoisted as is usual at these functions. The authorities served a notice that a flag having been erected on the rampart of the fort had caused annoyance to some of His Majesty's subjects and should be hauled down within an hour. The promoters claimed that the ground was under municipal jurisdiction, and that they had authority from the Municipality to hold the exhibition. The protest was of no avail. The flag was unceremoniously hauled down by the police and addresses prohibited. If the exhibition was held under the permission of the Municipality, the interference with the flag was clearly illegal. But apart from the illegality the hauling down of the flag was a highly provocative act. An insult such as this can easily lead to unexpected results. I suggest that the matter is one for the Central authority to investigate. I hope that the Central authority does not want to provoke a clash which is highly likely if incidents like the Ajmer one are repeated. It would be deplorable if the non-intended happened.

The promoters telephoned to me for advice immediately the incident happened. Contrary to their expectations, I advised the workers to submit to the order. Ordinarily I would not have a moment's hesitation in advising disobedience of such an order. I am the author of the flag. It is dear to me as life. But I do not believe in flag-waving. This flag represents unity, non-violence and identification through the charkha of the highest with the lowliest in the land. Any insult to the flag must leave a deep scar on an Indian breast. But today unity is lacking; the Muslim League has declared its hostility to the flag; those who honour it do not accept the authoritative implications of the flag. And the nation is preparing for a vast struggle. In a situation such as this I felt that the best course was to suppress the impulse to answer the insult. I felt that the restraint would be a test of the discipline of the workers in Ajmer. It would be a lesson to all India in the non-violent technique, and an opportunity for the Central authority to undo what appears to have been a wanton interference with the ordinary peaceful non-political activity of the Congress. It should be remembered that the exhibition had nothing whatsoever to do with the impending struggle. I congratulate the workers on their prompt compliance with my instructions. They have strengthened the Congress by showing their capacity for observing discipline.

SEVAGRAM, April 16, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-4-1940

### 153. REPRESSION IN JODHPUR

News about repression in Jodhpur is disquieting. The Jodhpur Lok Parishad, which according to the information in my possession has been before now held in respect by the local authorities, has suddenly been declared illegal. Several prominent workers are under detention without trial. Speeches and processions are banned.

What is worse is the speech delivered by the Maharaja Bahadur justifying the order. It reads as if a mountain was in labour. The following are extracts<sup>1</sup> form the report of the speech:

. . . Member of the Lok Parishad have recently become increasingly violent in their denunciations of all established order and traditions. The members of this party ask us to believe that the sole panacea for the many diverse afflictions. . . is to vote for and place ourselves unreservedly in the hands of the Lok Parishad. We are asked to believe that with the advent to power of the Lok Parishad there will be created a new heaven and a new earth. And I, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, am desired to place the destinies of my house and my people in the hands of the Lok Parishad in order that peace may reign and 'freedom' be enjoyed by all.

This is indeed a tall order and a bold demand. . . the Lok Parishad consists mainly of inexperienced young men, men who do not appear to have achieved much success in their various vocations. . .

They show no sign whatever of any co-operative spirit. . .

I do not consider it consistent with my duty, as a loyal ally of the British Government, to allow a groundless political agitation to grow and spread in my state in time of war; nor am I prepared any longer to allow an open campaign of subversive agitation manifestly designed to encourage our peasantry to revolt and to corrupt our youth.

It seems that the voice is the Maharaja's but the hand that has prepared it is not his. The speech consists of palpable exaggerations. The Parishad has more than 30 branches in the State and has many experienced men as members. I have seen correspondence in which their co-operation has been desired and sought for. The Lok Parishad has never put forth the claim attributed to it in the quotations. It has responsible government within the State as its goal. It has carried on agitation in the recognized manner. I suggest that it is highly undignified for the advisers of the Maharaja to put into his mouth

<sup>1</sup> Of which only excerpts are reproduced here.

words that have no correlation to facts. They have not hesitated even to drag the war and the 'alliance' with Britain to justify the high-handed action adopted towards the Parishad. The Parishad, I am sure, will come out unscathed, if the workers can stand the test of self-suffering. Those who are imprisoned will be the salt and saviours of Jodhpur, for they will be trusted by the people as their real servants. It is not right for the Princes and their advisers to ignore the time spirit and to resort to such statements and acts as cannot stand impartial scrutiny. I see from their leaflet that the parishad have asked for an open trial. They deny all the charges that are mentioned in the Maharaja's speech. The least that is owing to the public is proof of the indictment against the Parishad. Meanwhile, and whether the Parishad gets justice or not, I hope that its members will peacefully and bravely stand the sufferings that may be inflicted on them.

SEVAGRAM April 16, 1940

*Harijan*, 20-4-1940

#### 154. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEVAGRAM

*April 17, 1940*

CHI. MUNNALAL<sup>1</sup>,

I will give you some time. Avail yourself of it when I am taking my walk. If Kanchan<sup>2</sup> also agrees, you may write to each other as much as you want, but through me. That will probably be much safer. I have even advised you that you would be committing no sin if you two lived together. Kanchan's zeal for service however is wonderful. I believe she will make progress. Stop getting up in the night. Everything will be all right if you keep yourself engrossed in work.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8547. Also C. W. 7081. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> An inmate of the Sevagram Ashram

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

*155. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

SEVAGRAM

*April 18, 1940*

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter, as also the pad<sup>1</sup>. It would have been better if you had written to me about the fast<sup>2</sup> before undertaking it. I might not then have tried to dissuade you, but would have, instead, shown you how to use it in a better way. I hope you are returning to normal food gradually. Your letter is incomplete. You have not said all that you should have said. That is not right. Write to me now if you can. If you want to come and talk things over personally, you may come.

*Blessings from*

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N.. 10406. Also C. W. 6845. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

*156. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

*April 18, 1940*

CHI. MRIDULA,

I have your letter. What you have written is correct. We shall solve it on another occasion if that is necessary.

Mummy will be well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 11211. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

<sup>1</sup> Of handmade paper

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had undertaken a seven days' fast to atone for some lapses in her conduct while she was in Bihar.

## *157. DISCUSSION AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING*

WARDHA

[April 15/19, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

Discussing the present political situation Gandhiji said that the letters he was receiving from all over the country indicated that there was no atmosphere for the starting of the struggle. In Bengal and the Punjab, the struggle would not be against the British but against the respective ministries. People asked him what next. Some wanted to know if they were to leave their Government jobs and join in the preparation. He was telling everybody to keep ready. He was in no hurry. Some people asked if he would commence the struggle in spite of the attitude of the Muslim League and the Khaksars.

Congressmen, he continued, told him that there was neither honesty nor discipline in the Congress and there was no belief in the constructive programme. All this did not encourage him to issue the word of command for the struggle. Talking of the international situation, he said, that did not affect him. His gaze was centred on the internal situation and that was not hopeful. Some people asked if he would sit still and allow the present opportunity to pass by. His reply was that he was helpless unless conditions precedent were fulfilled.

Shri Jawaharlal said that all this was known at the time of the Ramgarh resolution. Nothing new had happened since. That resolution contemplated struggle if there was goading from the Government. He asked if Gandhiji was contemplating a non-mass struggle.

Gandhiji's reply was that he did not feel that Government was bent upon goading. If he felt that he would not wait for numbers he would begin with a few. Participation of even 50,000 satyagrahis would not make the action a mass struggle. Mass meant indefinite numbers. But if 50,000 satyagrahis offered themselves, it might mean that the door for mass civil disobedience had been opened.

Shri Jawaharlalji said that the goading at present might not be sufficient but it would go on increasing. Should the nation not prepare to resist it? He was not prepared to say that action might be immediately precipitated. But it was a fact that the country was being pushed back. . . He asked Gandhiji what the latter would do if he got 50,000 satyagrahis.

<sup>1</sup> It appears from the contents that this was the meeting held at Wardha from April 15 to 19, 1940, after the Ramgarh session of the Congress (March 1940) and before the Working Committee meeting at Wardha from June 17 to 21, 1940.

Gandhiji reply was that even then communal and other difficulties might make action difficult. Gandhiji wanted the members to consider the question of the struggle in connection with the attitude of the Muslim league and the terrorist activities of the Khaksars.

Dr. Mehmood said there was need to analyse the Muslim opposition to the Congress. He had no doubt that the nationalist Muslims had not discharged their duties properly.

. . . Today there was nothing in India which was distinctly Muslim. Every reform movement in India brought about further assimilation. Even the theosophic movement had like results. Gandhiji's reforms also meant more Hindu revival than anything else. In his scheme of reforms there was no place for Muslims. The Congress was also guided by the spirit of Hindu revival. . . .

Gandhiji again asked the members to give him the benefit of their opinion about the starting of C.D., taking into consideration the opinions expressed by Dr. Mahmood and Mr. Asaf Ali in addition to the attitude of the Muslim League and the Khaksars. The Khaksars wanted to terrorize the Hindus. His advice to the Hindus would be to fight this menace non-violently. This he could not do under the present circumstances from the Congress platform.<sup>1</sup> . . . Maulana Saheb's view was that Gandhiji was exaggerating the importance and strength of the Khaksars. Their leader was an egoist who wanted to keep himself before the public eye anyhow. . . . As for the movement, he said, the Congress was not writing on a clean slate. It would not change its policies in mid-stream. . . .

Gandhiji did not agree with Maulana Saheb in his analysis of the Khaksars. He said the Government this time would not be quick to repress us but would allow time to the opposition forces like the League and the Khaksars to complicate the situation. When that happened, his fear was that people would be cowed down. Even if they acted they would do so violently. He would also not like, if he could help it, to irritate the Muslims by starting the movement. He did not agree with Maulana Saheb and Jawaharlalji. He thought there could be no mass C.D.

It was not possible at present to have corporate non-Violence, which meant that all orders must be strictly obeyed and carried out. If these were disobedience and interference there could be no mass movement. The masses were connected with the movement but that connection was indirect. If there was proper discipline, he did not see any reason why individual C.D. should necessarily develop into mass C.D. It was

<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, Shankarrao Deo, Sardar Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Vijaya-lakshmi Pandit, Achyat Patwardhan, Bhulabhai Desai and J. B. Kripalani then spoke in favour of starting C. D., whereas Rajendra Prasad, P. C. Ghosh, Rajagopalachari and Pattabhi Sitaramayya expressed a contrary opinion

possible that Congress might succeed if it started the movement. The Government might accede to Congress demands. But that today would only mean that the Muslims were ignored. He did not want such a settlement or such a swaraj. He had respect for Islam. He was not prepared to say that the League did not represent the Muslim mind. If Muslims wanted separation, he would not oppose. When they had it, he would oppose them non-violently. He knew in this matter the nation would not accept his lead and there would be civil war. He was, however, hoping that at such a time the Congress at least would be with him and would declare that it would be no party to coercing Muslims or to seeking British protection.

During the course of discussion, Gandhiji stated his idea about the constituent Assembly. He said when the Congress asked for the Assembly, it was understood that the Assembly would be free to decide the question of independence or Dominion Status. Of course the Congress demand for Independence must stand. Jawaharlalji said that what was contemplated in the Congress resolution was that Government should first declare India independent and then call a Constituent Assembly. He said he would insist upon every Tommy to withdraw from India before a Constituent Assembly could be called. He did not mind the European officers working under Indian direction.

Gandhiji said that that was not his view of things. They both differed on this point but ultimately they seemed to understand each other and the matter was dropped.

Wardha Office, Satyagraha File, 1940-41. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

### *158. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA*

SEVAGRAM,  
*April 19, 1940*

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

If you want to bind all letters into a book, use paper of uniform size. You did well in writing the letter. It was your duty. After writing it, your duty is over and mine begins. I have started investigating what you mention. There seems to be a difference between what is actually happening and your understanding of it, I put up with many things. Yes, it is true that I trust Parnerkar's scientific knowledge. I also trust your practical knowledge. You will gain more strength from what you are doing now.

I shall see about Krishnachandra.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N.. 1933

159. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SEVAGRAM,  
*April 20, 1940*

CHI. BALVANTSINHA

See the enclosed, Mother Gita says that we should prostrate ourselves before one from whom we seek knowledge, we should repeatedly question him and serve him.<sup>1</sup> See if Krishnachandra has the strength and seek instruction from him. You cannot have a better teacher.

I have spoken to Munnanalal. He will talk to you. His version is different. The arrangement that has been worked out should not be described as division of work.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1930

160. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM K. JERAJANI

SEVAGRAM  
*April 21, 1940*

BHAI KAKUBAHI

What Vithaldas says is correct. Even so there is no harm in your having yourself registered as an “active” member, since only those whom I call will have to join the struggle. I do not want to bring out persons like you at the moment.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W.. 10844. Courtesy: Purushottam K. Jerajani

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavad Gita, iv. 34

*161. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI*

SEVAGRAM WARDHA,

*April 21, 1940*

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. I hope Father is calm. It is best that you stay there for the present. Write to me from time to time.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7127. Also: C. W. 4619. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

*162. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI*

SEVAGRAM

*April 21, 1940*

BHAI MUNISHI,

I will certainly read your book when I get the time.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI KANAIYALAL MUNSHI

26, RIDGE ROAD

BOMBAY

From Gujarati: C. W. 7652. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

*163. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI*

SEVAGRAM,

*April 21, 1940*

CHI. VALJI,

Is it not violence to make your handwriting so small or to write with a lead pencil or to write like I do? Because you have spent ten rupees, perhaps you won't even take treatment now!!! You may now

stay on in Bombay if it benefits you. I have your article also. I understand about Helen. What she requires seems a little excessive. And the English is none too good.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7493. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

*164. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA*

SEGAON,

*April 21, 1940*

DEAR HARIBHAU,

I have your letter. You will have seen Bapu's article<sup>1</sup> about Ajmer. That should satisfy you.

This is what Bapu feels about Ramnarayan. Bapu is satisfied with him and feels that he has changed a lot. However, one cannot say with certainty that the change will endure. But it is our duty to put trust in him, and take work from him. Bapu would ask you to talk to him frankly and express your opinion firmly. But if you still have your doubts then tell him plainly, "Look, I still have my doubts. I hesitate to take work from you." If you feel shy and are hesitant in talking to him, you will not be doing him justice.

The Devas ruler is a very good man. A note on him will certainly appear in *Harijan*.

*Yours,*

MAHADEV

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

*165. INTERVIEW TO "THE NEW YORK TIMES"*

[Before *April 22, 1940*]<sup>2</sup>

Q. I have heard it said on behalf of Britain, "We cannot say what the new world is going to be at the end of the war; the Indian problem cannot be isolated from world problems; . . . Dominion Status under existing circumstances is the highest we

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Danger Signal", 16-4-1940

<sup>2</sup> The report by Amrit Kaur is dated "Sevagram, April 22, 1940".

can offer India.” You yourself have said, “ Of what value is freedom to India if Britain and France fail?” Can you throw some light on these points?

A. The legal status of India, whether it is Dominion Status or something else, can only come after the war. It is not a question at present to decide whether India should be satisfied with Dominion Status for the time being. The only question is what is the British policy? Does Great Britain still hold the view that it is her sole right to determine the status of India or whether it is the sole right of India to make that determination? If that question had not been raised, there would have been no discussion such as we are facing today. The question having been raised—and it was India’s right to raise it—I was bound to throw in my weight, such as it is, with the Congress. Nevertheless I can still repeat the question I put to myself immediately after the first interview with the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>: “Of what value is freedom to India if Britain and France fail?”<sup>2</sup> If these powers fail, the history of Europe and the history of the world will be written in a manner no one can foresee. Therefore my question has its own independent value. The relevant point, however, is that by doing justice to India Britain might ensure victory of the Allies because their cause will then be acclaimed as righteous by the enlightened opinion of the world.

Q. Have you any views about world federation (Streit’s<sup>3</sup> scheme of 15 white democracies with India excluded at present) or about a federation of Europe with the British Commonwealth and again excluding India? Would you advise India to enter such a larger federation so as to prevent a domination of the coloured races by the white?

A. Of course I would welcome a world federation of all the nations of the world. A federation of the Western nations only will be an unholy combination and a menace to humanity. In my opinion a federation excluding India is now an impossibility. India has already passed the stage when she could be safely neglected.

Q. You have seen in your lifetime more devastation by war than there has been at any time in the world’s history. And yet do you still believe in non-violence as the basis of new civilization? Are you satisfied that your own countrymen accept it

<sup>1</sup> This was on September 4, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Statement to the Press”, 5-9-1939. The text there reads; “but what will it [the freedom of India] be worth if England and France fall?”

<sup>3</sup> C. K. Streit, an American journalist. The reference is to a scheme he had propounded in *Union Now*.

without reservation? You continue to harp on your conditions being fulfilled before starting civil disobedience. Do you still hold to them?

A. You are right in pointing out that there is unheard-of devastation going on in the world. But that is the real moment for testing my faith in non-violence. Surprising as it may appear to my critics, my faith in non-violence remains absolutely undimmed. Of course non-violence may not come in my lifetime in the measure I would like to see it come, but that is different matter. It cannot shake my faith, and that is why I have become unbending so far as the fulfilment of my conditions prior to the starting of civil disobedience is concerned; because, at the risk of being the laughing-stock of the whole world, I adhere to my belief that there is an unbreakable connection between the spinning-wheel and non-violence so far as India is concerned. Just as there are signs by which you can recognize violence with the naked eye, so is the spinning-wheel to me a decisive sign of non-violence. But nothing can deter me from working away in hope. I have no other method for solving the many baffling problems that face India.

Q. You want a declaration that henceforth India shall govern herself according to her own will. You also say, "It is 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."<sup>1</sup> The British say, "We are vitally interested in defence, out commercial interests, and the Indian States." Are you willing to allow your best Englishmen and your best Indians to enter into a treaty in regard to these matters" in a spirit of friendly accommodation"?<sup>2</sup>

A. If the best Englishmen and the best Indians meet together with a fixed determination not to separate until they have reached an agreement, the way will have been opened for the summoning of the Constituent Assembly of my conception. Of course this composite board will have to be of one mind as to the goal. If that is put in the melting-pot, there will be nothing but interminable wrangling. Therefore self-determination must be the common cause with this composite board.

Q. Supposing India does become free in your lifetime, what will you devote the rest of your years to?

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "notes", 9-4-1940

<sup>2</sup> The passages within quotes are form the Anglo- Egyptian Treaty of 1922.

A. If India becomes free in my lifetime and I have still energy left in me, of course I would take my due share, though outside the official world, in building up the nation on a strictly non-violent basis.

*Harijan, 27-4-1940*

## 166. QUESTION BOX

### BEEF

Q. The Muslim public need to be satisfied on a very important question. Will the Muslims be allowed to eat their national food-beef-under a Hindu majority Government? If you can satisfy the Muslims on this all important question, a great deal of knots will be solved. You should give a straight answer to this question in your paper Harijain.

A. I do not know how this question arises. For whilst Congressmen were in office they are not known to have interfered with the practice of beef-eating by Muslims. The question is also badly conceived. There is no such thing as a Hindu majority Government. If a free India is to live at peace with herself, religious divisions must entirely give place to political divisions based on considerations other than religious. Even as it is, though unfortunately religious differences loom large, most parties contain members drawn from all sects. It is moreover not true to say that beef is the national food of Muslims. In the first place the Muslims of India are not as yet a separate nation. In the second, beef is not their ordinary good. Their ordinary food is the same as that of the millions. What is true is that there are very few Muslims who are vegetarians from a religious motive. Therefore they will take meat, including beef, when they can get it. But during the greater part of the year millions of Muslims, owing to poverty, go without meat of any kind. These are facts. But the theoretical question demands a clear answer. As a Hindu, a confirmed vegetarian, and a worshipper of the cow whom I regard with the same veneration as I regard my mother (alas, no more on this earth), I maintain that Muslims should have full freedom to slaughter cows, if they wish, subject of course to hygienic restrictions and in a manner not to wound the susceptibilities of their Hindu neighbours. Fullest recognition of freedom to the Muslims to slaughter cows is indispensable for communal harmony, and is the only way of saving the cow. In 1921 thousands of cows were saved by the sole and willing effort of Muslims themselves. In spite of the black clouds hanging over our heads, I refuse to give up the hope that they will disperse and that we shall have communal peace in this unhappy land. If I am

asked for proof, I must answer that my hope is based on faith and faith demands no proof.

#### DEATH SENTENCE

Q. Do you consider death sentence to be against your principle of ahimsa? If so, what form of punishment would you advocate as a substitute in a free India?

A. I do regard death sentence as contrary to ahimsa. Only he takes life who gives it. All punishment is repugnant to ahimsa. Under a State governed according to the principles of ahimsa, therefore, a murdered would be sent to a penitentiary and there given every chance of reforming himself. All crime is a kind of disease and should be treated as such.

#### GOD'S WILL

Q. How can an ordinary man distinguish between God's will and his own will?

A. By not regarding anything as God's will unless he has positive proof to the contrary. Not every person can know God's will. Proper training is necessary to attain the power to know God's will. an offence against congress

Q. Some of the Congress committees here in Adampur Doaba during the last Independence Day celebrations got prepared national flags of uncertified khadi, and some of them got badge flags prepared from paper. They sold these to raise funds. When questioned they pleaded that they wanted funds for the Congress and could not afford to sell badge flags made out of khadi for one piece each and still retain something for themselves. At some places I even found national flags hoisted which were of mill-cloth and even without the spinning-wheel. I personally feel that the spinning-wheel and khadi are the very soul of our flag; and a national flag which is printed on uncertified khadi and without the spinning-wheel mark on it, or a paper flag cannot be called a national flag.

A. Your objection is sound. The Congress committees who used as national flags paper flags or those which were made of mill-cloth or uncertified khadi or without the charkha, committed an offence against the Congress. The betrayed little regard for the flag. Any rag cannot be used as flag. It has to conform to the prescribed pattern. If we do not respect our own flag, we have no right to expect others to do so. You have made out a case for the central office having a stock of flags of variety of sizes. Nobody should be permitted to use unauthorized flags as national flags.

SEVAGRAM, April 22, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-4-1940

## 167. WHAT BIG EMPLOYERS CAN DO

Shri Vthaldas Jerajani sends me the following<sup>1</sup> from Shri Shantikumar<sup>2</sup> of the Scindia House:

During the National Week every effort will be made to sell khadi. . . . Then why not approach the big offices. . . . to buy khadi for peons' dresses? . . . . Last year the Scindia Company provided khadi uniforms for the peons, and this year also we are going to have the same. . . . I am trying to push khadi uniforms in other Associated Companies of the Scindia Company.

I am also trying to push the use of handmade paper in the office of the Scindia Company. . . .

I have no hesitation in whole-heartedly endorsing the suggestion made by Shri Shantikumar. I would go a step further. In order that the peons who have willy-nilly to wear uniforms provided for them may not feel any inferiority, the big office staff should set the example by themselves voluntarily using khadi for their garments. Khadi is one of the greatest levellers. The peons should be able to take pride in their uniforms. This they will only do when they know that their employers use the same material as that of which their uniforms are made. The greater the approach on the part of employers to their employees, the greater the possibility of a peaceful solution of the difficult problem of class conflict.

I therefore hope that Shri Shantikumar's effort will be appreciated by the other employers. Indeed the idea should be taken up by all public institutions such as hospitals, students's hostels, etc.

The use of handmade paper is a less difficult problem. For good handmade paper is any day more artistic than and superior to the ordinary mill paper, and there is not the same difference in the prices of the two varieties as in the case of khadi and millmade cloth. The big houses owe it to the millions to use as many handmade articles as is possible for them to do.

SEVAGRAM, April 22, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-4-1940

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

<sup>2</sup> Shantikumar Morarjee

## 168. ABOUT ZAMINDARS

A first class Deccan Sardar propounds the following conundrums:<sup>1</sup>

You say, on page 442 lines 4-6 of Harijan of 10th February,<sup>2</sup> that you put Europeans on the same footings as big zamindars and capitalists. I presume that you include in the general word ‘zamindars’, inamdars<sup>3</sup>, talukdars and big landholders.

1. Will you be pleased to say whether you remember and realise the fact that Europeans are foreigners and their earnings and profits go out of the country to enrich other nations and make them more powerful instruments to exploit India; while zamindars and inamdars. . . are Indian. . . and all their earnings and savings and even their extravagance will remain in this country. . . Many of these people have national interest fully at heart. . .

2. What are the differences between a nationalist zamindar and a nationalist non-zamindar, in your opinion?

3. What exact position do you assign to zamindars and inamdars, and the capitalists in a free and independent India? . . .

4. Have the zamindars and inamdars and capitalists any place in the present Congress, consistent with their limitations and commitments?

Answers:

1. I make no difference between Europeans and Indians, if the former conform to the laws of free India. I cannot, consistently with my views on non-violence. Under my scheme European settlers will not be allowed to exploit the country as most of them are doing today. Patriots will have had their reward in the shape of freedom of their country. They are no patriots who are working with selfish personal ends in view. If we create a State based on pure justice, real equality and genuine brotherhood, Europeans will cease to be foreigners. They will take pride in pooling their talents for the sole good of the country of their adoption.

I gladly acknowledge the fact that there are many inamdars, zamindars and other capitalists who are as patriotic as any Congressmen.

2. A nationalist zamindar will try to live like a non-zamindar. He will regard his tenants as his co-proprietors; in other words, he will

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

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Statement to the Press”, 6-2-1940.

<sup>3</sup> Holders of lease-free land

hold his zamindari in trust for his tenants taking a moderate commission for the use of his labours and capital. A nationalist non-zamindar will not regard the zamindaras his natural enemy but will seek redress of his wrongs by the process of conversion. I have shown before now that this is not a long-drawn-out agony.

3. This is answered in the foregoing. Antagonism between the classes will be removed. I do not envisage a dead and artificial level among the people. There will be a variety among them as there is among the leaves of a tree. There will certainly be no have-note, no unemployment, and no disparity between classes and masses such as we see today. I have no doubt whatsoever that if non-violence in its full measure becomes the policy of the State, we shall reach essential equality without strife.

4. All who subscribe to the simple creed of the Congress can join it. As a matter of fact there are many moneyed members of the Congress. To quote only one instance, Jammalalji is a capitalist and he is a member of the Working Committee.

SEVAGRAM, April 22, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-4-1940

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

SEVAGRAM,

*April 22, 1940*

DEAR SISTER,

I am dealing with your question in *Harijan*.

*Your's sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: N. A. I. File No. 73. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also G.N. 6837

### *170. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

SEGAON,

*April 22, 1940*

Three of your letters have remained unanswered. The reason is my helplessness.

I understand your arguments. But I stick to my position. In course of time either you will be persuaded or I shall be persuaded. I

cannot advance any new argument. You just watch which way I go. I myself do not know it. I have only one guiding principle. Comprehend it. There can be mistakes in its interpretation and practice. If that is proved, it should be taken as evidence of some shortcoming in my sadhana. With each passing day I see it more and more clearly that non-violence cannot be cultivated in any other way.

April 24, 1940

There was an interruption after I had written the above. You must continue to write whatever comes to your mind. Do not wait for my reply.

I read your letter to Pyarelal. I myself forbade him to reply. It would only lead to unnecessary bickering and achieve nothing. You have already said what you had to say. Now let the brother and sister go their ways. I too hardly discuss our relations with him. I go my way, the brother and sister follow their own ways. We are engaged in our own work. Where is the occasion to talk about anything except the work? I would advise you to stop worrying about them. Even as it is, are you not having enough work on your hands?

I have written a letter to the Viceroy today.<sup>1</sup> I do not intend to send copies of it to anyone. All I would say is that you would approve it. But I may be mistaken even in that.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 171. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

April 22, 1940

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

We already had a discussion last night; hence I shall not repeat it here. What I said yesterday deserves serious consideration.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1931

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 24-4-1940.

172. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

SEVAGRAM,,  
April 22, 1940

DEAR SISTER,

My article<sup>1</sup> does not mean what you interpret it to mean. Even if the telling of beads does not yield concrete results, continue it with faith. You will certainly witness concrete results one day. I have nothing more about the eleven vows<sup>2</sup>. Only this: if you believe in them, it is good to think of them. One day God will give you the strength to fulfill them.

Blessings from  
BAPU

SMT. RAMESHWARI NEHRU  
2 WARES ROAD  
LAHORE

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7990

173. CABLE TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"<sup>3</sup>

[On or after April 22, 1940]<sup>4</sup>

PROPOSAL CONVENING COMMITTEE LEADERS REACH PRE-  
LIMINARY AGREEMENT ATTRACTIVE, PROVIDED LEADERS  
ELECTED, NOT NOMINATED, ACCORDING TO ACCEPTABLE  
PROCEDURE. THIS IS MY PERSONAL VIEW. UNCON-  
SULTED COLLEAGUES.

GANDHI

*Harijan*, 27-4-1940

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Question Box", 1-4-1940.

<sup>2</sup> These were: Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, brahmacharya, nonpossession, body labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equal respect for all religions, swadeshi and freedom from untouchability.

<sup>3</sup> This was sent in reply to a cable which read: "Grateful to receive an exposition of your attitude to proposal that committee of Indian leaders representing all interests should try to reach agreement on essential preliminary to final constitutional settlement,"

<sup>4</sup> The cable from *The News Chronicle* was received on April 22, 1940.

## 174. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

The Working Committee<sup>1</sup> advisedly passed no startling or new resolution this time. For there was no programme before them. That of civil disobedience has to be evolved by me. But the Committee had useful discussions on many points arising out of the contemplated movement. I propose to give the readers the gist of what I told the members of the Committee, with the necessary amplification.

Civil disobedience in the face of the lawlessness that prevails in the country will easily pass for the same unless it is beyond doubt recognized as something different in kind from the prevailing brand. Thus the Khaksar defiance is admittedly and openly violent.<sup>2</sup> The kisans who held up the train between Gaya and Kiul were violent under cover of non-violence. They were doubt guilty according to the non-violent conception. For they are supposed to be Congressmen. To hold up a train is disobedience without doubt. And so far as the Congress is concerned, according to the Ramgarh resolution,<sup>3</sup> Congressmen may not resort to civil disobedience singly or in groups without my permission. I have already said that Prof. Ranga's disobedience was also not civil.<sup>4</sup> His friends have asked me to withdraw my criticism. I claim to be a special friend of his. We became friends probably before the protesters knew him. And it is because he is such a close friend that I condemned his action without mincing words. I am sure he will not misunderstand me. In any event when a man of his learning chooses deliberately to commit an act of indiscipline it must come to me as a warning against any hasty action.

Now civil disobedience, if it is really civil, must appear so even to the opponent. He must feel that the resistance is not intended to do him any harm. At the present moment the average Englishman thinks that non-violence is merely a cloak. The Muslim Leaguers think that civil disobedience is aimed at them more than at the British. I protest

<sup>1</sup> The Working Committee met at Wardha from April 15 to 19.

<sup>2</sup> Violent and widespread clashes, inspired by the Khaksars, had been taking place in the Punjab. For further comment by Gandhiji, *vide* "All on Trial", 8-4-1940.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 9-4-1940

with all the strength at my command that, so far as I am concerned, I have no desire whatsoever to embarrass the British, especially at a time when it is a question of life and death with them. All I want the Congress to do through civil disobedience is to deny the British Government the moral influence which the Congress co-operation would give. The material resources of India and her man-power are already being exploited by the British Government by reason of their control of the whole of this subcontinent.

If by civil disobedience the Congress has no desire to embarrass the British people, it has still less to embarrass the Muslim League. And I can say this on behalf of the Congress with far greater assurance than I can with regard to the British. Working in the midst of suspicion and terrible misrepresentation, on the one hand and the prevailing lawlessness outside and inside the Congress on the other, I have to think a thousand times before embarking on civil disobedience.

So far as I can see at present mass civil disobedience is most unlikely. The choice lies between individual civil disobedience on a large scale, very restricted, or confined only to me. In every case there must be the backing of the whole of the official congress organization and the millions who, though not on the Congress register, have always supported the organization with their mute but most effective co-operation.

I have repeatedly shown in these columns that the most effective and visible co-operation which all Congressmen and the mute millions can show is by not interfering with the course civil disobedience may take and by themselves spinning and using khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth. If it is allowed that there is a meaning in people wearing primroses on Primrose Day, surely there is much more in people using a particular kind of cloth and giving a particular kind of labour to the cause they hold dear. From their compliance with the khadi test I shall infer that they have shed untouchability, and that they have nothing but brotherly feeling towards all without distinction of race, colour or creed. Those who will do this are as much satyagrahis as those who will be singled out for civil disobedience.

SEVAGRAM, April 23, 1940

*Harijan*, 27-4-1940

## 175. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

April 24, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

This is going to be a complaining letter. I was tempted to write to the Press on Lord Zetland's speech<sup>1</sup>. But I restrained myself. What I wanted to say was too serious to be given to the public. Hence this letter. I am carrying on my head a tremendous responsibility. I want to avoid mistakes.

There is a ring of reluctance to [do] the right thing by India. He may say 'we don't want to do the things by way of settlement, you will have to fight for it or take what we offer. That would be a straight answer. Why does he bring up against the Congress things which are common ground? Hindu-Muslim question, minorities and the like are common ground. The Congress claims that they can be truly settled only by a constituent assembly or its equivalent. On British admissions, Princes are your creation. That they were there before you came is true. So were many other institutions. You kept what was necessary for your existence and destroyed what you thought were a hindrance.<sup>2</sup> It is a thankless task to prolong this tale. I can if you want me to. I feel sure this sample should enable you to infer the rest.

Will you please convey my complaints to Lord Zetland in any way you think best? If I have misinterpreted him, you will oblige me by correcting me.

<sup>1</sup> Speaking in the House of Lords on April 18, Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India (1935-40), had said: "A substantial measure of agreement among the communities of India is essential if the vision of united India is to become a reality . . . . But the fact of the matter is that the Congress Party has raised in the minds of many Muslims apprehensions which only they themselves can allay. Will the Congress refrain from closing the door upon unity in India? Upon their answer hangs the future fate of the country." *The Indian Annual Register*, January-June 1940,.

<sup>2</sup> In answer to this Lord Linlithgow, in his letter of April 29, said: "But it does seem to me, too, that we cannot refuse to face the historical facts of this matter or the historical setting in which the relationship of His Majesty's Government with the Princes arose."

I know your and his preoccupations. But this Indian question is an integral part of the task in hand, is it not?

*I am,*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

*176. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA*

*April 24, 1940*

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I knew one day you would see the truth. I wish to explain things at length, but I have no time. With patience, everything will become clear. I should be informed of whatever loss is observed. I have read the letter form B. A. Ascertain his needs before permitting him to come.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1932

*177. TELEGRAM TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR*

WARDHAGANJ,  
*April 26, 1940*

RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR  
DHULIA

YOU MUST NOT DISTURB BALKOBA'S<sup>1</sup> SLEEP. MEET  
HIM KALYAN IF NECESSARY.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 738

<sup>1</sup> Balkrishna Bhawe

178. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

April 26, 1940

CHI, NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I hardly get time to read Harijanbandhu. Only today it chanced to fall into my hands and I read the very sentence you refer to. It irked me, too. This happened in the morning. In the afternoon I got your letter. How strange. Or rather what a coincidence!

I had a talk with Vallabhbhai about your work. He said he would send some help.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

You yourself may write to Shamaldas and Kaku<sup>1</sup> and let me know the result. How much used to be given?

From a microfilm of the Gujarati:m.m.u./II. Also C. W. 8573. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

179. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

[April 26,1940]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. JAMNA,

I have your letter. We should use the strength God has given us and be content. Kanaiya's<sup>3</sup> work is progressing very well. Now he has decided to have a dark-room.

*Blessing from,*

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M. M. U./II. Also C. W. 8573. Courtesy:

<sup>1</sup> Purushottam K. Jerajani

<sup>2</sup> This and the preceding item are written on the same sheet.

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's son

## 180. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G.SHAH

April 26, 1940

CHI, MUNNALAL,

The remedy for you is simple. Resolve that you will get rid of your restlessness here and nowhere else, come what may. As you have understood the position about Pyarelal, there is no problem any more. You should not feel you are a slave. Man becomes a slave of his passions, not of his environment. Slavery thus is only a state of mind. As for Kanchan, what has happened is good. Let her go to Panchgani for the present and serve till she is restored. Her regaining and keeping her health rests in her own hands. Like you, she too is free. if you wish to live with her, we shall think about it after it after she returns.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8546. Also C. W. 7082. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

## 181. LETTER TO RAMDAS AND SUMITRA GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,

April 26, 1940

CHI. RAMDAS,

I liked your having gone to Ahmedabad for you will have more experience there. You will get there the company of our own people and Nimu will have better facilities for her studies. But from the point of view of the children, I am not so happy at your having left Bhavnagar. They had got used to the place. But, then does it always happen as one wishes? Hence, one should believe that whatever happens is for the best and remain content.

I will certainly urge Ba to go to you but there is little likelihood of her going. If she finds the heat unbearable, she will prefer to go to Mithubehn at Maroli. I need not write separately to Nimu.

CHI. SUMI,

You have done very well indeed. Go on writing in this way.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

182. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

SEVAGRAM,  
April 26, 1940

CHI. HARIBHAU,

I have your letter. I am awaiting news from Ajmer. We should be in a position to give a full reply to the Government's note<sup>1</sup>. I hope you are well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: Gandhiji aur Rajasthan, p. 252. ALSO C. W. 6089. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyaya

183. LETTER TO EARNEST A. BRANN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
April 27, 1940

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am myself groping in the dark and making an experiment in the direction mentioned by you. If it succeeds it will present the work an infallible peace plan.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

EARNEST A. BRANN, ESQ.  
5532 KENWOOD AVENUE  
CHICAGO

From a photostat: G. N. 10536

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Danger Signal", 16-4-1940, "The Ajmer Trouble", 30-4-1940 and "Ajmer", 6-5-1940.

## 184. AN ENGLISH SUGGESTION

An English friend writes thus:<sup>1</sup>

It is still reasonable at present to proceed on the assumption that the Muslims would accept something a good deal less than 'Pakistan'. But the trouble is that the longer the time that elapses without any compromise solution being reached, the stronger and more insistent will be the cry for 'Pakistan', so that in the end civil war or partition will be the only alternatives. I think the view held by some that there is nothing to be done but to wait upon events is fatal. It is up to the British now to use all their powers of persuasion and statesmanship to compel the parties to settle.

The crux of the matter is who is to control power at the Centre-Hindus or Muslims? Over this the Congress must be prepared to make great concessions. . . . If the Congress do not recognize the quickly, I am afraid that partition will become, if not the only alternative, the best one. . .

Of course the British Government can do much. They have done much by force. They can make the parties come to a solution by force. But they need not go so far. What they have done hitherto is to prevent a proper solution. In proof of my statement I commend the esteemed correspondent to the columns of Harijan. The only thing the British Government have to do is to change their attitude. Will they? They can retain their hold on India by a policy of divide and rule. A living unity between Muslims and Hindus is fraught with danger to their rule. It would mean an end of it. Therefore it seems to me that a true solution will come with the end of the rule, potentially if not in fact.

What can be done under the threat of Pakistan? If it is not a threat but a desirable goal, why should it be prevented? If it is undesirable and meant only for the Muslims to get more under its shadow, any solution would be an unjust solution. It would be worse than no solution. Therefore I am entirely for waiting till the menace it gone. India's independence is a living thing. No make-believe will suit. The whole world is in the throes of a new birth. Anything done for a temporary gain would be tantamount to an abortion.

I cannot think in terms of narrow Hinduism or narrow Islam. I am wholly uninterested in a patch-work solution. India is a big

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

country, a big nation composed of different cultures, which are tending to blend with one another, each complementing the rest. If I must wait for the completion of the process, I must wait. It may not be completed in my day. I shall love to die in the faith that it must come in the fullness of time. I should be happy to think that I had done nothing to hamper the process. Subject to this condition, I would do anything to bring about harmony. My life is made up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal. Pakistan cannot be worse than foreign domination. I have lived under the latter though not willingly. If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream. But I do not believe that the Muslims really want to dismember India.

SEVAGRAM, April 29, 1940

*Harijan*, 4-5-1940

### 185. HINDU-MUSLIM TANGLE

The partition proposal<sup>1</sup> has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. I have called it an untruth. There can be no compromise with it. At the same time I have said that, If the eight crores of Muslims desire it no power on earth can prevent it, notwithstanding opposition, violent or non-violent It cannot come by honourable agreement.

That is the political aspect of it. But what about the religious and the moral which are greater than the political? For at the bottom of the cry for partition is the belief that Islam is an exclusive brotherhood, and anti-Hindu. Whether it is against other religions it is not stated. The newspaper cuttings in which partition is preached describe Hindus as practically untouchables. Nothing good can come out of Hindus or Hinduism. To live under Hindu rule is a Sin. Even joint Hindu-Muslim rule is not to be thought of. The cuttings show that Hindu and Muslims are already at war with one another and that they must prepare for the final tussle.

Time was when Hindus thought that Muslims were the natural enemies of Hindus. But as is the case with Hinduism, ultimately it

<sup>1</sup> The All-India Muslim League, meeting at Lahore, passed a resolution on March 23, recording the view that no constitutional plan would be workable unless it was based on territorial readjustment and the creation of independent Muslim States.

comes to terms with the enemy and makes friends with him. The process had not been completed. As if nemesis had overtaken Hinduism, the Muslim League started the same game and taught that there could be no blending of the two cultures. In this connection I have just read a booklet by Shri Atulanand Chakrabarti which shows that ever since the contact of Islam with Hinduism there has been an attempt on the part of the best minds of both to see the good points of each other, and to emphasize inherent similarities rather than seeming dissimilarities. The author has shown Islamic history in India in a favourable light. If he has stated the truth and nothing but the truth, it is a revealing booklet which all Hindus and Muslims may read with profits. He has secured a very favourable and reasoned preface from Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan and several other Muslim testimonials. If the evidence collected there reflects the true evolution of Islam in India, then the partition propaganda is anti-Islamic.

Religion binds man to God and man to man. Does Islam bind Muslim only to Muslim and antagonize the Hindu? Was the message of the Prophet peace only for and between Muslims and war against Hindus or non-Muslims? Are eight crores of Muslims to be fed with this which I can only describe as poison? Those who are instilling this poison into the Muslim mind are rendering the greatest disservice to Islam. I know that it is not Islam. I have lived with and among Muslims not for one day but closely and almost uninterruptedly for twenty years. Not one Muslim taught me that Islam was an anti-Hindu religion.

SEVAGRAM, April 29, 1940

*Harijan*, 4-5-1940

### *186. OF WHAT AVAIL IS NON-VIOLENCE?*

An Indian friend writes:<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday Reuter in pathetic terms related how the population of Norway under the rain of bombs and machine-gun bullets was fleeing from towns completely demoralized and in panic. . . The futility of violence, and also. . . its temporary efficacy, is being proved. . . Let us hope eventually everyone will see the futility of violence and a new era may dawn. But are we

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

really making a non-violent contribution towards the world problem? Of what avail is our non-violence to Norway, Sweden and Denmark? Virtually are we not giving a handle to Germany? True, We are doing nothing beyond embarrassing Great Britain, and perhaps we may say that such an embarrassment is inevitable and is not caused deliberately. . . . We are not likely, it seems, to succeed in changing England's heart. And victims like Norway, etc., can never appreciate our attitude. In the light of our present attitude, the international world can with justification misinterpret our past help to victims of aggression like China and Spain. Were they more deserving of our help than the present victims? And if not, then why this distinction? . . . You have never regretted your action during the last war when you vigorously recruited people for military purposes. This time your attitude appears to be in sharp contrast, although you say that both attitudes are right.

My correspondent is not alone in bemoaning the lot of the most cultured and inoffensive people like the Danes and the Norwegians. This war is showing the futility of violence. Supposing Hitler becomes victorious over the Allies, he will never subjugate England and France. It will mean another war. Supposing the Allies are victorious, The world will fare no better. They will be more polite but not less ruthless, unless they learn the lesson of non-violence during the war and unless they shed the gains they have made through violence. The first condition of non-violence is justice all round in every department of life. Perhaps it is too much to expect of human nature. I do not, however, think so. No one should dogmatize about the capacity of human nature for degradation or exaltation.

Indian non-violence has brought no relief to the cultured Western powers because it is still poor stuff. Why travel so far to see its inefficacy? We in India are torn asunder in spite of the Congress policy of non-violence. The Congress itself is distrusted. Not until the Congress or a similar group of people represents the non-violence of the strong. Will the world catch the infection.

India's aid to Spain and China was merely moral. The material aid was but an insignificant token of it. There is hardly an Indian who does not feel the same sympathy for Norway and Denmark who lost their freedom overnight. Though their case is different from that of Spain and China, their ruin is more complete perhaps than that of Spain and China. Indeed there is a material difference even between China and Spain. But there is no difference so far as sympathy is

concerned. Pauper India has nothing to send to these countries except her non-violence. But as I have said this is not yet a sendable commodity. It will be, when India has gained her freedom through non-violence.

There then remains Britain's case. The Congress has caused no embarrassment. I have declared already that I shall do nothing to embarrass Great Britain. She will be embarrassed if there is anarchy in India. That the Congress, so long as it is under my discipline, will not support.

What the Congress cannot do is to lend its moral influence to Britain. Moral influence is never mechanically given. It is for Britain to take it. Perhaps British statesmen do not think the Congress has any to lend. Perhaps they think that all they need is material aid in this warring world. If they do, they will not be far wrong. Morality is contraband in war. My correspondent has given up the whole of his case for Britain when he says, "We are not likely to succeed in changing Britain's heart." I do not wish ill to Britain. I shall grieve if Britain goes down. But the moral influence of the Congress cannot avail Britain unless she washes her hands clean of India. It works under its own unalterable condition.

My friend does not see the difference between my recruiting in Kheda and my attitude now. During the last war the moral issue had not been raised. The Congress was not pledged to non-violence. It had not the moral hold on the masses it now enjoys. I was acting on my own in all I did. I had even attended the War Conference. And to be true to my declaration I had been recruiting at the cost of my health. I told the people that, if they wanted arms. Military service was the surest way to get them. But if they were non-violent like me my appeal was not to them. There was no non-violent man among my audiences so far as I know. Their reluctance was based on ill-will towards Britain. This was gradually giving place to an enlightened determination to throw off the foreign yoke.

Things have changed since then. In spite of the unanimous support that Britain got during the last war from India, the British attitude was translated into the Rowlatt Act and the like. The Congress accepted non-violent non-co-operation to meet the British menace. There is the memory of the Jallianwala Bagh, the Simon Commission, the Round Table Conference, the emasculation of Bengal for the sake

of the misdeeds of a few. The Congress having accepted non-violence, I do not need to go to the people to give recruits. Through the Congress I can give something infinitely better than a few such recruits. Of that evidently Britain has no need. I am willing but helpless.

SEVAGRAM, April 30, 1940

*Harijan*, 4-5-1940

### 187. WANTON DESTRUCTION IN BIDAR

A correspondent is grieved that I have been silent about the shocking tragedy in Bidar (Hyderabad State).<sup>1</sup> I have before now said in another connection that because I say nothing in public about certain wrongs it is not to be thought that I am oblivious of them or that I am doing nothing. I must be allowed to judge what is best under given circumstances. If all I have heard about Bidar (not all has been published in the papers) is true, nothing quite like it has happened anywhere in all India. If Hyderabad State is not to give over to lawlessness and Hindu life and property not rendered valueless, there should be a thorough and impartial judicial inquiry commanding confidence, and full compensation should be given to those who are rendered suddenly homeless. It is to be hoped that Muslim opinion outside Hyderabad will ask for full investigation into the happenings.

SEVAGRAM, April 30, 1940

*Harijan*, 4-5-1940

### 188. QUESTION BOX

#### NO CONFUSION

Q. There is still a lot of confusion in the public mind about the Indian situation. How can one remove it?

A. Confusion should have been removed as soon as the popular ministers resigned. They were the chosen representatives of the people. They had applied themselves to their work with amazing industry and efficiency which won the unstinted praise of the Governors. They took no rest themselves and allowed none to their subordinates. They had set a definite programme before themselves which would

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to communal riots in Bidar. *Vide* also "Bidar", 28-5-1940.

have improved the condition of the masses. It must have cost them a lot to give up office. But they found to their amazement that Provincial Autonomy, Which sir Samuel Hoare had declared from the house-tops to be real and complete, was reduced to a farce in the twinkling of an eye. The popular ministers were to be mere registering officers to carry out the will of the central executive so far as war measures were concerned. In this most vital matter they were not consulted formally or informally. So the ministers had to resign. This one act of theirs was complete in itself. Its importance is not felt as it should be because the Congress is wedded to non-violence.

#### CONGRESS NOT RESPONSIBLE

Q. Many people believe that the attitude of the congress has precipitated the Muslim League resolution about partitioning India.<sup>1</sup>

A. I do not think so. But if it has, it is a distinct gain. It is good that what was in should come out. It is easier now to deal with the problem. It will solve itself. One distinct gain is that nationalist Muslims have become awakened to a sense of their duty.

#### MUSLIM RULE = INDIAN RULE

Q. Would you prefer Muslim rule to British rule?

A. The question is badly put. You, being British, cannot get out of the habit of thinking that India is fit only to be ruled by someone. Muslim rule is equivalent to Indian rule. You might as well ask me whether I would prefer Bengali or Maratha to British rule. Maratha, Bengali, Sikh, Dravidian, Parsi, Christian(Indian), Muslim-all will be Indian rule. It makes no difference to me that some Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation. It is enough for me that I do not consider them as such. They are sons of the soil. Muslims considered separately have eight crores of unarmed Muslims scattered over India to look to. But you have the whole British nation and your army of occupation to look to. You belong to the ruling race. You are less than one hundred thousand in the midst of 350 millions over whom you rule. It is a matter of shame both for you and us. I need not weigh whose is the greater shame. The sooner we get out of it the better for both of us.

You will now understand my answer when I say that I would any day prefer Muslim rule to British rule. I have no doubt that, if

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* footnote 1 of "Hindu-Muslim Tangle", 29-4-1940.

British rule which divides us by favouring one or the other as it suits the Britishers were withdrawn today, Hindus and Muslims would forget their quarrels and live like brothers which they are. But supposing the worst happened and we had a civil war, it would last for a few days or months and we would settle down to business. In status we are equal. With you, it is different. You have disarmed us. Those of us who have been trained by you really belong to you rather than to us. We are no match for you in military power. You do not know how the rule has stunted the nation. Immediately British rule is really ended, we shall grow as never before, in spite of all foreboding.

#### WHY THIS PARTIALITY?

Q. Both Prof. Ranga and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan have been punished under the law. But while you were moved by the latter's sentence<sup>1</sup> you have denounced Prof. Ranga,<sup>2</sup> and this in spite of the fact that Prof. Ranga's offence was, if anything, a technical one, whereas Shri Jayaprakash by obstructing the war effort invited the penalty of the law upon himself. I agree that Prof. Ranga should not have broken the law. But then does not your attitude betray partiality on your part towards the one and antipathy towards the other?

A. You are hopelessly wrong. Your admission that Prof. Ranga was wrong in breaking the order shows that your cause is not just. Prof. Ranga is as good a friend to me as Shri Jayaprakash. I should have expressed the same opinion about the latter's action if he had done what Prof. Ranga did. There is no room in public life for partial friendships. Indeed real friendship is in no need of partiality. I have none for Shri Jayaprakash.. Nor have I any antipathy towards Prof. Ranga. I have perhaps less differences with Prof. Ranga than with Shri Jayaprakash, but that makes no difference to me. Shri Jayaprakash committed no breach of an order. He delivered a speech which was regarded as contrary to law. In Prof. Ranga's case there was a deliberate breach of an order served on him. The two things are different. I have answered your question because I attach importance to the breach. I also want to warn those who accept Congress discipline against such breaches.

#### A MUNICIPAL CHAIRMAN'S DUTY

Q. My father is the Congress Municipal Chairman of a certain place. In a recent by-election for a ward the official Congress candidate was defeated. A local

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Jayaprakash Narayan", 12-3-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

youth organization gave a tea party in honour of the successful non-Congress candidate. My father was invited and he attended.

His view was that once a candidate is elected, no matter to what party he belongs, as Chairman it was his duty to welcome him and get the best of co-operation from him in the interests of civic welfare. Some people feel that attending a function given in honour of an opponent is harmful to the party's cause.

A. Your father, I am sure, was quite right. He would have been wrong if he had not attended the function. An opponent is entitled to the same regard for his principles as we would expect others to have for ours. Non-violence demands that we should seek every opportunity to win over opponents. And what can be better than that we share their joys and sorrows? Moreover your father as Chairman was bound to be impartial. I was, therefore double his duty to attend the function.

SEVAGRAM, APRIL 30, 1940

*Harijan*, 4-5-1940

### 189. THE AJMER TROUBLE

Having published the gist<sup>1</sup> of the case of the Khadi exhibition organizers about the national flag incident, I am in duty bound to publish the following communiqué of the Commissioner of Ajmer Merwara on the incidents:

A feature of the celebration by the Ajmer Congress of what is known as the "National Week" has been an exhibition organized by a committee known as the 'Khadi Gram-Udyog Exhibition Committee'. For this a number of temporary structures have been erected adjoining the fort on a plot of nazul land, which is under the control of the municipal Committee. Advantage was taken of the fact that the exhibition attracted large crowds of people to hold political meetings on a vacant plot between the exhibition grounds and the entrance to the city kotwali. At two of these meetings speeches of an extremely objectionable character were delivered, and it was evident that the organisers of the meetings who are members of the local Congress were attempting under the pretext of promoting the use of khadi and village industries in general to bring the Government into hatred and contempt. The fact that these seditious utterances were made at a place adjoining a barrack

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Danger Signal", 16-4-1940

occupied by constables stationed at the kotwali was an additional provocation.

Further, the organizers of the exhibition set up a flag-staff on an outlying bastion of the fort from which the Congress flag was flown. This bastion is on Government land and is a part of the kotwali Police Station. Permission was neither sought for nor obtained for this act. Apart from the undesirability of a party emblem of this nature being displayed from a Government building, the flying of the congress flag from the ramparts of an ancient Moghul fort, which is a protected monument, caused grave offence to certain sections of the public.

After satisfying grave himself by personal inspection as to the facts, the Commissioner decided to issue two prohibitory order to prevent a breach of public tranquillity. The first order was addressed to the organizers of the exhibition by name, and it directed them to remove the flag and flag-staff within one hour and to refrain from reerecting it within 400 yards of the fort ramparts. The second order was a general one prohibiting political meetings under the Municipal limits for a period of ten days. The issue of this order was rendered necessary by the manner in which certain partisans of the Congress had abused the opportunity which the holding of the Khadi Exhibition presented.

As far as the first order is concerned, the individuals to whom it was addressed intimated in writing their refusal to comply, whereupon the police were directed to remove the flag and the flag-staff. Action is being taken separately regarding the refusal of the organizers of the exhibition to comply with the order.

If the above version is true, the case of the Exhibition Committee falls to the ground. I may state that a correspondent claiming to impartial sends a letter supporting the version of the Ajmer authorities. I refrain from expressing any opinion till my investigation is complete. One thing, however, is clear. The Commissioner has done everything he can to incite the Muslims against the Exhibition Committee. Prejudice against it peeps out through a portion of the communique. Even if the facts are as he has stated them, the Commissioner could have avoided the inflammatory reference to the 'Moghul Fort'. He knew that the Exhibition Committee could have no intention of wounding Muslim susceptibilities.

I have further information that more trouble is brewing in Ajmer. But of this more when I have full facts.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile let me draw attention to the reported tactful act of a Commissioner in the Frontier Province who, when a Congressman went to his office to hoist the Congress flag, straight away hoisted it himself, and hoisted the Muslim League flag as well, taking care that the union Jack flew the highest of all. But for the sense of humour and tact of the Commissioner it is difficult to say what would have happened.

SEVAGRAM, April 30, 1940

*Harijan*, 4-5-1940

*190. LETTER TO BIPIN BIHARI VERMA*

May 1, 1940

BHAI, BIPIN,

Be as you are. That would be *sadhana* for you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI BIPIN BABU

MANAPUR

BETTIAH, CHAMPARAN

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 10249

*191. CABLE TO HUTCHINGS*

May 2, 1940

MR. HUTCHINGS

26 PHAYRE STREET

RANGOON

GLAD HINDU MUSLIM REPRESENTATIVES MEETING RESTORE  
HARMONY. HOPE MEETING WILL SUCCEED IN DEVISING  
WAYS AND MEANS TO ESTABLISH PERMANENT PEACE.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Ajmer", 6-5-1940.

192. TELEGRAM TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

May 2, 1940

GURUDEO

SANTINIKETAN

OVERWHELMING WORK LEFT NO TIME. HOPE SEND  
YOU CONSIDERED OPINION<sup>1</sup> SOON. PRAY FORGIVE UN-  
AVODABLE DELAY.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers; Courtesy: Pyarelal

193. LETTER TO VITHAL L. PHADKE

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 2, 1940

CHI. MAMA,

End your fast. I shall not judge you. May your fast bear fruit.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3842

194. A STATEMENT

When Gandhiji was shown Reuter's cable of Sir Hugh O'Neill's<sup>2</sup> statement, he said his position was absolutely clear.

The only authority that can possibly convene a preliminary conference of elected leaders is the British Government, and they will do so and find out the ways and means when they have made up their mind to part with power and recognize the right of India to frame the charter of her own freedom<sup>3</sup>

SEVAGRAM, May 3, 1940

*Harijan*, 11-5-1940

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Rabindranath Tagore", 5-5-1940.

<sup>2</sup> A member of the House of Commons

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* also "Cable to The News Chronicle", on or after 22-4-1940.

195. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 4, 1940

CHI. MANI,

The figures you have sent are excellent. You had better spend the time in spinning rather than in writing to me.

Ask Father whether I should send that amount to him or to Prithvi Singh direct. How is his health?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SMT. MANIBEHN

C/O SARDAR PATEL

68 MARINE DRIVE

BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 126*

196. *LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU*

SEVAGRAM WARDHA,

[May 4, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. I see no flaw in it. I shall not enter into an argument. May your noble wish be fulfilled.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> From a copy of the letter available from the same source

*197. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI*

SEVAGRAM WARDHA,

*May 4/5, 1940*

CHI. HAIKHLAL,

You have at last settled down well. Everything depends on you now. IF Sanyukta<sup>1</sup> wishes to get married this year, let her do so in Porbandar in your absence. She can get married in Sevagram only next year. I do not think it at all proper for you to ask for leave just now.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

*198. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

*[May 5, 1940]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. AMRIT,

Your wire. Am well. No more today beyond sending love. I hope the pain of the sprain is entirely gone.

From the original: C. W. 3964. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7273

*199. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 5, 1940*

DEAR GURUDEV,

Ten thousand apologies for the delay in replying to Rathin's<sup>3</sup> letter. Pressure on my limited time is unbearable. The result is an accumulation of arrears. But I have not been idle about your proposal. I discussed it fully with Roger Hicks. I have been thinking over

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

<sup>2</sup> This is written at the top of an Urdu letter dated May 5 that someone had written to the addressee.

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's son, Rathindranath

the thing independently, The conclusion is set forth in the enclosed amended draft<sup>1</sup>. You will revise it as you like. You will give it the polish which you alone can give.

Somehow or other I could not reconcile myself to an appeal for the hall and the hospital. Santiniketan was his as much as it is yours. What can be better than that the thing to which he had given himself and from which he had derived inspiration would be put on a permanent basis? The sum asked may be too little. It should then be increased. I have stated that originally Santiniketan was founded by the Maharshi<sup>2</sup>. There is an apparent contradiction in the statement. You will please deal with it.

The idea that the appeal should be signed by us three<sup>3</sup> is, I think, quite good.

I have not sent a copy to the Bishop.

If you do not like my proposal and if you will retain the original, please do not hesitate to do so.

I hope you are keeping well.

With love,

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2290

## 200. QUESTION BOX

### HINDU - MUSLIM UNITY

Q. You can do Harijan work, you can organize khadi and village industries, but when it comes to Hindu-Muslim unity, You find many excuses for not organizing it.

A. This charge has been brought against me by several Muslim correspondents unknown to me. But latterly it has been repeated with considerable vehemence by one who knows me intimately. The com-

<sup>1</sup> This appeared in *Harijan*, 1-6-1940, under the title "deenabandhu Memorial".

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's father, Debendranath Tagore

<sup>3</sup> Finally, however, the appeal was signed by Gandhiji, Abul Kalam Azad, S. K. Datta, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Bishop Foss Westcott.

plainant challenges me to deal with the charge in Harijan. There can be no comparison between Harijans and Muslims. I owe a debt to Harijans in need of any assistance that can be given to them. Harijan work is humanitarian work. Muslims stand in no need of my humanitarianism. They are a powerful community standing in no such need. Any work done for Muslims after the Harijan style will be resented. To cite khadi and village industries against me is thought-less. These can be organized and are organized for all who will care to profit by them. As a matter of fact both Hindus and Muslims, and indeed others too, profit by these activities. Hindu-Muslims unity stands on its own footing. I have tried and am still trying to do my share of the work. I may have achieved no visible success, but I have no doubt that the direction in which I am working is the right one and is bound to lead us to the goal.

#### BIDAR AND BIHAR

Q. You feel keenly about Bidar. You ask for justice about it and you want Muslims outside Hyderabad to see that justice is done.<sup>1</sup> Do you feel equally keenly if Muslims are ill-treated as they were in Bihar.?

A. I do not know what the exact reference to Bihar is. All I can say is that not one single case of maltreatment of Muslims by Hindus having been reported to me has remained without investigation by me. This has been my practice since the days of the Khilafat. I have not always succeeded in finding the truth or giving satisfaction to the aggrieved parties that I had done my best. The Bihar charge is too vague to be answered more fully. If a particular instance were mentioned, I should be able to say what I had done about it. But supposing that I had failed in my duty to do justice, supposing further that I did not “feel equally keenly about Hindu injustice to Muslims” would that justify indifference about Bidar? I have said that there is nothing like Bidar in all the previous cases of Hindu-Muslim clashes, assuming of course that the allegations we made were true. All I have asked is that full justice and reparation should be made through a tribunal admittedly impartial. My proposal in the case of Bidar should be applicable to all such cases.

SEVAGRAM, May 6, 1940

*Harijan*, 11-5-1940

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* , “Wanton Destruction in Bidar”, 30-4-1940.

## 201. AJMER

As soon as I read the extraordinary communique<sup>1</sup> of the Commissioner of Ajmer, I asked for proof from the workers in Ajmer in support of their charges. It seems to me that in every single particular the charges are supported by documentary evidence. I have now in my possession copies of the relevant documents including a blue-print showing where the so-called Ajmer fort is, where the wall on whose bastion the Congress flag was flown is. The statement giving a categorical denial of all the allegations of the Ajmer Commissioner is published below.<sup>2</sup> From it, it would appear that the Commissioner is prejudiced against the Congress.

1. The ground including the wall and a portion behind it is in the possession of the Municipal Council as lessee.

2. Permission was duly received by the khadi workers for the use of the ground for the exhibition.

3. No separate permission for flying the flag is or has ever been considered necessary.

4. The Municipal Council even voted Rs. 51 towards the expenses of the exhibition.

5. The Ajmer fort is a well-defined structure. It is at present used for the kotwali etc. It is undoubtedly a protected monument and in possession of the Government. The outer wall is dilapidated and is included in the ground leased to the Municipal Council and is going to be demolished by them.

6. There was no complaint brought before the workers against the hoisting of the flag on the wall. It could give no offence to anybody. The Ajmer Council contains Muslim members. The decision to give permission to hold the exhibition on the ground was unanimous. Muslims freely visited the exhibition. Well-known Muslim attended the party given to Seth Jamnalaji<sup>3</sup> although they knew that the flag was hoisted on the outer wall.

I have seen many denials by officials of uncomfortable popular charge-sheets. But it is hard to beat the unblushing distortions by the Commissioner of Ajmer. He has not added to British prestige. If ever

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Ajmer Trouble", 30-4-1940.

<sup>2</sup> This is not reproduced here.

<sup>3</sup> Who inaugurated the exhibition

a case was clearly made out for civil disobedience, surly the Ajmer one is such a case. I refrain because of the turbid atmosphere and because I wish to take no action that will precipitate a crisis. The worker in Ajmer have done well to exercise self-restraint in the face of the gravest provocation. This case demands serious notice by the Central authority. In my opinion nothing short of the removal of the Commissioner from the high office he occupies will meet the requirements of justice.

It may be argued that the Commissioner of Ajmer is no worse than may such officials who do much worse things with impunity. The argument is sound. But many thieves escape with impunity because of want of conclusive evidence. When, however, one is caught red-handed, it is well to deal with him and give satisfaction to the injured public. Lord Curzon had his grave limitations. But he believed in justice being done and therefore had no hesitation in acting sternly and promptly when p proved case came under his observation. Prevention of civil disobedience, I believe is common cause between the Government and the Congress. The letter will resort to it when it is clearly inevitable, if, that is to say, the congress is ready, I am leaving no stone unturned to prevent it. But if the executive officials behave as the Ajmer Commissioner seems to have done, no effort on my part may prevent a conflagration.

On the 29th ultimo, being the last Sunday of the month, all over the country there was *jhandavandan'* . In Ajmer too the Congress had advertised the function to take place in the T own Hall com-pound. But this time the Commissioner, who is also the District Magistrate, prohibited the use of the Town Hall compound for the purpose. It is debatable whether he had any legal right to prohibit the use of the municipal ground in the manner he did. But for the moment it is not relevant. The fact of the issue of the order is relevant to show the bias the Commissioner has against the Congress. The matter was referred to me by telephone, and I advised the Congressmen to obey the order and not attempt to hold the meeting even elsewhere. But if the Commissioner is intent upon provoking a quarrel, I suppose he will not be happy till he has succeeded.

SEVAGRAM, MAY 6, 1940

*Harijan*, 11-5-1940

<sup>1</sup> Saluting the flag

## 202. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G.SHAH

SEVAGRAM,  
May 6, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Since you don't mind a little delay, I took some time to reply to you. So much work has piled up. I think you find peace of mind only in restlessness, for if you can shake off your discontent there is no cause at all for restlessness. Here work has been piling up.

Either forget that Kanchan is your wife or start living with her. She has gone to Panchgani because of her own intense desire. Even as she should no feel suspicious when you go somewhere so also you should not when she does. If you wish, I may persuade her to change her mind, but that would upset those people's plans. It would not at all look nice if you stayed in Poona, nor would it benefit you. You may continue to write to her matter-of-fact letters.

Do what you wish about Burhanpur. I do not understand the matter very well.

Who do you think reads your letters? And even if anybody does what will he understand from them? Even so, if you do not want anybody to read mark them, "private" so that I can promptly return them or tear them up.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8545. Also C. W. 7084. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

## 203. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
[May]<sup>1</sup> 6, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

I had your wife from Simla too. Herewith my two articles. You may translate at leisure. Sushila translated the questions well and

<sup>1</sup> The source has "6-6-40" which is evidently a slip, as the post-script is dated May 7 and the article on Ajmer (*vide* "Ajmer", 6-5-1940) referred to in the letter was written on May 6.

quickly. The Ajmer one was not ready. She will translate it tomorrow. But you should religiously translate them. If you two can get used to the work the whole of Harijan Sevak can be done here and I should be free from anxiety.

After all Anand<sup>1</sup> had no smallpox. It was rash after the vaccination. He has fever and cough. Majadev came in today.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

May 7, 1940

If the English articles don't accompany this, don't worry. The translation is not required. Practice may be delayed. Here with Gosibehn's letter. Your article about Kamalapuram<sup>2</sup> and your Hindi translation are going in. The translation is good.

From the original: C. W. 3965. Courtesy: Amrit kaur. Also G.N. 7224

#### 204. A ONE-SIDED INQUIRY

I had hoped that I would not have to say anything on Justice Nagesvara Iyer's report into the allegations of ill-treatment of satyagrahi prisoners in Mysore. But the Press criticism of the action of the State Congress in abstaining from participation in the inquiry demands an explanation from me. If it was wrong for the State Congress not to participate in the inquiry, the blame was mine. The inquiry was a result of Mahadev Desai's visit to Mysore at the instance of the Dewan<sup>3</sup> and the former's confidential report to me of which a copy was given to the Dewan. Mahadev Desai had recommended an open judicial inquiry presided over by a judge of known integrity brought from outside. Instead there was only a departmental inquiry by a Mysore judge. I have been for some time guiding the Mysore Congress, and the Congress acted upon my advice in not leading evidence before a Mysore judge who could not, I felt, be wholly impartial in judging the conduct of officials with whom he must have come in close official contact. It was too much to expect an impartial scrutiny

<sup>1</sup> Sharda G. Chokhawala's son

<sup>2</sup> Vide "A Hideous Evil", 18-5-1940.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Mirza Ismail

by one who had risen to the rank of a judge from being a Government official.

The allegations were of a most serious character, and they were repeated in the presence of Mahadev Desai and before officials occupying the positions of Deputy Commissioner, District Superintendent of Police, Superintendent of Jail and so on. Those who made the allegations were volunteers, not criminals, and a few of them held high social positions. It is impossible to treat them as liars, as the report seems to have done.

I am not yet in possession of the Judge's report. What I have before me is a highly tendentious summary of the report published by Government, interspersed by Government's own statements of certain happenings and Justice Nagesvara Iyer's comments on them in his report. It passes comprehension that the inquiry was continued when the complainants refused to appear before the officer. The judge should have dismissed the case for want of evidence. How he could have arrived at definite conclusions in the absence of material evidence, it is difficult to say. The judge admits that "most of the persons who made accusations of assault and torture did not attempt to establish those charges," but that he "had a large volume of oral and documentary evidence" adduced before him. What this "documentary" evidence was, we do not know. The oral evidence was of people who had nothing to do with the inquiry but were dragged by the police before the judge to prove the Government case. The judge says he has based his conclusions "on such materials and broad probabilities", This is hardly the language of a judge. No judge of integrity and impartiality would have cared to go into the extraneous evidence that Justice Nagesvara Iyer went into, and made uncalled for animadversions against satyagrahis for refusal to give evidence before him, when he knew that their reason in doing so was that they questioned the competence, independence and impartiality of the judge. The paragraphs in the communique are devoted to proving that the leaders of the movement adopted questionable methods of sending out surreptitious letters from jails. What this has to do with allegations of torture one is at a loss to know. It would thus appear that, far from the inquiry being into any allegations by Congressmen, it became an inquiry into allegations by Government official which the judge has supported without giving those against whom the allegations were made an opportunity to rebut them.

My point, however, in referring to the unfortunate inquiry is that the Mysore Congress acted under my advice. The judge's biased finding confirms me in the soundness of the opinion I gave them. As satyagrahis, the members of the Mysore Congress were not interested in the guilty parties being condemned. They were interested in the truth being known. The golden lid of the one-sided inquiry covers the truth. But they should have the faith<sup>1</sup> that the lid will be lifted one day and the truth will be found. The exoneration of the officials may result in the hardening of their hearts and greater maltreatment of the prisoners than before. If such is the case, the prisoners should rejoice in their sufferings and know that, if they bear them without malice, they will be the local Congress nearer its goal.

SEVAGRAM, May 7, 1940

*Harijan*, 11-5-1940

### 205. ANDREWS'S INFLUENCE<sup>2</sup>

Mr. A. G. Fraser of Elgin, Scotland, sends me the following touching letter about Deenabandhu:

I write to you because of the great joy and inspirations you were to him who has just left us, Charlie Andrews, and because you, perhaps more than any other, will feel his loss. He has had a great and deeply joyful life, and amongst all the many things which made it rich, your friendship was one of the foremost. For your pleasure in him I would like to tell you one story of him.

The noblest of British Governors that I have known, Sir Gordon Gaggisberg, who literally gave his life for Africans, was anxious to know Charlie and he asked me to arrange a meeting, if possible for lunch in his club, the Army and Navy Club in Pall Mall. It is one of the most rigid clubs in London in its standard of dress, so I told Gaggisberg that Charlie would not be dressed for clubland. He did not care about that, so the lunch was arranged. On the day, I was seated with Sir Gordon when the porter came and said: 'Sir, there is a man at the door who says he has an appointment with you, but I did not like to let him in till you had seen him.' I said to Gaggisberg, 'That's Charlie.' and it was. He was worse dressed than I have ever known him to be in Europe. But Gaggisberg was too delighted to meet him to think of that. We had lunch at a small central table and admirals, generals, governors came up to

<sup>1</sup> The Source has "truth"

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under the title "Notes".

greet Gaggisberg who was newly back in England. He introduced them all to charlie. Then we retired to an alcove for a quiet talk, and Charlie's visit to British Guiana was fixed up. Thus charlie had to go and Gaggisberg saw him down to the street and finding a taxi himself for him put him into it. As the taxi left he followed it with his eyes, his head bent, It disappeared round a corner and he stood very still. Then he turned to me and said, 'I feel as though I had been honoured to give lunch to my Lord.' It was the meeting of two great men, and they met for the sake of Indian labourers in Guiana.

You will greatly feel his loss at this time, more than even we who loved him here can know. But we do pray that you and India through you may be blessed, and you will be blessed.

SEVAGRAM, May 7, 1940

*Harijan*, 25-5-1940

## 206. LETTER TO BAL KALELKAR

May 7, 1940

CHI. BAL,

I am sending you the revised version<sup>1</sup>. There has been some delay, but I couldn't help it. I had both your letters. Sign the letter and send it to me. I will despatch it myself.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2641

## 207. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

May 7, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I think it is not desirable that you should go to Kanchan just now. I am afraid a quarrel will start there. I think it would be better, provided you wish it, that I myself should write to her and find out how she feels about it. Now that she has gone there it would not be

<sup>1</sup> Of the addressee's letter to G. D. Birla for a scholarship of Rs. 9000 to enable him to finance his studies in America for a D. Sc. in Engineering

right to upset her. You must observe a certain restraint even as her husband. You should respect her freedom; you may guide her, you cannot order her. Do nothing in haste. If you wish to go to Badrinarayan or Calcutta, why need you ask her? But do as you wish.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8544. Also C. W. 7086. Courtesy: Munnalal G.Shah

## 208. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

[After May 7 ]<sup>1</sup> 1940

I have your letter. I had also seen your statement.<sup>2</sup> For us, it is a moral question. And when the Government obstinately refuses to do justice, how can we help? If slavery is bad, where is the question of choosing masters? This has been the Congress policy. We need not be uneasy. If all of us want freedom no one can deny it to us. If only a few of us want it, we will sacrifice our lives in its pursuit. What have we to offer except moral support? We can give it only when there is justice. They are getting money whether we like it or not. As long as they are the lords they will obtain the funds. Jawaharlal has shown me his reply. It is quite all right. It is no small thing that we are not resorting to civil disobedience. Take good rest.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

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

<sup>1</sup> In the source this and the following letter are placed after the entries for May 7, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> According to the source the addressee had made a 'panicky statement' that the British rulers would be better than the others. In his autobiography the addressee writes; "when . . . the German army, in a sweep, took Denmark, Norway Holland and Belgium, I was deeply distressed because Hitler made it clear that he would not let any weaker nation survive. My feeling of anger against the British for denying India her rights was somewhat assuaged and I somehow felt that it was our duty to help the British in defeating Germany and help stop the rot.

"I was so much overpowered by these thoughts that I could not help issuing a statement to this effect."

## 209. LETTER TO K. N. KATJU<sup>1</sup>

[After May 7, 1940]

Of course my first position was true but it could not be taken up mechanically. The position Congress has taken is also true. Our problem is purely moral. The moral weight of the Congress is at the disposal of the British people, the moment they act morally. The Congress has nothing else to give. I do not think the position it altered because the war cloud has assumed a blacker shape. I may have sympathy for my erring son but moral help is of no avail to him till he persists in his error. The material help of Indian Britain gets whether we will or not. What however we can do is not to embarrass Britain by any precipitate action. I will not resort to c.d. unless the way is absolutely clear. If what I have said does not appeal to you I would ask you to discuss the thing with Jawaharlal and others.

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

## 210. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

[May 8, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. AMRIT,

I had your first letter today. I am glad you have a warm welcome. I had not a shadow of a doubt about it. You must now put on weight. The Times of India's thought for the day runs: "Your disappointment will be removed not by change of surroundings but by change of outlook—of heart."

I have been sending your post and writings. There are two letters [to] day.

Herewith the articles. I could have sent them yesterday but not without a strain. The translations have gone from here.

All well including Anand. Lalita Kumari is coming after all.

Love

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3966. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7275

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had written: "What you wrote about unconditional co-operation is right. There is now an international crisis. We may still reconsider our stand and offer our help. As it is all the smaller nations are faced with doom."

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to Gandhiji's inability to send the articles on the previous day. *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 6-5-1940.

## 211. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 8, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

How perverse you are! I reply to all your letters, still you are not satisfied and keep complaining! Would it not be better, instead, to stay here permanently? Why should Jayaprakash not get a newspaper? I have had a letter sent to Poona. Inform me if he does not get it. There has been a letter from Rajendra Babu. I understand about Father, I hope he also is better now. Has your work been chalked out? Ba is well. Rajkumari has gone to Simla. Her address is: Manorville, Simla. It is very hot here. Sharda is still here, I am quite well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI PRABHAVATI DEVI

C/O SHRI BRIJ BEHARI SAHAI

A/32 HIGH COURT QUARTERS, PATNA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3541

## 212. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

SEVAGRAM,

May 8, 1940

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have your letter. Since Munnalal writes to you, I saved my time. I accept your notice. I have already told him that the two of you should set up house. Where and when is all that remains to be considered. We will think over it when you free yourself from there. Do you want Munnalal to go there? Can he be accommodated there? Write to me frankly.

Do you keep good health there? Do you get all your requirements? How do you pass your time? Here it is quite hot.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8282. Also C. W. 7083. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 213. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

May 8, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Send that accompanying letter<sup>1</sup> to Panchgani. I welcome the idea that you should set up house with her. We shall think over the matter when Kanchan returns. If on getting Kanchan's reply you think it necessary to go to Panchgani you may do so. I have no objection if you stay there and Kanchan comes here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8543. Also C.W. 7085. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 214. LETTER TO PRABHULAL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 8, 1940

BHAI PRABHULAL

I have the report of your work. It is quite satisfactory.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4135

### 215. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,,

May 9, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW

I must thank you for your prompt and frank reply of 29th ultimo.

I had the Hansard by me thoughtfully sent by Miss Harrison, so I read Lord Zetland's full speech.<sup>2</sup> I am sorry to say it read worse than cabled summary. But I will not weary you with argument on

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

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* 1st footnote of "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 24-4-1940

points. My position is that Great Britain, to put herself right morally, should make requisite declaration unconditionally about India's right of self-determination. If you say that right will be recognized when she fulfils the conditions you lay down, self-determination may be indefinitely postponed, for the conditions may never be fulfilled.

*I am,*

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10257. Courtesy: India Office Library, London

### 216. LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,,

*May 9, 1940*

DEAR SIR AKBAR,

Your letter makes strange reading.<sup>1</sup> Communal unity would never come by generalizations of glossing over serious disturbances. I do not know what Bihar incident you refer to. But if there was a denial of justice in Bihar, it is no precedent worthy to be copied.

And why should public criticism of a big disturbance prejudice judicial proceedings against individuals?

*Your sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 8018

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's letter dated May 2, 1940, read: "My disappointment is no less than yours. The big question of communal unity governs all these minor proceedings, and, until progress is made with that problem, many other problems must be at a standstill, and communal manifestations will occur.

"As to the regrettable Bidar affair (which is reminiscent of incidents last year in Bihar) , cases are before the courts involving many accused. I can only express surprise that statements have [been] issued prejudicing some of the issues."

## 217. LETTER TO JAGANNATH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 9, 1940

MY DEAR JAGANNATH,

Surely Dr. Gopichand<sup>1</sup> needs no introduction or certificate from me. That he is the agent for everything I stand for is more than enough. Don't worry for him. In the Punjab, he is his own introduction and advertisement. I am glad he is free from the Parliamentary burden. I shall expect great things from him for constructive work.

Please hand the enclosed<sup>2</sup> to Shakuntala Devi.

*Yours*

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 985. Courtesy: Lala Jagannath

## 218. LETTER TO MANUBEHN S. MASHRUWALA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 9, 1940

CHI. MANUDI,

I got your letter. Why need you give your address, since the whole world knows you? If, therefore, I merely write Bombay, will not the letter reach you? Or do you perhaps think that I must have your address by heart? Ba is all right. Do you wish to come here in *Ashadh*? You know that you will be welcome whenever you wish to come. Kunvarji<sup>3</sup> is keeping good health. Sharda is still here. The boy is fine. His eczema persists but he is growing. It is very hot.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2676. Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

<sup>1</sup> Gopichand Bhargava

<sup>2</sup> This is not traceable.

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's brother-in-law

## 219. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,,

May 9, 1940

CHI. SARU,

I got your letter. It is not as if I abstained from writing to you because I did not want to bless you. Where can I go if I make you and Kanti angry? Ba and I can only wish you well. I am glad to know that Shanti<sup>1</sup> is well. I have also heard that Kanti has failed. He should not grieve over his failure. He gets another opportunity to study. If he studies steadily, he will become a good doctor. I hope you are keeping good health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRIMATI SARASWATI  
MADHAVI MANDIRAM, EASWARAVATTOM  
NEYYATHINKARAI, TRAVANCORE<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6175. Also C. W. 3449. Courtesy:  
Kantilal Gandhi

## 220. INTERVIEW TO "THE TIMES OF INDIA"<sup>3</sup>

SEVAGRAM,

May 9, 1940

Seated on a mat in his small barely furnished room, with a wet cloth wrapped round his head, Mr. Gandhi carefully explained his viewpoint. He spoke with great earnestness.

I would welcome a settlement which ensures peace with honour. The Viceroy knows I am always ready.

I am not averse to coming to terms with Britain on matters like defence and commercial interests, and I am fully prepared that these adjustments should be referred to a Constituent Assembly as part of an agreed settlement.

Mr. Gandhi went on to explain his attitude to the Constituent Assembly.

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

<sup>2</sup> Address from the C. W. copy

<sup>3</sup> This appeared in Harijan under the title "An Important Interview".

I believe personally that it is the most satisfactory method of procedure; but don't forget that I preserve an open mind on the matter. If some people hold that there are other forms of procedure which are more representative, I am willing to be convinced. Today I say that the assembly should be elected on adult franchise, but here again my mind is open to alternative proposals provided these proposals have the backing of representative men.

"If the Viceroy," asked the correspondent, "declares that he will summon a conference of 'the best Englishmen and the best Indians', and if he further agrees that its terms of reference will be to arrange for the establishment of self-government within the shortest period practicable, would you accept that gesture?"

Certainly, it will be acceptable. In the preliminary conference it is necessary that the best Englishmen and the best Indians should meet to adjust their differences, but in the framing of the constitution only Indians must participate.

If the Viceroy is authorized to declare that His Majesty's Government have definitely come to the conclusion that it is the sole right of India to determine the form of government under which she would live, and if with that end he summons a conference of the best Englishmen and the best Indians—the latter elected according to an acceptable procedure—to devise a method whereby a Constituent Assembly can be summoned for the purpose of framing a constitution and for solving all problems that may arise, I would accept the proposal. But I don't sense the proper atmosphere today.

Asked whether, if His Majesty's Government summoned a conference and acted in good faith, Mr. Gandhi would be prepared to use his personal influence to induce the Congress Ministers to return to office, the Mahatma quickly replied:

Not unless there is a Hindu-Muslim agreement. I should wait.

As I said good-bye, Mr. Gandhi chafed:

You did not deserve the interview. You brought a hot wind with you to Sevagram.

The temperature was 108. He laughed uproariously at my obvious retort: "It is an ill wind which brings no one any good."

*The Times of India*, 10-5-1940; also *Harijan*, 18-5-1940

221. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM,  
May 11, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

Your letter.

Dr. Risti and her friend can easily stay in the Circuit House.

Ghanshyamdas and Jamnalalji here. Over head and ears in work.

Sharda's Anand was not smallpox. Many were willing to be vaccinated. Ba, Durga and other women said no. But the storm has blown over. In the village too, it has subsided.

Lilavati had a scorpion sting and so had Amtul Salaam. L. Suffered much.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3967. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7276

222. *LETTER TO ANNAPURNA C. MEHTA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 11, 1940

CHI. ANNAPURNA,

I have your letter. May you prosper. May your pious aspirations be fulfilled.

Come over whenever you wish.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9426

223. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

May 11, 1940

Considering everything, it would be good if you visited Panchgani. There is a wire from Kanchan, too, asking me to send you.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8542. Also C. W. 7088. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

## 224. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 11, 1940

chi. amala,

I have your letter. I was very happy. It is good you are serving the blind dog. You are looking after Mother, too. Everybody is fine here.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DR. MARGARETE SPIEGEL  
IVANHOE, OPP. BACKBAY BATHS  
FORT, BOMBAY

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

## 225. QUESTION BOX

### DEMOCRACY AND NON - VIOLENCE

Q. Why do you say, "Democracy can only be saved through non-violence"?<sup>1</sup>

A. Because democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence, cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak. The weakest, you say, go to the wall. Take your own case. Your land is owned by a few capitalist owners. The same is true of South Africa. These large holdings cannot be sustained except by violence, veiled if not open. Western democracy, as it functions today, is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism, Why is there the war today, if it is not for the satisfaction of the desire to share the spoils? It was not through democratic methods that Britain bagged India. What is the meaning of South African democracy? Its very constitution has been drawn to protect the white man against the coloured man, the natural occupant. Your own history is perhaps blacker still, in spite of what

<sup>1</sup> The Questioner was an American.

the Northern States did for the abolition of slavery. The way you have treated the Negro presents a discreditable record. And it is to save such democracies that the war is being fought!. There is something very hypocritical about it. I am thinking just now in terms of non-violence and trying to expose violence in its nakedness.

India is trying to evolve true democracy, i.e., without violence. Our weapons are those of satyagraha expressed through the charkha, the village industries, primary education through handicrafts, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition, and non-violent organization of labour as in Ahmedabad. These mean mass effort and mass education. We have big agencies for conducting these activities. They are purely voluntary, and their only sanction is service of the lowliest.

This is the permanent part of the non-violent effort. From this effort is created the capacity to offer non-violent resistance called non-co-operation and civil disobedience which may culminate in mass refusal to pay rent and taxes. As you know, we have tried non-co-operation and civil disobedience on a fairly large scale and fairly successfully. The experiment has in it promise of a brilliant future. As yet our resistance has been that of the weak. The aim is to develop the resistance of the strong. Your wars will never ensure safety for democracy. India's experiment can and will, if the people come up to the mark or, to put it another way, if God gives me the necessary wisdom and strength to bring the experiment to fruition.

#### HYPOCRISY

Q. I agree with you that those who do not believe in the tests laid down by you for enrolment as satyagrahis should not hold office in the Congress organization. What is however, happening is that, while embargo upon disbelief has been effective, hypocrisy is enjoying a premium. People who have nothing in common with your programme are coming forward with the satyagraha pledge<sup>1</sup> in order to capture power, their only qualification being lack of scruples. Can you as general of the satyagraha army shut your eyes to this? If not, what remedy do you propose?

A. I suppose Cowper not knowing how to deal with the hypocrite paid him a compliment by saying that 'hypocrisy was an ode to virtue'<sup>2</sup> And so it is. But the gentlemen whom you refer to will soon discover their error either by my sensing the hypocrisy and not

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Satyagraha Pledge", before 1-6-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Rochefoucauld says: "Hypocrisy is the homage paid by vice to virtue."

starting the struggle, or by their being tired of a role which requires labour from them. Meanwhile I must take everyone at his or her word, and believe that those who have taken the pledge have done so in good faith. I have no right to question anybody's motive unless I have proof positive to the contrary.

#### DEFENCE OF INDIA ACT

Q. The resolution<sup>1</sup> passed at Ramgarh says that "Congressmen and those under the Congress influence cannot help in the prosecution of the War with men, money or material". Every resolution of the Congress has to be explained to the people by Congressmen and Congress committees. If we do that, we are sure to offend the provisions of the Defence of India Act, i.e., we will be committing an act of civil disobedience before you as general have given the word. What are we to do under the circumstances?

A. I am not quite sure that you will commit an offence against the Defence of India Act merely by explaining the resolution to the people. But you can easily put yourself under it by adding 'ginger' to your explanation and delivering a first-class harangue against British rule. In your place I would not do it. Sufficient education has been given to the people as to what British rule is. But you should lay stress on what the people have to do to get out of foreign rule. Therefore everything depends upon how you say it. You will offend against my instructions when you disobey explicit orders served upon you.

#### SELF - DETERMINATION

Q. Are you right in conceding the right of self-determination to Muslims in a matter so vitally affecting others also, viz., Hindus, Sikhs, etc.? Supposing the majority of the Muslims decide in favour of partition in terms of the Muslim League resolution, what happens to the self-determination of Hindus, Sikhs, etc., who will be minorities in the Muslim States? If you go on like this, where will be the end to it?

A. Of course Hindus and Sikhs will have the same right. I have simply said that there is no other no-violent method of dealing with the problem. If every component part of the nation claims the right of self-determination for itself, there is no one nation and there is no independence. I have already said that Pakistan is such an untruth that it cannot stand. As soon as the authors begin to work it out, they will find that it is not practicable. In any case mine is a personal opinion.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "A Resolution", 1-3-1940.

What the vast Hindu masses and the others will say or do I do not know. My mission is to work for the unity of all, for the sake of the equal good of all.

#### WHAT SHOULD BE DONES?

Q. In the last meeting<sup>1</sup> of the Working Committee the Committee have resolved that all Congress committees should either be transformed into satyagraha committees of the office-bearers, who for any reason cannot sign the pledge, should resign and make room for others who have signed the pledge. Now, if any Congressman has no faith in your technique but has accepted it only to carry out the Working Committee's resolution and is spinning only because he wants to remain in office, is he entitled to become a satyagrahi and remain in office?

A. Surely the office-bearers should resign. The pledge taken merely to remain in office is of no value. Such a person should not hold office.

#### FOR NON-PERFORMANCE

Q. If anyone signing the satyagraha pledge does not observe the rules laid down in it, what action will be taken against such a satyagrahi?

A. He is liable to be removed from the position he may hold.

#### IF A COMMITTEE REFUSES

Q. If a Congress committee refuses to transform itself into a satyagraha committee, what is the position of that committee?

A. That area will be unrepresented unless there are other Congressmen to take the place of the defunct committee?

#### CAN THEY TAKE THE PLEDGE?

Q. Can the following persons take the satyagraha pledge?

(a) A pleader who has given an undertaking to court that he will not join any civil disobedience movement.

(b) A person who though he wears khadi himself buys mill-cloth for others and uses mil-cloth for his bed-sheets, etc.

(C) A person who though a khadi-wearer himself trades in foreign cloth.

A. These persons cannot take the pledge.

SEVAGRAM, May 13, 1940

*Harijan*, 18-5-1940

<sup>1</sup> Held at Wardha from April 15 to April 19

## 226. FAVOURITISM

On reading my note<sup>1</sup> in Harijan of 9th March on the Seng Khasi School, a correspondent writes:<sup>2</sup>

. . . It is all too true that the books on the prescribed list are nearly all mission books, and are unusable by any non-Christian school. . . All the people with influence in the Education Department, so far as Khasi education is concerned, are Christians, and the scales are weighted very heavily in favour of mission schools, and against such courageous efforts as the one referred to by your correspondent. . .

This is a matter for the Assam Government to attend to. Whatever may have happened before, the scandal such as the one referred to by my correspondent should cease under a Government which is responsible to the people.

SEVAGRAM, May 13, 1940

*Harijan*, 18-5-1940

## 227. NON-CO-OPERATION

The following is from a godfearing political friend whom everybody knows:<sup>3</sup>

. . . I have been closely following your experiments in ahimsa and satyagraha . . . But I tell you these weapons of yours have been and are being abused in the world . . . Non-co-operation has become a curse in everyday life. Its ill effects are seen in family circles, in associations, in business, in factories and in Government offices.

. . . Having learnt its use from you, selfish people use it in your name in order to gain their selfish ends, and bring misery upon thousand of people. Therefore I beg of you not to employ this weapon in politics . . .

I request you not to embarrass the British in any way while they are engaged in this life-and-death struggle. But I know, by itself the Congress will not have the patience to do so, though it may under your advice. . .

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 16-2-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

If the Congressmen must embarrass the British, I feel they should go back to offices in the Provinces and should face the British Government with a dilemma at every step in the Provincial and the Central Assemblies. . .

Again we have to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. For that we should call a conference of all the communal leaders and party leaders. If we make an effort before hand, we might become united by the time the Government is willing to call Constituent Assembly. No time should be lost. The demands of the Mussalmans will mount up as time goes on. I am certain God will help us to attain unity if we try for it is right earnest and without delay. . .

The writer is one of the most earnest among us. He has presented one side of the picture, but like all one-sided pictures this also is misleading.

Every powerful thing is liable to misuse. Opium and arsenic are most potent and useful drugs. And they lend themselves to great abuse. No one has for that reason suggested the stopping of their good use. If no-co-operation has lent itself to abuse in some cases, in many cases its wise use has proved absolutely efficacious. A thing has to be judged by its net effect. The net effect of no-violent no-co-operation has been of the greatest benefit to India. It has brought about an awakening among the masses which would probably have taken generations otherwise. It has prevented bloodshed and anarchy and on the whole improved the relations between the Britishers and ourselves. There is a better mutual understanding because there is better mutual respect than ever before. And yet our no-co-operation has been indifferently non-violent. I hold that no-co-operation is of universal use. Well applied, its use in politics can wholly displace the use of barbarous weapons of mutual destruction. The thing to do, therefore, is not to restrict its use but to extend it, care being taken that it is used in accordance with the known laws regulating its use. Risk of misuse has undoubtedly to be run. But with the increase in the knowledge of its right use, the risk can be minimized.

One safe thing about non-co-operation is that in the end its abuse recoils more upon the users than upon those against whom it is used. Its abuse is the greatest in domestic relations because those against whom it is used are not strong enough to resist the abuse. It becomes a case of misapplied affection. Doting parents or wives are the greatest victims. These will learn wisdom when they realize that

affection does not demand yielding to extortion in any form. On the contrary true affection will resist it.

The writer suggests that usual parliamentary programme with obstruction. It futility, when it is not backed by readiness for no-co-operation and civil disobedience, has been fully demonstrated.

So far as the British are concerned I have already said that I will do nothing to embarrass them. I straining every nerve to avoid a conflict. But they may make it inevitable. Even so, I am praying for a mode of application which will be effective and still not embarrassing in the sense of violent outbreaks throughout the country.

Here I must say that, whilst it is true that active co-operation on the part of Congressmen is not yet much in evidence, of passive co-operation on their part there is no lack. Violent, sporadic eruptions on the part of the people would have paralysed my effort to gather together forces of non-violence in an effective manner. As it is, the restraint which they have exercised fills me with hope for the future.

Hindu-Muslim unity is a morsel by itself. But my friend is on the wrong track when he suggests that unity should be hastened for fear of Muslims raising their demands. Demands against whom? India is as much theirs as anybody else's. The way to unity lies through just demands once for all, not through ever-increasing demands, whether just or unjust. The demand for partition puts an end to all effort for unity for the time being. I hold that communal understanding is not a pre-requisite to the British doing justice on their part. When they feel that they want to recognize India's right of self-determination, all the difficulties that they put forth as obstacles in their path will melt away like ice before the sun's rays. The right of self-determination means the right of determination by every group and ultimately every individual. The demand for a Constituent Assembly presumes that the determinations of the groups and individuals will coincide. Should it happen otherwise and partition become the fashion, either we shall have partition or partitions rather than foreign rule, or we shall continue to wrangle among ourselves and submit to foreign rule, or else have a proper civil war. Anyway the present suspense cannot continue. It has to end one way or the other. I am an optimist. I have every hope that when we come to grips Hindus, Muslims and all others will throw in favour of India which all will claim as their own.

SEVAGRAM, May 13, 1940

*Harijan*, 18-5-1940

228. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 13, 1940

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have already written to you about this matter. I have written to him<sup>1</sup> too. I suppose you know that Nanabhai is connected with this. Just now we shall have to hand him Rs.2,000. We shall manage it. I am writing to him in detail; you should too.

I have not yet read the note about Chandrashanker. I will do something if I can. What happened at Rajkot?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro -2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 240*

229. *LETTER TO DILKHUSH B.DIWANJI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 13, 1940

BHAI DILKHUSH,

Mahadev has given a pleasant description of your work. Do you label all your boxes? Have you bought cows? Do you have an oil-press? Have you introduced any other industries? You should take up only the work you can easily do. But as the men are obedient, you will perhaps be able to take new work from them easily; they too would fetch a little income.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRII DILKHUSH DIWANJI  
KHADI ASHRAM  
KARADI Via NAVSARI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2645

<sup>1</sup> Prithvi Singh; *Vide* "Letter to Prithvi Singh", 14-5-1940.

### 230. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,,

May 14, 1940

CHI. MANILAL,

Your attack on Jinnah Saheb in *I[ndian Opinion]* was not proper. You should never discuss our quarrels here. This is only the impression I have formed from this end. I do not know whether you have any special reason for such severe criticism.

Medh<sup>1</sup> has arrived. His daughter is getting married on the 21st. He has not yet visited me. I have written to him to come any time.

Ba is well. I am of course well. There is no indication that I shall be starting a struggle in the immediate future.

Radha has been here for the last two or three days. She has grown a little thin.

It is extremely hot.

Kishorelal is in Bombay.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4912

### 231. LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 14, 1940

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH,

Sardar has sent me your letter to him. He will send you the money, but your estimates have not been carefully calculated. How can you afford to pay for water the price of milk and that too in such a poor country? How can you run a camp like this? You say that all the people there are happy. Why shouldn't they be? You have taken them out on a picnic or are giving them a change of air. Getting milk from a distance of fifteen miles is a luxury which only the rich can afford. You can get even six hundred men on your conditions. What

<sup>1</sup> Surendrarai Bapubhai Medh, an associate of Gandhiji and a leading satyagrahi during South Africa Struggle<sup>1</sup>

is heat and cold to a person who has come to learn to serve? I fear that your disciples, both men and women, are not likely to turn out very useful. You may, therefore, take Rs.2,000 but spend the money carefully. If you lose your reputation, I shall lose mine as well. After completing your work in Ghogha I think it will be safer to go back to the original idea. Borsad, Ahmedabad or Bardoli — whichever Sardar selects.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C. W. 2949. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

### 232. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*Unrevised*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 15, 1940*

CHI. AMRIT,

Your two important letters were torn as soon [as] they were read. Therefore I have to trust my memory for what I am to write. But since you insist on all this, I have to submit.

The articles I could send earlier but I became indifferent as Sushila could effectively and quickly translate the articles. Yours<sup>1</sup> could never reach Delhi the same week. I have told you I might get the translation here. You are still to translate for practice, so that when you return, you will bring greater ability and dispatch for the translation work. You have therefore to translate the articles with the same care that you would give if they were to be sent to the press. You should then send them to me for examination. You should not read Sushila's translation till you have done yours.

Sir M.<sup>2</sup> disappoints me. His letter is curious. But you are right in saying that we have to cultivate even such people. We have to convert the die-hards.

I cannot say I miss you. I am daily getting more and more detached. I seem to miss nobody and nothing. I have no time to think

<sup>1</sup> The source has "you"

<sup>2</sup> Presumably Sir Mirza Ismail ; *Vide* "A One-sided Inquiry", 7-5-1940.

of these things. The burden I carry occupies the whole of my time. The is not to say that I would not like your return or that there is no work for you. There is work and there is no work. That has been life from the beginning. But it [is] much more so now than ever. There is an inner longing for loneliness. If Harijan was stopped today, I should not feel the deprivation. And yet the place is growing.

There is no smallpox now.

Lalita Kumari came in today. She has two servants. She is with me.

Ramnarayan's letter is disappointing. You need not write to him any more. I shall write when I can.

Your letter to Narsingarh is good. It is being sent.

The war is taking an ugly turn. Let us see what happens. Somehow or other I do not feel the same way as you do. I do not want to see the Allies defeated. But I do not consider Hitler to be as bad as he is depicted. He is showing an ability that is amazing and he seems to be gaining his victories without much bloodshed. Englishmen are showing the strength that Empire builders must have. I expect them to rise much higher than they seem to be doing. But I must stop now.

If I have omitted any of your questions you must remind me. Hot here. But I am keeping well.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

This was written 9.30 a.m. Your today's note just in 1.30 p.m. I sent you all my articles. I wrote very few. All but unimportant five lines going with this.

From the original: C. W. 3667. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6476

### 233. *LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 15, 1940*

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter. What you write is correct. Our people are easily influenced. I got your telephone message. I do not intend to

write anything immediately. I will write when the time comes. We had heard the news about Ramu<sup>1</sup>. I did not feel unhappy but Ba did that you had not informed us. Ba still has such attachments though they have weakened considerably. Her forbearance, equimindedness, generosity, fortitude and firmness astonish me. Her health is good and she remains cheerful.

I see no need for anyone to go to America. Only what we can do here will have some effect. Nevertheless if an occasion arises, we shall see.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2123

### 234. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEVAGRAM,  
May 15, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. It is good that you have gone there. I think it is a great thing that you have found peace of mind. Stay there as long as duty demands. In any case you must do so as long as it may be necessary for your peace of mind.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI MUNNALALJI  
C/O SHRII BALKRISHNA  
VADILAL SARABHAI AROGYA BHAVAN  
PANCHGANI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8541. Also C. W. 7089. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> Ramchandra, addressee's son

### 235. LETTER TO PURATAN J. BUCH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 15, 1940

CHI. PURATAN,

You are doing excellent work. But do you want me to notice all that work in Harijan? If it is likely to do any good, I will certainly write. Anand and you must be fine.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI PURATAN BUCH

HARIJAN ASHRAM

SABARMATI

B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a photostat of Gujarati: G.N. 9175

### 236. MESSAGE TO N. W. F. P. DELEGATION<sup>1</sup>

WARDHA,

May 16, 1940<sup>2</sup>

My message has been already given, and I have none new to give you. All I will say is that now that you have actively taken up this great mission, you will not cease from your effort until Hindu-Muslim unity is achieved. I would ask you to forget that you have any quarrel with the Muslim League people. Your object differs from theirs, but they also are our brothers and you cannot convert them unless you treat them as such and refrain from all personal attacks. You have to carry conviction to them, for unless you or we can win them over there is no Hindu-Muslim unity. I wish you godspeed.

*Harijan*, 25-5-1940

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "God-speed". About twentyseven Red Shirts, accompanied by Ali Bahadur Khan, M. L. A. who had come to attend the Azad Muslim Conference in Delhi in April, called on Gandhii and asked him for a message.

<sup>2</sup> From *The Hindu*, 17- 5-1940

237. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM,  
May 17, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

Your corrections are quite good. They should have occurred to every one of us, but there you are.

Here are some letter for you.

I shall examine your translations and return to you. Have commenced t[he]<sup>1</sup> [e]<sup>2</sup> xam[i]<sup>3</sup> nation already.

Lalita Kumari is down with headache. Nothing much. She has these attacks often.

Love.

[PS.]

J. L.<sup>4</sup> came in yesterday. He left this morning

From the original: C. W. 3968. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7277

238. *LETTER TO DR. SYED MAHMUD*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 17, 1940

DEAR MAHMUD

I have your letter. Before you can make anything of the Delhi Conference<sup>5</sup> much spade work has to be done.

Englishmen like me and dislike me by turns. I remain the same.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 5066

<sup>1</sup> The source is damaged here.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>5</sup> The All-India Azad Muslim Conference held at Delhi from April 27 to 30. One of the resolutions passed by the Conference condemned the Pakistan scheme as "impracticable and harmful to the country's interest generally and Muslims' in particular".

## 239. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA

May 17, 1940

CHI. AMALA,

I did not write ‘*sharam*’<sup>1</sup>. I wrote ‘*sarun*’. It is good—*sarun* that you are serving the blind dog.<sup>2</sup> It is very happy thing that among all the teachers you are the only European. Mahadev is not keen on writing to you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 240. A HIDEOUS EVIL<sup>3</sup>

A friend from Kamalapuram writes as follows:

I am quite sure that Congressmen must not tolerate this evil.

*Harijan*, 18-5-1940

## 241. FOREWORD TO “MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD”<sup>4</sup>

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 18, 1940

I have had the privilege of being associated with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in national work since 1920. In the knowledge of Islam he is surpassed by no one. He is a profound Arabic scholar. His nationalism is as robust as his faith in Islam. That he is today the

<sup>1</sup> Meaning ‘Shame’: *vide* letter to the addressee, “Letter to Margarete Spiegel”, 11-5-1940.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is in English.

<sup>3</sup> The article by Amrit Kaur, not reproduced here, dealt with the evil of brothels coming up at religious fairs and festivals and quoted a letter from Kamalapuram complaining about the local Congressmen's apathy to it.

<sup>4</sup> A biographical memoir by Mahadev Desai.

supreme head of the Indian National Congress has deep meaning which should not be lost sight of by any<sup>1</sup> student of Indian politics.

M. K. GANDHI

*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*

#### 242. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

WARDHAGANJ,  
May 18, 1940

JAMNALALJI

SHREE, BOMBAY

HAVE NOT COURAGE ASK SAROJINIDEVI THIS TIME.<sup>2</sup>  
SHE IS ILL.

BAPU

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 234*

#### 243. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 18, 1940

CHI. MIRA,

I was wondering why I had not heard from you so long. Anything beyond a week will be too long for me. Though your descriptive letters are welcome (they are your speciality) a p.c. when you have no time would be enough.

Do I take it that you have left Oel<sup>3</sup> for good? I don't mind if you have. I want you to feel free and make yourself happy.

Your description of your new place<sup>4</sup> is attractive, but I do not know that I shall ever reach there. There is no prospect of my going to simla. Though Sevagram is a furnace just now, I feel like not moving out at all. The work before me takes up all my time.

<sup>1</sup> The source has "every".

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had requested Gandhiji to send Sarojini Naidu to Jaipur.

<sup>3</sup> Oel Ashram where the addressee stayed for three months

<sup>4</sup> In Palampur, Kangra

R. K.<sup>1</sup> is in Simla. Maharani of Vizianagram is here just now. So also is Radha.

P.<sup>2</sup> is in Ghogha with his band of 340 boys and 40 girls. Water and milk and vegetables have to be brought daily from Bhavnagar.

Love.

BAPU

Form the original: C. W. 6452. Courtesy: Mirabeehn. Also G.N. 10047

#### 244. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE

*Unrevised*

SEVAGRAM,  
May 18, 1940

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I have your two letters, as also the cheque for Rs. 5,000 jointly from Grandmother and yourself for the equipment for the hospital here. I hope to utilize the amount.

Your second letter is very important. I very much appreciate your minute examination of the details regarding khadi. I am in agreement with you on many of the points raised by you and will now enter into correspondence with Kakubhai<sup>3</sup> on this subject.

The position regarding the exhibition is rather complicated. Not that shipping, steel manufacture, etc., are not beneficial to the country. They do not, however, stand in need of any help from the Congress; or if they do it is help of a different nature. The object in confining the exhibition to products of village industries is to raise the importance of these industries, to educate the people and to concentrate the country's attention on this activity. Anything other than village industries should, indeed, have no place either in the exhibition or outside it. Since, however, I have not been able to carry all co-workers with me on this point, some confusion does persist in this respect. I admit, however, that there can be other views also on this matter. Please come over here some time and discuss the thing with me. These days it is very hot. You may come in June when it will be cooler.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C. W. 4731. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

<sup>1</sup> Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

<sup>2</sup> Prithvi Singh

<sup>3</sup> Purushottam K. Jerajani

## 245. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,  
May 18, 1940

CHI. NIMU

I got your letter. Ba will not go there. It is hot, no doubt, but she keeps quite well. It will be good if you do well there and suffer from no shortages. R[aj]kumari<sup>1</sup> has gone to Simla. Amtussalaam is here. There are a number of visitors coming and going. Sharda is still here. Her boy is growing fast. His eczema persists and that is rather vexing. Radha is here these days.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 246. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 18, 1940

CHI. RAMDAS,

How are you keeping now? Has the load on your mind lightened? Are you able to absorb yourself in your work? I hope you are not short of money, are you?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

## 247. QUESTION BOX

### SPINNING REGULARLY

Q. What do you mean by 'spinning regularly'?<sup>1</sup> If one spins for a couple of hours during a month or for half an hour once or twice a week, would he be deemed to have satisfied the condition about spinning regularly?

A. 'Regularly' was put in the place of 'daily'. This was meant to provide for accidental or unavoidable omissions. Therefore spinning every week or at stated intervals will not meet the case. A satyagrahi will be expected to spin daily except for valid reasons such as sickness, travelling or the like.

### SATYAGRAHA CAMPS AND UNTOUCHABILITY

Q. Satyagraha camps are being organized for the training of volunteers all over the country. But the principle with regard to the renunciation of untouchability in every shape and form is not being rigorously enforced. Don't you agree that it ought to be made an absolute rule in the camps that no one who regards the touch of Harijans as polluting and does not freely mix with them should be permitted to attend them?

A. I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that he who has the slightest untouchability in him is wholly unfit for enrolment in the Satyagraha Sena. I regard untouchability as the root cause of our downfall and of Hindu-Muslim discord. Untouchability is the curse of Hinduism and therefore of India. The taint is so pervasive that it haunts a man even after he has changed over to another faith.

### PARTITION AND NON-MUSLIMS

Q. You have said in Harijan that "If the eight crores of Muslims desire partition, no power on earth can prevent it."<sup>2</sup> Does it not strike you that 25 crores of non-Muslims too might have a say in the matter? Does not your statement imply that you put a premium on the opinion of the Muslims while underrating that of Hindus?

A. I have only given my opinion. If the majority of Hindus or Christians or Sikhs or even Parsis, small though their number is, stubbornly resist the express wish of the duly-elected representatives of eight crores of Muslims, they will do so at the peril of a civil war. This is not a question of majority of minority. If we are to solve our problems non-violently, there is no other way. I say this not because

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Satyagraha Pledge", before 1-6-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Hindu-Muslim Tangle", 29-4-1940

the eight crores happen to be Muslims. I would say the same if the eight crores were any other community.

#### LEGAL PRACTICE AND SATYAGRAHA

Q. Knowing as you do how lying and deceit have become the stock-in-trade of the legal profession in this country, would you permit practising lawyers to enlist as active satyagrahis?

A. I am unable to subscribe to your sweeping proposition. The fact that a lawyer wants to become a satyagrahi presupposes on his part a certain standard of purification. No doubt there may be, to my knowledge there are, black sheep in the Congress. This is inevitable in any big organization. But it would be unbecoming of a satyagrahi to condemn a man because he belongs to a certain profession.

#### SATYAGRAHA AND OBSTRUCTIONISM

Q. Is the policy of obstructionism compatible with satyagraha? Can a satyagrahi, who is supposed to stand for principles rather than party, adopt one attitude with regard to a measure when it is sponsored by his party, and another when the same measure is sponsored by the opposite party? Would you approve of this policy in municipalities and district boards as is being done by some Congressmen at present?

A. I have always opposed obstruction as being anti-satyagraha. Congressmen, to be correct in their behaviour, should always give co-operation to their opponents when the latter are in a majority and adopt any wise measure. The object of Congressmen should never be attainment of power for power's sake. Indeed such discriminatory co-operation will enhance the prestige of the Congress and may even give it majority.

#### TRAINING HARIJANS AS COOKS

Q. Don't you think that, if the Congress started a plan for training Harijans as expert cooks for Hindu homes and made it a rule to man every ashram of a mess meant for Congress workers with Harijan cooks thus trained, it would prove a short cut to the removal of untouchability?

A. Our ambition should be to enable Harijan to rise to the highest rank. But while that must be the ideal, it will be a good thing to train some Harijan to become accomplished cooks. I have observed that the move we draw them into the domestic circle the quicker is the pace of the reform. Harijans who become absorbed in our homes lose all sense of inferiority and become a living link between other Harijans and savarna Hindus.

SEVAGRAM, May 19, 1940

*Harijan*, 25-5-1940

## 248. NOTES

### NON-RESISTANCE

I read the following in the daily Press:

A petition signed by a number of Muslims has been sent to the Corporation authorities that, if their previous representations for the removal of Gandhiji's portrait from all Corporation schools for Muslims boys and girls is not acceded to, the institutions will be boycotted. They contend that the display of the portrait is a form of hero worship, which is anti-Islamic.

Assuming the truth of the statement I would strongly advise compliance with the Muslim demand. Nothing is to be gained by the Congress party resisting the demand. At the same time I would suggest to the leaders of the agitation that it is supported by wrong argument. For they have surely their own heroes. The proper and conclusive argument is that I am no longer their hero. Heroes change with the times. It is well for public bodies to accommodate themselves to such changes.

### FIVE QUESTIONS

1. Can satyagrahis (i.e., those who have signed the satyagraha pledge) offer defence when they are arrested?
2. May a satyagrahi make an effort to get better class treatment, i.e., 'A' or 'B'?
3. Ought a satyagrahi in jail to acquiesce in the conditions imposed upon him, or should he endeavour to secure that he regards more humane and satisfactory treatment?
4. What is the minimum time for which a satyagrahi ought to spin or what is the minimum quantity of yarn he should produce?
5. Can a man sign the satyagraha pledge immediately you declare civil disobedience and court arrest, or is there any definite period for which he should have remained a satyagrahi to be eligible to take part in the civil disobedience campaign?

Answers:

1. There is no objection to offering defence, and in certain cases it would be a duty to do so as, say, in the Ajmer case.
2. In my opinion he should not make any attempt to alter the class, Personally I am against an classification.

3. He is entitled to make every legitimate effort for change to humane conditions.

4. I think one hour per day should be the minimum and 300 rounds per hour is a reasonable speed. Men engaged in public work may spin less.

5. A man who intentionally refrains from signing a pledge in order to avoid fulfilment of conditions is a cheat and unworthy of being a satyagrahi. But I can conceive an honest man just signing the pledge and straightaway going to jail. Even at the risk of losing prospective pledge-takers and those who have taken the pledge. I would say that there is no immediate prospect of my giving the call.

SEVAGRAM, May 20, 1940

*Harijan*, 25-5-1940

### 249. OUR DUTY

In view of further ruthless aggression by Nazi Germany and the fact that Britain is hard pressed and going through deep waters today, does not non-violence demand that we should say to her that, while we do not resile in the very least from our position nor withdraw an iota of our demand so far as her relationship with us and our future are concerned, we do not desire to embarrass her in dire distress and will definitely, therefor, defer all thoughts and all talk of a civil disobedience movement for the time being? Do not our minds rebel against the very idea of a domination such as Nazidom is avowedly standing for today? Is not the whole future of a humane civilization at stake? It is true that our independence from an alien rule is also a matter of life and death to us. But when Britain is up against an aggressor who is definitely pursuing barbarous methods, should we not make a timely and humane gesture which should in the end win the heart of our opponent? Even if such a gesture makes no impression on her and an honourable settlement is impossible, will it still not be the higher and ennobling thing for us to offer non-violent battle when she is not beset on all sides? Will it not require greater strength in us and therefore mean greater and more lasting benefit, and will it not be a glorious example for a warring world? Will it not also be a proof that non-violence is pre-eminently a weapon of the strong?

Perhaps this correctly represents the sentiment of several correspondents who have written to me since the Norwegian setback.

It is evidence of the nobility of the hearts of these correspondents. But there is want of appreciation of the reality. These letters ignore British nature. British people stand in no need of sympathy from subject people. For they can command all they want from them. They are a brave and proud people. They are not going to be demoralized by even half a dozen such setbacks. They are well able to cope with any difficulty that may face them. India has no say whatsoever in the manner in which she is to take her part in the war. She was dragged into the war by the mere wish of the British Cabinet. Her resources are being utilized at the will of the British Cabinet. India is a dependency, and Britain will drain the dependency dry as she has done in the past. What gesture has the Congress to make in these circumstances? The greatest gesture in its power the Congress is already making. It creates no trouble in the country. It refrains in pursuance of its own policy. I have said and I repeat that I shall do nothing wilfully to embarrass Britain. It will be contrary to my conception of satyagraha. Beyond this it is not in the power of the Congress to go.

Indeed it is the duty of the Congress to prosecute its demand for independence and to continue the preparations for civil disobedience to the fullest extent it can. The nature of the preparations should be appreciated: to promote khadi and village industries, communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, and to this end to enlist and train Congress members. Is this preparation to be suspended? I dare say that, if the Congress truly becomes non-violent and in pursuance of the policy of non-violence it successfully carries out the constructive work I have mentioned, it will be able to have independence without doubt. Then will be the time for India as an independent nation to decide what aid she should give to Britain and how.

The Congress contribution to the cause of the Allies in so far as it may be good, and to the world peace, is its active pursuance of non-violence and truth and the prosecution of its goal of complete independence without abatement and without delay.

Britain is really damaging her own cause by persistently refusing to examine the Congress position and recognize its justice and in raising false issues. The Constituent Assembly of the kind proposed by me provides for every difficulty except one, if it is a difficulty. It does not provide for British interference in the shaping of India's destiny. If that is put forth as a difficulty, the Congress

must wait till it is acknowledged that it is not only no difficulty but that self-determination is India's indisputable right.

In this connection let me refer to the letters I have received accusing me of unwillingness to declare civil disobedience under some pretext or other. These friends must know that I am more concerned than they in the successful demonstration of the weapon of non-violence. I am not giving myself a minute's rest from the pursuit of the search. I am ceaselessly praying for light. But I cannot precipitate civil disobedience because of outside pressure, even as I will not refrain because of such pressure. I know that this is the time of my greatest trial. I have overwhelming evidence to show that there is much violence in the hearts of many Congressmen and that there is much selfishness. If Congressmen were imbued with the true spirit of non-violence, we would have had independence in 1921 and our history would have been written differently. But I must not complain. I must work with the tools I have. Only let Congressmen know the cause of my seeming inaction.

SEVAGRAM, May 20, 1940  
*Harijan*, 25-5-1940

### 250. LETTER TO RAMAKRISHNA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 20, 1940

DEAR RAMAKRISHNA <sup>1</sup>,

Father tells me you are to have the *upanayana*<sup>2</sup> ceremony. It means a new birth - regeneration. It means a resolution to lead a life of purity and service.

*Yours,*

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 746. Also C. W. 2804. Courtesy: Ramakrishna

### 251. LETTER TO K. T. NARASIMHACHAR

[ May 20, 1940 ]<sup>3</sup>

MY DEAR K. CHAR,

There is not likely to be any call.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 746. Also C. W. 2804. Courtesy: Ramakrishan

<sup>1</sup> Brother of K. T. Narasimhachar

<sup>2</sup> Investiture with the sacred thread, a sacrament for caste Hindus

<sup>3</sup> This and the preceding letter are written on the same sheet.

252. *LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ*

SEVAGRAM,  
May 20, 1940

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I did not have the courage to write to Sarojinidevi<sup>1</sup> Shri Katju is no stranger.<sup>2</sup> He is an eminent lawyer and was a Minister in the Congress Ministry. He held a high post. People should give up such attachments also.

It appears Om<sup>3</sup> has failed. If so, she should not feel disappointed. She must study again and get through. One famous man who had failed 21 times kept on trying and got through at last.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3011

253. *LETTER TO BHOLANATH*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHAM  
May 20, 1940

BHAI BHOLANATH,

I think I have replied to your letter of March 26, 1940. I came across it today when I was going over my correspondence. Tell me how you are now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1377

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Jamnalal Bajaj", 18-5-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to K. N. Katju", 29-5-1940.

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's younger daughter

## 254 LETTER TO TARA SINGH'

[ Before May 21, 1940 ]<sup>2</sup>

The Congress will stick to its resolution<sup>3</sup> passed at the Lahore session of the Congress regarding communal rights of the Sikhs, meaning thereby that no communal solution will be accepted by the Congress which will not be acceptable to the Sikhs.

*The Hindustan Times*, 23-5-1940

## 255. ASHRAM NOTE

SEVAGARAM,

May 21, 1940

The work of cutting vegetables is disorganized. Under the rules, no one should drop out of vegetable cutting. This applies to all community activities. Whenever someone is unable to participate in such work, the person in charge of that work should be informed. Those who cannot participate in such activities should declare their inability once and for all.

BAPU

From Hindi: C. W. 4674: also G.N. 6866

## 256. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,

May 21, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

In spite of all effort I have failed to write before now. Reason: want of time.

You said there was a letter for Kanu. It never came. The account of yarn was received only yesterday.

<sup>1</sup> Leader of the Akali Party. He had pointed out to Gandhiji that Abul Kalam Azad's statement that the Congress would accept the Pakistan scheme of the Muslim League if the same got the approval of the Muslims had caused much anxiety amongst the congress-minded Sikhs, who did not like the idea of partition.

<sup>2</sup> The report carrying the item is dated May 21, 1940.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Subjects Committee, A.I.C.C.—III", 30-12-1929.

I have made use of your question. I can't compliment you on it. There is no logic in it. I have let you down gently.

The weather has changed for the better since yesterday.

I sent you some letters

Lalita Kumari still here, She keeps none too well but gives no trouble. Her servants look after her. I had put her with me but she passes her time in Ba's room and is happy.

Love

BAPU

From the original: C. W.: 3969. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7278

### 257. *LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH*

SEVAGRAM,

*May 21, 1940*

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I have your letter. It is not yet time for you to go to Rajkot. If you build up your physical strength there, you will have taken one step forward.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9737. Also C. W. 717. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

### 258. *LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH*

SEVAGRAM,

*May 21, 1940*

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH,

I have your three letters. You are not at all to blame in regard to Prabhakumari's case. But the case proves that it is necessary to be alert in all matters. Ahimsa requires non-possession, both mental and physical, and truth requires silence, If this is accepted, it will become easy to distinguish between violent and non-violent actions in all important matters.

I find your case about going to Ghogha rather weak. All athletes would endure the hardships you mention. I do not believe, from what you describe, that any very great shock is being given to reason. But the truth will soon be known. We will know how much those who attended benefited. I have spent myself in training people in ahimsa but I have not wholly succeeded in cultivating it my self or in helping others to cultivate it. I am now looking to you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C. W. 2950. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

259. *LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA

*May 21, 1940*

BHAI VITHALDAS,

I think we should not ask for contributions just yet. I have even written to Shankerlal [Banker] to this effect. We shall know in a month or so. Meanwhile we should think over the matter.

How to improve the internal state of affairs?

What should we do if we get no contributions?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9795

260. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

SEVAGRAM,

*May 21, 1940*

CHI. MUNNALAL

By all means stay on there. You are making yourself fully useful and are getting some peace of mind. Kanchan also gets it. Return only when you clearly feel that there is no further need for you to stray on. Ask Kanchan to write to me some time.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a the photostat of Gujarati: G. N. 8540

## 261. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

May 21, 1940

STUPID GIRL,

What can I write to you? I know that it is very mean to go off leaving me in this condition. But if what I consider uncivilized attitude you consider duty, you must do your duty and in that case it becomes my duty to encourage you in that. If you would listen to me, I would say that (1) you should not talk of going till you have not convinced me of your position. In other words, you must not go. And if that is not possible (2) you should not utter a word about going till the mists have rolled away. Even Mother, if she understood this, would not keep you in Delhi for a moment.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 262. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM,,

May 21, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I did not say anything because I thought the work of vegetable-cutting was proceeding smoothly. Now I have commented on it in my Ashram Note<sup>1</sup>.

Mahadev may not be looked upon as an inmate of the Ashram. He cannot be spared even for a minute for community work. Pyarelal's case is slightly different, but he too should not be pressed.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4342

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Ashram Note", 21-5-1940.

263. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 21, 1940

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter. I have also written to Madhav<sup>1</sup>. All of you must naturally be very sad at Sumitra's death. Still, do not such occasions serve to test our wisdom and faith? I trust you will all pass the test.

Europe is now an arena of bloody strife. Be that as it may. I have hardened my heart.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C. W. 8046. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

264. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 22, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. I could not reply by today's post. There is no need to send you a wire. Ask Kanchan to write to me about the matter and ask Balkrishna and Kunvarji also to write. I cannot also understand why Bhojubhau and Kanchan are not on speaking terms. Is Balkreishna's work suffering in any way because of this tiff? He had some such fear, and if it is so they should let him alone. I can give my decision about you only after taking into account all these factors.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8539. Also C. W. 7090. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> Son of Rameshwardas Birla

## 265. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 22, 1940

CHI. MANILAL,

Why do you feel ashamed to mention that Sushila is in her seventh month of pregnancy? And why do you feel unhappy? All one must do is to observe that utmost self-control. What more can one do? This is how life will go on.

Yes, Sevagram is fast growing. Nobody can say how big it will grow.

Here there is no possibility of my starting a struggle immediately.

Bhabha and others may write what they please but propriety requires that you should write nothing about Jinnah Saheb. If you do write, you should use polite language. This is my view. Certainly I would not want you to write or refrain from writing anything out of fear.

I wrote what I thought best about the struggle there. But it was for you to decide whether or not to act upon it. Medh came and saw me. I had long talks with him. He will call again. His daughter is getting married and so he went back on the same day.

Ba's health is fine, considering her age. The rest are all right.

I am not nursing any hope of anyone of you coming here in the immediate future. Besides, it is a good thing that you are there and doing some service.

Ramdas is with the Tatas but he is very restless and has no peace of mind. His health also is not very good. Nimu is with him of course.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4913

266. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 23, 1940*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Read the enclosed and guide me. I have told the writer that his suggestion<sup>1</sup> attracts me and if I see my way clear I shall act up to it in part or wholly.

Love.

*Yours,*

BAPU

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

267. *LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,,

*May 23, 1940*

DEAR NATESAN,

You had a perfect right to send me your letter.

What more can India as a subject country do than it is made to do? You do not suppose for one moment that they hesitate to take all they want from this country. The Congress has nothing but moral help to give. They have disabled India from doing more. India as a subject country *cannot* save Britain. India as a free country may. There is no want of will on my part. It is sheer want of ability. Hope your wife is better.

Love

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 2238

<sup>1</sup> Abdul Hai Abbasi of Lucknow had suggested that since comunal troubles usually started in Northern India, Gandhiji should settle in a village in U. P. where Muslims were in a majority.

268. *LETTER TO DILKHUSH B. DIWANJI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 23, 1940*

BHAI DILKHUSH,

Your letter is not at all long. The single-minded devotion with which you are working leaves you no time for any other thoughts. I can of course remove your financial difficulty but I am of the view that it would be better if you fought your way through. I suppose you have trained weavers from among the local population. If not, please train more.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 2646

269. *ASHRAM NOTE*

SEVAGRAM,,

*May 24, 1940*

Owing to certain irritations, big and small, I have entered on a period of silence today. The silence will continue indefinitely. It will have to be broken when the working Committee arrives. It will also be broken in other similar emergencies. At present there can be but one sadhana for me. For this silence is essential. Talking causes interruptions. I also find that silence saves my energy. I do not want to insist on anything any more and so beyond expressing my views on essential matters, I do not want to argue.

BAPU

From Hindi: C. W. 4674; also G.N. 6686

270. *LETTER TO M. MUJEEB*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 24, 1940

MY DEAR MUJEEB,

Raju has been and gone to his place. He wants to work there if he can. I gave him all the time he wanted and put him in touch with Kaka's office. At his wish I have given him a note to Dr. Pattabhi.

I am sure you will strike the balance between the two seemingly conflicting duties. Please tell Dr. Zakir that the Urdu school thing is being fixed up satisfactorily

Love.

BAPU

PROF. MUJEEB

JAMIA MILLIA

NEW DELHI

From the original: C. W. 1466. Courtesy: M. Mujeeb

271. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 24, 1940

CHI. AMRIT

I have your translations. I must make time to read them. V. Hari<sup>1</sup> says he does not want any now. All the same you must practise them. One never knows when the need will arise.

Your corrections must be in ink for my eyes sake - not mine!

This week's articles will go in today I hope. I have not got them from Kanu yet.

No time for more just now. Nanahbai Bhatt has come in. I am silent indefinitely from 7.30 a.m. today.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3668. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6477

<sup>1</sup> Viyogi Hari, editor of *Harijan Sevak*

272. *LETTER TO MRS. K. L. RALLIA RAM*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 24, 1940*

DEAR SISTER,

What you say is true. I shall write - with what effect I do not know.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: N. A. I. File No. 74. Courtesy: National Archives of India.  
Also G. N. 6836

273. *LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 24, 1940*

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your two letters. I have Dr. Bhaskar's detailed letter, too. It was good that you were sent there. Now you are bound to get well. Your mind is weak; make it strong. Here the weather has changed since the 20th. The heat has very much decreased. All the same it was good that you went. Shakaribehn must be having a little more peace of mind. Let her stay on as long as it may be necessary.

*Blessings to all of you from*

BAPU

SHARDABEHN CHOKHAWALA

PATIDAR ASHRAM

SURAT

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10028. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

274. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 24, 1940*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I wrote you a letter which you have not answered.

Read what is written overleaf. It is a job for the Corporation. It can be easily done. It means protecting the cows and the poor.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 275. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SEVAGRAM,,

May 24, 1940

CHI. BALVANTSHINHA,

I have gone through your letter. The thing is that Parnerkar says he cannot all by himself look after the three jobs; the milkroom, the cattle and the farming. He is therefore agreeable to cattle and farming being transferred to you. I like this arrangement and then you have to help Parnerkar quite a lot in his work. Chimanlal and Munnalal, to the extent they understand the problem, also approve. Parnerkar also accepts if not wholly. The reason he advances is that he is short-handed. Under the circumstances, it becomes my duty to entrust cattle and farming to your care. I do not like the idea of forming a committee. You can take me to be the committee. If I need anyone's help I shall take it, otherwise I shall decide matters myself. In effect this will mean that many things will be left to you.

As far as possible let the *goshala* be as it is. If experience demands any change, it will be made.

As for servants only those will remain who are good.

We must grow our own vegetables. We are already using our own cotton. The fruit tree must be taken good care of.

This is my view. But if for any reason your heart is not in this work, I shall not insist. If you wish to go to Nathji<sup>1</sup> for some days, do go. And if you wish to do some work on a larger scale, you should certainly do so. If you take up this work you should do so with feeling of satisfaction and as a duty.

<sup>1</sup> Kedarnath Kulkarni

You should not take it up on my account; because I have no knowledge of these things. I want to entrust you with the work because you are here and I have confidence in you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1944

276. *STATEMENT TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*<sup>1</sup>

WARDHA,

May 24, 1940

While hourly butchery is going on in the West and peaceful homes are being destroyed, I have no heart to say anything publicly in regard to Mr. Amery's statement in answer to Mr. Wedgwood Benn in the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup>

Suffice it to say that I would leave no stone unturned to bring about a peaceful and honourable settlement of the present deadlock.

*The Hitavada, 25-5-1940*

<sup>1</sup> This was also published in Harijan, 1-6-1940, under the title "Will Leave No Stone Unturned". Gandhi was lying in his cottage with a wet piece of cloth over his head on account of the blazing heat when the Associated Press representative presented Amery's statement in the Commons to Gandhiji.

Gandhiji read the statement carefully and then appeared to think deeply for a few minutes. he then took paper and pencil and himself wrote out the statement.

<sup>2</sup> On May 23, L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, had said in the Commons: "The attainment by India of full and equal partnership in the British Common wealth is the goal of our policy. We recognize, as my predecessor made clear in his speech on April 18, that it is for Indians themselves to play a vital part in devising a form of constitution best adapted to India's conditions and India's outlook. The promise already given that the present scheme of the Act of 1935 and the policy and plans on which it is based are to be open for re-examination at the end of the war necessarily implies discussion and negotiation, and not dictation. we have no desire to delay any of the steps that may pave the way towards an agreed settlement that will take account of the legitimate claims of all communities and interests. on the contrary, we have been, and are only too anxious to make our contribution towards such a settlement."

277. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

[ Before May 25, 1940 ]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VIJI,

I have your letter as also the beautiful handkerchiefs. I have started using them. Do write to me about Father. I hope you are calm. You must have got my letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7106. Also C. W. 4598. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

278. TELEGRAM TO SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN<sup>2</sup>

WARDHA,,

[ May 25, 1940 ]<sup>3</sup>

SIR SIKANDAR HYATKHAN

CONFIDENTIAL. MUCH OBLIGED YOUR WIRE<sup>4</sup> SUFFICIENT  
DECLARATIONS OF SUPPORT HAVE BEEN MADE. IT  
SHOULD BE ENOUGH IF CONGRESS DOES NOT OBSTRUCT.  
OBVIOUSLY CONGRESS CANNOT GO BEYOND. WHAT BAF-  
FLES ME IS BRITISH OBSTINCY MAKE UNEQUIVOCAL  
DECLARATION THAT INDIA IS FREE COUNTRY HAVING  
FULL RIGHT TO SHAPE HER DESTINY WITHOUT BRI-  
TISH INTERFERENCE. WITHOUT SUCH DECLARATION AND  
CONSEQUENT ACTION SO FAR AS POSSIBLE DURING  
WAR MORAL FORCES CANNOT WORK. THIS IS PER-  
SONAL REACTION TO YOUR WIRE. AM CONFERRING  
WITH MAULANA AND JAWAHARLAL. HOPE YOU ARE  
QUITE WELL.

GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10883. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

<sup>1</sup> From the reference of "receipt of the handkerchiefs" in "Letter to Vijayabehn M. Pancholi", 25-5-1940

<sup>2</sup> Punjab landowner, leader of the Unionist Party and Premier of the Punjab.

<sup>3</sup> The Source gives no date. However copies of this telegram and the one which it answered were forwarded by Mahadev Desai to Rajagopalachari on May 25.

<sup>4</sup> In this the addressee had appealed to Gandhiji and the Congress "for whole-hearted support of prosecution of war in interests of civilization and of safety of India.

279. *LETTER TO ABDUL DADAR BEG*

May 25, 1940

DEAR MIRZA SAHEB

Herewith Shri Garg's reply to your indictment, I would like to have your reaction to it. Political differences there will be. But all bitterness between parties should be avoided.

*Yours sincerely.*

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

280. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 25, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

I told you Mira had gone to Bundla. I have an enthusiastic account from her.

Lalita Kimari is braving the heat quite cheerfully. She is quite happy being here.

Lilavati has no plans.

A[mtul] S[allam] does not want to be happy. She thinks everybody is at her.

Valjibhai's address is Harijan ashram, Sabarmati.

Surely I have been writing to you fairly regularly, Why should you feel depressed? The Allies seem to be losing ground everywhere. These are the fortunes of war. You must [not]<sup>1</sup> grieve over these things. The slaughter is awful but it is part of the fame. All parties know what is what.

If it is the personal element that depresses you, it is worse than childishness. Let us forget ourselves in this dance of death. And then you have your day's work for you.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3669. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6478

<sup>1</sup> The source has this scribbled in pencil in somebody else's hand.

281. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 25, 1940*

CHI. MIRA,

I have your chatty letter. I envy you your scenery. But I have to be in the midst of the storm. I have taken indefinite silence since yesterday for the sake of peace and work. It will break for the W[orking] C[ommittee] or accidents.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6453. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 10048

282. *LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 25, 1940*

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have already written to you. I have also acknowledged receipt of the handkerchiefs. I understand about the mangoes. I shall deal with them when they arrive. They will be finished in a day.

Pay a flying visit whenever you wish to.

Nanabhai had been here for a couple of days. He had come for some work concerning Bhavnagar. The rest are fine.

*Blessings from*

[PS.]

The mangoes have arrived.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7128. Also C. W. 4620. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

283. *LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

SEVAGRAM,  
May 25, 1940

CHI. SUSHILA,

Your last sentence was unbecoming of you. "I do not want a relevant truth, I do not want a half-truth, I want the whole truth"—think over its meaning.

So long as you are at Sevagram the question of what your duty and mine is does not arise at all. You may well believe that you are here on my account and I may think that because you are here I should take service from you. When there is an occasion to go out, I am faced with a dilemma, not you. If, thinking otherwise, I act differently, then it is self-deception. That cannot happen in Sevagram because I am already taking service from you. If this distinction is not clear to you, let both of us leave the matter to God. When God reveals to us your or my mistake, you or I shall correct it.

I have told you that so long as the mists have not rolled away, you must stay. If you do not feel certain about it, do as you like. Do nothing under any pressure. Do only what brings you self-satisfaction. Ultimately, only what you think to be your duty would be your duty.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

284. *LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

SEVAGRAM,  
May 25, 1940

STUPID GIRL,

You really are stupidity incarnate. I do not understand your letter at all. How have you become a sinner because I told you an untruth? I want to keep you with me, but not by making you believe an untruth. It was due to love that I resorted to the untruth. There was attachment in that love. How are you at fault in that? If at all, it is I who should undertake a fast. But I will not do so because my untruth was not so very sinful. If you undertake a fast, you will cause me pain and add to the wrong which you are doing. If you are keen to see your mistake, abide in peace. So long as I am here, you will continue to serve. Then you will see your mistake. But if you cannot endure it, do go. One day you will discover your mistake and laugh. You have your reason for staying whether I believe in it or not. You can stay out of the Ashram if I go out and do not take you along.

Why run away now? Why are you not ashamed of running away? What did I write to hurt you? What should I write? I am ashamed of your stupidity. I should certainly fast to cure you of your stupidity. This is not tragic. It is comic.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

285. *LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

SEVAGRAM,  
May, 25, 1940

CHI. SUSHILA,

It was not a question of my being insulted. You insulted yourself. But if you are not able to see it, there is nothing I can do. I have not taken it as an insult to me. Read my words again.

I see that there is a vast difference in our outlooks. What should I do to persuade you, how can I persuade you? I can say

nothing more. How is one to prove that red is red? For you it is sufficient to say that what I see as red appears yellow to you. I have expressed my feelings to you. If you cannot discover any meaning in what I say, how can I find another language to explain it ? Even when I took you along with me it was not the question. I have already explained that. The question was there even then. That is why I said that I resorted to untruth in order to keep you with me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 286. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

SEAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 25, 1940*

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

Your letter came into my hands only after 15th of May. You may come whenever you wish to. Accommodation will be found for you. A number of buildings have now been put up. The rest when we meet or, in case you do not come, when the question is decided. Krishna is still at Nasik.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI PRABHUDAS GANDHI

ASAFPUR

DISTT. BADAUN

UP.

From the Gujarati original : S.N. 33050

## 287. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SEVAGRAM,  
May 25, 1940

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

Have a talk with Prahlad. The question of giving him the charge of the land does not arise now. About a house we shall see in November.

You have done well in pointing out the mistake in ‘*nanamota*’<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1935

## 288. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM,  
May 25, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

What you desire is of course good. It is, however, advisable to keep patience as long as my letters do not reach you in the natural course. I shall remember your wish. It will be fulfilled in its own good time.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4343

## 289. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 25, 1940

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I have read your letter to Rajku[mar]. None of you is to be selected.<sup>2</sup> Render such service as you can. If the battle is joined, truth

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Ashram Note”, 24-5-1940, and the reference to big and small irritations for which Gandhiji had used this Gujarati expression instead of its Hindi equivalent ‘chotemote’.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably for individual civil disobedience

and falsehood will stand revealed. You must do something in the villages if you can. I am keeping good health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2481

## 290. *LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
May 26, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

Many thanks for your letter of 19th instant, Enclosed herewith you will find copied of the wires that have passed between Sir Sikandar and myself.<sup>1</sup> My [wire] represents only my personal position. I feel that so long as Britain refuses to make an unequivocal declaration, her moral position must remain doubtful.

But my object in writing this letter is not to ventilate my grievances. It is to place before you my reaction to the war situation. The latest development seems to be most serious. Want of truthful news is tantalizing. I suppose it is inevitable. But assuming that things are as black as they appear to be for the Allied cause, is it not time to sue for peace for the sake of humanity? I do not believe Herr Hitler to be as bad as he is portrayed. He might even have been a friendly power as he may still be. It is due to suffering humanity that this mad slaughter should stop.

If there is anything in my proposition and if the British Cabinet desire it, I am prepared to go to Germany or anywhere required to plead for peace not for this interest or that but for the good of mankind.

This may be a visionary's idea. But as your friend I owe it to pass it to you. Perchance it may be wisdom more than a vision.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Sikandar Hyat Khan", 25-5-1940

<sup>2</sup> The Viceroy in his letter of June 3 replied: "His Majesty's Government have done their best in the past to avoid that struggle and to keep it to the extent that it proved inevitable within the narrowest limits practicable . . . But . . . they are clear in their own resolution that the war must be pursued until the objects for which they are fighting have been achieved. Nor can they place any objects for which they are fighting have been achieved. Nor can they place any reliance in the light of events on any undertaking or any promise that Herr Hitler might give to them. there is nothing for it . . . but to go on until victory is won."

You have two sons and son-in-law on active service. May it be well with them.

*I am,*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

*291. NOTE TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE*

*May 26, 1940*

I am sorry you discover nothing but violence, hy[po]crisy and untouchability here. There is nothing confidential in your letter. You shall talk to all the people here. As I am silent I shall not be able to do much. Even in supervision you can serve. But you are free to choose your work.<sup>1</sup> But how can you live in the midst of violence, hypocrisy, etc.? You must chalk out a programme for yourself. I am sorry but I am helpless.

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 1499. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

*292. LETTER TO CHANDAN KALELKAR*

SEVAGARAM, WARDHA,  
*May 26, 1940*

CHI. CHANDAN,

What a woman you are! I should not have allowed you to go away from sevagram. You ought to be where you belong. No matter whether you remain well or ill. Now observe the rules of food, etc., and get well soon. It will be nice if you can come and spend some time here. You seem to have completely given up writing to me!

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 954. Courtesy: Satish D. Kalelkar

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had sought Gandhiji permission to work amongst the Harijans of Sevagram instead of doing supervision work in the Ashram.

### 293. KERALA CONGRESS

Mian iftikharuddin after his visit to Kerala reported to me that the differences between rival groups that were hampering real progress in Kerala had been settled. I was happy to have the report. But letters since received from Kerala go to show that the settlement was superficial. I have before me a long resolution passed by the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee which condemns almost all my acts and writings, ridicules the constructive programme, and yet to fulfil the letter of the Congress law half-heartedly endorses the congress resolution. I suggest to the Kerala Congressmen who are responsible for the resolution that this is neither good soldiership nor sportsmanship. The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life. Congressmen should understand the spirit of the resolution and carry it out. They will put life into me the themselves. If they cannot, it will be brave and honourable to resist in a dignified manner the present leadership and programme. The resolution before me merely confounds the people to whom it is addressed. I hope that the leaders of the majority group in Kerala will realize their mistake and retrace their steps. But whether they do so or not, the minority who have faith in the programme should quietly pursue it and by their solid work impress the people with their sincerity.

SEVAGRAM, May 27, 1940

*Harijan*, 1-6-1940

### 294. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEVAGRAM,

May 27, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got both your letters only today. For the present please remain there. I understand about your fall. I see no need for you to broadcast it. When I permitted you to go there, I had expected this would happen. But I did not want to stop you forcibly. You were mentally meeting her every day. It was better that you should meet physically also, if it had to be so. Now it is best that you should resume living together. Surely living together does not necessarily

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the heading "Notes".

mean sharing the same bed. If, even while living together, you can both observe self-control, that will be a great thing. You should test each other while you are there. I think that would be the best thing.

Having written this much, I started feeling sleepy and so the mind got confused. Do not lose heart.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I shall not write to Kanchan or anyone else today; it is the day for Harijan.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8538. Also C. W. 7091. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 295. *NOT YET*

The reader will find in another column Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia's plea for immediate civil disobedience, I endorse his prescription for ensuring world peace. For enforcing the acceptance of his prescription he would have immediate civil disobedience. Here I must join issue. If Dr. Lohia subscribes to my conception of the working of non-violence, he will at once admit that the present is no atmosphere for influencing the Britisher in the right direction through civil disobedience. Dr. Lohia agrees that the British Government should not be embarrassed. I fear that any step towards direct action is bound to cause them embarrassment. If I start now, The whole purpose of civil disobedience will be defeated.

I would unhesitatingly declare civil disobedience if the country was demonstrably non-violent and disciplined. But unfortunately we have many groups outside the Congress who believe in neither non-violence nor civil disobedience. In the Congress itself there are all shades of opinion about the efficacy of non-violence. Congressmen who believe in the application of non-violence for the defence of India can be counted on the finger-tips. Though we have made great strides towards non-violence, we have not arrived at a stage when we can hope to be unconquerable. Any false step at the present time may end in the loss of the great moral prestige the Congress has gained. We have sufficiently demonstrated that the Congress has done with

imperialism, and that it will not be satisfied with anything less than the unfettered right of self-determination.

If the British Government will not suo motu declare India as a free country having the right to determine her own status and constitution, I am of opinion that we should wait till the heat of the battle in the heart of the Allied countries subsides and the future is clearer than it is. We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence.

But we shall have many opportunities of demonstrating our power if we really have it. We can make it felt at the time of peace which must come whichever party wins.

Have we got the power? Is India at ease without having up-to-date arms? Does not India feel helpless without the ability to defend herself against aggression? Do even Congressmen feel secure? Or do they not feel that for some years to come at any rate India will have to be helped by Britain or some other Power? If such is our unfortunate plight, how can we hope to make an effective contribution towards an honourable peace after the war or universal disarmament? We must first demonstrate the efficacy of non-violence of the strong in our own country before we can expect to influence the tremendously armed Powers of the West.

But many Congressmen are playing at non-violence. They think in terms of civil disobedience anyhow meaning the filling of jails. This is a childish interpretation of the great force that civil disobedience is. I must continue to repeat, even though it may cause nausea, that prison-going without the backing of honest constructive effort and goodwill in the heart for the wrongdoer is violence and therefore forbidden in satyagraha. Force generated by non-violence is infinitely greater than the force of all the arms invented by man's ingenuity. Non-violence, therefore, is the decisive factor in civil disobedience. At this the most critical moment in India's history, I will not play with the force whose hidden possibilities I have been humbly trying to explore now for nearly half a century. Fortunately in the last resort I have myself to fall back upon. I have been told that people cannot be non-violence overnight. I have never contended they can. But I have held that by proper training they can be, if they have the will. Active non-violence is necessary for those who will offer civil disobedience, but the will and proper training are enough for the people to co-operate with those who are chosen for civil disobedience, The constructive work prescribed by the Congress is the proper

training. Given the preparation, the congress will make perhaps the most effective contribution towards ending the war in the right way. Disarmament of India though compulsory in origin, if it is voluntarily adopted by the nation as a virtue and if India makes a declaration that she will not defend herself with arms, can materially influence the European situation. Those therefore, who wish to see India realize her destiny through non-violence should devote every ounce of their energy towards the fulfilment of the constructive programme in right earnest without any thought of civil disobedience.

SEVAGRAM, May 28, 1940

*Harijan*, 1-6-1940

## 296. QUESTION BOX

### WHOLE OF SPARE TIME

Q. You say an active satyagrahi should devote the whole of his spare time to constructive work. What is your conception of spare time?

A. Every minute that is not required for my necessary private work would be spare time. A merchant whose whole time is occupied in making money—nothing inherently wrong in it, if it is honestly made and equally honestly spent—naturally has no spare time. He cannot become an active satyagrahi. An active satyagrahi will give the least time to his private work. The balance is his spare time. For an active satyagrahi time is more than money. He should therefore be able to give a good account of every minute. In these matters the ultimate judge is oneself.

### HOW TO USE VACATION

Q. What can students do during vacation? They do not want to study and would get tired of constant spinning.

A. If they get tired of spinning, it shows that they have not understood its life-giving property and its intrinsic fascination. What is the difficulty in understanding that every yard spun adds to the national wealth? A yard of yarn is not much, but as it is the easiest form of labour it can be easily multiplied. Thus the potential value of spinning is very great. Students are expected to understand the mechanism of the charkha and keep it in good order. Those who do so, will find a peculiar fascination in spinning. I refuse, therefore, to

suggest any other occupation. But of course spinning may give place to more pressing work - I mean more pressing in point of time. Their help may be required in putting the neighbouring villages in a good sanitary condition and in attending to the sick or in educating Harijan children, etc.

#### HONEST DOUBT

Q. Some of us belong to that section of Congress workers who are not firmly of the opinion that the charkha is no good and has to be discarded along with your leadership at the earliest possible date. Nor do we belong to that happy band of your followers who have an unshakable faith in the political, economical and spiritual mission of the charkha. We believe in khadi at any rate in the present circumstances of our country. But we cannot truthfully say that we understand the necessity of ourselves spinning. We are city people, and there is very little scope for the charkha here as a bread-giver. However, we are anxious to be enrolled as satyagrahis. We can promise that we shall conscientiously spin as required by you, but we are not in a position to promise that faith in it which you desire. It is possible that as we ply the charkha the faith may come. But, for the present, it is as we have stated. Can we honestly sign the satyagraha pledge?

A. Of course you can be enrolled. All those who spin do not do so because of the bread-giving property of the wheel. Many spin for sacrifice, to set a good example, and to create the spinning atmosphere.

#### TEST FOR ALL MEMBERS

Q. I am one of the secretaries of a Congress committee. I have a feeling that some of those who have signed the pledge are not carrying it out—particularly the clause about spinning. Can we put to them the question whether they spin or not? And, if we feel that their answers are evasive or untrue, is it part of our duty to hold an enquiry into the matter? Some of us feel that we must accept their word, and not be too searching.

A. As secretaries it is your duty to devise rules so that there would be an automatic test for all members, not merely for doubtful ones, spinning or not spinning. One test will be that the members deliver to a depot the yarn they spin. Every member is expected to keep a daily record of his output. But a nagging inquiry should undoubtedly be avoided.

#### RECRUITMENT v. CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

Q. Which would you prefer—whether we should devote all our time to recruiting satyagrahis or set about organizing constructive work with the satyagrahis that we already have on hand?

A. Of course you will organize constructive work with those you have. This will by itself attract recruits.

#### MEN AND WOMEN

Q. I should like to know whether you would approve of men and women satyagrahis mixing promiscuously and working together, or whether they should be organized into separate units with a clear delimitation of the field of each. My experience is that the former must lead, as it has led, to a lot of indiscipline and corruption. If you agree with me, what rules would you suggest to combat the potential evil?

A. I should like to have separate units. Women have more than enough work amongst women. Our womenfolk are terribly neglected, and hundreds of intelligent women workers of sterling honesty are required to work among them. On principle too I believe I the two sexes functioning separately. But I would lay down no hard and fast rules. Good sense must govern the relations between the two. There should be no barrier erected between the two. Their mutual behaviour should be natural and spontaneous.

#### KHADI AND ADVERTISEMENT

Q. Do you approve of the policy that is being followed by the Charkha Sangh in some places, of pushing the sale of khadi by the use, for instance, of loud-speakers, popular gramophone records and the like? Don't you think that advertising apart from supplying the necessary information about the marketing of khadi is undignified and incompatible with the khadi spirit?

A. I see nothing wrong or undignified in making use of loud-speakers, etc., to popularize khadi. Through these means too one does no more than give the prices and other information about khadi. It will be certainly undignified and worse if false information is given whether with or without the use of loud-speakers and the like.

#### WILL TO LIVE

Q. It has been said that the "will to live" is irrational, being born of a deluded attachment to life. Why is then suicide a sin?

A. The will to live is not irrational. It is also natural. Attachment to life is not a delusion, it is very real. Above all, life has a purpose. To seek to defeat that purpose is a sin. Therefore suicide is very rightly held to be a sin.

SEVAGRAM, May 28, 1940

*Harijan*, 1-6-1940

## 297. *BIDAR*

Five gentlemen from Hyderabad Deccan have sent me an offer to which there is a long preface containing all kinds of innuendoes against me. I need not burden these columns with their preface. If the adjectives used against me are deserved, they will stand whether I advertise them or not. If they are due to the ignorance of the authors, as I know they are, it is well for me not to notice them. Here is the offer:

Will Gandhiji agree that the whole Samajist movement which led to this and many other incidents should be thoroughly investigated by a Commission, whose head should be a Parsi or a Christian, with an equal number of Hindus and Muslim members? We are even prepared if Gandhiji agrees to arbitrate himself, as we are confident that the evidence with us will prove the case. As a preliminary, congenial atmosphere to conduct such an enquiry is all that is required. We, therefore, suggest that Gandhiji will not hesitate to demand that all the cases pending in court in connection with the Bidar conflagration should be withdrawn. We do not, of course, plead that cases of a serious nature, as that of murder or cases having no connection with the conflagration, should be included.

Gandhiji is also of opinion that compensation should be given to those who have suffered.<sup>1</sup> we fail to understand the logic behind it. If communal incidents are to be compensated, what would be the burden on the Exchequer? Would the riots not be employed as a weapon to bring financial failure upon the Government? Is it a remedy or an encouragement? It is a novel demand indeed. We hope Gandhiji will accept our offer.

I have no difficulty about accepting the offer unreservedly. If the writers succeed in persuading the Government of H. E. H. likewise to accept the offer, they will have established a precedent which may well be followed in all such cases. Needless to say, if the court suggested by my correspondents comes into being, the composition and terms of reference will have to be by agreement.

I am asked to demand the withdrawal of the cases instituted against persons suspected of complicity. They were not instituted at my instance, and I presume they will not be withdrawn on my demand. But I should have no hesitation in approving of all withdrawals if the court of inquiry is appointed. I assure my friends

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* : "Wanton Destruction in Bidar" 30-4-1940.

that I am interested in elucidation of truth, not in the punishment of the guilty.

But I am sorry I cannot forgo the suggestion for compensation. Compensation has been asked because it is alleged that the authorities failed to do their duty. The question of compensation has naturally to be referred to the proposed tribunal. My correspondents assure me of the sincerity of their proposal. I do not doubt it. I shall await the results of their efforts to have the offer accepted by the State. I wish them every success.

SEVAGRAM, May 28, 1940

*Harijan*, 1-6-1940

### 298. CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Several correspondents protest against my referring to the arguments advanced in favour of partition. They say that Islam is not exclusive, and that it teaches universal brotherhood and toleration. I have never denied this claim. It was because of my knowledge of Islam that I felt grieved over the arguments which go to prove the contrary. Almost every Muslim writing I take up nowadays contains disparagement of Hindus and Hinduism. It cannot be otherwise if the case for partition is to be proved. But my correspondents are angry when I point out the anomaly. They say I have hastily come to the conclusion from isolated writings of unimportant Muslims. Unfortunately, the arguments referred to by me have proceeded from important Muslims.

But where the writers score over me is in regard to Hindu untouchability. They say in effect:

You should be ashamed of bringing the charge of untouchability against the Muslim League. First cast out the beam from the Hindu eye before you attempt to deal with the mote in the Muslim eye. Has not the Hindu maintained for a thousand years complete boycott of Muslims? He will not drink or eat with him. He will not intermarry. He will not even let his house to him. Can you conceive a more effective isolation of a whole community that the Hindu has carried out? Will it not be a just nemesis if the Muslim now turns round and pays you in your own coin?

I have admitted as much. Whatever the Muslims do by way of retaliation will be richly deserved by Hindus. My question was and is, should they do so? Does it behove a great political party to play upon religious prejudices?

Whatever the Muslim League does or does not do, it behoves thoughtful Hindus to take note of the deserved taunt and purge Hinduism of its exclusiveness. It will not be protected by artificial barriers which have no sanction in ancient Hinduism or reason. Well did Maulana Abul Kalam Azad say the other day how sick he was of hearing the cry at railway stations of Hindu and Muslim tea or water. I know this touch-me-notism is deeprooted in Hinduism as it is practised today. But there is no reason why it should be tolerated by Congressmen. If they will be correct in their behaviour, they will pave the way for a radical transformation of Hindu society. The message of anti-untouchability does not end in merely touching the so-called untouchables. It has a much deeper meaning.

SEVAGRAM, May 28, 1940

*Harijan*, 1-6-1940

### 299. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 28, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

To my horror A[mtul] S[alaam] told me the enclosed was forgotten. So you will be without my letter again for four days. I am sorry. She is sick and a bundle of nerves. You have to suffer for your own obstinacy or stupidity or both.

I have your two letters—one almost all in Hindi. It is good. The copies of my articles now cannot be sent before Thursday. For that is the day on which the articles can be sent with safety. The office copy should be here till the others reach their destination. And it is the office copy that is being now sent to you.

Your letter of today brings me an Englishman's difficulty. I might deal with it next week. But the arrogance and ignorance of such men are marvellous. They don't want to do simple justice and yet expect sympathy. But our non-violence has full play only when the irritation is at its highest.

Love

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3970. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7279

### 300. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 28, 1940

CHI. MIRA,

I do not think the stay at Oel was a waste.<sup>1</sup> You are gaining valuable experience and keeping well in body and mind. I don't mind the expense. Do as the spirit moves you. It will be good if you can persuade Punditji to join you. Frightful things are happening in the West. God's will be done.

Love

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6454. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Alson G.N. 10049

### 301. NOTE TO MOHAN N. PARIKH

May 28, 1940

What will you gain by making me talk?<sup>2</sup> What I wanted to learn. I have learnt. You may ask me any question you wish. My silence gives me peace of mind. It helps my sadhana. If I broke my silence to please you, I would have to break it for others also. So please understand and stop urging me to speak.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9187

### 302. LETTER TO PURATAN J. BUCH

May 28, 1940

CHI. PURATAN,

This needs to be looked into. Investigate and write to me. Yes, send me a note about Bhangis.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9176

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Mirabehn", 18-5-1940.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee wanted to hear Gandhiji's voice since he had come to see him after a long interval.

### 303. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

May 28, 1940

CHI. RAMDAS,

I wrote to you this morning and in the afternoon I received your letter. You have no cause to despair. Try for six months more and if you fail even after that, you may certainly come over to me. If your health itself suffers, you ought to give up the service. You alone can say what your health is like.

Go and consult Vallabhram Vaidya and improve your health.

Is the long letter Kanam has written the product of his own brain or has somebody dictated it to him?

Learn to be alert and do not lose self-confidence.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I am returning Nalierwala's letter.

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

### 304. LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

May 29, 1940

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

Though I have scrapped the enclosed scheme<sup>1</sup> owing to the present turmoil, I should like to examine it. Can work be done in the manner suggested? Is it done anywhere like that?

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Regarding A. I. V. I. A. work in Orissa

305. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 29, 1940

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I had your letter enclosing Mr. Spalding's Thompson's was not in it. I am writing to S.<sup>1</sup> generally approving of your reply. That will save my time.

I have also yours enclosing reply to sir Sikandar and your letter [to] the Maulana. Your statements are good and full. I purposely refrain from making statements. But I will when I find it necessary.

I hope you are having a good time in Kashmir.

Love.

BAPU

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

306. *LETTER TO K. N. KATJU*<sup>2</sup>

May 29, 1940

I understand all you say. But panic must be avoided at all costs. You are quite right in saying that the country is not ready for non-violence. Therefore the thing to do is to throw individuals and groups on their own resources. The worst happening, there will be no central leadership, if the Congress disappears as it well may. It will be a testing time for the Congress. My own position is, I shall die in the attempt to preserve peace through non-violence. I may not be able to influence anybody but my immediate surroundings. I am not thinking of the future. I am trying to take care of the present. I should advise you also not to worry but prepare the people around you to do the best they can. We need not look to the existing Government to protect anybody if chaos overtakes us. Let us however have the confidence that if we have acted honestly all these years, our labours will not be in vain, and that God will see us through. I draw no black picture before me of India's future. I shall await your reflections on the States.

I am sure your presence in Jaipur must have given great relief to Jamnalalji and his band of workers.

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

<sup>1</sup> The letter to Spalding is not traceable.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to Jamnalal Bajaj", 20-5-1940.

307. *LETTER TO ARTHUR MOORE*<sup>1</sup>

May 29, 1940

I know I have been disappointing you of late. This letter will add to the disappointment. For I cannot make the response you would like me to your suggestion to raise a crore of rupees for an air force. As you know I am wedded to non-violence through and through. There is no room for such a force in my plan of life. Perhaps in this I am in a minority of one in all India. But I must go my way. Only I shall say nothing about your plan. I am therefore not writing to Jawaharlal.

I know you will bear with me.

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

308. *LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 9, 1940

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

You always have my blessings. God will always prosper you. You may come in June.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C. W. 4732. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

<sup>1</sup> The editor to *The Statesman*

309. *LETTER TO MIR MUSHTAK AHMED*

[After *May 29, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI MIR AHMED,

It is good that you have given up writing and speaking in English for as long as you can.

The answer to your question is covered in the opinion I have given. I feel that such a responsibility should not be undertaken as long as the Congress remains outlawed. Congress Assemblies are a different matter. In this each province is free to act in the manner it likes.

From Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

310. *LETTER TO CARL HEATH*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 30, 1940*

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your kind letter. Since then events have happened which leave me dumb. May God help us all.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I have now your 2nd letter. But I am still the same.

M. K. G

From a photostat: G.N. 1038

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated May 29, 1940

### 311. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 30, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your letter.

Do you take enough milk? What work have you taken up? Just now this place is fairly crowded. Sarlaldevi Chowdhrani has come. Lalita Kumari is still here. You know she was in Ramgarh. There are others also. Krishnakumari has come here for a few days. Radha too is here. R[aj] K[umari] is still in Simla. It is a little cooler now. I am keeping excellent health. Ba's is fairly good. A[mtul] S[alaam] is rather unwell.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 3542

### 312. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 30, 1940

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I do not know if Mahadev wrote to you about Suresh's<sup>1</sup> visit. He himself is now more inclined to our side. He wants to draw Subhas also but he is not likely to succeed. I have told him that he [Subhas] can come and see me whenever he wants. He knows my position. His publicly expressed views clearly indicate that he will not be able to come. He [suresh] believes that those views have now changed. It doesn't seem so to me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 240*

<sup>1</sup> Suresh Banerji

313. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 30, 1940

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I am enclosing Bal's letter.<sup>1</sup> He intended to send it direct. I said if he insisted on sending it I would rather sent it myself. But attach no special significance to my sending it.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C. W. 8037. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

314. LETTER TO GOPAL NARAYAN SHIROMANY

SEVAGRAM, WARHDA,  
May 30, 1940

DEAR SHIROMANY<sup>2</sup>,

I am able to attend to your letter only today. I found nothing wrong in your letter. Let me know the judgment in the case<sup>3</sup>.

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI G. N. SHIROMANY  
SAINIK KARYALAYA  
AGRA, U. P.

From the Hind; original: C. W. 10942. Courtesy: Gopal Narayan Shiromany

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Bal Kalelkar", 7-5-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Managing Editor of *Sainik*, Hindi daily, from 1932 to 1952

<sup>3</sup> Concerning the closure of Sainik Press under the Defence of India

Act

### 315. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
[Before May 31, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. I am very happy that on the whole the burden of work on you is quite light.

I understand about ghee. You seem to be always having a tussle with Lilavati. She came here. She told me a lot of things. There is no point in narrating everything here. She said you had objected to the use of the word 'Chairman'. She also said that you lose your temper frequently. The thing about chairman has irked me.

The War is now hotting up. What no one else had everdone, Germany is doing. I am quiet. My faith in God has become stronger.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 316. LETTER TO GORUR RAMASWAMI IYENGAR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 31, 1940

DEAR FRIEND,

I see no objection to your acceptance.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI GORUR RAMASWAMI IYENGAR  
GORUR, HASSAN DISTT.  
MYSORE

From a photostat: C. W. 10159. Courtesy: Gorur Ramaswami Iyengar

<sup>1</sup> Inferred from the date of receipt of this letter by the addressee, i. e., May 31, 1940

<sup>2</sup> The addressee was nominated a member of the District Board by the Government of Mysore.

### 317. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 31, 1940

CHI. BRAJKRISHNA,

Yes, do start a camp at Narela. It is not good to detain Nayar there under some pretext of the other. But you must do whatever you consider advisable. You have to do something about the widespread nervousness among the people.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2480

### 318. LETTER TO SHOBHALAL GUPTA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 31, 1940

BHAI SHOBHALAL<sup>1</sup>,

I have a faint recollection that I had written to Durgaprasad about the poem<sup>2</sup>. It is provocative. But it is also true that such writings are common. Where an officer wants to resort to repression he does just this.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Gandhiji aur Rajasthan*, p. 168

### 319. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM,  
May 31, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

You can certainly tell the guests that extra milk is not served except under doctor's advice.

<sup>1</sup> Editor of *Navajyoti*, a Hindi weekly

<sup>2</sup> By natvarlal Chaturvedi. Action was taken under the Defence of India Act against the publication of this poem.

Talk to Bharatananda<sup>1</sup> about Appu and about himself too. You may also talk about . . .<sup>2</sup> Consider first how it will affect Appu's heart. If Appu looks upon him as father and stays and works with him, we should have nothing to say.

Surendra's denial is partly true and partly untrue. Does not Sarladevi's man wash her clothes? Ask her. Leave out parner-karji now. The girls at any rate do their jobs, don't they?

Whatever we do should be inspired by ahimsa. Whomsoever you speak to, speak with affection. I shall tell you what your duty is. It is for you to act accordingly. Consult me about rules. Ask me to make new rules. But relieve me of the rest. My *sadhana* will be disturbed if I am saddled with day-do-day management.

Having said all this, I am still there if there is any difficulty in the management. I shall try to escape as much as I can. I suppose those who are getting extra milk get it only on doctor's advice.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4344

### 320. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

SEVAGRAM,  
*May 31, 1940*

CHI. SAMPURNANANDJI,

I have your letter. I have a fear that if there is disorder I may prove ineffective. Because no one will listen to me. I tell those who ask me that everyone should be at his post-using the lathi if they must but with non-violence if they have the faith.

I do not worry, whatever may happen. We can but make the effort and say: "God's will be done."

You cannot take office like that. If there is disorder, of what good will the office be? Still, if I can find a way I shall.

There is no sign from Simla.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Frydman, a Polish Engineer who had become Gandhiji's follower.

<sup>2</sup> The name has been omitted in the source.

### 321. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
[May 1940]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. NARANDAS,

I had got your letter. Why need you be unhappy that you lost five hundred rupees? There would have been cause for sorrow if the loss had been due to any mistake of ours. In the present case I see no mistake on your part. Your faith will bear fruit. You will get the help you need. It is better that whatever help you may get should be through Sardar.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 8574

### 322. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,  
June 1, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

By book-post I send you this week's articles and three of your translations revised.

The articles are going late because of me. I was in no hurry.

In the revision you will see one or two howlers. You have made distinct progress.

You have not yet got control over the pen. You must religiously do the translation though they are not for the present wanted for publication.

You should also read the current translations in *Harijan Sevak* and make notes for my information.

Lalita Kumari went on 30th. She is an extraordinary woman. I liked her well. She bore the heat bravely.

She went and Sarla Devi Chowdharani came. I suppose she will be here for a day or two longer. I do not know her movements.

This war is going to alter things radically, at least I hope so. I simply refuse to think about it. It is a [war] of scientific abilities. German science is winning the day.

<sup>1</sup> As in the source

You asked Kanu to send you copy of R.'s letter. He never got the letter. But I do not want to send you copy. It must not leave the Ashram. It is well like this; of course there is nothing striking in the letter. You appreciate the reason, don't you? You will see all on your return.

Love.

BAPU

From the original : C. W. 3971. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7280

### 323. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

*June 1, 1940*

CHI. JAMNALAL ,

I have your letter. Katjuji had written to me. We may look upon the Jaipur affair as having ended well. Our workers should not be impatient. If they have to make public speeches, they should talk about khadi. There is time enough for economic and social reforms.

Should I take it that your health is all right? How is Janakidevi? Is it true that Dr. Purshottam Patel has passed away? What is his wife's name? I heard of it recently.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

A letter to Dr. Patel's wife is enclosed.<sup>1</sup>

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 3012

### 324. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

*June 1, 1940*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I shall write to Bharatananda. Let us see what happens. What he writes is silly. Yes, it is true that I have said that the eleven vows do not apply to him.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

We have to think about Appu.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4345

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is in Gujarati. The letter is not traceable.

325. *LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI*

SEVAGRAM  
*June 2, 1940*

DEAR MALKANI,

Tejuramji has been with us for some time. I have found him to be a very fine worker, simple and quiet. He dreamt of founding an ashram. I said he must not do that but attach himself to some institution and work under it. Hence this note to you. Take him if you have any use for him. He is honest and industrious.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

He has learnt fine carding.

From a photostat: G.N. 935

326. *LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI*

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 2, 1940*

MY DEAR MALKANI,

By mistake a note<sup>1</sup> I wrote for the bearer to take to you was posted. Hence this one is being given to Tejuramji. He is a good and industrious worker. He was dreaming of founding an ashram. I have advised him to join an institution. If you can make use of him, he will be a valuable worker.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 934

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

### 327. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

June 2, 1940

I had a talk with Bha[ratananda]. Let us engage Appu. Let him do all the work. Let him learn Hindi. If Bha[ratananda] needs any assistance in respect of his clothes, etc., give it to him.

The new friend<sup>1</sup> who has arrived today is very modest and hard-working. Find room for him. Make him your own. Explain to him the rules. Include him in all activities.

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4346

### 328. NOTE TO AMTUSSALAAM

[June 2, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

About today's theft you will have to speak to all the girls who go to Ba's room. Whoever has done it has done wrong. Hiding it will make it worse. If she does not confess the whole thing to me, I shall be compelled to fast. Convey this quietly to all the girls who go there.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 708

### 329. MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN ASSAM<sup>3</sup>

Shri Thakkar Bapa writes:<sup>4</sup>

I have seen your notes in Harijan of 9th March and 18th May<sup>5</sup> regarding the grievance of the Secretary, Seng Khasi School, Shillong. The Secretary has been running the school with great zeal and without any grant from the Government. That the Christian Missions have been working in Assam with the sole view to convert the Hill tribes to Christianity with the help of Government grants is very apparent from the *Quinquennial Education Report of the Assam Government for the Year 1932-37* as submitted

<sup>1</sup> Chandel, a co-worker of the addressee's sister

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to the theft which occurred on June 2; *vide* "To Segaon Workers", 3-6-1940

<sup>3</sup> This appeared under the heading "Notes".

<sup>4</sup> Only extracts are reproduced here.

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* "Favouritism", 12-5-1940; also "Notes", 16-2-1940

by Mr. G. A. Small, Director of Public Instruction. In his review of the report he wrote in April 1938, p. 63: "The general policy at present is for Government to take over the responsibility for education from the Missions as early as possible. While acknowledgement must be made of the debt owed to the Missions for their work as pioneers in the field of education, it must also be recognized that the Missions have interested themselves in education solely with the object of Christianizing the children. . . The Governments of the past have definitely neglected the Hill areas and it is only recently that they have recognized at all their responsibility in the matter. . . The question of the policy to be adopted in the Lushai Hills is still under consideration. In the Mikir Hills Government schools are being opened and arrangements are being made for the production of Mikir text-books in Assamese character."

This but confirms what I have already published in these columns. One only hopes that things will be better managed now.

SEVAGRAM, June 3, 1940

*Harijan*, 15-6-1940

### 330. TO SEGAON WORKERS

*June 3, 1940*

Today I wanted to send for everyone and talk to them: but the mind resisted. Perhaps I could do the same thing by writing. A letter and a pen belonging to Radhabehn<sup>1</sup> were stolen last night or this morning. I was shocked. Theft of a letter and a pen is an ordinary matter: but this theft has some peculiar aspects. However it be, this theft has brought me to the conclusion that I am a wholly incompetent person. That such a thing should happen in my very presence indicates that my penance is defective. A pure heart is the real foundation of any penance. It is said that violence is subdued in the presence of non-violence, untruth in the presence of truth and stealing in the presence of non-stealing. What is my worth if untruth, violence and stealing survive in my presence? How can I give any battle? All these questions do arise. But giving up will be cowardice. What, then, is one to do? The answer I get is that if the theft is not traced I should fast. The theft took place in Ba's room. The pen has been discovered. Budhu found it near the hospital gate at about 10 yesterday. Bits of

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Maganlal Gandhi

paper were also found later. I feel that this is not the work of a servant. Someone who has access to Ba's room has done it. There are a few such persons. Why then do I address this to all ashram inmates? That is because you know one another well and may help in the enquiry. If I have to resort to a fast then, in any case, everyone will know. It is better that I do not have to say all this on that occasion. If a fast becomes necessary you will know the reason and remain calm. I am convinced that if the theft is not traced, I must fast. No one should join the fast or interfere with it. I must do whatever I consider my duty. I do not know how long I shall fast. If the theft is not traced by Friday, the fast will commence from Saturday. I hope the culprit will bring me peace by making a clean breast of it and save me from having to fast in these critical days. Everyone makes mistakes but the real cleansing comes by owning them. I myself stole once. I owned it up and freed myself of the taint for ever. Ba too resorted to thieving. What should I say about others? I do not know. But the instances of the two of us should help everyone in cleaning themselves.

BAPU

[PS.]

It would be enough to read this out to the permanent inmates of the ashram. They should be summoned now or tomorrow to hear this. Those who cannot be present then may read this note.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6866. Also C.W. 4674

### 331. A NOTE

[After *June 3, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

You admit that it is only someone from amongst us who has done it. You should then try and find out. If I could do it, I would do so at once.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 632

<sup>1</sup> From the obvious reference to the theft; *vide* the preceding item. The following notes have been dated on the same basis.

### 332. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

Can you tell something? Who could take the pen? There was a letter too.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 630

### 333. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

Why waste my time like this? Why should you bother about what I do after you leave? If you are concerned with the matter, then don't go. I am unable to see at the moment. Do you or do you not agree that this is not the work of the servants? That you admitted it, is no crime, it is the truth. From you I merely understood that the servants had not done it. Besides, the matter ended then. I am convinced that the servants are not responsible. I am talking about you and me when I accept the innocence of the servants. Have you ever spoken or practised untruth in life? I have seen hundreds of Mussalmans swearing by the Koran and uttering falsehood. Some others swear by the Gita. If a Kazi says that you have committed a theft, will you admit the guilt? Then why do you unnecessarily raise the issue of a judge? I have heard your argument on the way. Do not hold your tongue. Say whatever you wish to say. I have said only this much. If the servants have not done it, there remain Ba, Johra, Abha, Lilavati and you. Your proof - my suspicion. This much. . . .<sup>1</sup>

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 706

### 334. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

You took no notice of my words yesterday. I insist that you go to the root of the matter. I am convinced that the servants did not do it. It is so much on my mind that I have no peace. Unless things clear up in a day or two, I shall have no alternative but to fast if I am to have peace.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 707

<sup>1</sup> Incomplete in the source

### 335. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

I am at my wit's end. I suspect everyone and no one. Supposing Ba herself has done it!

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 692

### 336. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

It is not so. The fast will be avoided only when my suspicion is dispelled or confirmed. My quarrel with God is why He allows such things. Why does He permit suspicion to creep into my mind?

As for your not caring, well if you have not done it, why should you care what happens? Yes, you can help in tracing the theft. You yourself admitted that this was not the work of the servants.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 650

### 337. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

What I wish is that you should do your work, eat well and be happy. You know what a terrific quarrel I had with Ba over my suspicion: she stayed away from me for a whole year. How shall I say what other things I did. But Ba showed courage. In the end, after four or more years, my suspicion was dispelled. It was not a matter of stealing. It was something worse. You do not know me ! How could I have told you all this? Sheikh Mehtab was behind this. He kept me under his thumb for more than ten years. On his suggestion, I came to doubt the character of. Ba. I broke her bangles, refused to have anything to do with her and sent her away to her parents. The hatchet was buried only after my return from England. It was then that I realized fully after many years how wicked Sheikh Mehtab was. He threatened me many times. But finally he relented. He continued to worship me from a distance. This is a long tale, pleasant as well as pathetic.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 641 a and 648

### 338. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

Tell Chimanlalbhai to show your notes and mine to everyone. You want that, don't you? I on my part don't. Why should I? I am concerned only with you. What is the use of disclosing my suspicion? But I cannot stop you, nor do I want to. The argument about who said so is over. Then why do you ask who told him? That you showed the letter to Chimanlalbhai was the end of your duty. He is the manager.

I wrote because you asked me.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 721

### 339. A NOTE

[After June 3, 1940]

you have kept a copy. Now you should not take my time over this. Whatever you wish to make public, you may. Why should I withdraw anything? I for my part do not want any further discussion on the matter; but if you wish to tell everyone for your own satisfaction, you are free to do so.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 722

### 340. NOTES

#### PEACE IN SIROHI

Some time ago I had regretfully to comment on happenings in Sirohi.<sup>1</sup> I am therefore happy to be able to note that there is now peace between the State and the people. The credit may be equally divided between the State and the satyagrahis. The satyagrahis were ably led by Acharya Gokulnhai who is a firm believer in the principles of satyagraha. Let me hope that the relations between the two will daily become more and more cordial and that there never will be any cause for quarrel between the State and the people.

#### UNTOUCHABILITY

Shri T. S. Jadhav, President, District Local Board. Sholapur, writes:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 18-9-1939

<sup>2</sup> Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

I have been incessantly making efforts to give facilities to the Harijans especially with regard to their immediate needs in respect of water supply, education, etc. The Congress Board has opened a good number of wells to the Harijans, and has also arranged to put up notices to that effect at these wells. But it is a matter of regret that the Harijans are not inclined to take advantage of this facility for fear of being put to trouble by the 'touchables'. During my tours in the district, I have been requesting the latter to allow Harijans the exercise of this legitimate right. . . I go myself to a public well in a village after a public meeting with some Harijans, 'touchable' Congress workers, and a few other prominent villagers, and all of us drink water from the well after it has been drawn by a Harijan. But it is found that the 'touchables' who take part in this function are often boycotted and the Harijans visited with various kinds of troubles by the 'touchables' who do not participate in the function . . . . Can you suggest anything more?

This certainly is good work. Removal of untouchability is a question of double education, that of 'touchables' as well as 'untouchables'. 'Touchables' have to be taught patiently by precept and example that untouchability is a sin against God and humanity, and the 'untouchables' that they should cease to fear the 'touchables' and shed untouchability among themselves. I know that that is very easily said. But I have found nothing else. Living in the midst of both, I know how hard the work is among both. If Hinduism is to live, the work has to be done, however difficult and even hopeless it may appear to be.

#### HAND-MADE PAPER

Shri Jadhav further writes:

Secondly, I have been using hand-made paper for the use of the District Local Board office since the advent of the Congress Party in the Board. Use of mill paper or foreign paper is absolutely discontinued, and as far as my information goes, ours is the only Board in Maharashtra which has been using hand-made paper for its office use to the complete exclusion of other paper. I had sent a circular letter to the Presidents of the other Boards in Maharashtra, requesting them to follow this practice of our Board, and I am glad a few of them have agreed to do so. But I think it will be better if you yourself request the presidents of the Congress Boards in India to use hand-made paper for their office purposes. This can well be done through the columns of *Harijan*, and I am sure it will go a long way in bringing into reality your dream of revival of village industries as far as writing paper is concerned.

I gladly support this plea. Indeed I have often enough said the same thing in these columns. Shri Jadhav's example should be copied by all Local Boards not merely in the matter of hand-made paper but all village products. With a little care, the Boards should be able to manage these things within their budget. I should also suggest that the Boards have these things manufactured in the villages under their jurisdiction as far as possible. The purpose of the village movement will be defeated if this central fact is not borne in mind. Decentralization is the beauty of the movement as also the key to its success.

#### RED CROSS FUND

The same letter mentions the following:

Then, with respect to the Real Cross Fund. Efforts are afoot in this district to collect money for this fund on a very large scale by means of sale of lottery tickers. These tickets are sold to the villagers against their wishes and in spite of their inability to do so. This is being done through undue influence without leaving any proof of the same behind. At some places the Patil-kulkarnis do not accept land revenue if the agriculturist does not buy these tickets. I have received a number of complaints in writing to this effect during my recent tour in the district. I am communicating these complaints to the proper Government authorities.

This subject too I have already dealt with. I have explained that in such matters there should be no compulsion. Over-zealous officials may resort to unfair means bordering on compulsion. There is no statutory obligation to subscribe to such funds. Those who do not wish to, well certainly not subscribe. These irregular collections are often vexing and should be stopped by the authorities wherever discovered.

#### COMILLA MUNICIPALITY AND HARIJANS

Shri Thakkar Bapa sends the following interesting account of what the Comilla Municipality has done and proposes doing for Harijans:

1. 15 days' leave with full pay in a year, and maternity leave to female sweepers.
2. A free primary school in their quarters.
3. Corrugated-iron-roof huts for (a) Naga sweepers at a cost of Rs. 1,500 and (b) for other sweepers at a cost of Rs. 3,000. Some Nagas in East Bengal and Surma valley have taken to scavenging work.

4. The sweepers have been relieved almost wholly from their indebtedness, which totalled about Rs. 3,000 and on which they were paying an interest of three annas per rupee per month or 225 per cent!

The Commissioners intend to adopt the following further measures for them:

1. To start a co-operative store, proposal for which has been sent to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies for registration.

2. Sweepers have to be weaned from their drinking habit, which it is known is a difficult task.

3. The insanitary drain behind the sweepers' quarters requires to be made into a pucca drain.

4. Providing kitchens for sweepers' quarters, as at present they have to cook and sleep in the same room.

This reminds one of what the Ahmedabad Municipality has done in the matter. The latter is possibly more thorough. But that does not in any way detract from the merit of what the Comilla Municipality has done. It deserves warm congratulation. Let us hope that the prospective reforms too will be carried out in good time.

SEVAGRAM, June 4, 1940

*Harijan*, 8-6-1940

### 341. HINDU-MUSLIM

Thus writes a Khan Bahadur from Delhi:

This is a letter for the Question Box in *Harijan*.

In your article in *Harijan* of April 6<sup>1</sup>, you observe as follows:

“I should be failing in my duty, if I did not warn the Mussalmans 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.”

I will request you to consider the Hindu-Muslim problem from our point of view. The stumbling-block to any negotiations for a settlement of the communal question has been the refusal of the Congress to recognize the All-India Muslim League as the authoritative and sole representative body of the Indian Mussalmans. The Congress claims that it speaks for whole India and that it has on its rolls a considerable number of Mussalmans, the very fact that the Congress has made several attempts to come to terms with Mr. Jinnah

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Baffling Situation”, 28-11-1939

shows that it is not fully confident of its representative character, as far as the Mussalmans are concerned. But do not honestly feel that the Congress Mussalmans are the real stumbling-block in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity, and that it is for their sake that the Congress is not making a serious effort to solve the problem? Believe me, they are a lazy lot who are enjoying their present position because they are in the Congress.

You know what the Muslim masses did to your President<sup>1</sup> in Calcutta where for years he had been leading Id prayer. You also know that they have no courage to address a Muslim meeting to convert the Mussalmans to their point of view. You blame the British for creating Princes, Moderates and Khan Bahadurs like me. You blame the British for trying to create another Ulster in India. Has not the Congress created equivalent Moderates and Khan Bahadurs in Azads, Asaf Alis and Kidwais? Is not the action of the Congress tantamount to creation of a Muslim Ulster?

You may cite the case of Mr. Asaf Ali succeeding in the municipal elections of Delhi. I may inform you that but for a division in the Provincial League and bad handling of the situation Mr. Asaf Ali would never have won the election. I may inform you that even as it is, when Delhi Congress wanted to contest the municipal elections as a party, Mr. Asaf Ali, who is now a member of the Congress Working Committee, had declined to take a Congress ticket. Therefore, Mr. Asaf Ali's election was not a test case; and if you pardon my saying so, even now let Mr. Asaf Ali reseek election on a Congress ticket, and I am confident that any League candidate would defeat him. You will thus realize that your being baffled by the Lahore resolution<sup>2</sup> of the League is not justified when Mussalmans have ceased to trust in your life's mission regarding Hindu-Muslim unity. On the other hand they are convinced that the sole aim of the Congress, for the last ten years at least, has been to divide and rule the Mussalmans. I will beg of you to reconsider your attitude towards the League. Please don't trust the Congressite Mussalmans, for they are not only the 'Mir Jafars' amongst us, but the enemies of Hindu-Muslim accord and India's freedom.

Just now I am inundated with letters of protest from Muslim friends. Most writers do not argue. They give themselves satisfaction by abusing. Pyarelal, who opens and deals with the daily post, gives me only those letters which he thinks I should see. Of these I take notice of those I think I must. In some cases I answer them privately.

<sup>1</sup> Abul Kalam Azad

<sup>2</sup> Demanding a separate Muslim State

Therefore correspondents who never receive acknowledgement either through Harijan or the post should know the reason.

There are some Muslim letters of sympathy too. One of them says that in his house he has to listen to wildest criticism of me. No adjective is too bad to use. Much criticism he knows to be false. What is he to do, he asks. Is he to leave the house, or is he to engage in endless disputation and convert his house into a bear garden? I have advised my correspondent neither to leave the house nor to engage in a discussion. If he can, he may put in mild word when he knows that a manifest falsehood is being uttered and believed.

The correspondence in my possession and the Urdu press cuttings and even some English cuttings from journals owned by Muslims go to show that I am believed to be the arch enemy of Islam and Indian Muslims. If I was at one time acclaimed as their greatest friend and suffered the praise, I must suffer too to be described as an enemy. Truth is known only to God. I am confident that in nothing that I am doing, saying or thinking, I am their enemy. They are blood-brothers and will remain so, though they may disown me ever so much.

Now for the Khan Bahadur's letter.

I have never understood the reason behind the demand for the recognition by the Congress of the All-India Muslim League as the sole and authoritative Muslim body. Why should such an admission be demanded or expected? How is it compatible with a genuine desire for a settlement?

The Congress attempts to represent all. But it has never demanded recognition as such from anybody. The all-India status has to be deserved. But whether it be deserved or not, admission there of is a superfluity. The Congress has never claimed that it represents the whole of Indian Muslims. It has not claimed to represent any single community wholly. But it does claim to represent every single national interest irrespective of class, caste, colour or creed. Even that claim need not be admitted by those who deal with it. It should be sufficient consolation to each party that it is considered by the other important enough to seek friendship with.

The Congress has always frankly admitted that it has not on its register as many Muslims as it would like. But it has been proud to have had the support of many eminent Muslims. Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan was the tallest among them. Qaid-e-Azam himself was a great

Congressman. It was only after non-co-operation that he, like many other Congressmen belonging to several communities, left it. Their defection was purely political. They disliked direct action.

It is wrong to swear at the nationalist Muslims simply because they are attached to the Congress. If they become members of the League, they will become worthy Muslims!!! My correspondent simply does not know how much Congress Muslims are trying to bring about unity. When unity is re-established, as it must be, I have no doubt that nationalist Muslims will get their due both from Hindus and Muslims.

It is torture of truth to suggest that they are so many Mir Jafars. They are betraying neither Islam nor India. They are as true Muslims according to their lights as members of the League claim to be. It is equal torture of truth to suggest that the Congress is following the British method of divide and rule. The Congress is a political party with one single aim. It would be a bad day for India if the Congress could be proved to have mean motives. Is it mean to woo Muslim opinion by the fairest means imaginable? Rightly or wrongly the Congress does not believe in watertight compartments on a communal basis. If religion is allowed to be, as it is, a personal concern and a matter between God and man, there are many dominating common factors between the two which will compel common life and common action. Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them. It is a misfortune that today they are so distorted that they have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter.

It will perhaps now be clear why I can have no concern with Asaf Ali Saheb's case. I would grant that he would be beaten in a contest between him and a Leaguer. Let it be further granted that such will be the case in the majority of such contests. It will in no way weaken my position. It will prove the superior organizing ability of the League and its popularity among the Muslims. I have not doubted either. My case is incredibly simple. I must not be called upon to make any admissions about the status of the League before thinking of unity through the League. I must not be disloyal to the Muslim nationalists however insignificant they may be considered to be. I ask the Khan Bahadur, the writer of the letter under discussion, to exert his influence to bring the two communities together.

SEVAGRAM, June 4, 1940

*Harijan*, 8-6-1940

### 342. PANIC

Nowadays one reads about panic in the Press and hears more than one reads. One friend writes:

You sitting in lonely Sevagram can have no notion of the talks and whispers going on in the busy cities. Panic has seized them.

Panic is the most demoralizing state anyone can be in. There never is any cause for panic. One must keep heart whatever happens. War is an unmitigated evil. But it certainly does one good thing, it drives away fear and brings bravery to the surface. Several million lives must have been already lost between the Allies and the Germans. They have been wasting blood like water. Old men, women both old and young, and children in Britain and France are living in the midst of imminent death. But there is no panic there. If they were seized by it panic would be an enemy more dreadful than German bullets, bombs and poison gas. Let us learn from these suffering nations of the West and banish panic from our midst. And in India there is no cause whatsoever for panic. Britain will die hard and heroically even if she has to. We may hear of reverses, but we will not hear of demoralization. Whatever happens will happen in an orderly manner.

Therefore I would say to those who lend a listening ear to me: Go on with your work or business in the usual way. Do not withdraw your deposits or make haste to turn your paper into cash. If you are cautious, you will run no new risks. Your metal buried underground or in your treasure chests need not be considered safer than in banks or in paper if anarchy overtakes us. There is risk just now in everything. It is best to be as you are in such a condition. Your steadiness, if it is multiplied, will steady the market. It will be the best preventive against anarchy. There is undoubtedly fear of goondaism in such times. You must be prepared to cope with it yourself. Goondas flourish only in the midst of timid people. They will have no quarter from people who can defend themselves violently or non-violently. Non-violent defence presupposes recklessness about one's life and property. If it is persisted in, it will in the end be a sure cure for goondaism. But non-violence cannot be learnt in a day. It requires practice. You can commence to learn it from now. You must be ready to lose your life or property or both. But that is implied in the art of non-violence. If you do not know how to defend yourself either way, the Government will not be able to save you in spite of its best effort. No Government, however powerful it may be, can without the active

co-operation of the people. If even God only helps those who will help themselves, how much more true it must be of perishable Governments! Do not lose nerve and think that tomorrow there will be no Government and it will be all anarchy. You can be the Government now, and you certainly will be in the contingency you contemplate or you will perish.

SEVAGRAM, June 4, 1940

*Harijan*, 8-6-1940

### 343. QUESTION BOX

#### IF YOU HAVE COURAGE

Q. My mother died last month. I have for a long time been following the practice of eating food cooked by Harijan. The orthodox did not like it, but they tolerated my practice. Three years ago I accepted an invitation for a funeral dinner given by a Muslim friend on the occasion of his mother's demise. Now my mother is dead. My community have now boycotted all functions in connection with my mother's demise. What am I to do?

A. If you have courage, you will let the castemen do their worst, but you will befriend your Muslim friend at all costs and dine with him as often as is necessary. Such boycotts should not be feared at all.

#### BENEVOLENT DICTATORSHIP

Q. When the rich become callous and selfish and the evil continues unchecked, a revolution of the masses with all the attendant horrors inevitably results. Since life, as you have put it, is often a choice between evils, won't you, in view of the lesson which the history of revolutions inculcates, welcome the rise of a benevolent dictatorship which would with the minimum use of force "soak the rich", give justice to the poor, and thereby serve both?

A. I cannot accept benevolent or any other dictatorship. Neither will the rich vanish nor will the poor be protected. Some rich men will certainly be killed out and some poor men will be spoon-fed. As a class the rich will remain, and the poor also, in spite of dictatorship labelled benevolent. The real remedy is non-violent democracy, otherwise spelt true education of all. The rich should be taught the doctrine of stewardship and the poor that of self-help.

#### A SOCIAL NUISANCE

Q. The beggar problem has become a social nuisance everywhere, especially in the cities. India can ill bear the burden of this army of drones. They use self-torture,

sometimes even threats and menaces, to work upon the sympathy and fear of our simple folk and extract alms from them. Some of them have in this way accumulated a secret hoard and lead a life of vice and immorality. What solution would you suggest for this problem?

A. Begging is an age-old institution in India. It was not always a nuisance. It was not always a profession. Now it has become a profession to which cheats have taken. No person who is capable of working for his bread should be allowed to beg. The way to deal with the problem will be to penalize those who give alms to professional beggars. Of course begging itself by the able-bodied should be penalized. But this reform is possible only when municipalities conduct factories where they will feed people against work. The Salvation Army people are or were experts in this class of work. They had opened a match factory in London in which any person who came found work and food. What I have, however, suggested is an immediate palliative. The real remedy lies in discovering the root cause and dealing with it. This means equalizing the economic condition of the people. The present extremes have to be dealt with as a serious social disease. In a healthy society concentration of riches in a few people and unemployment among millions is a great social crime or disease which needs to be remedied.

#### ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE OF WOMEN

Q. Some people oppose a modification of laws relating to the right of a married woman to own property on the ground that economic independence of woman would lead to the spread of immorality among women and disruption of domestic life. What is your attitude on the question.

A. I would answer the question by a counter question: Has not independence of man and his holding property led to the spread of immorality among men? If you answer 'yes' then let it be so also with women. And when women have rights of ownership and the rest like men, it would be found that the enjoyment of such rights is not responsible for their vices or their virtues. Morality which depends upon the helplessness of a man or woman has not much to recommend it. Morality is rooted in the purity of our hearts.

#### A TEMPLE TRUSTEE'S POSER

Q. I am a member of the A. I. C. C. Personally I neither believe in nor observe taboos relating to untouchability. But I am trustee of a temple built by my ancestors who were thoroughly orthodox in their religious outlook. I feel that it

would be a breach of trust to throw it open to Harijans. Would that stand in the way of my signing the satyagraha pledge?

A. It would stand very much in the way of your signing the pledge. It would be no breach of trust if the law allows you to open the temple. The condition was immoral as we have now discovered and hence invalid.

#### UNCERTIFIED KHADI

Q. You say that a person buying or using mill cloth cannot take the satyagraha pledge. Can a person using, buying or dealing in uncertified khadi take the pledge or hold offices in Congress committee? Is a person or an association other than the A. I. S. A. entitled to certify khadi dealers?

A. Certainly not, I repeatedly said that a person who uses or deals in uncertified khadi damages khadi and directly exploits the spinners and weavers whose lot the A. I. S. A. is striving to improve. Such persons can neither take the pledge nor hold any office in a Congress organization. No person or institution other than the A. I. S. A. can issue the required certificates.

#### STUDENTS' DIFFICULTY

Q. We are students in Poona. We are taking part in the drive against illiteracy. Now in the parts we are visiting there are drunkards who threaten us if we go to teach people. Those among whom we are working are Harijans. They get frightened. Some suggest that proceedings should be taken against these drunkards. Some suggest we should try your method of wooing them. Will you advise?

A. You are doing good work. Literacy drive and many such things are by-products of the big reform, perhaps the biggest of modern times. As to the drunkards they must be treated as diseased person entitled to our sympathy and service. You should, therefore, reason with them when they are sober, and take even the beating, if any, with good grace. I do not rule out court proceedings, but they will be evidence of want of enough ahimsa in you. But you cannot go against your nature. If you do not evoke response from them to your wooing, your work must not be held up because of the obstruction referred to by you. Recourse to legal proceedings is then indicated. But you must make all honest effort before you go to law.

SEVAGRAM, June 4, 1940

*Harijan*, 8-6-1940

### 344. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,  
June 4, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

Shall I also write in Hindi? Put up with at least a little. I had intended, as I still do, to write a long letter, but it cannot be managed. One business after another keeps turning up and such letters have to remain unwritten.<sup>1</sup>

It is my intention to give you some satisfaction on the points raised by you but I could not do. I have just ( 4 p.m. ) finished the last article for *Harijan* and I have taken up this to inform you of my helplessness.

Poor Lilavati. She had a scorpion sting last night and again this morning. Fortunately, the pain each time was quite bearable, she is up and doing. So the Sevagram charkha goes on.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Your donation to the treasurer, Santiniketan, earmarked Andrews Hall on Western Culture.

From the original: C. W. 4237. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur . also G.N. 7870

### 345. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEVAGRAM,  
June 4, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. I also am not happy that there are three of your there<sup>2</sup>. But you and Kanchan can be counted as one patient; hence you are three patients and three nurses to attend on them. That is how I console myself. I want that both of you should somehow have peace of mind.

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing is in Hindi. What follows is in English.

<sup>2</sup> At Panchagani where the addressee had gone for treatment

I have all along been of the opinion that Balkrishna and Kunvarji<sup>1</sup> should spend the monsoon months there. You may also decide whether both or one of you should stay there during the period. If Kunvarji's health is satisfactory he may be able to manage with a local servant, but think over the matter. My decision is that both of you should stay there.

*Blessing from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Today I am not writing separately to anybody else.

Form a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8536. Also C. W. 7093. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 346. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

*June 4, 1940*

CHI. SUSHILA,

What a girl you are! Everyone had been looking forward to welcoming you today and then came your telegram.

I passed by Ba's room after my bath. Ba asked what she should do about her cough. I said she need not worry since you would be coming today. She agreed. Then I went to my room and found your telegram.

Your arrival thus is being awaited. Yesterday your two letters came together. In one of them you have expressed some doubt as regards your examination result. May your doubt prove baseless. I am somewhat impatient to know the result. I shall be thankful if God takes the load off your mind. You will probably know the result while you are there. Send me a telegram if you do.

Ba's cough persists. It is mild of course. Jamnalalji has been put up here. His weight has gone down considerably. He has been put on a diet. How far he ultimately benefits remains to be seen.

I am keeping very good health. The weight has gone down. One cannot eat much in this heat.

Enclosed is a letter from Pyarelal. It, was received yesterday. It is about the things you have to bring from there. There are also letters to others. I am sending them along. You will explain the mistake about the watch.

<sup>1</sup> Kunvarji Parekh, husband of Rami, Harilal Gandhi's daughter

This letter will go from here on Thursday. You should get it on Friday, before you leave. Hence, I am not sending the telegram about the things Pyarelal wants.

Mahadev has not yet come.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 347. NOTE TO AMTUSSALAAM

*June 4, 1940*

Then why don't you be quiet? What is the point in arguing over it?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.

Please excuse me . I am silent.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 662

### 348. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 4, 1940*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I understand about Bal.

You may bring the children whenever you like. The days are hot but the nights have become pleasant.

*Blessing from*

BAPU

SETH GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA

BIRLA HOUSE

MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD

BOMBAY

From Hindi: C. W. 8038. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

### 349. A NOTE

#### A SINCERE WORKER IS GONE

Bhai Fulchand writes from wadhwan as follows:<sup>1</sup>

This heart-rending picture needs no addition of colour. Vaishnav was a true *vaishnava*<sup>2</sup>. The best way to perpetuate his memory would be not to let a single activity of his suffer, go in vain and for everyone to strive to be like him.

SEVAGRAM, June 5, 1940

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 9-6-1940

### 350. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 5, 1940*

DEAR PREMI,

What a bad girl you are? You have not written to me for ages. What was your promise? How is Father?

Love.

BAPU

SHRI PREMIBEHN  
C/O SHRI JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM  
HYDERABAD, SIND

From the original: C. W. 11053. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. it described the death from tuberculosis of Chamanbhai Vaishnav, who was in Yeravda Prison in 1932 with Gandhiji.

<sup>2</sup> Devotee of Vishnu

### 351. LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

SEVAGRAM , WARDHA ,  
*June 5, 1940*

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH

I get your letters regularly. If you come. we shall discuss the matter then and decide about the future. Just now you are gaining good experience from your tours.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI SWAMI RAO VYAYAM MANDIR  
BHAVNAGAR  
KATHLAWAR

From Gujarati: C. W. 2951. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

### 352. TO SEGAON WORKERS

*June 5, 1940*

I hear that the servants are being questioned regarding the theft of the pen and letter. I have said that I do not suspect them at all and they should not be harassed in the least. I was pained and continue to be pained that someone from amongst us has committed the theft. I will change my mind when the person is identified. May God give the guilty person sense to confess the guilt.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6866; also C. W. 4674

### 353. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

[Before *June 6, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

It is easy to understand. When a father suspects one of his sons, but does not know who exactly it is, he seeks solace in a fast. If the

<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been written before the following item.

sons love him, they come out with a confession. True, I am only guessing but we men are not omniscient.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen*, p. 275

### 354. A LETTER

[On or before *June 6, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

DAUGHTER,

My heart trembles at the thought of writing such a letter. But I must write it if my love for you is honest. I have thought over it a great deal and my suspicion turns on you. How far is it justified? Either you or Ba could have taken that letter. I am convinced that Ba has not taken it. It is not that Ba has never committed a theft. She has. I have announced it to the entire ashram. Why does my suspicion turn on you? It is no use going into that. If you have done it, you know it; if you have not done it, it will serve no purpose for you to know the ground of my suspicion.

You have one defect. You do not often see your faults and when you do you do not often confess them. If you have done it, that will not make you a different person. Others also have made mistakes. Munilal was guilty of a grave error, for which I fasted for seven days and missed a meal every day for a year. I fasted for 14 days on account of Jekibehn, it was not then a matter of letter having been stolen, but of lying. Chhaganlal was guilty of theft, too. I, of course, committed theft. Everyone errs. But everyone does not confess. If you have been guilty, you will tell me. If you have not done it, you should not care what I do. This is my injunction.

I am writing this with a heavy heart. Do not kick up a row. If you have sinned do not worry. If you have you not there is nothing to worry about.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 711

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Note to Mahadev Desai", 6-6-1940.

### 355. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,  
June 6, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your letter and the translation of “Not yet”. “Not yet” should mean “It will still be some time” and not “Not just now “. I have made a beginning at revising it.<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry I was late sending you the articles last time. It was wholly my fault. Herewith this week’s. I hope you got the book-post which contains the articles and my revision of some translation.<sup>2</sup>

There was an outpouring [sic] last night. The weather is decidedly much less hot than yesterday. You can descend after 15th so far as the heat is concerned.

Your corrections are good.

Love

BAPU

From the original : C. W. 4238. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7871

### 356. NOTE TO MAHADEV DESAI

June 6, 1940

I told A. S. about my suspicion. She has replied, too. Let us now see what she does. She keeps on telling me to publish that letter. I do now know whether to treat it as a threat or just an angry outburst. I am gaining good experience.,

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

### 357. NOTE TO MAHADEV DESAI

June 6, 1940

It seems you are absolutely wrong. As long as I had only a faint suspicion in my mind, how could I speak? When the suspicion persists

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing is in Hindi. What follows is in English.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “letter to Amrit Kaur”, 1-6-1940.

and gets stronger, then it becomes my duty to put it before those whom I love. I have realized that even those who seemed above suspicion have turned out not to be so. Now I shall know the facts. If I have done any injustice, that also I will know now. It was my duty to tell her of my suspicion.<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

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

### 358. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

June 6, 1940

CHI SARU,

I got your letter. Why these repeated apologies? Everyone makes mistakes. You two did so too. I have long forgotten about it. Do parents keep a record of the mistakes of their children? Some day you will certainly come here. We have not boycotted you and Kanti. Do not be unhappy. Ba had no grievance at all.

It will be good if the rains come soon. It rained here last night.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI. SARASWATI GANDHI  
VORA HARIDAS WAKHATCHAD'S HOUSE  
BEHIND HIGHT SCHOOL  
RAJKOT (KATHIAWAR)

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6179. Also C. W. 3453. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi.

### 359. LETTER TO KANHAIYALAL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

June 6, 1940

BHAI KANHAIYALAL,

I got your *hundi*<sup>2</sup>. I am utilizing it for the Harijan Fund. Mirabehn has arrived safe.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 10050; also C. W. 6455

<sup>1</sup> This was in response to the addressee's reply to the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> Bill of exchange

### 360. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM ,  
June 6, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Why attach such importance to Ba's criticism? It was all right that Amtul Salaam was questioned. It would have been equally all right if she had not been questioned. It is either way a trivial matter. It is best not to brood over such things.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4348; also S. G. 82

### 361. LETTER TO GOPAL NARAYAN SHIROMANY

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
June 6, 1940

DEAR SHIROMANY,

I have read the Judgment. You may convey my opinion to anyone about what cannot come under the purview of Defence of India Rules. But what is the good of giving it to the Press? If there is any advantage in it, do explain it to me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI SHIROMANY  
SAINIK OFFICE  
AGRA, U. P.

From the Hindi original: C. W. 10943. Courtesy: Gopal Narayan Shiromany

### 362. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

[ June 6, 1940 ]<sup>1</sup>

Lilavatibehn told me that dates were being washed with tap water, that water pots lying on the ground were dipped into the jars, and so on. In all such matters we should observe norms of hygiene. We should make rules in this respect and display them on the notice

<sup>1</sup> The date is in a hand other than Gandhiji's.

board. They should be observed. Let them be framed in consultation with Sushilabehn<sup>1</sup>.

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4347

### 363. A NOTE

[ *After June 6, 1940* ]<sup>2</sup>

I have paid no attention to it. I dismissed the matter when it was first reported. I do not know anything about it. It did not disturb me. Yes, if my suspicion is proved correct in this case, then the matter of Lilavati's letter may crop up. But I am striving for something else. What is the worth of Radha's pen or her letter? But after these four days of quarrelling the terrible thought has possessed me that you have done it. You annoy me What more shall I write? Leave me.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 705

### 364. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

*Personal*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 7, 1940*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I have to thank you for your two letter of 3rd instant.

I think I understand your letter about the war situation.<sup>3</sup> My intense prayer to the Almighty is for a speedy end of this terrible suffering.

As to Miss Sheridan's bust I do not know that you have not brought a hornet's nest about your ears.<sup>4</sup> You are sure to have protests against the acceptance. And as it seems to me nothing is to be gained by the step you contemplate. As a mark of personal affection natu-

<sup>1</sup> Sushila Nayyar

<sup>2</sup> This seems to have been written after notes of Mahadev Desai of 6-6-1940

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* 2nd footnote of "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 26-5-1940.

<sup>4</sup> The Viceroy had informed Gandhiji that he had been given by the Maharja of Darbhanga a bust of Gandhiji done by Clare Sheridan and that he proposed in the first instance to have it exhibited in Bombay and thereafter "to make it over to the Government of India with the suggestion that it should ultimately find a permanent home in the national capital".

rally I esteem your action. I am merely presenting an impersonal view for you consideration.

I shall not expect any reply to this letter.

*I am,*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

### 365. *LETTER TO BHASHYAM*<sup>1</sup>

*June 7, 1940*

I am quite clear that you should obey every order even to the non-holding of meetings. Such voluntary obedience of orders, even unreasonable, produces a capacity for non-violent resistance which becomes invincible. It disarms suspicion. If you knowingly do these and the people too follow you knowingly you will feel a new strength to which you were stranger before. Obstacles there will be. They have to be conquered intelligently.

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

### 366. *LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, ,  
*June 7, 1940*

DEAR SIR AKBAR,

I have slept all these nights over your unkind letter of 28th ultimo.<sup>2</sup> I see I have lost caste with you. I thought you would take my word for it that I knew nothing of the Muzaffarpur violence by

<sup>1</sup> Presumably K. T. Bhashyam of Bangalore

<sup>2</sup> In this the addressee had referred to the concern Gandhiji had shown at the communal riot at Bidar in Hyderabad and asked how it was that a similar riot in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, where Muslims had suffered, had escaped Gandhiji's notice. *Vide* also "Question Box", 6-5-1940.

Hindus.<sup>1</sup> I am now trying to find out what it was. For that matter, I knew nothing of Bidar till parties wrote to me and sent papers.

I had hoped that you knew me sufficiently to know that whenever occasion had arisen I had not spared Hindus. So far as Hyderabad is concerned, I have been particularly careful and avoided public reference to Hyderabad when I might have. I thought you had given me credit too for my reticence. Even as it is I am guiding the Hyderabad State Congress (now defunct) and restraining them. But I must not plead for myself. Only I feel sorry that you can think so unkindly as to write that last sentence in your letter.

I hope Lady Hydari's improvement has continued

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G. N. 6845. Also from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

### 367. *LETTER TO HRIDAYA NATH KUNZRU*

*June 7, 1940*

I am glad I got the statement. In a way the statement raises p. In my estimation. He has expanded his philosophy. But the cleavage is definite. He has taken the Society;s<sup>2</sup> name in vain. I hope you will have smooth sailing. But smooth or rough, your way is clear. There is no room for compromise. Even if you are in a hopeless minority you will take the satyagraha [*sic*] with you for God's spirit will be with you. Hope you are keeping well in this turmoil.

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

### 368. *LETTER TO SHIVA RAO*

*June 7, 1940*

You are wonderful. I have read your letter to Mahadev. The draft<sup>3</sup> requires drastic amendments. In any case I won't make them. I

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Akbar Hydari", 9-5-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Servants of India Society

<sup>3</sup> Of a formula for Congress-League rapprochement forwarded to Gandhiji by the addressee

would advise you to send it to Maulana Saheb and to Jawaharlal. My own opinion is that the time for a settlement has not arrived. It will come but not without agony. I have not lost hope but am prepared for the worst.

But you persevere along your own line.

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

### 369. LETTER TO C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR

SEGAON, WARHDA,  
*June 7, 1940*

DEAR FRIEND,

I was glad to have your letter. Who says you are old.? And of course I am young enough to be your son. I am sorry I cannot move out. What is poor B. P. . . .<sup>1</sup> doing now? C. D. is suspended.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR  
THE ARAM  
SALEM

From a photostat: C. Vijayaraghavachariar Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 370. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*June 7, 1940*

CHI. NARANDAS,

May God give you adequate strength in you famine relief work.

You have written to Nanalal—it is all right. What can I say about Shamaldas<sup>2</sup> ? He does not even answer my letters. But go on trying.<sup>3</sup> Did you write to Kaku?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> Illegible in the source

<sup>2</sup> Shamaldas Gandhiji, Lakshmidas Gandhiji's son

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the complaint by Gokibehn, Gandhiji's sister, that she was not receiving money regularly from Shamaldas.

SHRI NARANDAS GANDHI  
RASHTRİYASHALA  
NAVU PAPU  
RAJKOT, KATHIAWAR

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M. M. U./II. Also C. W. 8575. Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

*371. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

*June 7, 1940*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Yes, when you suspect a dear one, it is your duty to speak out. Suspicion is imaginary. It indicates the evil in you. It is one's duty to suppress it. But when it grows too strong and looks as if it might have consequences, it is necessary to give expression to it. My pain arises out of the fact that a suspicion should arise in my heart. There have been such occasions earlier and my suspicions proved right.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4349; Also S. G. 84

*372. TO SEVAGRAM WORKERS*

SEVAGRAM,

*June 7, 1940*

I have to state with regret that my suspicion falls upon A. I am convinced that no servant has done this. So we are left with our own people. When I inquire further, only A. remains to be cleared. She has been closer to me than a daughter, her service has been immense, it is no small matter to suspect her. But I can see no other way. She is equally sure that she has not done it. Under these circumstances, a fast is the only easy way left to me. My fast may be considered as a measure of self-purification. Why should this suspicion arise in me? If she is innocent, then the suspicion indicates impurity in my love. Love never suspects. Faults cannot remain hidden to love. The loved ones feel secure. Ahimsa ordains that no one should look at A. with hatred. Everyone should continue to love her. Let no one presume

that she is a liar and that my suspicion is well founded. I shall not be unhappy if she is found innocent. I shall dance with joy.

My fast commences from tomorrow. I have no idea how long it will last. I shall be guided by the intelligence and strength that God may grant me. No one need worry

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6866; also C. W. 4674

### 373. NOTE TO PYARELAL AND MAHADEV DESAI

*June 7, 1940*

You should bear with me. The whole thing reminds me of S. M. Incident<sup>1</sup>. My talk with her makes me tremble. I will not tell you about that today. I will tell you some other time. This will bring to light a good many things. This fast seems to have come as a godsend.

[ From Gujarati ]

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

### 374. NOTE TO MAHADEV DESAI

*June 7, 1940*

Ghanshyamdas or anybody else who may be thinking of coming here today should give up the idea. I shall know today what the inner voice says. I have no intention at all this time of carrying the fast to the point of physical suffering. I want to be ready for the 17th<sup>2</sup> and for other work. I wish to fast only as long as I can bear.

As I was preparing to send this note, I got yours. This answers part of it. Rest later. Today I want complete peace. Continue to send your suggestions. I will not reply today.

[ From Gujarati ]

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

<sup>1</sup> Sheikh Mehtab incident; *vide* "A Note", 3-6-1940.

<sup>2</sup> On which date the Congress Working Committee was meeting at Wardha

### 375. A NOTE

[ Before June 8, 1940 ]<sup>1</sup>

Now all this is unnecessary discussion. Can't you see that I am not in a position to engage you in any work. Why this suspicion against one whom I have loved more than a daughter? I cannot force the suspicion out. Do please leave me alone for the present. You may follow the way God shows you. Leave me in peace. I shall see my way clear when my suspicion is either proved or dispelled. At present, everything is dark. I have not understood why you should want to fast with me. If you do so, you will be coercing me. I thought it was to be a sympathetic fast for a day today. That, too, I would not permit.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 682

### 376. NON-VIOLENCE AND KHADI

Mr. Richard Gregg, one of whose letters I reproduced some time ago, has sent another which I share with the reader:<sup>2</sup>

All these months since I wrote you last I have been wrestling intellectually with the problem of discipline for non-violence and of non-violent persuasion and conversion, and how to state them and their solution in Western terminology. As I think I wrote you, I am working on a book about those two aspects of satyagraha, to supplement my *Power of non-violence* . . . My effort is to try to get the Western world to realize the validity and practicalness of your entire programme.

I have been so glad that during these last few months you have insisted so strongly that the Congress must earnestly and loyally take up the khadi programme before you will lead them in any open struggle of satyagraha against the Government. I see clear as crystal the necessity for that. You are absolutely right. . . .

Despite the war and all its horrors, I am optimistic as to the future of non-violence. Never before in all the history of the world have there been so many believers in non-violence, both in absolute number and also relatively to the rest of the population. Never before has that belief been found in all groups, classes, religions and occupations. Never before have so many

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to the fast which Gandhiji was to undertake from the 8th

<sup>2</sup> Only extracts of the letter are reproduced here

prominent statesmen stated earnestly, clearly and publicly the folly, futility and appalling results of war and violence. Never have so many military men been so unsure of the validity and ultimate effectiveness of their method.

All during the past two years and rapidly since the war began, the organized peace movements of Britain and America have grown. . . .

Up to March 9th 26,681 men among the military conscripts of Great Britain had been officially registered as conscientious objectors to war, as compared with about 16,000 for the entire four years of the war of 1914-18. . . . In the five or six calls of conscripts in Great Britain between last June and March of this year the percentage of C. O.'s ranged from 1.6 to 2.2%. This may be interestingly compared with the estimate that in all countries the really effective or decisive work of government is done by not over 2% of the population. . . .

If it be true that man's desire for order and significance in his life are stronger than fear and hate, the only programme which can produce order and significance to life will have non-violence as its back-bone. This places a great responsibility upon the believers in non-violence. It will require of them great thought, discipline and social invention. I consider your khadi programme one of those great social inventions. The Wardha education scheme is another.

I am writing a letter to J. C. Kumarappa about some items that that I have long wanted to discuss with him, a set of suggestions for possible experiment by the A. I. V. I. A. One is to try hanging small mosquito-net bags containing naphthaline moth balls in village wells a yard or more above the level of the water. The odour of the moth ball is much disliked by mosquitoes, and as it is slightly heavier than unscented air it would lie like a blanket over the surface of the water the keep the mosquitoes from laying their eggs in the water, without harming the water or killing the mosquitoes. Another application of the same idea would be planting certain water-living aromatic herbs along the banks of village tanks and rivers, close to the water's edge. Mosquitoes lay their eggs preferably in shallow water so that the larvae can escape being eaten by small fishes. If the right herbs, of a kind whose odour is repellent to mosquitoes, were thus planted and kept growing, it would seem likely to cut down the malaria in this way. Anyhow I think these two experiments worth trying. The mint family of herbs are known to be repellent to mosquitoes.

Mr. Gregg is a careful thinker. He takes nothing for granted. The last paragraph of his letter shows his practical nature. But I know that no amount of logical thinking is going to establish the supremacy of non-violence on earth. The only thing that can do it is India's

ability to demonstrate beyond doubt its efficacy in gaining and defending national freedom.

SEVAGARAM, June 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 22-6-1940

377. *LETTER TO RICHARD B. GREGG*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

June 8, 1940

MY DEAR GOVIND,

Yours of 16th April. It is also going into *Harijan* with the paragraph cut out as you wanted<sup>1</sup>.

The letter is good. But all depends upon what we can do here.

Though you are doing good work where you are, I expect you and Radha<sup>2</sup> to turn up here one of these days.

Meanwhile my love to you and Radha.

BAPU

RICHARD B. GREGG, ESQ.

ELIAT SAINT

SOUTH NATICK MASS., U. S. A

From a photostat : C. W. 4521. Courtesy: Richard B. Gregg

378. *TO SEVAGRAM WORKERS*

June 8, 1940

I notice that no one is with me over my fast; on the contrary everyone opposes it. In this situation I cannot preserve my peace of mind. I have therefore decided to give up the idea of fasting. I shall eat when it is time to eat. This does not mean that my suspicion has been dispelled. Only God can dispel it. Nor do I feel that the intended fast was mistaken. But there are occasions when a man has to give up something for the sake of his colleagues. This is one such occasion. Krishnachandra may copy this in the note-book.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6866; Also C. W. 4674

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

<sup>2</sup> The addressee's wife

379. NOTE TO MAHADEV DESAI

[June 8, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

I did not ask about it.<sup>2</sup> The reason is that I had no proof at all, and still have none. Of circumstantial evidence I have plenty. I see her as another Sheikh Mehtab. You can put an end to everything. I ended the fast for the reason I have explained,<sup>3</sup> but the chapter is not closed for me.

[From Gujarati]

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

380. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

June 8, 1940

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I have been forgetting to write about Abha. You should write to Mahila Ashram and inform them that her expense will not be borne from here. She is to be admitted as a freeship holder. If the practice of exempting students from fees has been discontinued, then it is a different matter. With whom does the decision rest at present?

BAPU

[PS.]

I hope she will be allowed to wear the same clothes that she does here.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10602

381. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEVAGRAM,

June 8, 1940

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. My advice is that at present you should stay there. Let your health also improve. When you yourself feel bored.

<sup>1</sup> This appears to have been written on the day Gandhiji decided against a fast.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had written to Gandhiji that he would like to find out about the letter which Lilavati had lost

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

You will of course run away from there. Both of you are ill, i.e., in mind. Mental illness should not be neglected.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

MUNNALAL SHAH

VADILAL AROGYA BHAVAN

PANCHGANI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8535. Also C. W. 7094. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 382. A NOTE

*June 8, 1940*

I shall take only service from you. When you are sick, go to the kitchen as little as possible; you have to eat and drink merrily. If you cannot do this, then all service will be suspended.

The best thing would be for you to go to Zohra. Set her on the track and also do some spinning, etc. You should return when you are absolutely calm. But this is left entirely to your discretion. In my view Zohra's going will benefit neither Akbar nor Zohra. In this, I may be wrong.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 717

### 383. A NOTE

[After *June 8, 1940*]<sup>1</sup>

'Shall I or shall I not continue doing these two jobs which I used to perform before the theft incident?'—these words of yours in the morning had in them the sting of a scorpion. You say things to me which I do not dream of. Now my verdict is that you have to give up these two things also—shoes and latrine. You are not attached, so you need not be pained. And we shall be quits.

<sup>1</sup> From reference to the theft incident

What shall I write about the other thing? Time alone will show.  
It is my past experience.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 638

384. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 9, 1940*

CHI. AMRIT,

Your two letters came in together. Although the address was correctly written, the first letter went to Shegaon. Remarkable how the mistake continues. I suppose we must put up with it. I am sending the envelope for complaint.

Your Gujarati is flawless. It shows how you have picked up from the air. It is easy of course for those who know the Punjabi.

Yes, I have commenced your translation of "Our Duty"<sup>1</sup> and some other too. I shall insist on finishing all.

You must not damage your hand or arm. You should learn to draw the thread with the right hand like me.

By the by your watch does not work in my hands. After two days I gave up winding it.

I am glad you have patched up the internal quarrel. But how long will<sup>2</sup> patches last?

You ask me why silence. It is to avoid irritation and save my energy. The output of my work has certainly doubled. Irritation is almost nil. It would be a strain now to speak. I love my silence. I expect M.<sup>3</sup> is giving you all such titbits and A. S.<sup>4</sup>

Love.

BAPU

From the original : C. W. 3972. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7281

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Our Duty", 20-5-1940

<sup>2</sup> The source has "with".

<sup>3</sup> Mahadev Desai

<sup>4</sup> Amtussalaam

### 385. LETTER TO BHOLANATH

SEVAGRAM, via WARDHA,  
June 9, 1940

BHAI BHOLANATH,

I have received your letter. I see that the Dewan wants to evade the demands of the Praja Mandal. We have to make a stand somewhere. If you want to give up the insistence on the flag you may. Responsible government should be accepted as the goal. As for affiliation with the All-India Conference, seek a decision from Jawaharlal. I am in two minds.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1378

### 386. QUESTION BOX

#### ARRESTS

Q. You must know that arrests after arrests are being made under the defence of India Act. Now your favourite Dr. Lohia is taken up. I suppose you still see no reason for civil disobedience even as a protest against these arrests. Or maybe you think that these arrests are legitimate.

A. The question is apposite. Dr. Lohia is no more my favourite than any other Congressman. True he has come nearer to me than he was. Every arrest evokes my mental protest. But I am not in the habit of reducing all my thoughts to writing. I believe that our thoughts too produce effects, though not known to us or to the world. I felt that any public protest by me would be ineffective. All things are legitimate and illegitimate in war time. I regard war itself as illegitimate. Therefore all repression is bad from my standpoint. But I have as yet no effective remedy against war. Even, therefore, as I suffer war, I suffer these repressive acts of warmakers. One strange thing about India is that, so far as I know, it is not the people who are likely to help the Nazis that are being put under restraint, but those who are patriots hungering for the freedom of the country. In a free country they will be fighting against designs upon their country. Here their chief fault is that they are lovers of their country and its freedom. If the authorities have anything else against them, they should publish it. Repression is on the increase. They know that the Congress is the

most powerful instrument for preventing violence. The Congress has taken no step which might, in spite of its efforts to the contrary, result in violence. It is therefore difficult to understand these acts of repression. They seem to be part of a concerted plan, for they are prevalent in almost all provinces. One reflection I put before Congressmen for what it is worth. Imprisonment has no terror for them. Civil disobedience means certain imprisonment. The difference is that in the one case it is courted, in the other it comes uninvited. Therefore any step the Congress can take will be not to secure the discharge of the persons arrested but to take wind out of the Government sails by offering more victims than they can take. Therefore the question is whether the Congress should take that step or not.

#### INCONSISTENCY

Q. Recently you wrote: "The present is no atmosphere for influencing the Britisher in the right direction through civil disobedience." And in the same article<sup>1</sup> you said: "I would unhesitatingly declare civil disobedience if the country was demonstrably non-violent and disciplined." Now the question is, if the country is demonstrably non-violent after some time, and the war continues for a long time, will you start civil disobedience? And if you start it, will it not embarrass the Britisher? Will you hesitate to start civil disobedience if the group outside the congress are not non-violent?

A. If you will fill in the sentences left to be understood in my article, you will not find any inconsistency. The present atmosphere means English unreadiness to put up with anything when the safety of English homes is at stake. It also means our very incomplete non-violence. If we were completely and therefore demonstrably non-violent, it would mean that the British themselves would recognize our non-violence. Any purely non-violent step cannot embarrass them. As a matter of fact, if our non-violence was complete, we would have no internal differences, no friction in the Congress ranks, no friction with non-Congressmen. In that case there would be no occasion for civil disobedience at all. I have said as much only recently in these columns. I have put the same thing in another manner in the sentence quoted by you. For a non-violent step taken by a united nation will carry its own fruition without any bitterness. Therefore I should be ready for action the moment the non-violence of my dream is establish, no matter in what peril the British may find themselves.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Not Yet", 28-5-1940.

Indeed, if that non-violence comes, it will not only save India but also save Britain and France. But you will be on safe ground in saying that I wrote nonsense because I knew that the degree of non-violence required by me was not forthcoming in my time. I am an irrepres- sible optimist. No scientist starts his experiments with a faint heart. I belong to the tribe of Columbus and Stevenson who hoped against hope in the face of heaviest odds. The days of miracles are not gone. They will abide so long as God abides. Your second question is answered in the foregoing. Of course in the picture here presented non- Congress groups will also have accepted non-violence . But first things first. Let the congress put its own house in order.

#### A WIDOW'S DIFFICULTY

Q. I am a Bengali Brahmin widow. Since my widowhood - these 24 years - I have observed strict rules about my food. I have my separate widow's kitchen and utensils even in my own family. I believe in your ideal of truth and non-violence , I am a habitual wearer of Khadi since 1930 and a regular spinner. Our Mahila Samaj has established a Harijan school in a Harijan village in Dacca. I go there and mix with the Harijans. I mix freely with my Muslim sisters towards whom I have nothing but goodwill. But I cannot interdine with Harijans or any other non-Brahmin caste. Now can't orthodox widows like me enlist as satyagrahis, passive and active?

A. According to the congress constitution you have a perfect right to be enlisted. You can even enforce your right. But since you ask me, I would dissuade you from being enlisted. I know the punctilious way in which Bengali widows observe the rules custom has prescribed for them. But widows who dedicate themselves to the country's cause, and that in a non-violent way, should have no scruples in dining with anybody. I do not believe that dining with people, no matter who they are, hinders spiritual progress. It is the motive which is the deciding factor. If a widow approaches every task in a spirit of service, it is well with her. A widow may observe all the dining and other rules with meticulous care and yet not be a true widow if she is not of a pure heart. You know as well as I do that outward observance of rules governing a society often covers hypocrites. I would, therefore, advise you to disregard the restriction on inter-dining and the like as a hindrance to spiritual and national progress and concentrate on cultivation of the heart. In the satyagraha dal I should like to have not self-satisfied persons but those who have used their reason and chosen a way of life that has commended itself to both head and heart.

SEVAGRAM, June 10, 1940

*Harijan*, 15-6-1940

### 387. NOTES

#### COPYRIGHT

Shri Satish Kalelkar writes:

Being modern in my views and rather materialistic in temperament, I have always been sceptical about your views on the question of copyright. If I remember rightly, you needed some persuasion from friends before you consented to hold the copyright and save the profits on your *Autobiography* for the sake of the A. I. S. A. I agree that a seeker of truth should welcome its spread, and not put obstacles by insisting on the copyright. But surely there is a limit to this liberality, and an unscrupulous exploitation of it ought to be prevented.

Perhaps you are aware that *Harijan* comes in very handy to the evening papers on Saturday and morning papers on Sunday. Some editors, not content with the “whole week-end off”, draw liberally on *Harijan* even on Monday morning.

I am not discussing here the possibility of raising the already excellent sales of *Harijan* by stopping the reproduction of articles in other papers, nor am I opposed to your view that truth should be spread widely. There are other results, however, which must not be ignored. Some Anglo-Indian papers, which are not exactly in love with the nationalist movement, sometimes reproduce convenient excerpts, and sometimes one side only, of issues discussed in a series of articles in *Harijan*. Takes for example the Ajmer case. The Anglo-Indian papers, that published an account of the incident and your cautious advice to the Ajmer workers to restrain themselves, took care to publish the Commissioner’s ‘explanation’<sup>1</sup> in that connection; but they did not consider it a part of the ‘gentleman’s agreement’ with regard to the free reproduction of articles from *Harijan*, to publish the final and irrefutable reply from your pen. Your unwillingness in accusing before all facts are known, and your deliberate moderation and openness are interpreted as ‘Gandhi’s admission’. The ‘awkward’ articles that appear in *Harijan* are safely ignored!

Perhaps you would argue that truth needs no tomtomming, and that it can never be suppressed in spite of a conspiracy of silence in papers. But surely one may not be a party to the spread of untruth by indirectly consenting to the publication of half-truths. Don’t you agree that you should

<sup>1</sup> Vide “The Ajmer Trouble”, 30-4-1940.

qualify your free permission so as to stop misleading excerpts and only a few of a series of articles being reproduced in other papers?

There is much force in what young Kalelkar says. I own that often my articles suffer from condensation. They are made to yield a meaning I had never intended. The Ajmer illustration quoted by my correspondent is clinching. This matter of copy-right has been often brought before me. But I have not the heart to copyright my articles. I know that there is a financial loss. But as *Harijan* is not published for profit I am content so long as there is no deficit. I must believe that in the end my self-denial must serve the cause of truth.

#### PLEASE SPARE ME

In spite of repeated entreaties friends continue to ask me for messages. I have stated before and repeat here that I am of no use for such services. I do send messages where I must, for instance to meetings which I promoted or which demand attention for delicate reasons. Apart from such occasions I must resolutely deny myself the pleasure of sending messages or replying to letters. Though I have imposed on myself indefinite silence for, among other things, coping with the very heavy work which I must go through, I am daily in arrears. In these circumstances enthusiasts will please forgive me if I sent them neither messages nor even acknowledgments.

#### ANDREWS MEMORIAL

As usual, collections for this memorial will not come spontaneously. They will have to be organized. It is much to be wished that the numerous devotees of Deenabandhu will take up the work themselves. I am happy, therefore, to be able to announce that in Agra it is going to be done by the students. Nothing can be more fitting than that all over they should organize what after all is a paltry collection. Charlie Andrews was above all an educationist of a very high order. He came out as an educationist to help his friend and chief Principal Rudra. He picked up an educational institution of international reputation as his final home. To the making of it he dedicated his life. Even without Andrews's closest association with it, Santiniketan by itself is worthy of the devotion of the student world. I hope, therefore, that the students of India will take a leading part in the work of collections. Then come the poor people who have specially benefited by his labours. It would be a great thing, a proper thing, if the five lacs were made up of offerings of thousands of students and poor people rather

than from the donations of the few special rich friends of Deenabandhu with whom they had come in close touch and of whose worth they had intimate knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

#### TRIBUTE FROM SOUTH AFRICA

The joint Hon. Secretaries of the Natal Indian Association send me the following:

At a meeting of the Indian community held under the auspices of the Association, on the death of the Rev. C. F. Andrews, the followings resolution was passed unanimously:

‘This meeting of the Indian community held under the auspices of the Natal Indian Association (with which are amalgamated the Natal Indian Congress and the colonial Born and Settler Indian Association) deeply mourns the death of the Rev. C. F. Andrews, whose services in the cause of the South African Indians were outstanding and whose humanitarian appeals for the better treatment of Indians overseas have always received the ear of the Government and the attention of responsible European opinion. This meeting records its deepest sympathy and conveys its condolence to his family, Mahatma Gandhi, Poet Tagore and to the Indian nation.’

The meeting was attended by not only the members of the Indian community but also by leading Europeans including the Rt. Rev. Archdeacon Harris, who, after offering prayers, spoke of the sterling qualities and the humanitarian spirit of Mr. C. F. Andrews. The Indian community of South Africa have lost a friend and guide. His services in the cause of our community in South Africa, his simplicity, his constant endeavours to bring about a better understanding between the European and Indian communities, his constant thought for the poor, will always remain fresh in the minds of those of us who have had the pleasure of working with him.

We respectfully tender to you our condolences, for we know that in Mr. Andrews you have lost a trusted friend.

#### GWALIOR AND KHADI

The A. I. S. A. has the information that the Gwalior State has issued the following departmental order in connection with khadi. The original is in Hindustani:

In the Tariff of Revenue it has been laid down that no import duty should be charged on any kind of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth whether

<sup>1</sup> For an appeal for funds for the Deenabandhu Memorial signed by Gandhiji and some others, *vide* Appendix “Deenabandhu Memorial”, 1-6-1940.

cotton, woollen or silk. It has come to our notice that with the increasing popularity of khadi, very often khadi made out of mill-yarn is passed for genuine hand-spun and hand-woven khadi, free of customs duty. This causes loss of revenue and nullifies the object of exempting the industry of hand-spinning and hand-weaving from duty. It should be realized that hand-spun and hand-woven khadi only is to be exempted from customs duty. To secure this end it is notified that khadi bearing an A. I. S. A. certificate only should get the benefit of the exemption.

The Gwalior authorities deserve commendation for their alertness. The next step should be a grant to local khadi and its use by elite of Gwalior.

#### HARIJANS OF GARHWAL

Only the other day I had the good fortune to report a case of Harijan bride being carried in *palki* or *dandi* in Garhwal without let or hindrance. But Shri Shyamlal of the Harijan Sevak Sangh informs me that the case has proved to be an exception, and that prevention of the use of a *dandi* by Harijans flourishes almost as before. Two such cases have come under his observation only recently. Harijans who had dared to make use of *dandis* were “mercilessly beaten”. There is an awakening among Harijans. They have approached the Commissioner for protection which he had promised if a fortnight’s previous notice is given to him. But that means more bad blood. The real thing required is conversion of the caste Hindus. I understand that Pandit Jawaharlal is specially interesting himself in the matter. The U. P. C. C. is moving. All these are steps in the right direction. Let us hope that the labours of the reformers will bear fruit and Harijans. Will no longer need police protection. But they need not wait for the success of the reformers’ labours. They must assert their right even if it be by seeking police protection. It should be remembered that Garhwal produces fine soldiers. It is a part of India which is noted for its beauty. Shall caste Hindus alone be vile?

#### A WALKING TOUR

Shrimati G. Vishalakshi of Gokulam Harijan Colony of Madras writes:

Nine Harijan students of the Gokulam Harijan Colony taking their training in village welfare work propose to tour the villages on foot in the neighbouring district of Chinglepet. In the course of their training in the Ashram they learn the cause of their backwardness and how to cure it by being self-reliant. They will study first-hand the economic condition of the vil-

lagers and what types of cottage industries could be taken up in a particular village. They will teach habits of thrift, how savings could be pooled and how they can derive benefit by organizing themselves into co-operative societies for such purposes as better living, agriculture, credit, and industries as mat-making, hand-loom weaving, etc. The students who are trained for welfare work in the villages are expected to settle in villages and do welfare work without expecting any subsidy from Government or public bodies. They will earn a living by the industries they have learnt like spinning, weaving, mat-making, paper-making and bee-keeping. As they tour in the villages they will also speak to the villagers about these cottage industries which they can take up as spare-time work. The party start from Madras on 1st June and will complete their tour on 30th June. As all of them are Harijan they will visit *cheries* only unless invited to go the caste-Hindu villages also. They will depend for the daily food during their tour on the hospitality of the *cheries* they visit.

I hope the tourists started on their tour on the 1st. It is a good plan. If the tour succeeds, it will be an example to copy. If the tourists are of the right type, they will succeed. They won't be a burden on the villagers, for they will make ample return for the hospitality they will receive from them.

SEVAGRAM, June 10, 1940

*Harijan*, 15-6-1940

388. *LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM K. JERAJANI*

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 10, 1940*

BHAI KAKUBHAI,

I am sending you herewith the resolution of the All-India Spinners' Association duly signed by me. It has to be delivered to the bank.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10845. Courtesy: Purushottam K. Jerajani

389. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 10, 1940*

CHI. KAKA,

It seems there has been some confusion about sending a wire to Tandonji.<sup>1</sup> I had drafted it all right. Amritlal thought that it was to be sent to you. The problem now is what should be done. You alone can decide the date. The meeting is fixed for the 19th now instead of the 14th. But I cannot decide whether to call him on the 14th or the 18th. You will get this letter tomorrow, so send a wire as you think fit. I will of course accept whatever you decide.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10924

390. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*June 10, 1940*

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. Everything is in mess. We have to find our way through it. We are in God's hands. He will do as he wills.

As regards the organization<sup>2</sup> do as your heart bids you. I have no objection but I shall not encourage you either.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10407. Also c. W. 6846. Courtesy: Premabehn kantik

<sup>1</sup> Purushottamdas Tandon

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had been asked to organize the women's wing of the Congress and had sought Gandhiji's guidance.

### 391. TWO PARTIES

Private and public appeals are being made to me to call all parties together and arrive at a common agreement, and then, they say, we shall get what we want from Great Britain. These good friends forget one central fact. The Congress, which professes to speak for India and wants unadulterated independence, cannot strike a common measure of agreement with those who do not. To act otherwise would be to betray its trust. In the nature of things, therefore, there can be no 'all parties conference' unless all have a common purpose.

The British Government would not ask for a common agreement if they recognized any one party to be strong enough to take delivery. The Congress, it must be admitted, has not that strength today. It has come to its present position in the face of opposition. If it does not weaken and has enough patience, it will develop sufficient strength to take delivery. It is an illusion created by ourselves that we must come to an agreement with all parties before we can make any progress.

There is only one democratic, elected political organization, i.e. the Congress. All the others are self-appointed, or elected on a sectional basis. The Muslim League is an organization which, like the congress, is popularly elected. But it is frankly communal and wants to divide India into two parts, one Hindu and the other Muslim. I read an appeal by a Muslim Leaguer suggesting that the British Government should come to terms with the Muslims and depend upon Muslim aid. That would be one way of settling the question, but also of perpetuating British rule. The Hindu Mahasabha will no doubt want favoured treatment for Hindus including Hindu States.

Thus for the present purpose there are only two parties - the Congress and those who side with the Congress, and the parties who do not. Between the two there is no meeting ground without the one or the other surrendering its purpose. The other parties must be presumed to be as constant in their purpose as the Congress claims to be in its. Therefore there is a stalemate. But the stalemate is only apparent. An agreement independently of evolving a common demand the Congress must seek and has always sought. It is the process of conversion. Its non-violence forbids the Congress from standing aloof and riding the high horse as the opponents say. On the contrary, it has to woo all parties, disarm suspicion and create trust in its bona fides. This it can only do when it has cleaned its own stables. The process

may take time. That time must be given. It will be no waste. But if the Congress loses hope and faith and comes to the conclusion that it must surrender its original position for the purpose of getting a common measure of agreement. It will cease to be the power it is. Today it is the sheet-anchor of India's hope and faith. It will be well with it if it refuses to move away from its moorings, whether it is in a minority or a majority.

SEVAGRAM, June 11, 1940

*Harijan*, 15-6-1940

### 392. *LETTER TO RAMIBEHN K. PAREKH*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 11, 1940*

CHI. RAMI<sup>1</sup>,

I have your letter. I got it today and I am replying to it immediately. It came into my hands after the post had been despatched. You are suffering a good deal. Do get the tonsils removed. One should be very careful about children's diet. I hear from Kunvarhi every week at least. He is keeping good health. There is no need at all to worry about him. It is enough if you do not cause him worry.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9739. Also C. W. 719. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

### 393. *LETTER TO BALIBEHN M. ADALJA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 11, 1940*

CHI. BALI<sup>2</sup>,

I got your letter. You have been born to wear yourself out in the service of the family. And so you take upon yourself even unnecessary burdens, but God fulfils everybody's aspirations. I do not, therefore, pity you. I shower praises on you from here.

<sup>1</sup> Harilal Gandhi's daughter

<sup>2</sup> Harilal Gandhi's sister-in-law

I know that you will train Saraswati<sup>1</sup> perfectly well. You must have got her tonsils removed. It will be better if it rains there now. You have taken a great risk by collecting such a large crowd there at such a time. Kunvarji will most certainly spend the monsoon months in Panchgani. He is doing very well. Kumil<sup>2</sup> must be well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9738. Also C. W. 718. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

### 394. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

[June 11, 1940]<sup>3</sup>

I am convinced that your good lies in your joining college. God will provide the funds for completing the medical course. Otherwise neither you nor I shall find any peace of mind. You do have that capability and you have the will. There is certainly nothing wrong about it. Hence, you should start tomorrow. Ba's trouble is only temporary.

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 11285

### 395. LETTER TO K. F. NARIMAN

[Before June 12, 1940]<sup>4</sup>

Do come.<sup>5</sup> Events<sup>6</sup> have made no difference in my regard for you and you will find me the same you used to admire.

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

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Kantilal, Harilal Gandhi's son

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

<sup>3</sup> From the reference to the addressee leaving for Bombay "tomorrow" namely, on June 12 1940, *vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 12-6-1940 and "Letter to Vijayabehn M. Pancholi", 12-6-1940

<sup>4</sup> In the source this precedes the letters of June 12.

<sup>5</sup> These words are in Gujarati in the source. The addressee had written: "I want to go to you to understand Gandhism, there was a time when I used to revere you."

<sup>6</sup> Presumably a reference to the episode relating to the addressee's charges against Vallabhbai Patel that the latter used his influence to defeat him in the Bombay Legislature leadership election in 1937. Gandhiji, who found Vallabhbai Patel irreproachable, persuaded the addressee to withdraw his allegations which were ultimately proved baseless by arbitrators.

396. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*June 12, 1940*

CHI. AMRIT,

After many days there is a post for you. Here it is.<sup>1</sup> Lilavati<sup>2</sup> has passed her examination. She is delirious with joy. Probably she goes to Bombay today to arrange for her college course. Valjibhai's son Manu<sup>3</sup> comes first and has gained prizes. He is a wonderful boy. The heat is melting.

Love

BAPU

From the original: C. W . 3973. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7282

397. *LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE*<sup>4</sup>

*June 12, 1940*

I was delighted to have your unexpected letter<sup>5</sup>. I thank you for it. It revived the memories of the frank and cordial talks we used to have. You are passing through trying times. My incessant prayer is that peace may take The place of strife.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE  
2 CHESTER PLACE  
REGENTS' PARK  
N. W. I. LONDON

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

<sup>1</sup> This was a letter from the Editorial Committee of the Social Service Quarterly requesting her to contribute an article.

<sup>2</sup> Lilavati Asar

<sup>3</sup> Mahendra V. Desai

<sup>4</sup> Then Lord Privy Seal

<sup>5</sup> Which read: "Our religion, our culture, our very life is in jeopardy—I look to the time when I worked at your constitution as very usefully spent. you did not like it, but you did not doubt my sincerity nor did I yours."

398. *LETTER TO K. F. NARIMAN*

*June 12, 1940*

I am serving the Congress because it is not inconsistent with the service of God. I assure you I am trying to do the best I can.

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

399. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*

WARDHA,

*June 12, 1940*

CHI. KAKA,

What you have sent about Hindustani is controversial. I feel that nothing would be published just now. Go on doing quietly whatever you wish to do. Have a brief discussion with me on this matter when you come here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10988

400. *LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 12, 1940*

CHI. VIJAYA,

At last you have gone back to Ambala. You could not peep in here! I did acknowledge the handkerchiefs. Only those are used these days. What news may I give of Ba ? I can write about her if she is not well. When I give no news, you should understand that all are well. Lilavati has passed and is mad with joy. She will now go to Bombay for further study.

*Blessings to both of you from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7129. Also C. W. 4621. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

401. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
June 12, 1940

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

You do not seem to have received the letter I wrote to you in reply to yours. Hence I repeat here what I said in that letter. Come over here for some days. You have even expressed your desire that Vinoba should explain your idea to me in detail. Krishnadas will be arriving here before the 15th. It is not right that you should fall ill so often. It is not necessary to eat like a labourer in order to live as he does. If the body consents, one must eat. I will see about . . .<sup>1</sup> I will have to find . . .<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI PRABHUDAS GANDHI  
P.O. ASAFPUR  
DISTT. BADAUN

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 33048

402. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
June 13, 1940

CHI. MANI,

When you come , please bring an alarm-clock for Balvantsinha.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI MANIBEHN PATEL  
C/O SARDAR PATEL  
68 MARINE DRIVE

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro- 4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 126*

<sup>1</sup> A word at each of these places is illegible in the source.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

#### 403. LETTER TO VIDYAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
June 13, 1940

CHI. VIDYA,

I have your letter. It is God's grace that Chi. Virendra has recovered.

You have shown much patience.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

RANI VIDYAVATIJI  
KOROKALA  
BENIGUNJ  
HARDOI, U. P.

From the Hindi original : Rani Vidyavati Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

#### 404. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,  
June 14, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

The weather has taken a sudden turn for the better.

Quite stupidly I forgot to send you the articles yesterday. I don't send them today. They will be useless. You will have your Harijan.

Herewith letter from Bapa<sup>1</sup>. Of course you will accept his proposal.

Some corrected translations are going by book post. You will be interested to know that they took me 1<sup>o</sup> hours. There is as much work left to clear the balance.

I finished the arrears of correspondence yesterday. Silence has done the trick. I don't feel like speaking at all. I had to last night for Tandonji. As soon as he went, I lapsed into silence again.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3974. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. W. 7283

<sup>1</sup> Amritlal V. Thakkar

405. *LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

June 14, 1940

CHI. KANCHAN,

I had given instructions about Pratap and Lokvani. But what am I to do if you do not receive them? I am sending you some old issues that I could find. It seems the current issues have stopped coming. Don't you get anything else to read besides these? There was a letter from Valod to say that neither Munnalal nor you have been writing to them. What laziness and what a shame!

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI KANCHANBEHN SHAH

VADILAL AROGYA BHAVAN

PANCHGANI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8281. Also C. W. 7095. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

406. *LETTER TO PYARELAL*

June 14, 1940

CHI. PYARELAL,

A. S. has written me a number of letters about the talks she had with you. She has also given me the gist of a letter you wrote to her in Urdu. I have not understood much of it. I have written to her to that effect and stopped further discussion. But it would be nice if you could write about it. What happened? In any case you were to write about A. S.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

407. *LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

June 14, 1940

CHI. KRISHNACHADRA,

*Brahmacharya* and ahimsa have reference to the body, hence they are included in physical disciplines. I also did not like the word

‘physical’. It does not bother me now. This does not, however, mean that mental lechery is excusable or less reprehensible.

*Namasmaran*<sup>1</sup> can be looked upon as the king of *yajnas* only in one sense. It needs practically no physical effort and yields the maximum fruit.

I am not satisfied about the pen and letter. But it does not seem proper to investigate further. Hence I have left it to God.

I had not fixed any duration while taking up the fast; so there was no difficulty in abandoning it. Naturally, there was no moral blemish. It often becomes a duty to respect the views of one’s colleagues. The fast was intended for my satisfaction and my purification. But the opposition of colleagues pained me. So I abandoned it. The fast was necessary. But I had to choose between two duties.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4351

#### 408. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

[Before June 15, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

MAULANA ABULKALAM AZAD

MAHAL NAINITAL

YOUR WIRE AND LETTER IN VIEW YOUR HEALTH  
DATE CAN STAND. AFTER MIDDLE JUNE WEATHER  
HERE QUITE COOL. DIFFICULT FOR ME STAY OUT  
INDEFINITELY.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Remembering the name of God

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to improvement of weather after middle June

#### 409. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,  
June 15, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

The letter at the back of whose cover you forgot to give your name, etc., was censored and received a day late.

C. P.<sup>1</sup> never came, never wrote.<sup>2</sup> At last Ramachandran went yesterday.

*Harijan Sevak* translations are bad. I am writing to Viyogi Hari.

Your Gujarati is better.

You are not doing the right thing in not giving yourself rest during the day.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3975. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7284

#### 410. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

SEVAGRAM,  
June 15, 1940

CHI. KAKA,

Tandonji loves you. He likes your company. He might feel lonely in Poona and therefore he wishes to take you along. It is your duty to go. Make the necessary arrangements for his lodging and boarding. Be with him in his work. Give him whatever help he asks for. Since you have withdrawn the invitation, no responsibility rests on your shoulders now. Do whatever you can as a silent member and worker. Your going to Poona will not be fruitless.

The business of the Prachar Samiti cannot be settled in a hurry. We shall think over it when you return. I shall have to go a little deeper into it. There is of course no need to worry about it.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Travancore", 17-7-1940.

[PS.]

To be free from all activity is liberation from the physical self.  
How can I, having a body, teach you that?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10931

*411. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH*

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 15, 1940*

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Balvantsinha has asked for Apu's help in farm work. I feel that is reasonable. Apu is strong and it is not right to use him in the kitchen, though of course I do believe that the kitchen should be entrusted to a man. He feels that if you are agreeable Apu should be transferred to him.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10603

*412. LETTER TO PYARELAL*

*June 15, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

What you have written is certainly useful. That means that the blame I put on A. S. was not justified.

Then she said that the papers fell out from her Koran. They were saved from falling into somebody's hands. What did those papers contain? Into whose hands could they have fallen? Or have I understood it all wrong?

On the whole in your opinion she is a saintly woman and I am being unfair to her.

BAPU

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

### 413 DUTY OF INDIANS OVERSEAS

Last week I referred to the duty of the students to make collections for the Deenabandhu memorial.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brookes's letter,<sup>2</sup> reproduced elsewhere in this issue, should remind Indians overseas of their special duty. No man laboured so hard, so sincerely or so effectively as C. F. Andrews in their behalf. He travelled to distant lands to study personally the condition of the Indian settlers in those lands. I hope that these settlers will make collections and send their quota to the Memorial Fund.

SEVAGRAM, June 16, 1940

*Harijan*, 22-6-1940

### 414. NOTES

#### CASTE HINDU MARRIES HARIJAN GIRL

Shri Harekrushna Mahtab writes a letter about a marriage between a caste Hindu and a Harijan girl in Orissa. From it I take the following:<sup>3</sup>

I congratulate Shri Radhamadhab on his courage in breaking through the rock of caste superstition. I hope his example will be copied by other young men. May the union prove happy. I would advise Shri Radhamadhab to arrange for the proper education of his wife who, I understand, has not received any scholastic training.

#### ANOTHER TRIBUTE

Dr. Edgar Brookers has sent me through my son a letter about his contacts with Deenabandhu. Dr. Brookes, my son tells me, is a very learned man and deeply religious. He is a well-known figure in South Africa apart from his being a senator. Here is Dr. Brookes's letter to me:

You will pardon me, a complete stranger, for thus writing to you. I am elected senator representing the Bantu 'Natives' of Natal and Zululand in the Union Parliament. As such I have had the privilege of speaking more than once on behalf of groups of Indians suffering from disabilities in South Africa. The urge to write to you has come to me as during these last weeks I

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 10-6-1940

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the following item.

<sup>3</sup> Not reproduced here. The letter described how a caste-Hindu youth had married a Harijan girl in the face of opposition from his as well as her relations.

have been reading C. F. Andrews's *Christ in the Silence*, and thinking very much of my dear friend who has entered into fuller life - I dare not say 'died', for I have never felt him more living. Knowing something of what your friendship meant to him and his ( I imagine) to you, I felt that I should like to tell you a little of our contact. I met him not only here in south Africa but also in England and France, where we both spoke in connection with the Oxford Group movement. He is godfather to my youngest son. Mr. Andrews had the greatest of gifts - love. In its weakness, it is yet the strongest thing on earth - 'terrible as an army with banners'. You have taught us that lesson. I would rather be like Mr. Andrews than the Prime Minister of a great country. He was the closest among all the people that I have ever met to what I imagine Jesus to have been. He brought something to India. He learned much from India, and much from yourself. Those who were made humbler and better by knowing him will, like myself, want to thank you for helping to make him what he was.

The letter shows how great was the influence that Deenabandhu produced on those with whom he came in contact.

#### ADULT LITERACY

The Gandhi Mission Society, Tiruvonnainallur, send me their half-yearly report of adult literacy work. The total number of adults educated was 197. But the problem that really faces them is ' how to enable the adults to retain the knowledge thus gained'.

Nearly half the members who attended the class during the first session have approached the workers in charge to repeat the lessons. In fact they had lapsed into illiteracy. The workers are racking their brains to devise means to prevent this lapse.

The workers need not rack their brains at all. The lapse is bound to occur after the short courses that are given. The lapse can only be prevented by correlating the teaching to the villagers' daily wants. The dry knowledge of the three R's is not even now, it can never be, a permanent part of the villagers' life. They must have knowledge given to them which they must use daily. It must not be thrust upon them. They should have the appetite for it. What they have today is something they neither want nor appreciate. Give the villagers village arithmetic, village geography, village history and the literary knowledge that they must have use daily, i.e., reading and writing letters, etc. They will treasure such knowledge and pass on to the other stages. They have no use for books which give them nothing of daily use.

SEVAGRAM, June 16, 1940

*Harijan*, 22-6-1940

#### 415. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,  
June 16, 1940

CHI. MANILAL,

This time it can be said that you wrote a very long letter. Do not feel apprehensive that it will bore me. That cannot be.

What you say about Sorabji<sup>1</sup> is painful. It is surprising that even Christopher<sup>2</sup> did not remain with you. But I do not worry in the least that you are left alone. Never mind if you find yourself alone for the sake of what you regard as truth.

I have already written to you about Medh. He will come back. No one is going to arrest me in a hurry. I am myself in no hurry to start a fight. It is enough that I am prepared. This is the position today. Tomorrow rests with God.

Ba is fairly well. Krishnadas<sup>3</sup> and Manojna<sup>4</sup> have returned from Nasik. Ramdas is touring and selling soap. He is in the good books of his boss and is, therefore, getting along quite well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4914

#### 416. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
June 16, 1940

CHI. VALLABHRAM,

Your settling down in Bombay means that you cannot pay your way in Ahmedabad. If it is so what a sad state of affairs!

You must have gone to Poona and examined Valjibhai. I have advised him that when you are ready to call him to Bombay he should go.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

<sup>1</sup> Sorabji Rustomji

<sup>2</sup> An inmate of Phoenix Ashram

<sup>3</sup> Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

<sup>4</sup> Wife of Krishnadas

SHRI VALLABHRAM VAID  
1756 JUGAL BHUVAN  
GANDHI ROAD  
AHMEDABAD

From Gujarati: C. W. 2910. Courtesy: Vallabhram Vaidya

#### 417. LETTER TO PYARELAL

*June 16, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

A. S. says that you are still not careful about your food. This is not good. Relieve me of this anxiety. It will end the trouble if you eat whatever A. S. cooks and as often as she cooks.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 418. LETTER TO PYARELAL

*June 16, 1940*

CHI. PYARELAL,

A. S. categorically says that she never told you that she did not tell me. Anyway, she told me and I wrote to you only after she had told me. She said it with such pain that I asked her why she herself did not feed you. I did not want to force her. I would never do it. I would only wish that you eat your food regularly and regain your failing health.

As for my words, no doubt should have arisen in your mind at all. Sushila had already told me. But since I know that you do not approve of Sushila telling me anything about you, I usually do not act on what she says. If A. S. had not told me, I would not have told you anything even though I would have felt upset.

There was no need for me to comment on that letter of yours. I was not surprised by what you wrote. Where is the need for me to show ‘delicacy’<sup>1</sup> in my dealings with you? If I come to know

<sup>1</sup> The English word has been used in the source.

something, I would give my reactions. What was your last sentence? 'Is it about her whom you consider a saintly woman?. That is my question. Even though I am aware of her many qualities, I have my doubts about her being a saintly woman. She eats herself away. I have already told her that. I would feel happy if you see her as a saintly woman. In that case I will try to see her as such. I think now all the questions have been dealt with.

BAPU

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

### *419. NOTE TO SUSHILA NAYYAR*

*June 16, 1940*

It is strange. How sensitive and suspicious you are! On such occasions silence irks. But for my silence there would have been no misunderstanding. Still I cherish it. Gradually, as we become more generous towards one another this sort of misunderstanding will cease. Silence has many other advantages that are unique.

I told you not to touch the file because I had arranged the papers in my own way. I did not want anyone to disturb them. I cannot stand any interference on Sundays and other such days. I do the same with everyone.

I wrote out the addresses myself because I could do that quicker. I had to send the letter to Valjibhai in any case. And before I could enclose with it one to Vaidya I had to write it and take out Vaidya's address. Rather than explain all this to you, it was better that I wrote everything myself. Yes, you did offer to write. I did not respond because I did not want to waste time writing down my response or making signs.

As for Rajkumari's article I did not want to take it out because she desires to send it elsewhere. Until I examine it from this angle I do not want to remove it from my file. There was no consideration of whether you saw the article or not. There was no question of stopping you from seeing Rajkumari's article. It was you who raised such a question. Is everything clear now?

BAPU

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

## 420. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

SEVAGRAM ,  
June 16, 1940

CHI. NIMU,

I got your letter. It is good that Sarita has arrived. You will now have some spare time. Manojna and Krishnadas have arrived. Bachu has grown into a big boy.

How do you keep? Do you read anything? Does Ramdas keep fit in all this travelling about?

Things are going on well here. Meetings will start from the 17th.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 421. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

[After June 16, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

I am determined to find a way out of the impasse.

I have just got yours of the 28th May. Pretty quick work. Mr. Amery's message is good. I shall live in hope and not make haste. But I know that the Working Committee will not accept anything weak. If they on your side wait till all parties including the Princes have come to a common agreement they will have to wait and so shall we. This should be recognized that the Congress is one party and others anti-Congress in the sense that they will close on a lesser note. The Congress can afford to wait but cannot afford to take less in the sense of bartering away the liberty of the country. The situation there is terrible. You are living in a blood-bath. For those of us who know, in a way it is worse than a blood-bath here. All my energy is devoted to

<sup>1</sup> Of the Congress Working Committee, at Wardha

<sup>2</sup> L. S. Amery's message referred to in the text was broadcast on June 16, the anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. Amery traced the development and spread of British democratic ideals and said, "In the case of India, we have made manifest our sincere desire, that she should, as a willing partner, attain the same status in the British Commonwealth as is enjoyed by the Dominions, or for that matter by ourselves." *Indian Annual Register, 1940*, Vol. I, p. 79

preventing a blood-bath here. How long I shall control the situation I do not know. I shall not bend but break in the attempt.

Love

BAPU

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

#### 422. *SPINNING COMPETITION IN RAMGARH*

During the Congress Week there was the usual spinning competition at the exhibition. There were six tests-coarse counts up to 10, medium up to 18, fine up to 30, very fine ranging from 44 to 158, spinning on the Magan Charkha, and last on the *takli*. The examiners were Ramdev Babu of Bihar, Shri Nandlal Patel of the Khadi Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, and Prabhudas Gandhi who was also the organizer. From the table before me I see that the examination was as strict and thorough as it should have been. In my opinion the competitors were neither as many as should have been nor from many provinces. They were principally from Bihar and Gujarat, some from Maharashtra and U. P. There were cash prizes, the highest being Rs.15, and trophies for the winning institutions. It is worthy of note that in the very fine yarn competition there were many women. The finest spinner was Devsundari Devi of Madhubani. Her count was 158. The highest speed on the wheel was 618 yards per hour of 10 counts. The highest on the Magan charkha was 925 yards of 15 counts. The highest on the *takli* was 303 of 12 counts. This is all satisfactory. There is not much scope for increased speed with the present improvements except on the Magan Charkha. Enough experiment has not yet been made on that wheel. But all accounts go to show that it has further possibilities. The *takli* is any day the queen for easy carriage, simplicity and cost. On the whole it may prove to be the quickest. Whereas the wheels many go out of order, the *takli* need never. Experiments are being made in plying the *takli* after the style of the charkha.

I congratulate the winners. I only hope that more interest will be taken than hitherto in such competitions. Spinning competitions have a great national value. I may note that the Maulana Saheb was to have given the prizes. But the wholly unexpected downpour made it utterly impossible to do so.

SEVAGRAM, June 17, 1940

*Harijan*, 22-6-1940

## 423. QUESTION BOX

### MEANING OF SPINNING ACTIVITIES

Q. It is an admitted fact that constructive activity keeps the political atmosphere pure and non-violent. You have recommended it for active satyagrahis. This activity can be carried on in a centre amongst Congressmen as also the villagers generally, which may include such people as old women, etc., who take to spinning as unemployment insurance, as is done in A. I. S. A. production centres. Your writings make one infer that you want active satyagrahis to confine constructive activity to Congressmen and particularly in the direction of making them self-spinners and make them wear khadi of their own yarn; the khadi in the first instance to be bought from A. I. S. A. stores, until the Congressmen produce their own yarn. Confining attention to Congressmen or political Congressmen seems to be more practicable than starting a general khadi centre of spinning for wages. Is this a correct interpretation of your writing?

A. Your interpretation is correct so far as it goes. I do not want the Congress organization to be an indifferent or glorified copy of the A. I. S. A. It has to do the work that the A. I. S. A. does not do. Its motive will be predominantly political, whereas that of the A. I. S. A., although it is a creation of the Congress, is purely philanthropic and economic. The Congress organization aims at creating an army of non-violent soldiers or, to drop the military terminology, a band of non-violent workers for the freedom of the country. The spinning work and all the allied processes keep Congressmen busy and away from mischief. It will knit them together in a brotherhood, it will give them an insight into village life, it will bring them in direct touch with the villagers, it will give them a hold on the economic condition of the masses as nothing else will do, it will lead them on to a study of the whole of the vast village problem, it will make them sink their petty or big differences and forget class, racial or religious distinctions. The charkha may or may not have all this potency inherent in it. I want Congressmen to impute all these implications to it.

### TEST-TUBE BABIES

Q. You say that motherhood is sublime but sex is bad. From the spiritual and eugenic point of view don't you agree that the test-tube technique of begetting babies is ideal since it altogether eliminates lust and carnality from procreation?

A. I would reconcile myself to your method, if carnality itself can be eradicated thereby. So long as I hold to the view that carnality prevents man or woman from rising to the fullest height possible, so

long must I rebel against these artificial methods of procreation. Your method, as far as I can see, can only result in multiplying idiots or monsters, not human beings, thrown into the sea of passions which it should be their pride to subjugate. But I own I belong to an age that is perhaps dying. The new age to come, when men and women will walk, if they at all do, only for pleasure but go to their work on wheels or fly to it, and when the institution of marriage and all it implies will be abolished, does not enthuse me.

#### HOW TO FACE A LIE

Q. People believe in your sincerity when you sympathize with Britain and France in their struggle for existence, but some of us have scented a danger that the Indian capitalists may continue to employ you as a tool for keeping India calm when these capitalists are reaping rich profit as a result of this war. What steps are you taking to remove this suspicion?

A. I propose to take no steps, even as I took none when I was accused of having one crore of rupees in the Bank of England. Lies are best left unanswered. They die of inanition. They have no vitality of their own. They flourish on opposition. If my whole life is not sufficient answer to the lie referred to by you, no steps I can take will remove the impression created by the lie. Mind you, I do not dispute the fact that the peaceful atmosphere created by my inaction benefits the capitalists, but it benefits the masses more than the capitalists, for the inaction enables the masses to garner their non-violent strength which will enable them to deal effectively with capitalists and imperialism which covers them.

SEVAGRAM, June 17, 1940

*Harijan*, 22-6-1940

#### 424. A NOTES

[June 17, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

There is no need at all to do anything just now. Never mind if you have been given the charge. Advise everyone in the Ashram not to hurt her. There is no need to broadcast the thing. I will write something tomorrow in the Notes.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 647

<sup>1</sup> The last sentence "I will write something tomorrow in the Notes" is presumably a reference to "Note to Ashram Inmates", 18-6-40.

#### 425. NOTE TO AMTUSSALAAM

[Before June 18, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

I have made no mistake . think that what you have done is the best thing. There is no question of my being angry. I am only doing my dharma. You should do yours. Seeking my advice is not going to help you in any way.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 655

#### 426. NOTE TO AMTUSSALAAM

[Before June 18, 1940]<sup>2</sup>

I cannot judge. Guide Zohra as you wish. If you have no influence with her, then entrust her to me. Let her talk the thing over with me. For the rest you may decide. Do what Puri tells you. Listen to what Khan Saheb says. I cannot guide you.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 723

#### 427. HOW TO COMBAT HITLERISM

Whatever Hitler may ultimately prove to be, we know what Hitlerism has come to mean. It means naked, ruthless force reduced to an exact science and worked with scientific precision. In its effect it becomes almost irresistible.

In the early days of satyagraha when it was still known as passive resistance, *The Star* of Johannesburg, stirred by the sight of a handful of Indians, wholly unarmed and incapable of organized violence even if they wished it, pitting themselves against an overwhelmingly armed Government, had a cartoon in which the latter was depicted as a stream-roller representing irresistible force, and passive resistance was depicted as an elephant unmoved and comfortably planting himself in his seat. This was marked immovable force. The cartoonist had a true insight into the duel between the irresistible and the immovable forces. It was then a stalemate. The sequel we know. What was depicted and appeared to be irresistible was successfully

<sup>1</sup> These notes were obviously written before "Note to Ashram Inmates", 18-6-1940

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

resisted by the immovable force of satyagraha-call it suffering without retaliation.

What became true then can be equally true now. Hitlerism will never be defeated by counter-Hitlerism. It can only breed superior Hitlerism raised to nth degree. What is going before our eyes is a demonstration of the futility of violence as also of Hitlerism.

Let me explain what I mean by failure of Hitlerism. It has robbed the small nations of their liberty. It has compelled France to sue for peace.<sup>1</sup> Probably by the time this is in print Britain will have decided upon her course. The fall of France is enough for my argument. I think French statesmen have shown rare courage in bowing to the inevitable and refusing to be party to senseless mutual slaughter. There can be no sense in France coming out victorious if the stake is in truth lost. The cause of liberty becomes a mockery if the price to be paid is wholesale destruction of those who are to enjoy liberty. It then becomes an inglorious satiation of ambition. The bravery of the French soldier is world-known. But let the world know also the greater bravery of the French statesmen in suing for peace. I have assumed that the French statesmen have taken the step in a perfectly honourable manner as behoves true soldiers. Let me hope that Herr Hitler will impose no humiliating terms but show that, though he can fight without mercy, he can at least conclude peace not without mercy.

But to resume the thread of the argument. What will Hitler do with his victory? Can he digest so much power? Personally he will go as empty-handed as his not very remote predecessor Alexander. For the Germans he will have left not the pleasure of owning a mighty empire but the burden of sustaining its crushing weight. For they will not be able to hold all the conquered nations in perpetual subjection. And I doubt if the Germans of future generations will entertain unadulterated pride in the deeds for which Hitlerism will be deemed responsible. They will honour Herr Hitler as a genius, as a brave man, a matchless organizer and much more. But I should hope that the Germans of the future will have learnt the art of discrimination even about their heroes. Anyway I think it will be allowed that all the

<sup>1</sup> The French request for armistice was sent to Hitler on June 16. Hitler's terms were delivered to the French on June 20. On June 22 the German terms were accepted and three days later on June 25 the armistice became effective.

blood that has been spilled by Hitler had added not a millionth part of an inch to the world's moral stature.

As against this imagine the state of Europe today if the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the French and the English has all said to Hitler: 'You need not make your scientific preparation for destruction. We will meet your violence with non-violence. You will therefore be able to destroy our non-violent army without tanks, bat-tleships and airships. It may be retorted that the only difference would be that Hitler would have got without fighting what he has gained after a bloody fight. Exactly. The history of Europe would then have been written differently. Possession might (but only might) have been then taken under non-violent resistance, as it has been taken now after perpetration of untold barbarities. Under non-violence only those would have been killed who had trained themselves to be killed, if need be, but without killing anyone and without bearing malice towards anybody. I dare say that in that case Europe would have added several inches to its moral stature. And in the end I expect it is the moral worth that will count. All else is dross.

I have written these lines for the European Powers. But they are meant for ourselves. If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms but we will defend it with the force of non-violence ?

SEVAGRAM, June 18, 1940

*Harijan*, 22-6-1940

#### 428. NOTE TO ASHRAM INMATES

[June 18, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

Now you know from experience that A. S. is not in such a state of mind that we can rely on any word of hers. This condition is also a part of her illness. So there is no question of ascertaining her wish. I made it plan last evening that the kitchen is completely out of bounds for her. She may go there today if she has any instructions to give. But she shall do no work at all. We have, therefore, to make arrangements ourselves independently of her. Do not send Apu to work on

<sup>1</sup> This was found among the papers of Krishnachandra and presumably the date is given by him.

the farm against his will. In that case let him take charge of the kitchen. If he requires any guidance, he can ask Krishnachandra. If Krishnachandra cannot judge, he can ask me, but not A. S. I do not at all want to tax either her body or her mind. She is working out of stubbornness. I have tolerated her stubbornness till now. But I see that I would be committing a sin if I went on doing so any longer. I would be doing her harm and doing the same to myself too. The best service to her is that however difficult she may be I must stop her from working in the kitchen, and compel her to give up everything she did for me. When she recovers health of body and mind, we will let her work in the kitchen and for me and also do whatever other work she can do.

If Krishnachandra has Brahmadrutt's clothes, please ask him to send them with these men, or he may give them to me. I will send them.

Let everyone read this letter and then return it to me.

Chimanlalbhai himself had said that A. S. Behn had agreed to give up the kitchen work. Now they say she is not willing to give it up.<sup>1</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4563

#### 429. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,,  
June 20, 1940

CHI. SHARMA,

I got your letter; also the book. I had asked Su[shila] behn to send an acknowledgment. The book was needed for Shankaran who is working in the dispensary. I shall expect one letter from you every month.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, p. 286

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is in Hindi and written in the margin.

430. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 21, 1940*

CHI. AMRIT,

Just one line of love in the midst of distraction. I suppose you have abstained knowing that I would hardly have time to see the post. If so, you were right.

Well, you have seen what has happened. I am both unhappy and happy.<sup>1</sup>

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3976. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7285

431. *LETTER TO BHAGWAN DIN*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*June 22, 1940*

BHAI BHAGWAN DIN,

What I have been asked is about staying in some Muslim home, in some Muslim village. Nothing has been decided.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 737

432. *SPEECH AT MEETING OF GANDHI SEVA SANGH AND  
CHARKHA SANGH*

WARDHA,  
*[June 22, 1940]*<sup>2</sup>

Now is the testing time for you. The Working Committee, let us say, were weighed and found wanting. Can the Gandhiji Seva Sangh do anything to repair their failure? The Working Committee's resolution does not mean that you cannot appeal to people to declare their faith in non-violence. You can do so, and then tell the members of the Working Committee, 'You undervalued our faith. We are going to

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Both Happy an Unhappy", 29-6-1940

<sup>2</sup> From *Hitavada*, 26-6-1940

hold by the creed.' I tell you the Working Committee members well not only not resent this, but will simply dance with joy. Some of you are members of the Congress. It is the duty of those who are members and who believe in non-violence to reassure the members of the Working Committee, to declare their faith before the meeting of the A. I. C. C. and even before the open Congress if the time comes. But you may not separate your creed as Congressmen and creed as ordinary human beings, your behaviour in Congress affairs and in non-Congress affairs. Your non-violence, if it is true, must be part of your normal life, must be in your thought, word and deed, and must colour all your behaviour. Then and then only can you give the Working Committee the assurance I have referred to, and compel them to alter their resolution. . . .

But, let me explain this further. You will examine every action of yours in the light of the creed. That does not mean that you will be morbid of pernickety. Your conduct will have to be natural. When I began observing silence it meant an effort on my part. Now it has become part of my nature, and to break my silence means an effort. In the same way acting non-violently must be part of your nature. It is likely that your relating everything to non-violence may be logically wrong, but it is not wrong for you. I may be wrong, in the eyes of others, in my belief that with every thread that I draw I am bringing swaraj nearer, but for me the belief is as true as the fact that I exist. That saves me from losing my sanity. This spinning-wheel is a symbol of non-violence for me. The wheel as such is lifeless, but when I invest it with symbolism it becomes a living thing for me. Its sound, if it is musical, is in tune with non-violence. If it is unmusical, it is not in tune with it, for it indicates carelessness on my part. The steel spindle one can use as a deadly weapon, but we have put it there for the best possible use. So we have to be meticulously careful about every part of the wheel. Then and then only will it produce fine music and spinning will be a true sacrificial act.

But this kind of sadhana, you will say, may take thousands of years. It may take some a thousand years, and it may take some others only one year. Don't think that, if in spite of my 50 years' practice of it I am still imperfect, it must take you many more years. No, there is no rule of three here. You may succeed quicker than I. I meant what I said to Prithvi Singh: 'You had at any rate the violence of the brave. I had nothing of it. Now if you believe in cultivating

non-violence of the brave, you will do so much more quickly than I, and you will leave me behind.' This applies to every one of you. In South Africa I was the first to learn shoe-making and so I taught it to others. But those others soon left me behind. It was because I was a true teacher. Now if I am a true teacher of ahimsa, I am sure you will soon leave behind your teacher. If that does not happen, it will only mean that I was an unfit teacher. But if my teaching fructifies, there will be teachers of ahimsa in every home.

I want to know how many of you are with me. If none goes with me, I am ready to tread my path alone. For I know that I can never be alone as God is there with me. You are all companion *sadhaks* (seekers) with me. I am old but you have many years before you. And yet me tell you that I do not feel the weight of my years. I do not think my power of growth or capacity for research has come to an end.

So you have to go forth and find out how many actual believers in ahimsa there are among Congressmen. The Working Committee members are you representatives. If they were mistaken in assessing the faith of their electors, you have to correct their judgement. My position was different from theirs. I consider myself a confirmed representative of ahimsa, and so I severed my connection with the Congress in 1934. I could not help doing it. If I had not done so, I should have been untrue to my creed.

No one knows my imperfections better than I, but what little power I possess is derived from my ahimsa. What is it but my ahimsa that draws thousands of women to me in fearless confidence? But neither you nor I can trade on our capital. We have to be up and doing every moment of our lives and go forward in our sadhana. We have to live and move and have our being in ahimsa, even as Hitler does in himsa. It is the faith and perseverance and single-mindedness with which he has perfected his weapons of destruction that commands my admiration. That he uses them as a monster is immaterial for our purpose. We have to bring to bear the same single-mindedness and perseverance in evolving our ahimsa. Hitler is awake all the 24 hours of the day in perfecting his sadhana. He wins because he pays the price. His inventions surprise his enemies. But it is his single-minded devotion to his purpose that should be the object of our admiration and emulation. Although he works all his waking hours, his intellect is unclouded and unerring. Are our intellects unclouded and unerring? A mere belief in ahimsa or the charkha will not do. It should be

intelligent and creative. If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of non-violence.

With this he referred to the work of Richard Gregg in this direction, and described how the latter had come to the conclusion that spinning as a symbol of non-violence is good enough not only for India but for the world. Continuing he said:

The Working Committee's decision was simply an echo of the atmosphere around them. My decision could not be its echo. For ahimsa is my special sadhana, not that of the Congress. I congratulate the members on their honesty and their courage, though I am sorry for myself that I could not inspire them with confidence in our creed and in my leadership. We have now to show that we have faith in the non-violence of the brave. It does not mean the development of the capacity to go to jail. It means increasing faith in the potency of constructive work to bring about swaraj, and in constructive work being a vital part of the programme of ahimsa.

*Harijan*, 21-7-1940

### 433. BOTH HAPPY AND UNHAPPY

It was on the 18th instant that I expressed the following hope Harijan:<sup>1</sup>

If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms but we will defend it with the force of non-violence ?

On the 21st the Working Committee felt unable to enforce such faith in action when the time for it came.<sup>2</sup> For the Committee never

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "How to Combat Hitlerism", 18-6-1940.

<sup>2</sup> The resolution of the Working committee, passed after five days of deliberations, inter alia said: "While the Working committee hold that the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in their struggle for independence, the Committee cannot ignore the present imperfections and failings in this respect of the human elements they have to deal with . . . The Committee have deliberated over the problem that has thus arisen and have come to the conclusion that they are unable to go the full length with Gandhiji. But they recognize that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way, and therefore absolve him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue under the conditions at present prevailing in India and the world in regard to external aggression and internal disorder."

before had an occasion to test their faith. At the last meeting they had to lay down a course of action for meeting impending anarchy within and danger of aggression from without.

I pleaded hard with the Committee: "If you have faith in non-violence of the strong, now is the time to act up to it. It does not matter that many parties do not believe in non-violence whether of the strong or of the weak. Probably that is all the greater reason for Congressmen to meet the emergency by non-violent action. For if all were non-violent, there could be no anarchy and there would be no question of anybody arming for meeting aggression from without. It is because Congressmen represent a party of non-violence, in the midst of parties who do not believe in it, that it becomes imperative for Congressmen to show that they are well able to act up to their faith."

But the members of the Working Committee felt that Congressmen would not be able to act up to it. It would be a new experience for them. They were never before called upon to deal with such a crisis. The attempt made by me to form peace brigades to deal with communal riots and the like had wholly failed. Therefore they could not hope for the action contemplated.

My position was different. With the Congress non-violence was always a policy. It was open to it to reject it if it failed. If it could not bring political and economic independence, it was of no use. For me non-violence is a creed. I must act up to it whether I am alone or have companions. Since propagation of non-violence is the mission of my life, I must pursue it in all weathers. I felt that now was the time for me to prove my faith before God and man. And so I asked for absolution from the Committee. Hitherto I have been responsible for funding the general policy of the Congress. I could no longer do so when fundamental differences were discovered between them and me. They readily recognized the correctness of my attitude. And they gave me the absolution. One more they have justified the trust imposed in them. They have been true to themselves. They had not the confidence, in themselves of those whom they represented, that they could express in their actions the required measure of non-violence. And so they made the only choice they could honestly make. It was a tremendous sacrifice they made-the sacrifice of the prestige that the Congress had gained in the world for unadulterated non-violence, and the dissolution of the unwritten and unspoken bond between them and me. But though it is a break in the common practice of a common ideal or

policy, there is no break in the friendship of over twenty years' standing.

I am both happy and unhappy over the result. Happy because I have been able to bear the strain of the break and have been given the strength to stand alone. Unhappy because my word seemed to lose the power to carry with me those whom it was my proud privilege to carry all these many years which seem like yesterday. But I know that, if God shows me the way to demonstrate the efficacy of non-violence of the strong, the break will prove to have been temporary. If there is no way, they will have justified their wisdom in bearing the wrench of letting me go my way alone. If that tragic discovery of my impotence is in store for me, I hope still to retain the faith that has sustained me all these years and to have humility enough to realize that I was no a fit enough instrument to carry the torch of non-violence any further.

But this argument and doubt are based upon the assumption that the members of the Working Committee represent the feeling of the vast majority of Congressmen. They would wish and hope that the vast majority of Congressmen had in them the non-violence of the strong. No one would be more glad than they to discover that they had underrated Congressmen's strength. The probability, however, is that there is no majority but only a good minority which represents the non-violence of the strong. It should be remembered that the matter does not lend itself to argument. The members of the Working Committee had all the argument before them. But non-violence, which is a quality of the heart, cannot quiet but resolute demonstration on non-violent strength. The opportunity comes to everyone almost daily. There are communal clashes, there are dacoities, there are wordy duels. In all these things those who are truly non-violent can and will demonstrate it. If it is shown in an adequate measure, it will not fail to infect their surroundings. I am quite clear that there is not a single Congressman who disbelieves in the efficacy of non-violence out of sheer cussedness. Let the Congressmen who believe that the Congress should adhere to non-violence in dealing with internal disorders or external aggression, express it in their daily conduct. Non-violence of the strong cannot be a mere policy. It must be a creed, or a passion, if 'creed' is objected to. A man with a passion expresses it in every little act of his. Therefore he who is possessed by non-violence will express it in the family circle, in his dealings with neigh-

bours, in his dealings with opponents. It is because it has not expressed itself in this way amount Congressmen that the members of the Working Committee rightly concluded that Congressmen were not ready for non-violent treatment of internal disorders or external aggression. Embarrassment caused by non-violent action would move established authority to yield to popular will. But such action has obviously no play in the face of disorders. We have to court death without retaliation and with no malice or anger towards those who bring about disorder. It is easy enough to see that non-violence required here is of a wholly different type from what the Congress has known hitherto. But it is the only non-violence that is true and that can save the world from self-destruction. This is a certainty sooner or later, sooner rather than later, if India cannot deliver that message of true non-violence to a world which wants to be saved from the curse of wars and does not know how to find the deliverance.

SEVAGRAM, June 24, 1940

PS.

After the foregoing was written and typed, I saw Jawaharlal's statement.<sup>1</sup> His love for and confidence in me peep out of every sentence referring to me. The foregoing does not need any amendment. It is better for the reader to have both the independent reaction. Good must come out of this separation.

*Harijan*, 29-6-1940

#### 434. WHAT THE "MASNAVI" <sup>2</sup> SAYS

I gladly publish the following sent to me by Advocate Rustomji Andhyarujina of Bombay:

In the latest issue of *Harijan* while dealing with the letter of a Khan Bahadur from Delhi you write the following lines<sup>1</sup> of eternal truth:

<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru in his statement issued from Bombay on June 23 had said: "... The difference between Gandhiji's approach and that of the Working Committee must be understood and must not lead people to think that there is a break between him and the congress. the Congress of the past twenty years is his creation and child and nothing can break this bond. I am sure his guidance and wise counsel will always be available to the Congress.

<sup>2</sup> Poem composed by the Persian mystic poet Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-73)

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Hindu-Muslim", 4-6-1940.

“Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them.” (Page 157, 2nd column.)

These lines remind me of the immortal words of a famous Persian poet put into the mouth of God who addresses Moses in verse 14 of the poem, viz.,

“Thou hast come to this earth to unite; thou hast not come to this earth to separate.”

Original:

*To barae Vasl kardan amadi*

*Na barae Fasl kardan amadi.*

I give below a faithful translation of the whole poem in order to show the beauty and the grandeur of the truth contained in the above verse:

“Moses once saw on the road a shepherd who was exclaiming thus: ‘Oh God Almighty!

Tell me where Thou art, so that I may become Thy servant, stitch Thy heavy shoes, comb Thy hair,

Kiss Thy hand, rub Thy feet, and sweep the floor for Thee to sleep.

If Thou wouldst fall ill in future, like Thy kith and kin I would grieve for Thee.

Oh my Lord, my life is sacrificed to Thee: together with my children and all the property that I own.

Aye, all my sheep are sacrificed to thee: every call of ‘hae-ha’ of mine addressed to my wayward sheep is for Thy remembrance!”

In this strain that shepherd was speaking when Moses spoke to him thus: “Whom art thou addressing?”

He replied: “I am addressing Him who created us, the One from whom became manifest this earth and this revolving celestial globe (Charkh).”

Moses exclaimed: “Alas, thy head has become arrogant and discourteous: thou hast ceased to be a Mussalman; thou has turned an infidel.

If thou dost not tie up (stop) these words in thy palate, the fire (of Hell) will spread out and consume the whole world.”

The poor shepherd cried in agony: “oh Moses, thou hast stitched my mouth; the repentance that thou hast caused in me has consumed my soul.”

He tore his robe into tatters, heaved a burning sigh, set his face towards the forest and disappeared in its midst.

A voice reached Moses from God saying: “ Why didst thou separate my slave from me ?

*Thou hast come to this earth to unite; thou hast not come to this earth to separate.*

Knowest thou that We do not see the exterior nor the words; We see only the interior and the real thing.”

No sooner did Moses hear these words of censure from the almighty God than he ran after the shepherd in the thickness of the wood.

At last Moses was able to find him out in the wilderness. The Prophet told him: “Good news for thee! For, Good has given me permission to tell thee, do not worry about the conventional modes and forms whilst addressing Me, but instead speak out whatever thy narrow heart prompts thee to speak.”

(From *Masnavi-e-Molavi*)

How I wish the beautiful truth embedded in these verses will be taken to heart by every one of us. Is not the Pakistan movement a denial of the obvious truth?

SEVAGRAM, June 24, 1940

*Harijan*, 29-6-1940

### 435. QUESTION BOX

#### VOWS AND WILL POWER

Q. I am a genuine seeker after *brahmacharya*. But in spite of all my prayerful effort I am sinking deeper and deeper into self-indulgence. I cannot blame my partner for it. My circumstances do not permit me to enforce the rule about segregation.

You advocate and believe in the efficacy of vows. You have said in *Harijan* that “for the weak in mind and soul vows are like tonics”. But how will you administer this tonic to a case like mine who has not the strength of will to carry out the vow he has taken? Had I such a strong will, the necessity for taking vows would not have arisen.

A. Let me bluntly tell you that I do not believe in your genuineness, not that you are wilfully lying. You are unconsciously un-genuine. If you are genuine, you will at least observe the rules of the game. You give up your case when you say you cannot segregate yourself from your wife for want of room. I have never heard such an excuse. If you take the vow, you must at least produce the necessary atmosphere around you for its observance. Everyone who has successfully carried out the vow has invariably observed this first condition.

If you are living in only one room, you should go elsewhere or send away your wife or have a relative to sleep in the same room. The question is how far you are determined. It may be that you want to observe *brahmacharya* because you have read much about it and would like to be classed among *brahmacharis*. I know many such young men. If that is your case, you should not make the attempt. One must have a burning desire to live that life. If you have it, you will adopt the measures that all aspirants have invariably adopted. You are then bound to succeed. If you have not read *Self-restraint v. Self-indulgence*, you should read it.

#### WHAT TO DO?

Q. The situation in the country is becoming graver daily. Everywhere panic is growing. In certain parts armed gangs are already organizing themselves to take advantage of the ensuing anarchy in case the central power should disintegrate or weaken. The danger may not be imminent, but it would be folly to ignore its possibility. With all the education in non-violence which the country has received during the last twenty years, you will agree that it has not developed the sort of non-violence that can be effective in the face of anarchy and gangsterism. The Government is taking steps to organize the citizens for self-defence. What is the duty of those who look up to you for lead and guidance? Should they take part in these Government activities? If they should not, what else are they to do? Surely they cannot sit with folded hands doing nothing.

A. I am unable to say what the Congress will exactly do, in view of the recent statement of the Working Committee. If you believe in non-violent treatment of anarchy and the like, naturally you will prepare yourself and your neighbours and those whom you can influence for non-violent defence. I quite agree with you that no responsible person can sit idly by in these times. Violent preparation would need long previous training. Non-violent preparation means mental adjustment. Possibility of anarchy there undoubtedly is. But if you are non-violent, you will not give way to fear. Do not anticipate anarchy, just as you do not anticipate death though you know that it is a certainty. If you are non-violent, you will believe that there will be no anarchy. But if unfortunately it comes, you and your companions of followers will give your lives to prevent it. Those who give their lives, in trying to kill those whom they regard as robbers or mischief-makers, do no better, possibly they do worse. They risk their lives and there is darkness after they are gone. What is more, they may leave

things worse by feeding the fire of violence by counter-violence. Those who die unresistingly are likely to still the fury of violence by their wholly innocent sacrifice. But this truly non-violent action is not possible unless it springs from a heart belief that he whom you fear and regard as a robber, dacoit, or worse and you are one, and that therefore it is better that you die at his hands than that he, your ignorant brother, should die at yours.

#### PAKISTAN AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Q. The two nations theory is by way of a counterblast to the demand for a Constituent Assembly which is about as absurd as the other thing. To me the idea of a Constituent Assembly ignores the existing conditions. 95 per cent of our people are illiterate, and nearly cent per cent are swayed by religious prejudices; and then there is the additional factor of corruption. And the fatal objection to a constituent Assembly is that without a genuine desire on the part of the majority to give effect to safeguards the best of these are bound to prove unreal.

A. Surely you cannot speak of the Constituent Assembly side by side with Pakistan. The latter is wrong, as I conceive it, in every way. There is nothing wrong in the idea of a Constituent Assembly. At its worst, dangers surround its formation. Every big experiment is beset with dangers. These risks must be taken. Every effort should be made to minimize them. But there seems to me to be nothing like a Constituent Assembly for achieving the common purpose. I admit the difficulty of illiteracy. Indeed adult suffrage was introduced at the instance of Muslim nationalists including the late Ali Brothers. The danger of corruption is also there. The greater the origination the less felt is the effect of corruption because it is so widely distributed. Thus in the Congress there are much corruption and jealousy, but they are confined to those few who run the machinery. But the vast body of Congressmen are untouched by these defects, though they profit by the good the Congress does. The danger you mention about safeguards will be reduced to the vanishing point if they come through a Constituent Assembly. For safeguards laid down by the representatives elected by the adult Muslim population will depend for their safety not on the goodwill or honesty of the majority but on the strength of the awakened Muslim masses. Fatality really attaches to your wrong conception of the majority, not to a Constituent Assembly. There is a

majority of Hindus undoubtedly, but we observe that in popular political assemblies parties are not rigidly divided according to religious opinions, but they are according to political and other opinions. The curse of communalism became intensified by the introduction of separate electorates. The cry for partition is the logical outcome, but it is also the strongest condemnation, of separate electorates. When we have learnt wisdom we shall cease to think in terms of separate electorates and two nations. I believe in the innate goodness of human nature. I therefore swear by the Constituent Assembly. The Muslim vote will surely decide the issue so far as their special interest is concerned. Arguing communally, therefore, the fear, if there is any, about a Constituent Assembly should surely be on the part of the Hindus. For if the Muslim vote goes in favour of partition, they have either to submit not to one but many partitions or to a civil war. As things are, all satisfy themselves by passing resolutions and seeing their names in print. In practice all of us remain where we are in a state of subjection. A Constituent Assembly is a reality. It will not be a debating or legislative irresponsible body. By registering its final decision it will decide the fate of millions of human beings. You may oppose it. If you are successful in your opposition, there is the dread prospect of anarchy, not an orderly civil war. There seems to me to be no solution of the painful deadlock except through a Constituent Assembly.

SEVAGRAM, June 24, 1940

*Harijan*, 29-6-1940

### 436. TELEGRAM TO LORD LINLITHGOW

[ June 24, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

H. E. VICEROY

SIMLA

THANKS WIRE. HAVE APPOINTMENTS TILL WEDNESDAY.  
CAN LEAVE THURSDAY. REACHING SATURDAY. BUT CAN  
LEAVE TOMORROW IF YOUR WISH.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

437. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*

*June 24, 1940*

CHI. KAKA,

Your letter will not do. The cutting does not support your case. Just now I am busy with Harijan work. It was with some reluctance that I spared time even to read what you have sent. I will draft a letter and send it after I am free from Harijan work. You will of course see my letter. Let Anna go. Release him completely. You will not be able to shoulder the responsibility for his nephew. It will be better if you frankly tell him so.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10932

438. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 24, 1940*

CHI. LILA,

I have received your letters. You have settled well. Have you met Shankar? He will be of maximum help in the matter of books. Such books are available even second-hand. We shall try from here of course. Sushila does not have any. Continue to study patiently. Meet Radha. She must be having some books. Do not hesitate to go to her. Today Sushil's tonsils were removed. Mahadev, etc., are at the hospital.

*Blessings from,*

BAPU

SHRI LILAVATIBEHN ASAR  
KANJIKHETSI KANYA CHHATRALAYA  
65 MINT ROAD  
BOMBAY FORT

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

439. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHAGNJ,  
June 25, 1940

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANORVILLE  
SIMLA W

REACHING THERE SATURDAY LEAVING HERE THURSDAY.  
IF INCONVENIENCE AT MANORVILLE YOU MAY PUT  
ME ELSEWHERE. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3977. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7286

440. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

SEVAGRAM,  
June 25, 1940

CHI. PREMA,

Why are you afraid? Such things do happen. They are a test for me.<sup>1</sup> Do you remember the bhajan beginning: “When will the matchless time. . .”? Think over the lines “Wandering alone on the cremation ground”. The Committee could not have adopted any other course. Everyone has to face this problem. What will all of you also do, if I turn out to be a bad coin? We have never tried the non-violence of the brave. Now the time has come for that. My Memon clients used to quote the saying/” He is a man who remains steadfast at a critical hour”. Cheer up.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10408. Also C. W. 6847. Courtesy: premabehn Kantak

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Congress Working Committee's resolution; *vide* 2nd footnote of “Both Happy and Unhappy”, 29-6-1940.

441. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
June 25, 1940

CHI. JETHALAL,

I have already talked the matter over with Jajuji, for the arrival of your postcard coincided with his coming. I will go through Sarvadaya.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Gujarati: C. W. 9870. Courtesy: Narayan J. Sampat

442. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

June 25, 1940

KRISHNACHANDRA,

If no one has notified Shankaranji, inform the kitchen that four new guests will dine there today.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4353

443. TELEGRAM TO AMIT KAUR

WARDHAGANJ,  
June 26, 1940

RAJMUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANORVILLE  
SIMLA W

WE SHALL BE FOUR. ONE CAR WILL DO. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3978. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7287

444. INTERVIEW TO VISITORS FROM PRINCELY STATES<sup>1</sup>

[Before June 27, 1940]

They should cease to be Princes and become servants of the people.

They will have to descend from their pedestal and seek the co-operation of their people. If they do so, they need not use force at all to put down the forces of disorder. The Congress does not want to do away with the Princes, and they can seek its co-operation in bringing about peace and contentment in their States.

They will have to be genuine servants of the people. When they do so, no one will think of eliminating them. If they are the servants and the people are the masters, why should the masters do away with the servants? You say there are a number of smaller Princes today who are anxious to make up with the Congress. If they are, what prevents them from doing the most elementary things.?

INTERVIEWERS: They want to do certain things, but they are on the one hand afraid of the Paramount Power and on the other afraid of the people. Some kind of fear seems to have seized them that the people will want to pay off old scores.

GANDHIJI: Both their fears are groundless. If they will do justice, I can scarcely think of the people wanting to pay off old scores. Our people are not of a revengeful nature. Is the Ruler of Aundh afraid of any rebellion in his State? He is not, for whom will they rebel against when they know that he has divested himself of practically all power? If they want to rebel, I think he is capable of saying to them, 'Come and take charge of my palace, I shall be content to go and stay among the poorest of you! Appasaheb, the son of the Chief of Aundh, is slaving away for the people as no servant of the State does.

But the fact is that the people have to be convinced of their *bona fides*. Let them do two things. One is that they have to purify their lives and reduce themselves to utter simplicity. The fabulous amounts they spend on themselves are unconscionable. I cannot understand how they can have the heart to squander the people's money in riotous living, when thousands of their people cannot get a square meal a day. Why should they not be content with two or three hun-

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "occasional Notes", 27-6-1940. The interviewers had asked Gandhiji what the Princes were to do in the face of the panic, insecurity and impending anarchy in the States.

dred rupees a month? But my point is this . let them take what the people will give them. Their privy purse must be votable. No reforms and no budget can have any value unless the people have the fullest right to say how much their ruler take for himself. An new age has already begun, and no ruler can conceivably be tolerated whose life does not correspond largely with the life of his people and who does not identify himself with them.

That is one thing. The other thing is that their judiciary will have to be above board and therefore independent of them. I cannot say today with confidence that in any State the judiciary is really independent. And there must be complete civil liberty.

These, then, are the first steps in the way of reform. Their fear of the Paramount Power is groundless. That Power dare not openly say or do anything to interfere with *bona-fide* reforms. Wherever they have interfered they have made some flaw in the particular Prince's character an excuse. The deduction is that Princes should be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. As for the Congress, let them know that it is ever ready to come to an understanding with them. The Congress is essentially a non-violent organization. Let the Princes voluntarily go under the authority of their people and the Congress will befriend them. If they do not do so, there are breakers ahead. The Congress, let me repeat, is not out to destroy the Princes, unless it be that they do not mend their ways and destroy themselves. Even if there is *one* Prince who will be content to be the servant of the people, the Congress will stand by him.

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 445. INTERVIEW TO AMERICAN VISITORS<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,  
[ Before June 27, 1940 ]

QUESTION: How can I best prepare in India to help in America towards a better understanding between Indians and Americans? . . . How could I contribute towards this end in America?

ANSWER: One has to show in one's life one's country's best traits, and that is how one can bring another country to a better

<sup>1</sup> EXtracted from Mahadev Desai's "Occasional Notes", 27-6-1940. The visitor was a pacifist and represented various women's associations.

understanding of one's own. If you do not show the best in you whilst you are here, you make America liable to be misunderstood; and the same thing I would say about Indians in America. If one wants to interpret one country to another, he or she has to discover the best in that country and place it before the other country. If you, for instance, see nothing good in the life here, then you certainly are not the best person to interpret India to America. In America you find a Miss Mayo bringing out all the filth from the Indian gutters. You will contradict her, and as against one calumny uttered by a hasty or a paid or an interested observer you will adduce many testimonies gathered out of a sympathetic understanding and knock the bottom out of that calumny.

Q. What can pacifist Americans do to help the world situation?

A. It is a difficult question. If you mean pacifist Americans in India, they can do precious little. But in America they should, I suppose, be able to do a great deal. But it is a question really outside my depth, and I must not say anything more about it.

Q. I do a lot of writing and speaking especially among women. Have you any message to give to American women?

A. Not as a message. I can throw out a suggestion and, if it appeals to you, you can develop it. Woman can play a most important part in the work of pacifism. She should refuse to be swept off her feet and to imitate man's language and refuse to allow herself and hers to be identified with anything connected with war. For she must know that she can represent peace more than war. She is made for the demonstration and exhibition of that silent force which is not less effective because it is silent, but the more effective because it is silent.

*Harijan, 13-7-1940*

446. *LETTER TO BISHAN NATH*

DELHI  
*June 28, 1940*

DEAR LALA BISHAN NATH,

I had yours of 11th inst. I shall do what I can.

*Yours sincerely.*  
M. K. GANDHI

LALA BISHAN NATH  
ADVOCATE  
ANARKALI  
LAHORE

From a photostat : G. N. 7943

447. *TELEGRAM TO LORD LINLITHGOW*

[ Before *June 29, 1940* ]<sup>1</sup>

H. E. VICEROY  
SIMLA

MANY THANKS WIRE. HOPE REACH FRIDAY.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had reached simla on June 29, 1940.

448. DISCUSSION WITH PYARELAL AND MAHADEV DESAI'

[ June 29, 1940 ]<sup>2</sup>

PYARELAL: This puzzles one.<sup>3</sup> What is so personal about that letter? That man has a curtness which one does not like.

GANDHIJI: It is improper of you to judge a co-worker from one single instance. It is improper from the point of view of logic and more so from the point of view of ahimsa. Darwin, in his book *The Descent of Man*, has not based his conclusions on any one fact. He never tired of adducing heaps and heaps of evidence. He has crammed the whole book with facts to prove his thesis and in the end he has formulated that thesis in the fewest words. Imagine how much he valued truth! Even so I find a flaw in his thesis because *Syadvad* of Jain philosophy teaches me that notwithstanding all this testimony we may come across some other facts which may refute Darwin's thesis. Because the writer of the letter has written "personal" on the top of the letter, you came to the conclusion that he is curt. Now let me give an instance. Many people eat out of each other's plates and they believe that that promotes friendship. Hindu wives believe that they earn merit by eating the orts from their husbands' plates. Maybe Ba also believes that and she would not shrink from eating from the plate used by me. But as for me, leaving others aside, I would not be able to eat even from Ba's plate. If someone was to see me refusing food from Ba's plate and drew the conclusion that I was curt and fussy - what an injustice he would be doing me! Even though I may feel repelled by this one thing, I have no doubt that by temperament I am neither curt not fussy, and I can cite hundreds of instances to prove that. Similarly numerous instances can be cited to prove that your friend about whom you have complained is not what you have described him to be. No proposition can be called universal unless it is proved so by analysis and synthesis. We know that water consists of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. But we must prove that by synthesis and analysis. If we analyse water we get two parts of

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "A Revealing Dialogue". A brief report by Pyarelal also appeared in Harijan, 6-06-1940, under the title "On the Road to Simla".

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Pyarelal was commenting on a co-worker's marking "Personal" a letter he had written to Gandhiji.

hydrogen and one part of oxygen. However we should synthesize two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen and if that produces water, our proposition about its composition is proved. The same applies to our day-to-day behaviour. We cannot jump to the conclusion about a certain thing, even though it be as clear as daylight, without examining hundreds of facts which may prove it wrong. It certainly violates truth and in being uncharitable towards others we violate ahimsa too. We who tread the path of ahimsa should take each step with great care.

It is not that I am unaware of his faults. Maybe you are justified in finding him curt in this particular instance but to believe that he is always so betrays lack of charity on your part. Shall we not take into account the circumstances under which this co-worker has been brought up and educated, the difficulties he has had to face and the efforts he had to make to reach the present position? Shall we judge him by this one manifest shortcoming of his? What a beautiful word the English language has for love - 'charity'. It connotes compassion too. And compassion should be an integral part of our ahimsa.

M. D. The meaning of the roots of 'charity' and 'daya' is the same.

G. I did not know that the roots of both the words meant the same. But one thing is certain: that even if we see shortcomings in others, we should overlook them and take into account their good points alone. The beauty of love and compassion lies in magnifying the virtues of others. Moreover there is always another way to win over others-i.e., by rendering silent service.

P. I agree. But there should be an opportunity for that. I have many times endeavoured to befriend him and make myself agreeable to him. But I have failed. You do not know the utter contempt in which he holds me.

G. You do not see the point. I tell you there is subtle pride in those words of yours. It is your pride that prompts you to say that you have tried to befriend him ignoring his contempt for you. All the time you were conscious of the injustice done to you. But you have never thought of analysing why he was unjust to you either consciously or unconsciously. Don't I know his faults and shortcomings? You do not know how many times I have made him shed tears by reminding him of all his faults. I have not even restrained myself in exposing him in the presence of all co-workers. But look at his behaviour. He is fighting against all his faults and shortcomings. All the twenty-four hours he is making incessant efforts to subjugate them and he has achieved considerable success. But how much can a man rise beyond

his inborn nature and upbringing? If we are perpetually aware of these things, we shall never have the courage to do injustice to others. Who knows better than I the faults of the Rajas and Maharajas? But why do I have sympathy for them? Because I know that their nature, their temper is conditioned by their circumstances. I understand them and they also know that in me they have a friend.

While talking about contempt, we must think about Andrews. Numerous Government officials had nothing but contempt for him. It is not that he did not know about it but he never hesitated in going to their houses. He tried to find out why they showed contempt for him and endeavoured to remove the cause. As a result many of those who had hated him repented of their attitude and confessed that they had been unjust to him. Such contempt creates opportunities for love to come into play. What is so remarkable about loving those who love us? The beauty lies in melting those who hate us with our love and kindness.

P. I understand. I understand all. There were occasions when I sensed the dreariness of his condition. Many times on such occasions I felt like befriending him, but always feared that he might misinterpret the gesture.

G. Even that fear had *himsa*. Love and fear cannot co-exist. There was pride even in your fear. But for all this I am to blame. My ahimsa is imperfect and that is why my surroundings are not saturated with ahimsa. Sevagram is to me a laboratory for ahimsa<sup>1</sup>. If my experiment here were successful and I could find a solution for the little problems that confront me here, I am sure the same formula would provide me a solution for the bigger issues that today face us in the country. That is why I am so reluctant to leave Sevagram. It is my laboratory for satyagraha. It is there that I expect to discover the key to India's independence, not in Simla or New Delhi. I sometimes feel like taking shelter in flight, not to seek cloistered peace, but in the stillness of utter isolation to know myself, to see where I stand, to catch more effectively the faint whispering of the 'still small voice within'. Then alone would my experiment in ahimsa be complete.

M. D. we who are near to you are utterly devoid of ahimsa, so I feel that in order to lighten your burden we should leave you.

<sup>1</sup> The rest of the paragraph is from Pyarelal's "On the Road to Simla", published in *Harijan*, 6-7-1940.

G. But there may be some whose mere thoughts would influence the world. Hence in returning to a cave the motive should not be just to achieve solitude so as to seek individual salvation but to cultivate a natural bent of mind which will always inspire thoughts of universal welfare, nothing less.

M. D. But Buddha achieved salvation and returned to the world, preached to lacs of people and made them his disciples.

G. That is true. But I am never attracted by the idea of complete renunciation.

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 20-7-1940

#### 449. INTERVIEW TO “ THE HINDU “

SIMLA

June 29, 1940

I have come because I have been invited, and I shall return to Wardha this evening unless there is need for me to stay on.

The barometer within me is rising, even though the sky looks back.<sup>1</sup>

*The Hindu*, 29-6-1940

#### 450. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

BIRLA HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE ROAD

NEW DELHI,

June 30, 1940

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I think it will be mutually helpful if I reduce to writing the substance of the advice I tendered you yesterday as a personal friend and friend of the British.<sup>2</sup>

I had made it clear at the outset that I had no representative capacity and that, after the last resolution of the Working Committee, I

<sup>1</sup> Later in the afternoon Gandhiji left to see the Viceroy.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji had met the Viceroy on June 29 at Simla at the latter's invitation.

could only speak as an individual in any case.<sup>1</sup>

Your first proposal was to advise His Majesty's Government to let you announce that a status similar to that of the self-governing dominions would be granted to India within one year of the termination of the war, subject to an agreed understanding about British commercial interests, defence, external relations, rights of minorities and the position of Princes-regard being had to treaty obligations with them.<sup>2</sup> Granted these reservations, a Constituent Assembly<sup>3</sup> may draw up the Constitution which, unless there were unacceptable provisions, will be adopted by His Majesty's Government and placed by them before the Parliament for acceptance.

I said as to this that I personally could never accept it and that so far as I knew, the Congress also would never approve of it. My strong advice was that it should not be put before the Secretary of State of before India. Any such announcement would further embitter the relations between His Majesty's Government and India. I stressed the point that nothing short of immediate unequivocal declarations of independence,, free of all control by the British Government, would be accepted by the Congress. (India free will no doubt have to negotiate a treaty, I hope, of partnership, with Great Britain; will have to make provision for protection of legitimate foreign interests, guarantee to the full the rights of the minorities and make adequate arrangements with the Princes consistently with due protection of the people living within their jurisdiction. All this is inherent in the non-violent policy of the Congress. For its predominant sanction will be, not the force of arms behind it, but its sense of fairness and absolute justice. In the absence of these two, independence will go as soon as obtained. The thought thus expressed parenthetically was not put before you as part of my advice. I see as I am writing this letter that it was incomplete

<sup>1</sup> The Congress Working Committee which met at Wardha on June 21 resolved that they were unable to extend to the region of national defence, Mahatma Gandhi's creed of non-violence; *vide* "Both Happy and Unhappy", 29-6-1940

<sup>2</sup> The Viceroy, writing on July 1, gave his own version of the talk. According to him what he had said here was that His Majesty's Government "would spare no effort to bring about Dominion Status within a year after the conclusion of the war, and to set up whatever machinery those concerned agreed as appropriate to work out the new constitution".

<sup>3</sup> The Viceroy's version was ". . . you had thought of a constituent assembly . . . , while some of us were thinking of a smaller and rather different body. That body . . . would however have to be one on which the various political parties were agreed."

without it) The question of drawing up of the Constitution by a Constituent Assembly might be postponed to a future suitable date. I suggested too, that it would be a catastrophe not to make the aforesaid unequivocal declaration of independence, for whilst the Congress was openly pledged to it and had been fighting for it persistently and consistently for a long time, all parties whether it be the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha, or even the Princes, could not but prize independence if it could be had. Therefore it passed comprehension why there should be so much ado about making the overdue declaration that India was free of all external control.

Your second proposal was that subject to the acceptance of the proposed declaration, and pending the war, you would increase the number of the Executive Council[lors] so as to include representatives of various parties. As to this, I advised that without the vital declaration of independence the Congress was not likely to serve on the Council. I added that I adhered to the view expressed in a recent *Harijan* article of mine, entitled "Two Parties". Unless the parties had one mind on the question of fighting or immediate independence and the method thereof no joint effort was possible.

You had also in mind a proposal to convene a miniature Round Table Conference composed of representatives of various parties, groups and interests.<sup>1</sup> I strongly dissuaded you from entertaining any such proposal as being doomed to failure.

I then enlarged upon my confirmed opinion that time had arrived for a revision of Britain's war policy. Frank recognition of German superiority in organization and technique would be no derogation from British valour and would add to it because of conformity to truth. Even if it were otherwise, and Britain could show her superiority to Germans in every department and defeat them, given sufficient time, my proposition would still hold. In order to prove its validity, admission of German superiority was unnecessary. As you know, I had made this suggestion before the fall of France. My proposition was based on purely humanitarian grounds. I had chosen the present time as being opportune for pressing it. Assuming that Nazis were as bad as they were said to be, victory must be unattainable without cop-

<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy said: "I do not think that I spoke of a miniature Round Table Conference . . . I had rather in view a preliminary enquiry group of persons competent . . . to tender advice and guidance to their principals . . . without the parties being in any way committed to their conclusion."

ying the Nazi methods. That would mean no deliverance from Nazism. Sufficient had happened to prove the utter futility of armaments for the protection of small nations no matter how brave they were. Britain's victory after the slaughter and ruthlessness which it must involve could never make the world safe for democracy, nor bring it peace. Such a victory must mean another preparation for a war more inhuman than the present, as this one had proved more inhuman than the last. For this and similar reasons I urged with all the earnestness and force at my command that if Britain could accept the non-violent method. It would redound to her eternal glory and would count for much greater bravery than her proverbial bravery in war.

I hoped too that it would not be retorted that I had no warrant for appealing to Britain suddenly to accept the non-violent method when I had failed in persuading my colleagues and co-workers to accept it when the time had come for its enforcement in its fullness. I said in anticipation of the possibility of such a retort that my colleagues and I represented a weak and subject people wholly unarmed and untrained in the use of arms. The non-violence of my conception was essentially for those who were conscious of their ability to wield them with effect. Therefore I suggested that if Britain could be convinced of the superiority of non-violence over violence, now was the psychological moment for the full adoption of the non-violent method. Britain with all her intentions could not protect Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France. If Britain could accept the method presented by me, it would point to all these countries the way of deliverance and ensure the peace of the world as no other method ever would or could. It would confound Nazi wisdom and put all the Nazi armaments out of use.

Lastly, I said that my proposal was based on a practical experience of non-violence extending over half a century of ceaseless striving, experiment, research and prayer. I therefore requested you to present my proposal to His Majesty's Government for acceptance as coming from a life-long friend and well-wisher of the British people.

You were good enough to tell me that I could give the purport of our conversation to the members of the Working Committee. This I propose to do by showing a copy of this letter to them. Unless you have any objection I would like also to make a public appeal to the

British people to accept the non-violent method at this supreme juncture in their life as also the life of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

*I am*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

*451. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDUSTAN TIMES"*<sup>2</sup>

DELHI,  
*June 30, 1940*

The situation today is the same as it was yesterday.

Questioned whether his abrupt departure from Simla after his interview with the Viceroy meant that his talks with the Viceroy would not be pursued further, Mahatmaji said that it was evident that if there had been anything more to discuss he would have stayed in Simla.

GANDHIJI. . . . motored from the station to the Mall Road, from where he, along with the party, walked up to the Harijan Colony. The students of the Harijan Industrial Home extended a warm welcome to mahatmaji on his reaching the colony. Gandhiji remarked:

The credit for my coming here goes to Zohra (Begum Zohra Ansari). If she had not invited me to stay with her, probably I would not have been able to visit the Harijan Colony.

*The Hindustan Times, 1-7-1940*

*452. TALK TO MEMBERS OF SPINNIG CLUB*<sup>3</sup>

DELHI  
[ *June 30, 1940* ]<sup>4</sup>

QUESTION: Why should we spin now that there is no definite civil disobedience in the offing? Some satyagrahis have actually given up spinning since civil disobedience has receded into the background.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "To Every Briton", 2-7-1940.

<sup>2</sup> The *Hindustan Times* correspondent saw Gandhiji at railway station on the latter's arrival from Simla.

<sup>3</sup> Extract from Pyarelal 's "The Journey Back". The club was organized by Brij-krishna Chandiwala.

<sup>4</sup> The date is from a report in *The Hindustan Times*, 1-7-1940.

GANDHIJI: That to me shows that they would have made but poor satyagrahis and it is for the best that they have dropped out. I doubt if these fair-weather customers could be good for anything. For good or for ill, we have adopted the spinning-wheel as the weapon for our non-violent struggle. A soldier who will practise his weapons only when action is in sight will surely come a cropper at the time of the test. A satyagrahi soldier always looks and plans far ahead of him. If we have faith in the efficacy of the weapon we have chosen, we shall never give it up or lay it down but keep it always refurbished and ready. Today our non-violence is on its trial. The Working Committee's resolution is based on the assumption that the country is today not ready for the practice of pure ahimsa. They would be but too glad to discover that their assumption was wrong and revise their decision accordingly. It is for those who have a living faith in non-violence to prove the same and convert the Working Committee to their view instead of catching at the first excuse to resile from their faith. If the fifty-two members who are on the register of your club have the right faith in them, they will soon multiply into fifty-two hundred. But mere shilly-shallying won't do. 'If the salt loseth its savour, where-with shall it be salted?'

I have not a shadow of doubt that though the spinning-wheel we can develop the non-violence of the strong which recks no odds, however overwhelming, and knows no defeat. Weapons forged out of iron and steel do not interest me. They might enable you to scatter death over the enemy and to capture a measure of the power he today wields over you. But that will not leave the masses any the better. They will continue to groan under the yoke of the powerful and the mighty. I am not interested in an order which leaves out the weakest- the blind, the halt and the maimed. My swaraj is even for the least in the land. This can come only through non-violence

Non-violence of the weak is bad. But violence of the impotent - impotent violence-is worse. That is what is today vitiating the atmosphere. Mere spinning a *la mode* will not purge the atmosphere of this poison.

Another member of the club remarked that they could not pretend to have a faith in the spinning-wheel which Gandhiji had, put they were prepared to spin for discipline, which was quite honest a stand to take up.

Gandhiji, while admitting that spinning for discipline had value at one time, contended that it was altogether inadequate to the need of the hour today. To create a

truly non-violent atmosphere in the country, spinning with faith was necessary. Supposing there were riots imperilling the lives of thousands of innocent women and children and the conflagration threatened to spread over the whole country, it would be up to those who had true faith in non-violence to interpose themselves between the lust-maddened rioters and quell their fury by their self-immolation. Spinning for discipline will not give them that faith. He continued:

discipline has a place in non-violent strategy, but much more is required. In a satyagraha army everybody is a soldier and a servant. But at a pinch every satyagrahi soldier has also to be his own general and leader. Mere discipline cannot make for leadership. The latter calls for faith and vision. That is why I have said that spinning for discipline, whatever else it might be capable of achieving. Cannot help us to win the satyagraha fight which requires the non-violence of the strong.

*Harijan, 28-7-1940*

#### 453. ANSWER TO QUESTION<sup>1</sup>

[ Before July 1, 1940 ]<sup>2</sup>

QUESTION: You think we have not the non-violence of the brave. Well, then, I ask you what would you do if independence were to be offered to you today? Would you say no?

ANSWER: I would say no. I am giving an absurd answer to an absurd question. The question is absurd, for independence is not going to be offered, because we are not ready. If we were ready, it would be there without our asking for it.

*Harijan, 13-7-1940*

#### 454. ABOUT THE WORKING COMMITTEE'S DECISION

I have been receiving several letters both from Congressmen and non-Congressmen including friends from the West Deploring the

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal's "What Led to the Decision", 1-7-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Namely that congress could not go all the way with Gandhiji in the matter of non-violence; *vide* also "Both Happy and Unhappy", 29-6-1940

recent decisions of the Working Committee. These correspondents have nothing but admiration for the courage the members have shown in doing what they felt was a duty though very unpleasant, but all of them deplore the decision and would have the Working committee to reconsider it. Of all these letters there is one which is a reasoned plea for not abandoning non-violence for internal disorders or external attacks. The correspondent encloses also an extract from a letter he wrote to a friend of his who ridiculed the method of satyagraha. Both the letter to me and the extract referred to have intrinsic merit and are opportune at this juncture. I have omitted from the letter the part that disputes the correctness of my tribute to the French statesmen for suing for peace. French capitulation, he considers, was unjustified. It has given him a great shock.

“But,” says the writer, “the decision of the Working Committee has come as a greater shock.” From the extract too I have omitted, for the sake of brevity, a paragraph which though very interesting was not strictly necessary for his argument.<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI, July 1, 1940

*Harijan*, 6-7-1940

#### 455. SOME VITAL QUESTIONS

H. E. the Viceroy is again conferring with leaders of parties. I was invited, but not as a party leader or a leader at all. I was invited as a friend to help him, if I could, to come to a definite conclusion, especially to interpret the Congress mind to him. It is better, in the

<sup>1</sup> The texts of the correspondent's letter to Gandhiji and one written to a friend, are not reproduced here. In his letter to Gandhiji the correspondent, having affirmed his "absolute faith in satyagraha, not only as a convenient instrument of regaining independence for our country, but as the only law for humanity to follow", had gone on to say that the decision of the Working committee to adopt measures for national defence, in spite of Gandhiji, had come as a huge disappointment to him.

In the letter to his friend he had said, "To declare that preparations should be made for national defence, while retaining non-violence as a method for national liberation is, to my mind, to make a travesty of non-violence in the sense in which every true satyagrahi understands it . . . It is non-violence that should be the end . . . , and self-determination the means. . . ."

"The desire for moral effort . . . is there in everyone. But that does not mean that moral effort is easy, or that everyone will willingly take to it . . . the majority of us live by our passions . . . Patriotism is the worst kind of emotional orgy. . . ."

light of what is happening (and things will presently move with lightning velocity) to consider some of the question that will demand quick decision, if they will not have been decided before these lines are in print.

The first thing that everyone has to consider for himself is whether Dominion Status of the Westminster variety can be acceptable to India. If it has not become a myth already, it will be at the end of the war. Britain herself, victorious or defeated, will never be the same as she has been for these few hundred years. But this much is certain that her defeat, if it must come, will certainly be glorious. If she is defeated, she will be because no other Power similarly situated could have avoided defeat. I cannot say the same of her victory. It will be bought by a progressive adoption of the same means as the totalitarian States have adopted. I must say with the deepest pain that British statesmen have rejected the only moral influence they could easily have got from the Congress to turn the scales in Britain's favour. It is no blame to her statesmen that they have not availed themselves of that influence. They did not see the need of it. It may well be that they did not perceive the moral influence itself which I have claimed for the Congress. Whatever may be the case, it is clear to me that India's immediate objective must be unadulterated independence. This is no time for mincing words or hiding our thoughts. I cannot think of anyone wanting less than independence for his country, if he can get it. No country has ever got it without its people having fought for it. Anyway, the Congress made up its mind long ago. Even if India is to render effective help to Britain, it can come from a free India. Crores may be drained from India as of yore; thousands of men may be hired as soldiers or camp-followers out of her teeming millions. All such contributions will be from a helpless India. They cannot raise the moral status of Britain.

The next question for consideration is that of providing for internal disorder and external invasion. The raising of private armies will be worse than useless. It will never be allowed. No Power, whether foreign or swadeshi, can tolerate private armies. Those, therefore, who believe in the necessity of India having armed forces will be driven sooner or later to enlist themselves under the British banner. It is the logical outcome of the belief. The Working committee have taken the decision on the point. If it is to abide, I have little doubt that they will presently have to advise Congressmen to enlist in the usual way. That

would mean an end to the slogan of immediate independence and an end also to non-violence of the true brand. I shall hope to the last that, for the sake of themselves, India, aye Britain herself, and humanity, Congressmen will resolutely decline to have anything to do with the use of arms for any of the two purposes. I feel strongly that the future of humanity lies in the hands of the Congress. May God give wisdom and courage to Congressmen to take the right step.

The officer of enlarging the Viceroy's Council is on the tapis. The Congress cannot countenance it, so long as it swears by independence and non-violence. But if it sidetracks them, it will be logically driven to reconstructing Congress ministries in the Provinces. This means the congress becoming a vital part of the war machine. The Government of India has no other occupation but that of preparing India for defending Britain. It is an illusion to talk of preparing India for self-defence. No power has eyes on India except as British possession. As such she is a rich prize. Is not India the brightest jewel in the British Crown? But I own that, if India is to learn the trade of war, she can now have her apprenticeship to the extent that the British masters will allow.

The Congress has to make its choice. The temptation is irresistible. Congressmen can again become Cabinet Ministers. They may also be Ministers or Members at the Centre. They will have an insight into the war machine. They will watch from inside (again to the extent allowed) the Englishman at work when engaged in a life-and-death struggle. They will have to raise crores of rupees and dispose of them in the war effort. If I have my way, I would have the Congress to resist the irresistible temptation and not grudge those who believe in the accepted method filling all these posts. There will be Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and others taking up these posts as they have done before now. They too are our countrymen. We must give them credit for good faith. Let us who believe in independence and the only way to attain it, hold fast to the objective and the means. I can see much good coming out of this division of functions. For the Congress to merge itself into the stereotyped method would be a disaster of the first magnitude. If, on the other hand, the Congress sticks to its colours, it is sure to fight its way to its goal even before the war is over, provided that the fight is purely, truly and demonstrably non-violent.

NEW DELHI, July 1, 1940

*Harijan*, 6-7-1940

#### 456. A VALID COMPLAINT

A correspondent sends me a forcible letter in which he argues that, though I expect great things from my countrymen, I write only for *Harijan* which is edited in English, and utterly neglect its Hindustani and Gujarati editions. Both *Harijanbandhu* (Gujarati) and *Harijan Sevak* (Hindustani) have only translations of the writings in *Harijan*. I must plead guilty to the charge. My excuse for writing in English has been that I had to address English-educated India who could understand neither Gujarati nor my faulty Hindustani, and also the ever-growing number of Western readers. I hope that the excuse will be deemed valid. But it seems to me that the time has come for me to confine my writings, as far as possible, exclusively to Gujarati and occasionally to Hindustani. The reason is simple and, I hope, convincing. I have before me that most difficult task of reaching the message of the non-violence of the strong to the masses. They will not understand the fineness of the Working Committee's decision. Already I have warnings that they will be confused. They will believe that the Congress has given up non-violence and wants them also to do likewise. Then they would say, "But the Mahatma still believes in it. In the midst of these differences whose word are we to follow?" If I lose the masses, the mass experiment in no must be voted down as failure. My faith would be still as strong as ever. But my failure will be equally clear. In such trying circumstances I must not rely upon the translations of my writings to carry my message to the masses. I must use the most effective means available. Naturally, therefore, I must speak at least to the Gujaratis in their own language which is also mine. Moreover Gujarati lends itself to correct translation in any northern language much more easily than English.

But the decisive reason for the proposed change is that when I write in English the English-speaking public is in view. I would not have exactly the same message of them as I would have for the masses. Past experience, too, points in favour of the change. When I began to edit *Indian Opinion* in south Africa, most of the Indians there were almost illiterate. I wrote the language they could understand. When the weekly *Indian opinion* reached them, for every twenty Indians they had one reader who was of course a volunteer. They listened to and devoured every word of what appeared in *Indian Opinion*. In it there was no padding, no essays given to the readers. I used to reason out for them their difficulties. I had no time to discuss theories. They

they had one reader who was of course a volunteer. They listened to and devoured every word of what appeared in *Indian Opinion*. In it there was no padding, no essays given to the readers. I used to reason out for them their difficulties. I had no time to discuss theories. They had weekly instructions as to what they were to do. I have no doubt that *Indian Opinion* had a vital part to play in moulding and guiding the satyagrahis. Had I spoken to them through the English medium, I should have failed. I should never have been able to feel one with them, if I had spoken to them in English when I knew that I could speak to a large section of them through their own tongue. If, therefore, I hope as I do, to carry even a section of the masses with me, I must at least speak to them through the tongue they and I understand.

So the English-knowing readers should not be surprised if one fine day they get my writings in *Harijan* in translated form. Happily I have very able assistance in this direction. Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal have often translated my Gujarati or Hindustani writings. English-knowing readers should know that they have my *Experiments with Truth* and *History of Satyagraha in South Africa* in translation. So in *Hind Swaraj*, and several other writings of mine. After all, however, in the matter of non-violence I must rely most upon my thought to carry my message to the farthest limits of the universe. All thought does not possess the same potency. Only thought crystallized by a pure life and charged with prayerful concentration has potency. The purer the life, the greater the concentration, the brighter the faith in that Unseen Power from whom all things are, the greater the potency of thought. If I had the purity, the concentration and the faith I want, I know that I would do all my work without speech or writing, or with the least use of either, and the power the thought would then carry would be irresistible. That is the power which every human being has to aspire to and with due effort can attain. The voice of silence has never been denied.

NEW DELHI, July 1, 1940

*Harijan*, 6-7-1940

## 457. NON-VIOLENCE AND PANIC

The following<sup>1</sup> from a correspondent's letter will be read with interest and perhaps profit:

Since the Allies have begun to suffer reverses there is a panic in the country. The people have become afraid of the consequences of the failure of the British. They apprehend civil war, communal riots, looting, arson, plunder and goondaism. You are the apostle of non-violence and have been preaching it for the last twenty years, if not more. . .

But . . . I find that in the majority of your followers this conception on non-violence is wanting. They are non-violent because they believe that, if they will use violence to fight a wrongdoer, they will provoke him with the result that he will use greater violence which they may be unable to stand. This seems to be the background of their non-violence which is clearly an outcome of fear and cowardice, and not of love. For, the idea behind is to save one's life and not to risk it for a higher cause. . . .

In these days of panic and general nervousness I strongly believe that a few articles from your pen will dispel all fears from our young men and infuse a spirit in them which will enable them to resist the goonda element in the society. One article<sup>1</sup> of this nature has already appeared in the last issue of *Harijan*. But I suggest that a series is necessary to bring courage and bravery to those who are physically quite fit but are panic-stricken. In my opinion, all fear, all nervousness and panic will disappear in case you are kind enough to spare a few lines in *Harijan* on this subject every week. Our nervousness is encouraging the goondas amongst us. The moment it disappears, the goondas and bullies of our society will also disappear.

The letter gives a correct picture of the mentality of the average Congressman. The non-violence which it describes can never take us to our goal. It will have served us well, if we use it as a stepping-stone to true the non-violence of the strong-non-violence which will stand alone defying the combined might of the mightiest powers of the earth. Let all Congressmen ask themselves whether they have the courage to take up non-violence of the strong. Nothing is needed to reach that much-to-be-desired state beyond the will to risk all for the sake of one's cause. The non-violence of the person who went to jail to avoid a worse fate harmed him and disgraced the cause which he used as a shelter to escape death. Swaraj-makers are made of sterner

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "How to Combat Hitlerism", 18-6-1940.

stuff. And, surely, it is simple enough to see that, if we can bravely face death without killing or even wishing to kill, we have achieved the ability to win and keep swaraj.

My correspondent asks me to write a series of articles in condemnation of panic. Nothing that I can write will alone prevent panic. What is required is example more than precept. I have pointed out that the city-dwellers who are reported to have given way to panic were never non-violent even when they went to jail. Our city-dwellers made a handsome contribution as jail-goers during the civil-resistance campaigns launched by the Congress. They should now, by resolutely sticking to their posts, steel the hearts of the timid against the temptation to flee from fancied or real danger. It is foolish to think that by fleeing one can trick the dread god of death. Let us treat him as a beneficent angel rather than as a dread god. We must face and welcome him whenever he comes. My host, Sheth Ghanshyamdas Birla, tells me that not many months ago a whole mercantile family which had converted paper into gold met death in a railway accident which overtook the train that was carrying the family and its precious gold. Verily that gold was a death trap. Let us not die before the inevitable hour comes as it must come to every one of us, war or no war

NEW DELHI, July 1, 1940

*Harijan*, 6-7-1940

#### 458. *QUESTION BOX*

##### A MUSLIM'S DELEMMA

Q. We Muslims believe that the Prophet's life was wholly directed by God and truly non-violent, though not in your sense of the term. He never waged an offensive war, and he had the tenderest regard for the feelings of others, but when he was driven to a defensive war he drew his sword for a holy war, and he permits the use of the sword under conditions he has laid down. But your non-violence is different. You prescribe it under all conditions and circumstances. I do not think the Prophet would permit this. Whom are we to follow- you or the Prophet? If we follow you, we cease to be Muslims. If we follow the Prophet, we cannot join the Congress with its creed of extreme non-violence. Will you solve this dilemma?

A. I can only answer that, since you notice the difference, you should unhesitatingly follow the Prophet, not me. Only I would like to say that I claim to have studied the life of the Prophet and the Koran

as a detached student of religions. And I have come to the conclusion that the teaching of the Karan is essentially in favour of non-violence. Non-violence is better than violence, it is said in the Koran. Non-violence is enjoined as a duty; violence is permitted as a necessity. I must refuse to sit in judgement on what the Prophet did. I must base my conduct on what the great teachers of the earth said, not on what they did. Prophethood came not from the wielding of the sword, it came from years of wrestling with God to know that truth. Erase these precious years of the great life, and you will have robbed the Prophet of his prophethood. It is these years of his life which made Mohammed a prophet. A prophet's life, after he is acknowledged as one, cannot be our guide. Only prophets can weigh the works of prophets. If a civilian can judge the merits of a soldier, a layman of a scientist, an ordinary man may judge a prophet, must less imitate him. If I handled a motor-car, I should surely run it and me into the danger zone and probably into the jaws of death. How much more dangerous would it be then for me to imitate a prophet! When the Prophet was asked why, if he could fast more than the prescribed times, the companions also could not, he promptly replied: "God gives me spiritual food which satisfies even the bodily wants: for you He has ordained the Ramadan. You may not copy me." quote from memory.

#### SPARE THE ROD

Q. I am a teacher. I try to follow the principle of non-violence in dealing with my schoolboys and my own children. I am successful to a great extent in case of the school children, excepting a bully whom I would send to the Head Master. But in case of my own children I often feel like beating, though I successfully restrain myself. I find that these are readily obedient to my uncle who, unlike me, believes in the old saying: 'Spare the rod, spoil the child., what should I do with my own children? How should a non-violent Head Master deal with a bully?

A. I am quite clear that you must not inflict corporal or other punishment on your children or pupils. You can punish yourself, if you like and are qualified, in order to melt your children's or pupils' hearts. Many mothers are known to have corrected their children in this manner. I have on many occasions. I had to deal with wild boys in South Africa, Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Parsis. With one exception, I do not remember ever having punished a single boy. The non-violent method invariably succeeded. When a bond is established between a teacher and his pupils, the latter will generally yield before

their teacher's suffering for their sake. In the case of your 'bully', if he has no respect for you, you can non-co-operate with him by sending him away from your school. Non-violence does not compel you to keep in your school a student who does not carry our disciplinary rules.

#### THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Q. You often refer to the Sermon on the Mount. Do you believe in the verse, 'if any man will take away the coat, let him have thy cloak also'? Does it not follow from the principle of non-violence? If so, then do you advise the weak and poor tenant of a village to submit gladly to the violent encroachment of the zamindar on his '*abadi* land' or tenancy rights, which so often occurs in a village these days?

A. Yes, I would unhesitatingly advise tenants to evacuate the land belonging to a tyrant. That would be like giving your cloak also when only the coat is demanded. To take what is required may be profitable; to have more given to you is highly likely to a burden. To overload a stomach is to court slow death. A zamindar wants his rent, he does not want his land. It would be a burden on him when he does not want it. When you give more to a robber than he needs, you spring a surprise on him, you give him a shock although agreeable, he has not been used to it. Historical instances are on record to show that such non-violent conduct has produced a wholesome effect upon evil-doers. These acts cannot be done mechanically; they must come out of conviction and love or pity for the other man. Nor need you work all the apparent implications of my answer. If you do, you will come across blind alleys. Suffice it to say that in the verse quoted by you Jesus put in a picturesque and telling manner the great doctrine of non-violent non-co-operation. Your non-co-operation with your opponent is violent when you give a blow for a blow, and is ineffective in the long run. Your non-co-operation is non-violent when you give your opponent all in the place of just what he needs. You have disarmed him once for all by your apparent co-operation, which in effect is complete non-co-operation. A girl, who rather than give her living body to a would-be ravisher presents him with her corpse, confounds him and dies a heroine's death. Here is a stout heart in a frail body.

#### COMPULSORY PRAYER

Q. I am a worker in the Rajasthan branch of the A. I. S. A. I believe in prayer but some of my colleagues do not. Still they have got to join in prayer under the rules

of the *Sanstha*.<sup>1</sup> They are afraid that, if they refuse, they would lose their job. My view is that the *Sanstha* pays wages to its workers for their eight hours' work. What right has it to insist upon including compulsory participation in prayer by their workers into the bargain?

A. There can be no such thing as compulsory prayer. A prayer to be prayer must be voluntary. But nowadays people entertain curious ideas about compulsion. Thus, if the rules of your institution require every inmate-paid or unpaid-to attend common prayer, in my opinion you are bound to attend it as you are to attend to your other duties. Your joining the institution was a voluntary act. You knew or ought to have known its rules. Therefore your attendance at prayer I would regard as a voluntary act, even as I would treat your other work under the contract. If you joined the institution merely because of the wages it offered, you should have made it clear to the manager that you could not attend prayer. If in spite of your objection you entered the institution without stating your objection, you did a wrong thing for which you should make expiation. This can be done in two ways - by joining the prayer with your heart in it, or by resigning and paying such compensation as may be necessary for the loss caused by your sudden resignation. Everyone joining an institution owes it to obey the rules framed by the management from time to time. When any new rule is found irksome, it is open to the objector to leave the institution in accordance with the provisions made for resignation. But he may not disobey them whilst he is in it.

NEW DELHI, JULY 1, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 459. *LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW*

BIRLA HOUSE, ALBURQUE ROAD,  
NEW DELHI,  
*July 2, 1940*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I have to thank you for your very prompt reply to my letter of 20th ultimo. I thank you too for sending me the full meaning of what

<sup>1</sup> Institution

you had actually said. In trying to interpret you, my object was to put your proposals in as favourable a light as I could. I am thankful for the corrections. I would read your letter to the Working Committee.

I am glad also that you have no objection to my making a public appeal to the British people on behalf of non-violence.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say that I can in no way associate your name with my appeal.

Our talks and correspondence shall remain confidential as desired by you.

*I am*

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

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

#### 460. TO EVERY BRITON

In 1896 I addressed an appeal<sup>1</sup> to every Briton in South Africa on behalf of my countrymen who had gone there as labourers or traders and their assistants. It had its effect. However important it was from my viewpoint, the cause which I pleaded then was insignificant compared with the cause which prompts this appeal. I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of relations between nations and other matters. Your statesmen have declared that this a war on behalf of democracy. There are many other reason given in justification. You know them all by heart. I suggest that at the end of the war, whichever way it ends, there will be no democracy left to represent democracy. This war has descended upon mankind as a curse and a warning. It is a curse inasmuch as it is brutalizing man on a scale hitherto unknown. All distinctions between combatants and non-combatants have been abolished. No one and nothing is to be spared. Lying has been reduced to an art. Britain was to defend small nationalities. One by one they have vanished, at least for the time being. It is also a warning. It is a warning that, if nobody reads the writing on the wall, man will be reduced to the state of the beast, whom he is shaming

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

<sup>1</sup> Presumably "Open Letter" and "Letter to Europeans"; *Vide* "Open Letter", before 19-12-1894.

by his manners. I read the writing when the hostilities broke out. But I had not the courage to say the word. God has given me the courage to say it before it is too late.

I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazim. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as the Germans. If that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win the war. In other words, you will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis. No cause, however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today cannot be called just.

I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in a trial of brute strength, whether expressed through the muscle or the brain. Your muscular bravery is an established fact. Need you demonstrate that your brain is also as unrivalled in destructive power as your muscle? I hope you do not wish to enter into such an undignified competition with the Nazis. I venture to present you with a nobler and a braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

This process or method, which I have called non-violent non-co-operation, is not without considerable success in its use in India. Your representatives in India may deny my claim. If they do, I shall feel sorry for them. They may tell you that our non-co-operation was not wholly non-violent, that it was born of hatred. If they give that testimony, I won't deny it. Had it been wholly non-violent, if all the non-co-operators had been filled with goodwill towards you, I make bold to say that you who are India's masters would have become her

pupils and, with much greater skill than we have, perfected this matchless weapon and met the German and Italian friends' menace with it. Indeed the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently. Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations, and the orgy of hatred.

This is no appeal made by a man who does not know his business. I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for my self. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of the search the discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life-mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

I claim to have been a lifelong and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. At one time I used to be also a lover of your empire. I thought that it was doing good to India. When I saw that in the nature of things it could do no good. I used, and am still using, the non-violent method to fight imperialism. Whatever the ultimate fate of my country, my love for you remains, and will remain, undiminished. My non-violence demands universal love, and you are not a small part of it. It is that love which has prompted my appeal to you.

May God give power to every word of mine. His name I began to write this, and in His name I close it. May your statesman have the wisdom and courage to respond to my appeal. I am telling His Excellency the Viceroy<sup>1</sup> that my services are at the disposal of His Majesty's Government, should they consider them of any practical use in advancing the object of my appeal.

NEW DELHI, JULY 2, 1940

*Harijan*, 6-7-1940

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 3-7-1940.

#### 461. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,  
July 3, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

You may not cable Amery<sup>2</sup>. Let things shape themselves. Shivaroa<sup>3</sup> need not worry. Read my "Appeal<sup>4</sup> to Every Briton" and do lobbying among the Britons. Don't expect letters from me now. You should write. I shall see that someone writes to you. I must reserve writing for papers.

LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3979. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7288

#### 462. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

DELHI,  
July 3, 1940

You must have seen in the Press my public appeal to every Briton. Nevertheless, for the sake of courtesy, I enclose herewith a copy. You will note the last sentence of my appeal. Will you please convey the contents it to the proper quarters? The appeal and the offer at the end represent my personal and humble contribution to Britain's cause. It is the best I could give.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan* 21-7-1940

<sup>2</sup> The Secretary of State of India

<sup>3</sup> B. Shiva Rao

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>1</sup> Replying on July 10, the Viceroy said, "I duly conveyed your letter of July 3 and your appeal to His Majesty's Government. I have now heard from them that with every appreciation of your motives they do not feel that the policy which you advocate is one which it is possible for them to consider, since in common with the whole Empire they are firmly resolved to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion.

463. *CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON*

NEW DELHI  
*July 5, 1940*

AGATHA HARRISON  
CRANBOURNE COURT  
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD  
LONDON

NO HOPE SETTLEMENT, WIRE EXTENT PUBLICITY GIVEN  
THERE MY APPEAL EVERY BRITON.

GANDHI

From the original: Gandhi Nidhi File (August 1796). Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

464. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

NEW DELHI,  
*July 5, 1940*

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your two packets. You will not worry if I can't send you many letters.

I appreciate the love behind the wish that your translation should be revised by me. I have promised that I shall do so. I shall try. If I can train you and S. to do that work I should be at ease about *Harijan Sevak*. In the altered circumstances created by me I must write for Harijan also. I refer to my "Appeal to Every Briton".

Khurshed is here. She is quite well and quite cheerful. She is going for a few days to Bombay and will return to the Frontier on 15th.

Rogers is still here meditating on what he can do about the Appeal. You should do the lobbying among your English friends.

LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3980. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7289

465. *TESTIMONIAL TO BAL. D. KALELKAR*

NEW DELHI,  
*July 5, 1940*

This is to introduce young Kalelkar to all my friends in America. He was brought up under my hands. He is one of the most promising among the boys brought up in Satyagraha Ashram. Any help rendered to him will be appreciated.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 2176

466. *TO SEVAGRAM WORKERS*

*July 6, 1940*

I hope everyone drinks only boiled water. During the rainy season, our wells contain many impurities. As a protection against malaria everyone should apply kerosene oil to hands and feet before retiring to bed at night. It should be applied even to the face. Food should be masticated well. Bowels should be cleared every day. If there is constipation castor oil may be taken as a purgative. We should protect ourselves against the sun; a cap or a piece of cloth may be used to cover the head

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bopuki Chhayamen, P. 383

467. *SPEECH AT THE HARIJAN INDUSTRIAL HOME, DELHI*

[ Before July 7, 1940 ]<sup>2</sup>

There can be no better cement to weld scattered and isolated units into a homogeneous society than heart-union through prayer. It purifies us and gives us true strength-the strength that come from purity and high resolve. May God bless you with both in an ample measure.

A litter girl asked Gandhiji how satyagraha could avail against raiders from the sky who would deal death from above and with whom the satyagrahis would not be able even to make contact.

By dying non-violently rather than submitting.

Q. But who will then live to enjoy freedom?

A. The survivors if there are any. But may I put you a counter-question? Who enjoys the freedom when whole divisions of armed soldiers rush into a hailstorm of bullets to be mown down? Why, those who might succeed in capturing the citadel by passing over their dead bodies. The soldier who fights never expects to enjoy the fruits of victory. But in the case of non-violence everybody seems to start with the assumption that the non-violent method must be set down as a failure unless he himself at least lives to enjoy the success thereof. This is both illogical and invidious. In satyagraha more than in armed warfare, it may be said that we find life by losing it.

*Harijan*, 28-7-1940

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal's "The Journey Back". The Home was being run under Thakkar Bapa's care and Gandhiji visited it twice during his stay in Delhi.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji left Delhi on the evening of July 7.

468. DISCUSSION AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE  
MEETING

[July , 3/7, 1940]<sup>1</sup>

GANDHIJI: I have been oppressed all the time by the fact that I now represent a totally different mentality from that of the Working Committee. When I asked for absolution it was not a formal thing. My article in the *Harijan*<sup>2</sup> is a true picture of my mind. I put the same thing to the Viceroy. I told him that this was the last interview. He should send for the President of the Congress if he must have an offer on behalf of the Congress. I think in the course of days he will invite the President. It is the most difficult job for me to give a decisive opinion on these matters. I would much rather that you left me alone.

Granting the implications that I have drawn from the last resolution you cannot possibly escapes its logical conclusion. You will want to seize power. You will have to surrender certain things in order to get it. You will have to be like other parties. You will be driven into their ways. Maybe you will be an advanced party. This picture repels me. I don't believe in the expression 'seizure of power'. There is no such thing as 'seizure of power'. I have no power save what resides in the people. I am a mere representative of the power in the people. While Rajaji was developing his theme I felt that a wide gulf separated me from him. He thinks he will be best able to serve his country by taking advantage of every opportunity be serve the country. He takes office in that light. I differ fundamentally from him. He may satisfy himself with the illusion that he is serving non-violence. I am not afraid of power. Some day or the other we will have to take it. The Viceroy is here to serve his country, its interests and therefore he must use all resources that India has mercilessly. If we participate in war effort, we shall have learnt some lesson in the art of violence, even if the Britishers are defeated. This will gives us some experience, some power such as a soldier has but all this at cost of independence, this seems to me the logical consequence of your resolution. This does not

<sup>1</sup> From the contents it is obvious that this was the meeting following the one held at Wardha from June 17 to 21 at which Gandhiji had expressed a desire to be absolved from the activities of the Congress

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Both Happy and Unhappy", 29-6-1940.

appeal to me. If we are non-violent I know how to deal with the situation. The vast majority of our people had violence in them, but they were taught the power of non-violence. Now you must teach them the power of violence. There is confusion in the people now. It is not my interpretation which has caused it but the resolution itself. I cannot guide you in this atmosphere. Whatever I say will embarrass you.

I told the Viceroy that the British, if they succeed, will not be better than Mussolini or Hitler. If there is peace with Hitler India will be exploited by all powers. But if we are non-violent and Japan comes we will see that they do not get anything without our consent. Non-violence has worked wonders in 20 years. We cannot do any such thing with violence. . .<sup>1</sup>

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The question was brought forward by Gandhiji in the world context. He wanted to place the message of non-violence before the world.

GANDHIJI: Not exactly world context. I thought of the immediate problem. I did not have the world picture before me but India, and India alone. In the position they have taken the Working Committee is free to render help and to prepare an army. It is free to take office. The Viceroy thought the resolution favoured him. He said: "You want to defend India, you want aeroplanes, battle-ships, tanks, etc. We will give you all these. This will serve our purpose and also yours. This is the golden opportunity. You should come and get equipped. Under pressure we will go forward double speed."

I regret the Congress took what I considered as a backward step, but it is a perfectly honourable step. It has taken the only step that it could. I will still try to wean it and the rank and file from this mistake. If the rank and file feel with me the Working Committee will retract the step. A larger issue of internal anarchy was before us. What contribution shall we make if anarchy overtakes us? Will the masses cooperate in the non-violent effort? I will test the masses and if I find that they will desert me I will shape my policy accordingly, but I won't collapse before they collapse. The terrible things that are going on in Europe fill me with anguish. I do not know where I could come in there. I feel I can do something and hence the statement.

<sup>1</sup> The meeting then discussed the question of non-violence and internal disorder.

Private armies never appeal to me. The masses will be exploited by us. We will go and tell them you must give us your last penny to defend your hearths and homes. I cannot do this. This is not for me. I want to proclaim to the country that India will defend itself non-violently so far as the Congress is concerned.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI: I cannot go with Gandhiji in his conception of the State. Ours is a political organization not working for non-violence but for the political ideal. We are working in competition with other political parties.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I agree with Rajaji in his understanding of violence and non-violence ; else we cannot function on the political plane.

GANDHIJI : Very difficult questions have arisen in the course of the discussion. Rajaji has summarily rejected the idea that we can retain power by non-violent means. This was illustrated even when we attained it by non-violent means while the Congress was in office. To the extent they used violence the ministries failed. Their action showed bankruptcy of our non-violence. Perhaps we could not have done otherwise. I advised giving up of office. Rajaji however does not accept what I have said, that it is possible to hold office without the use of more than police violence.

I again want to emphasize two things. I do not [*sic*] believe that declaration of independence is necessary. The legal declaration may come afterwards. If the government expect any help from us our help will be moral. It will be infinitely superior to what they can get by manipulation, coaxing or coercion. I do feel if they have courage to do the right thing, the scales will be turned in their favour. Independence inaction must be declared. Very lightly it was said by some members that we must dismiss from our minds civil resistance. I have never dismissed it. A time may come when we shall resort to civil disobedience. I cannot conceive the idea of our sitting, silently when people are made to co-operate under compulsion. This process is going on now. The process was gentle and not much felt till the French capitulation. I cannot conceive my remaining silent or sitting at ease with this coercion going on unhampered. But can our people show non-violence through and through? The non-violence of the weak will bring us some relief but not real joy and power-it will end in our being exhausted. If we begin with non-violence of the weak and end also with that we are finished. Therefore now, when the testing

time has come, you say it is not possible. All honour to your integrity and courage of conviction. But I cannot help feeling that our non-violence has ended in disaster, I say again with experience and conviction that it is possible to touch power through non-violence, but we may not take it. A non-violent organization may not accept office but it can get things done its way. Thus alone can we have power if we have not non-violent control over people. Jawaharlal has done less than justice to those who believe in non-violence. He means that they want to be superior men leaving the dirty work of violence to be done by others. I hold, on the other hand, that we don't take power at all. It involves emoluments, glory and things which people prize. Those in power consider that they are superior and others subordinate. When a non-violent man refuses to take over power he says, 'I decline because if I accept I shall make a mess of it. I am not built that way. Let credit go to others.' I never felt that I was superior to those who took power nor did they feel that they were inferior or called upon to do a dirty job. Now suppose you at this critical moment hold fast to non-violence in the midst of other parties who swear by violence, you will be in a minority. Why should a small non-violent group immediately expect to win power before they convert others. Let others hold power. A group of non-violent men wishing to convert the country to non-violence will not bother about power. In holding fast to the creed you will have converted a majority of the people. A man who has self-confidence will convert the county. But you say millions will never arrive at that stage. I feel practically certain they can. Do not lay down this proposition. I became non-violent after laborious processes. It is the essence of non-violence that we give the same credit to the whole of mankind that we claim for ourselves. I have never felt that I alone can practise non-violence. Quite the contrary, I consider myself mediocre. I belong purely to the rank and file and yet I can lead the masses. I can produce heroes from the illiterates of Gujarat. Time was when these illiterates said, 'what can we do?' Today these very people are wielding power. If we can convert a few thousands we can convert millions. Both masses of Hindus and Muslims acted non-violently in 1920. Could it not be a great thing for us to have acquired such an influence upon public opinion and upon those who wield power that we do not have to compel obedience. Non-violence cannot suddenly mount to power. I am not satisfied with swaraj for the few. It is for millions. They must feel it. By violent means they cannot feel it. This opportunity has

come into our hands. We have got to decide. I do not leave out even lepers from my non-violent calculation. I am not talking through my hat. I have a leper<sup>1</sup> in my Ashram. He feels now that he can play his part though he cannot wield arms. Logically I have endeavoured to show that there is nothing to prevent you from taking power if certain conditions are fulfilled.

Many Indian villages and institutions are behaving non-violently. We are trying to produce a homogeneous nation. We must allow time for it. What has violence accomplished in the world? I think impatience has seized us. If we do not take office others will take office. If you think that you can serve the people by entering into competition with others you are mistaken. We are democrats. We would be presumed to be ruling by the will of the people. We must dismount if people rebel. We have not given that trial to non-violence which we might have. All of us did our best. Let us do better. If we do better, if we have got the proper courage we shall have left something for India to be proud of. I would like you to feel with me that it is perfectly possible to hold the State without an army. If anybody comes I will square accounts with him along non-violent lines. Why should we fear that they will swallow us? Violent people fight violent people. They do not touch non-violent people. We build up huge armaments in order to ward off an attack in some distant future. The divisions in the country also provide us with reason for our keeping to non-violence. We can hold our people peacefully against the whole world.

Our non-violence is of the weak. It is not non-violence of the brave. If we have affection for our neighbours there will be no Hindu-Muslim riots. These riots can be prevented, if they can be prevented, other anarchy can also be prevented.

Wardha Office Satyagraha File, 1940-41. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> Parchure Shastri

469. *DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR THE WORKING COMMITTEE*

[ July 3/7, 1940 ]

The Working committee have noted that confusion prevails amongst Congressmen as to the interpretation of their last statement made in Wardha on 21 June. They observe that several newspapers and others in common with many Congressmen have believed that the committee had given up non-violence as an integral part of the Congress policy. Certain paragraphs of the statement do lend themselves to such interpretation in spite of the following emphatic and unequivocal declaration therein of the Congress policy:

The war in Europe, resulting from a desire for imperialist domination over other peoples and countries, and a suicidal race in armaments, has led to human sorrow and misery on a scale hitherto unknown. It has demonstrated the inefficacy of organized violence, on however vast a scale, for the defence of national freedom and the liberties of peoples. It has shown beyond a doubt that warfare cannot lead to peace and freedom and the choice before the world is uttermost degradation and destruction through warfare or the way of peace and non-violence on a basis of freedom for all people. . . The Committee wish to make it clear that the methods and basic policy of non-violence in the national struggle for freedom continue with full force and are not affected in the least by the inability to extend it to the region of national defence.

The Working Committee have come to the conclusion that they should exclusively rely upon Congress volunteers pledged to non-violence and the Congress discipline to deal with internal disorders to the extent it is possible. The volunteers will co-operate in a non-violent way with other similar organizations in their non-violent activities. The Working Committee advise all Congress Committees to form volunteer corps provided that they are sure that the candidates know the implications of non-violence and the value of strict discipline.

The Congress non-violence has been hitherto confined to the fight with the British government. If success achieved so far has made non-violence, to the extent mentioned, the settled policy of the Congress beyond assail, it must be admitted that success cannot be claimed for non-violent effort in the case of communal riots. The Working Committee are of opinion that the fault must be laid at the door of volunteer organizations. The Working Committee hope that at

this the critical hour in the history of India volunteer organizations would be able effectively to deal with riots and the like in a non-violent manner.

The Working Committee never had occasion to determine whether India can be defended non-violently, nor is it even now called upon to do so, though the proved futility of violence to defend the nations of Europe is sufficient indication for the Working Committee for coming to a decision. But till the hour for taking a final decision arrived, the Working Committee must keep an open mind. But so far as the present is concerned, the Working Committee are firmly of opinion that in pursuance of their non-violent policy Congressmen must not have anything to do with military training or activities calculated to make India military-minded. Therefore the Working Committee cannot but view with grave alarm the attempt made in an organized manner to prepare India for military defence. In the opinion of the Working committee if India were free and independent without an army she would have no fear of external aggression. The best defence that free India can put up if the people accepted the Congress policy would be to cultivate friendliness with the whole world. To invest crores of rupees in armaments, fortresses and the like would be to invite foreign attack. The Working committee believe that India is too poor to invest money in costly defence forces and modern equipment. The Working Committee therefore warn the British Government against the feverish preparations that they are making for the professed defence of India. They are of opinion that they are intended merely to help Britain. These preparations cannot help India in any real sense. The Working Committee draw the attention of the British Government and people that although India is claimed by them to have provincial autonomy and every province has elected assemblies, and there is also a partially popularly elected Central Legislative Assembly, the huge expense is being incurred without any reference to these legislatures. The Working committee believe that it is wrong and immoral to arm one man, however honest and distinguished, with unlimited powers to utilize the resources of a great country like India and to impress her people in any manner he chooses without any control or check on the part of her people. It is a procedure in no way

in keeping with the British Government's declarations, however unsatisfactory from the congress standpoint, about the freedom of India.

The Working Committee wish to declare that the Congress claims to be wholly friendly to the British people. Its non-violent policy demands nothing but goodwill towards them. But the friendliness and goodwill can have no play and no meaning, so long as India remains in helpless bondage and her resources in men and money are utilized without ascertaining the wishes of the representatives of the people elected under a system established by Great Britain. The Working Committee ask the British Government to revise their suicidal policy and take the popular assemblies into their confidence. The Working Committee associate themselves with the appeal recently made by Gandhiji to every Briton<sup>1</sup> and hope that Great Britain will accept the policy of non-violence whose potency has been proved beyond doubt even though its application was admittedly imperfect. British Government may rely upon the fullest and friendliest cooperation of the Congress in the direction of peace effort in the non-violent way commended by Gandhiji.

In spite of the repeated and firm declaration of the Congress to the contrary, there seems to be a belief among the public, including even some Congressmen, that the Congress will be satisfied with Dominion Status. The Working Committee warn all concerned that they will accept no status lower than complete independence and that declaration should be made now and given effect to, immediately so far as may be. The legal formality may await a suitable future period. Only India free and independent in action can decide upon the part she should play in the present war.

There is talk among some Congressmen that the Congress may countenance resumption of Ministerial offices. The Working Committee wish to make it clear that there is no prospect of the Congress countenancing such a step without a satisfactory settlement with the Government and in no case of promoting a war effort in which they have no faith. In view of the foregoing it is superfluous to say that the Working Committee cannot associate themselves with any Government proposals to expand the Central executive.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "To Every Briton", 2-7-1940.

In view of the recent developments the Working Committee decide to remove the ban upon Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly attending its sessions.

In as much as it is necessary still further to enforce strict discipline, the Working Committee ask all those who do not strictly believe in non-violence to resign from the Congress. It is against the Congress Constitution for anyone to become a four-anna member unless he believing in it, signs the Congress pledge.<sup>1</sup>

GANDHIJI: I have placed this draft before you only to know your reactions. I have no doubt that you took in Wardha the wisest decision that you could take. The discussions today have more than confirmed my opinion. I am more than fully repaid for the labour I spend on the draft. I reduced my idea to writing only to find your reactions. I have listened to every word of the discussion. I see that there is a definite, wide gulf between us, such that it cannot be bridged. To attempt to do so would be doing a disservice to the country. I have no impatience, no irritation in me. If I find that my hold has weakened I must withdraw in the interest of the Congress itself.

I have always derived my politics from ethics or religion and my strength is also derived by my deriving my politics from ethics. It is because I swear by ethics and religion that I find myself in politics. A person who is a lover of his country is bound to take lively interest in politics otherwise he will not be able to carry on his avocation with peace. I came into the Congress with my religion.

The time has arrived when I should watch you and see whether I can take you as far as necessary.

I had not in the past the slightest difficulty in carrying Rajaji with me, his intelligence as well as his heart, but since this office question cropped up, I saw that our thoughts were running in different directions. I see that I cannot carry him now along with me. It is vital for me therefore to ask for absolution. Internal dissensions are a small thing. We have now concentrated sufficiently on them. If you cannot come to a decision about external aggression, you cannot come to a decision about internal dissensions. My mind does not make a vital distinction between the two. I have deliberately put in the resolution the expression 'open mind'. You have said that we can mount to power by non-violent means but you doubt the ability to retain and

<sup>1</sup> The meeting then discussed Gandhiji's draft.

consolidate it except through an army. The little police force that I have in mind will not be sufficient to cope with big disorders unless we have, as a nation, sufficient non-violence in us, or in other words we apply non-violence to politics. The technique of non-violence is different from that of violence. We shut our eyes to the fact that our control on the masses, over even our registered Congressmen is ineffective. The negative response is there. In positive response both fail. It is not our fault exactly. Millions are concerned. Even a military programme could not have been complete in 20 years. We must therefore be patient. If the masses have won independence by non-violence, they can also retain it by non-violence.

Twenty years is nothing for the country. Our non-violence was restricted to capturing power. We are successful as against the British, but we failed against our own people. At several places we have had violent demonstrations by Congressmen and Congress Committee. Hence our difficulties and my insistence that we must develop non-violence. This is the time; otherwise we will cut a sorry figure. Rajaji is right that if I believe that the Congress is with me I am living in a fool's paradise. I have plunged with my eyes open. I played with fire when I entered into partnership with Muslims. Hindus said the Muslims would organize themselves. They did. I have one measure for the whole of mankind.

I have been thinking seriously about the weaknesses that have crept into the Congress, but always in the hope that I will carry you further when the time comes. When Bhulabhai said we are committing ourselves he is right and not right. A document is to be read together with commas and semi-colons. Today we have the choice between weapons of destruction and non-violence for internal and external purposes. We have got to make the choice. Let us say good-bye to non-violence if we must. Today non-violence, tomorrow violence - this is our attitude. We don't know what we shall do in future. Let alone tomorrow, let us ask ourselves: shall we shoulder the rifle now? Bhulabhai spoke of 1100 officers. This does not move a single muscle of mine. My horizon extends to the submerged millions. The 1100 are lost in that ocean. I will never be able to forgive myself if I take a false step. If you don't come to Rajaji position today you will come to it tomorrow. If you have imbibed non-violence in practice well and good; for myself I go on with it in my pocket, in my heart and mind. I shall try to convert my people and see what is in store for me; in the

alternative we must give our people military training but that for ourselves and not for the empire. The empire is tottering. The sun on it is fast setting. If we lack faith in non-violence let us organize for violence. I hold we will fail. I agree with Maulana Saheb that those who start with violence for self-defence end with aggression. He has quoted his own coreligionist. I have got this precious thing for which I want to live. I don't want to be instrumental in militarizing the masses. A non-violent soldier will not be despised. He may be a consumptive, but he will give a better account of himself than the tallest Pathan. I want you to seriously examine Rajaji's position and see if you can adopt it; otherwise he should be allowed to go away. Our readings on non-violence differ at this moment. Let him carve out a position for himself. He must agitate even if he is in a hopeless minority. I started alone, but soon I enjoyed a vast majority. He should strain every nerve to persuade the Working Committee or reconstitute the Committee of those who are not saturated with non-violence up to the point I have stated.

You should allow me to carry the message as I know it. The country will not lose by this twofold division if we are honest. We must all act according to our views. It fills me with intense pleasure that everyone has spoken frankly. Visualizing the position as it changes from moment to moment we have to find out what part we can each of us play in the drama. Let Jawaharlal take the lead. He will express himself forcibly. I shall be in his pocket.<sup>1</sup>

Wardha Office Satyagraha File, 1940-41. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

#### *470. SPEECH AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING*

[ July 3/7, 1940 ]

GANDHIJI: If Rajaji's draft reflects the Congress mind it must be accepted. If it does not and if it is the personal opinion of some members it is necessary to know where the Congress mind lies. In

<sup>1</sup> After this discussion Gandhiji withdrew his draft and C. Rajagopalachari placed his draft before the Working committee for its consideration. For the draft, *vide* Appendix "Rajagopalachari's Resolution for Working Committee Meeting, Delhi", 3-7-1940.

order to know this at the present moment no resolution be passed. You must boldly face the situation. You must recognize that the non-violence that we have hitherto offered is different from true non-violence. The non-violence of the Congress represent only the resistance of the weak. It is passive resistance, the expression which was flung in my face in Africa and which I resisted. It does not satisfy me; but the country will be free from the incubus of doubt. Whenever we have tried non-violence of the strong we have miserably failed.

The business of the members of the Working Committee should be to ascertain where the Congress mind lies. They should go to the provinces and quietly ascertain the opinion there. This will give us the opinion of the general run of Congressmen. We will then come with better and more accurate information. Each one may try to influence the members in his favour up to a point. If we find that Rajaji's proposition reflects the popular will we should allow it to be worked. I am not satisfied with it. But then I pledge everything from the standpoint of non-violence.

I feel that the draft will be accepted by the Government. If it can be then I hold independence too would be swallowed. The question of independence should not be taken in a lukewarm manner. This will be tactically wrong. If we really mean what we say in the draft we should be prepared to put forth the best war effort of which we are capable. I feel we can get both our independence and national government, not one in which all the parties will be represented, but it will be a transference of power to the Congress, if the Government are assured that the Congress will participate fully in the war effort. But this will mean we have said goodbye to non-violence. The Government is anxious to get the Congress. They are resourceful to get other tools if they cannot get the Congress. At present they are doubtful if they can get full assistance from the Congress even if they transfer power to the Congress. I have never allowed them to think that they will get even one soldier from the Congress. All they can get from it is moral support. They realize it. They weigh the two things; (1) what they get in a voluntary manner from other parties and (2) the moral support of the Congress. But if we go and say that the resources of India are at the disposal of the British I have no doubt they will accept the Congress demand. The question is whether it is an outlook which you can countenance. I have a thousand objections but they are based on non-violence.

QUESTION: How does the moral support of the Congress help them?

GANDHIJI: Britain rises in the estimation of the whole world. It means it seeks eagerly the support of an organisation which has functioned non-violently for 20 years. They will say: 'We will rather have your support than the support of other parties.' They will make an appeal to non-violent India. I am taking a lofty view of the moral support. They have to make their choice between India which represents force and this incalculable force of non-violence. These are two dissimilar forces. If they say they will rather have this moral support, it will be a tremendous thing. It is not a mechanical process at all. It is a vital process.

If you want to do justice to the Congressmen, you must quietly go and ascertain their opinion. If we find that they have no true non-violence we must make an honest declaration. We will have done our duty. Then we must arm ourselves. If we do so in an open and sincere manner, we will overcome other organizations. I know the workings of violence. I always put it side by side with non-violence. I do not feel for one moment that I represent only myself in holding the extreme view that I do. I feel, I represent the dumb mind of India. If I had physical strength and went to the people I am sure they would say yes to my proposition. I know how to put it to the masses in their language. . . .

such help rendered will go in favour of India. It will mean that we tried our best to save the sinking ship. They say: 'Give us a helping hand when we are drowning.' We can reply: 'We are trained in the school of adversity. We fought nobly and non-violently. We give you this help now that you are sinking.' There is nothing wrong in such an attitude.<sup>1</sup>

Wardha Office Satyagraha File, 1940-41. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

#### 471. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,  
July [7]<sup>2</sup>, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

I got your letter. Your article will be published. It is good. I shall read the translation. I am reading the translations of other

<sup>1</sup> In the light of the discussions C. Rajagopalachari recast his draft. For the draft as it emerged finally from the discussions, *Vide* Appendix "Resolution assed at Congress Working Committee Meeting at Delhi", 7-7-1940

<sup>2</sup> The original has "8", but the postmark bears the date "July 7".

articles. The work here will probably be completed today. It is very hot here. I am keeping good health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI RAJMUMARI AMRIT KAUR

MANORVILLE

SIMLA W

From the Hindi original: C. W. 4239. Courtesy: Amrit kaur. Also G. N. 7872

472. 'A CRY IN THE WILDERNESS' ?<sup>1</sup>

ऊर्ध्वबाहु विरौम्येष न च कश्चिच्छृणोति मे

धर्मदर्थश्च कामश्च स धर्मः किं न सेव्यते ॥<sup>2</sup>

Bapuji Aney [on his way back from simla]<sup>3</sup> paid a flying visit to me at Delhi on Saturday. Whether we work together or seem to be working in opposite directions, his love for me endures, and so he never misses an opportunity to look in wherever I may be. He express himself freely before me, and often shares with me a verse or two from his inexhaustible store. During his Delhi visit he sympathized with me for my having had to sever my connection with the Congress, but he really congratulated me.

They should, I think, leave you in peace, and let you go your way. I read your appeal to every Briton <sup>4</sup>. It will fall on deaf ears. But that does not matter to you. You cannot help telling them what you feel to be their *dharma* (duty). But it is not strange that they will not listen to you- seeing that the Congress itself did not listen to you at the critical moment. When even sage Vyasa failed to make himself heard, how should others fare better? He had to conclude his great epic - *Mahabharata* - with a verse which reveals the cry of his soul.

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this was published in Harijanbandhu, 14-7-1940. This translation is taken from Harijan.

<sup>2</sup> "With hands upraised I cry:

(But none listens to me)

Dharma yields both artha and kama

Why is that dharma not observed?"

<sup>3</sup> The Gujarati version does not have this.

<sup>4</sup> Vide "To Every Briton", 2-7-1940

With this he cited the verse I have quoted at the head of this article. He thereby strengthened my faith, and also showed how difficult was the way I had chosen.

And yet it has never seemed to me so difficult as it is imagined to be. Though the Sardar's way and mine seem to diverge today, it does not mean that our hearts also diverge. It was in my power to stop him from seceding from me. But it did not seem to be proper to do so. And it would have been morally wrong to strive with Rajaji in what he firmly regarded as his clear duty. Instead, therefore, of dissuading Rajaji I encouraged him to follow his course. It was my clear duty to do so. If I have the power to carry my experiment of ahimsa to success in an apparently new field, if my faith endures, and if I am right in thinking that the masses are fundamentally non-violent, Rajaji and the Sardar will again be with me as before.

What are these apparently new fields for the operation of non-violence? Those who have followed the Working Committee's resolutions and writings in Harijan are now familiar with these. Non-violence in its operation against constituted authority is one field. We have exercised this up to now with a fair amount of success, and I have always described it as the non-violence of the weak. This non-violence may be said to have come to stay with Congressmen.

The other field is the exercise of ahimsa in internal disturbances -Hindus-Muslim riots and the like. We have not been able to show visible success in the exercise of ahimsa in this field. What then should the Congressmen do when internal chaos is so imminent? Will they return blow for blow, or will they cheerfully bend their heads to receive violent blows? The answer to this is not so easy as we might think. Instead of going into the intricacies, I should say that Congressmen should try to save the situation by laying down their lives, not by taking any. He who meets death without striking a blow fulfils his duty cent per cent. The result is in God's hands.

But it is clear that this non-violence is not the non-violence of the weak. It does not give one the joy of jail-going. One can have that joy and also cover thereby the ill-will one harbours in his breast against the Government. One can also non-co-operate with the Government. But where swords, knives, lathis and stones are freely used, what is a man to do single-handed? Is it possible for one to receive these deadly blows with ill-will in one's heart? It is clear that it is impossible to do so, unless one is saturated with charity. It is only he who feels one with his opponent that can receive his blows as though they were

so many flowers. Even one such man, if God favours him, can do the work of a thousand, it requires soul force - moral courage of the highest type.

The man or woman who can display this non-violence of the brave can easily stand against external invasion. This is the third field for the exercise of non-violence. The Congress Working Committee were of opinion that, while it might be possible for us to exercise ahimsa in internal disturbances, India has not the strength to exercise ahimsa against the invasion of a foreign foe. This their want of faith has distressed me. I do not believe that the unarmed millions of India cannot exercise ahimsa with success in his wide field. It is for Congressmen to reassure the Sardar, whose faith in ahimsa of the strong has for the moment been shaken, that ahimsa is the only weapon that can suit India in the fields mentioned. Let no one ask, ' But what about the martial races in India ?' For me that is all the more reason why Congressmen should train themselves to defend their country with a non-violent army. This is an entirely new experiment. But who, save the Congress, is to try it - the Congress which has tried it successfully in one field? It is my unshakable faith that, if we have a sufficient number of non-violent soldiers, we are sure to succeed even in this new field, apart from the saving of the needless waste of crores of rupees.

I am therefore hoping that every Gujarati Congressite - man and woman-will declare their adherence to ahimsa and reassure the Sardar that they will never resort to violence. Even if there is sure hope of success in the exercise of violence, they will not prefer it to the exercise of non-violence. We are sure to learn by our mistakes. " We fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake."

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, July 7, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 473. ' COPYRIGHT'

It is strange that what I would not do in response to the advice of a correspondent<sup>1</sup> I have to do almost immediately after the refusal though, I feel, for a very cogent reason. Since my main articles will henceforth be written in Gujarati, I would not like their unauthorized

<sup>1</sup> Satish Kalelkar; *vide* "Notes", 10-6-1940.

translations appearing in the Press. I have suffered much from mistranslations when I used to write profusely in Gujarati and had no time myself to produce simultaneous English translation. I have arranged this time for such translation in English and Hindustani. I would therefore ask editors and publishers kindly to regard English and Hindustani translation rights as reserved. I have no doubt that my request will be respected.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, July 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 474. CONGRESS MEMBERSHIP AND NON-VIOLENCE <sup>1</sup>

A Punjabi Congressman writes:

Can those who openly declare that they do not believe in non-violence be Congress members, can they take part in Gulughara<sup>2</sup> celebrations, and what should one do if such men be in a majority in a Congress committee?

Now that I am out of the Congress guidance,<sup>3</sup> my opinion has little weight. I cannot say what decision the Congress will give on your question.<sup>4</sup> But I am quite clear that those who do not believe in non-violence cannot belong to the Congress. I am also clear that no Congressman can take part in celebrations such as Gulughara. If you find your self in a minority, the non-violent way for you is to withdraw from the Committee.

ON DELHI-WARDHA TRAIN, July 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this was published in *Harijanbandhu*, 20-7-1940. This translation is taken from *Harijan*.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmed Shah Abdali Day

<sup>3</sup> The Gujarati original has: "when the Congress is undergoing so many changes".

<sup>4</sup> The Gujarati here adds: "I also feel that Congressmen should not ask me such questions and also that I ought not to answer them. I shall however answer this question since I must."

#### 475. ABOUT THE WAZIRIS<sup>1</sup>

Waziristan is one of the regions on the border of the Frontier Province. Everybody knows that there are a number of tribes living on the north-western frontier of India. The popular notion about them is that they are born only to rob and plunder and harass the British Government. Both these notions are far removed from reality. These trans-border<sup>2</sup> tribes are born and bred in extreme poverty. Life among their native hills is a tale of chronic hardship and internecine strife. India comes handy to them for satisfying their pecuniary need by raiding. Besides, there are not lacking people who in order to serve their own political ends are ready to misguide them and set them on the wrong path. Our knowledge about these tribes, therefore, is almost confined to their raiding activities. Khan Saheb has told me that these tribesmen are very simple and innocent by nature.

Whenever I have visited the Frontier Province I have tried to go across and make acquaintance with these tribes. My first effort in this direction was made at the time of the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. I had to give it up as Lord Irwin said his Government would feel embarrassed. I next sought permission through correspondence but was equally unsuccessful. I renewed the attempt at the time of my first Frontier tour and interviewed H. E. the Governor in that behalf, but he could not give or rather could not obtain for me the necessary permission. Recently the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee tried to send a deputation among the Waziris not with any political motive but simply to do welfare work. But the permission could not be obtained. The Working Committee has now decided to send a deputation consisting of Shri Bhulabhai Desai the Janab Asaf Ali. Let us hope the deputation will be given the necessary permission.

The object of the Working Committee's resolution is not political. Its purpose simply is to find out how help can be rendered to the border tribes and friendly relations cultivated with them. It ill comports with our dignity to be in constant dread of them. Ignorance is at the root of most of our fears. If I suspected my neighbour, naturally I would be afraid of him. But if I cast out my suspicion, the

<sup>1</sup> Gujarati original of this was published in *Harijanbandu*, 14-7-1940. This translation is taken from *Harijan*.

<sup>2</sup> The Gujarati version has "the Waziris and other tribes".

fear would automatically go. For years we have proceeded on the assumption that the authorities would under no circumstances allow us to cultivate friendly relations with the border tribes. The Government, on their side, have, under the spell of their pet bogey<sup>1</sup>, spent crores of rupees on building forts and block houses and on sending out military expeditions into the tribal territory. It should be a duty of the Congress to try to cultivate sincere and friendly relations with these folk. The proposed step of the Working Committee is, therefore, to be welcomed. Let us hope that the Congress, having begun the effort, will pursue it to the end.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, July 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 476. IS ISLAM INSPIRED?

A writer in a Muslim paper has suggested that, if I regard Islam as an inspired religion and Muhammad as the Prophet of God, I should declare my belief, so that Mussalmans doubts may be dispelled and Hindu-Muslim unity may possibly be more easily achieved. I read the suggestion about a month ago, but I did not think it necessary to respond to it. But as nowadays I read as many Muslim papers as I can, in order to acquaint myself with the Muslim mind, and as I find them so full of poison and conscious or unconscious untruths, I feel it necessary to redeclare my opinion about Islam, though I think it is well known.

I certainly regard Islam as one of the inspired religions, and therefore the Holy Koran as an inspired book and Muhammad as one of the Prophets. But even so I regard Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism as inspired religions. The names of many of them have been already forgotten, for the simple reason that those religions and those prophets related to the particular ages for which and peoples for whom they flourished. Some principal religions are still extant, after a study of those religions to the extent it was possible for me, I have come to the conclusion that, if it is proper and necessary to discover an underlying unity among all religions, a master-key is needed. That master-key is that of truth and non-violence. When I unlock the chest

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati has "Out of fear".

<sup>2</sup> The Gujarati original of this was published in *Harijanbandhu*, 14-7-1940. This translation is taken from *Harijan*.

of a religion with this master-key, I do not find it difficult to discover its likeness with other religions. When you look at these religions as so many leaves of a tree they seem so different, but at the trunk they are one. Unless and until we realize this fundamental unity, wars in the name of religion will not cease. These are not confined to Hindus and Mussalmans alone. The Pages of world history are soiled with the bloody accounts of these religious wars. Religion can be defended only by the purity of its adherents and their good deeds, never by their quarrels with those of other faiths.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, July 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 477. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ON THE TRAIN,  
*July 8, 1940*

CHI. AMRIT,

Here are two more translations corrected. Both are good. The Masnavi<sup>1</sup> captivated me. It had the force of the original. Of course it was easy. You have seen what happened at the W. C.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3981. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7290

#### 478. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

ON THE WAY,  
*July 8, 1940*

STUPID GIRL,

I cannot put you out of my mind. I shall certainly hope that you will arrive on the 24th or the 25th. Did you read what Bharatanand wrote at the end of his letter? He was right. I wish you to come out only if you can do so with your mind at peace. That is your duty. Come only if you can come as Mahadev, Kanu and Pyarelal came. My last sentence should be carefully considered. Devdas and Ramdas are my sons. But they are quite apart. You are a daughter. You will always be to me as they are. Though remaining staying away you will have with me same sweet relationship that Devdas and Ramdas have. But if you stay with me, you have to stay on my terms. Forget

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "What the Masnavi Says", 24-7-1940

the past. Think afresh, think with a calm mind. It does not behove you to lay down conditions. I cannot afford to keep you on conditions. The question is not whether you are deserving or undeserving. Surely Devdas and Ramdas are not undeserving? It is a matter of temperament. If you cannot come as Mahadev and others came, does it mean that you cannot come when you wish? Do not feel upset in any way.

If you are definitely not coming, I do not intend keeping the dispensary in its present form. I have set it up for you. Unless I get another doctor to settle here the dispensary will be of no use. I cannot afford to have another doctor here.

I shall enclose with this the Gujarati matter that is ready. Other matter is being got ready.

I have myself made the thumb worse. It is now throbbing. I hope it does not become septic. I shall bandage it. You will keep writing to me. Make the *Harijan Sevak* beautiful. Do not feel unhappy.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 479. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

*July 8, 1940*

CHI. SUSHILA,

One Gujarati article at least is going with this. I hope to send the rest from Wardha. The thumb-nail keeps reminding me of my foolishness. It troubles me occasionally.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 480. THE DELHI RESOLUTION

I have just seen the news that the Working Committee's fateful resolution<sup>1</sup> has been released to the Press. It was passed in my pre-

<sup>1</sup> The resolution, passed on July 7, called for "acknowledgment by Great Britain of the complete independence of India" and as an immediate step in giving

sence, but I wanted to say nothing before it was actually released for publication. It will be a profound mistake to suppose that the members passed the five solid days in wrangling. They had to discharge a heavy responsibility. Though logically the resolution is no departure from the Ramgarh resolution<sup>2</sup>, it is an undoubted departure from its spirit. The letter often remains constant, the spirit changes. Up to now for one reason or another the Congress policy was: No participation in the war except for the moral influence that the Congress can exercise if the vital demand was satisfied of Britain's own free will. Such was not the position of all the members of the Working Committee. Hence at the critical moment every member had to make up his or her mind independently of the rest. The five days were days of tremendous heart-searching. I had produced a draft resolution<sup>3</sup> which almost all thought was the best, if they could bring to bear a living belief in non-violence through and through, or if they could truthfully say that such was the belief of their constituencies. Some had neither and some had individually the required faith. Only Khan Saheb was clear so far as his own faith and that of his beloved Khudai Khidmatgars were concerned. So he had decided even after the last Wardha resolution that he had no place in the Congress. He had a special mission and a special duty to his followers. So the working Committee gladly permitted him to retire from the Congress. By retiring he serves the Congress all the more even as I hope to do. Who knows that those of us who retire may not be able to give our comrades the faith they seem, for the moment, to have lost?

Rajaji was the Framer of the Resolution. He was as certain of his position as I was of mine. His persistency, courage and utter humility brought him converts. Sardar Patel was his greatest prize. He would not have even thought of bringing up his resolution if I had chosen to prevent him. But I give my comrades the same credit for earnestness and self-confidence that I claim for myself. I had long known that we

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effect to it, the constitution at the centre of a provisional National Government. it declared that "if these measures are adopted, it will enable the Congress to throw in its full weight in the efforts for the effective organization of the Defence of the country." *Vide* Appendix " Resolution Passed at Congress Working Committee Meeting at Delhi", 7-7-190

<sup>2</sup> This, while reiterating complete independence as the only thing acceptable to the people of India, denounced the declaration, by the British Government, of India as a belligerent country and said, "Congressmen, and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the War with men, money or material."

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* " Draft Resolution For the Working Commtee", 7-7-1940

were drifting away from each other in our outlook upon the political problems that face us. He will not allow me to say that his is a departure from ahimsa. He claims that his very ahimsa has led him to the point which culminated in his resolution. He thinks that I suffer from obsession owing to too much brooding on ahimsa. He almost thinks that my vision is blurred. It was no use my returning the compliment though half joking I did. I have no proof, save my faith, to question his counter faith. That is evidently absurd. I could not carry the Committee with me at Wardha and so I got my absolution. I at once saw as clear as daylight that, if my position was not acceptable, Rajaji's was the only real alternative. I therefore encouraged him to persist in his effort, though all the while I held him to be hopelessly in the wrong. And by exemplary patience, skill and considerateness towards his opponents he got a good majority, five remaining neutral. I had a fearful moment. Generally such resolutions are not carried by the majority vote. But at his juncture unanimity was not to be expected. I advised that Rajaji's resolution should be enforced. And so at the last moment the committee decided that the resolution should go forth to the world.

It was necessary for the public to have this background to the tremendous step the Committee have taken for good or ill. Those Congressmen who have a living faith in the non-violence of the strong will naturally abstain. For the moment, however, what they can do is wholly irrelevant, Rajaji's resolution represents the considered policy of the Congress. Non-Congressmen, who were eager for the Congress to be free of my religious bias to adopt a purely political attitude, should welcome the resolution and support it wholeheartedly. So should the Muslim League, and even the Princes who think of India more than their principalities.

The British Government have to make their choice. Independence they cannot withhold unless their wisdom is as much blurred as Rajaji claims that mine is. If independence is recognized, the acceptance of the other part of the resolution follows as a matter of course. The question is: Do they want to impress help from India by virtue of their rulership over India, or will they have the help that a free and independent India can give? My individual advice has already gone. My help always has been promised. Acceptance of that advice can but enhance their heroism. But if they cannot accept it, I advise, as a

disinterested but staunch friend, that the British Government should not reject the hand of friendship offered by the Congress.

SEVAGRAM, July 8, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 481. MYSORE LAWYERS

Several Mysore lawyers who had taken part in the Mysore satyagraha struggle have been disbarred by the Mysore Chief Court. The last victim is Shri H. C. Dasappa, a most respected Mysorean and a practitioner of twenty years, standing. Serious as the disbarring of a member belonging to a liberal profession must be, such cases have happened before now on insufficient or purely political grounds. Such injustices have to be borne with resignation and fortitude. But the order of the Chief Judge in Shri Dasappa's case as reported in *The Hindu* has made for me most painful reading. Shri Dasappa had the hardihood to defy a magistrate's order not to address meetings in a part to Mysore, and had the equal hardihood under my instructions to advise satyagrahi prisoners to boycott the departmental inquiry by Justice Nagesvar Iyer. For these grave offences Shri Dasappa has been disbarred for ever. He will be reduced to penury, if the Judges could help it and, if their verdict has any potency beyond the paper on which it is written, Shri Dasappa becomes a man without a character, to be despised and shunned by society. I happen to know Shri Dasappa personally. I hold him to be a man of spotless character and unimpeachable honesty. He has been manfully striving to practise non-violence to the best of his ability. He has done what many patriots, lawyers or no lawyers, have done in British India. And nowadays the Judges take no notice of their conduct, and the public have made of them heroes. Advocate Bhulabhai has been Advocate-General of the Bombay High Court. He has defied laws. So has Advocate Munshi and so has Chakravarti Rajagopalachari. They have not been disbarred. Two of them have been Ministers in their Provinces. Public inquiries have been boycotted before now with impunity. Neither the honour nor the character of those who have brought about such boycotts have been impugned. In my opinion the Judges of the Mysore Court have forgotten themselves in delivering their-

judgement. Shri Dasappa has not suffered. He will rise in the estimation of the people of Mysore. But I make bold to say the Mysore Judges have suffered by allowing themselves to be carried away by prejudice.

Such travesty of justice has happened before now. A Durban Magistrate who was carried away by some stupid prejudice had condemned an innocent man. His judgement was reversed and the Supreme Court condemned it in such scathing terms that the Magistrate had to be removed. The Judges of the martial law days in the Punjab were not removed, but many were thoroughly disgraced because they had pronounced judgements which could not be supported by evidence before them. This Mysore judgement is worse than the Punjab judgements. Then there was panic. Murders had been committed by the mob, and eminent men were tried not by ordinary courts but by martial law tribunals. In Mysore nothing of the kind has happened. The Chief Judge's order is a cool and calculated attack on the honour of a man who could not defend himself against reckless statements from the Bench. Judges sometimes forget, as these Mysore gentlemen have done, that there is the bar of public opinion which is no respecter of persons.

My condolence and pity go out to the Judges who have delivered a judgement which, let me hope, in their cooler moments they will regret. For Shri Dasappa and his colleagues who have been disbarred I have nothing but congratulations. I would ask them to turn the punishment into a blessing. It is well that they cannot appear before Judges who can be so grossly prejudiced as the Mysore Judges have proved themselves to be. Let these lawyers be proud of their poverty which will be probably their lot now. Let them remember Thoreau's saying that possession of riches is a crime and poverty a virtue under an unjust administration. This is an eternal maxim for satyagrahis. The disbarred lawyers have a rare opportunity of so remodelling their lives that they can always be above want. Let them remember that practice of law ought not to mean more taking daily than, say, a village carpenter's wage. Let them make redoubled efforts to produce such a state of affairs in Mysore that the travesty of the nature I have described may become impossible. It is no pleasure to me to have to write as strongly as I have done. But I could do no less if I was to serve Truth.

SEVAGRAM, July 9, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 482. *THE LATE CHANGANACHERRY PILLAI*

The readers must have learnt about the death of Shri Changanacherry K. Parameswaran Pillai of Travancore. He was one of the true and consistent Harijan sevak. He was a retired Judge of the Travancore High Court. He was a member of the Executive Council of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. As a man he was most unassuming and lovable. His secretary sends me the following pathetic account of his death.<sup>2</sup>

Death prompted the feast.<sup>3</sup> As the secretary truly says he ate to live. But God confounds our wisdom when He wants to take us unwary. None of us can boast that we would do better than the late sevak. It will be creditable if we can close our lives as did this great Harijan sevak. May God bless his spirit and give courage to his widow and family to bear their loss, and let me hope that they will follow in his footsteps.

SEVAGRAM, July 9, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

#### 483. *SUBHAS BABU*

On the return journey to Wardha a young man at Nagpur station asked why the Working Committee had not taken any notice of Subhas Babu's arrest<sup>4</sup>. I was in silence and so gave no reply but took note of the reasonable question. I have no doubt that hundreds if not thousands must have asked themselves the question the young man put at Nagpur. It is true that Subhas Babu is an ex-Rashtrapati of the Congress twice elected in succession. He has a record of great sacrifice to his credit. He is a leader born. All these qualities alone will not warrant a protest against the arrest. The Working Committee would be bound to take notice of it if it could be condemned on merit. Subhas Babu did not defy the law with the permission of the Congress. He has frankly and courageously defied even the Working Committee. If he had asked for permission to raise any side issue for battle at the

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> This is not reproduced here.

<sup>3</sup> According to the secretary's account the deceased had eaten a sumptuous feast a few hours before death.

<sup>4</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested on July 2, 1940, in connection with his campaign for the removal of the Hollwell monument in Calcutta.

present juncture, the Committee would, I think, have refused it. Hundreds of issues of greater importance can be discovered. But the country's attention is for the moment riveted upon one single issue. Preparations are being made to take up direct action at the proper time on that issue. Therefore, if the Working Committee had taken any action, it would have been one of disapprobation. That the Committee would not do. I might also have ignored the youth's remark. But I felt that no harm could occur by my putting this arrest in its proper setting. The arrest of a big man like Subhas is no small matter. But Subhas Babu has laid out his plan of battle with deliberateness and boldness. He thinks that his way is the best. He honestly thinks that the Working Committee's way is wrong, and that nothing good will come out of its "Procrastination". He told me in the friendliest manner that he would do what the Working Committee had failed to do. He was impatient of delay. I told him that, if at the end of his plan there was swaraj during my lifetime, mine would be that first telegram of congratulation he would receive, if while he was conducting his campaign I became a convert, I should wholeheartedly acclaim him as my leader and enlist under his banner. But I warned him that his way was wrong.

My opinion, however, matters little. As long as Subhas Babu considers a particular course of action to be correct, he has the right, and it is his duty, to pursue it whether the Congress likes it or not. I told him he would be more in the right if he resigned from the Congress altogether. My advice did not commend itself to him. Even so, if success attends his effort and India gains her freedom, it will justify his rebellion, and the Congress will not only not condemn his rebellion but welcome him as a saviour.

In satyagraha a courted imprisonment carries its own praise. There can be no protest against an imprisonment for a breach of the current law of the land. On the contrary, the practice has been to congratulate arrested civil resisters and invite Congressmen to imitate them. It is obvious that the Committee could not do so in Subhas Babu's case. Let me remark in passing that the Committee has taken no notice of the numerous arrests and imprisonments that have taken place even of prominent Congressmen. It does not mean that the Committee does not feel anything about them. But in life's battle there is such a thing as mute submission to many a wrong. If it is

deliberate, it generates strength which, if the submission is well conceived, may well become irresistible.

SEVAGRAM, July 9, 1940

*Harijan*, 13-7-1940

484. *LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI*

SEVAGRAM,  
*July 9, 1940*

DEAR BROTHER,

Have just read your letter. Your detachment<sup>1</sup> is simply wonderful. Bapu<sup>2</sup> is an authority on many things—road-making, Harijans, Bhils, Society's<sup>3</sup> affairs, forlorn causes, etc. But I never knew that he was an authority on interpreting Tulsidas. I should still cite Sita's example for our women. My incitement has never gone beyond. But I must not weary you. Keep me always on the straight and narrow path.

love

M. K. G.

From a facsimile: Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Vol. V, between pp. 352 and 353; also Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, p. 320

<sup>1</sup> T. N. Jagadisan explains "Sastriat's letter, which is not available now, was written from Poona in the midst of an anxious crisis in the society. This fact explains Gandhiji's reference to Sastriat's detachment."

<sup>2</sup> A. V. Thakkar

<sup>3</sup> Servants of India Society

485. *LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI*

SEVAGRAM,  
July 9, 1940

CHI. VIJAYA,

We arrived yesterday evening and Ba gave me the news that you had bidden farewell to Naranbhai<sup>1</sup>. I was very happy to hear that. He was released from pain and you all are released from worry. You are keeping up courage, but I can read your grief in your letter. But do not grieve. Run down here as soon as possible. Amritlal is not here. I will send your letters to him.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7130. Also C. W. 4622. Courtesy: Vijayabhn M. Pancholi

486. *NOTE TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

[July 9, 1940 ]<sup>2</sup>

It will not make much difference whether you wire or write. The proper thing would be to write a letter. It will certainly reach tomorrow. You may write and I also will write. Come and take away my letter.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8534. Also C. W. 7096. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

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

<sup>2</sup> In a note, date 9-7-1940, the addressee had sought Gandhiji's permission to send a telegram to his wife Kanchan on that very day. The above is a reply to that.

487. *LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*July 9, 1940*

CHI. AMALA,

I will keep in mind what you say and do the needful.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

DR. MARGARETE SPIEGEL

IVANHOE

OPP. BACK BAY BATHS

BOMBAY, FORT

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

488. *LETTER TO PADMAVATI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*June 9, 1940*

CHI. PADMAVATI,

God has at last blessed you with a son. May he have a long life and may he bring credit to the family. I hope you are keeping good health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. N. 11399

489. *LETTER TO VASANT LAL.*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*July 9, 1940*

BHAI VASANT LAL,

My blessings to Chi. Bhagirathi and her husband. Let us hope that the couple will be happy and will serve the country to the best of their ability.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindu: C. W. 10256

490. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHAGANJ,  
July 10, 1940

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANORVILLE  
SIMLA

JOIN STATES CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3983. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7292

491. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

July 10, 1940

CHI. AMRIT,

Your 2 letters. I won't keep you quite letterless. Wired today to say you can join the States C[onference] Executive. In fact I had a hand in your nomination. The matter was referred to me. And I approved. I forgot to tell you about it.

Even when I write in Gujarati, its Hindi has to go. And now that

I wrote that Appeal<sup>1</sup> something will appear in English. Too from my pen<sup>2</sup>.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3982. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7291

492. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

SEGAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
July 10, 1940

CHI. SUSHILA,

You will have duly received all the articles. In case you are pressed for time, I have sent Pyarelal's translation to help you. Had it

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 3-7-1940

<sup>2</sup> Vide also "Unrepentant", 17-7-1940.

been your translation, I would have corrected it more carefully because I want to teach you how to translate well. I went through Pyarelal's translation to see if the meaning had been properly conveyed. I might have made the language simpler or better at places but you can attend to that there.

You are free to write to me anything you choose. That is also my demand. You were forbidden only for that particular day. What dreams ? I shall not worry about you if you become hale and hearty. I shall take all possible care of myself. The weight today was  $111\frac{1}{2}$  lb.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

*493. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*July 11, 1940*

DEAR MALKANI,

Nothing can be spared just now from A. I. S. A. I am trying to get some funds. You must do what you can there. Your, I know is a difficult task. If the Hindi Prachar work is too much for you, you should reject it.

Love.

BAPU

PROF. N. MALKANI  
TILAK CONGRESS BHAVAN  
HYDERABAD, SIND

From a photostat: G. N. 939

494. *LETTER TO MARGARET JONES<sup>1</sup>*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*July 11, 1940*

MY DEAR KAMALA,

I was delighted to have your letter. . . .<sup>2</sup> Herewith one for Chandel.<sup>3</sup> I am glad you liked your stay here. You will come again when you wish.

Love.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

*Bapu-Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi*

495. *LETTER TO CHANDEL*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*July 11, 1940*

BHAI CHANDEL,

I was glad to have your very clear letter. If you can get away from khedi it would be better for you to work in your own village. But if you go there you should go for good. However, the first thing to consider is whether you can leave the Khedi Work in a healthy condition; it should not be ruined by your departure. You had better come and stay with me for some days to talk it all over.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

*Bapu-Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi*

<sup>1</sup> An Englishwoman who was doing village uplift work in Khedi after F. Mary Barr Left for South Africa; she adopted the Indian Name Kamala.

<sup>2</sup> Omission in the source

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

496. LETTER TO S. R. VENKATRAMAN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
July 11, 1940

DEAR VENKATRAMAN,

you should see Rajaji about the Tamil edition of *Harijan*.

*Your sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI. S. R. VENDATRAMAN  
SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY  
ROYAPETTAH  
MADRAS

From a photostat: G. N. 10504

497. LETTER TO PURATAN J. BUCH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
July 11. 1940

CHI. PURATAN,

You have given me terrible news. I did have some suspicion.

What should be done about liquor? We must not give up.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI PURATAN BUCH  
HARIJAN ASHRAM  
SABARMATI  
B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9177

498. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

July 11, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

How lazy you are! And you want an immediate reply from me! If you have no work in Patna for the time being and if Jayaprakash also wishes it, then take Rajen Babu's permission and come here and improve your health. What prevents you from coming? If you are not going to Hazaribagh either, we shall plan about the future if you come.

Sushila is working in her own college Hospital in Delhi at present.

Vijaya's father has passed away. She will perhaps come here for a few days.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 3545

499. LETTER TO CHAKRAIYYA

SEGAON, WARDHA,

July 11, 1940

CHI. CHAKRAIYYA,

I got your letter. What you write about money is not correct. Money is no everything in the world. What can money do in a waterless desert? I refused you money out of a sense of duty. When you go home, it is your duty to eat at home. Why should you spend public money there? Whatever service is being rendered to you is not for money but for love. Am I paying any money to Sharmaji for his service to you? If we are healthy, we need less money. God has protected you till now and He will care for you in the future, too. Never lose courage and faith. I had gone to Delhi and there too I talked to people about you. It will be very good if homoeopathy cures you. I hope will recover completely.

Hand over to Sharmaji the letter meant for him.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9111. Also C. W. 9181

500. *LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
[ After July 11, 1940 ]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MANILAL,

Mary Barr is an excellent co-worker. Take her home. Give her help if she needs any.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4916

501. *LETTER TO RADHA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
July 12, 1940

CHI. RADHA,

I hope Mother's passing away has not filled you with despair. She lived quite long, and God fulfilled many aspirations of her. She has left you all in a happy state. Of course however long a mother lives the children are bound to miss her when she dies. One must bear the loss patiently.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

502. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, ,  
July 12, 1940

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter surrendering all. Nothing less could be expected of you. Do not worry about me. I know no such thing as despair. The Working Committee's resolution did not particularly shock me. Go on reading Harijan and Harijanbandhu. I will of course have to start afresh. But I do not think myself too old for that.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "First Foot Note, Lettet to Margaret Jones" , 11-7-1940

Accept a cartload of blessings for your birthday. A birthday means a year less, doesn't it?

My going there is not at all certain.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a Photostat of Gujarati: G. N. 10409. Also C. W. 6848. Courtesy: Premabehn Katak

*503. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*July 12, 1940*

CHI. NARAHARI,

Bhai Maganlal, Dr. Mahta's son, is there. I am sending a letter<sup>1</sup> for him at the Ashram address. Send it to him wherever he is staying. Give him whatever help he asks for. Introduce him to the leading citizens.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9118

*504. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*July 12, 1940*

CHI. MAGAN,

I had got your letter. I could not reply at once as I was visiting Delhi and other place. How is Ratilal<sup>2</sup>? How is his mind? Champa<sup>3</sup> has come here today. She is unhappy. What should we do about her?

You should get acquainted with the men there. I am writing to Naraharibhai.<sup>4</sup> He will introduce you. See Ambalal and others and meet the Congress leaders. Champa told me that you had left the Lal

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Ratilal Mehta's wife

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

Bungalow<sup>1</sup> and were staying elsewhere. I am sending this letter at the Ashram address.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 1017. Courtesy: Manjula Mehta

*505. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PARIKH*

SEVAGRAM,

*July 12, 1940*

CHI. KUNVARJI,

Kanchan has come here and I hope that has not caused you any inconvenience, if Bhojakhai's cooking for you both is unsatisfactory in any way you can cook your own food. Consult Vachharajbhai and make suitable arrangements.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a Photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9741. Also C. W. 721. Courtesy:

Navajivan Trust

*506. LETTER TO BHOLANATH*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*July 12, 1940*

BHAI BHOLANATH,

I could reach your letter only yesterday. I had made up my mind to write. How it got left I do not know, but it was all to the good. It should be enough if your work is no interfered with.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1379

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's house near the Ashram premises

### 507. THE BEST FIELD FOR AHIMSA<sup>1</sup>

Last week I wrote about three fields for the operation of ahimsa.<sup>2</sup> I propose to invite attention today to the fourth and the best field for the operation of non-violence. This is the family field, in a wider sense than the ordinary. Thus members of an institution should be regarded as a family. Non-violence as between the members of such families should be easy to practise. If that fails, it means that we have not developed the capacity for pure non-violence. For the love we have to practise towards our relatives or colleagues in our family or institution, we have to practise towards our foes, dacoits, etc. If we fail in one case, success in the other is a chimera.

We have generally assumed that, though it may not be possible to exercise non-violence in the domestic field, it is possible to do so in the political field. This has proved a pure delusion. We have chosen to describe our methods adopted so far as non-violence, and thus caricatured non-violence itself. If non-violence it was, it was such poor stuff that it proved useless at the critical moment. The alphabet of ahimsa is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that, if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere else. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him.

It will be retorted that those who satisfy such a test of non-violence will be few and far between. It is quite likely, but that is no reply to my proposition. Those who profess to believe in non-violence should know the implications of that belief. And if these scare them away, they are welcome to give up the belief. Now that the Congress Working Committee has made the position clear, it is necessary that those who claim to believe in non-violence should know what is expected to them. If, as a result, the ranks of the non-violent army thin down, it should not matter. An army, however small, of truly non-violent soldiers is likely some day to multiply itself. An army of those who are not truly non-violent is never likely to yield any use whether it increases or decreases.

Let no one understand from the foregoing that a non-violent army is open only to those who strictly enforce in their lives all the

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this was published in Harijan bandhu, 20-7-1940. This translation is taken from Harijan.

<sup>2</sup> Vide " 'A Cry in the Wilderness'?", 8-7-1940

implications of non-violence. It is open to all those who accept the implications and make an ever-increasing endeavour to observe them. There never will be an army of perfectly non-violent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe non-violence. For the last fifty years I have striven to make my life increasingly non-violent and to inspire my co-workers in the same direction, and I think I have had a fair amount of success. The growing darkness around, far from damping my zeal and dimming my faith, brightens them, and makes the implications of non-violence more clearly visible to me.

SEVAGARAM, July 15, 1940

*Harijan*, 21-7-1940

### 508. A WORTHY EDUCATIONAL EFFORT<sup>1</sup>

The Birla family have been running an institution called the Birla College at Pilani in Jaipur State. I have been often asked to visit it, but in spite of my keen desire to do so I have never been able to find time for it. Thakkar Bapa visited the institution and gave me a glowing account and pressed me to visit it. Seth Ghanshyamdas Birla has now issued a booklet to acquaint the public about the origin and growth of the institution. The object is to invite criticism and to present the public with its novel features, may be for adoption. The writer has lavished on the booklet all his art of writing, aided by fine printing, beautiful illustrations alluringly arranged, making the whole thing very attractive. For two months Mahadev waited for a suitable opportunity to place it before me, and imagining that I should have some spare time on our journey to Simla he ventured to give it to me on the train. The moment I took it up to read, it gripped me. It is a quarto size booklet of 47 pages, and I could not give it up until I had read it from cover to cover. I would ask all interested in education to write for it to the Secretary of the Birla College, Pilani.

A brief history of the enterprise may be given here. The institution has grown out of a small school called Birlas Pathshala opened 40 years ago in an insignificant little building. Now it is an institution with an intermediate College, splendid buildings for school,

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this was published in *Harijanbandhu*, 20-7-1940. This translation is taken from *Harijan*.

college and hostels, and vast playgrounds. It has 33 staff quarters, and 5 hostels accommodating 295 students (including 27 Harijan). There are 18 playgrounds, a library with 3,608 Hindi and 6,772 English books. There is high school with 791 boys, a college with 165 boys, and a girls school with 157 girls. The Birla Educational Trust runs besides 128 village schools with 4,636 boys and 200 girls. Physical instruction and games are compulsory, and so is music. There is an agricultural farm with a dairy on modern lines. Among the crafts and vocations taught are spinning and weaving, carpentry, tailoring, dyeing, printing, book-binding, weaving, carpet-making, shoe-making and leather-work. The agricultural farm and dairy have numerous cows, sheep and goats. The basic education scheme is also being given a trial. Hardly anything has escaped the attention of those in charge - prayer, intellectual and industrial training, balanced diet, health examination and health preservation. An endeavour is made to develop individual contact between the students and teachers on a family basis.

The whole institution has grown out of Seth Shivnarayanji Birla's desire to provide for the education of his two grandsons Rameshwardas and Ghanshyamdas. He did not like the provision to be confined to the needs of his grandsons, and so he established a school in 1900 with a village teacher on Rs. 5 a month for all the children of the village. This was called the Birla Pathshala - the seed out of which has grown the vast tree that the institution now has become. It combines family interests with philanthropy which has now become a distinctive trait of the Birla brothers. But Ghanshyamdas, of all the brothers, made a special interest of education, health and kindred topics, and the growth of the institution at Pilani is mainly due to his perseverance, resourcefulness and interest in education. Sir Maurice Gwyer and other distinguished people have visited the institution and spoken in high terms about it. Ghanshyamdasji's ambition is to make a Degree College of the Intermediate College, and he has been trying to do so for some years. But things move slowly in Princes' India, and so his ambition still remains unfulfilled, it is hoped that the Jaipur State will lose no time in encouraging this worthy enterprise and accord permission to turn it into a full-fledged college. In my opinion there are few institutions in India run with such care and attention.

If we assume the necessity for modern colleges, the Birla college has succeeded in combining several features which are scarcely to be seen elsewhere in India.

SEVAGRAM, July 15, 1940

*Harijan*, 28-7-1940

### 509. ONE MORE FACTION?<sup>1</sup>

Q. Does not the resolution of the Working Committee mean that it adds one more to the existing factions?

A. I do not think there is room for such a fear or doubt. Let us see what happens in the A. I. C. C. If it is found that a large majority of the members are believers in strict non-violence I have no doubt that Sardar Vallabhbhai and other will be extremely delighted. It was no pleasure to them to arrive at the decision they did, and they acted in their representative capacity. They acted in the belief that there were very few Congressmen with a genuine faith in non-violence, and they had sufficient reasons for their belief. Had it been a question of their individual belief, I am sure they would have unhesitatingly voted for non-violence. Assuming, therefore, that the truly non-violent are in a minority, it will be their duty to leave the Congress and thus serve the Congress all the better. Their continuance in the Congress would lead to friction, for the majority would, in carrying out their policy, have to adopt many resolutions which the followers of out-and-out non-violence could not accept. That would lead to clashes which should be anything but non-violence. The out-and-out non-violent, therefore, will gladly retire and devote themselves exclusively to constructive work. They will also co-operate with the Congress wherever they can do so without a clash, and yet they will not think of being in any committee. I am firmly of opinion that, if we can bring into being an army of truly non-violent persons, the Working Committee's decision will be found to be a blessing in disguise. If every province has its band of truly non-violent soldiers, they will not only add to the glory of the Congress but contribute effectively to bringing the Congress nearer to non-violence than ever before.

*SEVAGRAM, JULY 15, 1940*

*Harijan, 28-7-1940*

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 20-7-1940. This English translation is reproduced from *Harijan* where it was published under the heading "Question Box".

*510. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SEVAGRAM, WARDA,  
*July 15, 1940*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

The idea about Urdu is good. You shall have a review of the Urdu writings by Hindus and of Urdu periodicals and books. There should be an Urdu weekly giving a dispassionate reply to the lies. It is uphill work to overtake deliberate lies but it is worth trying.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
LUCKNOW, U. P.

Gandji-Nehru Papers, 1940. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*511. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA*

*July 15, 1940*

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

I understand. If your needs were within my means to meet, I would give you a place at Sevagram. I should like you to settle in a village and teach Ayurveda. But I know it will be difficult. It will be easy in Bombay. If you feel that my plan is worth considering, come over. You can come any day except Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. I understand about Shankerlal. Also about Valjibhai.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

VAIDYARAJ VALLABHRAM  
DHANVANTARI AYURVEDA HOSPITAL  
151 PRINCESS STREET, BOMBAY 2

From Gujarati: C. W. 2911. Courtesy: Vallabhram vaidya

### 512. LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*July 15, 1940*

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH,

I won't interfere with your programme, but I must remind you that you have altered the schedule you had planned. Your decision was that after finishing your book in about eight days in Bombay, you would come here, begin the work and impart your knowledge to the people here. You will keep to the dates you have sent if you must. If it is not necessary then give them up and come soon.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SARDAR PRITHVI SINGH

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. N. 5641. Also C. W. 2952. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

### 513. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*July 15, 1940*

CHI. SUSHILA,

I have received your letter of complaint. You had a right to hope. In fact I wrote you a letter before I reached Mathura. But Pyarelal did not like it. His argument convinced me, so I cancelled the letter and asked him to tear it up. That is why Mathura was missed. After that I wrote three letters between Itarsi and Wardha. So you did not hope in vain, did you? Admit it. I would forget writing to you only if I forgot you. You are always before my eyes. Pyarelal does try to make up for your absence, but how can he do it? Where would he find a hand like yours? He sleeps even closer to me than you did. But who would be jealous of him? However, I have not regained that

fearlessness I had with you. Pyarelal does almost everything you did. I am looking after my health. Ba is well.

You are free to write to me anything you want. I shall wait for you on the 24th. My order stands. But my order is meaningless. Follow the guidance of God. I can wish for nothing except your well-being.

Take care of yourself, will you? It will be good both for you and for Mother if you return the food she may bring. Sensible children never succumb to the blind love of their parents. If you return it once, she will not express her love in this undesirable way again.

I am personally seeing to it that the articles are sent to you on time. Three are being sent today. Mahadev sent you his Gujarati article yesterday. I shall go through what has come from you today. As you might have guessed, I have written a lot today.

*Blessings form*

BAPU

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

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### A RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

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.

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

<sup>1</sup> 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* "Statement to the Press", 2-3-1940; "When?", 5-3-1940 "For Englishmen", 11-3-1940; "Question Box", 12-3-1940; "Speech at Subjects Committee", 18-3-1940 and "Jayaprakash's Picture", 14-4-1940.

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 II

### *JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S STATEMENT*<sup>1</sup>

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 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A Brave Statement", 26-3-1940.

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 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 III

#### *RESOLUTION PASSED BY ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE*<sup>1</sup>

*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.

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A Baffling Situation", 1-4-1940 and "Letter to Abdul Kalam Azad", 4-4-1940.

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 IV

#### *LETTER FROM LORD LINLITHGOW*<sup>1</sup>

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.

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 4-4-1940 and 12-4-1940.

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 V

### *EXTRACTS FROM LIAQUAT ALI KHAN'S STATEMENT*<sup>1</sup>

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 :

"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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "My Position", 9-4-1940.

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

## APPENDIX VI SATYAGRAHA PLEDGE<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SATYAGRAHA/CONGRESS COMMITTEE

.....

I desire to enroll myself as an active satyagrahi.

I solemnly declare that,

(1) So long as I remain an active satyagrahi I shall remain non-violent in word and deed and shall earnestly endeavour to be non-violent in intent, since I believe that as India is circumstanced today, non-violence alone can help and result in the attainment of *purna* swaraj and consolidation of unity among all the races and communities of India whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsi, Christian or Jew.

(2) I believe and shall endeavour always to promote such unity.

(3) I believe in the justice and necessity of removing the evil of untouchability and shall on all possible occasions seek personal contact with, and endeavour to render service to the submerged classes.

(4) I believe in swadeshi as essential for India's economic, political and moral salvation and shall use hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of every other cloth. I shall so far as possible use the produce of hand and village industries.

(5) I shall spin regularly.

(6) I shall carry out the instructions of my superior officers and all rules and regulations not inconsistent with the spirit of this pledge prescribed by any superior

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Question Box", 19-5-1940.

Congress organization or the Working Committee or any other agency established by the Congress.

(7) I am prepared to suffer imprisonment or even death for the sake of the cause and my country without resentment.

(8) In the event of my imprisonment I shall not claim from the Congress any support for myself, my family and dependants.

Signed

Full name . . . . .

Address. . . . .

Date. . . . .

Note. Nobody who is not above the age of 18 may take this pledge.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1940, Vol. I, p. 240*

## APPENDIX VII

### *DEENABANDHU MEMORIAL*<sup>1</sup>

Innumerable people all over the world, who have been plunged into sorrow by the recent death of Charles Freer Andrews, must have been feeling, in their grief, that it behoves his friends to carry on the work of service and reconciliation in which he laboured so greatly. We would not willingly let die the memory of his life; we seek a way to perpetuate, in permanent and visible form, the spirit of that life. Andrews's permanent Indian home, the place with which for over a quarter of a century he affectionately identified himself, was Santiniketan in the Birbhum District of Bengal. This Ashram was originally founded by the late Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and supported by the ancestral funds. Under the leadership of his son, the Poet Rabindranath Tagore, the educational institutions at Santiniketan, with the centre of rural reconstruction close by at Sriniketan, have far outgrown the first conception, and become a world-famous centre of international culture. To the welfare of these institutions, with their vision of universal brotherhood and their service of international understanding and peace, Andrews, the Poet's closest friend, gave his whole-hearted devotion. No private resources could be adequate for the support of such a centre of study and research, and many of the financial and other contributions which have been made to it from East and West alike have been owed to Andrews's perseverance, hard work, and faith in its future. No more fitting place can be conceived for a memorial to him, nor one which he himself would have loved better, as we who came into the closest contact with him know.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 10-6-1940. and "Andrews Memorial", 27-8-1940.

It is true that no memorial in stone and mortar can fully perpetuate Andrews's memory. That can best be done by promoting true and lasting peace between India and Great Britain as independent nations and, through their joint effort, universal peace. But this work of reconciliation must find concrete form in some centre from which his influence can radiate. There could be no better memorial to him than the place where he found his spiritual home and greatest human inspiration should be so endowed as to enable it to fulfil his high hopes for it unhampered by the constant financial anxiety with which it is now burdened. In his name and that of the Poet whose vision he so entirely shared, we appeal for this endowment to be generously given.

There are two projected developments of the work of Santiniketan and Sriniketan which Charles Andrews himself specially longed to see. The generous response of the public to our appeal for a memorial fund will enable them both to be carried out in addition to ensuring the permanence of the present established work. They are as follows:

Andrews was most appropriately called 'Deenabandhu', the friend of the poor, and the poor of the Birbhum district knew his friendship. The rural centre at Sriniketan has a good doctor and dispensary but no hospital or operating theatre. We propose to build a small but properly equipped hospital to serve the villages round us, and to dig each year 'Deenabandhu wells' in the neediest areas. The Birbhum district is not served by the large rivers of Bengal, and lack of adequate water supply is the main cause of its grinding poverty.

It was true insight which caused an Indian friend to interpret the initials C. F. A. as meaning "Christ's Faithful Apostle". Christ was the centre of his life. Devotion to Him was his outstanding characteristic and the source of his inspiration and strength. During the last months at Santiniketan he often expressed the hope that in this place, where the civilizations of the world can share with each other the bases of their strength, there might be established a Hall of Christian culture which could do for India's thought through contact with the Western world, what the 'Cheena Bhawan' is expected to do for our relationship with China. The central purpose of the Hall would be the study of the teaching and character of Christ and its application to the solution of international problems. It would seek to attract scholars and students, especially of the East, to the task of interpreting in their own modes of thought the spirit and mind of Christ. We envisage a modest building, sufficiently endowed to enable us to offer such scholars and students a home at a minimum cost, with simple living accommodation, meeting hall, and the library whose nucleus Charles Andrews had already begun to assemble. He himself made Santiniketan his headquarters during a life of practical Christian service which, reached our from here to the ends of the

earth. We hope that such a Hall would enable others consecrated to the same kind of service to enjoy the same kind of home.

The full carrying out of this programme will require a fund of at least Rs. 5,00,000 (£40,000). We ask Andrews's friends and admirers all over the world to give liberal support to a scheme which will make possible, in his name, the preservation and enrichment of this work nearest to his own heart.

Santiniketan and Sriniketan are in the charge of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Founder-President, Sir Nilratan Sarkar, Shri Hirendranath Datta, Shri L. K. elehirst, Dr. D. M. Bose, Treasurer, and Shri Rathindranath Tagore, General Secretary, as trustees. The trust deed is registered. Its corpus today is valued at Rs. 1,700,000. Its annual expenditure is about Rs. 330,000.

ABUT KALAM AZAD  
S. K. DATTA  
M. K. GANDHI  
M. M. MALAVIYA  
SAROJINI NAIDU  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI  
FOSS WESTOOTT (BISHOP)

*Harijan*, 1-6-1940

## APPENDIX VIII

### *RESOLUTION PASSED AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING AT DELHI<sup>1</sup>*

#### POLITICAL SITUATION

*July 7, 1940*

The Working Committee have noted the serious happenings which have called forth fresh appeals to bring about a solution of the deadlock in the Indian political situation; and in view of the desirability of clarifying the Congress position they have earnestly examined the whole situation once again in the light of the latest development in world affairs.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide*. "The Delhi Resolution", 8-7-1940 and "Letter to Abdul Kalam Azad", 19-8-1940.

The Working Committee are more than ever convinced that the acknowledgment by Great Britain of the complete independence of India, is the only solution of the problems facing both India and Britain and are, therefore, of opinion that such an unequivocal declaration should be immediately made and that as an immediate step in giving effect to it, a provisional National Government should be constituted at the Centre, which, though formed as a transitory measure, should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature and secure the closest co-operation of the Responsible Government in the provinces.

The Working Committee are of opinion that unless the aforesaid declaration is made, and a National Government accordingly formed at the Centre without delay, all efforts at organizing the material and moral resources of the country for Defence cannot in any sense be voluntary or as from a free country, and will therefore be ineffective. The Working Committee declare that if these measures are adopted, it will enable the Congress to throw in its full weight in the efforts for the effective organization of the Defence of the Country.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1940, Vol. II, pp. 176-7*