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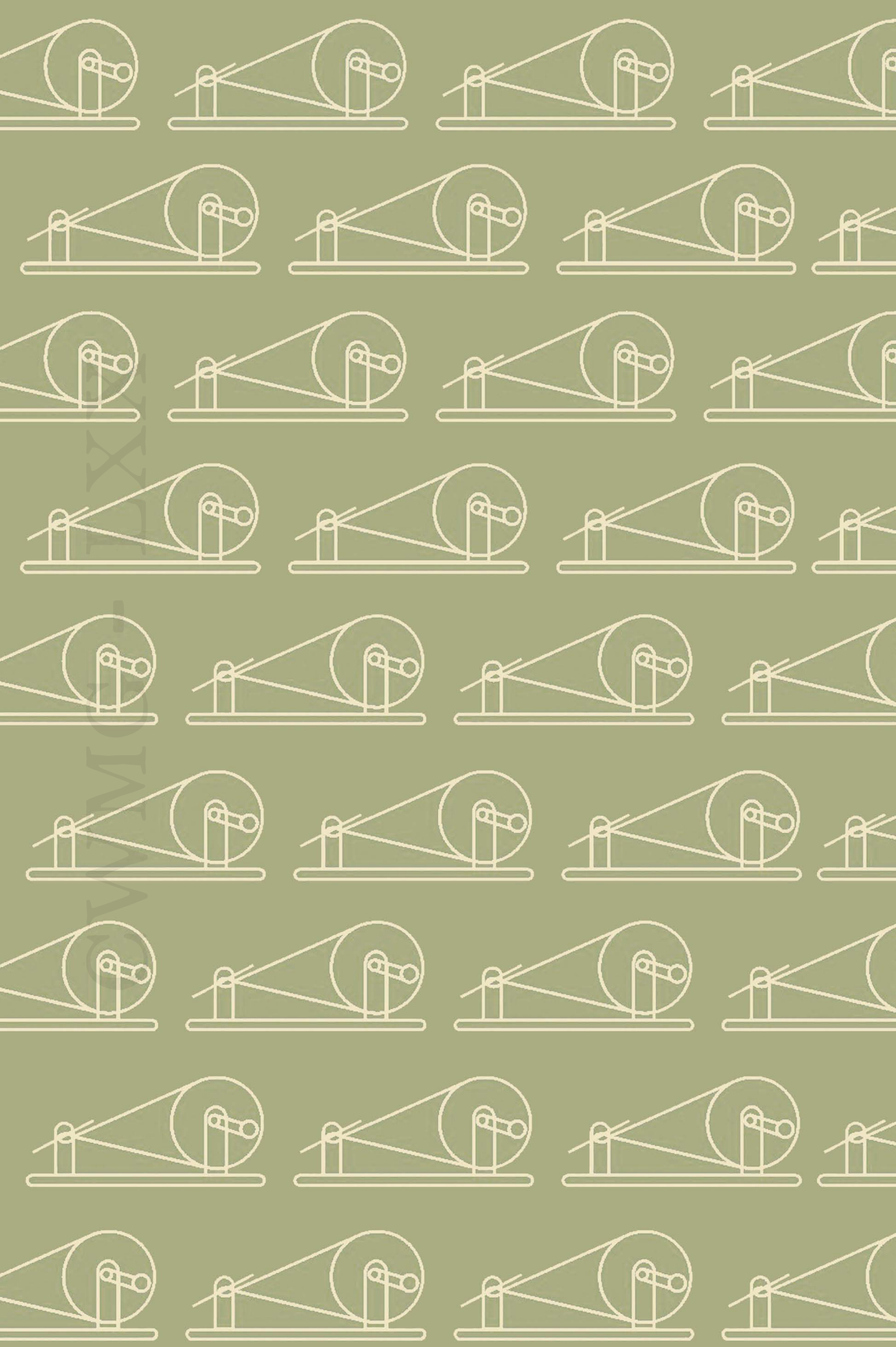
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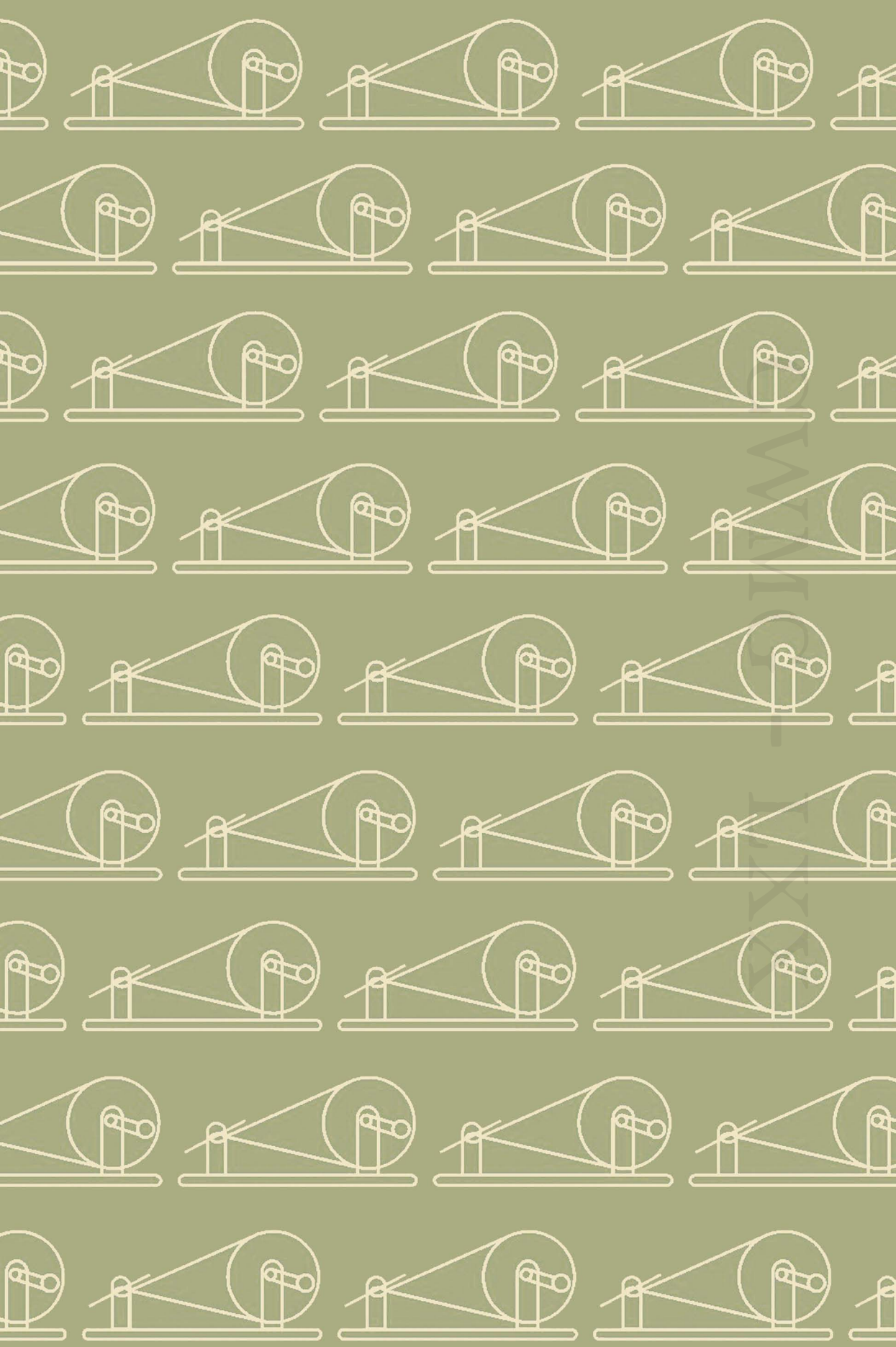
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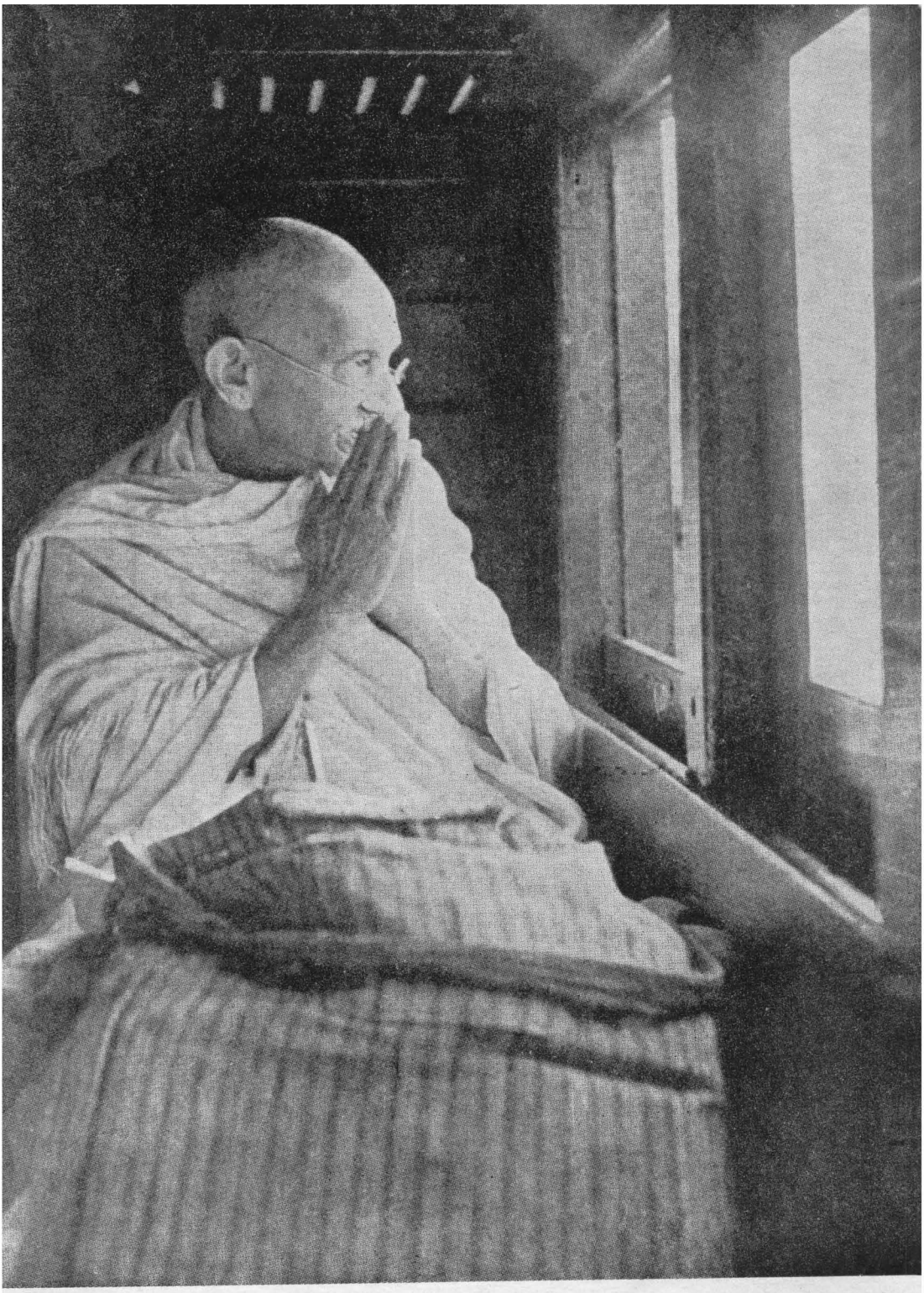
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(July 16 – November 30, 1939)

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ON WAY TO ALLAHABAD

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

LXX

(July 16 – November 30, 1939)

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THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
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PREFACE

The constitutional experiment which, under Gandhiji's advice, the Congress had begun in July 1937 came to an abrupt end during the period of this volume (July 16 to November 30, 1939). With the outbreak of World War II, the national leadership was faced with the tragic dilemma of having to help the British in a war for the preservation of their Empire or, by refusing co-operation, appear to be helping the Fascist Powers. Gandhiji saw the conflict in the larger moral perspective. As the European crisis was deepening, he had, in a letter addressed to Hitler (which, however, was not forwarded by the British Government in India), appealed to him to prevent "a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state" (p. 21), and when the war broke out he was filled with "horror". Convinced that non-violence was the only force that could save humanity, he resolved to play his part. "We are both actors in and spectators of the drama", he said, and took the stand that his guidance, whether of the Working Committee or the Government, should have "the deliberate purpose of taking either or both along the path of non-violence, be the step ever so imperceptible" (pp. 204-5).

Gandhiji's first public reaction to the catastrophe expressed the depth of his human concern. After his interview with the Viceroy on September 4, he said in a Press statement: ". . . as I was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. . . . I am not therefore just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled?" (p. 162).

This larger human concern determined Gandhiji's view of the policy the Congress should adopt. He had come to the conclusion that Hitler was responsible for the war (p. 170). Though he had fought the British Government in India for twenty years, his sympathies were now wholly with the Allies, as he recognized that the war was one "between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler" (p. 204). He therefore advised the Congress to give unconditional moral support to the British (pp. 175 and 311). Such support, Gandhiji explained to a British pacifist, "will lift the Allied cause

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to a high moral plane and the Congress influence will be effectively used in the cause of peace." It would be the special business of the Congress "to see that, if the war is fought to a finish, no humiliation is heaped upon the vanquished" (pp. 257-8). That was the role he had conceived for the Congress. But the Congress would acquire such moral authority only if it adopted non-violence as its creed and policy, discarding violence even for defending the country against external aggression. "For India to enter into the race for armaments," Gandhiji argued, "is to court suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence the last hope of the world will be gone" (p. 245).

The Congress, however, as a political organization claiming to represent the whole country, could not subscribe to non-violence as a creed, nor could it accept Gandhiji's suggestion of unconditional moral support to the British. There were many leaders in the country who did not favour such a course because they distrusted British professions about fighting for democracy. The Congress Working Committee, therefore, after prolonged discussions lasting over four days, passed on September 14 a resolution drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru declaring their intention not to "associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere" and inviting the British Government to declare their war aims and to state how they "are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present" (p. 412). In reply, the Viceroy merely reiterated the British Government's intention to help India "attain its due place among our Dominions", promised some modifications in the Government of India Act of 1935 after "consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests, in India, and with the Indian Princes," and offered to set up "a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes" (pp. 416,417 and 418). Gandhiji characterized the declaration as "profoundly disappointing" (p. 267). The subsequent debates in the two Houses of Parliament and Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the House of Commons convinced him of "the prudence of the course adopted by the Working Committee" (p. 311) in asking for a declaration of the British Government's war aims.

The British approach to the Indian problem was concerned mainly with the protection of certain sectional interests, British and Indian, rather than with evolving a constitutional set-up which would allow free play to the influence of the masses in

creating a truly democratic, just and unified society in India. The Working Committee resolution of September 14 had asked for the establishment of "full democracy in India" and the exercise by the Indian people of "the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference" (p. 411). The demand was summarized by Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, to mean "that His Majesty's Government will raise no opposition to her future form of Government being determined, without their intervention, by a Constituent Assembly called upon the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation". Lord Zetland stated emphatically that the British Government found it "impossible to accept this position" and explained that "the long standing British connection with India has left His Majesty's Government with obligations towards her which it is impossible for them to shed" (p. 431). These obligations related to the Princes, the European commercial interests and the minorities. In regard to the Princes, the Working Committee resolution had pertinently pointed out that the Princes, despite their "professions in favour of democracy abroad", were averse to "the introduction of democracy within their own States in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme" (p. 411). Here was an obligation to the people which the Paramount Power had never cared to persuade or encourage the Princes to fulfil. Gandhiji also pointed out that "Great Britain's position as the self-constituted guardian of democracy is compromised so long as it has more than 500 autocrats as its allies" (p. 228). The European commercial interests were "an imposition protected by the British bayonet", and Gandhiji declared that "a free India will claim to examine every European interest on its merit, and that which conflicts with the national interest will go by the board" (p. 317).

Well aware of the weakness of their case in regard to the Princes and the European interests, British spokesmen chose to play up the minorities' problem though, as admitted by Lord Zetland, the Constituent Assembly demanded by the Congress was to be summoned "by agreement in regard to communal representation" (p. 431). In vain did Gandhiji plead that "there can only be political parties and no majority or minority communities", that the "cry of the tyranny of the majority is a fictitious cry", for "Hinduism is an elastic, indefinable term, and Hindus are not a homogeneous whole like Muslims and Christians." And in any case Hindu majority was only "a paper majority . . . ineffective because

. . . weak in the military sense.'' The ''so-called minorities' fear,'' Gandhiji argued with surprising insight into the reality of the Indian situation, ''has some bottom only so long as the weak majority has the backing of the British bayonets to enable it to play at democracy'' (pp. 259, 260 and 261). Sir Samuel Hoare's division of India into ''Congress India and non-Congress India'' therefore meant in effect division into ''armed India and unarmed India'' and a declaration that ''India's battle for freedom cannot be won till unarmed India has come to terms with armed India including. . . the British Government'' (p. 318). The real question, which British spokesmen were evading, was ''whether it is right for Britain to plead these rivalries in defence of holding India under subjection'' (p. 259). ''Is it right,'' Gandhiji asked, ''to invite people to say whether they want freedom or not? Should a slave be consulted as to the desirability of his freedom?'' (p. 280) In other words, what was wanted was ''a declaration of Britain's intention regarding her Indian policy irrespective of India's wishes'' (p. 337). But such a decision, as Gandhiji had pointed out in his Press statement on the Working Committee resolution of September 14, ''required . . . a mental revolution on the part of British statesmen'' (p. 176). That is, as Gandhiji put it later in another statement, ''If imperialism is dead, there must be a clear break with the past. Language suited to the new era has to be used'' (p. 336).

But British statesmen were not yet ready for such a ''mental revolution'', with tragic consequences for the peace and well-being of the sub-continent. Thus by their own action or inaction the British Government had made it impossible for the Congress to co-operate with them in the prosecution of the war. And yet Gandhiji held strongly that the Congress ''must not embarrass them in its prosecution'' (p. 316). He believed in the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's sincerity. He believed he had developed with him a friendship that would ''bear the strain of differences of opinion that may arise among us'' (p. 293). Gandhiji would not therefore contemplate civil disobedience as long as the Viceroy was exploring the possibilities of a settlement (p. 337). He was convinced that both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State were in error, but, believing in their honesty, he wanted to ''give them time to collect themselves'' and meanwhile, he suggested, ''we must do real propaganda by way of educating the public both here and abroad'' (p. 389). Other reasons for Gandhiji's unwillingness to launch civil disobedience were the opposition of the Muslim League and the ''indiscipline and disunity in Congress ranks'' (p. 337). The Muslim League looked upon the Congress

as an enemy of the Muslims and Congressmen lacked the strength of true non-violence to be able to disarm their opposition. Their non-violence against the British was in "effect violence in suspension or inactive violence". And violence was "resorted to by rival Congressmen at Congress meetings" and the "gross indiscipline and fraud practised at Congress elections" were also "illustrations of Congress violence" (p. 265). Gandhiji was so sensitive to this atmosphere of violence that he felt he "was walking on a mine" (p. 374). He feared that civil disobedience in such an atmosphere would lead to "Hindu-Muslim riots" (p. 315). Stressing the dangers of hasty action he said, "I am painfully conscious of the fact that India is not yet ready for non-violent civil disobedience on a mass scale. If, therefore, I cannot persuade the Congress to await the time when non-violent action is possible, I have no desire to live to see a dog-fight between the two communities. I know for certain that if I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction to the satisfaction of the Congress and there is no communal adjustment, nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting for the time being in anarchy and red ruin" (p. 364). "I do not desire anarchy in the country", Gandhiji had said. "Independence will never come through it" (p. 316). The only "way to disarm this communal suspicion," Gandhiji believed, was "not to offer civil disobedience in terms of swaraj" (p. 323).

All Congress leaders did not share Gandhiji's fears. Subhas Bose had since the beginning of the year been advocating mass action at the earliest opportunity, and the differences between him and Gandhiji on this question had led to Bose's resignation as Congress President in May (Vol. LXIX). Subsequent events had forced the Working Committee to take action against Bose for what it considered to be a "deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline" (p. 85), but there was a large measure of sympathy for him and his line of approach in Congress ranks (pp. 150-1). The differences became irreconcilable after the outbreak of the war. "Your way is not mine," Gandhiji wrote to Bose. "For the time being you are my lost sheep. Some day I shall find you returning to the fold, if I am right and my love is pure" (p. 374). Differences were developing between Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, too, and Gandhiji was not sure, either, that he carried the other members of the Working Committee with him. On October 26, he wrote to Nehru: "I feel that I must not lead if I cannot carry you all with me. . . . you should take full charge and lead the country, leaving me free to voice my opinion. But if you all

thought that I should observe complete silence, I should, I hope, find no difficulty in complying'' (p. 297). Then a week later, after a personal talk, he wrote again to Jawaharlal: ''At this critical time in our history there should be no misunderstanding between us and, if possible, there should be one mind'' (p. 328).

In ruling out civil disobedience, Gandhiji did not rule out all action. Non-co-operation had already begun with the resignation of the Congress Ministries (p. 328). And he had no doubt ''that the Congress will find means other than civil disobedience, within its self-imposed limits, of dealing with the crisis'' (p. 343). But he did not know what those means would be. ''I have no ready-made concrete plan,'' he had said earlier. ''More will be revealed to me from day to day, as all my plans always have been. . . . I must act in obedience to 'the still small voice' '' (pp. 205 and 206). Recalling how he knew nothing of the Dandi March till the moment it was decided upon, he said, ''God has rarely made me repeat history and He may not do so this time'' (p. 375).

Though Gandhiji obeyed the ''still small voice'' and claimed to ''have the experience of listening, not merely of trying to listen,'' he humbly confessed to members of the Oxford Group that he was ''still far away from God'' and perhaps not ''altogether free from self-deception''. He had indeed tried his ''very best to make India listen to the way of God'' but, though he had some success, he was ''far away from the goal'' (pp. 195-6). Prayer was the means of such listening. By prayer, Gandhiji explained to Dr. Charles Fabri, he wanted to evoke within him the Divinity that is in ''everyone and everything''. ''You are not going to know the meaning of God or prayer,'' he said, ''unless you reduce yourself to cipher. . . . It is in these moments that we have a glimpse of God, a vision of Him who is guiding every one of our steps in life'' (pp. 26-9).

Commenting on the charge in certain quarters that his *brahmacharya* was ''a cloak to hide his sensuality'', Gandhiji explained how the vow of *brahmacharya* which he took in 1906 ''irresistibly drew'' him ''to woman as the mother of man'', ''too sacred for sexual love'', and he discovered, when he invited Indian women in South Africa to join the struggle, that he ''was specially fitted to serve womankind''. In India, too, he found himself ''one with . . . women'' and the ''easy access'' he had ''to their hearts was an agreeable revelation'' to him (pp. 313, 314 and 315). Gandhiji was convinced that woman was ''the embodiment of sacrifice and therefore non-violence'' and he felt that her being

dragged down for purposes of violent war was "no credit to modern civilization", and that violence so ill became woman that "presently she will rebel against the violation of her fundamental nature" (p. 381).

Modern civilization in fact violated not merely woman's nature but human nature itself, because it was based on exploitation which was the essence of violence (p. 296). Gandhiji held that the real India was not military but peace-loving and that it was easier to train millions in the "white art of non-violence" than in the "black art of violence" (p. 202). Non-violence was not a cloistered virtue confined only to the *rishi* and the cave-dweller. It was capable of being practised by the millions. He pleaded with friends as well as critics that they should read *Hind Swaraj* with his eyes and see how India could be kept non-violent by being rural-minded (p. 296). In an article on the "unbridgeable gulf" that seemed to divide his ideal of "walking to one's duty" (p. 202) and his unabashed use of trains and cars, Gandhiji maintained that *Hind Swaraj* was not "an attempt to go back to the so-called ignorant dark ages" but "to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness. The modern rage for variety . . . for multiplicity of wants . . . deadens the inner being in us" (p. 242). No ideal, he conceded, could be realized in full, but he claimed that pleasure lies in making the effort, not in its fulfilment. "For, in our progress towards the goal we ever see more and more enchanting scenery" (p. 241). This was the secret and the meaning of Gandhiji's *karmayoga*.

Charged with inconsistency between his co-operation with the British during the first World War and his present attitude, Gandhiji explained, "My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statement on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth" (p. 203). The *karmayogi* responds in thought and action to the limited *satya*, the actual need of the present moment, while his loyalty to abstract Truth and absolute non-violence as the ultimate ideals is never forsaken. For practical purposes Gandhiji used the terms ahimsa and courage as interchangeable. "Cowardice and ahimsa," he said, "do not go together any more than water and fire" (p. 296). And hence his noble inconsistency in the famous tribute: "If Poland has that measure of uttermost bravery and an equal measure of selflessness, history will forget that she defended herself with violence. Her violence will be counted almost as non-violence" (p. 181).

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NOTE TO THE READER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD[1]

ABBOTTABAD,
July 16, 1939

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD
RANCHI

SEE MY STATEMENT[2]. WE MUST SAY UNEQUIVOCALLY FASTING FOR FREEDOM FROM IMPRISONMENT INDEFENSIBLE. MATTER REQUIRES SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. IF MY OPINION ACCEPTABLE GUIDE CORRESPONDENT ACCORDINGLY.[3]

BAPU

From the original: Rajendra Prasad Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

2. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

ABBOTTABAD,
July 16, 1939

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I got your letter and the estimates of expenditure given by Bhai Sukhabhai[4]. I see no profit at present from the investment of Rs. 1,645. The estimate does not mention either how much khadi is likely to be produced. Nevertheless we will let him try for this one year. The expenditure may be treated as part of the Ashram expenses. Get a *hundi*[5] from Mahadev.

I hope the man who had lost his leg is all right now. Why does Parnerkar[6] fall ill so often? He has not learnt the art of preserving his health.

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's telegram which read: ". . . ninety hunger-striking political prisoners Bengal appealed to me as President for help. Much feeling their favour. Unable find any effective steps. Shall appreciate advice."

[2] Of July 15; *vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 440-1. *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", p. 12.

[3] The prisoners agreed on August 3 to suspend their fast for two months in response to Subhas Chandra Bose's appeal; *vide* "Statement to the Press", 6-8-1939.

[4] Sukhabhau Chaudhari of the Charkha Sangh

[5] Bill of exchange

[6] Yeshwant Mahadev Parnerkar

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How much rain have you had there? What is the condition of the road? Is the temporary bridge ready? It is a matter for serious concern that the water of the well has not yet become pure.

You must be hearing from Sharda[1]. Does Lilavati[2] write to you? Doesn't Bhansali[3] show any effect, good or bad, of the garlic?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10600

3. TELEGRAM TO RAJARAM

ABBOTTABAD,
July 17, 1939

RAJARAM RAJAH SAHEB[4]
TANJORE

CONGRATULATIONS ON BIG TEMPLE BEING OPENED TO HARIJANS.[5]

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

4. TELEGRAM TO NATESA IYER

ABBOTTABAD,
July 17, 1939

NATESIER
VARNASHRAM SANGH
MADURA

MINISTER RAMANATHAN CATEGORICALLY DENIES YOUR CHARGES[6] SAYING ALL CLASSES INCLUDING HARIJANS VISIT TEMPLE.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Addressee's daughter, Shardabehn G. Chokhawala
[2] Lilavati Asar
[3] Jaikrishna P. Bhansali
[4] A "senior Prince and hereditary trustee of the Tanjore Palace Devasthanams"; *vide* also "Notes", sub-title, "More Temples Thrown Open", p. 41.
[5] The Brihadiswara Temple in Tanjore was thrown open to Harijans on July 16, 1939.
[6] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, p. 441.

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5. TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT, KARACHI DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE

ABBOTTABAD,
July 17, 1939

PRESIDENT
CONGRESS COMMITTEE
KARACHI

WISH SUCCESS PROHIBITION PROGRAMME.[1] HOPE PICKETING PURELY EDUCATIVE PEACEFUL.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

6. TELEGRAM TO PATTOM THANU PILLAI

ABBOTTABAD,
July 17, 1939

THANU PILLAI
STATE CONGRESS
TRIVANDRUM

YOUR REPLY PERFECT.[2]

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] The Karachi District Congress Committee had begun its prohibition campaign by holding meetings to urge the Sind Government to introduce prohibition.

[2] The addressee, President, Travancore State Congress, had a discussion with Gandhiji on Travancore Satyagraha; *vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 316-8.

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7. LETTER TO SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN

ABBOTTABAD,
July 17, 1939

DEAR SIR SIKANDAR,

Many thanks for your letter of 12th instant. You have forgotten to answer my question about separate electorates[1] for Harijans.

I have now carefully gone through your scheme and your remarks upon my draft[2] about Hindu-Muslim unity.

The scheme is too complicated for me to form an opinion. I must own to you that I never studied the Government of India Act in the manner required for a proper evaluation of your scheme which I see is designed, so far as the Federal structure is concerned, to replace the Act.

I see that you contemplate zonal legislatures in between the Provincial ones and the Federal legislature. The Government of India scheme itself is much too expensive and complicated for me. Yours seems to add to the expense and the complication.

Then you suggest that the composition of the army should not be disturbed except under the contingency mentioned therein. For an out and out believer in non-violence like me, I would disband the army altogether. An army and non-violence go ill together. But I am painfully conscious that in this extreme view of non-violence I have no partner. How far those who believe in the necessity of the country having an army even after it has come to its own will accept your proposition is more than I can say.

Then you have enunciated Dominion Status as an accepted fact. It is a bitter pill for Congressmen to swallow.

But I see that your solution of the communal tangle is your scheme including the proposal about the army. Yours is the only proposal of a constructive character on behalf of the League. I congratulate you on the great pains you have bestowed upon it. I am glad that you have decided to publish it in full.[3] I must thank

[1] This and other points raised by Gandhiji were met by the addressee in his letter dated July 20; *vide* Appendix I.

[2] The Congress Working Committee which met at Bardoli on January 11, 1939, had discussed Gandhiji's new draft on the minorities question.

[3] It was published on July 30, 1939.

you for having taken me into your confidence and asked me to give you my opinion upon it.

As to my draft solution, as I have already told you, it is in no sense adopted by the Working Committee. But it does still represent my views. I prize your criticism upon it. And if it ever formed a basis for the solution of our difficulties, I should adopt many of your suggestions.

Your solution for representation of minorities on services causes difficulty. What are the minorities? Is there a final list? I am therefore very uneasy about communal representation in the services. If we make much of the minorities question in the services, we shall not only endanger efficiency but we shall endanger purity and impartiality in the administration of affairs of the country. But I heartily endorse your suggestion that all the backward members of the nation should be levelled up to the forward ones.

I do not want to burden this letter with the other points arising out of your criticism. They are easy of adjustment, if we all make up our minds to meet with the determination not to part without reaching a settlement.

Yours sincerely,

SIR SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN
PRIME MINISTER
LAHORE

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

8. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ABBOTTABAD,
July 17, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Of course you can come to Kashmir as Sir Kailash's[1] guest as I should also be his guest. Therefore you will naturally stay with me. The incongruity will be in my carting you from place to place. From your remembering the word I see that you do not see eye to eye with me in this matter.

I have heard today from Sir Kailash. I enclose his letter herewith. You will see he mentions your name. We leave here

[1] Kailas Narain Haksar, Personal Adviser to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir

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on 25th for Kashmir for a week's stay at the outside.[1] You will pick us up somewhere on the route, I suppose, unless you go there in advance and receive the party. I am wiring to Sir Kailash just now.

I do hope you will cancel Sangli[2].

Yes, we are Mrs. Parmanand's guests or fellow-inmates.

I do not want you to mention Balvantsinha's experiences to Datar Singh because it would be wrong to do so. I am sure things have righted themselves by now. It would be ungrateful to mention such things. I would not even have thought of the thing. Probably he has not even seen the house in which he was put.

Love.

TYRANT

Enclosure 1.

From the original: C.W. 3930. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7239

9. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

July 17, 1939

CHI. MIRA,

I have your booklet[3] full of news. Of course the Biharis are lovable. I would not remove you from them if you will keep your health. Don't deceive yourself that you are well when you are not. Watch yourself and do whatever comes your way.

Don't be hasty in your judgments. You jump to conclusions without enough data.

We leave for Kashmir on 25th and stay there seven days at the outside.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6447. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 10042

[1] The visit was, however, cancelled; *vide* p. 14.

[2] Where the All-India Women's Conference was to be held on July 29

[3] In *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, the addressee explains this as "long letter".

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10. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA

ABBOTTABAD,
July 17, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

What shall I write to you? Are you not going to take care of your health so long as you are away from me? Does it mean I should keep both of you with me or that you should take a divorce? It will not do for you to fall ill so often. Has there been any change in your diet?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10014. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

11. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

ABBOTTABAD,
July 18, 1939

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD
RANCHI

IF MEETING[1] NOT IN WARDHA MAYBE PATNA OR ALLAHABAD WHATEVER SUITS BETTER. AM GOING KASHMIR TWENTY-FIFTH. AFTER WEEK'S STAY RETURN WHERE REQUIRED.

BAPU

From the original: Rajendra Prasad Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

[1] The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha from August 9 to 12.

12. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

ABBOTTABAD,
July 18, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Your years are flying like the wind. I cannot imagine that you have now entered the thirty-fourth year. You look the same that you did when I saw you first. That also is good. May you keep young always and go on doing service. It does not matter if Chandan's[1] improvement is slow. It is enough if ultimately she is completely cured. Vijaya[2] must write to me in detail. Did she come away because she fell ill or for some other reason?

I do not understand the cause of Kakasaheb's despondency.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

We are going to Kashmir on the 25th. We shall stay there for seven days at the most and then return. Where we shall go thereafter is not yet decided.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10790

13. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 18, 1939

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have read your entire letter. What can I do if you do not get your post? I am writing regularly these days. It is difficult to find room in Harijan Ashram for those who come forward to work. Why insist on the Lal Bungalow[3]? There are other buildings too nearby. If the work grows, we can build houses. But

[1] Wife of Satish D. Kalelkar
[2] Vijayabehn M. Pancholi
[3] Of Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta, near the Harijan Ashram, Sabarmati

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what could we do if you keep falling ill? You are the cause of your illness. Ba is all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI AMTUL SALAAMBEHN[1]
HARIJAN ASHRAM[2]
SABARMATI[3]

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 425

14. NOT GUILTY

Dr. Lohia has sent me a long, well-reasoned letter on the current controversy on the Congress resolution[4] on satyagraha. There is a portion in it which demands public discussion. Here it is:

> You will not permit the slightest separation of the principle of satyagraha from your own specific programme. Is it not possible to universalize the principles of satyagraha, to make it the bed-rock of programmes other than your own? Perhaps, it is not; but I have this argument against you that you have not permitted and encouraged any such experiment. The people today do not regard your own programme of ministerial action and constructive activities as wholly adequate; they are experimenting with such programmes as those of peasant action. These newer programmes entail an amount of local and isolated action even during such times when there is no general satyagraha. Will you stop these little satyagrahas till you have found the formula for a general satyagraha? In such a course of action there is the danger of anarchy that arises out of suppression. Non-violent collective action is among the rarest and most precious gifts received by mankind in all history; we may not, however, know how to treasure it and continue it.

Not only have I not prohibited separation of the principle of satyagraha from my own specific programme, I have often invited new programmes. But hitherto I have not known a single case of any new programme. I have never suggested that there can never be any departure from or addition to my programme. What, however, I have said and would like to repeat here is that I cannot bless or encourage a new programme that makes no appeal to

[1&2] The source has these in Gujarati.
[3] The source has this in English.
[4] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, p. 367.

me. My programme, I claim, is a deduction from the satyagraha of my conception. It is, therefore, likely that if there was any such vital activity favouring the growth of satyagraha, it would not escape me.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that my programme has not made a general appeal to the Congress intelligentsia. I have already pointed out that the reason for the apathy of Congressmen is not to be sought in any inherent defect in the programme, but that it is due to the want of a living faith in ahimsa. What can be more patent than that we should have complete communal harmony, eradication of untouchability, sacrifice of the drink revenue by the closing of liquor-shops and the replacement of mill-cloth by khadi? I suggest that non-violent swaraj is impossible if Hindus, Muslims and others do not shed their mutual distrust and do not live as blood brothers, if Hindus do not purify themselves by removing the curse of untouchability and thus establish intimate contact with those whom they have for ages put beyond the pale of society, if the wealthy men and women of India will not tax themselves so that the poor who are helpless victims of the drink and drug habit may have the temptation removed from them by the closing of drink and drug shops, and, lastly, if we all will not identify ourselves with the semi-starved millions by giving up the taste for mill-cloth and revert to khadi produced by the many million hands in the cottages of India. In all that has been written against the constructive programme, I have not come across a single convincing argument against either its intrinsic merit or its merit in terms of non-violent swaraj. I make bold to say that if all Congressmen concentrate themselves on this constructive programme, we shall soon have the requisite non-violent atmosphere throughout the length and breadth of the land for cent-per-cent satyagraha.

Take the peasant action suggested by Dr. Lohia as a possible new programme. I regret to have to say that in most cases the peasants are not being educated for non-violent action. They are being kept in a state of perpetual excitement and made to entertain hopes which can never be fulfilled without a violent conflict. The same may safely be said about labour. My own experience tells me that both the peasantry and labour can be organized for effective non-violent action, if Congressmen honestly work for it. But they cannot, if they have no faith in the ultimate success of non-violent action. All that is required is the proper education of the peasantry and labour. They need to be informed that if they are properly organized they have more wealth and resources through their labour than the capitalists through their money. Only capitalists

have control over the money market, labour has not over its labour market, although if labour had been well served by its chosen leaders it would have become conscious of the irresistible power that comes from proper instruction in non-violence. Instead, labour in many cases is being taught to rely on coercive methods to compel compliance with its demands. The kind of training that labour generally receives today leaves it in ignorance, and relies upon violence as the ultimate sanction. Thus it is not possible for me to regard the present peasant or labour activity as a new programme for the preparation of satyagraha.

Indeed what I see around me is not preparation for a non-violent campaign but for an outbreak of violence, however unconscious or unintended it may be. If I was invited to hold myself responsible for this ending to the past twenty years' effort, I should have no hesitation in pleading guilty. Have I not said as much already in these columns? But my admission will not take us anywhere, unless it results in the retracing of our steps, the undoing of the wrong already done. This means having a reasoned faith in the non-violent method as the only means of gaining complete independence. When we have that faith, all bickerings within the Congress will cease, there will be no longer an ungainly scramble for power, and there will be mutual help instead of mutual mud-flinging. But it may be that Congressmen have come to believe that non-violence of my definition is played out or is not possible of attainment. In that case there should be a conference, formal or informal, between all Congress groups or a special meeting of the A. I. C. C. to consider the question whether time has not come to revise the policy of non-violence and the consequent constructive programme, and to find out and frame a programme in consonance with and answering the present temper of Congressmen. It is up to every Congressman to carry on a fierce search inward and deal with this central problem. It is not safe or dignified for the Congress to follow the policy of drift. I would like such a meeting to forget that the members belong to different groups and to remember that they are first and last servants of the nation pledged to fight the nation's battle of freedom with one mind. The Congress today is a house divided against itself. It must not be.

ABBOTTABAD, July 19, 1939

Harijan, 29-7-1939

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15. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

ABBOTTABAD,
July 19, 1939

I observe from the Press that the hunger-striking prisoners[2] have sent me a letter and also made a public appeal. There is no doubt that they have public opinion solidly behind them. I would beseech them to be satisfied with this backing and to give up the hunger-strike. They are brave. I suggest to them that their hunger-strike is misplaced and is no part of their bravery. Let them bravely suffer till public opinion makes the Government release them. They may rely upon my doing all I can to secure their release in an honourable manner.

Harijan, 22-7-1939

16. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ABBOTTABAD,
July 20, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your Hindi continues to be good.

I await your further letter about Dhami[3]. How I wish you could find out the truth about this affair! It is bad in every way.

I am sorry to have to tell you that I had to withdraw acceptance of State hospitality in Kashmir. The people won't tolerate any such thing. This is unfortunate. But I did not want to create bitterness. I therefore yielded. So I shall be the people's guest, whatever that may mean. Your programme need not suffer any alteration. You will be Haksar's guest though you will stay

[1] The statement appeared under "Notes", sub-title, "Give up Hunger-strike". It was also published in *The Hindu*, 20-7-1939.

[2] In Bengal; *vide* "Telegram to Rajendra Prasad", p. 1.

[3] A hill State, 22 kilometres from Simla, where, on July 17, police had opened fire on a crowd that attempted to march into the Palace of Rana Saheb to present a petition seeking redress of their grievances. *Vide* also "Minority Administration", pp. 14-7, and "Lesson of Dhami", pp. 45-6.

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with me. Only I would like you to precede me if only by a day. All this, of course, if Dhami can spare you. That affair must occupy the first place with you.

Nirmala[1], Kanam's mother, comes here today to fetch Kanam.

Here is another letter from Balvantsinha. So you will see he is getting on. I am glad Sardarsaheb has taken everything in good part. You will send the letter as before to Segaon with instructions to pass on to Kishorelal and Surendra.

The weather continues to be hot although we had a good shower.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3931. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7240

17. LETTER TO DUNICHAND

ABBOTTABAD,
July 20, 1939

DEAR LALA DUNICHAND[2],

It is no want of time that prevents me from going to the Punjab. But I feel utterly powerless to do any good. In other words, it is lack of confidence that keeps me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5585

18. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ABBOTTABAD,
July 21, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I don't like this persistent sadness about you. It is so inconsistent with faith in God, faith in human nature, faith in unbreakable friendship. However, enough of argument. The sadness will go in time.

[1] Ramdas Gandhi's wife; also called Nimu
[2] Member, Punjab Legislative Assembly

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The visit to Kashmir stands cancelled. I am not sorry. I hope to leave here on 26th for Wardha. The Working Committee will meet there. Hence I am likely to be a fixture in Segaon for some time at least, I hope till the Congress time. Will you join the party or join me in August early?

Dhami is a bad thing. I hope you will reach the truth. Why not see the Rana yourself? Study and pursue this case to the end. I am writing on it. You will have a typed copy.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3932. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7241

19. MINORITY ADMINISTRATION

The Chief of Chamba is a minor. The State is therefore under direct British administration. And the administrator acts virtually as the Chief and exercises all his powers. A correspondent from Chamba writes:

> Ours is a minority-administered State being directly under the control of the Paramount Power. We have been pressing for the repeal of the liberty-penalizing laws which have been enforced during the minority administration, and we do wish that popular element be introduced in the temporary administrative council at least during the minority of the Raja. . . .[1] In a case like ours the Paramount Power cannot say that it can't intervene. If it has to safeguard the rights of the Ruler, has it not any liability towards the people? . . .[2] Will you throw some light on the question?

The question is pertinent. There is no reason whatsoever why the people of administered States should not enjoy all the liberty that those in British India enjoy. Indeed a wise and liberal-minded administrator of a State has within his jurisdiction greater opportunity for doing good than one in British India proper. A State administrator has much greater latitude than an official working under the routine of a Province. The latter is subject to a series of superiors and has only limited powers. An administrator of a State is much more than a Governor in his own little State. He is subject only to general supervision of the Resident of the Agency to which his State belongs. Therefore there is no excuse whatsoever

[1]&[2] Omissions as in the source

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for any misrule or failure of justice in administered States, if the Paramount Power's policy is declared in unambiguous terms and followed in its entirety. But if the administration is not all it should be, it shows that there is no well-defined policy of the Paramount Power so far as the people of the States are concerned. There is no insistence on the right being done by the States towards their people. There should be no such thing as policy of non-interference by the Paramount Power in so far as the elementary rights of the people are concerned. The policy of non-interference can remain unchallenged only so long as the States people are ignorant of their strength. But there is nowadays too much consciousness among the people of the States to permit of the policy of non-interference being successful any longer. Denial of justice in administered States should be unthinkable. Let the people of Chamba publish unvarnished facts about the state of things there. I have little doubt that if there is any injustice done there, force of public opinion will secure the needed redress.

Absence of declared policy by the Paramount Power about the rights of the people of the States is perhaps glaringly demonstrated by the happenings in the little hill State of Dhami. The shooting that took place there would have been impossible if the policy of the Paramount Power was known. The communique issued by the Political Agent should not be the last word on the tragedy. He had no material before him to enable him to form a correct judgment. Every such firing should be followed up by an open, quick, judicial inquiry. The Chiefs who get easily frightened and resort to firing ought not to possess the power they have today over the lives of their subjects. But the public who have to form an opinion do not have a fair chance of doing so. They cannot set up an authoritative inquiry. And a Political Agent's communique is no true guide. Take the Dhami communique. I need not challenge the statements made in it. For aught I know every word in it may be true. But it cannot command implicit confidence. In its very nature, it is a one-sided document. The Political Agent can produce no legal proof in support of his statements. He does not give the sources of his information. To inspire confidence there should be a judicial enquiry carrying necessary consequences for the wrongdoer or doers whether the wrong done is on the part of the State or the people. Thus, if the people sought to overwhelm the Rana, it was undoubtedly wrong as it was if there was defiance of the order against Shri Bhagmal. It was wrong too if outsiders joined the alleged demonstration. The lightning ultimatum, if it was that, was a preposterous thing deserving severe

condemnation. Responsible government is made of sterner stuff. If the principality consists of only 5,000 persons and the revenue is Rs. 30,000, responsible government is a meaningless term. If people in every principality will take the law into their own hands, they will do irreparable damage to the cause. The All-India States Conference is there to guide them. Every Praja Mandal should put itself under its guidance in order to enable it to frame its case for freedom. There seems to be little doubt that there has been undue haste on the people's side.

But what about the Rana? Has he been dealing justly by his people? Was he really in danger of his life to warrant firing in self-defence? Every crowd is not necessarily a hostile crowd. Firing ought not to be treated lightly. Human life should have the same value in a State as in British India. Every firing should be followed by the closest scrutiny and by suitable action both of a punitive and of a preventive character. It is the duty of the Paramount Power to deprive Chiefs of powers of which they do not know judicious use. The whole question regarding the place of the States in Greater India requires overhauling.

A new epoch has come replacing the old. With the change of the times there must be a change in the manners of all parties—the Paramount Power, the Princes, their people, and last but not least the Congress if it survives the internal crisis that has overtaken it. It will be a mistake for the Paramount Power or the Princes to ignore the Congress, a body under whose shadow the people of the States from the commencement have been accustomed to grow and flourish. The Congress must guide them. Any resenting by the Princes or the Paramount Power of guidance of the people by the Congress must result in an inevitable but wholly unnecessary clash. How can people who are one in blood and bound together by the closest social and economic ties be artificially kept apart for any length of time? Instead of suspecting or fearing the Congress, surely the proper thing for all concerned is to welcome the Congress aid whenever it is available for the common good of both the Princes and the people.

No doubt the Congress will have to recognize its own limitations. It can hope to work with effect only if its work is of a friendly and peaceful nature. It has to hold the scales evenly between parties. It must avoid all show of force or coercion. Thus the reported participation by non-Dhami-ites in the demonstration should have been impossible under the Congress aegis. The Congress influence can be effectively exercised only if it retains its non-violence. Its only capital is its moral authority. Any other

position must lead to internecine feud and bloodshed. Dhami has a lesson which Congressmen have to take to heart. This I say quite apart from the admitted fact that we do not yet know exactly what happened and where the blame actually lay. In the absence of a proper judicial inquiry, right action becomes impossible.

ABBOTTABAD, July 22, 1939

Harijan, 29-7-1939

20. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

ABBOTTABAD,
July 22, 1939

I regret to say that for unavoidable reasons I have been obliged to cancel my Kashmir visit. I must apologize to those who were led to expect my visit to India's fairyland.[1]

The Hindu, 22-7-1939

21. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

ABBOTTABAD,
July 22, 1939

CHI. PRABHA,

Your letter arrived here yesterday *via* Peshawar. It is all right that you wrote to Rajen Babu, but you must improve your health. Otherwise you will not be of any use at all. Why do you keep worrying? We are leaving this place on the 26th and shall reach Segaon on the 28th. Could you not come to Segaon by that time?

Rajkumari is in Simla. Her address is: Manorville, Simla. She will perhaps come to Segaon when I go there. Amtul Salaam is at Sabarmati. Lilavati has joined New Era School, Bombay. Balkoba[2] is in Vadilal Sarabhai Sanatorium, Panchgani, and Krishnachandra is there with him. Sushila will stay on in Delhi and gain more experience in her old hospital for a month. After that she will go to Segaon. Nimu came here two days ago. She will return to Dehra Dun tomorrow with Kanam. After that she

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", pp. 42-3.

[2] Balkrishna Bhave

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too will go over to Segaon. Balvantsinha is getting experience in a dairy near Lahore.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3534

22. *MY NOTES*

HOW TO ATTAIN TRUTH

Lab Bibando, Chashma Bando, Gosh Band
Gar Nabini Sirre Haq, Bar Ma Bikhand

Keep your lips, eyes and ears closed and laugh at me then if you do not reach the heart of Truth.

This is a couplet by Maulana Rumi. Off and on Chaman Kavi of Kutch sends me such valuable verses. When I was at Rajkot, he sent me the above verse along with its meaning. I liked it so much that I wanted to place it before the readers of *Harijanbandhu*. At times when we talk nonsense, listen to falsehood or filth and look at objectionable things, this couplet ought to pierce our heart like a pointed arrow. The quest for Truth demands a heavy price. We may not actually close our lips, ears and eyes although we would lose nothing by closing them. We can, however, certainly do this much. Instead of uttering false or bitter words or hearing defamatory or useless things or watching lustful scenes, we may speak the truth at all costs, chant the name of God, hear His songs, observe the magic of His creation, have *darshan* of the saints and hear only such things as will help our progress. It is only he who does this that will attain the Truth. He alone can be a true satyagrahi and through his *tapascharya* we can get a glimpse of peaceful swaraj. The rest is all in vain.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 23-7-1939

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23. MESSAGE TO BOMBAY GOVERNMENT PROHIBITION BOARD[1]

ABBOTTABAD,
July 23, 1939

I hope that good sense for which Bombay is famous will ultimately prevail and all will combine to make the brave reform undertaken by the Bombay Ministry the success it deserves to be. I am quite sure that the removal of the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs will confer lasting benefit on the country.

M. K. GANDHI

Harijan, 5-8-1939; also *The Bombay Chronicle*, 31-7-1939

24. LETTER TO S. K. BOLE

ABBOTTABAD,
July 23, 1939

DEAR RAO BAHADUR,

I thank you for your letter of 20th instant. I understand your explanation. I had to deal with the memorial[2] as it was drawn up. The last paragraph was incapable of any other meaning. In the circumstances I imagine it is unnecessary to say anything further on my article. But if you think otherwise, I shall insert any explanation[3] you may think fit to send. It should be brief and to the point.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 4880

[1] This is extracted from "Notes" in *Harijan*, which reported that the message was "in connection with the introduction of prohibition in Bombay on August 1".

[2] The reference is to the Bhandaris' petition to the Bombay Premier; *vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 397-8.

[3] *Vide* "An Explanation", 7-8-1939.

25. LETTER TO DR. B. S. MOONJE

ABBOTTABAD,
July 23, 1939

DEAR DR. MOONJE[1],

I like your frank letter[2]. But I cannot make the response you desire, for our ways are so hopelessly different.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. B. S. MOONJE
19 ORTHODOX QUARTER
CARD ROAD, SIMLA

B. S. Moonje Papers. File No. 24/1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

26. LETTER TO ADOLF HITLER[3]

AS AT WARDHA, C. P., INDIA,
July 23, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

[1] Of the Hindu Maha Sabha

[2] Dated July 20, which read: " . . . owing to corruption and rise of violence in the Congress and the country generally and particularly owing to non-achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity, you do not feel justified in advising the Congress to start mass civil disobedience for exercising pressure on the Government to modify the present Federation according to your wishes. . . . and yet the Congress is not prepared to accept this Federation. The Government on the other hand not being pressed or coerced to modify the Federation according to your wishes will remain indifferent in the matter, though it may be tempted to modify it to suit the conveniences of the Muslim League. The result will be that the Muslim communalism will be still further strengthened and the hope for Hindu-Muslim unity will disappear for ever. . . . Will it not be wise to accept the present Federation in spite of all its defects and use it as a jumping-ground for further quarrels and gains? . . . "

[3] The Government did not permit this letter to go.

It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be ? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Anyway I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.[1]

I remain,
Your sincere friend,

HERR HITLER
BERLIN
GERMANY

From a photostat: G.N. 1510

27. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

ABBOTTABAD,
July 23, 1939

MY DEAR AGATHA,

Further contacts with Lord Linlithgow will come in their own time. I must hold myself in readiness but must not force the pace. There is nothing wrong with or in his letter. Only he thinks, he has gone as far as he could in the matters in which I am interested. I must not therefore tax him any longer on those matters. I am now trying to educate public opinion and showing all the parties how the new technique can work.

About Federation the position is absolutely clear so far as I am concerned. It is perfectly true that if my conditions were fulfilled, I would accept Federation and so would the Congress, I feel sure. But there is no atmosphere for the fulfilment of those conditions. There is no strength behind my 'demands'. And the British Government cannot give what cannot be taken and held by the grantee. I want you to believe that everything will come right in its own time. Herewith copy of my letter[2] to Hitler just going.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1509

[1] *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", 5-9-1939.
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

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28. SPEECH AT ABBOTTABAD

[*July 23, 1939*][1]

I hardly thought, when I came here, that you would present me with an address even this time too, on my third[2] visit to your province. I had thought I had sufficiently identified myself with your province to be entitled to be regarded as one of you and therefore above the need of such formalities as the presentation of an address. Should I suppose that I have still to win my spurs? Last time you gave me an address *and* a purse. But this time you have given me only an address and *no purse*. May I inquire how I have merited this 'fall from grace'?

I have more than once heard the complaint that the establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity is being delayed owing to lack of sufficient effort in its behalf on my part, that if only I would concentrate myself on it exclusively it could be realized today. May I assure you that if I do not *seem* to be doing that today, it is not because my passion for Hindu-Muslim unity has grown less. But I have realized, as I had never done before, my own imperfection as an instrument for this high mission and the inadequacy of mere external means for the attainment of big objects. I have learnt more and more to resign myself utterly to His grace.

If you could dissect my heart, you would find that the prayer and spiritual striving for the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity goes on there unceasingly all the twenty-four hours without even a moment's interruption, whether I am awake or asleep. I want Hindu-Muslim unity if only because I know that without it there can be no swaraj. Let no one imagine that because the Hindus constitute the majority community they can win swaraj for India or even for themselves by organizing civil disobedience without the backing or support of the other communities. Civil disobedience of the purest type, as I have often repeated, can be effective even if it is confined to a few. But then these few must represent in their persons the united will and strength of the whole nation. Is it not the same in armed warfare? The fighting forces need the backing and co-operation of the entire civil population. Without it they

[1] From *The Hindustan Times*. *Harijan*, however, has July 24.

[2] The two earlier visits were in May and October-November, 1938.

would be crippled. I must be impatient for Hindu-Muslim unity because I am impatient for swaraj. And I have full faith that true and lasting heart-unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans, not a merely patched-up political compromise, will come sooner or later, sooner perhaps than later. That dream has filled my being since my earliest childhood. I have the vividest recollection of my father's days, how the Hindus and Mussalmans of Rajkot used to mix together and participate in one another's domestic functions and ceremonies like blood brothers. I believe that those days will dawn once again over this country. The present bickerings and petty recriminations between the communities are an unnatural aberration. They cannot last for ever.

The greatest of things in this world are accomplished not through unaided human effort. They come in their own good time. God has his own way of choosing His instruments. Who knows, in spite of my incessant heart-prayer I may not be found worthy for this great work. We must all keep our loins girt and our lamps well trimmed; we do not know when or on whom His choice may fall. You may not shirk your responsibility by shoving it all on me. Pray for me that my dream may be fulfilled in my lifetime. We must never give way to despair or pessimism. God's ways are more than man's arithmetic.

It has grieved me to find that internal squabbles have begun to fill the Congress ranks in this province too. Yesterday I was closeted for over an hour with the members of your Provincial Congress Committee. They asked me to show them a way out. I suggest to you that the solution lies in your own hands. You have adopted Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan as your uncrowned chieftain. You have given him the proud titles of 'Badshah Khan' and 'Fakhr-e-Afghan'. Let his word be law to you as it was before. He does not believe in argument. He speaks from his heart. You must learn to sink your individual differences and work together like a team under him if the titles that you have bestowed upon him are to be vindicated, and not remain as mere lip compliments.

Then there is the question of poverty among the Frontier masses. I am told that many of them hardly get enough to eat. It is a humiliating reflection that a sturdy race like the Pathans should be in that plight. But here again the remedy lies largely with you. You must teach the people to work with their hands and realize the dignity of labour. The Ministry can and will, of course, provide facilities. But the spade-work will have to be done by volunteers.

May God show you the right way. I know that even when we quarrel amongst ourselves it is only to hasten the advent of

independence in the fond hope that independence will prove a solvent of all our ills. May our passion for independence prove a uniting bond stronger than all the differences that divide us.

Harijan, 5-8-1939; also *The Hindustan Times*, 24-7-1939

29. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

ABBOTTABAD,
July 24, 1939

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
SIMLA WEST

CAN YOU JOIN ME DELHI TWENTY-SEVENTH WAY WARDHA? TELL HIMALAYAN PRAJA MANDAL[1] I CAN SEE THEM DELHI TWENTY-SEVENTH. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3933. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7242

30. TELEGRAM TO DR. D. D. GILDER

ABBOTTABAD,
July 24, 1939

DR. GILDER
EXCISE MINISTER
BOMBAY

MATTER REGARDING SABBATH WAS FORGOTTEN. WIRING[2] "JEWISH TRIBUNE" TODAY. REGARDING DOLES YOU ARE RIGHT.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Of Dhami; *vide* also letters to the addressee, pp. 12 and 14.

[2] The telegram sent by Mahadev Desai read: "Kindly supply Dr. Gilder, Excise Minister, religious directions about Sabbath use of wine by Jews with authorities." *Vide* also "Notes", 10-9-1939, sub-title, "Intoxicating Wines and Judaism".

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31. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

ABBOTTABAD,
July 24, 1939

DEAR DR. HARDIKAR[1],

I am quite clear in my mind that we need a strong volunteer organization. But I know that I cannot tackle the problem. You should consult Jawaharlal. He is the man to guide. I retain the opinion that before we can have a central body, we should have provincial bodies. We can't create a centre out of nothing. The tragedy is that we have not in any single province an organization that can be a pattern for the rest.

You must become well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

32. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

ABBOTTABAD,
July 25, 1939

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
MANORVILLE
SIMLA WEST

STAYING WITH ZOHRA ANSARI NEAR HARIJAN COLONY. PRAJA MANDAL MAY MEET TWO. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3934. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7243

[1] Organizing Secretary, Hindustani Seva Dal

33. LETTER TO SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN

ABBOTTABAD,
July 25, 1939

DEAR SIR SIKANDAR,

Pray accept my thanks for your very clear letter[1] of 20th instant. I accept your suggestion that I may consult the Working Committee and give you its opinion. The Committee is likely to meet on the 9th proximo.

As to the Harijan electorates, I do hope that separate electorates will not be countenanced. It is one thing to have separate electorates for Muslims, but wholly different to have such divisions among the same community.

Yours sincerely,

SIR SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN

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

34. DISCUSSION WITH CHARLES FABRI[2]

ABBOTTABAD,
[On or before *July 26, 1939*][3]

GANDHIJI: It is a difficult thing to explain fully what I do when I pray. But I must try to answer your question. The Divine Mind is unchangeable, but that Divinity is in everyone and everything—animate and inanimate. The meaning of prayer is that

[1] *Vide* Appendix I.

[2] This appeared under the title "A Dialogue with a Buddhist" by Mahadev Desai, who explains: " . . . an archaeologist . . . Dr. Fabri . . . has been in India for many years. He was a pupil of Prof. Sylvain Levi and came out as assistant to the famous archaeologist, Sir Aurel Stein. . . . He is a Hungarian and had in the past corresponded with Gandhiji and even sympathetically fasted with him. He had come to Abbottabad specially to see Gandhiji. . . . He was particularly exercised about the form and content of prayer and would very much like to know what kind of prayer Gandhiji said. Could the Divine Mind be changed by prayer? Could one find it out by prayer?"

[3] Gandhiji left Abbottabad on July 26, 1939.

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I want to evoke that Divinity within me. Now I may have that intellectual conviction, but not a living touch. And so when I pray for swaraj or independence for India I pray or wish for adequate power to gain that swaraj or to make the largest contribution I can towards winning it, and I maintain that I can get that power in answer to prayer.

FABRI: Then you are not justified in calling it prayer. To pray means to beg or demand.

Yes, indeed. You may say I beg it of myself, of my Higher Self, the Real Self with which I have not yet achieved complete identification. You may therefore describe it as a continual longing to lose oneself in the Divinity which comprises all.

And you use an old form to evoke this?

I do. The habit of a lifetime persists, and I would allow it to be said that I pray to an outside Power. I am part of that Infinite, and yet such an infinitesimal part that I feel outside it. Though I give you the intellectual explanation, I feel, without identification with the Divinity, so small that I am nothing. Immediately I begin to say I do this thing and that thing, I begin to feel my unworthiness and nothingness, and feel that someone else, some Higher Power, has to help me.

Tolstoy says the same thing. Prayer really is complete meditation and melting into the Higher Self, though one occasionally does lapse in imploration like that of a child to his father.

Pardon me, I would not call it a lapse. It is more in the fitness of things to say that I pray to God who exists somewhere up in the clouds, and the more distant He is, the greater is my longing for Him and [I] find myself in His presence in thought. And thought as you know has a greater velocity than light. Therefore the distance between me and Him, though so incalculably great, is obliterated. He is so far and yet so near.

It becomes a matter of belief, but some people like me are cursed with an acute critical faculty. For me there is nothing higher than what Buddha taught, and no great master. For Buddha alone among the teachers of the world said: 'Don't believe implicitly what I say. Don't accept any dogma or any book as infallible.' There is for me no infallible book in the world, inasmuch as all were made by men, however inspired they may have been. I cannot hence believe in a personal idea of God, a Maharaja sitting on the Great White Throne listening to our prayers. I am glad that your prayer is on different level.

Let me remind you that you are again only *partially* true when you say my prayer is on a different level. I told you that the intellectual conviction that I gave you is not eternally present with me. What is present is the intensity of faith whereby I lose myself in an Invisible Power. And so it is far truer to say that God has done a thing for me than that I did it. So many things have happened in my life for which I had intense longing, but which I could never have achieved myself. And I have always said to my co-workers it was in answer to my prayer. I did not say to them it was in answer to my intellectual effort to lose myself in the Divinity in me! The easiest and the correct thing for me was to say, 'God has seen me through my difficulty.'

But that you deserved by your karma. God is Justice and not Mercy. You are a good man and good things happen to you.

No fear. I am not good enough for things to happen like that. If I went about with that philosophical conception of karma, I should often come a cropper. My karma would not come to my help. Although I believe in the inexorable law of karma I am striving to do so many things; every moment of my life is a strenuous endeavour which is an attempt to build up more karma, to undo the past and add to the present. It is therefore wrong to say that because my past is good, good is happening at present. The past would be soon exhausted, and I have to build up the future with prayer. I tell you karma alone is powerless. 'Ignite this match,' I say to myself, and yet I cannot if there is no co-operation from without. Before I strike the match my hand is paralysed or I have only one match and the wind blows it off. Is it an accident or God or Higher Power? Well, I prefer to use the language of my ancestors or of children. I am no better than a child. We may try to talk learnedly and of books, but when it comes to brass tacks—when we are face to face with a calamity—we behave like children and begin to cry and pray and our intellectual belief gives no satisfaction!

I know, very highly developed men to whom belief in God gives incredible comfort and help in the building of character. But there are some great spirits that can do without it. That is what Buddhism has taught me.

But Buddhism is one long prayer.

Buddha asked everyone to find salvation from himself. He never prayed, he meditated.

Call it by whatever name you like, it is the same thing. Look at his statues.

But they are not true to life. They are 400 years later than his death.

Well, give me your own history of Buddha as you may have discovered it. I will prove that he was a praying Buddha. The intellectual conception does not satisfy me. I have not given you a perfect and full definition as you cannot describe your own thought. The very effort to describe is a limitation. It defies analysis and you have nothing but scepticism as the residue.

What about the people who cannot pray?

'Be humble,' I would say to them, 'and do not limit even the real Buddha by your own conception of Buddha.' He could not have ruled the lives of millions of men that he did and does today if he was not humble enough to pray. There is something infinitely higher than intellect that rules us and even the sceptics. Their scepticism and philosophy does not help them in critical periods of their lives. They need something better, something outside them that can sustain them. And so if someone puts a conundrum before me, I say to him, 'You are not going to know the meaning of God or prayer unless you reduce yourself to a cipher. You must be humble enough to see that in spite of your greatness and gigantic intellect you are but a speck in the universe. A merely intellectual conception of the things of life is not enough. It is the spiritual conception which eludes the intellect, and which alone can give one satisfaction. Even monied men have critical periods in their lives; though they are surrounded by everything that money can buy and affection can give, they find at certain moments in their lives utterly distracted. It is in these moments that we have a glimpse of God, a vision of Him who is guiding every one of our steps in life. It is prayer.'

You mean what we might call a true religious experience which is stronger than intellectual conception. Twice in life I had that experience, but I have since lost it. But I now find great comfort in one or two sayings of Buddha: 'Selfishness is the cause of sorrow.' 'Remember, monks, everything is fleeting.' To think of these takes almost the place of belief.

That is prayer.

What would you say to the right of man to dispose of his life? Life as life I hold of very little importance.

I think that man has a perfect right to dispose of his life under certain circumstances. A co-worker[1], suffering from leprosy, knowing that his disease was incurable and that his life was as much an agony for those who had to serve him as it was for him, recently decided to end his life by abstaining from food and water. I blessed

[1] Parachure Shastri

the idea. I said to him: 'If you really think you can stand the trial you may do so.' I said this to him for I knew how different it is to die by inches from, say, suddenly killing oneself by drowning or poisoning. And my warning was fully justified, for someone tempted him with the hope that there was one who could cure leprosy, and I now hear that he has resumed eating and put himself under his treatment!

The criticism seems to me to be that if one's mind is completely obscured by pain, the best thing for him would be to seek *nirvana*. A man may not be ill but he may be tired of the struggle.

No, no. My mind rejects this suicide. The criterion is not that one is tired of life, but that one feels that one has become a burden on others and therefore wants to leave the world. One does not want to fly from pain but from having to become an utter burden on others. Otherwise one suffers greater pain in a violent effort to end one's agony. But supposing I have a cancer, and it is only a question of time for me to pass away, I would even ask my doctor to give me a sleeping draught and thereby have the sleep that knows no waking. . . .[1]

Now according to you I should have no business to stay if I feel I have finished my task. And I do think I have finished mine!

No. I am convinced that you can serve humanity for many years. Millions are praying for your life. And though I can neither pray nor desire anything—

Yes, the English language is so elastic that you can find another word to say the same thing.

Yes, I can unselfishly opine that you have many years before you.

Well, that's it. You have found the word! Here too let me tell you there is the purely intellectual conception of a man being unable to live. If he has not the desire to live, the body will perish for the mere absence of the desire to live.

Harijan, 19-8-1939

[1] Here, Mahadev Desai explains: "Dr. Fabri got up to go with the parting wish that there may be many more years of helpful activity left for Gandhiji."

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35. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

ON THE TRAIN,
July 26, 1939

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI[1],

I got your wire last night. The decision to open 2,000 schools for basic education is indeed glorious. I feel that your effort will be crowned with success. I congratulate you on this enterprise.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From Hindi: C.W. 10259. Courtesy: Kashi Vidyapeeth

36. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

DELHI,
July 27, 1939

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
CARE CONGRESS
G[IRGAUM], B[OMBA]Y

YOU HAVE DONE BRAVELY AND SPIRITEDLY.[2]

BAPU

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

[1] Education Minister, United Provinces

[2] The addressee had just returned from his Ceylon tour. *Vide* also "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", pp. 42-3.

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37. SPEECH AT HARIJAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, DELHI[1]

July 27, 1939

I congratulate myself that I am here to give away the certificates to the first batch of students leaving the school which was established in 1936. But the fact that they have won the certificates throws a good deal of responsibility on their as well as my shoulders—mine because my blessings, which are being given from the depth of my heart, must bear fruit. That only time can show. Shri Viyogi Hari will have to maintain contact with the boys who are going out today. It will have to be a contact as close as that between parents and children. The parents' interest in the children is all the more when the children go away from them for work in distant places. He will keep me informed of your progress.

The responsibility will be no less yours to be worthy of the training you have received, of the clean life you have lived, and of the uplifting contacts you have formed here. My blessings will be no use if you will not fulfil your trust. Your responsibility is enhanced by the fact that you will go out as representatives of Harijans and you will have to reflect in your life there the life you have lived here. Your contribution to the destruction of untouchability will be in proportion to the cleanness and purity of the life you live and the service you will render to your community. Hinduism, you will remember, cannot live if untouchability remains, and you will have to make yourselves volunteer workers in the sacred cause.

Shri Viyogi Hari said that it was difficult to make the tailoring department self-supporting. There must then be something wrong with the training given. Every craft is being taught, or ought to be taught, on a self-supporting basis. You students ought to ascertain from time to time from Viyogiji whether the work you turn out is paying enough and if not wherein lies the defect. Only then will you be able to make your school an ideal industrial school. If you

[1] This appeared under the title "Among Harijan Boys" by Mahadev Desai, who explains that Gandhiji presided over the first convocation of the school which imparted a system of education-cum-manual training comprising carpentry, tailoring, leather work and paper-making. *The Hindustan Times*, 28-7-1939, reported that Viyogi Hari, Superintendent of the school, read out the report, and that Gandhiji, before his speech, gave away certificates to all the 21 students and then presented some spinning-wheels made by the institution to those who had distinguished themselves in spinning.

pay for your training through your work, you will never have difficulty in after life in earning your bread.

Those who leave the institution ought to get work wherever they go; and if those who are fully qualified fail to get work, it is the duty of the industrial school to find work for them. Let no one think that they get here an inferior kind of training fit only for the poorest people. The training they receive is in my opinion superior to what the most well-to-do boys receive elsewhere. It will depend on you to show by the work you do that it is in no way inferior to similar training imparted by any other institution. It is my firm opinion that useful as the other activities of the Harijan Sevak Sangh are, its educational activity in a home like this is the most useful. For if this institution throws up even a few boys of sterling worth who would give themselves to the service of the Harijans, they will solve the problem of untouchability in a most substantial manner.

May you live straight and clean lives, and thus be the representatives not only of the Harijans but of the millions of non-Harijans who want to serve the Harijans.

Harijan, 5-8-1939

38. LETTER TO RADHAKRISHNA BAJAJ

ON THE TRAIN,
July 27, 1939

CHI. RADHAKISAN[1],

I shall reach Wardha tomorrow. Write all details to that address.

Is it necessary to send Mahadev for a meeting with Jamnalal? Shankerlal[2] has sent a telegram. Mahadev has been sent to Calcutta in connection with the prisoners.[3] On his return I can send him if necessary. How is Jamnalal's health now?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9127

[1] Son of Jamnalal Bajaj's brother
[2] Shankerlal Banker
[3] *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", p. 12.

39. *SUMMARY OF INDUSTRIAL SURVEY COMMITTEE REPORT*[1]

An Industrial Survey Committee was appointed by the Central Provinces Government on 15th December last on the following terms:

1. To review the work done in the province by the Department of Industries since its establishment.

2. To supervise the collection of data relating to large, small and especially cottage industries from previous publications and reports by an officer appointed for the purpose.

3. To advise the officer-in-charge as regards the lines on which the industrial survey of the province should be undertaken and to review its progress from time to time.

4. To visit typical villages, study their economic condition and examine the possibility of reviving cottage industries, and in doing so to take the advice and guidance of the All-India Spinners' Association and the All-India Village Industries Association.

5. To report on the industrial possibilities of the raw materials available in the province, with special reference to the forest and mineral resources.

6. To report on the measures which Government can undertake to promote industrial development within the province, especially of cottage industries in the villages, and to suggest methods for financing the same or otherwise promoting them.

The Committee consists of the following ten members:

Chairman: Shri J. C. Kumarappa, Wardha.

Members: Shri Chaturbhujbhai Jasani, M. L. A., Gondia; Shri V. V. Subhedar, M. L. A., Saugar; Shri K. P. Ghaira, General Manager, Central Provinces Syndicate, Limited, Nagpur; Shri R. N. Jha, Secretary, Berar Chamber of Commerce, Akola; Shri K. P. Sagreiya, I. F. S., Sylviculturist, Central Provinces and Berar; Dr. A. N. Kapanna, Demonstrator of Chemistry, College of Science, Nagpur; Shri Walter Dutt, Bar-at-Law, Nagpur; the Director of Industries, Central Provinces and Berar; Dr. R. S. Thakur, Officer on Special Duty in connection with Laxminarayan

[1] This appeared under the title "An Original Report" in six instalments. The item is placed here under the date of publication of the last instalment in the series. Only relevant portions from the extracts summarizing the report are reproduced here.

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Institute of Technology, Nagpur University, Nagpur. He will also act as Secretary to the Committee.

The Committee is empowered to appoint sub-committees and to co-opt members for specific purposes.

To this number the following two more were added under the *Gazette* Notification of Resolution No. 175-89-A-VII, dated the 12th January, 1939:

Shrimati Sarahamma Ittyerah, M.A., Wardha (late Professor of Economics, Lahore); Shri E. R. Mahajani, Managing Director, Shri Laxmi Oil Mills Company, Limited, Akola.

The Proceedings of the Committee were inaugurated on 15th January last. The survey began on 21st January and was finished on 6th February. 207 students including eight women volunteered their services. 14 persons were co-opted to lead the survey party. The party was divided into groups of 10 students each. It surveyed 606 villages covering a population of 15 lakhs paying an annual revenue of over 11 lakhs. The survey cost was Rs. 3,000 in round numbers, i.e., Rs. 5 per village. The whole expense amounted to one tenth of the estimates.

The report covers 46 pages of hand-made paper, foolscap size.

The party travelled third class, but when some members saw during their survey that old women were picking grass seeds for food they declined to draw even the third-class fare. The party satisfied itself with such lodgings and food as the villagers had. Nothing was specially prepared for them.

Prof. Kumarappa says to me in a covering note:

1. Ours is not an academic survey where mathematical accuracy is the one goal.

2. Neither is it a propagandic survey to gather 'evidence' to prove preconceived theories.

3. Nor is it a clinical survey to further the knowledge of the science of economics.

4. It is a diagnostic survey done in a short time with the set purpose of saving the patient's life by a suitable prescription, and this is national planning—not planning for a whole country as such, but planning the economic activity of each individual in relation to the raw material available within the field of our operations.

One member of the staff, an M. A. in economics, argued that without detailed statistics it would be impossible to prove whether the villagers are poor and are getting poorer. I took him with me into the villages,

showed him the houses in disrepair and one three-storeyed house, half fallen down, and the goldsmiths sitting idle.

This is no doubt a rough and ready argument. But if most of our villages contain ruins of well-built houses and artisans without occupation, surely the evidence of poverty is more complete and convincing than cold statistics which may prove everything or nothing.

The report which is Part I of Vol. 1 (Vol. 2 and Part II are to follow) contains six chapters and three short dissenting notes by Drs. Thakur and Kapanna and Shri Sagreiya. The dissenters chiefly emphasize the necessity of industrialization though they acknowledge that village industries need the help recommended by the main report.

Chapter two dealing with "General Considerations" stamps the report as an original document and shows that it is not to be pigeon-holed as most such reports are but should be given effect to without delay. The only way to do so is, as pointed out in the report, to invite the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. to help the Government to carry out the recommendations.

I give below a full summary[1] of the chapter on "General Considerations". . . .

The reader might have thought that my examination of the Kumarappa Committee's report on the Industrial Survey of the Central Provinces was concluded. The fact is that constant travelling and preoccupations disabled me from pursuing the examination with the regularity I had intended. The long journey to the Frontier Province has provided the opportunity to continue and finish the examination.

The last instalment brought up the examination to the chapter two. The third is no less important. The survey of 606 villages revealed to the Committee the painful fact that the average income of the villager per head was no more than Rs. 12. This need not startle the arm-chair scientist who relies for his figures on books, and who has been taught to believe that it is anything between Rs. 60 to Rs. 80. Both are right from their own standpoints and data. The figure of 65 to 80 is an all-India average which includes the income of millionaires, middlemen and zamindars.

[1] This appeared under eight sub-headings: "Functions of the State", "Taxes and Expenditure", "Capital and Labour Wealth", "Mercy and Baiter Economics", "Barter and Government Funds", "Raw Materials, Production and Profit", "Administrative or Creative Efficiency" and "Impediment to Production".

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The figure has a purpose of its own. But for the Kumarappa Committee the figure 65 would be wholly false. The figure 12 is accurate and truly scientific. That Committee was concerned with the average income of the villagers only. The Committee says:

> Our survey showed that most of the industries are tottering. There are hardly any which can be said to be even in a normal state. The taxable capacity of the people is rapidly going down and if the matter is not taken in hand immediately, the time is fast approaching when the Government will get nothing from the people. . . .

The meagreness of the income shows itself in the diet of the people. Thus the report says:

> . . . Their food is largely rice or some other grain, sometimes taken as gruel to fill themselves up with water, but the tragedy of the situation is that even this little amount of rice that is available to them is polished rice making their diet even worse. They hardly get the chaff. This makes it incumbent on the Government to see that at least the rice that is given to the poor people has all its nutritive elements left in it. . . .

There are other valuable hints on the subject of diet for which I must refer the reader to the original.

There is a brief reference to agriculture. Here is an excerpt from it:

> . . . We have, in a way, already touched upon the question of payment of revenues. In addition to this, the land tenure appears to us to require careful examination. . . . A great deal of harm has been done and is being done because of the unscientific dues taken without careful planning. During our survey we found that very little attention is being paid to renew the fertility of the soil. . . . It is time that the Agricultural Department took this function of re-fertilizing the soil on its own shoulders and supplied to the farmers manure from various depots in the villages at the proper season, getting back their return at the time of their harvest. Manufacture of artificial fertilizers should form a key industry. Seeds also may be given out. . . .

On the methods of production the Committee says:

> . . . large-scale organized industries are rendered various services and are granted concessions by the Government which enable them to produce cheaply, while village and cottage units hardly get even the recognition of their existence, not to mention services and concessions. . . . Cottage and village industries, as long as their natural tendency is to distribute wealth, have a definite unchallengeable place in the economy of a nation and more especially in that of our country. A careful examination will reveal that any cheapness in production in large-scale

industries or any economies that may be effected are not necessarily inherent in the method of production. It is largely due to expenditure which should be debited to this method of production being spread over the whole country.

Chapter four deals with the Department of Industries. The report has some trenchant remarks on it. Here is a summary:

> . . . As it is organized today, the department is not equipped to direct industries, it is nothing but a glorified inspectorate. . . . The organization of a department of this kind should be such that every villager will turn to it naturally for help and advice. . . . This department should be the pivot round which the productivity of the masses should revolve. It should provide direct help in every way—scientific, financial and technical. . . .
>
> The suggestion that has been made here is on the lines on which the All-India Village Industries Association and the All-India Spinners' Association are already working successfully. At the headquarters of the All-India Village Industries Association at Maganwadi, Wardha, various types of village industries are being carried on. Students are trained in the industries and for village work. A certain amount of scientific research is made. The goods produced are marketed in a shop organized by the Association. There is attached to it the Magan Sangrahalaya which is a museum of the type that is described hereinafter. The Spinners' Association has emphasized all these points and, in addition, has organized the village producers, and built up a network of shops all over the country to find outlets for the products of the organizations in the villages. . . .

It is worthy of note that the Director of Industries who is a member of the Committee, has endorsed these remarks about his department. He deserves congratulation for his detached and impartial outlook.

The following instructive analysis of the distribution of expenditure deserves more than a passing attention:

Education	0-3-5½
General Administration	0-3-0
Collection of Revenues	0-3-0
Police and Jails	0-3-0
Justice	0-1-3
Medical and Public Health	0-1-0
Agriculture, Veterinary, Civil Works	0-1-1
Co-operative Credit	0-0-1
Industries	0-0-1½
Re.	1-0-0

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Where industries, i.e., village economy takes only 1½ pies there is surely something rotten in the State of Denmark. And, as the Committee has truly observed, this money is spent largely on mere administrative work. If this department was run as it should be, the villages will be prosperous, and to that extent they would add to the prosperity of the State. It is wrong for the State to absorb three annas out of 16 for general administration and police and jails respectively.

The fifth chapter which deals with the survey is really introductory to the sixth and last which describes the village industries in detail. The condition of the villages is thus described:

> . . . The primary needs of the people suggest that sanitary surroundings and fresh and wholesome water-supply must form a first charge on the revenues of the villages as it affects the health of the people. Unfortunately, water-supply has been neglected, especially the supply of water to the Harijan families. Whatever may be said against social customs, we cannot wait until these have been reformed to enable these downtrodden communities to get water. . . .

The report has the following remarks on the condition of the industries in the villages:

> . . . In our survey we noticed everywhere all manner of industries interposed without any policy or plan. The result of it all is that today we find the villages disintegrating. . . .

This shows that the villages have been criminally neglected in the past. If the Congress Governments will carry out the professed intention of the Congress, they will reconstruct the lives of the villagers and make them utilize their time so as to supply most of their own wants. As the report points out, the Governments have to do two things: (1) to prevent interference with the village economy by preventing foreign goods from entering the villages, and by preventing our own merchants from introducing milled flour, rice, oil, etc. These impose idleness on the villagers, and the polished, devitalized food products undermine their health. Secondly and side by side with these preventive measures must go improvement in the methods of conducting the existing industries so as to make them more paying, and introduction of new industries in accordance with the condition of particular villages in regard to raw material. And if the venture is to succeed, the planning will have to include the taking up by the State of the goods produced by the villagers not for self-consumption but for sale outside the villages of production.

Among the village industries noted by the Committee are paddy-husking, flour-grinding, oil-pressing, *gur*-making, sugar

manufacture, bee-keeping, pottery, glass-work, soap-making, cotton processes (i.e., picking, ginning, carding, spinning, weaving), washing, dyeing, wool-spinning, weaving, sheep-breeding, carpentry, smithy, sericulture, mat-weaving, rope-making, tanning, disposal of carcasses, pisciculture, poultry-breeding, dairy-farming, shoe-making, brass and metal wares, toy-making, goldsmithy, paper-making, transport, lac industry, bamboo, match manufacture, etc. Among the industries is *bidi*-making. This is what the Committee has to say on this industry:

> *Bidi* manufacture is a very lucrative but a harmful industry in this province. . . . Naturally, as other industries are not available to those who are willing to work, this industry attracts labour at very low rates considering the subsistence level of wages. At all events they are able to make two and a half annas to three annas a day which, as wages go in the villages today, is high. . . .

The Committee has made practical suggestions on all the industries. No summary can do justice to the hints given under each heading. The curious must procure the report and study it. The Government should issue a cheap and handy edition, and have a translation in Hindustani at least. The report is useful for other provinces also. The Governments in the other provinces should therefore procure copies and instruct their Directors to study and act in the spirit of the report. I hope that the Central Provinces Government will carry out in full the recommendations made by the Committee.

Harijan, 20-5-1939, 3-6-1939, 15-7-1939, 22-7-1939 and 29-7-1939

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40. NOTES

More Temples Thrown Open

Raja Shri Rajaram Raja Saheb is the senior Prince and hereditary trustee of Tanjore Palace Devasthanams. He has 90 temples under his charge including the famous temple called Shri Brihadishwara. He has thrown open all these temples to Harijans as a purely voluntary act of reparation to Harijans and thus hastened the process of purification that Hinduism is going through. It is a great and good thing that the Raja Saheb has done. He deserves the congratulations of all those who believe that untouchability is a blot on Hinduism. The accounts I have received from Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru of the enthusiasm she has witnessed in the South in favour of opening temples to Harijans, show that the reform is genuine and is going to be lasting. She is a very careful observer. She says her meetings are attended by thousands of persons who follow every word of what she has to say. This is done through able interpretation. And she says that her listeners gladly endorse her sentiments. All this is a distinct improvement upon the past. Thus, though much has been done, much more remains to be done before Hindu reformers can rest on their oars. Temple reform has to go side by side with temple-entry. If the reform is not superficial but is an index of the desire for purification of Hinduism and Hindus, it must be accompanied by purification of the temples in every respect. Their sanctity and popularity should increase. The admission of Harijans to the temples should mean an automatic uplift in their lives. These things will not happen unless Harijan sevaks increase their vigilance, redouble their zeal and feel themselves uplifted by the reform they have helped to bring about. Reforms like the throwing open of temples to Harijans should bring with them a general levelling up in the lives of those who are engaged in and affected by them.[1]

Segaon, July 29, 1939

Harijan, 5-8-1939

[1] *Vide* also Vol. LXIX, pp. 421-3.

41. TELEGRAM TO SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN

SEGAON,
July 29, 1939

SIR SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN
SIMLA

THANKS WIRE[1]. NO NEED APOLOGY SUCH THINGS COMMON LOT OF PUBLIC MEN.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

42. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
July 29, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Instead of guiding the Dhami people I have passed them on to you.[2] I feel that you should discharge this burden without any interference from me. The idea in the States seems to be to isolate and ignore the Congress and hence the States Conference. I have already suggested[3] in *Harijan* that no State Association or Mandal should act on its own without reference to your committee[4]. I should act, if at all, through you; i.e., when you refer to me, I should give my opinion as I do in respect of the Working Committee. I told the Gwalior people also likewise yesterday. You will have to reorganize your committee a bit, if it is to function properly.

After all I could not go to Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah and his friends won't tolerate the idea of my being State guest. Banking on my past experience, I had accepted State offer in anticipation of Sheikh Abdullah's approval. But I saw that I was mistaken. I

[1] In this, dated July 27, the addressee expressed apology for the unseemly demonstration by the Shias at Lahore Railway Station on July 26.

[2] A deputation on behalf of the Himalayan States People's Conference met Gandhiji at Delhi on July 27, and apprised him of the firing in Dhami.

[3] *Vide* pp. 14-7.

[4] Standing Committee of All-India States People's Conference, of which Jawaharlal Nehru was President

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therefore cancelled the acceptance of the State hospitality and accepted the Sheikh's. This embarrassed the State. So I cancelled the visit altogether. I was guilty of double stupidity—in daring to think of going there without you and in not getting Sheikh's permission before accepting the State offer. I had thought that I would serve the people by accepting the State offer. I must confess that I was not pleased with my contact [with] the Sheikh and his friends. They seemed to all of us to be most unreasonable. Khan Saheb reasoned with them. But it was to no purpose.

Your visit to Ceylon was glorious. I don't mind what the immediate outcome is. Saleh Tyabji asks me to send you to Burma and Andrews thinks of you in connection with South Africa. For Ceylon the idea of a Congress deputation came to me spontaneously, not so these two even after the promptings. But of these when we meet. I hope you are fresh and that Krishna[1] is enjoying herself.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 377-8

43. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON,
July 29, 1939

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM

You hurt me and I hurt you. This is a good bargain, isn't it? A letter was dispatched to you every day. Yes, I used to show your letters to Sushila. It was my mistake. Please forgive me. Henceforth I shall destroy them as soon as I get them. But then how would I be able to reply?

Yes, it will indeed be good if you visit Ramana Maharshi.

When you are free in August, will you go to Patiala or to Bombay ?

I would probably stay here throughout August. But then God alone knows. Sushila has stayed back in Delhi and will remain there for a month.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 426

[1] Krishna Hutheesing, addressee's sister

44. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SEGAON,
July 29, 1939

I have been in telegraphic correspondence with Dr. Dadoo, leader of the Passive Resistance Committee in South Africa. I have no hesitation in asking the Passive Resistance Committee to postpone, for a time, the proposed launching of the struggle[2] on 1st August. I do so because I have some hope of an honourable settlement. I know that the Government of India as well as the British Government are trying to obtain relief. I have put myself in touch with the Ministers. In the circumstances I think a brief postponement of the struggle to be necessary. I am fully aware of the enthusiasm of the resisters. They have proved their mettle before, and they will do so again if it becomes necessary. But it is a code with passive resisters to seize every opportunity of avoiding resistance, if it can be done honourably. Every cessation in search of peace adds strength to real fighters. Let them remember that the Cape Town Settlement of 1914 was the outcome of a cessation of struggle for the sake of peace. I hope that the proposed cessation will lead to a similar result. Should it unfortunately prove otherwise and should the struggle begin, let Dr. Dadoo and his fellow-resisters know that the whole of India will be at their back.

Harijan, 5-8-1939

[1] This appeared under "Notes", sub-title, "Postpone the Struggle". The statement was also published in *The Hindustan Times*, 30-7-1939.

[2] The movement was proposed as a protest against the Asiatic (Transvaal) Land and Trading Act, 1939, which aimed at virtual economic extinction of the Indian community in the Transvaal. *Vide* also Vol. LXIX, p. 115. According to *The Bombay Chronicle*, 31-7-1939, Dadoo had issued a statement acceding to Gandhiji's appeal to postpone the Passive Resistance movement, pending further advice from him.

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45. LESSON OF DHAMI

We have not heard the last of Dhami. The truth is not yet out. The necessarily one-sided version of the Political Agent has been challenged by the Himalayan States Praja Mandal. Their statement shows how absolutely necessary it is to have an open judicial inquiry into the events that led to firing by the Rana of Dhami.

Some members of the Himalayan Mandal came to see me during my brief stay in Delhi. Dhami had made me think furiously. Was nothing possible to prevent such tragedy? I had much to say about it to the deputation, but I felt it would be wrong on my part to shoulder the burden of guiding the Himalayan States Praja Mandal. The responsibility was great. The issues at stake were equally great. I therefore felt that the matter should be handled not by me but by the Standing Committee of the All-India States People's Conference. The question of the States is daily assuming bigger and bigger proportions. The ruling Chiefs are becoming free with their rifles. They feel that they are safe so far as the Paramount Power is concerned. The Congress has not much prestige with them. Many of them are now evolving measures to crush the growing spirit of their people and make it impossible, if they can, for the Congress to give effective guidance to them, let alone to interfere. Nevertheless the Congress has a duty to perform. I do not exactly know the constitution of the Conference, but I presume that in some shape or other it is connected with the Congress. Anyway it is the only body which is specially designed for guiding the States people. It would be wrong for the States to resent such guidance. They should also realize that any resentment would be futile. The Congress cannot give up its duty of guiding the States people in the hour of their need. Time was when the Congress was guiding and protecting the rights of the States as against the Paramount Power. If the Congress friendship was desired and welcomed by the States in need, it hardly becomes them to demur at their people seeking Congress advice, guidance and protection. That the Congress may not always be able to give the people effective assistance is unfortunately too true. The Congress has to forge the necessary sanction by putting the organization on a firmer footing and by wise restraint

to acquire credit for impartiality and strictest justice. If the Congress is to discharge its function in a becoming manner, it will have to insist upon the workers learning to be more accurate than they have been hitherto in preparing their cases. In order to ensure accuracy, the Standing Committee will have to subject to strict scrutiny everything coming to it. If unchallengeable accounts of the doings in the States where even simple justice is denied are published, they will afford a foundation for action.

I have merely indicated a line of approach. The Standing Committee will no doubt lay down its own policy and method of dealing with problems as they arise from time to time. My object in writing these lines is to warn workers in the States against coming to me and expecting me to advise them. They should approach the Standing Committee. Even as I do not guide Congressmen on general matters falling within the function of the Working Committee but hold myself at the disposal of that body, so shall I henceforth act in respect of new State problems. I may not give up guiding those with whom I am already directly concerned. I need hardly add that I shall continue to do what my special aptitude in matters affecting States may enable me to do without being involved in the general direction of popular movements in them. I would ask workers in the States not to take up any forward movement without previous reference to any sanction of the Standing Committee. It must be the duty of the Congress acting through the States People's Conference to avoid, if at all possible, a quarrel with the States.

SEGAON, July 30, 1939

Harijan, 5-8-1939

46. NOTES

ONE SCRIPT FOR DAUGHTERS OF SANSKRIT

The question of having one script for the Indian languages which are daughters of Sanskrit by birth or adoption has been before the public for a number of years. Yet in these days of aggressive provincialism, perhaps, any plea for one script will be regarded as an impertinence. But the literacy campaigns raging all over the country should compel a hearing for the advocates of one script. I have been one such for years. I remember having even adopted in South Africa Devanagari script for my Indian correspondence with Gujaratis in select cases. Inter-provincial intercourse

will be much facilitated by such adoption, and the learning of the various provincial languages will be made infinitely easier than it is today. If the educated people of the land were to put their heads together and decide upon one script, its universal adoption should be an easy thing. To the millions who are illiterate it is a matter of indifference what script is prescribed to them. If the happy consummation comes to pass, there will be only two scripts in India—Devanagari and Urdu, and every nationalist will deem it his duty to master the two scripts. I am a lover of all Indian languages. I have tried to learn as many scripts as possible. And if only I had the time, even at the age of seventy I have energy enough to learn more Indian languages. That would be a recreation for me. But in spite of all my love for the languages I must confess that I have not learnt all the scripts. But if the sister languages were written in one script, I should pick up a workable knowledge of the principal languages of the provinces in very little time. And Devanagari has nothing to be ashamed of in point of symmetry or beauty. I hope that those who are engaged in the literacy campaigns will give a passing thought to my suggestion. If they will adopt Devanagari script, they will save for the future generations tons of labour and time and earn their blessings.

SEGAON, July 30, 1939

Harijan, 5-8-1939

47. A HARIJAN SEVAKS' CONFERENCE

There was held on 4th to 7th June last at Poona a conference of Western and Central India Harijan sevaks. Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru, the Vice-President of the All-India Sangh, presided at the Conference. I am sorry that it was not possible to notice before now some of the important resolutions of the Conference. But they bear publication even though they were passed nearly two months ago. Here are the most important of them[1]:

It is to be hoped that the resolutions addressed to the Indore and Gwalior States will bear fruit. I have omitted similar ones about Devas and Kathiawar States in order to avoid repetition. Indeed if the Princes will do their duty by the despised portion of India's humanity, they should not need any reminder from the Sangh. They do not, like the sanatanists, defend untouchability.

[1] *Vide* Appendix II.

With them the neglect to make provision for Harijans can only be ascribed to indifference. Let us hope that the appeal made by the Conference will not fall on deaf ears.

SEGAON, July 30, 1939

Harijan, 5-8-1939

48. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

SEGAON,
July 30, 1939

CHI. KAKA,

A letter for Maganbhai[1] is enclosed. If you like it, send it on along with your comments.

I send herewith an article[2] about a single script. If you wish to suggest any changes in it, send your suggestions as soon as possible. If you do not like the article, I am ready to cancel it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10923

49. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 30, 1939

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter. What should I say? If you can break your vow, then do what you like. I shall not give the money to anyone else. I cannot keep Akbar[3] here without you and how will you come here without breaking the vow? Meet and talk to Shankerlalbhai and do what seems proper.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 427

[1] Maganbhai Prabhudas Desai
[2] *Vide* pp. 46-7.
[3] Akbarbhai Chawda

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50. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
July 31, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I had no time to write earlier. I was immersed in Harijan work. The heap of correspondence still lies before me.

We had an exacting journey—crowds unusual everywhere. There was no rest till reaching Gwalior, i. e., 2 a. m. I have not got at the bottom of this sudden manifestation.

Mahadev is still in Calcutta.

Mira came in yesterday without notice. I knew that she was to return but did not know when. The place is filling up.

Aryasamajists occupy much of my attention.[1]

We are all keeping well. Mira has a bad cough and constipation.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3935. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7244

51. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
July 31, 1939

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I have your letter, and also Sanyukta's[2]. I am not writing separately to her. By God's grace Kasumba[3] is improving. I

[1] The reference is to the 'Arya Satyagraha' against the anti-Hindu policy of the Nizam Government, which ultimately announced a scheme of reforms that conceded in substance their religious demands. *The Hindustan Times*, 28-7-1939, reported: "On July 27, a deputation consisting of Mr. Ghanshyamsingh Gupta, Speaker of Central Provinces Assembly, Mr. Vinayak Rao and Mr. Deshabandhu Gupta met Gandhiji and placed before him the correspondence which passed between Mr. Ghanshyamsingh Gupta and Sir Akbar Hydari, Prime Minister of Hyderabad State, regarding the doubts expressed by the Aryasamajists on Hyderabad reforms." *Vide* also "Notes", sub-title, "The Arya Samaj", pp. 90-1.

[2] Addressee's daughter

[3] Addressee's wife

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cannot think of anything for you. You may write to Jamnalalji if you wish. Cases like yours deserve to be carefully considered. I do know what your dharma is and it will always seem difficult to practise. So you may try all means of earning whatever you can there. Contact Vithaldas. Don't insist on a particular sum as salary. Think further about the matter after Kasumba has recovered.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI JAISUKHLAL GANDHI
SIR HARKISONDAS HOSPITAL
NEW CHARNI ROAD, BOMBAY

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

52. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
July 31, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got both your letters. You will see in *Harijanbandhu* that I have acted upon your suggestion.[1] I have also made the correction[2] suggested by you. I am apt to commit such arithmetical errors. It could have been avoided if I had made the calculation on a sheet of paper. Mahadev had checked the figures, but he too failed to detect the error. He of course had some suspicion which was later on removed.

That statement[3] about the resolve of a good man is correct. Your own resolve would work; my blessings in this regard are out of place. The resolution about seventy lakh [yards of yarn] is yours, and there is strength of character in that resolution itself.

I do hope to supply you 700 yards at least. Ba also will give the same quantity.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] *Vide* pp. 54-5.
[2] *Vide* p. 69.
[3] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 420-1.

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[PS.]

Bhagwanji's case is rather delicate. I think we shall have to pay him more. I will explain further if I get time. For the present make the payment.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8558. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

53. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
July 31, 1939

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter. It did not upset me. The fact that a difference of opinion has arisen between us does pain me, but I hope that it will disappear in the course of time. You may take as much of my time as you wish. I meant well in asking you to get the opinion of Sardar and of others. Their opinions may perhaps have some effect on me. Do not forget one thing. You and I don't see eye to eye. You believe that my treatment kills the patient. I believe it keeps him alive. Now what shall we do about this difference of opinion? It is because of this that I am waiting patiently. One day one of us will be able to see who was in the wrong.

Meet Sushila and talk with her lovingly. I have of course told her the same thing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2049

54. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
July 31, 1939

CHI. JIVANJI,

When is the Devanagari edition of the *Autobiography* likely to be published?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9944. Also C.W. 6919. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

55. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEGAON,
July 31, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have received your letters. It is time for the post. I shall not write much today. I am thinking about you. There have been no rains here. People are anxious.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4323

56. TELEGRAM TO LORD LINLITHGOW[1]

WARDHA,
August 1, 1939

HIS EXCELLENCY VICEROY
VICEROY'S CAMP

EXCEEDINGLY SORRY CANNOT REACH DELHI FIFTH INSTANT ESPECIALLY AS THERE IS NO PARTICULAR PURPOSE FOR MEETING. URGENT WORK DEMANDS. EXHAUSTING JOURNEY FROM FRONTIER PROVINCE. ANY DATE AFTER TWENTIETH INSTANT WILL SUIT.[2]

From a copy: C.W. 7830 a. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated July 28, which, *inter alia*, read: "I write to say that it would give me very great pleasure to see you again if it was by any chance convenient for you to be in Delhi on Saturday, the 5th August. . . . There is no special subject which I want to raise with you but it is now some months since we have met and I would welcome an opportunity of seeing you again."

[2] For the addressee's reply, *vide* Appendix III.

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57. TELEGRAM TO NARANDAS GANDHI

WARDHA,
August 1, 1939

NARANDAS GANDHI
RASHTRIYASHALA
RAJKOT

HOPE INAUGURATION RENTIA YAGNA[1] SUCCESSFUL. IF DROUGHT CONTINUES SEVENTY PER CENT SHOULD BE DEVOTED FAMINE RELIEF. THEREFORE THERE SHOULD BE SPECIALLY EXTENSIVE RESPONSE IN MONEY AND YARN.

BAPU

From a microfilm: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8559. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

58. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEGAON,
August 1, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I am trying to send Shakaribehn or Kanchanbehn. Balkrishna should never be left alone. Today also I have no time for more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4324

[1] Initiated by the addressee in honour of Gandhiji's birthday, also known as *Rentia Baras*, observed with non-stop sacrificial spinning from *Bhadarva Vad* 12 (Gandhiji's date of birth according to Vikram calendar, usually falling in the second half of September) to October 2; *vide* also "Notes", 10-9-1939, subtitle, "Surplus Khadi"; and Vol. LXIX, pp. 420-1.

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59. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 1, 1939

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

There was no letter from you yesterday. Your present address is not known, hence I am sending this letter with Lakshmidas-bhai[1]. I did not expect such behaviour from you. It only shows that no responsibility can be entrusted to you. Well, His will be done. This will teach a new lesson. I hope you will stay there till Mridulabehn[2] returns.

All are well here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 428

60. THREAT OF FAMINE

There have been no rains yet at many places in Kathiawar. Shri Chhaganlal Joshi writes.[3]

This news is alarming. We do hope that Kathiawar will escape this calamity; but if it does not, my second hope is that those who have foodgrains and fodder, or can manage them, will not take advantage of the situation and make profit, and will sell them at cost price. My third hope is that the Rulers will fulfil their duty by rendering the people as much help as possible, and the fourth hope is that the volunteers will rush out to offer help at various places. The spinning *yajna* will be observed for seventy days with effect from 2nd August, under the auspices of the Rajkot Rashtriyashala. It has been suggested that during the *yajna* workers should increase their speed of spinning and from the produce 70 per cent should be used for helping the famine-stricken people. In the meanwhile, if it rains and Kathiawar escapes the danger, the yarn may

[1] Lakshmidas Asar
[2] Mridula Sarabhai
[3] The letter is not translated here. It described how people and cattle were starving. Chhaganlal Joshi along with Narandas Gandhi thought that 70 per cent of the amount collected during Gandhi Jayanti week should be spent on relief work.

be utilized for its original objective[1]. The main idea at this moment is to raise production. It can be raised by collecting funds and spinning more cotton. It is expected that those who did not normally participate in the spinning *yajna* would do so this time. If the atmosphere for spinning is created it will be easier to give the work to the famine-stricken. Thereby proper help will be given to them and their self-respect will also be preserved. In order to procure adequate help, the spinning work will have to be taken up on a large scale and for that the formation of a committee of right persons is essential.

My fifth and the last desire is that the khadi produced through the spinning *yajna* performed by the famine-stricken people will be disposed of easily. If the khadi is not sold immediately, the calamity cannot be met and overcome by the spinning-wheel.

SEGAON, August 2, 1939

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 6-8-1939

61. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

The hunger-striking prisoners of Dum Dum Jail have sent me some questions through Shri Mahadev Desai. It will serve the cause better if I give a public answer. I am sorry that I can fix no date for their release nor give any other undertaking. I would if I had the power. The only power I have is to plead their cause with all the force at my command. But they give me no chance whatever by continuing their hunger-strike. In so far as it was intended to rouse public attention it has served its purpose. Any prolongation of the fast will now defeat that purpose. There are many who would work actively for their release if the strike is given up. I do feel very strongly that this fast is not justified. The strikers are giving a bad lead to those who are similarly situated. Such hunger-strikers, if they are largely copied, will break all discipline to pieces and make orderly government impossible. The prisoners' cause is essentially just, but they are weakening it by their persistence. I would ask them to live and listen to the advice of one who claims to be an expert in fasting and who claims

[1] That is, to use it equally for Kathiawar Harijan work, khadi work and Rajkot Rashtriyashala; *vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 420-1.

[2] This appeared under the title "To Bengal Prisoners". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 2-8-1939, and *The Hindustan Times*, 3-8-1939.

also to know the science of political prisonership. Let them not hamper one whom they consider to be their best advocate. I make bold to say that had the fates not been against them and me, they would certainly have been discharged before 13th April last. But I do not propose to go into the past. Suffice it to add that their refusal to give up the strike will embarrass the Working Committee in whatever effort it might wish to make to secure their release.

SEGAON, August 2, 1939

Harijan, 5-8-1939

62. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 3, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have not had a moment for writing to you. I gave you a wire[1] about Dhami. Jawaharlal is already on the war path.

Of course, you will bring the cooker and everything else you may need. But why cooker? You are going to take your meals with me as before. The delay is unfortunate. It is not only the work for which you are coming. However don't delay any longer.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3936. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7245

63. LETTER TO POTTI SRIRAMULU CHETTY

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 3, 1939

MY DEAR SHRIRAMULU[2],

I have your letter.

I must not write to Rajaji. You should go to the Kodambakkam Ashram[3] and offer your services as a volunteer. They will accept you if you are a steady worker.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 112

[1] *Vide* p. 24.

[2] A Congressman of Nellore who fasted to death in 1953 for the formation of a separate Andhra State

[3] Harijan Ashram

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64. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

August 3, 1939

CHI. KAKA,

The letter for Maganbhai was posted promptly.

Come over at 3 o'clock today for giving me your report about Meher Ashram.

A bill for a fairly large sum has been sent by Wanless [Sanatorium] regarding that gentleman. Ask for it from me.

I have written[1] to Jivanji inquiring about the *Autobiography*.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7971

65. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 3, 1939

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. Since Rajendra Babu is so keen, take up the responsibility and do whatever you can. God will give you the needed strength. Sushila's address is: Dr. Sushila Nayyar, Lady Hardinge Hospital, New Delhi.

You can write to Uncle: Sheth Jamnalalji Bajaj, State Prisoner, Jaipur.

There is no cause for worry about Vidyavati[2] if there is no bleeding. The remedies for her are: mud packs, hip-bath, bland unspiced food without oil, and plenty of greens like *bhaji*, cucumber, *turiya*, etc., also oranges, *mosambi*, pomegranates, grapes, etc. Fried things should be avoided. Very little rice. She may eat *khakhara* but no food at night. She should drink plenty of water.

I am here for the present.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] *Vide* p. 51.
[2] Addressee's sister, the eldest daughter-in-law of Rajendra Prasad

[PS.]

Give this letter to Sumangal[1] after reading it.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3535

66. *LETTER TO PRESIDENT, TANZEEM-UL-MOMININ*[2]

[Before *August 4, 1939*][3]

DEAR FRIEND,

I have sufficient papers in front of me to enable me to formulate a tentative opinion upon the Shia and Sunni controversy. I have a long letter from Pantji[4] and printed papers giving me what purports to be an unbiased version.

This much seems to stand out clearly. Whereas the *Madhe Saheba* is to praise the elected Caliphs, the *Tabarra* is a curse pronounced upon the first three Caliphs. Whilst one can understand the right of publicly praising people, is there such a thing as right of pronouncing a curse on dead men? The right of *Tabarra* cannot be derived from the holy Koran for the simple reason that the Caliphate came into being only after the death of the holy Prophet. I would like you, therefore, to enlighten me on the religious duty of saying the *Tabarra.*

I would also readily grant that there can be no religious duty in praising the Caliphs specially in public places and in the presence of those whom the recital is known to offend. Therefore, subject to what you might say to the contrary, I would advise you, for the sake of peace, to withdraw the civil resistance[5] and stop the public recital of *Tabarra* unconditionally, leaving it to the good sense of the Sunnis so to act as not to wound the susceptibilities of their Shia brethren.

I have not written this letter for publication. You have been good enough to ask me to give my candid opinion and I have given it tentatively. If it helps you in announcing your decision in accordance with my advice, you are at liberty to publish this letter.

[1] Sumangal Prakash

[2] The source reported that a deputation of Tanzeem-ul-Mominin "recently waited on Gandhiji to seek his advice regarding the Shia-Sunni dispute" on the right to recite, in public, *Madhe Saheba* by Sunnis and *Tabarra* by Shias. The agitation had started as early as March. *Vide* Vol. LXIX. pp. 285 and 293.

[3] The letter was reported under the date-line "Lucknow, August 4".

[4] Govind Ballabh Pant, Premier and Minister of Home Affairs and Finance of the United Provinces

[5] Started by the Shias in early June

I am not sending a copy of this opinion to anyone. It is simply meant for you and friends who accompanied you and on whose behalf you had come.

The Hindu, 5-8-1939

67. *INTERVIEW TO GOVERDHANLAL SHUKLA*

[On or before *August 4, 1939*][1]

Gandhiji told Mr. Shukla[2] that he was not treating the question of the release of political prisoners, both of the Punjab and Bengal, lightly. He pointed out that the hunger-strike by the political prisoners in Bengal jails had been causing difficulties in finding a solution.

Gandhiji declared that the problem of the political prisoners was coming up before the Congress Working Committee.

Gandhiji pointed out that, with a solution found for the problem of political prisoners in Bengal, the question relating to the Punjab prisoners would be solved immediately and automatically.

Gandhiji, it is stated, then asked Mr. Shukla to furnish him with particulars about the prisoners belonging to the Punjab, and the attempts made for their release, on receipt of which he would do what lay in his power.

The Hindu, 5-8-1939

68. *WELL DONE BOMBAY!*

From all the accounts I have received it seems that Bombay surpassed itself on the 1st of August, the day of the inauguration of prohibition. An eye-witness of the demonstrations tells me that the procession that took the mortal remains of the immortal Lokamanya to the Chowpaty sands, huge as it was, was far outdone by the crowds that gathered together on the Azad Maidan. He tells me that all Bombay was present there. The labourers, who were the chief persons to benefit by the measure and who were at the same time the most affected by prohibition, attended in their thousands with their wives. They rejoiced in the deliverance from the devil from whose grip they could not disengage themselves without external assistance. Had they gone to express their gratefulness to the Ministers for their courage in persisting in their

[1] The interview was reported under the date-line "Wardha, August 4".
[2] Of Kanpur

benevolent measure in the teeth of the opposition of vested interests ?

It was not a mere labour demonstration. All classes took part in it. At that huge meeting there was not a jarring note. Men and women had turned up in their thousands to take part in thanksgiving to God for the successful inauguration of prohibition.

The great Parsi community deserves congratulations for the restraint it observed in spite of its bitter opposition to the measure. Evidently wiser counsel prevailed and no hostile demonstration appears to have been staged by them. My hope that Parsi philanthropy will get the better of the opposition, appears to have been justified. Is it too much to expect whole-hearted support from the Parsis in making the measure a complete success? Let them remember, the glory of the effort in Bombay will be reflected not only throughout the province but it will be reflected all over India. I make bold to say that although they feel that they have been unjustly dealt with, the future generation of Parsis will bless Dr. Gilder as their true representative and benefactor. Surely Parsis should be proud, as India is proud, that they have produced in Dr. Gilder a man who has stood firm as a rock in the midst of fiercest opposition including threats of boycott and worse.

Indeed the whole of the Ministry deserves hearty congratulations on the steadfastness with which they have pursued this great moral reform. The demonstration of 1st August shows that they had and have practically the whole of Bombay behind them. No constructive measure promoted by the Congress has had such enthusiastic support as this great moral reform.

It is a matter of regret that a Muslim procession of protest, not against the measure but against the property tax, was organized the same day and resulted in a clash with the police. But it only enhanced the value of the public meeting, for the procession had no effect whatsoever on the great and irresistible demonstration. Bombay had one mind at the Azad Maidan.

Let us hope the brilliant beginning has momentum enough in it to lead to a brilliant end. Much constructive effort will be required in order to consolidate the advantage gained by the closing of liquor-shops. It removes the temptation from the drinker but not the craving for drink. His mind has to be directed into the right channel. He must have healthy refreshment at a place where he can rest his tired mind and limbs. Workers among the labourers should deem it their duty to study their lives and help them to conquer the craving for drink. The Government alone won't be able to cope with this consolidation work. They could

close the liquor-shops with a measure of popular goodwill. But they will need the active co-operation of a band of volunteer workers to supplement the official effort to help the drinker to lose his craving for drink.

SEGAON, August 4, 1939

Harijan, 12-8-1939

69. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 4, 1939

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I am not sending you a telegram. What could I say? If you are determined to come, you will come. How could you do a job which you are unable to do? You had vowed that you would return when Mridula and Lakshmidasbhai let you go. Now Shankerbhai is there. Meet him and do what appears proper. I have, of course, written to Lakshmidasbhai about Akbar. I don't have the courage to keep him here. A Muslim lady doctor arrived here yesterday. She belongs to Central Provinces. Her father is also a doctor. She will stay for a month. She seems to be a good person. She is doing Sushila's work.

Nimu is of course here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 429

70. DISCUSSION WITH V. V. SATHE[1]

SEGAON,
August 5, 1939

GANDHIJI: If you are a satyagrahi, I too am a satyagrahi, and as I have been told by many friends that you are a reasonable man and a man of restraint, I shall show you that you are wrong.

Well then, you ought to have exhausted all the constitutional means. You must remember that the Bombay Congress Ministry is

[1] The discussion appeared under the title "A Satyagrahi *v.* A Satyagrahi" by Mahadev Desai, who explains: "Shri V. V. Sathe is a seasoned faster and a Congressman. He fasted in jail for the right of cooking his

under four Congress Committees—Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Bombay. You should have lodged your complaint before them. Failing satisfaction you should have gone to the Working Committee, failing there to the A. I. C. C., and then to the open session of the Congress. And if you accept my authority as an expert in satyagraha, then you should have come to me, but not with a decision to fast.

SATHE: I do not accept you as the final authority, but I would certainly take your advice. But let me ask you one question. Whether all these Congress Committees give an opinion in my favour or not, what if the Ministers say they have violated the Congress principles?

Do they say so?

Yes. But they will not resign, they say, unless they are asked to resign. But they have broken the promises given in election manifestos.

There is no rigidity about the manifestos. You may say many things but you may not be able to carry them all out.

My own Sadashiv Peth, which is one of the constituencies, did resolve that the Ministry had not fulfilled the promises.

Well then, let that committee approach the A. I. C. C. But why this fast? You must exhaust all the natural steps.

The natural steps take years. It is a cumbersome machinery.

Not years, but it may take a year. That should not matter.

I do propose to go to the open Congress, for the Congress is an authority above you.

I am no authority. I have a certain amount of moral influence.

But you do not exercise it.

How do you know? You must place all the facts before me and convince me that I have not done all in my power.[1]

---

own food . . . remained without clothes . . . because he would not be allowed to wear khadi. He is a downright honest man but often it would seem his logic gets the better of his common sense. . . . He came to Segaon on the morning of the 5th, determined to go on a fourteen-day fast. . . . He feels that the Bombay Ministry grievously erred in certain things, e. g., orders about processions, security demanded from Presses, and firing. He had come determined to fast in Gandhiji's presence because he said, Gandhiji was 'the God of the Congress' and had the resignations of the Congress Ministries in his pocket. . . ."

[1] Mahadev Desai says: "Shri Sathe now proceeded to give the details of his grievances on the three scores . . . the details of the orders about the processions and how people dodge them, and so on."

But you do not expect me to express my judgment on these matters?

I do.

How can I? Your reading out the texts of orders to me and placing all the facts in your possession before me does not take me further. I must hear the Ministers also.

But that you can easily do. You are the High Command.

How am I the High Command?

You have said that the Ministers' resignations are in your pocket.

When did I say so? Produce my statements.[1]

No, seriously, if I made any such preposterous statement, it would be bravado. You do not find my name mentioned anywhere in the constitution. I can exercise my moral authority certainly, but that only when I see that there is something which ought to be done (morally) by the Working Committee or the Ministry.

Then you will study the case while I go on with my fast.

How can you, when you have yet to convince me of the justifiability of your fast?

I am fasting only to arrest your attention.

You will if you do not fast. The moment you begin your fast you distract my attention, you paralyse my capacity for unbiased judgment. I could not enjoy my meals if I knew that someone was fasting without cause. And then you must know that this is a colony of fasters. There is Bhansali, the greatest faster I have known, Vinoba has fasted, and so has Kakasaheb. You had better see them, talk to them, and see if they approve of your going on fast.[2]

I do not take your view. If we have a national government, and we have papers that simply thrive on prosecutions, what are we to do? But that only means that there are fundamental differences between us. We have got to examine everything. If you want me to use my moral authority, I must have certain convic-

[1] Sathe laughed in reply.

[2] Mahadev Desai explains: "Shri Sathe now turned to the second of his counts—the demand of security from the papers. The British Government may have done it, but for the Congress Government to do so was the height of injustice. Why should the editors not be prosecuted? No security should be demanded without prosecution."

tion that the Ministers have gravely erred in all the three matters you have mentioned. And if the conviction goes home, I would certainly like to speak to the Ministers and the Working Committee. But to do all this I must examine your allegations at leisure. And you may be sure that though I have very little time I would study the papers you send me, just for your sake.

But in the mean while I may fast.

No. You can place the whole case before the Working Committee if you like.

What right have I?

Everyone has a right. The Working Committee is there to listen to every Congressman and non-Congressman with a grievance. But now that you have asked me to study the case perhaps you may not want to put it before the Working Committee. After I have given my decision, you may reason with me, plead with me, and then if you find me obstinate, you can fast against me.

You are a student of the *Gita*?

I am.

Well then, I tell you your fast would be the third kind of *tapas* described in the seventeenth chapter[1]—*tamasa tapas* born of ignorance and perverseness.

So I may fast a month hence, if I am not satisfied?

Yes, but if I want more time, you will give me.

Certainly.[2]

Harijan, 12-8-1939

[1] Verse 19

[2] Mahadev Desai adds: "Shri Sathe is a man of simplest habits and very few wants. He was a head master of a national school for some time, and Gandhiji tried to persuade him to stay on here, study the various activities and give his time to whatever activity appealed to him. His few wants could be easily met here. But he was not to be so easily fished. He preferred to go back to Poona."

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71. LETTER TO RAKHAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 5, 1939

BHAI RAKHAL,

I was happy that you came to Segaon and stayed here for some days. I wish that the faith in truth and ahimsa, which has grown in you, may also grow in the hearts of all revolutionary brothers and sisters. Those whom I met gave me this assurance. I know that we will never be able to achieve independence without truth, ahimsa and so on.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4667

72. AM I ALL-POWERFUL?

Two Congressmen came to me during the week. One of them said:

> We in the Central Provinces think that you can do everything you want. You can remove the Ministry at will and you can make them do what you like.

The other said:

> You are the Working Committee. Every Congressman therefore blames you for the present corruption. You showed us that moral authority was the supreme authority. You taught us to think that the existing system was Satanic. You taught us that when the Congress reigned there would be no devilry, there would be purity in every walk of life. But we find today quite the reverse. The Congress reigns in many provinces and yet corruption is rampant. Congressmen quarrel among themselves. There is marked deterioration. Devilry is not gone. You do not rely upon numbers. You have often said that even a few true and good Congressmen can, by their moral worth, represent the whole nation and real democracy can be evolved. But instead of quality the cry everywhere is for quantity. The amendments recently made are of no use. They won't remove the growing corruption nor reduce the unmanageable size of the

> Congress. If you say that you cannot have your way with the Working Committee, let us know it. As it is we believe you to be all-powerful and are therefore filled with wonder that you allow things to go from bad to worse. Look at your Khadi Clause. It is responsible for extensive hypocrisy in the Congress. Very few believe in khadi and therefore use it only for show. Khadi therefore stands for falsehood and worse. You who brought the country to a moral height are now bringing it down. Presently the Congress will become the laughing-stock of the country, if things go as they are doing. If you cannot mend the Congress, why don't you leave it alone?

This second critic is a well-known Congressman and organizer. He spoke feelingly. I promised to reproduce in these columns the substance of the answer I gave him.

I am not all-powerful whether with the Central Provinces Ministers or with the Working Committee. I know very little of the doings of the Ministers. I never interfere with their work. I have never regarded that as my function. Occasionally I have to correspond with them on matters such as the village industries, basic education or the like precisely as any citizen would do. I have invariably refused to interfere with their work. I would not have the time for it even if I had the wish. It would mean usurpation of the function of the Parliamentary Sub-committee of the Working Committee.

So far as the Working Committee is concerned, I do attend its meetings whenever I am required to do so. I do influence its decisions in the matters that may be referred to me and never in any others. Many sittings of the Committee I do not attend at all. Of many of its resolutions I have no knowledge except after they are passed and that through the Press. This was the arrangement when I first severed[1] my legal connection with the Congress. What hold I have on the Committee is purely moral. My opinion prevails only to the extent that I carry conviction. Let me give out the secret that often my advice makes no appeal to the members. For instance, if I had my way, the Congress would be reduced to the smallest compass possible. It would consist of a few chosen servants removable at the will of the nation but getting the willing co-operation of the millions in the programme they may put before the nation. But this is too drastic and too undemocratic for Congressmen.

I admit that the Khadi Clause has led to much falsehood and hypocrisy. If I had my way, it would have gone long ago. I

[1] In 1934; *vide* Vol. LIX, p. 263.

sought to have the clause removed[1] even when I seceded from the Congress. I have repeated the attempt more than once but with no success. The argument has been that the Congressmen in general will not listen to the removal of the clause.

Similarly I have endeavoured[2] to have the words 'peaceful and legitimate' removed from the Constitution but again without success. I can multiply instances in which I have failed to carry the Working Committee with me. I do not mention these failures by way of complaint against the Working Committee. The members had weighty reasons for not listening to me. I have not felt called upon to sever the moral tie with the old colleagues. I do not arrogate to myself any superiority over them. It has been a privilege to work with them. They are as good and faithful servants of the nation as I claim to be myself. I cling to them because I have the hope that one day they will be converted to my point of view or that I shall be converted to theirs.

Nor do I subscribe to the charge that the old regime was purer than the present. Whilst I admit that much corruption has crept into the Congress organization, that there are many self-seekers in it, it is my conviction that the Congress administration is comparatively purer than the old one. It is also my conviction that the Congress administration is responsible for several measures for the amelioration of the condition of the masses. I regard prohibition as the greatest of them all. But there is no doubt that a vast deal still remains to be done. I hug the hope that some day the Augean stables of the Congress will be swept clean and that the fears of the second critic of the Congress will be dispelled. It is not to be denied that he has grounds for his fears. Being an irrepressible optimist, things do not dismay me to the extent that they dismay him. They are serious enough to rouse every Congressman to a sense of his duty. The Congress will surely be undone if it does not stand exclusively on the solid rock of its moral worth.

SEGAON, August 6, 1939

Harijan, 12-8-1939

[1] & [2] *Vide* Vol. LIX, pp. 10-1.

73. NOTES

SHETH JAMNALALJI

Sheth Jamnalalji is an extraordinary prisoner. He believes that as a prisoner he has not to care about his body beyond what the doctors provided for him do. And so I have only now come to know the true state of his health. Shri Shankerlal Banker, who happened to go to Jaipur to see Jamnalalji, got concerned about his health and told me how bad it was.

For the moment I refrain from publishing the correspondence which has come into my hands. According to the Jaipur Civil Surgeon his is a case for special treatment. If it is, the onus is on the State to release him unconditionally, leaving it to Jamnalalji whether he will take special treatment within the State or without. It is futile to suggest to Jamnalalji that he should undertake to leave Jaipur if he is discharged. He will rather die in prison than be free under the very condition for the breach of which he has courted imprisonment. As I have already pointed out,[1] there is no fear of Jamnalalji promoting civil disobedience in the State. For it stands indefinitely suspended. The authorities know that Jamnalalji is essentially a non-violent man. They also know him to be a man of his word. To me his detention is a mystery and, in the present state of his health, a crime.

The public generally do not know that though the place where he is detained is good and accessible, it is a haunt of ferocious animals. Under what appear to me to be barbarous shikar laws of Jaipur State, these animals are protected under pain of heavy fines being inflicted on the persons killing them. Tigers and their brood, it is said, eat men and animals with impunity. My purpose here, however, is not to deal with these shikar laws, inhuman as they appear to me to be. My purpose is to protest against Jamnalalji being kept in a tiger-infested place. I understand that even his keepers are not very happy over their job. There is no fear of Jamnalalji running away. If he must be kept in prison, why should he not be kept in an unobjectionable place where medical and other assistance is easily available?

There is also another point which calls for notice. Though repeated requests have been made, he has not yet been permitted

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, p. 401.

to keep a companion. He has been given no nurse. Instances are on record when he was badly in need of night attendance. That he himself has made no complaint is no reason for the authorities' negligence in not providing necessary attendance. Their attention has been drawn to the matter more than once by Shethji's secretary.[1]

In Imitation of Kathiawar

Shri Sitaram Sastri, having read about the spinning programme[2] of seventy days set up by Shri Narandas Gandhi of Rajkot Rashtriyashala, has decided to imitate him and he has begun his programme of having from co-workers twenty-five lacs yards of yarn by the 2nd of October next. I wish him every success. Its secret lies in having previously the names of spinners and the quantity they would spin and having weekly reports of the work done. Naturally the spinners, being volunteers, will be expected to spin as strong, even and fine a yarn as they can with minimum waste. The idea behind all such effort should be that they will prove experts in their own localities and be an example to their neighbours.

A Correction

Shri Sitaram Sastri points out an error that crept into my note[3] on the Kathiawar spinning programme. In it I mentioned that 700 spinners spinning 1,000 yards per day would be required to spin 70 lacs of yards in 70 days, and 7,000 spinners if they span 100 yards per day. '700' should read 100, and '7,000' should read 1,000. Whilst I gladly correct the error, I may say that no harm will be done if 700 or 7,000 spinners take part in the sacrificial spinning. The more the better.

Segaon, August 6, 1939

Harijan, 12-8-1939

[1] Jamnalal Bajaj was released on August 9.
[2] & [3] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 420-1.

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74. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

August 6, 1939

CHI. VALJI,

I got your letter yesterday. But I did not have time to reply immediately. I am of course writing to Chitre, but will he do your work? I am writing to Ramachandran[1] at the same address. You will get this letter before Chitre leaves. If, therefore, you approve of what I write, send a wire to Chitre to stay on. This is only a suggestion. You know Chitre much better. As he is greatly devoted to you, he may prove useful. How did your health break down? Have you been careless about your diet? I hope you will return after getting completely cured.

Blessings from
BAPU

PROF. V. DESAI
SANATORIUM
P.O. VANIVILAS MOHALLA, MYSORE

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7485. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

75. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 6, 1939

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I have your long letter full of news. It will be of help to me.

Here the work is going on at full speed. There has been some delay as your Prime Minister is away. I will keep you informed if there are any special developments. But what counts and will count is your strength. I had a cable from Nana saying that I did a good thing in advising postponement. I have not replied to the cable. Can't the differences there be patched up? Who are the persons behind the threat of murder? How did the matter reach that stage?[2]

[1] G. Ramachandran
[2] *Vide* also Vol. LXIX, p. 373.

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What makes you think it would be to your advantage if there was no Agent-General at all? It would be easy to withdraw him. However, as it will not be possible to post one again, we should decide after careful thinking.

I must be kept informed about developments there.

A letter from Ba is enclosed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4900

76. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

August 6, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

You will be pleased to read the accompanying[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10791

77. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON,
August 6, 1939

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM[2],

I got your two letters together. I have already written to you to do what you please. If you wish to come over here, do so. Discuss the matter with Shankerlalbhai.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 430

[1] A letter from Chandanbehn Parekh to Gandhiji thanking him for sending a kind and patient man like the addressee to take care of her

[2] The superscription is in Gujarati.

78. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 6, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I got your letter. Shakaribehn[1] had agreed but still she is a bit hesitant. I have therefore postponed sending her. I am on the look-out for some other person. I am making as much haste as possible. Why has the mattress been placed in that manner? The cot does not belong to [the sanatorium]. Give the enclosed letter to Bachharajbhai[2]. I hope [Balkrishna's] ear is properly cleaned. Give all details to Sushilabehn. Her address is: Lady Hardinge College Hospital, New Delhi. Balkrishna must get completely cured there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4325

79. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[3]

SEGAON,
August 6, 1939

I congratulate Shri Subhas Babu on having succeeded in persuading the hunger-strikers to suspend their fast even for two months and on having undertaken to move the B. P. C. C. to take the necessary action for the release of the prisoners. I have also a wire from the prisoners in Alipore Jail informing me of the suspension and asking me to resume my effort. I need hardly assure them that what little I can do will be done to secure their release. I can say that the suspension gives me some hope that my effort will produce some effect. I hope too that the Bengal Government will use the occasion for a generous gesture and end the agony.

Harijan, 12-8-1939

[1] Wife of Chimanlal N. Shah

[2] Bachharaj Seth, who had adopted Jamnalal Bajaj

[3] This appeared under the title "Bengal Prisoners". The statement was also published in *The Hindustan Times* and *The Hindu* on August 7.

80. MESSAGE ON INAUGURATION OF BASIC EDUCATION[1]

[On or before *August 7, 1939*][2]

The decision to open 1,700 schools for the new system of education is a great undertaking. I hope this will be successful in every respect. My congratulations on this bold step.

The Hindu, 7-8-1939

81. AN EXPLANATION

I gladly publish the foregoing letter[3] and accept the explanation. Without it the concluding paragraph of the petition could only be interpreted as a threat. Better than the explanation, however, will be the help the Bhandaris could render in the prosecution of the prohibition programme. Let them be true soldiers of the Congress Government and the nation as they were of the East India Company, who were foreigners come to exploit the country. If they will heartily assist the Government in their arduous task, they will find that they will also assist themselves in a manner they never otherwise could have done.

SEGAON, August 7, 1939

Harijan, 12-8-1939

[1] & [2] The message was reported under the date-line "Allahabad, August 7" with the following note: "A big educational experiment will begin in the United Provinces tomorrow with the inauguration of the basic scheme of education by the Premier, Pandit G. B. Pant. . . ."

[3] This was dated "Bombay, July 31, 1939" from S. K. Bole, who *inter alia*, said: "The signatories to that memorial acted *bona fide* and they never intended to offer any threat to the Bombay Ministry. The last paragraph of the said memorial was a frank expression of the Bhandari Committee of its apprehensions about the probabilities that might ensue from the enforcement of the prohibition policy under the circumstances then prevailing." *Vide* also p. 19.

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82. *MILLS* v. *CHARKHA*

The A. I. V. I. A. has been issuing for some time a monthly bulletin called *Gram Udyog Patrika* at Maganwadi, Wardha, for the annual subscription of 12 annas. The July number contains an interesting article on national planning. I must refer the curious to the *Patrika*. I wish here only to draw attention to the following[1] striking figures:

> . . . we would need Rs. 300 crores of capital employing 33 lakhs of people if we supplied all our requirements by mill production, while we would require about Rs. 72 crores of investment employing 800 lakhs of people if our supply were to come from cottage units. The two methods have their undoubted advantages. . . . We are poor but we have an ocean of labour wealth. Therefore an intelligent plan will find the cottage method fit into the scheme for our country. . . . Any planning in our country that ignores the absorption of labour wealth will be misplaced. Our analysis has shown that centralized method of production, whatever may be its capacity to produce, is incapable of finding employment for as large a number of persons as we have to provide for. Therefore it stands condemned in this country.

The figures need no comment. If they cannot be challenged, they make an overwhelming case for the charkha and, by parity of reasoning, perhaps, for village production as against factory production. But I invite experts to examine the figures and challenge them if they can seriously do so.

SEGAON, August 7, 1939

Harijan, 12-8-1939

83. *ANOTHER TEMPLE OPENED TO HARIJANS*

The Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Ilanji, informs me that the Courtallam Temple was thrown open to Harijans by the manager on 26th ultimo. He is to be congratulated on his having done his duty. The President of the local Sangh was responsible for

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

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inducing the manager to open the temple. I hope that the worshippers at the *mandir* had no objection to the opening.

SEGAON, August 7, 1939

Harijan, 12-8-1939

84. LETTER TO TOTARAM HINGORANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 7, 1939

MY DEAR HINGORANI,

It gives me great joy to find that you are reconciled to Anand[1] and Vidya[2] and that they are near you to render you such filial service as you may need.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI TOTARAM HINGORANI
KARACHI

From a microfilm. Courtesy: National Archives of India, and Anand T. Hingorani

85. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 7, 1939

CHI. ANAND,

I like your decision. It is not at all bad to do business to earn one's living. It is the duty of a son to fulfil the desire of his father unless it is impure. Father's desire that you do some business and stand on your own feet is proper. I believe that a person who earns his living and supports his family by honest means also renders service to the nation. Therefore I want you to do your business with interest. Make Father happy and while doing your business render service to Harijans as far as possible.

Whatever money you send to me I will digest. But if you are unable to send any, I shall not starve. Do as it suits you.

[1&2] Addressee's son and daughter-in-law

Give the enclosed[1] to Father.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi. Courtesy: National Archives of India, and Anand T. Hingorani

86. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 7, 1939

CHI. PRABHA,

If you can relieve your tutor, you had better do so. If not, then complete one month and start working after that. Do only as much work as you can. Get yourself released from the work, if Rajendra Babu agrees, and continue your study. Who is the tutor, what does he teach and for how long?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3527

87. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 7, 1939

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your complaint. I have been writing regularly. You should complain to the postmaster. I have already written to you saying that you can do as you wish. Consult Shankerlalbhai. That is why I am not sending a telegram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 431

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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88. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

SEGAON,
August 7, 1939

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Tell Vanu[1] what a timid girl she is! Doesn't Amtul Salaam stay with you?[2] Ba is all right though she is weak. There has been no rain here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 431

89. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[3]

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 7, 1939

My attention has been drawn to the A. P. L message purporting to report the conversations between Dr. Khan Saheb[4] and Qazi Ataulla Saheb[5] whilst I was in Abbottabad. The conversations were confidential. I have no recollection whatsoever of Dr. Khan Saheb having complained of any conspiracy of Hindu members or of my having agreed about their expulsion. The thing is on the face of it impossible, for I could not endorse such a proposition without first seeing those against whom such serious complaints are made. Nor would Dr. Khan Saheb expect me to do such a dishonourable thing, nor have I any recollection of the Qazi Saheb having any discussion with me on the question of services. How I wish the newspaper reporters would have weighty matters confirmed by the parties concerned before giving them for publication. I understand that the Hindus of the Frontier Province are much perturbed over this report.

Harijan, 19-8-1939

[1] Vanamala N. Parikh

[2] Gandhiji had written this letter after writing to Amtussalaam; *vide* the preceding item.

[3] This appeared under the title "A Denial". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 8-8-1939.

[4] & [5] The Premier and the Minister of Education in the North-West Frontier Province

90. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 8, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. It is good news that you are restored. Is any mark left behind? Here all the rooms are getting full. Durgabehn[1] arrived today. Dhebarbhai[2] has come. Nanavati also is here today. Two more have come from Sojitra. They want to stay for some time. Bhansalibhai is at present busy teaching. Mathewji lives in Balkoba's hut. In place of Sushila, another lady doctor of the same college has come. She is a very good person. Nimu and others are of course here. Haven't I filled the letter with enough news now? I am quite well. Ba is all right.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10015. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

91. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 8, 1939

CHI. MANILAL,

I have your letter. Now you will hear from me regularly.

It would only be a needless waste of time to file a suit against the Congress workers and it would also create bitterness. If, instead, all of you go on doing your work, your strength will increase and the Congress also will help you indirectly. Even if it does not help, it will not matter. You may not remember, but Christopher probably will, that I had deliberately kept the Congress and the British Indian Association separate. I established the

[1] Wife of Mahadev Desai
[2] U. N. Dhebar

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Passive Resistance Association and it got the help of the Congress and the other bodies from time to time. The workers did not court imprisonment, they did not sacrifice their incomes and at the same time helped me with funds. The Agent will recognize your Association and respect it.

I may perhaps write[1] in *Harijan* about this. The enclosed will be useful to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

There are two letters[2] on the reverse.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4901

92. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

SEGAON,
August 8, 1939

CHI. SITA,

I got your note. If you too go to jail, who will run the *Indian Opinion*!

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4901

93. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON,
August 8, 1939

CHI. SUSHILA,

Medh[3] writes and informs me that you also have decided to go to jail. But what if there is a settlement? Will you see that you keep fit enough to go to jail?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4901

[1] *Vide* "Notes", sub-title, "Indian Struggle in South Africa", pp. 91-3.
[2] *Vide* the two following items.
[3] Surendra Medh

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94. LETTER TO DILKHUSH B. DIWANJI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 8, 1939

BHAI DILKHUSH,

I have your letter. If you wish to borrow, when will you return the amount? What is the minimum you require? What will you do with the khadi produced? Is there enough demand? It would be fine if none of the women spinners were turned back. They must observe our rules. All the yarn you get spun there must also be woven there.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

If the weavers are too few, we can train some more.

DILKHUSH DIWANJI
GANDHI KUTIR
KARADI, *via* JALALPUR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2642

95. LETTER TO RADHAKRISHNA BAJAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 8, 1939

CHI. RADHAKISAN,

I have your letter. Please read my article[1]. Kamalnayan has given me some papers. They contain a fragment of a description of ferocious animals.[2] The other part is missing. I want the whole story. How is Jamnalal's health now?

Kamalnayan[3] has gone to Calcutta as Savitri's[4] confinement is expected soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9128

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 400-1.
[2] *Vide* p. 68.
[3] & [4] Son and daughter-in-law of Jamnalal Bajaj

96. LETTER TO GOPABANDHU CHAUDHARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 8, 1939

BHAI GOPABABU[1],

Read the enclosed letter[2]. Can something be done about it? Were you indisposed?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2793

97. LETTER TO DR. JIVRAJ N. MEHTA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 9, 1939

BHAI JIVRAJ,

I wanted to write to you just at the time when you had a talk with Sushila[3] at Bardoli but it could not materialize because of the continuous rush of work and then I allowed the matter to drop. I am prompted to write this because of the criticism from you in Lilavati's presence. Your criticism has pained her. She ought to have promptly expressed her feelings and asked for clarification.[4] What is the use of fretting and fuming? I do believe that you are the guardian of my right conduct as well as of my bodily health. You would be pained if I were to commit something I ought not to. Also it is your duty to bring it to my notice. Hence if you have found anything in my conduct which deserves criticism or censure, please let me know, without hesitation. I will look upon it as true friendship. I know, these days the newspapers carry a lot of abusive references to me. I don't read them; I come to hear

[1] President, Utkal Provincial Congress Committee

[2] Dated August 4, 1939, from Mukunda Prasad Das, Speaker, Orissa Legislative Assembly. It read: "The quarrels amongst Congressmen of Orissa should be made up. . . . Can you write to Shri Gopabandhu Chaudhari to intervene? He has the confidence of all groups."

[3] Dr. Sushila Nayyar

[4] *Vide* also the following item, and letter to the addressee, p. 95.

about them. All this abuse is not going to affect me in any way, although I should really want to know if anything weighs on the minds of friends like you. My life is an open book. I have never had any secrets, so you can ask me about anything you wish to. I hope to take a lot of work from friends like you which I might not be able to do if my life were veiled in secrecy.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: Jivraj Mehta Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

98. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 9, 1939

CHI. LILA,

I have your letter. I see no need for girls to go begging on the Balev[1] Day or on any other occasion. Their services should not be used in this manner. Collecting money is the work of the management.

Keep yourself fully absorbed in your study. Do not be restless. Do your best and be content with the outcome.

Why did you take quietly what Dr. Mehta told you? Suppose he had been only joking? If there was any sting in it, you could have removed it.[2] You could have asked whether a daughter sleeping by the side of her father and a girl in an institution lying on top of another were the same thing. I think your keeping quiet itself implies your admission of some guilt. Your previous letter, however, suggests some feeling of shame about what is happening. In that case you would of course not be able to say anything. How can you, then, blame Dr. Jivraj? Even if somebody makes an offensive remark about me, it produces no effect on me whatever. But if I ever do something blameworthy, I would shrink into myself with shame even if nobody criticized me.

Blessings from

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 10091. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

[1] Also known as *Rakshabandhan* celebrated on the full-moon day of *Shravana*, when a girl ties a string called *rakhi*, *rakhadi*, or *raksha* round the wrist of her brother and receives from him some gift as a token of his promise to protect her

[2] *Vide* also the preceding item.

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99. LETTER TO TARA JASANI

MAGANWADI, WARDHA,
August 9, 1939

CHI. TARA,

I don't feel like going for walks without all my [walking-] sticks. Kanu[1], Bablo[2] are busy, and so they do not come out with me.

Instead of my giving you a description of the mountains, you may see them with your own eyes some day.

What work will you do if there is a drought? How much will you contribute to spinning *yajna*?

It is good that you attend Kanji Muni's[3] discourses. Your revered parents always used to listen to him with rapt attention.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9834. Courtesy: Tarabehn Pratap

100. LETTER TO R. L. HANDA

SEGAON,
August 10, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

I have seen your letter[4] and the accompanying articles[5] on Kathiawar States. Both are welcome. While your letter to me is appearing in the next issue of the *Harijan*, the articles will be published at a later date as soon as space is available. Your approach to the problem of States I consider, on the whole, as rational and workable.[6]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Leaves from a Diary, p. 77

[1] Son of Narandas Gandhi
[2] Narayan Desai, son of Mahadev Desai
[3] A Shvetambar Jain *muni*
[4] *Vide* pp. 88-9.
[5] For extracts, *vide* Appendix IV.
[6] *Vide* also "Kathiawar States", 11-9-1939.

CWMG-LXX

101. LETTER TO SURENDRA B. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 10, 1939

CHI. SURENDRA,

Isn't my writing to Manu[1], the same as writing to you? I assume that you two are as warp and woof to each other that there is no need for me to write anything to cheer you both. Hence though you are constantly in my thoughts, I save my time by not writing to you. As Manudi has stayed with me for a long time, she naturally expects letters from me and I, therefore, write to her and assume that it is as good as writing to you.

Manu told me that your work was progressing well. I hope you are keeping good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5049. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

102. CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION[2]

[*August 11, 1939*][3]

The Working Committee has given the most anxious consideration to the action of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose[4], the erstwhile President of the National Congress, in connection with two resolutions[5] of the last meeting of the A. I. C. C. known as "Satyagraha in Provinces" and "Congress Ministries and the P. C. C.s". The Working Committee has also considered the long letter[6] of Shri Subhas Babu, appended hereto. The Working Committee with great sorrow and reluctance has come to the conclusion that Subhas Babu has wholly missed the main point raised by the President of

[1] Addressee's wife
[2] Drafted by Gandhiji; *vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 112-4.
[3] From *Gandhi—1915-1948: A Detailed Chronology*
[4] He had asked the people to observe July 9, 1939, as 'Protest Day'.
[5] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 366-8.
[6] Addressed to the Congress President; *vide* Appendix V.

the Congress as clearly set forth in his declaration[1] also appended hereto. As ex-President he should have also realized that after having received peremptory instructions[2] from the President it was his clear duty as a servant of the nation to obey them implicitly even though he differed from the ruling of the President. It was open to him, if he felt aggrieved by the ruling, to appeal to the Working Committee or the A. I. C. C. But he was bound, so long as the President's instructions stood, to carry them out faithfully. This is the first condition of the proper functioning of any organization, much more so of a vast organization like the National Congress which is engaged in a life and death struggle with the best organized and most powerful imperialistic corporation in the world. If, what seems to be Subhas Babu's contention in his letter, that every member is free to interpret the Congress Constitution as he likes, prevails, there will be perfect anarchy in the Congress and it must break to pieces in no time.

The Working Committee has come to the painful conclusion that it will fail in its duty if it condones the deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline by Subhas Babu. The Working Committee therefore resolves that for his grave act of indiscipline Shri Subhas Babu is declared disqualified as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for three years as from August 1939. The Working Committee trusts that Shri Subhas Babu will see the error of his ways and loyally submit to this disciplinary action.

The Working Committee has taken note of the indiscipline of many other Congressmen including responsible officials. But it has refrained from taking any action as the members acted under the inspiration of Shri Subhas Babu. The Working Committee, however, leaves it open to Provincial Organizations to take action if they think it necessary for the proper observance of discipline and especially if the offending members do not express regret for their indiscipline.

The Committee further empowers the President to take disciplinary action against such members who, instead of expressing regret by their speech or conduct for the indiscipline, persist in it.

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, pp. 212-3

[1] *Vide* Appendix VI.
[2] *Vide* Appendix VII.

103. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 11, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I was half inclined to talk to you in the presence of the Working Committee (for want of other time) about the Planning Committee.[1] Shankerlal came this morning after his chat with you bringing with him copy of a letter written by him to Kripalani[2] in the matter. I sympathized with him in his objection. I have never been able to understand or appreciate the labours of the Committee. I do not know that it is working within the four corners of the resolution creating the Committee. I do not know that the Working Committee is being kept informed of its doings. I have not understood the purpose of the numerous sub-committees. It has appeared to me that much money and labour are being wasted on an effort which will bring forth little or no fruit. These are my doubts. I seek light. I know your mind is in China.[3] If you think Shah[4] can express your mind, I shall try to learn from him. Or I shall wait till you return from your great mission. May God protect you and bring you safe to the motherland.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 378-9

[1] *Vide* also Vol. LXIX, p. 384.
[2] J. B. Kripalani, General Secretary, A. I. C. C.
[3] Jawaharlal Nehru was to go to China; he actually left on August 20.
[4] K. T. Shah

CWMG - IXX

104. LETTER TO GHULAM RASUL QURESHI

SEGAON,
August 11, 1939

CHI. QURESHI[1],

I have your letter. I take it that the instalment of Rs. 100 has started. I am glad you got out of *Sugandhi*.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

If Amtul Salaam is still there, tell her that I have not written to her thinking she must have left.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10773. Courtesy: Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

105. HUNGER-STRIKE

Hunger-strike has positively become a plague. On the slightest pretext some people want to resort to hunger-strikes. It is well, therefore, that the Working Committee[2] has condemned the practice in unequivocal terms, so far at least as hunger-strike for discharge from imprisonment is concerned. The Committee should have gone further and condemned also the practice of forcible feeding. I regard forcible feeding as an undue liberty with the human body which is too sacred to be trifled with, even though it belongs to a prisoner. No doubt the State has control over the bodies of its prisoners but never to the extent of killing their soul. That control has well-defined limits. If a prisoner decides to starve himself to death, he should, in my opinion, be allowed to do so. A hunger-strike loses its force and dignity, when it has any, if the striker is forcibly fed. It becomes a mockery if somehow or other sufficient nourishment is poured down the throat, whether through the mouth or the nose. Of course, the mind instinctively revolts against feeding through the nose. But I understand that after a few days' practice the process ceases to offend the subject himself. Where a prisoner offers violent resistance, the matter becomes

[1] Also spelt Koreishi
[2] At its meeting held from August 9 to 12

difficult. But cases of such resistance are rare. It is not possible to keep up effective resistance for any length of time. A determined resister will of course die at the very first attempt and thus frustrate it. But such resistance requires great daring and reckless defiance of death. In any case it is my firm conviction that the method of forcible feeding should be abandoned as a relic of barbarism. I know that some prisoners welcome forcible feeding for the empty glory of being regarded as hunger-strikers. Jailors have often told me that such prisoners would deplore stoppage of forcible feeding. I am told that under the existing law jail authorities are bound to resort to forcible feeding if reasoning fails. I would recommend amendment of such legislation if any.

It is also worthy of consideration whether a rule should not be passed by the Working Committee making a public and political hunger-strike without permission a breach of discipline. I do not like restraint on the liberty of the individual except for his own good and that of the society of which he is a member. Hunger-strike has, however, become such a nuisance that it will be as well for the Working Committee to adopt measures to check it before it assumes dangerous proportions. A Working Committee resolution in such matters means expression of considered public opinion and is likely to prove a deterrent against an abuse of the practice. It may never need to be enforced.

SEGAON, WARDHA, August 14, 1939

Harijan, 19-8-1939

106. CONFEDERATION OF SMALL STATES

May I take the liberty of writing to you with a view to draw your attention to the problem of Kathiawar States? A close study of the States comprising the Western India Agency will convince anyone that the real problem of Kathiawar is not that of responsible government in individual States. That, in fact, is a demand very much beyond the ken of economic possibility. None of these States, with the exception of five or six, can afford to be genuine, separate, self-governing units. Economic considerations apart, their geographical contiguity, and cultural and linguistic unity positively point towards the desirability of grouping them all administratively. A confederation of these States alone can bring their people on a par with the people of Bombay Province or, for that matter, any other province in British India.

As to the fear that the Princes might strongly dislike such a move, it might be said that one cannot hope to go through any scheme

of reform embodying real transference of power to the people without being confronted by the most dogged opposition from those quarters. And when at all events a fight (of course a non-violent one) has got to be waged against that opposition, it is only prudent and politic on our part to fight on an issue which should be our main and ultimate demand. Whatever our immediate and minimum demands, the final objective must not be lost sight of. And may I suggest in the case of Kathiawar, as also some three-fourths of the States in India, the final goal of all political reformers must be a confederation on the lines roughly foreshadowed in the appended printed articles?

I hope you will see that this idea, though by no means new or original, deserves to be popularized. For, collective agitation by a group or cluster of States in favour of confederation has certain obvious advantages which agitation for reform in a single State cannot have. How much I wish you had worked for the propagation of this idea while you were actively engaged in the Rajkot struggle. Even now one word of support from you—of course, only if you generally agree with this view—will place this idea on a sound footing.

This important letter[1] was received by me in Abbottabad. The articles[2] appended are cuttings from *The Tribune* of Lahore specially dealing with the problem. The articles contain an interesting analysis of the Kathiawar States and corroborative quotations from the Butler Committee's Report[3] and a recent pronouncement[4] by the Viceroy. For the moment I must content myself with heartily supporting the proposal. I do not share the fear of my correspondent about much opposition from the smaller States, if they are sympathetically approached. They will soon realize that their safety lies in some kind of confederation and sharing of power with the people. The chief thing is a dispassionate representation of the problem and creation of public opinion that cannot be answered or opposed.

SEGAON, WARDHA, August 14, 1939

Harijan, 19-8-1939

[1] From R. L. Handa, *vide* p. 83.

[2] For extracts, *vide* Appendix IV.

[3] According to *India's Struggle for Freedom*, Vol. I, p. 459, the committee, under the chairmanship of Harcourt Butler, "recommended the setting up of special tribunals for adjusting a number of important matters which affect the Indian States and British India alike".

[4] The reference, presumably, is to the Viceroy's address at the annual session of Chamber of Princes in New Delhi on March 13, 1939.

107. NOTES

The Arya Samaj

It was a happy ending[1] to the Arya Satyagraha. I have hitherto not written a word about this struggle. The matter seemed too delicate for public treatment by me. The country knows that I have a special way of dealing with things public or private. Some even call it quixotic. Thus my public silence over the Arya Satyagraha did not mean that I was not deeply interested in the struggle. I was keeping myself in touch[2] with both the Arya Samaj leaders and the Muslim friends who could have any thing to do with Hyderabad affairs. Of course I was acting in concert with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. My sympathies were with the Aryas so far as their demands were concerned. They seemed to me to be so simple and so elementary. But I was averse to their satyagraha from my own standpoint which I had explained to them. I was, however, nonplussed when they suggested that it was no worse if it was no better than the satyagraha I had led. They must not be expected, they added, to appreciate and follow my new method or requirements. I saw that I had no right to put any pressure upon them beyond that of reason. Then I was anxious not to embarrass H. E. H. the Nizam's Government as long as I could help it. It is, therefore, a matter of great joy to me personally that the Arya struggle has ended in a friendly manner. Both the Nizam Government and the Arya Samaj[3] deserve congratulations. Let me hope that the dignified statement issued by Shri Ghanshyamsingh Gupta will receive from the Aryas the response it deserves. There is no doubt that much bitterness has been engendered during the struggle. If the Aryas act in the spirit of Shri Gupta's appeal and the Nizam's Government in the spirit of their own communique[4], the bitterness will die out and

[1] On August 8

[2] *Vide* p. 49.

[3] "Sabha" in the source

[4] According to *The Indian Annual Register, 1939*, Vol. II, p. 14, the communique contained "clarification of certain points in the official communique of July 17, 1939, in which the Government's attitude regarding the religious liberties in the State was set out as well as of the points raised by the, *Government Gazette* Extraordinary on July 19, 1939, announcing the reforms."

there never will be any occasion for resumption of the struggle so far as simple religious and cultural freedom is concerned.

The Punjab Congress

Dr. Satyapal[1] has needlessly quoted me in order to go out of public life. If it is an inner urge, the decision is sound. If it is due to my innocent postcard[2] to Lala Dunichand, the doctor is hopelessly wrong. In the first place the postcard has to do with the whole Congress atmosphere in the Punjab which has resulted in a distrust not of this or that individual but of myself. A critic may call it cowardice if he likes. But whether it is cowardice or want of self-confidence, I am useless as a mediator so long as my malady persists. So, when Sardar Mangal Singh and other friends from Ludhiana came to Wardha armed with authority from Dr. Satyapal, I told them that I was useless, but that Rajendra Babu as the head of the Congress organization was the proper person to go to the Punjab. He has consented to go as soon as his health and other engagements permit. But I have suggested to these friends that there is no help equal to self-help. They must, by their own exertion, put their house in order. If Dr. Satyapal has not gone out in obedience to the inner urge, he will not be able to keep himself out for any length of time. His nature will revolt against the artificial self-suppression. I therefore suggest a better course. Let him cease to be a party man. Let him forget old quarrels and let him be intent on producing real solidarity in the Punjab. I cannot say how this can be done. I have not even the data for laying down a plan of action. He must devise it himself. All I can say is that if he really wills it, he can do the thing. Everybody knows that he has a following in the Punjab, that he is an indefatigable worker and has sacrifice to his credit. If, therefore, anybody can bring about peace among Congressmen in the Punjab, it is certainly Dr. Satyapal. But whether it is he or anybody else, that one will have to efface himself and put the people's cause, which is the Congress cause, before his own or his party's. Behind my diffidence must be read an intense wish that the Congressmen in the Punjab should unite without mental reservations and act as one man.

Indian Struggle in South Africa

Whether our countrymen in South Africa have to take up passive resistance or not, there is no doubt that they will not be able

[1] Member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly
[2] *Vide* p. 13.

to vindicate their position if they cannot close their ranks and act as one man and act unselfishly. Their corporate existence cannot be maintained with honour, if individuals in order to serve their selfish ends compromise the community's interest and honour. There is, at the time of writing these lines, a cleavage between the local Congress and the passive resisters. The resisters seem to have the bulk of the Indian population with them. But the name and prestige of the South African Congress is with the non-resisters. Now there is a prospect of a lawsuit over the possession of the Congress books, funds and offices. I would warn the resisters against falling into the legal trap. Let them follow my example. The equivalent to the Congress in my days was the British Indian Association. From the very commencement of passive resistance, I recognized that all Indians would not and could not join the struggle although all might be, as they actually were, in sympathy with it. Although it was open to me, being secretary, to utilize the name and prestige of the Association, I founded a separate organization[1] leaving the British Indian Association free to act as it might within constitutional limits. It was possible by this arrangement to protect the non-resisters from harm, retain their sympathy and save the resisters from the embarrassment that would undoubtedly be caused by non-resisters if they were members of the same body. Let the present passive resisters work along their own lines and rely upon getting more than prestige by their strength, sacrifice and capacity for suffering. A passive resister should have a generous heart and represent not only his own companions but even his opponents. Whatever rights he secures, he will secure for all. He is a friend of all and enemy of none. That is the first condition of successful passive or civil resistance.

KHADI AS FAMINE INSURANCE AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

There has been a full discussion among the khadi workers at the meeting of the A. I. S. A. held at Wardha on the 12th instant and thereafter. It has been claimed for khadi that it has at least three definite functions. It provides a supplementary occupation to the semi-starved and semi-employed millions of India on a scale unequalled by any other occupation. It provides, with the least possible loss, work in famine areas; and it is the best medium of instruction for the boys and girls of India in the primary stage.

But there is one definite condition for the success of khadi as famine insurance or medium of instruction in the primary stage.

[1] The Natal Indian Congress; *vide* Vol. I.

What is to be done with the khadi produced in famine areas and in the schools? If khadi cannot be sold, it is as useless as the stones broken in many parts of India during famine time. I have suggested often enough in these columns that all the khadi produced under the last two heads must be taken up by the State. This can be most easily done through the A. I. S. A., if the State guarantees the losses as it guarantees today railway dividends and many other things. Considering price, khadi is undoubtedly dearer than mill-cloth. Therefore it commands a market only among patriots and philanthropists. But those who have no spare cash will not be easily actuated by philanthropy or patriotism. They will go to the cheapest market. It is therefore the business of the State to shut out or tax heavily enough such goods as compete with those which, for the general good, should command a market. I think it can be taken as proved that khadi comes under such goods. The administration of eight provinces is virtually in Congress hands to an extent enough to protect khadi and the like. There is no reason why the other provinces should not follow the Congress provinces in matters like protection of khadi on which there is no difference of opinion. Hindu-Muslim unity may not come as early as many of us wish. But even as we breathe common air and drink the common water supplied by the rivers, wells or waterworks, surely we might agree on a common policy regarding other necessaries of life, without in any way interfering with our differences, if we must unfortunately hug these and use them for warring against one another. But whether the other provinces fall in line or not, it is necessary for the Congress provinces to confer with the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. and evolve a line of action whereby the difficulty I have pointed out can be solved without delay.

SEGAON, WARDHA, August 14, 1939

Harijan, 19-8-1939

108. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 14, 1939

BHAI JIVANJI,

What sort of an article do you expect from me? Hadn't you better leave me out? You should give me a reward even if I am able to do all the other work you have given.

I understand about the *Autobiography*[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAI JIVANJI
P. O. BOX 105, AHMEDABAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9947. Also C.W. 6921. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

109. LETTER TO RAVI SHANKAR SHUKLA[2]

August 14, 1939

BHAI SHUKLAJI,

To this I have replied thus:[3] "I have your ultimatum. Please know that your proper course is to ask the Prime Minister or the Parliamentary Board."

Do you have anything to say?

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

110. LETTER TO LAKSHMISWAR SINHA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 15, 1939

MY DEAR LAKSHMISWAR[4],

I hope you will not take the final step without consultation with Aryanayakam[5]. I would like to see you with him, if that is at all possible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 1473. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

[1] *Vide* p. 51.

[2] This was in reply to a letter from the addressee, Premier, Central Provinces, who had forwarded to Gandhiji a telegram from H. J. Khandekar, M. L. A., Secretary, Depressed Classes Satyagraha Committee, Nagpur. Khandekar had threatened to resume "Segaon Satyagraha" unless demand for a Harijan Minister in Central Provinces Ministry was conceded within a fortnight. *Vide* also Vol. LXVII, pp. 228 and 289-90.

[3] In the source the following two sentences are in English.

[4] Author of *Teachers' Handbook of Basic Education through Cardboard Modelling*. Sinha was working at the Basic Teachers' Training Centre, Wardha, and had requested Gandhiji to allow him to quit the Centre.

[5] E. W. Aryanayakam, Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh. At Gandhiji's instance, he had invited the addressee to draft a syllabus in respect of basic crafts to be included in the Zakir Husain Committee's report.

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111. LETTER TO DR. JIVRAJ N. MEHTA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 15, 1939

BHAI JIVRAJ,

I got your frank letter only today. I am immensely pleased. I had not expected anything different. I understand what you say. Maybe, I might not fully implement your advice. Would you object even if I had a massage in the nude at the hands of a man? Do you believe that it is injurious to health if people slept side by side even in the open air? Please examine this question independently of the supposed impropriety of a woman sleeping by the side of a man.[1]

I have developed the habit of reading, etc., in the latrine since many years ago. You can look upon it as a kind of addiction. It is a pitiable condition that my bowels move freely only if I have some worth-while reading material with me and that in its absence I am constipated. But I am only taking advantage of the fact that I have to rush along. It would be just as well if you could frighten me out of this bad habit.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati original: Jivraj Mehta Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

112. LETTER TO ARORA SINGH

August 16, 1939

I have come to know that what you fear about Hon'ble M. Y. Nurie is groundless.[2]

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* also letter to the addressee, pp. 81-2.
[2] The addressee had complained that Nurie, a Congress Minister, had amassed too much wealth.

113. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

August 16, 1939

CHI. LILA,

You will see that the doctor's letter is very clear. He is not blaming me in any way. You had, therefore, no cause to be unhappy. Isn't his report of his conversation with you correct? How I shall tackle the problem[1] is a different question. You need not worry about that.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9593. Also C.W. 6565. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

114. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

August 16, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Sit down for an hour and spin; join me on the walks. Then do whatever job falls to your lot. Anyone, including Tarabehn, may learn Hindi from you to their heart's content.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4326

115. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

WARDHAGANJ,
August 18, 1939

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
ANAND BHAVAN
ALLAHABAD

MAY YOUR CHINESE MISSION BE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS. MAY GOD BE WITH YOU AND BRING YOU SAFE HOME. REGRET SRI PRAKASA. HE SHOULD SUSPEND ACTION

[1] *Vide* p. 82.

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TILL AFTER YOUR RETURN.[1] PROPOSE ISSUING A STATEMENT[2] ON CRISIS AND WAR RESOLUTION UNLESS YOU WISH OTHERWISE. SEND YOUR CHINESE ADDRESS. LOVE.

BAPU

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

116. DRAFT TELEGRAM TO MULKRAJ[3]

August 18, 1939

TRANSFER FUND BANK OF NAGPUR WARDHA THROUGH IMPERIAL BANK WARDHA.

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

117. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 18, 1939

MY DEAR C. R.,

What a sad letter to Mahadev Desai! What does it matter, what Srinivasa Iyengar says, when you have a clear conscience?[4] It is one and the same thing whether you are in or out. You have to labour in either case.

I hope Laxmi[5] and the children are doing well.

Mahadev is in Simla for the Punjab prisoners.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 2075

[1] Sri Prakasa wanted to resign from the Congress. *Vide* also "Telegram to Sri Prakasa", p. 124.

[2] *Vide* "A Statement", 20-9-1939.

[3] Secretary, Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Fund Committee; *vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 110, 153 and 160.

[4] On August 7, Rajagopalachari introduced in the Madras Legislative Council "The Temple-entry Authorization and Indemnity Bill" as passed by the Assembly. T. C. Srinivasa Iyengar, who expressed the view that it should not be left to the trustee to gauge public opinion, suggested that a representative commission might be set up to ascertain public opinion by means other than the ballot box.

[5] Addressee's daughter

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118. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 18, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I will write more if I get time. Tell Chhaganlal[1] that I have not been able to write to him. I shall arrange to send somebody if the drought[2] continues. Whom should I send on the *Rentia Baras* Day? How about Mirabehn?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8560. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

119. MESSAGE TO DEPRESSED CLASSES CONFERENCE[3]

[On or before *August 19, 1939*][4]

I received the invitation to attend the Conference. I wish it all success.

The Hindu, 24-8-1939

120. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 19, 1939

DEAR DR. HARDIKAR,

You are having unnecessary trouble. We have landed on evil times. But, if we keep straight, the clouds will pass. I adhere to the statement signed by me. I am sorry for the distortions

[1] Chhaganlal Joshi

[2] In various parts of Kathiawar; *vide* also pp. 54-5.

[3&4] According to the source, the message was read out at the All-India Depressed Classes National League Conference, held in Delhi on August 19, with Karan Singh Kane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Education Minister, United Provinces, in the chair.

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in the extracts sent by you. My advice is not to retort. You should contradict falsehoods where necessary and insist upon truth even though for the time being you have to incur unpopularity.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: N. S. Hardikar Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

121. LETTER TO ISWAR SARAN

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 19, 1939

DEAR MUNSHIJI,

Your letter is very interesting. I am glad you are making rapid progress.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 10200. Courtesy: Municipal Museum, Allahabad

122. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 19, 1939

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

I have your letter. It will make me very happy indeed if Chandanbehn[1] is completely cured. If you have the courage to treat Vijaya's[2] father[3], go and visit him even without being sent for and examine him. Vijaya should be in Varad. There has been no letter from her for some time.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI VALLABHRAM VAIDYA
MANDVINI POLE, DEVNI SHERI
AHMEDABAD

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 2907. Courtesy: Vallabhram Vaidya

[1] Chandan Parekh who married Satish Kalelkar
[2] & [3] Vijayabehn Pancholi and Naranbhai Patel

123. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

August 19, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I have your letter. I think Vijaya is still in Varad. Again there has been no letter. I am forwarding the vaid's letter to Varad.[1]

She had not gone to Bombay at all. Naranbhai had gone to Bombay before she left.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10793

124. SPINNERS' WAGES

The following is the translation of the resolution adopted by the A. I. S. A. at its meeting on the 15th instant at Wardha:

> The A. I. S. A. has for the past four years recognized the duty of making a progressive rise in the wages payable to the spinners. In the performance of this duty, the Maharashtra Branch of the Sangh has paid the highest rate of all the branches. But the result of this experiment of the Branch has been that khadi has proved unable to bear the burden and the sales have considerably gone down. The rise in wages should not result in a diminution in the capacity of khadi to provide work for the unemployed. It seems that in view of the existing circumstances it is necessary to postpone the insistence on giving the spinners more than three annas for eight hours' spinning. There is much unemployment. There is a sufficient number of spinners eager to work for less than one anna for eight hours' spinning. Other people are ready to give them work at such low wages to the detriment of the principle laid down by the Sangh. Apart from the Sangh providing them also with work, there seems to be no other way of combating the evil. Thus there are two duties before the Sangh: one that of raising the spinners' wages to eight annas for an eight-hour day, and the other of finding work for the unemployed sisters. There comes an interim period before reaching the simultaneous performance of the two duties.
>
> Moreover there is a danger of famine overtaking some parts of the country. The spinning-wheel is being proved to be of the greatest

[1] *Vide* also the preceding item.

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help at such times. But the question arises whether it is necessary to make the scale of wages lower than even three annas. A third problem arises from the fact of the production of yarn in the schools conducted according to the Wardha scheme of education.

Taking all these things into consideration the Sangh has come to the following conclusion:

Generally the scale of three annas for eight hours' work of the fixed standard be not touched for the time being. But it should be open to any branch to rise higher than the scale, provided that it takes over the responsibility of sustaining its sales under the higher scale. In the event of the necessity being felt of lowering the wages of artisans in the famine areas, the decrease may be made with the previous permission of the Secretary. The Sangh should take over from the respective Governments the sales of khadi prepared in famine areas and in schools conducted under the Wardha scheme of education, provided that these Governments bear the losses sustained in the disposal of such khadi.

This is an important resolution. It marks a slowing down of the speed with which I was goading the Sangh to rise to eight annas wages for an eight-hour day for the spinners. I knew that the goal was not to be reached in one jump. I had, however, nursed the hope that every few months would show a progressive increase in the wages. But reports from the different branches and the partial failure of the experiment carried on under my nose by Shri Jajuji[1] under the guidance of Shri Vinoba with high hopes of going forward with the rise, have opened my eyes to the stern and grim reality that this country is so terribly poor that it cannot afford to pay a wage of eight annas per day of eight hours to millions of women. Generally nowhere in rural areas do village labourers or artisans earn eight annas for eight hours' work. Spinners could not earn eight annas without all the other classes doing likewise. And the purchasing classes simply have not the money to pay an all-round wage of eight annas per day unless conditions are radically altered. The crushing and unproductive military burden drains the country dry. Add to this the inordinately high salaries and correspondingly high pensions paid, and spent abroad. There are other internal causes also for this gnawing poverty. But I must not stray from the purpose of this article.

Be the cause or causes what they may, the painful fact has been brought home by khadi workers that in spite of all the will in the world the middle-class khadi buyer simply has not the

[1] Shri Krishnadas Jaju

money to buy khadi at the increased price necessitated by the rise in wages beyond the point of three annas. They report that for the time being at any rate that is the saturation point. The resolution is a recognition of this painful fact.

But even the scale of three annas cannot be sustained if the Provincial Governments do not come to the rescue. They can do so both through legislative and administrative effort. This they will only do if they will use the A. I. S. A., the A. I. V. I. A. and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh as their own expert, voluntary and honorary agencies. I present them with the prospect of putting several lakhs of rupees into the pockets of the famishing villagers by providing them with employment during leisure hours. But no progress can be made if the manufactures of the villagers do not become current coin.

SEGAON, August 20, 1939

Harijan, 26-8-1939

125. NOTES

AMONG 'CRIMINAL TRIBES'

Shri H. S. Kaujalgi of the Karnataka Branch of the A. I.S.A sends me beautiful slivers and equally good yarn prepared and spun by the women in the 'criminal tribes' settlement near Bijapur and writes:

> The women are not criminals themselves, but they are the immediate dependants of the habitual criminals that are placed under certain restrictions in the settlement. The manager of the settlement asked the A. I. S. A. Karnataka Branch to try to introduce spinning in the settlement. As spinning was unknown to these women, they had no prejudices for any particular kind of spinning-wheels or carding process. So we thought it in the best interest of the spinners to introduce Andhra methods of spinning and carding. We began on the 19th of July. Five women are attending the class. They belong to the Bhat, Corvi and Waders communities. They are paid one anna and six pies per day as stipend during the course of spinning. They can now spin 500 yards in three hours. The cotton used is Jayawant and the yarn spun is between 30 and 40 counts. We are continuing the class till the end of August, after which time we shall be providing them with cotton and purchasing yarn from them. If the experiment succeeds, we are introducing spinning in other criminal settlements also. Shri Dhruva, the Backward Class Officer, Poona, is enthusiastic about it.

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Towards the end of August we are holding a competition in spinning. We are giving a sari as a present to all those who spin more than three hundred yards of 30 counts yarn in one hour. As the women are quick and intelligent it is possible that every one of the five spinners will get a sari.

This is a good beginning. If the Provincial Governments will take the fullest advantage of the three expert constructive bodies, viz., A. I. S.A., A. I. V. I. A. and Hindustani Talimi Sangh, they will find the maximum amount of productive work with the minimum expenditure of money and energy. But of course they have to face the problem of the sale of goods manufactured through the activities of these three bodies. Such a question arises only in this unfortunate land. In other countries the State sees to it that the people use the goods that are manufactured by or under State supervision. The Provincial Governments have the opportunity, though to a limited extent, of putting things right.

SEGAON, August 20, 1939

Harijan, 26-8-1939

126. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

WARDHA,
August 20, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

It is very unkind of you not to write to me these days. I hope you received the letter sent yesterday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7112. Also C.W. 4604. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

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127. WANTED PURCHASERS

The following is taken from a letter from the Gandhi Ashram, Meerut:

> The A. I. S. A. is giving work today to more than three lakhs of people. Its operations extend to 13,000 villages. 2,571 workers are engaged in this great nation-building activity. The quota of the United Provinces is no mean one. We have more than 40,000 spinners on our registers. The number of other artisans, weavers, washermen, carders, etc., is 4,780. Nearly 3,043 villages are covered by our activities, and 600 workers carry the message of khadi to different parts of the province. It brings all the creative forces of the nation into play. We learn to combine, plan, co-ordinate and build. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been reported to have said in the Working Committee that the spinning-wheel cannot fulfil all our needs of cloth today. I feel this statement underrates the possibility of the spinning-wheel. I can say from our experience that we have not been able to touch even the fringe of the problem. Production can be multiplied a thousand times within a very short period provided we have a ready market for the khadi we manufacture.

I have omitted the portion containing an appeal for sales. I hope that their effort will meet with the success it deserves. But what I wish to consider here is the reason for the sales not keeping pace with the production. Propaganda undoubtedly has its place. But more than propaganda is wanted scientific research. There is no doubt that our people use on an average 15 yards of cloth per head per year. There is no doubt that this cloth costs the country a figure approaching 100 crores of rupees, meaning less than three rupees per head, counting India's population at 35 crores. It is easy enough to say that the sales can be effected if the State protects khadi. That khadi deserves protection is in my opinion a self-proved proposition.[1] But have the khadi workers who have the qualifications found out whether we have done all we could to command sales even without protection? There are two obstacles. Mill-made cloth is said to be much cheaper than khadi, and has a variety of colour, design and finish which khadi does not possess. The second has been largely

[1] *Vide* also "Notes", sub-title, "Khadi as Famine Insurance and Medium of Instruction", pp. 92-3.

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overcome, but more is perhaps required to be done. There must be a limit beyond which probably khadi cannot go. If there is, we must frankly confess it. But my fear is that sufficient research has not been made as to the prices. Professor Kumarappa has put forth a startling claim for the spinning-wheel. He has produced figures in support of it.[1] But the man in the street asks the question: 'Then why is khadi dearer than mill-cloth?' This question has to be satisfactorily answered. The obvious answers I would not consider to be satisfactory. The answers themselves have to be thoroughly examined and the way to overcome the difficulties discovered and pursued till khadi comes to occupy its natural supremacy.

It is a shame that we who grow more cotton than we need should have to send it abroad for being turned into cloth for us. It is equally a shame for us that we who have in our villages unlimited unused labour, and can easily supply ourselves with village instruments of manufacture, should send our cotton to the mills of our cities for it to be manufactured into cloth for our use. We know the history of the shame. But we have not yet discovered the sure way to deal with the double shame beyond a patriotic appeal to the public. The latter have returned an encouraging response. But the recent resolution seems to show that we have reached the limit of the patronage. We may not be satisfied until khadi becomes an article of universal wear. It may be that in the prosecution of our search we may find, as some suggest we shall, that khadi can never become an economic proposition. We should then have no hesitation in making the admission, however it may hurt our pride and demolish the propositions we have hitherto advanced with so much confidence. But the admission cannot be made till we have made every search that is possible for a human being to make so as to yield an unequivocal answer to the questions propounded by me.

SEGAON, August 21, 1939

Harijan, 26-8-1939

[1] *Vide* p. 74.

WHY ONLY PROHIBITION?

A correspondent thus twits me:

> It was all very well for you to have insisted on prohibition. Do you suppose that the '*satta*' in the share market, the '*ank farak*', the dens of gambling, the races and the cinemas do less damage to the morals and the pockets of the people than the drink evil? I hear you have never gone to the cinema. Do go, if only once, and you will see things on the stage and among the spectators that will set you athinking. I assure you that the institutions I have mentioned demand your attention as much as the drink monster.

This is the substance of a fairly long indictment in Gujarati. There are other things packed into the letter. But I have given in my own words the relevant portions.

I have no difficulty in agreeing with the correspondent that the evils named by him are serious and should be dealt with. But who will bell the cat? If I could have, I should have dealt with the lady long ago. I have my limitations. I have only recently shown[1] that I am not so powerful as some people imagine. The drink evil has been recognized as such by the people of this land. But the other evils are more or less fashionable. If I led an agitation against the share gambling, I should be in danger of losing some of my willing and regular donors. If I incited people against the races and the infernal gamble that goes on there, all the high personages from the Viceroy downward would be up in arms against me. And those who patronize the race specials? If I led a raging campaign against the cinemas, I should lose caste among educationists and reformers. They have often sought to convert me by pleading that cinemas are a fine medium of education and that churches and reformers in the West give them their patronage in an ever-increasing measure. Therefore if I treated these evils as I have treated the drink evil and if I began to organize picketing in respect of them, I should lose caste, lose my mahatmaship, and even lose my head which of course has very little value at this

[1] *Vide* pp. 65-7.

time of my life. But as I do not wish to suffer the triple loss, I must allow my correspondent and others like him to think that I am shirking an obvious duty. I know the evils. I hope that greater reformers than I will deal with them. For me one step is enough.

A Fraud on Khadi

The Secretary, A. I.S.A., Punjab Branch, writes:

> I am sending per separate parcel an advertisement of Butala khadi. They were our certified centre till the end of 1937. Some suspicion then arose regarding the purity of yarn used by them. The matter was investigated and the Ahmedabad Office decided that they must keep an A. I. S. A. inspector for their centre to watch that no mill-yarn was used. They refused to abide by that decision, on which their certificate was cancelled. They are now exploiting our certificate that was given to them while they were working as a certified centre. They do not say that their certificate has been cancelled since, but quote the old certificate giving a false impression to the public that they have still got the patronage of Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Jamnalal Bajaj and other leaders of esteem. I feel something might be done to remove this impression.

I have omitted the advertisement. The action complained of in the letter is obviously a fraud on khadi. It is probably an actionable wrong. Though the A. I. S. A. has followed the policy of relying upon public opinion to protect khadi against fraud, the wrong-doers should know that the A. I.S. A. has taken no vow not to seek legal protection if it became necessary. I hope that the party making use of a cancelled certificate will wisely give up the practice, return the certificate to the Association, and refrain from dealing in khadi in contravention of the rules of the A.I.S.A. The Secretary of the Branch should warn the wrong-doer against the wrongful use of the cancelled certificate and report the result to the Central Office.

Segaon, August 21, 1939

Harijan, 26-8-1939

129. LETTER TO M. MUJEEB

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 21, 1939

MY DEAR MUJEEB,

Have you read the pamphlet issued by the Jamiat-ul-Ulema? They sent a copy to the Working Committee. Rajen Babu read extracts from it. One of them attacked the Wardha Scheme by saying that it was wrong to say that non-violence was an integral part of Islam and that Islam taught equal respect for the known religions—it taught toleration. Another suggested that Hindustani was merely another word for Urdu.

If you have not seen the pamphlet please procure it and if you have it, please send me your reaction to these extracts which I have quoted in my own words. I have not the original before me.

What about your finances? How are you otherwise doing? Is there any effect being produced on the attendance at the Jamia? How is Zakir[1] progressing?

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 1465

130. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 21, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Kaka's letter is enclosed. Bear your burden well. Personally I am of the opinion that he should stop travelling. I can stop him only by ordering him, but you can reason and plead with him. What he writes is perfectly true. The only amendment needed is that he has always been like a child and has not become childish through senility. You should write to Vijaya as you have been doing. She had suggested that you should write the full name of Naranbhai. There has been no letter from her. This suggests that she is in a fix. But she will

[1] Zakir Husain

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be able to manage. I am sure I shall get a letter from her in a day or two.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10794

131. LETTER TO SANYUKTA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 21, 1939

CHI. SANYUKTA,

Why should I write to you? Are you not included in Jaisukhlal? Very well then; I won't include Jaisukhlal in you. You will certainly benefit from all the service you are rendering. Kasumba is getting a new lease of life. Let us see what other exploits you claim now.

Jaisukhlal should try to do only what he can there and rest content.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

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

132. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 21, 1939

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

Now you will have no occasion to complain about the absence of letters from me. But that will be because of the struggle. Remember that both of you have to sacrifice your all there. Once the struggle starts it won't end soon. What will you do about the children? You must have thought about every contingency. If you cannot keep them there, then Sushila will perhaps have to keep out of the struggle and bring over the children here. Or, if she has the ability, she may single-handed run *Indian Opinion*. Thus think out your plans beforehand.

Here everything is all right. And, besides, what time can you get now to wonder about what is happening here?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4902

[1] *Vide* also pp. 49-50.

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133. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SEGAON,
August 21, 1939

CHI. JAMNALAL,

What is to be done about what you say regarding the Punjab National Bank? I have already sent over the information regarding Nagpur [Bank][1].

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

134. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

August 21, 1939

CHI. KISHORELAL,

Do you know anything about this?[2] What is this talk about printing the Vedas? And what contributions is he[3] talking about?

I hope you got my note of yesterday.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Please credit the enclosed cheque to my account. As for particulars, you can mention that it is from Magan Jerajani towards famine [relief] or some such cause.

BAPU

SHRI KISHORELALBHAI

From the Gujarati original: Gandhi Nidhi File. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

[1] From *Bapu Smaran*; *vide* also "Draft Telegram to Mulkraj", p. 97.

[2&3] The reference is to a quarterly work report, dated August 20, 1939, from Tummala Basavayya, a member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, stating, *inter alia*, that he had spent eight days outside Vinayashram (where he lived) in order to collect funds for the publication of the Vedas. The letter is written at the back of the report.

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135. LETTER TO POPATLAL CHUDGAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 22, 1939

CHI. CHUDGAR[1],

Sardar is in sole charge of everything. I will approve of whatever he decides, if at all my approval is necessary.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI POPATLAL CHUDGAR
BARRISTER
RAJKOT CITY
KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9831. Courtesy: Popatlal Chudgar

136. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

August 22, 1939

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I am writing to Lakshmidas. . . .[2] Do not enter [anything] concerning Jamnalal in the account books. Leave it for the present.

As I have not been able to digest what you say about forgiveness, try to convince me. If not now, whenever you have the time. I shall understand even if you write a few words.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Gandhi Nidhi File. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

[1] Barrister; legal adviser of the Rao Rana of Sikar
[2] Illegible in the source

137. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SEGAON,
August 23, 1939

I continue to receive letters, mostly abusive, about what may be called the Subhas Babu resolution[2] of the Working Committee. I also saw a letter addressed to Rajendra Babu, which can hardly be surpassed in the use of filthy language. I have seen some criticisms about the war resolution[3].

I owe it to the public to make my position clear about both these resolutions. I must confess that the Subhas Babu resolution was drafted by me. I can say that the members of the Working Committee would have shirked the duty of taking action if they could have. They knew that there would be a storm of opposition against their action. It was easier for them to have a colourless resolution than to have one which was no respecter of persons. Not to take some action would have amounted to abdication of their primary function of preserving discipline among Congressmen. Subhas Babu had invited action. He had gallantly suggested that if any action was to be taken it should be taken against him as the prime mover. In my opinion the action taken by the Working Committee was the mildest possible. There was no desire to be vindictive. Surely the word vindictiveness loses all force and meaning when the position of Subhas Babu is considered. He knew that he could not be hurt by the Working Committee. His popularity had put him above being affected by any action that the Working Committee might take. He had pitted himself against the Working Committee, if not the Congress organization. The members of the Working Committee, therefore, had to perform their duty and leave the Congressmen and the public to judge between themselves and Subhas Babu. It has been suggested that Subhas Babu has done what I would have done under similar circumstances. I cannot recall a single instance in my life of having done what Subhas Babu has done, i.e., defied an

[1] This appeared under the title "The Two Resolutions". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 23-8-1939, and *The Hindustan Times*, 24-8-1939.

[2] *Vide* pp. 84-5.

[3] *Vide* Appendix VIII.

organization to which I owed allegiance. I could understand rebellion after secession from such an organization. That was the meaning and secret of the non-violent non-co-operation of 1920.

But I am not penning these lines so much to justify the action of the Working Committee as to appeal to Subhas Babu and his supporters to take the decision of the Working Committee in the right spirit and submit to it while it lasts. He has every right to appeal to the A. I. C. C. against the decision. If he fails there, he can take the matter before the annual session of the Congress. All this can be done without bitterness and without imputing motives of the worst type to the members of the Working Committee. Why not be satisfied with the belief that the members have committed an error of judgment? I fancy that if a majority of the A. I. C. C. members signify in writing their disapproval of the action of the Working Committee, the latter will gladly resign. By imputing motives whenever there are differences of opinion, Congressmen pull down the structure that has been built up by the patient labour of half a century. Indeed, even if a bad motive is suspected, it is better to refrain from imputing it, unless it can be proved beyond doubt. It is necessary for the sake of healthy public education that leaders of public opinion should judge events and decisions on their merits.

On the war resolution I had a conclusive defeat. I was invited to draft a resolution, and so was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was proud of my draft, but my pride went before destruction. I saw that I could not carry my resolution unless I argued and pressed for it. But I had no such desire. We then listened to Jawaharlal's. And I at once admitted that it represented more truly than mine the country's opinion and even the Working Committee's as a whole. Mine was based upon out-and-out non-violence. If the Congress heartily believed in non-violence in its fullness even as a policy, this was its testing time. But Congressmen, barring individual exceptions, do not believe in such non-violence. Those who do, believe that it is the right thing only for a fight against the Government for wresting power. But the Congress has no non-violent message for the world. I would fain believe that the Congress had such a message. The conclusion to both the resolutions need not have been radically different. But the motive power being different the same conclusion would bear a different meaning in a different setting. In the face of the violence going on in India itself and in the face of the fact that Congress Governments have been

obliged to fall back upon military and police assistance, a declaration to the world of non-violence would have seemed a mockery. It would have carried no weight in India or with the world. Yet, to be true to myself, I could not draft any other resolution than I did.

The fate, to which I was party, of my resolution proved the wisdom of my withdrawal of official connection with the Congress. I attend the Working Committee meetings not to identify myself with its resolutions or even its general policy. I attend in the pursuit of my mission of non-violence. So long as they want my attendance I go there to emphasize non-violence in their acts and through them in those of Congressmen. We pursue the same goal. They all of them would go the whole length with me if they could, but they want to be true to themselves and to the country which they represent for the time being, even as I want to be true to myself. I know that the progress of non-violence is seemingly a terribly slow process[1]. But experience has taught me that it is the surest way to the common goal. There is deliverance neither for India nor for the world through clash of arms. Violence, even for vindication of justice, is almost played out. With that belief I am content to plough a lonely furrow, if it is to be my lot that I have no co-sharer in the out-and-out belief in non-violence.

Harijan, 26-8-1939

138. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 24, 1939

CHI. NARAHARI,

I understand that Amtul Salaam's Hanif[2] is under your charge and that he is learning carding. If the man is promising, then it is our duty to turn him into a fine craftsman. It will be a fine thing if he becomes a good craftsman and an expert. I should like him to be trained to learn all processes up to weaving. We have with us very few who are experts in all the processes. A lot of work can be done if we can give such training to one or two Muslims. Just as in Godhra I wanted

[1] The source, however, has "progress".
[2] A khadi worker of the Punjab

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that a cobbler or carpenter should take the chair, similarly I do believe that Hindu-Muslim unity can be achieved through ordinary Muslims. I would, therefore, be happy if persons like Hanif and Akbar also chance to come our way. However, you should be guided by your own experience and ability.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9115

139. LETTER TO AZAM ABED

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 24, 1939

BHAI AZAM ABED,

I have your letter. I got the cuttings, including the one about the late Nawab Khan. I don't think anything can be done from here about Nawab Khan. I was sorry to read the news about him.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 815

140. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI N. PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 24, 1939

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

I see that your *yajna* is becoming a very great one. We will be able to solve the problem of disposing of khadi only if we go deep into the matter and study it carefully. This will require collection of figures.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9010

141. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

[Before *August 25, 1939*][1]

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I have your letter. You may come over whenever you can. There has again been no letter from Vijaya but I think she is in Varad. I enclose a postcard for her. There is some blank space in it. Utilize that for writing. I have forgotten the name of Naran Patel's father. Send it. If the father's name is not written, the letter miscarries.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Post the accompanying postcard after entering the complete address on it.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10792

142. PLEA FOR VOLUNTARY FEDERATION

Imposed federation is likely to divide India more than it is today. It would be a great step if the British Government were to declare that they would not impose their federal structure on India. The Viceroy seems to be acting in that fashion if he is not saying so. If my surmise is correct, I suggest that a clear declaration will add grace to his action and will probably pave the way for real federation and therefore real unity. That federation can naturally never be of the Government of India Act brand. Whatever it is, it must be a product of the free choice of all India.

But before that political and legalized federation of free choice comes, there should be voluntary federation of parts, to begin with, if not of the whole. This reflection arises from famine conditions today in parts of lesser Gujarat and the whole of Kathiawar. I have received angry protests from correspondents

[1] From the reference to absence of any "letter from Vijaya", and the enclosed "postcard for her" which had crossed her letter to Gandhiji; *vide* "Letter to Vijayabehn M. Pancholi", p. 120.

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drawing my attention to what they have termed the heartless policy of the Bombay Government in prohibiting the movement of fodder and grain. I could not believe my correspondents. I knew that the Sardar was moving heaven and earth to cope with the distress both in Gujarat and Kathiawar. But in order to make assurance doubly sure, I wired to the Prime Minister. Immediately on the same day came the following answer:

> Removal of fodder from six districts not permitted without the permission of Collector as the necessities of our Province must be first considered. Excess will be permitted to be removed.

The wire was followed by a letter enclosing a copy of the Bill about to be introduced in the Bombay Assembly. It simply controls the movement and prices of grain and fodder during times of famine or scarcity. This is no policy of prohibition but it is one of control over and regulation of the movement of fodder and grain so as to prevent hoarding in speculators' hands or disposal to the extent of starving the places where it is grown and stored. The Premier's letter contemplates collection of grain and fodder from available sources outside the Province and its distribution in famine areas including Kathiawar. The Bombay measure I consider not only to be necessary but conducive to the interest as well of the whole of the States part of the Province as of the British part. I call it an act of voluntary federation. The reader must not quarrel with the stretch of the meaning of the word.

This little act introduces the reader to what can become a big act of voluntary federation. I reproduced[1] the other day a letter from a correspondent suggesting a federation of the Kathiawar States in many matters of common interest. The correspondent's ultimate aim was political federation. What I contemplate has nothing to do with politics. My present and ultimate aim here is purely humanitarian.

If the Kathiawar States would voluntarily federate, say, for water, forests and roads, purely for saving life, there would be no danger of a water famine such as threatens that cluster of States. There are States rich enough who can provide water for the whole of Kathiawar. I know it cannot be done in a day. But the dog-in-the-manger policy followed in Kathiawar has made impossible any scheme of big waterworks. Kathiawar has fairly good rivers and hills. There is no limit

[1] *Vide* pp. 88-9.

to the possibility of artesian wells. If only all the States will combine and the rich ones will use their riches for the common good, they will be saved the awful prospect of people and cattle having to die of thirst. I have faith that it is possible for Kathiawar to ensure a proper supply of water even in dry years. But no common waterworks will answer the purpose for all time unless there is a long-view scheme of afforestation. There are practically no forests in Kathiawar. The Princes and the people have to combine to plant trees on an extensive scale. This cannot be done unless the States and the people regard the whole of Kathiawar as their joint and common land and have wisdom enough to desire to live on their land without the perpetual dread of having to die of thirst when the god of rain stops supplies.

SEGAON, August 25, 1939

Harijan, 2-9-1939

143. MOTOR v. *CART*

Gram Udyog Patrika for August examines the respective merits of motor-vans and carts for village propaganda. Those who will read the whole argument should send for the *Patrika*. I give below the most important part of the argument.[1]

> We have been asked whether District Boards and such other local bodies, who wish to set apart a certain amount of money for village work, will do well to invest in motor-vans for propaganda work of various kinds in villages. . . . The question is whether speeding up matters by the use of motor-vans which can visit more than one village in a night will suit the purpose.
>
> In all our expenditure, especially when that expenditure is undertaken expressly for the benefit of the village people, it is necessary to see that the money spent goes back to the villager. District and local Boards obtain their money from the people, and their purchases must be such as will help to circulate money among the people. . . .
>
> What the villager needs above all is profitable employment. We steadily deprive him of employment by buying imported articles, and by way of compensation give him lectures, magic-lantern shows and tinned music all at his expense, and pat ourselves on the back that we are working for his welfare. Can anything be more absurd?

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

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> Compare with this what happens if in the place of the motor-van the much despised bullock-cart were used. . . . It can reach the most remote villages which a motor-lorry cannot do. It costs only a fraction of the money required for a van, so that many bullock-carts can be bought, if necessary, to serve groups of villages in the district. The money spent on them goes to the village carpenter, blacksmith and cart-driver. Not a pie of it need go out of the district. . . .
>
> Rural work and motor-vans appear, therefore, to go ill together. What is required is steady, constructive effort, not lightning speed and empty show. We would commend to local Boards and public institutions genuinely interested in village welfare to start by using only village-made goods, to study the conditions which are steadily producing poverty in the villages, and concentrate on removing them one by one. When every side of village life needs intensive, well-considered effort, it seems a waste of public money to throw it away on methods which attempt to bring about village uplift overnight.

It is to be hoped that those who interest themselves in village welfare will take to heart the obvious argument advanced in favour of the cart. It will be cruel to destroy the village economy through the very agency designed for village welfare.

SEGAON, August 25, 1939

Harijan, 16-9-1939

144. LETTER TO SHIVJI DEVSHANKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 25, 1939

BHAI SHIVJI,

I got your letter. Since people attach excessive importance to my words, I write only what is absolutely necessary. Despite that if once in a while a mistake remains, should not people overlook it?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

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145. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 25, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

You must have received the letter I wrote to you before I got yours. I am here for the present. If, therefore, you can free yourself from there, come over immediately. I hope you are keeping good health. Naranbhai must be improving.

Here owing to the rains everything is fine. The fear of drought has disappeared. I hope everything is all right there too.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI VIJAYABEHN
C/O NARANBHAI VALLABHBHAI PATEL
VARAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7113. Also C.W. 4605. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

146. MACHINE OIL AND "GHANI" OIL

The village *ghani*, the village *chakki*, the village loom and charkha, and the village sugar-cane-crusher were once inseparable parts of the village. The A. I.S.A. and the A. I.V.I.A. are trying to revive some of them. We know fairly well how the loom and the charkha can be revived. Khadi has become a science to be mastered in all its aspects. Maganlal Gandhi laid the foundation of that science. The village *chakki* and the village sugar-cane-crusher have yet to discover their science men. But the *ghani* has. Shri Jhaverbhai Patel of Maganwadi is studying the *ghani* in all its aspects with the zeal and precision of a scientist. He has made improvements which he claims have lessened the labour of both men and animals who work at the *ghani* and have at the same time increased the output of oil. He has studied the oil market and the movement of seeds. The result is that he is today able to sell his oil at almost the bazaar rates and therefore commands a ready market. His oil is superior to the machine product

which is, as a rule, adulterated and never fresh. But Shri Jhaverbhai is not satisfied merely because he competes successfully with the local market in Wardha. He has found out why the machine oil is at all cheaper than the *ghani* oil. He gives three reasons, two of which are unavoidable. They are capital and the ability of the machine to extract the last drop of oil and that too in a shorter time than the *ghani*. These advantages are neutralized by the commission the owner of the oil mill has to pay to the middleman. But Shri Jhaverbhai cannot cope with the third reason, adulteration, unless he also takes to it. This naturally he will not do. He therefore suggests that adulteration should be dealt with by law. This can be done by enforcing the Anti-adulteration Act if there is one or by enacting it and by licensing oil mills.

Shri Jhaverbhai has also examined the cause of the decline of the village *ghani*. The most potent cause is the inability of the oilman to command a regular supply of seeds. The villages are practically denuded of seeds after the season. The oilman has no money to store the seeds, much less to buy them in the cities. Therefore he has disappeared or is fast disappearing. Lakhs of *ghanis* are today lying idle causing a tremendous waste of the country's resources. Surely it is the function of the State to resuscitate the existing *ghanis* by conserving seeds in the places of their origin and making them available to the village oilman at reasonable rates. The Government loses nothing by giving this aid. It can be given, so Shri Jhaverbhai contends, through co-operative societies or panchayats. If this is done, Shri Jhaverbhai is of opinion, based on research, that *ghani* oil can compete with the machine product and the villager can be spared the infliction of the adulterated oil he gets today. It should be borne in mind that the only fat the villager gets, when he gets any, is what the oils can give him. To ghee he is generally a stranger.

SEGAON, August 26, 1939

Harijan, 2-9-1939

147. A MAHARAJA'S THREAT

I received some weeks ago an important letter from Patiala. It contained such grave statements attributed to the Maharaja Saheb of Patiala that I referred them to him for confirmation or otherwise. It is now more than three weeks since I wrote to him. But I have no reply.[1] I therefore presume that the statements reported by my correspondent are substantially true. Here is the main part of the letter:

> The Patiala State Praja Mandal launched satyagraha against the *Hidayat* of 1988[2], a lawless law curtailing the civil liberties of the people. On your advice the satyagraha was suspended unconditionally. The Publicity Officer, Patiala, on behalf of H. H.'s Government, stated in a Press communique dated 15 th April that the Government would repeal or withdraw the aforesaid *Hidayat* within three to four weeks, and further stated that the Government had constituted a Committee to go into its provisions and submit an early report. But the announcement has remained up till now a dead letter. And instead, H. H. has by *Ijlas khas* orders dated 25th May ordered the strict enforcement of the *Hidayat* for a period of another six months. In view of this, no propaganda of any kind can be carried on by the Praja Mandal workers, the provisions of the *Hidayat* being very wide and sweeping. The workers arrested in connection with this agitation are still in jail and others are being tried. Apart from this there is at present another movement going on within the State, i. e., between landlords and tenants.
>
> Some of the Praja Mandal workers were allowed an interview with H. H. on the 18th instant. During the interview H. H. addressed them as follows:
>
> "My ancestors have won the State by the sword and I mean to keep it by the sword. I do not recognize any organization to represent my people or to speak on their behalf. I am their sole and only representative. No such organization such as Praja Mandal can be allowed to exist within the State. If you want to do Congress work, get out of the State. The Congress can terrify the British Government, but if it ever tries to interfere in my State it will find me a terrible resister. I cannot

[1] For the Maharaja's reply, which was received subsequently and which appeared along with this, *vide* Appendix IX. Also for Gandhiji's note appended to these, *vide* "Remarks on 'A Maharaja's Threat' ", 12-9-1939.

[2] Of Vikram calendar, corresponding to 1932 A. D.

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tolerate any flag other than my own to be flown within my boundaries. You stop your Praja Mandal activities, otherwise I shall resort to such repression that your generations to come will not forget it. When I see some of my dear subjects drifting away into another fold, it touches the very core of my heart. I advise you to get out of the Mandal and stop all kind of agitation; or else remember I am a military man; my talk is blunt and my bullet straight."

It may be that my letter never reached the Maharaja Saheb, and that if it had, he would have disputed the correctness of my correspondent's letter. If any repudiation is received by me, I shall gladly publish it. But I must say that my correspondent is a responsible person.

Assuming then that the Maharaja did make the remarks quoted, it is a serious thing for any Prince, no matter how powerful he is, to use the threats the Maharaja is reported to have done. With due respect to him, I suggest that there is too much awakening among the people throughout India to be suppressed by threats and even corresponding action. The days of unadulterated autocracy are gone for ever. It is possible perhaps by intense frightfulness to suppress the rising spirit of the people for some time. But I am quite sure that it cannot be suppressed for all time.

I have no desire to eliminate the Princes. Friends have complained to me that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has, however, made such a statement although the Congress has enunciated no such policy. I have not had the opportunity of asking him about the alleged remark. But assuming that he did make the statement, it can only mean that some Princes are so acting as to bring about their own elimination. It is wrong to judge him by newspaper reports. His considered opinion is to be gathered from his statement on behalf of the Standing Committee of the All-India States People's Conference. Therein he has even warned people against hasty action. He is much too loyal a Congressman to contemplate any action in advance of known Congress policy. Therefore the fear and hatred of the Congress on the part of some Princes are misplaced and are calculated to injure rather than help them. The Congress is not seeking to interfere directly in the affairs of any State. But the Congress does guide the States people. They are part of the Congress organization. They derive strength and inspiration from their connection with the Congress. I do not know how this organic relationship can be avoided. To wish its termination is like an attempt to make children disown their parents. For better or for worse it is well to recognize the fact that just as the vast mass of people of British

India look up more to the Congress than to the Government for the removal of their woes, even so do the people of the States look to the Congress for their deliverance. It is under the Congress advice and inspiration that the people of the States say that they want to grow to their full height under the aegis of their respective Princes. I hope, therefore, that the Maharaja Saheb of Patiala and those Princes who hold the opinion attributed to him will revise their views and welcome the movement of their people for liberty to grow to their full height and not regard the reformers in their States as their enemies. It will be well if they will seek Congress aid in the settlement of their people's demands. But they need not do so, if they distrust Congress friendship. It is enough if they will placate the advanced section of their people by granting substantial reforms.

What is worse in my opinion, however, than the alleged threat of the Maharaja is the breach of the promise referred to in my correspondent's letter. There is no doubt so far as I can see that the promise of withdrawal of the *Hidayat* of 1988 was made; there is equally no doubt that the promise has been broken. It is a dangerous thing even for a rich and powerful Prince to break his plighted word. Breach of a promise is no less an act of insolvency than a refusal to pay one's debt. I plead with the Maharaja Saheb to redeem the promise and hope that his counsellors will advise him to do so.

SEGAON, August 26, 1939

Harijan, 16-9-1939

148. TELEGRAM TO SRI PRAKASA

SEGAON,
August 26, 1939

DELIGHTED. JUST LIKE YOU.[1] AWAITING YOUR LETTER.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] The addressee had withdrawn his resignation from the Congress; *vide* also "Telegram to Jawaharlal Nehru", pp. 96-7.

149. LETTER TO MULKRAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 26, 1939

DEAR LALA MULKRAJ,

I had a wire from Shri Mookerjee about Punjab National. I have not replied as I have sent you the papers about the Nagpur Bank. There is now no question of banking the money elsewhere. I hope therefore that you have given effect to my instructions[1].

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

150. NOTES

BOMBAY CORPORATION AND HARIJANS

The following important resolutions were carried by the Bombay Municipal Corporation on 17th and 18th August respectively:

> That the attention of the Commissioner be invited to the absence of bathing and washing facilities for the Municipal Labour Staff, particularly the Health Department sweepers and Drainage Department cleaners, after they finish their work on the streets, and he be requested to report as to whether it would not be desirable to construct a number of special bathrooms and washing places near their centre of work so that they can wash and clean themselves after finishing their day's duties and return home tidy and refreshed.
>
> That the attention of the Commissioner be invited to the fact that the dress used by the municipal sweepers and similar other menial staff gets extremely dirty as a result of their condition of work, and that the continuous use of such dress by this class of employees even during off-duty hours presents a very shabby appearance and is harmful to their health, and he be requested to report whether it would not be desirable to provide these employees with working suits which they may put on just before starting their work and take out at the end of their duty.

The resolutions should have been carried long ago. Both the points covered by the resolutions are important as well for the

[1] *Vide* p. 97.

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employees as the citizens. Sanitation of a big city like Bombay is dependent largely upon the efficiency of those who are employed to attend to it. And yet all over India they are the least looked after. It needed a Congress majority in the Corporation to pass these necessary resolutions. Let us hope that the Commissioner will report favourably without delay. There can be no objection to the reforms in principle. The objection so far as I can see can only be on the score of finance. But in matters such as the sanitary welfare of the city, financial objection can have little weight. Assuming that the report is favourable and not delayed, there will still be another stage to be gone through before the reforms become accomplished facts, for the necessary sanction of the Corporation will be required. I hope the mover and the seconder of the resolutions will, therefore, not rest till they see washing places and working dresses provided for the sweepers, cleaners and the other members of the labour staff.

SEGAON, August 27, 1939
Harijan, 9-9-1939

151. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SEGAON,
[*August 27, 1939*][2]

A sister from London wired on the 24th instant:

> Please act. World awaiting lead.

Another wire from another sister in London received today says:

> Urge you consider immediate expression of your unshakable faith in reason not force to rulers and all peoples.

I have been hesitating to say anything on the impending world crisis which affects the welfare not of a few nations but of the whole of mankind. I have felt that my word can have no effect on those on whom depends the decision whether there is to be war or peace. I know that many in the West believe that my word does carry weight. I wish I shared their belief. Not having such belief I have been praying in secret that God may spare us the

[1] This appeared under "Notes", sub-title, "The Impending Crisis". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 29-8-1939.

[2] *Vide* the following item. The source, however, has "August 28".

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calamity of war. But I have no hesitation in redeclaring my faith in reason, which is another word for non-violence, rather than the arbitrament of war for the settlement of disputes or redress of wrongs. I cannot emphasize my belief more forcibly than by saying that I personally would not purchase my own country's freedom by violence even if such a thing were a possibility. My faith in the wise saying that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword is imperishable. How I wish Herr Hitler would respond to the appeal of the President of the United States and allow his claim to be investigated by arbitrators in whose choice he will have as effective a voice as the disputants.

Harijan, 2-9-1939

152. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 27, 1939

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

Your illness disturbs me. I think this—the latest attack—is a warning from God that the South African visit should be given up altogether. The very fact of your brooding over it will retard your recovery. It really amounts to this that you should confine yourself to India, going to England for health's sake whenever necessary.

Dorothy Hogg and now Agatha have sent me cables[1] for a word on the situation. Here is a copy of what I am sending to the Press. Please thank Jesudasan for his letter. I am not writing to him separately.

Love.

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 1299

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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153. A LETTER[1]

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 27, 1939

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. You are hasty in your judgments. How can you identify the Ministers with what appears in the *Nagpur Times* even though it is a ministerial organ? Those who care to render public service have got to put up with criticism, both fair and unfair. Much of the writing you have sent me is simple banter.

I do not know what impropriety Shri Bhulabhai Desai committed. I understood that his appointment[2] was welcomed by the leaders of the complaining group. But you must not expect me to interest myself in such matters which are for the Working Committee to deal with.

I know nothing about Dr. Sonak and you will not expect me to enquire into what is after all a purely private affair. If I were to undertake such a mission I should be of no public use. What little energy is left in me must be reserved for dealing with questions which have become my life-work. My withdrawal from the Congress was a deliberate act to save myself, among other things, from attention to administrative details. All the three things you mention are matters of administrative detail.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 6902

[1] The addressee, presumably, was Anasuyabai Kale, Deputy Speaker, Central Provinces Legislative Assembly.

[2] According to *The Indian Annual Register, 1939*, Vol. II, pp. 215-6, Bhulabhai Desai was appointed by the Congress Working Committee to investigate into certain allegations made by some M. L. A.s against D. P. Mishra, Minister of Local Self-Government, Central Provinces. The enquiry had hardly lasted for two days when the complainants' representatives T.J. Kedar and others sought withdrawal from the enquiry "on the grounds that Bhulabhai Desai (1) shut out some evidence to which they attached importance, and (2) did not admit official documents under the plea of the Official Secrets Act. . . . B. Desai reasoned . . . as to the groundlessness of their apprehensions and urged them to proceed with the inquiry. . . . They, however, declined to do so. . . . Thereupon the inquiry was suspended."

154. LETTER TO INDU N. PAREKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 27, 1939

CHI. INDU,

Is there no limit to your foolishness? If you would listen to me, get out of all this entanglement and plunge yourself in whatever little service you can do. This is the only way to come up. Your brothers will look after themselves. Tell Bapasaheb about the shortage. Of course you will certainly speak to the Sardar. Personally I should like you to free yourself at the earliest.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6257

155. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 27, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

I will respect your wishes regarding the *rakhadi*, even though it is of silver. Even if you apply a mud-pack on the throat, you will be able to take the steam through the mouth as Rajkumari used to do. For food, take only fruit juices. But you will not be able to do all this by yourself. If the vaidya takes the responsibility, follow his advice. Otherwise follow Bhaskar's[1]. To get your ears pulled for getting angry come here as soon as you can. But so long as it is your duty to stay there, I don't want you to do anything else.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7114. Also C.W. 4606. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

[1] Dr. Bhaskar Patel

156. KHADI IN TAMIL NADU

The extracts from the half-yearly report of khadi work in Tamil Nadu ending 30th June, published elsewhere in this issue, should be read with interest. The report was followed up by a personal letter from Shri Aiyamuthu, the indefatigable secretary of the Tamil Nadu Branch of the A. I. S. A. Relevant extracts from the letter being very instructive are given below:

> Three years have passed since the first attempt was made for determining a minimum living wage for the spinners. The second step has also been taken since the 1st of this month. There has been a definite increase in the earnings of spinners, though it is not exactly the same as we aim at. A lot of spade-work has been done towards improving the spinning and carding efficiency of the spinner. Use of machine-ginned lint has been given up and *kapas* has been made the basis of all spinning. Improved implements have been distributed. The age-old village charkha has been rejuvenated by the addition of a transformer. The time has now come to pause and consider all the changes that have resulted from this step.
>
> You have always visualized khadi only as part of the home economics of the villager. Our ancients gave us the small wheel and the spindle as their heritage for all posterity. In this their idea was that each home should spin enough for its own immediate requirements. They viewed production only from the viewpoint of the natural consumer, that is, the producer and his family or at the most the village. Maybe the village weaver took a few cloths to the *shandy*[1]. But the commercial aspect of utilizing the spinning-wheel for catering to the needs of distant consumers never occurred to them.
>
> Till 1935, when the first step towards increasing the wages of spinners was taken, the Association had been looking more to the interest of the consumer than to that of the spinner. The Association always aimed at bringing down the price of khadi, thereby enabling more and more people to purchase it. It acted as a check against individuals entering the field and trying to exploit the consumer. Very few persons were willing to take to khadi business and the few who entered the field fell back as soon as they found that khadi did not pay them up to their expectations.

[1] Market

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The spinner till 1935 was able to earn on an average only four annas per lb. as spinning wages. Spinners who spun yarn above the average quality were paid a little more, the maximum being six annas per lb. In those days when a spinner was fined a mere pice she felt the loss so keenly that sometimes she burst into tears. In the same way, the addition of a copper or two to her expectations brought forth a ray of smile on her face. A copper more or less made all the difference in her outlook. It appeared so big.

In 1936, without her asking for it, the spinning wage has been increased far beyond her wildest expectations. While in 1935 the average spinning wage per lb. of yarn was only four annas, in 1938 it is Re. 0-12-3, i. e., her wage has been increased by 200 per cent. This should naturally have resulted in inducing her to spin better, to spin more twisted and even yarn. But this has not been the case. The only reaction to our efforts at improving the standard of living of the spinner has been that in a vague way she feels that she is being paid more, vastly more, than is due to her labour. So much so that when she is penalized for spinning yarn of an inferior quality she does not feel it at all. We pay the full wages only for yarn that meets all our rigid tests. The spinner feels it is not a loss to her to be paid ten annas per lb. She is not sorry if she is paid only eight annas. She does not care even if it is only six annas since it is a 50-per-cent increase on her own estimate of her labour and there is always a man who is willing to purchase it at that price. He does not use the rigid tests of the Association. He is always glad to purchase it at that value. It is the uncertified dealer, who pays 50 per cent of the wages paid by us and markets the cloth produced of that yarn at 75 to 80 per cent of our standard rates. Since 1936 we have interested ourselves more in the spinner than in the consumer. We have aimed at getting the maximum out of the consumer and paying it to the spinner. And the uncertified dealer (his number is increasing day by day) is given a free hand to exploit both the spinner and the consumer. The result is that in spite of an increase in wages and that without her asking for it, we are not able to show a corresponding improvement in the quality.

The increase in spinning wages has resulted also in more women registering themselves as spinners. Till 1935 spinning wages were not attractive enough to make the spinner sit at the wheel as a full-time worker. But with the increase of wages she has found spinning a profitable whole-time work. The value of our production has risen from Rs. 6 lakhs in 1936 to Rs. 16 lakhs in 1938. With the capital resources we have, it is not possible to purchase all the yarn that is produced. Nor have the sales increased in a corresponding degree. We are

forced to reject yarn from many who naturally sell their yarn to the uncertified dealer on his own terms, thus enabling him to undersell us.

Since 1936 we have always held the view that the producer should be the prime consumer, and that what is produced in excess of the producers' needs should alone be marketed. With this end in view the spinners have been asked to deposit with us a portion of their output for their own use and the balance alone is being purchased. This deposit has increased from 13 per cent of the total production in 1936 to 31 per cent in 1938. This percentage can be raised to any limit but for the trouble with the uncertified dealer. Perhaps his activities are at its worst in this case. He is not above purchasing the cloth thus distributed by us at a low price and selling the same elsewhere at a profit. In this instance he is doing more harm than even the vendor of mill-cloth.

The remedy for all this lies perhaps in localizing khadi. Khadi must not be made a commercial product, produced in villages to be sold in distant towns. As at present the spinner thinks she is spinning not so much for her own requirements and that of her family as for selling the yarn for an unknown destination. As such she does not understand, nor does she want to, what quality of yarn she has to spin. We are not able to control the count of the yarn to suit our requirements. If we are to produce khadi only for sale, we are bound to study the requirements of the consumer. We have to study what is required and how much to produce and in what quality. In the case of an organized industry like the mill, it is possible to so regulate the production that only what is wanted is produced. The entire spinning is done in a limited space and the spindles are inanimate things working to a definite motion and spinning what is wanted. In the case of khadi it is not so. The spinner and her spindle are different entities. She lives and thinks independently of us. But if she is induced to spin only for her own immediate wants, she will understand what she needs, what quality of yarn to spin and how much of it to spin. And if there is any surplus, it can be collected by a central organization which will find a market for it. It may be that the village panchayat can be authorized to hold in deposit the surplus yarn produced in the village and to sell it at a price which will ensure the spinner a standard wage for the hours of work she has put in producing the same.

A workers' conference was held at Tirupur on 27th June when Shri Shankerlal Banker addressed the workers. The question of a further increase in spinning wages was raised. Of the 93 workers who had assembled only two were for an enhancement. The rest were opposed to it, not because they were averse to giving the spinner something more but because such enhancement does not bring the desired result. The

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increased wage does not improve the quality of production. Not only that. The uncertified dealer is given greater scope to exploit both the spinner and the consumer. We feel helpless, not being able to control nefarious activities of the uncertified dealer. We were not able to clarify our position well to Shri Shankerlalji. We are not sure that we have fared any better now. We would only request you to view the problem from our point of view and realize our difficulties.

Perhaps the only remedy for this is for the Government to step in and give the spinner the protection that is her due. She must be saved in spite of herself. It may be that the price of hand-spun yarn should be determined by an act of legislation and it be made an offence against the State to purchase yarn at a lower rate. It may also be made an offence for anybody to purchase yarn from a spinner, when the spinner herself is in need of the same for her clothings. The village panchayat or on its behalf the A. I. S. A. may be authorized to hold in deposit the surplus yarn in the village for sale at the scheduled rates. With the Congress Ministries at the helm of affairs in the different provinces it is not impossible to bring in this piece of protective legislation. We only pray that you give the matter your consideration and advise the different Ministries to bring in suitable legislation.

The secretary is an impatient enthusiast. Both enthusiasm and impatience are good up to a point in any great venture. Khadi is the greatest I have been able to conceive inasmuch as it conserves the simultaneous good of millions of human beings without regard to status or religion. It can therefore take in as many impatient enthusiasts as will come to it, provided that they are honest, pure, incorruptible and unselfish. And impatient enthusiasts will have to remember that in the end only coolness, patience and tireless research will win.

Let me now examine Shri Aiyamuthu's difficulties.

1. Uncertified dealers are a curse; they are enemies of their own sisters which the spinners are; they are enemies of progress and ultimately of themselves. But the royal road to neutralize their mischievous activities is to buy all the yarn that the spinners produce. This is a matter of pure arithmetic. Shri Aiyamuthu is the sole controller of higher prices. He can pay even eight annas per day to the choicest spinners. They are useful for his laboratory work. He will regulate their number. He will buy up all the other yarn at the price lower, than under the increased scale, if the spinners are willing to sell their yarn. He will thus automatically eliminate the uncertified dealer, so far as yarn is concerned. I know that this is a dangerous experiment, if the experimenter is not always, in all that he is doing, thinking solely

of the spinners and the ideal wage he is anxious to pay to each one of them. If he fulfils this condition, having got hold of every spinner and eliminated the uncertified dealer, he will educate the former in the art of getting a better wage for her work. In the end she will know with whom she should deal and she will be a willing pupil. Then the secret sale of khadi meant for the spinners' use will automatically stop.

2. I wholly endorse the proposition that khadi should be decentralized to the extent that each village produces its own cotton and manufactures its own cloth. If there is a surplus, it should be sold where it is wanted, e.g., in the cities or places where cotton is not grown and where it will be cheaper to take khadi from the nearest khadi centre. This ideal will only be reached when each branch selects one village and attempts to carry out the experiment which will require the best expert. I settled in Segaon in order to carry out this among other ideals, but I must confess that I seem to be as far from it as when I came here three years ago. I need not go into the causes of the slowness of my progress. But the fact is enough to warn as well as hearten the workers. They need not expect miracles to take place immediately they go to villages; and they should take heart from the fact that if I could show little or nothing after three years of stay in a village, they need not despair nor be ashamed if after *due* effort they cannot *show* results.

3. It will induce lethargy among workers if they expect Congress Governments to work wonders.

Unscrupulous men will run a coach and four through any legislation. Congress Governments have their limitations. At the same time some help is possible through legislation. I have already pointed out the direction in which legislation can help. Dealing in khadi by uncertified vendors should be penalized. Khadi can have protection through subsidy as was done in the case of the Tatas, and the subsidy can be raised by taxing the sales of mill manufactures. The fines collected from uncertified dealers may also, subject to deduction for expenses, be paid to the A. I. S. A.

4. The question of sales is undoubtedly a problem. I have discussed this question in a previous article[1]. But there is no doubt that Congressmen should make all their purchases of cloth from khadi bhandars. By properly handling the whole question, Governments—Congress and non-Congress—can help khadi and

[1] *Vide* pp. 104-5.

thus themselves in the shape of giving employment to the unemployed with the minimum of expenditure.

SEGAON, August 28, 1939
Harijan, 2-9-1939

157. NOTES

WILL THEY LEARN?

Hirdaynath Baijal was a medical student in Agra. Whenever I pass through big stations after a lapse of time there are as a rule wild demonstrations. For causes I have not been able to divine, there were wilder demonstrations during my recent journey to the Frontier Province and wilder still on return from there. Such a demonstration took place at Agra on the 27th ultimo. My ears cannot cope with the noises however affectionate they may be. Plugging with cotton wool does not answer. I have to plug them with my fingers as hard as I can in order to deaden the noise. The demonstrators are themselves so lost in their frenzy that they do not listen to the piteous appeals I and my companions make to them. It is not their fault. They do not know what is being said to them. And they cannot understand why persons in whose honour demonstrations are made should resent them. They make no distinction between night and day. This Agra demonstration took place at night. I think it was after 9 p. m. Among these demonstrators was Hirdaynath. He boarded the train in order to reach me and get my autograph. Before he could come near my compartment he slipped and fell. The train moved and ran over him, and he had to lose his legs.

A correspondent suggests that the railway authorities could have or should have managed the crowd, that the train should have been stopped in time, and that first aid was not provided as it should have been. Be that as it may, the fact of the injury to Hirdaynath remains. Kind correspondents kept themselves in touch with me after the accident. Hirdaynath's father too wrote to me. I was thus able to write a word of cheer to the young man and give such consolation as I could to his father and his friends. Unfortunately in spite of the best treatment he breathed his last on the 22nd instant. My heart goes out to the deceased's father and his friends. The reason why I pen these lines is to warn the public against these demonstrations in which no order is

kept. If demonstrations there must be, and I suppose there will be, they must be regulated either by the demonstrators themselves or the police. This is the second accident within the past few months. One took place on my return from Brindaban[1]. There also the injured party was a student. Fortunately he has lived, though without a leg. Hirdaynath seems to have been a student of exceptional qualities and a great favourite with the students. I suggest to the students that the very best way in which they can treasure the memory of their dear comrade is by organizing a discipline brigade whose mission would be to introduce order in demonstrations, meetings and other crowds. With ever-increasing mass awakening we need to know the laws governing the conduct and movement of crowds so as to enable vast masses to gather together without fuss, noise or disturbance.

SEGAON, August 28, 1939
Harijan, 2-9-1939

158. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

WARDHAGANJ,
August 28, 1939

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD
RAMGARH
(HAZARIBAGH)

MOST INCONVENIENT LEAVE WARDHA BUT WILL GO ANYWHERE FOR YOUR HEALTH. WARDHA PERHAPS BEST FOR YOU BUT LET DOCTORS DECIDE.

BAPU

From the original: Rajendra Prasad Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

[1] Where Gandhiji attended the Gandhi Seva Sangh conference in May 1939; *vide* Vol. LXIX.

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159. LETTER TO JUGLAL CHOWDHARY

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 28, 1939

MY DEAR JUGLAL,

I have a copy of your letter to Kripalani. Three years is the limit. If Ministers can bring about prohibition in a year, they are expected to do so. Conversely, if in spite of great effort they cannot finish the programme within the prescribed period, they will not be blamed. Three years should be counted from the date of the Congress resolution. But of course the President's ruling should be your guide.

Yours sincerely,

HON. JUGLAL CHOWDHARY
MINISTER
PATNA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

160. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

August 29, 1939

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I thank you for your letter[1] of 26th instant. I reciprocate your wish that the world will be spared the calamity of war. But if it comes and you think my presence necessary in Simla, of course I shall come.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] Which, *inter alia*, said: ". . . though I have no justification for thinking war inevitable, you will agree with me that the international situation is very ominous and should war by any chance break out it has been in my mind to invite you to come to see me at once . . . should wiser counsels not prevail and should we find ourselves in war, I hope that you will not misunderstand it if I send you a telegram . . . to come to see me."

161. LETTER TO A. GUPTA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 29, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I am entirely at one with you that imputation of motives is a frailty common to all. If you will re-read my statement[1], you will find that it is of a general character. I have just read in today's paper that there was a black-flag demonstration against Subhas Babu at Patna. I was sorry to learn of it.

Yours sincerely,

SHRI A. GUPTA
BENGALI ASSOCIATION
DINAPORE, BIHAR

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

162. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 29, 1939

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter only today. The *rakhadi* was tied by Amtul Salaam and now I am writing this letter.

First your questions. Why don't you hand over the sum of Rs. 125 to Deo[2]? There should be no objection to accepting anything which somebody might give for the book[3]. You may hand over to Deo whatever you receive or a part of it.

I fully agree with Deo's argument, that his expenses should be met by Maharashtra itself. If Maharashtra does not bear them, it means the province does not want his services.

Patwardhan[4] may come and stay with me whenever he wants. It is always crowded here, of course.

Come over for a visit whenever you can. There is no question of overcrowding in your case. Rest assured that if you come

[1] *Vide* pp. 112-4.
[2] Shankarrao Deo
[3] *Kama ane Kamini*, a novel written by the addressee
[4] P. H. Patwardhan

over here you will get well. Yes, there is one risk, of course, that meanwhile I may have to go out. But what even if I have to? You will immediately know if that happens.

Kelkar[1] and I alone know what efforts I have made to win him over. It was I who got him appointed on the Working Committee, the sole reason being that he was regarded as Lokamanya's heir. I thought it my duty to accommodate him as much as I could and do my best to win him over. I still think so. Despite my differences with Lokamanya, I regard myself as his devotee. I had the highest regard for his learning, patriotism and courage.

There is no truth at all in Swami Satyadev's statement. I could never say such a thing. If I did, my truth and ahimsa would stand disgraced. I do believe, of course, that he would resort to untruth and violence for the sake of the country. He himself told me so. We had some correspondence too about the matter. He had advocated *shatham prati shaathyam*[2], against which I had asserted *shatham pratyapi satyam*[3]. Didn't you know this?

I think I have answered all your questions.

I was eagerly waiting for your letter. I have no comments to make on your activities which you have described. I don't believe that you should consult me in everything you do. What even if you make a mistake? I am confident that you bear in mind, and will always bear in mind, the Ashram vows in all that you do.

Yes, Rajen Babu did ask about you.[4] I told him that you were certainly capable of shouldering the responsibility and that if you agreed to do so I would not oppose. It would, I said, take a heavy load off his shoulders, but I added that I would not press you and suggested that he should address the request for you to Deo, as you are working under him. Are you satisfied now?

The letter from Sushila is enclosed. I will use the dhoti[5] when I get it, no matter of what quality it is.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10401. Also C.W. 6840. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] N. C. Kelkar

[2] & [3] 'Roguery against a rogue' and 'Truth even against a rogue'; *vide* also Vol. XV, p. 153.

[4] It was about sending the addressee to Ramgarh, in Bihar, to organize the women volunteers; *vide* also the following item.

[5] The addressee had resolved to send two hand-spun dhotis to Gandhiji every year specially on his birthday. She sent them in 1939 for the first time and kept her resolve till the end.

163. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 29, 1939

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your letter. I am asking Kanu to send you Rs. 50. I had a talk with Rajen Babu. He said that he did not insist as you were ill. The choice has fallen on Prema from among all the names considered. It has been decided that you will help Prema as much as you can. There was a letter from Prema today saying that she would go there in October.[1] Kanti[2] is studying in Mysore. He does not write to me. Nor does Saraswati[3]. She is expecting. It is nearly five months now and she must have gone to her father's place. He is studying in the Medical College at Mysore. In my view he has fallen to a great extent. May God bless him. Sushila is in Delhi. The present arrangement is that she will stay there up to the 15th of September. Her address is: Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi. Amtul Salaam and Rajkumari are here. Krishnadas[4] and Manojna[5] have come here to stay for some time. Krishnadas is ill. I am fairly well. Ba also is all right. The Ashram is full. Amtul Salaam has brought a Muslim girl also.

Take proper care of your health. Send me a specimen lesson. Carry on study for the present. See that your brain is not overburdened.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3531

[1] *Vide* also the preceding item.
[2] & [3] Elder son of Harilal Gandhi, and his wife
[4] & [5] Younger son of Chhaganlal Gandhi, and his wife

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164. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 29, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

It is not right on your part not to write to me regularly. What did you decide to do finally? Don't you wish to call in Vallabhram? I have written to him that, if he has the courage, he may go to Varad even uninvited and examine you. I am not particularly enthusiastic about your going to Patna, but if Father or you are, it would be your duty to go. I hope you are not worried [about Father].[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7115. Also C.W. 4607. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

165. MESSAGE TO THE POLES

[Before *August 30, 1939*][2]

TO ALL THOSE IN POLAND WHO BELIEVE THAT ONLY TRUTH AND LOVE CAN BE FOUNDATIONS OF BETTER DAYS FOR HUMANITY AND WHO ARE DOING THEIR BEST TO SERVE THOSE IDEALS WITH THEIR LIFE I SEND MY GOOD WISHES AND BLESSINGS.

M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 31-8-1939

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to Vijayabehn M. Pancholi", p. 173.

[2] The message was reported by the London correspondent on August 30, as "appearing in tonight's issue of *Wiodomosci Literackie*, a Polish newspaper from Warsaw". *Vide* also "Cable to Paderewski", pp. 163-4.

166. LETTER TO A. VAIDYANATHA IYER

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 30, 1939

DEAR VAIDYANATHA IYER,

Under separate cover I send you the papers received from Shri Prasada Rao. I would like you to give me your reply to his allegations. He seems to be a seasoned co-worker. Why is it difficult to win him over if his allegations are untrue? If they are true, there is something wrong about the whole affair. Have the Brahmins and the orthodox non-Brahmins boycotted the temple[1]?

Yours,

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

167. LETTER TO V. M. PRASADA RAO

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 30, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

I have carefully read all the voluminous papers you have sent me. You won't expect me to express an opinion without knowing what those have to say against whom you have brought serious charges. I am therefore sending the papers in the first instance to Shri Vaidyanatha Iyer.[2] But I observe that you have been a co-worker with all those against whom you feel aggrieved. I suggest, therefore, that it is your duty to see their viewpoint and discover a basis for common service. You can still adopt this course.

As for the Rao Bahadur, I asked the very parties to whom he had referred me and they point-blank repudiated his statements.

[1] The reference is to the Meenakshi Temple, Madura, which was thrown open to Harijans on July 8.

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

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I took him at his word and naturally believed his referees.

Yours sincerely,

SHRI V. M. PRASADA RAO
WEST AVANI MOOLA STREET
MADURA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

168. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 30, 1939

CHI. VALJI,

If you feel heavy after a meal, certainly reduce the amount. The doctor will not object. The patient should eat only as much as he can digest. Sometimes you may take only milk and fruit and see how you feel. I see some point in what Chitre says. Don't be careless about your health. The easiest remedy for stone is to get it removed. I feel there is nothing wrong if the sanatorium bears Chitre's expenses as regards food. If the sanatorium does not and if you can easily bear them, you may do so, but not at the cost of any hardship to yourself. I am not writing separately to Chitre.

Blessings from
BAPU

PROF. V. DESAI
SANATORIUM
P.O. VANI VILAS MOHALLA
MYSORE

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7486. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

169. NOTES

RURAL *v.* URBAN

An educationist writes:

> If you do not take care, you will find that basic education in urban areas will take a different form from the rural areas. For instance English will be introduced to the injury of the mother tongue and a kind of superiority complex developed.

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I must confess that my scheme was conceived in terms of the villages, and when I was developing it I did say that some variation will be necessary in applying the scheme to the cities. This had reference to the industries to be used as media of instruction. I never thought that English could ever find place in the primary stage. And the scheme has so far concerned itself only with the primary stage. No doubt the primary stage is made equivalent to the matriculation, less English. To inflict English on children is to stunt their natural growth and perhaps to kill originality in them. Learning of a language is primarily a training in developing memory. Learning of English from the beginning is an unnecessary tax on a child. He can only learn it at the expense of the mother tongue. I hold it to be as necessary for the urban child as for the rural to have the foundation of his development laid on the solid rock of the mother tongue. It is only in unfortunate India that such an obvious proposition needs to be proved.

SEGAON, August 31, 1939
Harijan, 9-9-1939

170. LIMBDI

Though I have had protracted correspondence with the Limbdi people, I have refrained for a long time from saying anything about their woes. My silence was due to the hope that those who were trying to bring about peace between the Ruler and the people would succeed. But it was a vain hope. Much has happened since the beginning stages of that struggle. Perhaps nowhere has the policy of ruthlessness been pursued with so much precision and persistence as in Limbdi. If the reports received by me are to be believed, and I have no reason to disbelieve them, the peasants have been hunted out of their homes. The heaviest blow has been aimed at the hated Bania who was at one time the State's friend, favourite and main supporter. But he was to be crushed because he dared to think and talk of responsible government, dared to go amongst the peasantry and tell them what was due to them and how they could get it. The shops and houses of these merchants who have performed *hijrat*[1] are practically looted. I cannot use any other term. There has not even been, so far as I know, any legal formality observed. The will of the administrator of the policy of ruthlessness is the supreme law. The idea is to

[1] That is, those who have migrated

terrorize the people into subjection. No wonder some have weakened. I would advise those who are in charge of the movement not to try to keep them from surrendering. Of course they should be told what is in store for them. But there are people who prize possessions before honour. They can only be a burden on a freedom movement. Freedom is always won by a few brave self-sacrificing souls who will stake everything for the sake of honour. Those who understand the value and the necessity of sacrifice, whether they are few or many, should feel glad that their possessions in Limbdi have been taken away. They should not live in suspense nor entertain any hope of immediate settlement. They should engage in healthy pursuits outside the State, always in the firm faith that a day must come when the people of Limbdi will come into their own. When that day comes, as it must, it will have come because of the sacrifice and the bravery of those who will have refused to bend before repression, however severe. Let them remember Thoreau's immortal words that possession is a vice and poverty a virtue in a tyrannical State.

So much on reliable evidence before me. But should Limbdi be a tyrannical State? If there is exaggeration in the statements made to me, let the State authorities send me a contradiction. I would gladly publish it. Better still will be an impartial judicial inquiry into the allegations made, if they are disputed. I wish to make a public appeal to the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi. I have the privilege of knowing him. I have enjoyed his hospitality. He has the reputation of being a pious, Godfearing man. It is not right that there should be this estrangement between him and his people, some of whom are well-known people with a reputation to lose and a stake in Limbdi. It would be wrong to regard them all as a discontented lot. They have no axes to grind. They have no earthly gain to make by ranging themselves against the State. They have incurred much material loss by becoming exiles from their own home. A wise ruler will think fifty times before facing the discontent of such people. He will conclude from it that there must be misrule and injustice on the part of his officials. He will summon the discontented people, listen to their complaints and pacify them. The Thakore Saheb has not adopted that course. It is not too late for him to do so even now.

SEGAON, August 31, 1939

Harijan, 9-9-1939

171. TELEGRAM TO G. D. BIRLA

August 31, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS
LUCKY
CALCUTTA

MY FIRM ADVICE IS COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY[1] SHOULD REMAIN SILENT TILL ACTUAL RESULT IS KNOWN.

From a copy: C.W. 7833. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

172. TELEGRAM TO MULKRAJ[2]

August 31, 1939

IF TRUSTEES' PERMISSION NECESSARY FOR TRANSFER, CIRCULATE MEMORANDUM CONTAINING JAMNALALJI'S AND MY OPINION NAGPUR BANK.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] In his letter dated August 26 to Mahadev Desai, G. D. Birla said: "I am enclosing herewith a manifesto which may be issued under the signature of various businessmen, in case war breaks out. I should like to know immediately, if necessary by wire, if Bapu has got any comments to make on the same. The contents of the manifesto express our own independent views, and our own feeling is that it is not incompatible with the attitude taken up by the Congress. However, we would not like to do anything in case Bapu thinks otherwise. . . ." G. D. Birla made the same request in a telegram dated August 30 to Mahadev Desai.

[2] This is extracted from a letter of even date from Amrit Kaur to the addressee which read: "I am desired by Gandhiji to acknowledge your letter of the 27th instant. He wishes me to tell you that all the points raised by you were duly considered." *Vide* also pp. 97 and 125.

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173. LETTER TO V. A. SUNDARAM

SEGAON ASHRAM, WARDHA,
August 31, 1939

MY DEAR SUNDARAM,

It is a great thing that Sir Radhakrishnan has become Vice-Chancellor[1]. I hope you all will insist on Malaviyaji taking rest.[2]

Love to you both.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3185

174. LETTER TO PATTOM THANU PILLAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
August 31, 1939

MY DEAR THANU PILLAI,

I wish you had given me more time but I suppose you could not.

I do not like the Dewan's reply. I think that you should make your own position clear. You should see that the State Congress does not propose to do anything in secret. Whilst, therefore, its decisions will be its own and it will not bring any outsider inside the State, it will, whenever necessary, seek the advice and guidance of persons outside Travancore. You would also make it clear that whilst any scheme that might be hammered into shape by mutual consultation will be loyally worked by the Congress, the end in view in working the scheme will always be to make an advance, even through the scheme, towards responsible government.

If these two positions are in any way left in doubt negotiations should be dropped and you should do such work, constructive and other, as is possible to do.

In all your talks and writings offensive and highflown language should be scrupulously eschewed. And in season and out of

[1] Of the Banaras Hindu University

[2] Madan Mohan Malaviya resigned from the Vice-Chancellorship on August 29, on health grounds.

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season you should reiterate the two conditions above made. They should be held good for all time.

You should cease to think of the prisoners. The fact of their being in jail is their unique contribution, provided that they appreciate the fact that being in jail as model prisoners is part of their struggle.

I hope the forthcoming meeting will be successful and that those who gather together at Kayankulam will more and more appreciate the efficacy of self-imposed restraint and quiet, silent, persistent constructive work, however small it may appear to be.[1]

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10201. Courtesy: Government of Kerala. Also Pattom Thanu Pillai Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

175. LETTER TO MANUBEHN S. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON ASHRAM, WARDHA,
August 31, 1939

CHI. MANUDI,

Your time for delivery is nearing. Where do you intend to go? What about Rajkot? Write to me and give me all details. Do you keep good health? What do you eat?

Ba is sitting by my side. She sends her blessing to you all.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2671. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

[1] This paragraph was published in *The Hindu*, 7-9-1939.

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176. LETTER TO PURSHOTTAMDAS A. PATADIA

SEGAON ASHRAM, WARDHA,
August 31, 1939

BHAI PURSHOTTAMDAS,

I got your letter. You must have received the wire I sent you. Sardar also has made some arrangement. You must have got the required fodder. I don't think you need any more.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

DR. PURSHOTTAMDAS AMERSHI PATADIA
WADHWAN CAMP
KATHIAWAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2687. Courtesy: Dr. P. A. Patadia

177. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

SEGAON ASHRAM, WARDHA,
August 31, 1939

BAPA,

Before you write to me about your doings, I mostly get to know about them. Whatever may be the case with others, we have benefited by the Congress Raj. Harijan work has progressed fairly well. If they mean to, they can do a lot more. Shantilal had sent me Barve's letter. Instead of writing in *Harijan*, I am directly dealing with Kher[1] in order that the work may be done more expeditiously. Barve will meet me on the 7th. Won't you take some rest?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1184

[1] B. G. Kher, Premier of Bombay

178. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 1, 1939

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I got your wire. It was a deliverance for Kasumba. Even if she had lived on, she would have remained ill all the time. Thanks to the doctors' hard efforts, she lived a little longer. She took from you what you owed her and went her way. None of the girls should weep.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

179. THAT UNBECOMING DEMONSTRATION

The first I heard of the black-flag demonstration against Subhas Babu on his visit to Patna was through a courteous letter received from the Secretary of the Bengali Association of Bankipore.[1] I then saw a notice of it in the Press. To make myself sure of what had happened I wired to Shri P. R. Das for an authentic and up-to-date account. He replied from Dhanbad saying he was away from the scene and knew nothing. The newspapers reported that there was stone-throwing and hurling of shoes resulting in injuries to Swami Sahajanand and others.

Allowing for exaggeration, if any, there seems to be little doubt that there was a hostile demonstration of an unseemly nature which brought no credit to the Congress.

I have read Rajendra Babu's eloquent statement on the unhappy incident. It is so true and so heart-stirring that it admits of no addition or embellishment. I endorse every word of that noble pronouncement. It is reproduced below this article.[2]

The demonstrators showed an unworthy intolerance. Subhas Babu has a perfect right to agitate against the action[3] of the Working

[1] *Vide* "Letter to A. Gupta", p. 138.
[2] The statement is not reproduced here.
[3] *Vide* pp. 84-5.

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Committee and canvass public opinion against it. The disciplinary action frees him from any liability for restraint save what every Congressman, pledged to the credal article of the Constitution, is bound to put on himself. That action should save him from any further demonstration of public displeasure. And those who disapprove of the action of the Working Committee are certainly entitled to join any demonstration in favour of Subhas Babu. Unless this simple rule is observed we shall never evolve democracy. In my opinion the black-flag demonstrators have rendered a disservice to the cause of freedom. It is to be hoped that the Patna demonstration will prove to be the last of such acts by Congressmen. The question may be asked, 'How are those who endorse the action of the Working Committee and disapprove of Subhas Babu's propaganda to show their disapproval?' Certainly not through black flags and disturbing of meetings in honour of Subhas Babu. They can express their disapproval by holding counter meetings, not at the same time as the others but either before or after them. These meetings, both for and against, should be regarded as a means of educating public opinion. Such education requires calm surroundings. Black flags, noisy slogans, and hurling of stones and shoes have no place in educative and instructive propaganda.

Apropos of the ugly demonstration I must refer to a complaint I have received that some Congress Committees have threatened action against those Congressmen who may take part in receptions to Subhas Babu. I hope that the complaint has no foundation in fact. Such action will betray intolerance and may even be a sign of vindictiveness. Congressmen who dislike the Working Committee's action are bound to take part in receptions to Subhas Babu. It is impossible to gag them by threats of disciplinary measures. Such action loses its value if it is resorted to on the slightest pretext. If it is true, as it is true, that no organization can do without such powers, it is equally true that no organization that makes free use of such powers has any right to exist. It cannot. It has then obviously lost the public backing.

SEGAON, September 2, 1939
Harijan, 9-9-1939

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180. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

WARDHAGANJ,
September 2, 1939

RAJENDRA PRASAD
RAMGARH
(HAZARIBAGH)

YOUR WIRE. LEAVING FOR SIMLA TONIGHT VICE-ROY'S INVITATION. PERHAPS BETTER HOLD MEETING[1] AFTER HEARING FROM ME FROM SIMLA. VENUE ACCORDING YOUR HEALTH.

BAPU

From the original: Rajendra Prasad Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

181. TELEGRAM TO LORD LINLITHGOW

WARDHAGANJ,
September 2, 1939

SORRY TERRIBLE NEWS.[2] TAKING EARLIEST TRAIN. ARRIVING SIMLA FOURTH MORNING.

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

[1] The reference is to an emergency meeting of the Congress Working Committee. It was ultimately held at Wardha from September 8 to 15.

[2] Germany invaded Poland on September 1 and war was consequently declared by England and France on September 3.

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Text Books

The craze for ever-changing text books is hardly a healthy sign from the educational standpoint. If text books are treated as a vehicle for education, the living word of the teacher has very little value. A teacher who teaches from text books does not impart originality to his pupils. He himself becomes a slave of text books and has no opportunity or occasion to be original. It, therefore, seems that the less text books there are the better it is for the teacher and his pupils. Text books seem to have become an article of commerce. Authors and publishers who make writing and publishing a means of making money are interested in frequent change of text books. In many cases teachers and examiners are themselves authors of text books. It is naturally to their interest to have their books sold. The selection board is again naturally composed of such people. And so the vicious circle becomes complete. And it becomes very difficult for parents to find money for new books every year. It is a pathetic sight to see boys and girls going to school loaded with books which they are ill able to carry. The whole system requires to be thoroughly examined. The commercial spirit needs to be entirely eliminated and the question approached solely in the interest of the scholars. It will then probably be found that 75 per cent of the text books will have to be consigned to the scrap-heap. If I had my way, I would have books largely as aids to teachers rather than for the scholars. Such text books as are found to be absolutely necessary for the scholars should circulate among them for a number of years so that the cost can be easily borne by middle-class families. The first step in this direction is perhaps for the State to own and organize the printing and publishing of text books. This will act as an automatic check on their unnecessary multiplication.

Divided Loyalty?

Shri Appa Patwardhan writes:

> The Bombay Government spend a large sum in helping weavers. They have appointed a marketing officer and salesmen. They give loans. Yet the weavers cannot compete with mills and in my opinion the expenses incurred do not bear fruit. Moreover the weavers use

foreign yarn as well. Side by side with this fruitless help the Government render some help to khadi also. I do not know how far this divided loyalty is justified.

I have always held the opinion that help to the weavers who use foreign or Indian mill-yarn is a waste of money and effort. Experience has not changed the view. Nor does it change because in certain provinces the Congress rules. I hold this view because the disappearance of the weaver of mill-yarn is a question of time only. In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. The weavers' only hope lies in a universal revival of hand-spinning. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving are interdependent, never hand-weaving and mill-spinning. I have, therefore, suggested that if hand-spinning cannot immediately supply the weavers' requirements, they should be induced to introduce hand-spinning, carding, etc., in their own families if they will not become spinners themselves. Now that in several provinces the Congress rules, the saving of the weaver becomes easier. Thus the Government can encourage spinning on a wide scale, guarantee the loss in khadi sales as the State guarantees the foreign railway companies. It is the primary duty of the State to guarantee employment of his choice to everyone in need of it. This includes the weavers also. If during the transition stage it is found impossible to guarantee weaving for every weaver, the State has to find him some other employment, profitable alike to the State and the individual. It should be borne in mind that the possibilities of hand-spinning have not yet been explored by any Government. I am of opinion that such investigation will yield startlingly encouraging results. My argument undoubtedly assumes the elimination of all mills from consideration. No industry, indigenous or foreign, can be allowed to increase unemployment and thus harm the true interest of the community as a whole.

Ways of Famine Relief

Though the most terrible distress that was feared has been averted by the falling of rains, however belated, some distress is bound to continue for a few months, and it will be unwise for relief agencies to go to sleep. What is more, time is now more propitious for devising measures for making permanent provisions for preventing distress caused by scarcity of water. I have already made some cardinal suggestions in this direction. The Secretary of the Saurashtra Seva Samiti sends me a business-like report of the elaborate steps taken by that body for enlisting helpers and providing relief. I need not detain the reader over them. He

also suggests preventive methods. As these are still seasonable I give below the substance, the original being in Gujarati:

1. The States should refrain from auctioning their stock of grass but they should store it as a precaution against dry year. The store should be replaced when fresh store becomes available. There is nowadays danger of the stacks being destroyed by incendiaries. The States should have no difficulty in protecting them. They may even allow private collectors to deposit their stores in such areas.

2. The existing banks should be renovated and flood water should be banked.

3. In the places where cattle are moved during famine times, measures should be taken to ensure proper water supply for the cattle.

4. There should be control over the cultivation of money crops to the detriment of food crops. Thus people nowadays sow ground-nuts in the place of most valuable fodder and food crops, i.e., *jawari* and *bajri*.

5. Existing forests should be preserved, indiscriminate cutting of trees should be made punishable, and people should be encouraged to plant trees according to plan.

6. The management of pinjrapoles should be put on a sound basis and they should become efficient famine insurance agencies for cattle. They should become castration depots.

7. The State should encourage khadi as a famine insurance measure.

All these suggestions seem to be sound and deserve the collective consideration of the States and the people of Kathiawar. In this humanitarian project all can and should combine in spite of political differences and struggles.

Sacrificial Spinning in Andhra

Shri Shankerlal Banker sends me a letter he has received from the Andhra Branch of the A.I.S.A. I take the following from it:

> On seeing Mahatmaji's note in *Harijan* dated July 22, 1939,[1] we conceived the idea of performing sacrificial spinning (*sutra yajna*) on the lines followed by Sjt. Narandas Gandhi of Rajkot Rashtriyashala. Accordingly we sent an appeal on July 29, 1939, to the local *Krishna Patrika*[2] and the *Andhra Patrika*[3] for publication, calling for applications from khadi lovers who would participate in the *sutra yajna* performed under

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 420-1.
[2] Telugu weekly published from Masulipatam
[3] Telugu daily founded by K. Nageswara Rao and published from Madras

the auspices of the Andhra Branch in connection with the ensuing Gandhi Jayanti. All participants are requested to offer 14,000 (70 x 200) yards of self-spun yarn or 70 coppers (Rs. 1-1-6) in terms of his present age. We find a ready response to our call. Till now we have received 500 applications. Many applicants offer 14,000 yards of yarn or Rs. 1-1-6 in cash. But some poor spinners offer only 7,000 yards of yarn and we accept their offer in consideration of their poverty, though they fall short of the minimum fixed in our appeal. Now we are going to issue a special appeal to the spinners in the Andhra Desh to contribute 7,000 yards (nearly one warp) as a birthday gift to Mahatmaji on his 71st birthday. In our appeal all A. I. S.A. workers were requested to give yarn contributions only. In our central stores and central office sacrificial spinning has been going on for the last 15 days since August 2, 1939. Some have been spinning on the *takli* and some others on the improved charkha. The workers are asked to improve and note the quality and quantity of their yarn. We have requested the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee to help us in enlisting volunteers for *sutra yajna* and see that all members of Congress committees participate in it. In compliance with our request they issued a circular to all Congress members to enrol themselves as volunteers for *sutra yajna* and help the khadi movement to the best of their ability. We hope to enlist at least 1,000 volunteers before Gandhi Jayanti.

I have letters from other quarters also showing that Shri Narandas Gandhi's example has caught on. I hope that the organizers are carrying out strictest economy in organizing sacrificial spinning. They may not, for instance, move the yarn spun from place to place resulting in the cost of postage being incurred. Yarn should be collected by appointed agents so that there can be hand to hand delivery. If an authentic account is kept and published, it should be accepted as completion of the *yajna*. Those who intend to account to Narandas Gandhi for their spinning need only send him certificates of their spinning. I suggest too that as far as possible yarn should be locally woven. It is against the spirit of the khadi movement to concentrate weaving in fixed places. As spinning has to be universal in every home, weaving should be universal in every village.

ON THE TRAIN TO SIMLA, September 3, 1939

Harijan, 9-9-1939

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183. CASE FOR INQUIRY

I published some time ago facts relating to Nallathur Harijans.[1] Shri K. Tatachar sent me some time ago the notes from his diary of the no less serious ill-treatment of the Harijans of Tenpatnam Cheri. I publish them[2] below in full.

This seems to be a case of gross failure of justice and the matter, though comparatively old, requires investigation. There has been no remissness on the part of the people or their friends to secure redress. But if Shri Tatachar's recital is accurate, justice was denied to the Harijans because they were Harijans. The police belonging to the lowest grade should be taught that they have to serve Harijans equally with the others. Harijans ought to be able to feel that during the Congress regime at least they can get justice.

ON THE TRAIN TO SIMLA, September 3, 1939

Harijan, 9-9-1939

184. NOTES

THE RICH ARE TRUSTEES

A friend writes:

> You will be glad to know that your view about the trusteeship of the rich was anticipated 1,300 years ago. The following verse occurs in the sacred *Hadis*:
>
> > Whatever is possessed by people is my property, the poor are my family, the wealthy are the trustees of the riches they possess. Therefore the wealthy persons who will not spend on behalf of my poor children, will go to *Hadis*. And I will not worry about them.

My correspondent's letter which is in Gujarati gives in Gujarati script the whole verse with its translation in Gujarati contained in a newspaper whose name he has not given. Here is the original text in Devanagari:

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, p. 435.
[2] Not reproduced here

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अल मालु माली वल फक़राओ अयाली वल अम्नियाओ वक्लाई
फमन बखलाब माली अला अयाली उदखलुहुन्नार वला उबाली

The curious reader will observe that twenty-five per cent of the words are easily understood by a Gujarati reader. In other words, they have become current in the language.

September 3, 1939

Harijan, 23-9-1939

185. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

DELHI,
September 3, 1939

CHI. MIRA,

Just a line to send love to you all.

BAPU

SHRI MIRABEHN
SEGAON, WARDHA

From the original: C.W. 6448. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 10043

186. REPLY TO MEMBERS OF OXFORD GROUP[1]

[After *September 3, 1939*][2]

It is no use dragging the Metropolitan to Wardha, but youths may come; for, for them I have no mercy.

Harijan, 7-10-1939

[1] & [2] This is extracted from "A Word to the Oxford Groupers" by Mahadev Desai, who explains: "As soon as the war broke out, a wire was received by Gandhiji asking for an interview with him by several members headed by the very Rev. the Metropolitan Bishop of Calcutta." *Vide* also "Discussion with Members of Oxford Group", pp. 195-7.

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187. TELEGRAM TO C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

September 5, 1939

SIR RAMASWAMI
TRIVANDRUM

RECEIVED STARTLING TELEGRAM SAYING YOU HAVE PROHIBITED ALL MEETINGS PROCESSIONS AS PRECAUTIONARY WAR MEASURE.[1] I UNDERSTAND PROJECTED STATES PEOPLES' CONFERENCE BEING HELD WITH KNOWLEDGE AND YOUR PERMISSION. DO HOPE CONFERENCE WILL BE EXCEPTED FROM BAN.[2]

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal. Also *The Hindu*, 7-9-1939

[1] *The Hindu* reported: "It is officially stated, on September 4, the Travancore Government have called upon the organizers of the Karunagappalli Conference and other similar bodies to postpone, if not stop, all assemblages at the present juncture in view of the preparations that are reported to have been made for processions and demonstrations."

[2] According to *The Hindu* a "gist of the reply to Gandhiji" read: "Sorry, you are misinformed again. Meetings, processions not prohibited. No ban imposed. Suggestion made to leaders of the State Congress not to have processions, demonstrations and controversial resolutions especially as there is a strong local party antagonistic to the local organizers of the Conference. In the above circumstances and the possibility of controversial resolutions and possible disturbances, suggestion was made for postponing the Conference for the time being. Surprised that, in such a matter, you should be appealed to on inaccurate information and misleading data. Have issued a communique deprecating any occasion for giving room to public excitement in view of the present international situation." *Vide* also "Telegram to Pattom Thanu Pillai", p. 163.

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188. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ[1]

[*September 5, 1939*][2]

IF EASILY POSSIBLE YOU SHOULD ATTEND MEETING WARDHA EIGHTH.[3]

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 222

189. LETTER TO DR. JIVRAJ N. MEHTA

SIMLA,
September 5, 1939

BHAI JIVRAJ,

You are keeping good watch over my health from all that distance. Ramjibhai[4] showed me your telegram. I was aware that I should not climb any heights and had therefore intended to swallow the bitter draught of riding in a rickshaw. Your wire put the seal on it.

BAPU

[1] In the source, quoting this in his "confidential" Hindi letter dated "Jaipur, September 5, 1939", the addressee says: "Today I tried to contact Simla through trunk call but was unable to get Rajkumaribehn's number. . . . So I have sent an express telegram: 'Arrange Mahadevbhai or Rajkumari phone tonight Jaipur 67 personal. Urge Viceroy if possible for Indian Minister for Jaipur. Inform programme phone number.' . . . I met Shri Maharaja Saheb twice. I will be seeing him again at 12.30 p.m. tomorrow. I hope the ban on the Praja Mandal will be lifted. It is likely that the question of releasing the *kisan* prisoners and removal of the ban on newspapers would also be settled tomorrow. If that is so, I will try and come over. Otherwise, there are good chances of settlement of many of the problems because of the mutual faith and love between us. Perhaps, my absence at this stage may cause some disturbance. So I feel that I should stay put. The help that I want from you for Jaipur is that if you are able to convince the Viceroy that an Indian Dewan should be appointed, then most of the problems can be solved by co-operating with him. . . ." *Vide* also "Jaipur Satyagraha", pp. 177-8.

[2] The telegram was received by the addressee on this date at 8.45 p. m.

[3] *Vide* also p. 163.

[4] The source, however, has "Ramibhai".

[PS.]

I am returning to Segaon today.

DR. JIVRAJ MEHTA
KHAMBHATTA HALL
ALTAMOUNT ROAD
BOMBAY

From the Gujarati original: Jivraj Mehta Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

190. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SIMLA,
September 5, 1939

At Delhi, as I was entraining for Kalka, a big crowd sang in perfect good humour, to the worn-out refrain of "*Mahatma Gandhiki jai*", "We do not want any understanding". I had then my weekly silence. Therefore I merely smiled. And those who were standing on the footboard returned the smile with their smile, whilst they were admonishing me not to have any understanding with the Viceroy. I had also a letter from a Congress Committee giving me similar warning. Neither of these counsellors knew me. I did not need the warning to know my limitations. Apart from the Delhi demonstration and a Congress Committee's warning, it is my duty to tell the public what happened at the interview[2] with H.E. the Viceroy.

I knew that I had no authority to speak for any person except myself.[3] I knew that I had no instructions whatsoever from the Working Committee in the matter. I had answered a telegraphic invitation and taken the first train I could catch. And what is more, with my irrepressible and out-and-out non-violence, I knew that I could not represent the national mind and I should cut a sorry figure if I tried to do so. I told His Excellency as much. Therefore there could be no question of any understanding or negotiation with me. Nor, I saw, had he sent for me to negotiate. I have returned from the Viceregal Lodge

[1] This appeared under the title "The Simla Visit". An A. P. I. report of the statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 5-9-1939, and *The Hindustan Times*, 6-9-1939, as released by Gandhiji in the "afternoon prior to his departure" from Simla.

[2] On September 4, 1939

[3] This sentence is from *The Hindustan Times*.

empty-handed and without any understanding, open or secret. If there is to be any understanding,[1] it would be between the Congress and the Government.

Having, therefore, made my position vis-a-vis the Congress quite clear, I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint. I told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart I am in perpetual quarrel with God that He should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of the daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith even though I may break in the attempt.

And so, as though in anticipation of the agony that was awaiting me, I sent on the 23rd July from Abbottabad the following letter[2] to Herr Hitler.

How I wish that even now he would listen to reason and the appeal from almost the whole of thinking mankind, not excluding the German people themselves. I must refuse to believe that Germans contemplate with equanimity the evacuation of big cities like London for fear of destruction to be wrought by man's inhuman ingenuity. They cannot contemplate with equanimity such destruction of themselves and their own monuments. I am not therefore just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled ?

Yet it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that Congressmen and all other responsible Indians individually and collectively have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama.[3]

Harijan, 9-9-1939

[1] With reference to the war, which broke out on September 3
[2] *Vide* pp. 20-1.
[3] *Vide* also pp. 169-71.

191. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

DELHI,
September 6, 1939

CHI. JAMNALAL,

The Dewan affair is a little difficult. The matter was not mentioned at all in Simla. If you think that your stay there will prove more beneficial, do stay there. Come if you conveniently can.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3004

192. TELEGRAM TO PATTOM THANU PILLAI

SEGAON,
September 8, 1939

RECEIVED LONG WIRE.[2] DEWAN SAYING NO PROHIBITORY ORDER ISSUED ONLY ADVICE GIVEN. POSTING TEXT.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

193. CABLE TO PADEREWSKI[3]

SEGAON,
September 8, 1939

OF COURSE MY WHOLE HEART IS WITH THE POLES IN THE UNEQUAL STRUGGLE IN WHICH THEY ARE ENGAGED FOR THE SAKE OF SAVING THEIR FREEDOM. BUT I AM PAINFULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT

[1] *Vide* also p. 160 and "Jaipur Satyagraha", pp. 177-8.
[2] *Vide* footnote 2, p. 159.
[3] This appeared under the title "To the Brave Poles", as Gandhiji's reply to a "cable from Morges (Switzerland) from Paderewski, the aged ex-President of the Polish Republic and celebrated pianist", which read: "On

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MY WORD CARRIES NO POWER WITH IT. I WISH I HAD THE POWER TO STOP THIS MAD DESTRUCTION THAT IS GOING ON IN EUROPE. I BELONG TO A COUNTRY THAT HAS LOST ITS INDEPENDENCE AND IS STRUGGLING TO BE FREE FROM THE YOKE OF THE GREATEST IMPERIALIST POWER ON EARTH. IT HAS ADOPTED THE UNIQUE METHOD OF NON-VIOLENCE TO REGAIN ITS LOST FREEDOM. THOUGH THE METHOD HAS PROVED ITS EFFICACY TO AN EXTENT, THE GOAL SEEMS FAR OFF. ALL THAT I CAN THEREFORE SEND TO THE BRAVE POLES IS MY HEARTFELT PRAYER FOR THE EARLY TERMINATION OF THEIR FEARFUL TRIAL AND FOR THE GRANT OF THE REQUIRED STRENGTH TO BEAR THE SUFFERING WHOSE VERY CONTEMPLATION MAKES ONE SHUDDER. THEIR CAUSE IS JUST AND THEIR VICTORY CERTAIN. FOR GOD IS ALWAYS THE UPHOLDER OF JUSTICE.

Harijan, 16-9-1939

194. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON,
September 8, 1939

CHI. LILA,

I have your letter. You seem to have formed the habit of whining and complaining. I was relieved after Mahadev had told me the facts about you. You have no difficulty even in Vanita Vishram. Overcrowding, etc., have got to be put up with. You have all the facilities for studying, the teachers take good care of you and you have plenty of scope for working hard. Despite all this, if you still remain unhappy, there is nothing for you and me to do but endure it. Never mind if you could not

---

behalf of a nation who is today defending the sacred right to remain free against a cruel and nameless tyranny, I appeal to you as one of the greatest moral authorities of the world to use your noble influence with your countrymen to gain for Poland their sympathy and friendship. Throughout the thousand years of its history, the Polish nation has always stood for the highest ideals of humanity, for faith, for justice, and peace. In this terrible hour when innumerable innocent women and children are massacred daily, a word of sympathy and encouragement from you, great teacher of your own nation, would profoundly move the heart of every Pole." *Vide* also "Message to the Poles", p. 141.

come. Come during the long vacation. Give the benefit of the short vacation to your brother and sister-in-law and spend the time in studying.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Mahadev has been sent to Ranchi. He is expected back tomorrow.

SHRI LILAVATIBEHN ASAR
C/O SHRI ACHARYA [M.T.] VYAS
NEW ERA SCHOOL
HUGHES ROAD, BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10092. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

195. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 8, 1939

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

You must have got my letter. You can go to the Delhi dairy in October. Ishwardas has written to me. If you want to try him for ten days or longer, please do so. He is a capable man. I met Sardarji[1] at Simla. Mahadev has gone to Ranchi to see Rajendra Babu. He may come here tomorrow. We are all well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1924

196. LETTER TO R. R. DIWAKAR

SEGAON ASHRAM,[2]
September 9, 1939

MY DEAR DIWAKAR,

Of course ahimsa can be organized. But the method of organizing ahimsa is wholly different from that of organizing *himsa*. That I have failed badly shows my own unworthiness.

[1] Datar Singh

[2] The source has this in Hindi.

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My *sadhana*[1] is incomplete. This does not cause despair in me. I must have and do have infinite patience. Faith without patience is an empty thing.

What our conduct in terms of non-violence should be you will see developed in *Harijan.*

Yours,
BAPU

From a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. V, between pp. 200 and 201

197. NOTES

SURPLUS KHADI[2]

Under the impulse of the phenomenal rise in the spinners' wages, voluntarily made by the A. I. S. A., there has been a great output of yarn. It has been difficult everywhere to cope with the khadi thus produced. In Tamil Nadu alone khadi production shot up to nearly 15 lakhs from about five and a half lakhs and the sales increased to only 11 lakhs from nearly nine lakhs. I have already dealt with the difficulty in the U. P.[3] These are only typical instances. The difficulty is almost universal. I have suggested that khadi experts should study this aspect of it in a scientific manner and discover the remedy. This research work, like all other research work, will take time. Meanwhile the surplus stock must be cleared. It is up to the patriotic public to come to the assistance. I have no love for the celebration of my birthday. Any other day is as good or as bad as a birthday. My parents, so far as I recollect, never celebrated the birthdays of their children. I remember the date of my birthday only because I had to take the birth certificate for the London examination. But I never thought of the date until after the rebirth of khadi. Khadi-lovers made the date of my birth an occasion for pushing khadi sales. I did not mind such exploitation of my birthday but tried with more or less success to give it the name of *Rentia Jayanti* so far as the Gujarati-speaking public was concerned. For it was they who first set the vogue for celebrating the date. Ever since, the Khadi

[1] Effort, spiritual striving

[2] In *The Hindustan Times*, 29-9-1939, this appeared as Gandhiji's "appeal", reported by the Assistant Secretary, A. I. S. A., "on the occasion of Gandhiji's 71st birthday".

[3] *Vide* pp. 104-5.

Week has been celebrated in many parts of India for popularizing khadi and village products. Khadi-lovers are setting much store by the forthcoming 2nd October according to the Christian calendar and the 10th October according to the Vikram Samvat. U.P., Tamil Nadu and other provinces have issued khadi *hundis* for which they expect a heavy demand in expectation of the coming celebration. Special fuss is being made because I shall have completed seventy years on those dates, assuming of course that I shall survive till then. But whether I do or not the dates will come unfailingly. And if it is of any value to the public to know it, let them know that my spirit, whether embodied or disembodied, will certainly rejoice to think that there are sufficient men and women in India who will combine always to take up, for the sake of *Daridranarayana*, all the khadi that can be produced by the semi-starved villagers. Let no one plead the war as an excuse for not buying khadi. War or no war, so long as there is life in us, we shall need to feed and clothe ourselves. What can be better than that we cover ourselves with cloth produced through the labours of the needy sisters and brothers of the villages?

Plea for Self-denial

Shri Banker writes to say that the prices of foreign dyes have considerably gone up owing to the war. In order to make khadi attractive, the A. I. S. A. have allowed the use of foreign dyes for colouring khadi cloth. Now if the use of foreign dyes is continued, there will have to be an increase in the price of khadi. The best way of avoiding the increase is for khadi depots to drop the use of foreign dyes and restrict themselves to the use of indigenous dyes and be satisfied with such colours as can be produced therefrom. But this can be done only if the public will, by simplifying their taste, encourage the A. I. S. A. in the experiment. If they will, it is just possible that necessity will be the mother once more of many inventions in the matter of producing beautiful colours from indigenous dyes.

Not Authoritative

The Secretary of the A. I. S. A. draws my attention to my article "Spinners' Wages"[1] in *Harijan* of August 26th regarding the purchase of underpriced yarn of quality below standard. He says in effect:

[1] *Vide* pp. 100-2.

Many people take your word as authoritative, more so in matters of khadi since you are President of the A. I. S. A. Will you not therefore state clearly that your opinion, expressed in *Harijan*, does not in any way affect or alter the resolutions of the A. I.S. A., and that those who have occasion to take up your advice have to do so subject to the previous permission of the Secretary in accordance with the recent resolution of the A. I. S. A. on the subject of prices of yarn?

I need hardly say that I endorse every word of what is said by the Secretary. Whatever I write in *Harijan* has as much authority as any editorial writing has and no more. It must be treated as an individual opinion, always subject to the resolutions passed by competent authority on the subject in question.

Intoxicating Wines in Judaism

When I saw that a claim was registered, and accepted by Dr. Gilder,[1] for the use of spirituous liquors on behalf of Jews, I was much disturbed. For my experience of Jews among whom I had many friends in Johannesburg was wholly against the claim made in Bombay. I therefore wrote to my friend Herr H. Kallenbach to send me an authoritative opinion from the Chief Rabbi in Johannesburg. Here is Dr. Landau's opinion:

> I beg to state that the orthodox Jew may use only specially prepared (*kasher*) wine for the sanctification of the Sabbath or holidays in the Synagogue after Divine Service and at home before meals, and on the two eves of the Passover Festival.
>
> The wine need not be fermented.
>
> I may state that the use of wine is not a law but a tradition which the orthodox Jew cherishes, as it is referred to both in the Talmud and in Jewish Codes of Law.

If the Jews of Bombay accept this opinion as authoritative, they should withdraw their claim and be satisfied with the juice of fresh grapes which I understand is the original meaning of the word wine. It is worthy of note, too, that even this use has the authority, not of the Jewish scriptures but of tradition only.

Segaon, September 10, 1939

Harijan, 16-9-1939

[1] *Vide* p. 24.

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198. LETTER TO HARIVANSH SINGH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 10, 1939

SIR,

I have your letter. I do not find anything alarming in the magazines that you have sent. I am trying my level best to see that there is no harassment by the *kisans*. But the landlords should be prepared to render full justice. I shall try to write on this in *Harijan*.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI HARIVANSH SINGH
TIRWA

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

199. SOURCE OF MY SYMPATHY

The statement[1] made by me just after my interview with H. E. the Viceroy has had a mixed reception. It has been described as sentimental twaddle by one critic and as a statesman-like pronouncement by another. There are variations between the two extremes. I suppose all the critics are right from their own standpoint and all are wrong from the absolute standpoint which in this instance is that of the author. He wrote for nobody's satisfaction but his own. I abide by every word I have said in it. It has no political value, except what every humanitarian opinion may possess. Interrelation of ideas cannot be prevented.

I have a spirited protest from a correspondent. It calls for a reply. I do not reproduce the letter as parts of it I do not understand myself. But there is no difficulty in catching its drift. The main argument is this:

> If you shed tears over the possible destruction of the English Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, have you no tears for the possible destruction of the monuments of

[1] *Vide* pp. 161-2.

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Germany? And why do you sympathize with England and France and not with Germany? Is not Hitler an answer to the ravishing of Germany by the Allied Powers during the last war? If you were a German, had the resourcefulness of Hitler and were a believer in the doctrine of retaliation as the whole world is, you would have done what Hitler is doing. Nazism may be bad. We do not know what it really is. The literature we get is one-sided. But I suggest to you that there is no difference between Chamberlain and Hitler. In Hitler's place Chamberlain would not have acted otherwise. You have done an injustice to Hitler by comparing him with Chamberlain, to the former's disadvantage. Is England's record in India any better than Hitler's in another part of the world in similar circumstances? Hitler is but an infant pupil of the old imperialist England and France. I fancy that your emotion at the Viceregal Lodge had the better of your judgment.

No one perhaps has described English misdeeds more forcibly, subject to truth, than I have. No one has resisted England more effectively, perhaps, than I have. And my desire for and power of resistance remain unabated. But there are seasons for speech and action, as there are seasons for silence and inaction.

In the dictionary of satyagraha there is no enemy. But as I have no desire to prepare a new dictionary for satyagrahis, I use the old words giving them a new meaning. A satyagrahi loves his so-called enemy even as his friend. He owns no enemy. As a satyagrahi, i. e., votary of ahimsa, I must wish well to England. My wishes regarding Germany were, and they still are, irrelevant for the moment. But I have said in a few words in my statement that I would not care to erect the freedom of my country on the remains of despoiled Germany. I should be as much moved by a contemplation of the possible destruction of Germany's monuments. Herr Hitler stands in no need of my sympathy. In assessing the present merits, the past misdeeds of England and the good deeds of Germany are irrelevant. Rightly or wrongly, and irrespective of what the other Powers have done before under similar circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the war. I do not judge his claim. It is highly probable that his right to incorporate Danzig in Germany is beyond question, if the Danzig Germans desire to give up their independent status. It may be that his claim to appropriate the Polish Corridor is a just claim. My complaint is that he will not let

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the claim be examined by an independent tribunal. It is no answer to the rejection of the appeal for submission to arbitration that it came from interested quarters. Even a thief may conceivably make a correct appeal to his fellow-thief. I think I am right in saying that the whole world was anxious that Herr Hitler should allow his demand to be examined by an impartial tribunal. If he succeeds in his design, his success will be no proof of the justness of his claim. It will be proof that the Law of the Jungle is still a great force in human affairs. It will be one more proof that though we humans have changed the form we have not changed the manners of the beast.

I hope it is now clear to my critics that my sympathy for England and France is not a result of momentary emotion or, in cruder language, of hysteria. It is derived from the never-drying fountain of non-violence which my breast has nursed for fifty years. I claim no infallibility for my judgment. All I claim is that my sympathy for England and France is reasoned. I invite those who accept the premises on which my sympathy is based to join me. What shape it should take is another matter. Alone I can but pray. And so I told His Excellency that my sympathy had no concrete value in the face of the concrete destruction that is facing those who are directly engaged in the war.

SEGAON, September 11, 1939

Harijan, 16-9-1939

200. KATHIAWAR STATES

The other day I referred[1] to the series of articles in *The Tribune* suggesting a scheme of confederation of States with special reference to Kathiawar. I had kept the cuttings containing the articles by R. L. H.[2] for the purpose of giving, when the pressure on *Harijan* columns admitted it, a reproduction of the most important extracts from the articles which appeared in *The Tribune* dated 5th and 7th July. The extracts[3], published elsewhere in this issue, should interest both the Princes and the people of Kathiawar. The writer is evidently a friend of the States. He desires reform, not destruction. His scheme is

[1] *Vide* pp. 88-9.
[2] R. L. Handa, *vide* p. 83.
[3] *Vide* Appendix IV.

worthy of serious consideration by all who are interested in the question of the administration of the States.

SEGAON, September 11, 1939

Harijan, 30-9-1939

201. LETTER TO G. N. KANITKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 11, 1939

DEAR BALUKAKA[1],

I excuse you for sending me your long letter and you should excuse me for my inability to follow you. Show the public some tangible result and you will have success. In the days of yore you were doing something even though it was . . .[2]. Now you are propounding schemes and delivering lectures.

What a fall !

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI BALUKAKA KANITKAR
HIND MATA MANDIR
341 SADASHIV, POONA 2

From a photostat: C.W. 968. Courtesy: G. N. Kanitkar

202. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 11, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

I note what you say regarding your birthday. Give the enclosed letters to the persons concerned.

Soon you will have come to the end of your *vanavasa*[3]. Time is flying. Since you keep an account of every moment of your time and are spending it well, you have no problem how to pass it. You still have a lot of work to do. God will grant you a long life for that.

[1] Also known as Sevananda

[2] A word is illegible here.

[3] Literally, 'life in the forest'; here, being away from Gandhiji and doing his duty sincerely

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It is enough that you have followed my point about the *Praveshika*[1]. I am in no great hurry about it.

Kanaiya[2] is really keeping good health. He is always engrossed in some work or other. Pyarelal also entrusts a good deal of work to him.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8561. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

203. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 11, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

I got your letter. Now our only wish should be that Father should be released from his suffering. My advice is that he should be given no food. Let him drink as much water as he can. If he likes, he may take *mosambi* juice, but not milk. This will reduce his suffering to the minimum. See that he sleeps in a properly ventilated room. Encourage him to keep repeating Ramanama. You should sing *bhajans* to him. Persuade Mother to be patient. If you do not lose courage, the others will automatically gain courage. Keep up a smiling face till the end. He who has faith in God never cries. Ba and I are all right. I had been waiting for you. But now I give up that hope.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI VIJAYABEHN OF SEGAON
C/O NARANBHAI VALLABHBHAI PATEL
VARAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7116. Also C.W. 4608. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

[1] The reference seems to be to a booklet on the science of khadi which Gandhiji had asked the addressee to write; *vide* Vol. LXVI, pp. 32-3.

[2] Addressee's son, Kanu

204. REMARKS ON 'A MAHARAJA'S THREAT'[1]

As doubt was raised whether my letter to His Highness the Maharajadhiraja was received or not, I sent a telegram to inquire whether it was received. As the reply[2] came saying that the letter was not received, I recalled the foregoing article which had already been sent to the manager of *Harijan*. Owing to great pressure under which all who are assisting me are working, the article sent for *Harijan Sevak* (Hindustani) was not recalled. Hence I thought that the ends of truth would be served by publishing both my English article and His Highness's reply to my letter. The reply speaks for itself. It substantially confirms what my correspondent said about the *Hidayat* of 1932. It is to be hoped that the *Hidayat* will be repealed at an early date. When the very war which is going on is claimed to be fought for democracy, it ill becomes any prince to curtail the liberty of the people without just cause.

SEGAON, September 12, 1939

Harijan, 16-9-1939

205. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 13, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

What a silly girl you are! You must have received my letter[3] and stopped crying. If you lose heart, then all the others in the family will keep crying and there will be no peace in the house. Thus it depends entirely on you whether or not peace prevails. You have faith in God. For such a person, to die, to live or to be born, all these things are the same. All the three things are momentary. If you understand this much, you will dance with joy all the time. As for Father I have sent a wire. You must have received it. Tell him not to lose courage and

[1] *Vide* pp. 122-4.
[2] *Vide* Appendix IX.
[3] *Vide* p. 173.

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to prove himself worthy of the name he bears. Let him return Home with Narayana's— Rama's — name on his lips. Whatever state he attains after death he will have nothing but peace. Ask him not to worry in the least about those whom he would be leaving behind. Water is the food for him and Ramanama the best medicine. For the present write to me daily.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7117. Also C.W. 4609. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

206. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SEGAON,
September 15, 1939

The Working Committee's statement on the world crisis took four days[2] before it received final shape. Every member expressed his opinion freely on the draft that was, at the Committee's invitation, prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could only be done on a purely non-violent basis. But the Committee had a tremendous responsibility to discharge. It could not take the purely non-violent attitude. It felt that the nation had not imbibed the non-violent spirit requisite for the possession of the strength which disdains to take advantage of the difficulty of the opponent. But in stating the reasons for its conclusion the Committee desired to show the greatest consideration for the English.

[1] This appeared under the title "Gandhiji's Comment on the Manifesto". *The Hindu*, 16-9-1939, reported: "When the *Hindu* representative and other Pressmen approached Gandhiji for his views on the Working Committee's statement, Gandhiji agreed to make a statement and invited them to Segaon for the purpose. Sitting down soon after evening prayers, Gandhiji began drafting his statement. . . . After an hour the statement was ready and as Mr. Mahadev Desai began reading it out, a little party gathered round the hurricane lantern. Gandhiji also joined and, as Mr. Desai proceeded, touched up and corrected the language of the statement here and there. . . . When Mr. Desai had finished reading, one of the Pressmen asked, 'Is that all?' 'Is that not enough?' replied Gandhiji with a smile and retired." For the text of the Manifesto, *vide* Appendix X.

[2] From September 10 to 14

The author of the statement is an artist. Though he cannot be surpassed in his implacable opposition to imperialism in any shape or form, he is a friend of the English people. Indeed he is more English than Indian in his thoughts and make-up. He is often more at home with Englishmen than with his own countrymen. And he is a humanitarian in the sense that he reacts to every wrong, no matter where perpetrated[1]. Though, therefore, he is an ardent nationalist his nationalism is enriched by his fine internationalism. Hence the statement is a manifesto addressed not only to his own countrymen, not only to the British Government and the British people, but it is addressed also to the nations of the world including those that are exploited like India. He has compelled India, through the Working Committee, to think not merely of her own freedom, but of the freedom of all the exploited nations of the world.

The same time that the Committee passed the statement, it appointed a Board[2] of his choice with himself as Chairman to deal with the situation as it may develop from time to time.

I hope that the statement will receive the unanimous support of all the parties among Congressmen. The strongest among them will not find any lack of strength in it. And at this supreme hour in the history of the nation the Congress should believe that there will be no lack of strength in action, if action becomes necessary. It will be a pity if Congressmen engage in petty squabbles and party strife. If anything big or worthy is to come out of the Committee's action, the undivided and unquestioned loyalty of every Congressman is absolutely necessary. I hope too that all other political parties and all communities will join the Committee's demand for a clear declaration of their policy from the British Government with such corresponding action as is possible amidst martial conditions. Recognition of India, and for that matter of all those who are under the British Crown, as free and independent nations seems to me to be the natural corollary of British professions about democracy. If the war means anything less, the co-operation of dependent nations can never be honestly voluntary, unless it were based on non-violence.

All that is required is a mental revolution on the part of British statesmen. To put it still more plainly, all that is required is honest action to implement the declaration of faith in democracy made on the eve of the war, and still being repeated

[1] The source, however, has "perpetuated".

[2] With Abul Kalam Azad and Vallabhbhai Patel as members

from British platforms. Will Great Britain have an unwilling India dragged into the war or a willing ally co-operating with her in the prosecution of a defence of true democracy? The Congress support will mean the greatest moral asset in favour of England and France. For the Congress has no soldiers to offer. The Congress fights not with violent but with non-violent means, however imperfect, however crude the non-violence may be.

Harijan, 23-9-1939

207. LETTER TO DUDABHAI DAFDA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 16, 1939

BHAI DUDABHAI,

I got your letter. I was pained to hear that you married a woman who had already been married once. Try to do whatever you can from there. I am helpless.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3246

208. JAIPUR SATYAGRAHA

Jaipur satyagraha has ended satisfactorily as announced in Sheth Jamnalalji's public statement. He had had several interviews with the Maharaja Saheb. The result has been that the regulation regarding public meetings and processions has been withdrawn. So has the ban on newspapers. Amelioration in several other matters has been assured.[1] For this happy result both the Maharaja and Sheth Jamnalalji deserve to be congratulated — the Maharaja for his just-mindedness and Shethji for his wisdom and moderation in conducting the negotiations on behalf of the Jaipur Praja Mandal. It is a happy ending to a struggle which was conducted with great restraint and calmness. It is a triumph of non-violence. From the very beginning the

[1] According to *The Indian Annual Register, 1939*, Vol. II, pp. 229-30, the main terms of the settlement were: (1) the release of political prisoners, (2) the lifting of the ban on all newspapers, and (3) satisfactory amendment of the Public Societies Act so as to render unnecessary for a society to get itself registered.

demands were restricted to the barest minimum necessary for self-expression and political education. The goal of responsible government has been always kept in view, but it has never been offensively or aggressively advanced as if the insistence was on an immediate grant of full responsibility. The Praja Mandal has wisely recognized its own limitations and the backward state of the people. Practically no political education has been hitherto allowed in many of the Rajputana States. It will be solid gain if civil liberty in its real sense is assured to the people of Jaipur. For this, as much will depend upon the wisdom with which it is used by the people as upon the restraint of the Jaipur authorities.

In this connection Sheth Jamnalalji has raised a most important question. He insists that no European should be appointed Dewan. I have had to perform the painful duty of criticizing the administration of the State by one of its English Dewans[1]. I have no doubt that an English Dewan is any day a misfit in an Indian State. He has to serve an Indian Chief. But retired English officials from whom Dewans are chosen are not by habit used to take orders from Indian Chiefs. They cannot understand the caprices of Indian Princes and will not accommodate themselves to them. The Chiefs themselves never feel at home with English Dewans. Moreover no matter how conscientious they are, Englishmen can never understand the people of the States or have patience with them. And the people can never take the same liberty with them that they can and will with men who are drawn from among themselves. Thus an English Dewan is a double handicap in an Indian State and robs it of what little scope there is left in it for indigenous development. Add to this the fact that the appointment of English Dewans in States is a cruel encroachment upon the very narrow field left for the expression of Indian administrative talent. Supposing Dewanships had been a preserve of retired English officials, we would have missed Sir T. Madhao Rao or Sir Salar Jung, to mention only two among the well-known Dewans of Indian States.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that if H. H. the Maharaja has really a free choice, he will select an Indian known for his integrity, ability and sympathy for popular aspirations. It is to be hoped further that if the choice has to be made by the British Government, they will not impose a European Dewan on the Maharaja.

SEGAON, September 17, 1939

Harijan, 23-9-1939

[1] Sir W. Beauchamp St. John; *vide* Vol. LXVIII.

209. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM K. JERAJANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 17, 1939

BHAI KAKUBHAI,

I have read through the correspondence between you and Bhai Lakshmidas Naye Gandhi[1]. It seems you have not replied to him. Do send your reply if you can. Why did the person who copied it write only on one side? That involves wastage of paper and additional postage.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10857. Courtesy: Purushottam K. Jerajani

210. NOTES

SIROHI

Sirohi is a Rajputana State with a population of 1,86,639 and revenue of Rs. 9,70,000. It has figured in the Press for its lathi charge said to be wholly unprovoked. I have authentic information of the event from Shri Gokulbhai Bhatt who belongs to Sirohi. He has gained a reputation as an efficient teacher and a devoted Congress worker. He is saturated with the spirit of non-violence. He has been recently staying in Sirohi attempting to gain elementary rights for the people. He thus writes about the lathi charge to Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala:

> The events of the 8th instant in Sirohi make it a memorable day for its people. The police swooped down upon a meeting all of a sudden, began to pull down the Praja Mandal flag and delivered a lathi charge. This was not the national flag. When the Hon. Resident, Mr. Lothian, was in Sirohi last February he suggested that we could use the Praja Mandal flag in our office, in our processions and at our meetings.

[1] In *Bapuna Patro–7: Shri Chhaganlal Joshine*, p. 399, Lakshmidas Gandhi, a co-inmate of Chhaganlal Joshi in Thana Jail, has been described as "a satyagrahi of Bombay known as 'Naye Gandhi' ".

And we were acting accordingly. On the 3rd instant the Dewan Saheb prohibited its use in our processions. In order to avoid a breach of the order, we discontinued the procession. There was no prohibition against its use at meetings, so we had it at our meeting. Suddenly appeared the police in great style and, without warning, without any order, began to pull down the flag. Some of the workers held on to it. They could not, however, keep their hold for long against the superior police force. They were separated. I had somehow retained my hold. So they dragged me with the flag. They caught me by the neck and beat me. Then began an indiscriminate lathi charge on the audience. Some notabilities are said to have been inciting the police not to spare the people who said, "You may beat us as much as you like. We will not leave the meeting." Women were also bravely taking part in this struggle. The charge must have lasted about seven minutes. The meeting continued to the end. The event has not demoralized the people. It has put heart into them.

Knowing Shri Gokulbhai as I do, I have no reason to disbelieve his account which is in Gujarati. It reflects no credit upon the Sirohi authorities. I have before me a long list of the grievances of the people. They are trying, in a perfectly constitutional manner, to seek redress. But instead of granting redress the authorities are evidently trying to crush their spirit. If, however, the people have imbibed the right spirit of non-violent resistance, they are bound to gain their end, lathi charges notwithstanding.

A Polish Sister's[1] Agony

In spite of all I am going to try to reach Poland, sailing tonight to Basra in Iraq, then through Turkey and Rumania. The inner call is irresistible. It may seem madness from the ordinary human point of view. Now I am not going for my mother's sake nor for my dearest friends who are now on the battle-fields—ready to die at any moment—it is for Poland itself. I believe countries have also souls. Souls of nations are a reality, not a theory, for me. If I reach the soil of Poland I will feel satisfied, even if I do not find those whom I love. It is the soul (and body) of the nation itself that is in its supreme hour of martyrdom. I believe Poland bleeds and struggles not only for her own rights but for the right, the just, the true; for the freedom of all nations, India including. I feel Hindu to the bottom of my

[1] Wanda Dynowska, also known as Uma

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> heart; Indian as much as Pole, both Motherlands are to be in my soul to the last day of my life. But I could not live if I would not do what is humanly possible to reach the feet of the Mother who is now bleeding in agony of pain. I shall write from the way, but not when I reach the war zone; I shall only think often about you and send mental messages as well as I can. Bapuji, do pray in all fervour of your great loving heart for those thousands of innocent people who suffer incredible pain and misery in Poland. It is these that need most sympathy and blessings and tender thoughts.

This is the letter a Polish sister wrote from Bombay harbour. I have known her for some years. She has become as much Indian as she is Polish. She had decided to work at Maganwadi in the Magan Museum[1]. But the rumours of war upset her. She has an aged mother in Poland whom she could not bring out owing to passport difficulties. When the war actually broke out, she calmed down so far as her mother was concerned. But her highly strung nature would not let her rest whilst her nearest and dearest were in peril of their lives for no offence of theirs. She is herself a believer through and through in non-violence. But her very non-violence made her restless. Her whole soul has rebelled against the wrong, as she thinks, that is being perpetrated against her motherland. So she has gone to find the Poland of her imagination fighting to the last ditch, not for merely preserving her own freedom but for the freedom of all those nations who have lost it. And in this she naturally includes her second love, India. May her dream prove true. If Poland has that measure of uttermost bravery and an equal measure of selflessness, history will forget that she defended herself with violence. Her violence will be counted almost as non-violence.

SEGAON, September 18, 1939

Harijan, 23-9-1939

[1] The Magan Museum of khadi and other village crafts was opened by Gandhiji on December 30, 1938, in memory of Maganlal Gandhi. Besides khadi, there were *gur*-making, paper-making, soap-making, oil-pressing and tanning sections in the museum.

211. TEMPLE-ENTRY

I had a complaint from a sanatanist in Madura regarding the manner in which the celebrated Meenakshi temple was opened. I had forwarded the complaint to Shri Vaidyanatha Aiyar and sent it to another friend too. I got a categorical refutation from the latter.[1] He added in his letter that Shri Vaidyanatha Aiyar was so persecuted by the sanatanists that his nerves were shattered. Thereupon I sent him a long wire urging him not to take to heart what his persecutors may say or do, and that as a religious reformer he had to work with perfect detachment keeping himself unruffled in the midst of persecution and worse. To my wire he sent the following consoling reply:

> With Shri Meenakshi's grace and your blessings acquired usual calmness. Continuing work. Expecting other big temples will follow shortly. Your love and blessings my strongest support.

The reply is characteristic of this great reformer. He is one of the humblest and the most silent among the workers in the cause of removal of untouchability. He is a godfearing man. This is what Shri Brijkrishna Chandiwala of Delhi, who had gone on a pilgrimage to the South, writes of his experience in Madura:

> I stopped seven days in Pondicherry, five in Ramanashram and went as far as Rameshwar. I had a great desire to visit the temples of the South. But I would not enter those that were closed to Harijans. I did, however, see the temples in Madura and Tanjore. The others I contemplated from without. I tarried awhile in front of many of them—and for the first time I realized what the bar sinister must mean to the tens of thousands of Harijans who, though eager for *darshan*[2] could never cross the precincts of the great temples. We who have the right to visit them never think of entering. But this time I was overwhelmed. I felt a longing to visit them and prayed from the depth of my heart that God might move the sanatanists to open the other temples to Harijans so that I too could visit them. I saw, too, at Shri Vaidyanatha Aiyar's house, what temple-entry costs reformers like him. Had I not seen with my own eyes what has been happening to Shri Vaidyanatha

[1] *Vide* pp. 142-3.

[2] Sight of a person or thing considered to be holy

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> Aiyar, I could never have believed that human nature could descend so low as I discovered in Madura. The conduct of the sanatanists towards him has been most unseemly. One of the ways adopted by them is to spread lies about Shri Vaidyanatha Aiyar. But both he and his wife are bearing this persecution bravely.

Only four days ago I had a letter from some ladies of Kumbakonam complaining of the treatment meted out to them by reformers. They asked for an appointment. In the midst of my work I sent them an early appointment, warning them of my views on untouchability. They repented of their wire and said that since I had taken no notice of their complaint, they did not propose to come. I have since read the report in *The Hindu* of the happenings in Shrirangam. Dr. Rajan has given a graphic account of the disgraceful behaviour of the so-called sanatanists there. I have no reason to doubt Dr. Rajan's account. It is a shame that innocent women are being exploited for supporting a wrong. I have a vivid recollection of what used to happen to me during my Harijan tour. No lie was too bad to be spread about me or my tour. So far as I could see, the opposition was confined to a handful only. I never opened a temple until I was satisfied that there was no opposition worth the name from the temple-goers. But the organizers of the opposition resented the very propaganda I was conducting. No doubt their opposition proved fruitless. My point, however, is that it was unscrupulous and violent. If I survived the year's tour, it was no fault of theirs; it was God's grace. Sixty-four charges were recorded against me. Not one of them was true. I am therefore loath to believe the complaints now made about the campaign in the South. I have not found any of them substantiated. Untouchability is itself a lie. Lies are not known to have been supported by truth, even as truth cannot be supported by lies. If it is, it becomes itself a lie. There is no wonder, therefore, that from everywhere evidence continues to pour in that the sanatanist opposition is confined to a few and that the few do not hesitate to resort to any method, however unscrupulous it may be.

Nevertheless the case against untouchability is not to be sustained by the weaknesses of opponents. It has to be supported by purity of character, industry and strictest honesty of reformers and a limitless capacity for sacrifice. For I should not wonder if the wrath of the opponents takes a heavy toll of the lives of reformers. No sacrifice, however great, will deter the reformers from pursuing the God-given mission of ridding Hinduism

of the curse of untouchability. For I must repeat for the thousandth time that Hinduism dies, as it will deserve to die, if untouchability lives. Only let the reformers know that impatience will be fatal to success. They must not open a single temple where a clear majority of temple-goers to a particular temple are demonstrably opposed to its opening. Untouchability will not be removed by the force even of law. It can only be removed when the majority of Hindus realize that it is a crime against God and man and are ashamed of it. In other words, it is a process of conversion, i.e., purification of the Hindu heart. The aid of law has to be invoked when it hinders or interferes with the progress of the reform as when, in spite of the willingness of the trustees and the temple-going public, the law prohibits the opening of a particular temple.

SEGAON, September 18, 1939

Harijan, 23-9-1939

212. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 18, 1939

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD
C/O MINISTER HAFIZ IBRAHIM
LUCKNOW

HOPE BY GOD'S GRACE AND YOUR EFFORT SHIA-SUNNI QUARREL WILL BE AMICABLY SETTLED.[1]

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to President, Tanzeem-ul-Mominin", pp. 58-9.

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213. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 18, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Here is my letter to Chiang Kai-shek. The letter became longer than I had wanted it to be. Perhaps it will be well to send a typed copy with the original.

Mahadev went to Madras yesterday.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1939. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 380

214. LETTER TO RAMAKRISHNA DHOOT

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 18, 1939

MY DEAR RAMAKRISHNA,

The analysis is not what I wanted. It is argumentative. I want an unvarnished examination showing categorically on one sheet of paper what is bad. Your analysis does not absolve me from having to read the original ponderous papers. But need anything be done now? Will not everything be hung up during the war?

Yours,
BAPU

SHRI RAMKISHEN DHOOT
HYDERABAD STATE CONGRESS
SULTAN BAZAR
HYDERABAD DECCAN

From the original: C.W. 10155

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215. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

September 18, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

You must have got Vijaya's and Uttamchand's letters which I sent with Shriman[1] yesterday.

It is time for Sushila to arrive but one cannot say when she will come. There is no news from her.

Bisen[2] should take hip-baths as also sun-baths. He is sure to benefit from them. I would certainly try and see how far they are helpful to him if he comes here some time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10795

216. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 18, 1939

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I have your letter. I hope to be here for the present. I cannot say when and where I may be required to go.

I understand what you say about Brother[3].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2473

[1] Shriman Narayan

[2] Shiv Balak Bisen, who later became Gandhiji's private secretary for some time

[3] Addressee's brother, who was ailing

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217. LETTER TO Y. M. DADOO

SEGAON,
September 19, 1939

MY DEAR DADOO,

I was glad to have your reply. Of course there is no absolute reason why passive resistance should be stopped because war has broken out in Europe. But wisdom may dictate that course. Of this you should be the best judges. I am trying my best to have the enforcement of the obnoxious law postponed. As the letters are delayed, you will use the cable when necessary.[1]

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 4903. Also C.W. 1316. Courtesy: Sushilabehn Gandhi

218. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON,
September 19, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

My blessings on your birthday. You seem to be making fairly rapid progress. The girls also seem to be doing good work. If, however, the people are tempted to pay money only by the sight of the girls, you should consider how far it is desirable to send them out. You can know more by asking the girls themselves. This is only for you. Satish Babu will certainly come. But not Ba. I will think about Mirabehn. Rajkumari is not enthusiastic. I shall consider how the money should be used.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] *Vide* also p. 44.
[2] *Vide* also Vol. LXIX, pp. 420-1.

[PS.]

Is Shambhu Shankar still in prison? What did he do? What is the state of affairs in Palitana? Dhebarbhai may be able to tell you.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8562. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

219. LETTER TO RAMASINHA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 19, 1939

BHAI RAMASINHAJI,

Only today I could reach your letter of August 28. The letter is excellent. If the Garasia brethren really take up the work which you have described, both they and Kathiawar would forge ahead.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5228

220. LETTER TO SURENDRA B. MEDH

SEGAON,
September 19, 1939

CHI. MEDH,

I have your letter. You will see [for yourself] from the letter[1] to Bhai Dadoo that I understand what you say. I am doing all that I can. Manilal must be getting these letters, so I won't be particular in writing to him. What is this about somebody in Boksberg having been killed? There seems to have been some report to that effect in *The Rand Daily Mail*. It seems there too a terrorist gang has come into existence.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4904

[1] *Vide* p. 187.

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221. DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES[1]

[*September 20, 1939*][2]

This Assembly regrets that the British Government have declared India as a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany, without the consent of the Indian people and without consulting this Assembly. The Assembly considers this declaration, made in complete disregard of the opposition from Indian opinion, a contravention of the spirit of Provincial autonomy, as also further measures adopted and laws passed in England and India limiting the powers and activities of Provincial Governments.

The British Government have stated that the war is for the preservation of democracy, but their policy in India militates against this profession. While this Assembly has the fullest sympathy for the cause of democracy and freedom, and condemns the aggression of the Nazi Government on Poland, it cannot offer co-operation in the war, unless the principles of democracy are applied to India and her policy is guided by her people. The Assembly invites the British Government to make a clear declaration that they have decided to regard India as an independent nation entitled to frame her own Charter of Freedom, and to accompany this declaration by suitable action, in so far as this is possible, even in the prevailing war conditions. The Assembly is further of opinion that no war measure or other activity should be undertaken in this Province except with the consent and through the medium of the Provincial Government.

Pilgrimage to Freedom (*1902–1950*), p. 58

222. A STATEMENT[3]

[*September 20, 1939*][4]

1. I (Gandhi) know that my views in regard to unconditional

[1],[2],[3]&[4] K. M. Munshi explains: "With the declaration of war, Central encroachment on Provincial autonomy was inevitable. Sardar Patel, therefore, issued a circular letter to all the Congress Prime Ministers advising them on

co-operation are not shared by the country. The resolution[1] of the Working Committee reflects the Congress opinion properly.

2. Since the Congress is unable, owing to past experience, to give unconditional co-operation, it can only co-operate if it is able to convince the country that it has in substance achieved

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the attitude they should adopt, pending a decision by the A. I. C. C. or the Working Committee. . . . The Working Committee met on September 9 and continued their deliberations till September 15. . . . Gandhiji, at first, was for supporting the British unconditionally, but ultimately he yielded to Jawaharlal Nehru. . . . The Congress Ministries in the Provinces simply could not continue in office for a long period during which they were bound to accept the direction of a Central Government with which they felt no sense of identity. . . . During the time . . . my relations with Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor, had become friendly . . . I tried to prevail upon Sir Roger Lumley to convey to Lord Linlithgow that there should not be any difficulty in meeting the Congress demands, viz., (1) clarification of war aims, (2) assurance as to India's future, and (3) the immediate steps to ensure Congress participation at the Centre. . . . The outlook became gloomy when, on September 18, Kher, like other Congress Premiers, received a letter from Sardar Patel intimating that the Working Committee's statement [Appendix X] should be taken as the background for the time being; that the Ministries should do nothing inconsistent with it and, in particular, should not allow their responsibility as Provincial Governments to be overridden. . . . The more important part of the letter was a directive: Provincial legislatures, or, in default of legislatures, Provincial Governments, should as early as possible pass a resolution, a draft of which was appended. . . . Sir Roger realized the grave implications of the resolution and told me that a resolution of this character would create the impression that the Congress had given up the intention to co-operate in the war. He, therefore, strongly urged that I should point out to Sardar the implications of the course advocated in the letter. I gave Sir Roger's message to Sardar Patel. He, however, told me that the letter had been drawn up by the Congress War Sub-committee and that he could not cancel it without the consent of the other members of the Sub-committee, namely, Nehru and Maulana Azad. He, therefore, advised me to go at once to Wardha and see Gandhiji and Rajendra Prasad who was still there. I left for Wardha the same evening and returned on September 21. Gandhiji gave me a patient hearing, spinning the charkha all the time. I remember to have argued the case at length. When I finished, he told me: 'Munshi, you have presented your case well, but the country will not accept the course of action recommended by you.' He was, however, prepared to modify the peremptory attitude reflected in the resolution. He gave me a statement defining his views on the situation. . . . Gandhiji also gave me a draft of the resolution which would be passed by the Provincial legislatures if a satisfactory solution on the lines indicated was not acceptable to the British Government. . . . As a result of my interview with Gandhiji on September 20 . . . instructions were issued to the Congress Ministries postponing action on the proposed resolution for a week."

[1] *Vide* Appendix VIII.

its purpose and that therefore there is a complete understanding about it between the British Government and the Congress.

3. If there is a real understanding between the British Government and the Congress, it follows that there must be corresponding action even during the war. Thus Ministries must not be mere registering agencies of the measures coming from the Centre. Hence there must be some method at the Centre of having a Congress representation sufficient to give it a majority.

4. The only constitutional way in which the Ministries can declare their position is to obtain the necessary authority of their respective legislatures by getting them to adopt this resolution[1], unless in the mean time they can convince their legislatures that circumstances in terms of 2 and 3 have come into existence which render such resolution unnecessary.

5. If the British Government are serious in their profession that they are fighting for democracy, they cannot marshal the moral opinion of the world in their favour except by declaring that India will be a free and democratic country at the end of the war and that in the mean time it has taken steps to implement the assurances so far as it is practicable under martial conditions.

6. If for some reason, the British Government takes a different view, the Ministries will find it impossible to function.

7. The resolution may be kept back for a week if the members of the War Sub-committee agree. But it must be clearly understood that before the A. I. C. C. meets, the Working Committee which meets on the 4th (October) must have definite material to enable it to give the lead to the A. I. C. C. and the country.

Pilgrimage to Freedom (1902-1950), p. 57

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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223. LETTER TO C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

WARDHA,
September 20, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

A friend unconnected with politics writes to me to say that the labouring population living near the sea and the backwaters are suffering great privations due to want of employment. The writer thinks that if I drew your attention to the matter, relief was likely to be given to these people.

Yours sincerely,

SIR C. P.
TRIVANDRUM

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

224. LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI

WARDHA,
September 20, 1939

DEAR SIR AKBAR,

There is Krishna Sharma of the State Congress under a ban. Should not the ban be now removed? He is suffering distress.

Yours sincerely,

SIR AKBAR HYDARI
HYDERABAD

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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225. LETTER TO PATTOM THANU PILLAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 20, 1939

MY DEAR THANU,

I drop 'Pillay' a bit for brevity. I have gone through all your papers. I am filled with admiration and amazement. You are keeping calm in the midst of the gravest provocation. It is all to the good. It is the most solid progress towards the goal. Therefore go on as you are doing. Make sure that you have no dross in your gold. It does not matter if you are only a few. Rely only on quality. You will quicken the pace of progress. Keep me informed.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10202. Courtesy: Government of Kerala. Also Pattom Thanu Pillai Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

226. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 21, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

I get your letters regularly. You must be growing calmer day by day. Think and realize that birth and death are one and the same thing. This is the normal thing. Death follows birth—birth follows death. In this manner the two ever keep changing places. Why then should we rejoice at one and grieve over the other? The coming of night is the death of day, but we know that day comes after night and so we are not surprised by the way it goes on. Our grief, therefore, is only on account of the separation. But separation is only one member of a pair. Union and separation—separation and union, go hand in hand. This is only an intellectual statement. But it is worth understanding. It will strengthen your faith. What I want to say is that your presence there should have this effect, and no one should grieve and Father should leave with a

smile on his face. He had better take only water. I hope Manubhai[1] will not be permitted to come there. Nanabhai[2] cannot spare him even for a second. What will he do even if he comes?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7118. Also C.W. 4610. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

227. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

WARDHA,
September 22, 1939

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

See the telegram about Rajkot. Please forward it. I think you should stay here, so that your burden may be lightened and we may be able to meet every day and exchange views.

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
BIRLA HOUSE
5 ALBUQUERQUE ROAD, NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 235

228. LETTER TO RAMAKRISHNA BAJAJ

SEGAON,
September 22, 1939

CHI. RAMAKRISHNA,

May you live long and bring credit to Father's[3] name.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3063

[1] Manubhai Pancholi, the addressee's husband who was himself ill
[2] Nrisinhprasad Kalidas Bhatt
[3] Jamnalal Bajaj

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229. *DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF OXFORD GROUP*[1]

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 23/24, 1939

How I wish I had the same enthusiasm that fires you. Of course I have the experience of listening[2], not merely of trying to listen. The more I listen, the more I discover that I am still far away from God. While I can lay down rules, the observance of which is essential for proper listening, the reality still escapes me. When we say we are listening to God and getting answers, though we say it truthfully, there is every possibility there of self-deception. I do not know that I am myself altogether free from self-deception. People sometimes ask me if I may not be mistaken, and I say to them, 'Yes, very likely, what I say may be just a picture of my elongated self before you.'

And then see how one may claim to be God-guided in taking a particular course of action, and another may make the same claim in taking an opposite course of action. I will give you a good illustration. Rajaji, whom you know, at any rate whose name you have heard, is I think unsurpassed in godliness or God-mindedness. Now when I took the 21 days'

[1] This is extracted from "A Word to the Oxford Groupers"; *vide* footnotes 1 and 2, p. 158. Mahadev Desai explains: ". . . six friends came to Wardha on the 23rd of last month. These included a barrister and his wife, an American journalist, a European who was a railway official, and a gifted lady, daughter of a one-time army officer. . . ."

[2] The word 'listening' had special meaning in the language of the Oxford Group. Mahadev Desai says: "Their mission may be described in common parlance as one of thinking aloud and, in their language, of 'spiritual sharing'. 'There is good somewhere in all,' said one of the members, 'and there are different ways of finding that out. For us it is by sharing. . . .' Another member said: 'You have always been listening to God. We feel that the solution of those problems for which you have worked would be reached if all the millions of India would start listening to God. We feel we have a place in this plan and have therefore come to you in joy.' Some of the members described their experiences of changes having come over the lives of men and women by this 'listening in'. . . . 'Whereas people of old used to use the word 'prayer', 'listening in' is the modern word. . . . There was a discussion and Gandhiji spoke out his mind to them."

purificatory fast in the Yeravda Jail in 1933[1] and proclaimed that it was in answer to a call from God, Rajagopalachari came all the way from Madras to dissuade me. He felt sure that I was deluding myself and that I should probably die and, if I did not, I should certainly be demented. Well, you see that I am still alive and of a sound mind. And yet perhaps Rajaji still thinks I was deluded and it was by an accident that I was saved, and I continue to think that I fasted in answer to the still small voice within.

I say this in order to warn you how unwise it may be to believe that you are always listening to God. I am not at all against the endeavour, but I warn you against thinking that this is a kind of 'open sesame' which has just to be shown to the millions. No one will contradict me when I say I have tried my very best to make India listen to the way of God. I have had some success but I am still far away from the goal. When I listen to the testimonies you have given I become cautious and even suspicious. In South Africa a preacher came who after his sermon got people to sign their names under a pledge, which was published in a book, binding them not to drink. Well, I have been witness to numerous of these promises being broken. It was no fault of these people. They signed the pledge under the temporary influence of the preacher's moving eloquence.

This I know that all that glitters is not gold, and also that if a man has really heard the voice of God, there is no sliding back, just as there is no forgetting it by one who has learnt to swim. The listening in must make people's lives daily richer and richer.

Let me not appear to damp your enthusiasm; but if it is to be built on solid rock, it is better that listening in is also based on solid rock.

This listening in presupposes the fitness to listen, and the fitness is acquired after constant and patient striving and waiting on God. Shankaracharya has likened the process to the attempt to empty the sea by means of a drainer small as the point of a blade of grass. This process thus necessarily is endless being carried through birth after birth.

And yet the effort has to be as natural as breathing or the winking of the eyes, which processes happen without our knowing them. The effort coincides with the process of living. I

[1] *Vide* Vol. LV.

commend to you this process of eternal striving which alone can take us face to face with God.[1]

What is India as a nation to do at this juncture? What would you want her to do? How is she to repent? India may say she has committed many sins for which she is suffering and would pray to be given the strength to wipe them out. Or is there anything else at the back of your minds?[2]

Harijan, 7-10-1939

230. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 24, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

The enclosed wire for you to dispose of. It is your special department.

I am off to Simla again.[3] I go only to act as intermediary. You will send me instructions if any. I do hope you will be ready to answer invitation, if it comes.

Love.

BAPU

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

[1] According to Mahadev Desai, the members of the Oxford group returned the next day and "produced another word begging the same rigorous definition and spiritual striving as 'listening in', viz., 'repentance'."

[2] Mahadev Desai adds: "There was no satisfactory reply. 'We should begin listening to God as a whole,' was their reply . . ."

[3] The Viceroy had invited Gandhiji for a second round of talks.

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231. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM K. JERAJANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 24, 1939

BHAI KAKUBHAI,

My blessings are always there for as many khadi bhandars as are opened and for as much khadi as is sold. Moreover Sardar is opening your bhandar. So it is bound to be a success.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10842. Courtesy: Purushottam K. Jerajani

232. HORIZONTAL v. VERTICAL

Prof. J. C. Kumarappa has contributed a thought-provoking article to the *Gram Udyog Patrika* for September. I take from it the following extracts[1] with slight unimportant alterations.

> According to the conception of the economic organization on which the A. I. V. I. A. is based, the villager is taken as the centre around whom the universe revolves. What contributes to his welfare is primary and everything else is secondary. Whatever the merits of a plan may be, if it fails to give employment and thereby direct a due share of the wealth produced towards the villager, it will stand condemned. The result or end of economic activity is wealth production for consumption by the producers. Wealth is usually produced by the intelligent use of the means of production and the application or employment of human talent or power. Planning, in the first instance, consists in the rational co-ordination of these three factors. We may express this mathematically thus: $W = E + M$.
>
> Here W stands for wealth, E for employment of human talent and M for means in the shape of tools, equipment or capital. In this equation, keeping W constant, if M is large, E will have to be small, and *vice versa*, that is, E and M vary inversely. Therefore, in planning,

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

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our first step will have to be the ascertaining of the availability of E and M. . . .

When we look around our country we find E in abundance while M is very scarce and, therefore, if our planning is to be effective, we have to lay our foundation-stone on labour and not on capital. . . .

Most people seem to think that all will be well as long as we produce large quantities of standardized goods. They cannot see that the method of large-scale production can only be employed as a handmaiden of the cottage and village industries, the former supplying the basic needs of the latter on a service basis. . . .

Properly conceived, the State should serve the citizen. The citizen may work for his profit but not so the State. Similarly, the decentralized units may work for profit but not so the centralized units. . . .

It does not do to plan vertically, i. e., emphasizing the functions and thus making them into separate industries, e. g., banking, insurance, etc., which is the way of capitalism. The other way is to take the industries horizontally and study their processes and apply the functional aid at suitable points. The plan of work of the All-India Spinners' Association is a good example of a horizontal system of planning, while a spinning mill is an example of vertical planning. There can be no compromise between these two methods. . . .

ON THE TRAIN TO SIMLA, September 24, 1939

Harijan, 18-11-1939

233. AN INTERESTING STUDY

Shri Shankerlal Banker has sent me the following figures:

DAILY PRODUCTION 38,400 SQ. YDS., ABOUT 11,000 LB.

MILL		KHADI	
Cost at 8.5 as. per lb. ($3\frac{1}{2}$ sq. yds.)	Rs. 5,843	Cost at 30 as. per lb. ($3\frac{1}{2}$ sq. yds.)	Rs. 20,625[1]
Note. Cotton including 16% wastage	4 as.	Note. Cotton	4 as.
All-inclusive charges: spinning	2 as.	Spinning and carding wages	15 as.
All-inclusive charges: weaving	2.5 as.	Weaving wages	8 as.
		Washing, etc.	1 a.
		Establishment charges	2 as.
Total	8.5 as.	Total	30 as.

[1] The source, however, has "20,575".

DETAILS RE. COST

Cotton including 16% wastage	Rs. 2,750	Cotton	Rs. 2,750
All-inclusive charges: spinning	Rs. 1,375	Spinning and carding wages	Rs. 10,313
All-inclusive charges: weaving	Rs. 1,718	Weaving wages	Rs. 5,500
		Washing wages, etc.	Rs. 687
		Establishment charges	Rs. 1,375
	Rs. 5,843		Rs. 20,625[1]
Wage at 2 as. per lb.	Rs. 1,375	Wages	Rs. 16,500
Interest on Rs. 23.1 lacs at 3% for one day	Rs. 190	Interest on Rs. 13.5 lacs	Rs. 111

$$\text{Ratio in the case of wages} = \frac{\text{K } 16{,}500}{\text{M } 1{,}375} = 12 \text{ K} : 1 \text{ M}$$

$$\text{Ratio in the case of interest} = \frac{\text{M } 190}{\text{K } 111} = 1 \text{ K} : 1.7 \text{ M}$$

This is a most revealing study. The cost of converting one lb. of cotton into calico in a mill is 8.5 as. whereas that of converting it into khadi is 30 as. In the one case the spinner and the weaver get between them 4.5 as.; in the other, i.e., khadi, they get 24 as. Which is better to buy—khadi though it seems dear, or the calico though it seems cheap?

ON THE TRAIN TO SIMLA, September 24, 1939

Harijan, 2-12-1939

234. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

NAGPUR,
September 24, 1939

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Don't ask Lilavati[2] or Hansabehn[3] yet about Rajkot.[4] I have written to Perinbehn[5] and asked her to go. I felt I must write to her. Wadia has not refused so far. I have written to Perinbehn that if Wadia refuses I should like her to go. I

[1] The source, however, has "20,575".
[2] Lilavati Munshi
[3] Hansabehn Mehta
[4] To go to Rajkot Rashtriyashala during *Rentia Baras*
[5] Perinbehn Captain

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will write to you and let you know after I hear from her. I have asked for a telegram at Simla.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine , p. 235

235. IS INDIA A MILITARY COUNTRY?

In the interesting broadcast delivered by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces in India on the 5th instant there occurs this passage:

> India is a military country and I am a soldier. It will, therefore, perhaps not be amiss if I give you some personal impressions of what the effect of modernization will be on the personnel of the future army in India. They are not just guess-work but based on what has already been done. With new scientific weapons and with modern vehicles, there will inevitably come new ideas and a new outlook. Modernization is likely to give increased impetus to the already high rate of education in the Indian Army; and when nearly every soldier on discharge returns to his home with a knowledge of motor-cars and machinery, there may well be a perceptible effect upon the age-old methods of agriculture and ways of living. Modernization in the army may therefore have a considerable indirect effect upon the life of India. Many of those who hear me will regret the passing of the horse. No one regrets it more than myself. But as a soldier who knows the fate which awaits the horse in modern warfare, I rejoice for its sake, that one of the greatest and best of friends of man is in future to be spared the horrors of war.

I must wholly, though respectfully, dissent from the view that India is a military country. And I thank God that it is not. It may be that the Commander-in-Chief has a special meaning for the term which I do not know. Or is it that his India is composed of only the Defence Forces under his command? For me the Defence Forces are of the least importance in the make-up of the nation. I need not be reminded that life would be in constant peril if the forces were withdrawn. The forces notwithstanding, life is not free from peril. There are riots, there are murders, there are dacoities, there are raids. The Defence Forces avail little in all these perils. They generally act after the mischief is done. But the gallant Commander-in-Chief looks at things as a soldier. I and, with me, the millions

are untouched by the military spirit. From ages past India has had a military caste in numbers wholly insignificant. That caste has had little to do with the millions. This, however, is not the occasion for examining its contribution to the making of India. All I want to state, with the utmost emphasis at my command, is that the description of India as a military country is wrong. Of all the countries in the world India is the least military. Though I have failed with the Working Committee in persuading them, at this supreme moment, to declare their undying faith in non-violence as the only sovereign remedy for saving mankind from destruction, I have not lost the hope that the masses will refuse to bow to the Moloch of war but will rely upon their capacity for suffering to save the country's honour. How has the undoubted military valour of Poland served her against the superior forces of Germany and Russia? Would Poland unarmed have fared worse if she had met the challenge of these combined forces with the resolution to face death without retaliation? Would the invading forces have taken a heavier toll from an infinitely more valorous Poland? It is highly probable that their essential nature would have made them desist from a wholesale slaughter of innocents.

Of all the organizations of the world the Congress is the best fitted to show it the better way, indeed the only way, to the true life. Its non-violent experiment will have been in vain if, when India wakes up from the present fear, she does not show to the world the way of deliverance from the blood-bath. The criminal waste of life and wealth that is now going on will not be the last if India does not play her natural part by showing that human dignity is best preserved not by developing the capacity to deal destruction but by refusing to retaliate. I have no manner of doubt that if it is possible to train millions in the black art of violence which is the law of the beast, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of regenerate man. Anyway if the Commander-in-Chief will look beyond the Defence Forces, he will discover that the real India is not military but peace-loving.

Nor do I contemplate without uneasiness the prospect of Indian soldiers, trained after the modern manner, taking the motor spirit to their homes. Speed is not the end of life. Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty.

ON THE TRAIN TO SIMLA, September 25, 1939

Harijan, 30-9-1939

236. CONUNDRUMS

Thus asks a well-known Congressman:

1. What is your personal attitude towards this war consistent with non-violence?

2. Is it the same as or different from your attitude during the last war?

3. How could you with your non-violence actively associate with and help the Congress whose policy is based on violence in the present crisis?

4. What is your concrete plan based on non-violence to oppose or prevent this war?

These questions conclude a long friendly complaint about my seeming inconsistencies or my inscrutability. Both are old complaints, perfectly justified from the standpoint of the complainants, wholly unjustified from my own. Therefore my complainants and I must agree to differ. Only this let me say. At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth; I have saved my memory an undue strain; and what is more, whenever I have been obliged to compare my writing even of fifty years ago with the latest, I have discovered no inconsistency between the two. But friends who observe inconsistency will do well to take the meaning that my latest writing may yield unless, of course, they prefer the old. But before making the choice they should try to see if there is not an underlying and abiding consistency between the two seeming inconsistencies.

So far as my inscrutability is concerned, friends should take my assurance that there is never any attempt on my part to suppress my thought when it is relevant. Sometimes it arises from my desire to be brief. And sometimes it must be due to my own ignorance of the subject on which I may be called upon to give an opinion.

To give a typical instance, a friend[1], between whom and me there never is any mental reservation, thus writes[2] in anguish rather than anger:

[1] V. S. Srinivasa Sastri

[2] In a letter dated September 22, addressed to Mahadev Desai

> In the not-improbable event of India being a theatre of war, is Gandhiji prepared to advise his countrymen to bare their breasts to the enemy's sword? A little while ago I would have pledged my word he would do so, but I am not confident any more.

I can only assure him that, notwithstanding my recent writings, he can retain his confidence that I would give the same advice as he expects I would have given before, or as I gave to the Czechs[1] or the Abyssinians[2]. My non-violence is made of stern stuff. It is firmer than the firmest metal known to the scientists. Yet, alas, I am painfully conscious of the fact that it has still not attained its native firmness. If it had, God would have shown me the way to deal with the many local cases of violence that I helplessly witness daily. This is said not in arrogance but in the certain knowledge of the power of perfect non-violence. I will not have the power of non-violence to be underestimated in order to cover my limitations or weaknesses.

Now for a few lines in answer to the foregoing questions.

1. My personal reaction towards this war is one of greater horror than ever before. I was not so disconsolate before as I am today. But the greater horror would prevent me today from becoming the self-appointed recruiting sergeant that I had become during the last war. And yet, strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the Allies. Willy-nilly this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler. Though the part that Russia is playing is painful, let us hope that the unnatural combination will result in a happy though unintended fusion whose shape no one can foretell. Unless the Allies suffer demoralization, of which there is not the slightest indication, this war may be used to end all wars, at any rate of the virulent type that we see today. I have the hope that India, distraught though it is with internal dissensions, will play an effective part in ensuring the desired end and the spread of cleaner democracy than hitherto. This will undoubtedly depend upon how the Working Committee will ultimately act in the real tragedy that is being played on the world stage. We are both actors in and spectators of the drama. My line is cast. Whether I act as a humble guide of the Working Committee or, if I may use the same expression, without offence, of the Government, my guidance will be for the deliberate

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXVII, pp. 404-6.
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXI, pp. 301 and 302.

purpose of taking either or both along the path of non-violence, be the step ever so imperceptible. It is plain that I cannot force the pace either way. I can only use such power as God may endow my head or heart with for the moment.

2. I think I have covered the second question in answering the first.

3. There are degrees of violence as of non-violence. The Working Committee has not wilfully departed from the policy of non-violence. It could not honestly accept the real implications of non-violence. It felt that the vast mass of Congressmen had never clearly understood that in the event of danger from without they were to defend the country by non-violent means. All that they had learnt truly was that they could put up a successful fight, on the whole non-violent, against the British Government. Congressmen have had no training in the use of non-violence in other fields. Thus, for example, they had not yet discovered a sure method of dealing successfully in a non-violent manner with communal riots or goondaism. The argument is final inasmuch as it is based on actual experience.

I would not serve the cause of non-violence, if I deserted my best co-workers because they could not follow me in an extended application of non-violence. I therefore remain with them in the faith that their departure from the non-violent method will be confined to the narrowest field and will be temporary.

4. I have no ready-made concrete plan. For me too this is a new field. Only I have no choice as to the means. It must always be purely non-violent, whether I am closeted with the members of the Working Committee or with the Viceroy. Therefore what I am doing is itself part of the concrete plan. More will be revealed to me from day to day, as all my plans always have been. The famous non-co-operation resolution[1] came to me within less than 24 hours of the meeting of the A. I. C. C. at which it was moved in Calcutta in 1920; and so did practically the Dandi March[2]. The foundation of the first civil resistance under the then known name of passive resistance was laid by accident at a meeting of Indians in Johannesburg in 1906[3] convened for the purpose of finding the means of combating the anti-Asiatic measure of those days. I had gone to the meeting with no preconceived resolution. It was born at the meeting. The creation is still expanding. But assuming

[1] *Vide* Vol. XVIII, pp. 230-1.
[2] On March 12, 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIII.
[3] *Vide* Vol. V, pp. 419-23.

that God had endowed me with full powers (which He never does), I would at once ask the English to lay down arms, free all their vassals, take pride in being called "Little Englanders" and defy all the totalitarians of the world to do their worst. Englishmen will then die unresistingly and go down to history as heroes of non-violence. I would further invite Indians to co-operate with Englishmen in this godly martyrdom. It will be an indissoluble partnership drawn up in letters of the blood of their own bodies, not of their so-called enemies. But I have no such general power. Non-violence is a plant of slow growth. It grows imperceptibly but surely. And even at the risk of being misunderstood, I must act in obedience to "*the still small voice*".

ON THE TRAIN TO SIMLA, September 25, 1939

Harijan, 30-9-1939

237. THE OLD REVOLUTIONARY

Readers of *Harijan* know that after twenty-five years, part of which was spent in jail and sixteen in hiding as an absconder, Sardar Prithvi Singh finds himself a free man. He cannot call a life of freedom those sixteen years of dodging the C. I. D., assuming new names and new dresses as circumstances demanded. The reader will recall that Prithvi Singh made up his mind to discover himself to me last year when I was convalescing in Juhu, to confess his past sins and regulate his future under my guidance. I advised him to surrender himself to the police and purge his past by becoming a prisoner amenable to prison discipline by choice. I had told him that though I would try to secure his discharge, he must not bank upon my success but should be content, if necessary, to pass the rest of his life in prison. Quite cheerfully and light-heartedly he showed his preparedness to face life imprisonment. With sincere conviction he accepted the truth that voluntary imprisonment might be as good service of the country as life outside.

I am glad to be able to say that he was true to his word. The readers know from Mahadev Desai's description of him after his visit to the Sardar in Rawalpindi prison that he was a cent per cent model prisoner. He endeared himself to his jailors who never found misplaced the trust that they had reposed in him. He learnt wool-spinning and cotton-spinning and worked at the first so assiduously that even his powerfully built

body had to take relaxation from strenuous labour. First Pyarelal's and then Mahadev Desai's enthusiastic testimony in favour of Sardar Prithvi Singh's exemplary conduct in the jail decided me. Mahadev Desai felt confident that he could plead the cause successfully before Sir Sikander Hyat Khan. I let him go. Sir Sikander made a generous response. He was impressed with the truth of Mahadev's description, fortified as it was by the uniformly good reports from the officials in charge of Sardar Prithvi Singh. Mahadev knocked also at the Viceregal gates. The result was that Sardar Prithvi Singh was delivered to me by the authorities on the 22nd instant.

I greeted him with the remark that he had transferred himself from one jail to another and harder. He smiled a hearty assent. He knows that he is on his trial. He has been a staunch believer in violence as the only way to the deliverance of his country. He has to his credit examples of daring which may be equalled by some but surpassed by no revolutionary. His life is rich in romance. But by patient introspection he discovered that fundamentally his was a life of falsity, and that true deliverance could never come out of falsity. In spite of the glamour that surrounded his life of hiding and the adoration of his companions who marvelled at his exploits, he had wearied of the false life and the hiding. The gymnastic lessons he gave to hundreds of young men had given him no satisfaction. Fortunately he had companions like Nanabhai of Dakshinamurti. They guided his footsteps towards me. I have told him I will not be satisfied unless he becomes a better example of ahimsa in action than I could ever be. I was never full of *himsa* in action except the *himsa* of a coward. He was *himsa* in action personified. If now he has assimilated ahimsa, his non-violence should be infinitely richer in romance than his past violence. He should by God's grace be a modern exemplar of the proverb: "The greater the sinner the greater the saint." He has shown me authenticated leaves from his diary in which he describes his first night as a voluntary prisoner as death. I pick up the following striking passage from it:

> Today is the day of my surrender when under divine guidance I surrender everything I can call my own. For a period of 25 years I had faced all perils and worked hard to acquire the light which could guide me in the field of service. As a revolutionary of good experience I used to look upon my achievements with pride. 19th May is an eventful day in my life—the day when I realized that by treading the trodden path I would not enrich my nation nor make any contribution

to the uplift of humanity. This 19th May is the day of the greatest adventure of my life. The present life has no charm, no meaning for me. I must have a new life. How can I have it without embracing death? But to embrace death is not the objective. A new life is the objective. But how could I come to it except through death? There was not much room for reason. It was faith which led me to make my choice.

May the freedom the Sardar now enjoys prove that his notes were no creation of a heated imagination but were an expression of a yearning soul.

ON THE TRAIN TO SIMLA, September 25, 1939

Harijan, 30-9-1939

238. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI AND LAKSHMI

Unrevised

ON THE TRAIN,
September 25, 1939

MY DEAR SATYAMURTI,

I reach your letter of 31st ultimo only today.

Much of your argument perhaps now needs no reply.

You are unnecessarily perturbed about Jawaharlal. In spite of his limitations he is as good as gold. Have we all not our own limitations? You do not know how much members of the Working Committee need him. I cannot impose myself on anyone. My services are ungrudgingly given when they are needed.

I am with you for the most part in the matter of the Parliamentary programmes. But there are great difficulties. Let us see.

I hope you are steadily improving.

Love to Lakshmi[1].

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI[2]

CHI. LAKSHMI,

Hope you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Satyamurti's daughter
[2] What follows is in Hindi.

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239. LETTER TO P. KODANDA RAO

ON THE TRAIN,
September 25, 1939

MY DEAR KODANDA RAO,

I have your and your partner's letters of good wishes. I know you too well to underrate your affection. I treasure it. About non-violence, I work in faith and I hope with the detachment prescribed in *Gita*.

My love to you both.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI KODANDA RAO
SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY
POONA 4

From a photostat: G.N. 6285

240. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

ON THE TRAIN,
September 25, 1939

CHI. KAKA,

I have read the accompanying. We should get help. I have assured Margarete[1]. You should write in detail. Remind me when we meet. Shankar must have met you. Wake up Chandan.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7970

[1] Margarete Spiegel

241. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

ON THE TRAIN,
September 25, 1939

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

Hope you are calm. Keep cheerful and take care of your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 678

242. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA

ON THE TRAIN,
September 25, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

I didn't like going away from you. I will try to return soon. Let God's will be done. Keep cheerful. Serve everyone.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10016. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

243. LETTER TO KANCHANBEHN M. SHAH

ON THE TRAIN,
September 25, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

I am sorry that I was not able to talk with you. After I return I will find time at the first opportunity. Try to befriend Amtul Salaam. I hope Munnalal is calm.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8291. Also C.W. 7055. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

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244. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

ON THE TRAIN,
September 25, 1939

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I got your letter. It is good. Sardarji has also written. We shall talk when we meet. The story of the Muslim brothers is interesting. By the time you return from Asafpur, you will know about [the] Delhi [dairy]. You will return home only after finishing the job. I am going to Simla. I shall be there for two or three days. I hope Ishwardas is doing good work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1925

245. LETTER TO Y. M. DADOO

ON THE TRAIN [TO WARDHA],
September 27, 1939

MY DEAR DADOO,

Haji Ismail Bhabha writes complaining that satyagrahis are acting violently, that they had gone to the June meeting taking lethal weapons with them, that they were exploiting Muslim women, etc. I have written to him saying that I am writing to you. I suggest your seeing him. Our duty is to see even the opponent's viewpoint and meet him wherever we can.

I hope things are shaping and proceeding well there.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 4905. Also C.W. 1318. Courtesy: Sushilabehn Gandhi

246. LETTER TO LADY RAZA ALI

[As at] SEGAON,
September 27, 1939

MY DEAR POORVI,

I am writing this on a moving train. Sir Raza[1] told me that you were ailing. I promised to write to you and in order that I may not forget I am writing this now. I hope this will find you fully restored.

Love to you all.

BAPU

LADY RAZA ALI
78 JONES STREET
KIMBERLEY, S. AFRICA

From a photostat: G.N. 7749

247. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

During my last journey to Simla my attention was drawn to the bitterness with which, it was alleged, the Muslim League and its doings were being criticized in some Congress organs. I have not seen any such criticism for the simple reason that I do not see the papers except for a few moments daily. But if there is any ground for such complaint, it should certainly be removed. The Muslim League is a great organization. Its President was at one time an ardent Congressman. He was the rising hope of the Congress. His battles with Lord Willingdon cannot be forgotten. The Jinnah Hall of the Bombay Congress is a standing monument of the President's labours for the Congress and a mark of Congressmen's generous appreciation of his services. The League contains many members who were whole-heartedly with the Congress during the memorable Khilafat days. I refuse to think that these erstwhile comrades can be as bitter in their hearts towards their fellow-workers of yesterday as their speeches

[1] Syed Raza Ali, who was the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa, 1935-38; Member, Central Legislative Assembly, since 1939

and writings of today will show. It is, therefore, wrong of Congressmen and Congress organs if they are bitter against the League or its individual members. The Congress policy of non-violence should put an easy restraint upon the speech, writings and actions of Congressmen in their dealings with the League and its members. They must resolutely believe and hope that sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, there is to be communal unity, not superficial but real and lasting.

Zahid, the late Big Brother's[1] son, who met me in Simla said, "We must not quarrel. Blood is thicker than water. We are of the same blood. You must work for unity." Other Muslim friends who met me during the journey said: "You must bring about unity. You alone can do it. Heaven help us if unity is not achieved in your lifetime." I have a similar message from a great Muslim.

All this may flatter my vanity. But I know that it does humble me. I wish God had given me the power to realize the hope genuinely expressed by so many Muslim friends. I assure them that not a day passes but I think of and pray for the unity. It is neither for want of will nor effort that I have to be a helpless witness of so much bitterness and quarrelling between the two. I have not lost hope that I shall live to see real unity established between not only Hindus and Muslims but all the communities that make India a nation. If I knew the way to achieve it today, I know that I have the will and the strength to take it, however difficult or thorny it may be. I know too that the shortest and the surest way lies through non-violence. Some Muslim friends tell me that Muslims will never subscribe to unadulterated non-violence. With them, they say, violence is as lawful and necessary as non-violence. The use of either depends upon circumstances. It does not need Koranic authority to justify the lawfulness of both. That is the well-known path the world has traversed through the ages. There is no such thing as unadulterated violence in the world. But I have heard it from many Muslim friends that the Koran teaches the use of non-violence.

It regards forbearance as superior to vengeance. The very word Islam means peace, which is non-violence. Badshah Khan[2], a staunch Muslim who never misses his *namaz* and Ramzan, has accepted out-and-out non-violence as his creed. It would be no

[1] Shaukat Ali, who died on November 27, 1938
[2] Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

answer to say that he does not live up to his creed, even as I know to my shame that I do not. If there is difference in our actions, the difference is not one of kind, it is of degree. But argument about non-violence in the holy Koran is an interpolation, not necessary for my thesis.

I hold that for the full play of non-violence only one party need believe in it. Indeed if both believe in it and live up to it, there is no appreciation or demonstration of it. To live at peace with one another is the most natural thing to do. But neither party gains the merit that the exercise of non-violence carries with it. Unfortunately, at the present moment, those Hindus who do not know the use of violence, though they have it in their hearts, are sorry for their incapacity and would fain learn the trick—I won't call it the art—of violence, so as to be able to match what they describe as Muslim violence. And if peace is to be brought about by both parties being equally matched in the use of violence both offensive and defensive, I know that that peace will not come in my lifetime and, if it came, I should not care to be witness of it. It will be an armed peace to be broken at any moment. Such has been the peace in Europe. Is not the present war enough to make one sick of such peace?

Muslim friends who hope much from me will perhaps now recognize my agony for the unattainment of peace in spite of the travail that I have gone through and am still going through. They should also see that my principal work lies through teaching at least the Hindus to learn the art of non-violence unless I can bring the Muslims to the position the Ali Brothers and their associates took up during the Khilafat days. They used to say: "Even if our Hindu brethren cut us to pieces, yet will we love them. They are our kith and kin." The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say: "Muslims of India will never forget the ungrudging and unconditional support that Hindus have given to us at this critical period of our history." I am sure that both Hindus and Muslims of those days are the same today that they were then. But times have changed and with them have changed our manners. I have no shadow of a doubt that our hearts will meet some day. What seems impossible today for us God will make possible tomorrow. For that day I work, live and pray.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, September 28, 1939

Harijan, 7-10-1939

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A Striking Thought

A Pathan friend who met me during the journey, talking about violent deeds, said: "You know the Government is strong enough to put down any violence however organized it may be in our country, but your non-violence is uncanny. You have given our country a wonderful weapon. No Government in the world can put down non-violence." I complimented my visitor on the striking thought he gave me. In one sentence he presented the matchless beauty of non-violence. If only India can understand the full implications of the remark so naturally, so effortlessly made by the Pathan friend, she will become unconquerable in the face of any combination of invaders. Ten to one there will be no raid on a people trained in non-violence. Indeed the weakest State can render itself immune from attack if it learns the art of non-violence. But a small State, no matter how powerfully armed it is, cannot exist in the midst of a powerful combination of well-armed States. It has to be absorbed by or be under the protection of one of the members of such a combination. Well does Badshah Khan say, as reported by Pyarelal during my last tour in his province:

> We would have fared ill if we had not learnt the lesson of non-violence. We have taken it up quite selfishly. We are born fighters and we keep up the tradition by fighting amongst ourselves. Once a murder takes place in a family or a clan it becomes a point of honour to avenge it. There is no such thing generally as forgiveness among us. And so there is avenging and re-avenging and re-re-avenging. And thus the vicious circle never ends. This non-violence has come to us as a positive deliverance.

What is true of the Frontier Province is true of all of us. Without knowing it, we move in the vicious circle of violence. A little reflection and corresponding practice should enable us to get out of the circle.

Narsinghgarh

The reader knows that at the invitation of the Dewan of Narsinghgarh and with the consent of the Secretary of the Central India States Conference I had sent Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

to inquire into certain allegations made against the State. The Rajkumari was given every facility by the State to make what inquiry she liked. Shri Kanhaiyalal Vaidya was present during the enquiry. The Rajkumari's way was made easy by the State giving her every facility. The immediate cause of complaint was soon settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. The Maharaja has given cautious assurances of civil liberty. The people of these States have hitherto been strangers to civil liberty and all it means. I hope the Maharaja and his advisers will remember that civil liberty means the fullest liberty, consistent with non-violence, to speak, write and do what the people like, even though it may mean strong criticism of the acts of the State. He has, however, given full permission to Shri Vaidya to do khadi, Harijan and other constructive work. He has also requested the Rajkumari to send Shri Shankerlal Banker or a representative of the A. I. S. A. to the State in order to explore the possibilities of khadi work in the State which grows plenty of cotton. He has also shown interest in other village industries and basic education. I hope that the beginning so well made will continue uninterrupted, and that the people of Narsinghgarh will show political, economic, social and moral progress on an ever-increasing scale. From the correspondence I had with the Dewan, I have reason to hope for the best. Much will depend upon the sympathy of the Maharaja and his advisers towards all-round progress and the restrained manner in which the workers use the liberty given by the State. I must congratulate the Maharaja and the Dewan on having shown wisdom and courage in calling in the Congress aid (for my aid is virtually Congress aid) for settling their domestic difficulty. This is perhaps the second instance of its kind.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, September 28, 1939

Harijan, 7-10-1939

CWMG-LXX

249. ANSWER TO QUESTION[1]

September 28, 1939

I am an optimist, I have pinned my faith in hope. The world lives on hope and so do I.

I am sure that I shall get something.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-9-1939

250. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

SEGAON,
September 28, 1939

An advance copy of Reuter's summary of the Lords' debate on Indian affairs has been shown to me. Perhaps silence on my part at this juncture would be a distinct disservice both to India and England. I was unprepared for the old familiar flavour in the debate in the shape of drawing comparisons unflattering to the Congress. I maintain that the Congress is an all-inclusive body. Without offence to anybody it can be said of it that it is the one body that has represented for over half a century, without a rival, the vast masses of India irrespective of class or creed. It has not a single interest opposed to that of the Mussalmans or that of the people of the States. Recent years have shown unmistakably that the Congress represents beyond doubt the interests of the people of the States. It is that organization which has asked[3] for a clear definition of the British intentions. If the British are fighting for the freedom of all, then their representatives have to state in the clearest possible terms that the freedom of India is necessarily included in the war aim. The content of such freedom can only be decided by Indians and them alone. Surely it is wrong for Lord Zetland to complain

[1] The source reported that "when Gandhiji passed through Nagpur *en route* to Wardha", he was asked by some people "about his interview with H. E. the Viceroy".

[2] This appeared under the title "Open a New Chapter". The statement was also published by *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Hindu* on September 29.

[3] *Vide* Appendices VIII, X and XI.

as he does, though in gentle terms, that the Congress should, at this juncture when Britain is engaged in a life-and-death struggle, ask for a clear declaration of British intentions. I suggest that the Congress has done nothing strange or less than honourable in asking for such a declaration. Only a free India's help is of value. And the Congress has every right to know that it can go to the people and tell them that at the end of the war India's status as an independent country is as much assured as that of Great Britain. As a friend of the British I, therefore, appeal to English statesmen that they will forget the old language of imperialists and open a new chapter for all those who have been held under imperial bondage.

Harijan, 7-10-1939

251. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON,
September 29, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter after I had sent you the wire. However, I intend to send Rajkumari as I informed you in the wire. She will certainly be of some use. She will see Mr. Gibson and Virawala Saheb, do the work which I have suggested from a humanitarian point of view and such other things. She will visit other places if she likes. Please arrange about her stay, etc. She will not like to run about very much, and, therefore, don't make her do that. Arrange to send her back on the 10th or the 11th.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I got Chhaganlal's letter. I will make arrangements for the money only after consulting you. I will send with Rajkumari whatever yarn I have spun. The rest with anybody who happens to go that side later.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8563. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

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252. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

SEGAON,
September 29, 1939

CHI. KUNVARJI[1],

How are you? I had made inquiries regarding Dharampur. Nobody recommends it. The climate of Dharampur is certainly good, but the sanatorium is not reputed to be good. It would be difficult to get accommodation at Almora. It is reserved only for patients from the United Provinces. If you don't feel comfortable there, we can arrange something in Nagpur. Show this to Jugatram[2] and then write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9728

253. LETTER TO MANUBEHN AND SURENDRA MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
September 29, 1939

CHI. MANUDI, SURENDRA,

Ba gave me the news about Surendra's illness. How is he now? I could not reply to your letter. I am enclosing a letter[3] to Kunvarji. You will forward it to him, won't you? I will be going again to Delhi.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1575. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

[1] Husband of Rami, Harilal Gandhi's daughter
[2] Jugatram Vaidya
[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

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254. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

September 29, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

There can be no post from Simla today. I, therefore, do not know what the position is. There is no letter from Vijaya. Shankar was to come. Why didn't he? Let him have his meal here tomorrow. I will talk with him at 11.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10796

255. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

September 30, 1939

CHI. MUNNALAL,

There may or may not be any sin in touch, but violation of a pledge is a very great sin indeed. If, however, the pledge is violated again, you and Kanchan should quietly leave the Ashram. To enable you to keep the vow, you should not talk with each other, nor work together or take service from each other. I would advise you to go away for some time to Ramana Maharshi's Ashram. If you think that the self-control suggested above is beyond your capacity, you should give up the ambition to cultivate it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8560. Also C.W. 7054. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

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256. TELEGRAM TO G. V. GURJALE[1]

[*September 1939*][2]

RECEIVED LETTER, WIRE. NO RIGHT INTERFERE YOUR RESOLVE.[3] MAY GOD GUIDE YOU KEEP YOUR HEART FREE FROM ANGER.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

257. NOTES

THANKS

Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has made much of my seventy-first birthday. He has sent me his book[4] of praises from friends, known and unknown to me. With it he has been good enough to send also a covering letter of further appreciation. I do not know when I shall have the time to go through all the tributes collected in the volume. I can only pray that God may give me the capacity to live up to the contributors' picture of me whatever it may be. To Sir Sarvepalli and all those who have sent me their blessings and greetings, I return my thanks hereby. It is impossible for me to send personal acknowledgements.

One warning I should like to issue to my admirers. Some would like to erect my statues in public places, some others would have portraits, yet others would proclaim my birthday as a public holiday. C. Rajagopalachari knows me well and so he has wisely vetoed the proposal to declare my birthday a public holiday. These are days of dissensions and discord. I should feel deeply humiliated if my name became in any way an occasion for accentuating them. Avoidance of such opportunity is a real service to the country and me. Statues, photographs and the like have no place today. The only praise I would like and treasure is promotion of

[1] Also known as Bhikshu Nirmalananda

[2] In the source the telegram is kept among the September 1939 items; *vide* also "Letter to G. V. Gurjale", p. 269.

[3] According to Pyarelal, the addressee had decided to go on an indefinite fast unless the trustees of the Sri Kripapuriswarar temple allowed Harijans to enter the temple in accordance with the public wish.

[4] *Mahatma Gandhi—Essays and Reflections on Mahatma Gandhi*

the activities to which my life is dedicated. He or she who does a single act to produce communal harmony or to destroy the demon of untouchability or to advance the cause of the villages, brings me real joy and peace. Workers are striving during these days to dispose of the khadi stock that has accumulated in various khadi bhandars. I can conceive no greater or more tangible blessing to me than to know that the whole of the surplus khadi stock was taken up by the people during the khadi week or fortnight misnamed after me. I am nothing without or apart from my activities.

FURTHER FALSEHOODS

I had the misfortune to remark the other day[1] on the sanatanist propaganda being supported by falsehoods. I have the following wires from Madura and Kumbakonam respectively:

> Srirangam temple being forcibly entered today. Armed Madura temple peons dispersing opposing orthodox worshippers. This is waging war during world war. Pray issue immediate instructions suspending such high-handedness. We have after all to live together. K. R. VENKATARAMA IYER.

> Minister Rajan threatening Harijan-entry Srirangam with police. Pray interference to avoid bloodshed. Inform Rajaji. KUPPUSAMI.

Rajaji happened to be in Wardha when these wires were received. He gave the following reply:

> There is no Harijan-entry being tried in Srirangam. This is impossible without Government consent, and the Government has not yet given any such consent.

In the face of this flat denial I can only regard the wires as figments of imagination. It is noteworthy that there is no complaint from Srirangam itself. Madura and Kumbakonam are too far from Srirangam to know first-hand what may happen there. Trichy is the only town near enough to Srirangam to know events there, if the people interested themselves in the happenings in that temple town. An opposition that requires palpable falsehoods to support it, must be on its last legs. I have seen correspondence which shows that Meenakshi temple has not been boycotted by anybody except a few orthodox Brahmins. It is as popular as ever with the vast mass of temple-going population.

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, October 1, 1939

Harijan, 7-10-1939

[1] *Vide* pp. 182-4.

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258. LACK OF SENSE OF HUMOUR

I cannot resist publishing the following very frank and well-meaning letter addressed to the Editor:

> I earnestly request you to be kind enough to give me a few minutes to clear some of my doubts. I write this letter not as a critic. I am an ardent seeker after truth and one of the many 'Ekalavyas' of Bapuji.
>
> I am rather very much pained to read the following in this week's *Harijan* in the course of a note under the caption "Why Only Prohibition"[1] written by Bapuji: "Therefore if I treated these evils as I have treated the drink evil and if I begin to organize picketing in respect of them, I should lose my caste, lose my mahatmaship and even lose my head which of course has very little value at this time of my life. But as I do not wish to suffer the triple loss, I must allow my correspondent and others like him to think that I am shirking an obvious duty."
>
> I was not prepared for the above note, especially the portion quoted by me, along with his previous writings and my reading of his life. For, I was, and am still, of the opinion that Bapuji stands for 'Truth' and he would be ready to lose any donation whatever it may be, his mahatmaship, his caste and, if necessary, even his head for the sake of Truth, i. e., God.
>
> Now let us examine some of his writings. In his *Autobiography* (Part V, Ch. X) he says when he accepted Dudabhai, an untouchable, and his family, "All monetary help, however, was stopped. . . . With the stopping of monetary help came rumours of proposed social boycott. We were prepared for all this."[2]
>
> This clearly indicates that he was not ready to accept donations or maintain his caste at the cost of his principle, i. e., Truth.
>
> In an article "Truth *v. Brahmacharya*" (*Young India*, February 25, 1926) he says: "My mahatmaship is worthless. It is due to my outward activities, due to my politics, which is the least part of me and is therefore evanescent. What is of abiding worth is my insistence on truth, non-violence and *brahmacharya*."[3] In yet another article he has tried to show the "Handicap of Mahatmaship"[4] (*Young India*, Nov. 8, 1928).

[1] *Vide* pp. 106-7.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, p. 316.
[3] *Vide* Vol. XXX, p. 16.
[4] *Vide* Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 32-4.

What else is necessary to show that he cares naught for his mahatmaship?

Moreover he says in the course of a conversation reported in *Harijan*, August 29, 1936 : "I am here to serve no one else but myself, to find my own realization. . . . Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God."[1] In another place (*Young India*, October 11, 1928) he says: "I know too that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself."[2]

I hope that these are enough to prove that he stands for Truth and not for anything else. It may be perhaps that he does not recognize these evils, viz., gambling, race, cinema, etc., as such or so dangerous as the evil of drink or untouchability to lead an agitation against them, "to wrestle with and against them at the cost of life itself".

Anyhow I am sure that there will be a number of readers of *Harijan* like me who will not be prepared to read a statement like this from the pen of Bapuji. Now I ask you what does he stand for? For donations, caste, mahatmaship, etc., at the cost of Truth, or for Truth at the cost of all these? Will you kindly refer this to Bapuji and correct the misunderstanding created by the above note?

If the writer, who is manifestly a close student of my writings and is himself a schoolmaster, took seriously my note in *Harijan* about gambling, etc., there must be quite a number of other readers who too had the same doubts as the correspondent. The correspondent has quoted enough from my writings to enable him to know that the note was written in a humorous vein. But unfortunately many of us have no sense of humour. Therefore, in order to secure appreciation, humour evidently has to be boldly labelled as such. The readers should have known that by writing the note I had expressed my disapproval of cinemas, races, share market, gambling and the like. I had tried to show also that these vices were fashionable and therefore were not capable of being dealt with like prohibition. I claim to be a practical reformer. I know almost instinctively what vices are ripe for being publicly dealt with. Of course it may be that I lack the courage to tackle the others and cover my cowardice by pleading untimeliness. No man can get over his limitations beyond a point.

But my correspondent has shown from my writings that at the time I had the courage to face unpopularity and loss of everything.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIII, p. 240.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XXXVII, p. 350.

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Let those who might have been disturbed by my innocent note reassure themselves that I retain the same spirit as before to face difficulties and trials in the prosecution of public causes. Time has not weakened it in any way; it has, if possible, strengthened it. But I am humble enough to restrain my ambition and to feel thankful to God for what capacity He has vouchsafed to me for the service of the country and humanity.

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, October 1, 1939

Harijan, 14-10-1939

259. LETTER TO GOBIND DAS CONSUL

ON THE TRAIN,
October 1, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

I have just glanced through your production for five minutes. I have nothing whatsoever to say against the front page or the contents. You have every right to express your views in the manner that may seem best to you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a facsimile: *Mahatma Gandhi—The Great Rogue of India*, between pp. 4 and 5

260. UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE OF TRAVANCORE

An evil fate seems to dog the career of the people of Travancore in so far as they are represented by the State Congress. The Congress is composed of some of its bravest and most self-sacrificing men. But unfortunately there never have been happy relations between them and the able Dewan of the State. The charges brought against him by the Congress in the preliminary stages of the movement for responsible government somehow or other acerbated the relations. The framers of the charges, as I happen to know from personal conversations with them, honestly believed in them. But when I reasoned with them that they were bound to withdraw them if their cause was the attainment of responsible government, and not the removal of the Dewan—a case in which India could not be interested—they saw the wisdom of my advice

and promptly acted upon it. This cleared the ground for them and made their case unassailable. But I feel that the estrangement created by the charges between the Dewan and the leaders has persisted. I wish it had been otherwise. Though civil disobedience has been discontinued and personal talks between the Dewan and the leaders have taken place, cordiality between them has been lacking. On the contrary there has been a ring of distrust about their talks. The Dewan has kept himself at a safe distance from the leaders. Negotiations after a struggle are generally preceded by discharge of prisoners and withdrawal of prosecutions and removal of other disabilities. In Travancore these things have not happened. Cancellations of lawyers' *sanads* and suspension of elected members of the Assembly remain. In fact there is not much sign of an advance by the State towards the leaders. And now comes like a bombshell suspension of negotiations for political reform. These are the words of the Travancore communique[1]:

> For reasons which must be obvious and which have, for instance, influenced the Government of India in their decision[2] regarding the Federal negotiations, no conversations can possibly take place regarding any constitutional reforms until normal conditions are restored and the position is stabilized.

This is followed by the following minatory warning:

> With reference to the statement to the Press issued by the President of the Travancore State Congress and his letter to the Dewan, Government wish to point out that while they do not intend to curb or put a check upon ordinary activities of political organizations and while their ideas are unaltered as to consultations with political organizations and leaders as soon as conditions permit, they cannot possibly allow an organized scheme of agitation to be conducted at this juncture, in view of the present situation and especially the likelihood of increased unemployment owing to war conditions and the public excitement that may be caused by the situation regarding foodstuffs and other commodities. Such a scheme of agitation is bound to give rise to serious repercussions and results, and the Government, who have a duty to protect the law-abiding inhabitants of the State, cannot possibly take the risks involved thereby nor can they at present devote any attention to questions relating to constitutional demands. Government desire

[1] Dated September 23, 1939

[2] Addressing a joint session of both the Houses of the Central Legislature on September 11, the Viceroy had announced that the work in connection with the preparations for Federation were held in suspense in view of the war.

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to warn the Travancore State Congress and other organizations with similar programme that they will be forced to take steps both under the ordinary law and under the Defence of Travancore Proclamation and Rules for maintaining normal conditions and a peaceful atmosphere in the State.

The reason for suspension of contemplated reform is wholly unconvincing. So far as I know in no State has such suspension been thought necessary. Indeed I venture to suggest that the offer of the States to the British Government lacks the spirit assumed to be behind the aims of the Allies, viz., the saving of democracy for the world. The States' offer to be consistent with the time spirit has to carry with it the will and the co-operation of their people. This is clearly impossible if the people of the States do not feel that they are partners with the Princes in the administration of the States. Viewed in this light, the grant to the people of the greatest measure of responsibility consistent with their own safety becomes a first and first-class war measure so far as the States are concerned. And who will say that the people of Travancore, where education has for years been given to the people on a liberal scale, are not ready for shouldering the burden of managing their own affairs? The responsibility in large States can mean no more than that of a big corporation in the Provinces. This suspension of political advance in Travancore on the ground of war comes as a shock and a surprise. What connection political reform in the States has with the suspension of Federation is not easy to understand. But for the opposition of the Princes, the Muslim League and the Congress, Federation would have come long ago; and I make bold to say that the British Government would gladly bring it in today if the three parties desire it. Political reform in the States is overdue and has to come irrespective of Federation.

I mean no offence to the Princes when I say that generally speaking they may in a sense be compared to Herr Hitler. The difference is that they have not his dash, energy, resourcefulness and capacity. Every one of the Princes has the powers of absolute autocrats, and they have times without number exercised such powers. In their own sphere they enjoy powers which the British monarchs have not possessed for centuries. The present British King is merely the first citizen of his country. He cannot arrest a single person at his mere wish. He cannot administer corporal punishment to a single person without coming like any other citizen under the law of the State. This severe

limitation on the British monarchy is rightly the envy of the world. But every Indian Prince is a Hitler in his own State. He can shoot his people without coming under any law. Hitler enjoys no greater powers. If I am not mistaken, the German Constitution does impose some limits on the Fuhrer. Great Britain's position as the self-constituted guardian of democracy is compromised so long as it has more than 500 autocrats as its allies. The Princes will render Great Britain a real service when they can offer their services not as so many autocrats but as true representatives of their people. I venture, therefore, to suggest to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the distinguished constitutional lawyer that he is, that he has ill served the people and the Prince of Travancore and the British Government by suspending political reform and threatening the State Congress with dire consequences if it dares to carry on the contemplated agitation for political advance during these times.

NEW DELHI, October 2, 1939

Harijan, 7-10-1939

261. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

BIRLA HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
October 2, 1939

CHI. AMRIT,

This is just to send you love. We had a boisterous journey —crowds throughout. The Gwalior crowd was the worst. I was calm. I had to take care of my silence. You must not overstrain yourself. I have gone through most of the letters in the file.[1]

Majid must have come. I trust the other files are being looked into. The mail received up to Monday, i. e., of two days, could have been despatched.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3937. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7246

[1] The rest of the letter is in Hindi.

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262. MESSAGE TO BRITISH PEOPLE[1]

October 3, 1939

It will be a very serious tragedy in this tragic war if Britain is found to fail in the very first test of sincerity of her professions about democracy. Do those declarations, or do they not, include the full freedom of India according to the wishes of her people? This is a very simple and elementary question asked by the Congress. The Congress has the right to ask that question. I hope that the answer will be as it is expected by the Congress and, let me say, all those who wish well by Great Britain.

The Hindu, 4-10-1939

263. CABLE TO AGATHA HARRISON

NEW DELHI,
October 5, 1939

AGATHA HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT, ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON

RECEIVED.[2] HAVE WRITTEN REGULARLY AIRMAIL. UNHOPEFUL.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1512

[1] This was sent through *The Manchester Guardian* correspondent in India.

[2] The reference is to the addressee's cable (G.N. 1511) of September 30, which read: "My birthday wish is increased strength your peace work for India and world. Hampered by lack direct information from you."

264. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA,
October 6, 1939

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I have Sushila's letter. No matter what happens and how it happens, we must patiently and cheerfully bear it and do our duty. The letter for Medh is enclosed. Knowing that my Diwali greetings may not reach you with this, I intend to send a few words by cable. Have the two organizations there come together? Manilal and the children must be well now. We shall reach Wardha this evening.

The accompanying is for Medh.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4906

265. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

ON THE TRAIN,
October 6, 1939

CHI. VALJI,

I agree with what Chitre writes about [your] diet. I see you have gained nothing special by staying there. If you come over to Wardha, we can try some other ways. You must get all right. If my suggestion appeals to you, start immediately. If you have no money, borrow some from someone there. I could not understand Chitre's question regarding money.

Blessings from
BAPU

PROF. V. G. DESAI
T. B. SANATORIUM
P. O. VANIVILAS MOHALLA
MYSORE

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7488. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

266. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,
October 6, 1939

CHI. SURU,

I have your letter, but only one. No matter how displeased I may be, I do expect a letter from you both. Is not my displeasure born of my love? There has been no letter from Kanti. That is just like him and so I do not mind. All I want is that both of you remain happy, healthy and pure. May God help you rise.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI SARASWATI GANDHI
C/O SHRI PILLAY
NEYATINKARA
TRAVANCORE

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6177. Also C.W. 3451. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

267. LETTER TO KUNDAR DIWAN

ON THE TRAIN,
October 6, 1939

BHAI KUNDAR,

I do not write to you because Krishnachandra has been writing. Balkrishna will certainly gain strength. Rest and diet are the normal prescription. He complains about lack of sleep. I am thinking of doing something about it. I may ask him to come over to Segaon during the cold season. I shall consult the doctor.

What suggestions can I give you regarding the *takli*? We are reaching Wardha this evening.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 215

268. AN EYE-OPENER

The following note on the development of khadi work in the Ernad taluk up to the end of June 1939 should open the eyes of sceptics as to the possibilities of khadi as a ready-made means of giving remunerative employment to the needy millions:[1]

> Hand-spinning was started by the A. I. S. A. in Ernad taluk as an experimental measure at Pulickal in June 1937. The area has had no tradition for hand-spinning. Therefore, all those who took to hand-spinning had to be taught the art of spinning and carding afresh. . . .
>
> This successful experiment conducted at Pulickal encouraged the A. I. S. A. to include in the Government grant for khadi for 1938-39 a scheme for starting four more centres in the taluk, viz., Nediyiruppu, Pandikkad, Randhani and Tirurangadi. . . . By the end of June 1939 there were 1,233 spinners trained up in the taluk . . .
>
> The total expenditure . . . has come to Rs. 5,830-8-10 . . . The cost of implements itself comes to Rs. 3,482-0-6, the whole of which was met out of the Government grant. . . . Rs. 488-15-9 was spent out of A. I. S. A. funds in the initial stages at Pulickal and other centres. . . .
>
> Due to . . . proper training to spinners, the quality of yarn produced is of a very high standard . . .
>
> From February 1939, while we insisted on quality, we also increased the spinning wages by 17.19 per cent of the cost of yarn. . . .
>
> Efforts are being made to induce the spinners to be habitual wearers of khadi. To facilitate this work yarn deposits are collected from each spinner . . . Khadi . . . at nearly cost price is being issued to spinners in exchange for yarn thus deposited. . . .
>
> A khadi weaving centre is being started at Tirurangadi. . . . There is still a demand from different places for introduction of hand-spinning. A separate scheme for further development of khadi work in the taluk has been submitted as part of the scheme of utilization of the Government grant for 1939-40.

Harijan, 7-10-1939

[1] Only extracts from the note by C. K. Karth, Secretary, A. I. S. A., Ernad, are reproduced here.

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269. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,
October 7, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

I missed you last night. But I was glad to learn that you had gone to fulfil your mission.[1] You will keep your health in proper order and condition. I found the papers in extraordinarily good condition. You will leave there on 11th instant and report yourself in Segaon on 13th. Of course a car will await you at the station.

More from Mahadev.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3660. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6469

270. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

October 7, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

I hope the *Rentia Baras* programme will pass off well under Rajkumari Amrit Kaurbehn's chairmanship. I very much like your decision to make the spinning *yajna* a permanent feature, and I hope large numbers of men and women will welcome it.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] The reference seems to be to her visit to Morvi; *vide* "Famine Work in Morvi", pp. 261-2; also "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", p. 218.

271. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 7, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have a letter from you after a long time. Do not be so slack again. It is all right if you have gone to Varad. As long as one breathes, one should not lose hope. Both the views are correct. The best thing is to rely on Ramanama. And it is also good to put in our best efforts. I am sending your letter to Amritlal. Keep writing to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7119. Also C.W. 4611. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

272. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 7, 1939

CHI. JAMNADAS,

What have you been doing? Why don't you make enough effort to build up your body? How can you afford to feel old at this age? Now stay there and take rest and leave Rajkot only after you have fully recovered your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8565. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

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273. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 8, 1939

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I got your postcard. I had made arrangements for you at Nagpur. But since you went to Miraj, I wired to you not to come away in haste. The poor have but to put up with common hardships. I, therefore, encouraged you to stay on. Now patiently overcome the other difficulties that may arise and see if you derive any benefit. If you do not improve write to me immediately. Keep me informed about your progress. Do not send for the children. The best plan would be for Bali[1] to take them to Bombay.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Surendra will write more from Bombay.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9729

274. INDIA'S ATTITUDE

On the 27th August last, i. e., just before the senseless war broke out, Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya wrote to me as follows:

> I have sent you an appeal through *The Bombay Chronicle*, asking you to voice the attitude of India and of the exploited peoples of the East on the present situation. What I meant was not a mere reiteration of our old position that we can have nothing to do with this imperialist war, but something more than that. The present conflict is mainly centred round the usual scramble for colonies, or spheres of influence as they are now called in polite phraseology. On this question the world thinks there are only two opinions, for it hears only two views: one which believes in the maintaining of the *status quo*; the other which wants a change but on the same basis, in other words, a

[1] Balibehn M. Adalaja, sister of the addressee's mother-in-law

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redistribution of the loot and the right to exploit, which of course means war. It is in the very nature of things that such a redistribution can never come about without an armed conflict. Whether there will be anyone or anything left to enjoy, of course, is another question. But the world is mainly torn between these two. If the thesis of the one is accepted, then that of the other should also be. For, if England and France have the right to rule over large tracts and big nations, then Germany and Italy have an equal right. There is as little moral justification in the former countries crying halt to Hitler as there is in his what he calls his rightful claims.

That there is a third view the world hardly seems to think, for it rarely hears it. And it is so essential that it should find expression: the voice of the people who are mere pawns in the game. Neither Danzig nor the Polish corridor is the issue. The issue is the principle on which the whole of this present Western civilization is based; the right of the strong to rule and exploit the weak. Therefore it is centred round the whole colonial question, and Hitler and Mussolini are never tired of reminding the world of that. And that is exactly the reason why England has raised the cry of the Empire in danger. This question therefore vitally concerns all of us.

We are against the *status quo*. We are fighting against it for we want a change in it. But our alternative is not war for we know that the real solution does not lie there. We have an alternative to offer which is the only solution of this horrible muddle and the key to future world peace. It is this which I would like to be placed before the world. It may seem today like a cry in the wilderness; still we know that it is the voice which will ultimately prevail; and it is those hands which seem so feeble before these mailed fists that will finally reshape a battered humanity.

You are eminently fitted to give voice to it. India has, I think, a peculiar place today in the colonies of the world. It has both a moral prestige and organizational strength enjoyed by few colonies. The others look to it for a lead in many matters. It has already shown to the world a superior technique of struggle whose moral value the world is bound to appreciate some day. India has therefore to tell a very distraught and maddened world that there is another path that humanity must tread if it would save itself from these periodical disasters and bring peace and harmony to a bleeding world. It is only those who have suffered so much against this system and who are bravely struggling to change it that can speak with all the conviction and moral basis necessary, speak not only for themselves but all the exploited peoples of the world.

I am sorry I had not seen Shrimati Kamaladevi's letter to the *Chronicle*. Try as I will, I simply cannot do adequate justice to

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the reading of newspapers. The letter then remained on my file for want of time to deal with it. But I think delay has not affected the object of her letter. Perhaps this is the psychological moment for me to express what is or should be India's attitude. I agree with Kamaladevi's analysis of the motives of the parties to the war. Both are fighting for their existence and for the furtherance of their policies. There is, however, this great difference between the two: however incomplete or equivocal the declarations of the Allies are, the world has interpreted them to mean that they are fighting for saving democracy. Herr Hitler is fighting for the extension of the German boundaries, although he was told that he should allow his claims to be submitted to an impartial tribunal for examination. He contemptuously rejected the way of peace or persuasion and chose that of the sword. Hence my sympathy for the cause of the Allies. But my sympathy must not be interpreted to mean endorsement, in any shape or form, of the doctrine of the sword for the defence even of proved right. Proved right should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, i.e., sanguinary, means. Man may and should shed his own blood for establishing what he considers to be his 'right'. He may not shed the blood of his opponent who disputes his 'right'. India as represented by the Congress has been fighting in order to prove her 'right', not by the sword but by the non-violent method. And she has carved out for herself a unique place and prestige in the world although she is yet far—let us hope, not very far—from the independence of her dream. Her novel method has evidently struck the imagination of the world. It has the right to expect India to play a decisive part in this war, which no people of the world have wanted, by insisting that the peace this time is not to be a mockery designed to share among the victors the spoils of war and to humiliate the vanquished. Jawaharlal Nehru, who has a right to speak for the Congress, has said in stately language that the peace must mean freedom for those who are held in bondage by the imperialist powers of the world. I have every hope that the Congress will also be able to show the world that the power that armaments give to defend right is nothing compared to the power that non-violence gives to do the same thing and that too with better show of reason. Armaments can show no reason, they can make only a pretence of it.

SEGAON, October 9, 1939
Harijan, 14-10-1939

275. TWEEDLEDUM AND TWEEDLEDEE

In dealing with the situation in Travancore last week[1] I omitted to refer to the controversy between the Dewan and the State Congress as to the source of the information on the basis of which I had wired[2] to the Dewan hoping that his notice did not ban the conference that was to be held in Travancore by the State Congress. Shri Thanu Pillai had said that neither he nor any other member of the State Congress was responsible for suggesting that there was any ban. He could not, therefore, say that my telegram to the Dewan was based on such information. In saying this he was quite correct. As a matter of fact, however, my wire was certainly based upon the information contained in Shri Verghese's wire.[3] But there was no suppression of fact by Shri Verghese. Shri Thanu Pillai made his position clear in his letter to the Dewan dated the 23rd ultimo thus:

> In the letter under reference, Government seem to disbelieve my statement that no one from the State Congress informed Gandhiji that there was a ban on the conference. Your contention is at best an inference from a telegram from Gandhiji while my assertion is confined to facts within my knowledge. The following is the substance of the Government communique as communicated by wire to Gandhiji by the Chairman of the Reception Committee: 'Government sprung surprise in issuing Press note this noon in view outbreak war state of emergency arisen necessitating measures safeguarding public peace and avoiding incidents likely creating public excitement or large concourses. Regarding conference preparations being made for processions and demonstrations and as large crowd may gather at conference, Government in public interest call upon conference organizers and all political or other organizations in the State to postpone or stop assemblages at present juncture and until further notice.' Gandhiji might have taken the Government communique calling upon the organizers of the conference and all political or other organizations to postpone or stop such assemblages at the present juncture and until further notice as virtually amounting to prohibiting all meetings and processions. If Government still persists in their contention that the State Congress misled Gandhiji, they should in fairness substantiate it.

[1] *Vide* pp. 225-8.
[2] *Vide* p. 159.
[3] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, p. 108.

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The language according to the Travancore legal form may not mean a ban. I could give it no other meaning. Whether it was technically a ban or not, its effect was that the Congress authorities felt obliged to cancel processions and the other demonstrative part of their programme. If, therefore, there is any difference between the language used by the Dewan in the Government communique and a ban, it is the same that exists between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. It is also suggested that the communique had to be issued because of objections taken to the holding of the conference. Why should a big organization be prevented from functioning properly merely because somebody objects to its so doing? I can only appeal to the Dewan not to harass the leaders of the State Congress beyond the point of endurance. They should not be made useless even for constructive constitutional activities. This is their humble programme:

> This conference resolves that the immediate programme of the State Congress will be:
>
> 1. Intense, systematic and countrywide propaganda for educating the people on the issue of responsible government.
> 2. The strengthening of the State Congress organization throughout the State and putting the same on self-reliant and permanent foundations.
> 3. Real and effective mass contact through a carefully planned programme, emphasizing a mass literacy campaign, khadi and swadeshi and prohibition.
> 4. Establishment of a permanent volunteer and *desh-sevika* service.
> 5. Opening of centres or camps for a minimum period of training for workers in the various programmes outlined above.
>
> In order to leave no room for doubt, this conference has to point out that the above programme will be wholly constitutional, and that the State Congress has no intention of creating a conflict with Government in the prosecuting of the above programme. The object of the above programme is to make the constitutional demand of the people irresistible.

They do not ask for immediate responsible government. Surely they have every right to educate the people along the lines of responsible government. It should be a proud day for the Travancore Maharaja and for his people when it can be said of the latter that by patient and quiet training they made themselves fit to shoulder the responsibility of managing the affairs of their State.

SEGAON, October 9, 1939

Harijan, 14-10-1939

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276. A MINISTER'S DREAM

If you can give a message or direction to the Provincial Governments and the people to see that spinning and weaving are made compulsory for boys and girls in all the schools, I have no doubt that within a short time the children of schools will be wearing cloth made by themselves. This will be the first step. I have not lost faith in your ideals and I am hoping to see that each home will make its own cloth and each village will become self-sufficient not only with regard to cloth but also every other article of necessity under your village industries scheme and education scheme. I believe with you that real swaraj in this land can be established only when the budget of the villager is balanced alongside of the budget of the Provincial Government or that of the Government of India which is brought about by artificial adjustments and manipulations generally.

Thus writes a Congress Minister. If I had the powers of an autocrat, I would certainly make hand-spinning compulsory in at least the primary schools. A Minister who has the faith should do so. There are several useless things made compulsory in our schools. Why should not this most useful art be made compulsory? But nothing can be made compulsory in a democratic system, if it is not widely popular. Thus compulsion in democracy is only so called. It removes laziness, it does not force the will. Such compulsion is an educative process. I suggest a milder preliminary course. Let there be prizes given to the best spinner. This competition will induce many if not all to take part in it. No plan will succeed if the schoolmasters themselves have no faith in it. If basic education is accepted by the Provincial Governments, hand-spinning and the like is not merely part of the curriculum, it is the vehicle of education. If basic education takes root, khadi surely becomes universal and comparatively cheap in this afflicted land of ours.

SEGAON, October 9, 1939

Harijan, 14-10-1939

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277. THE UNBRIDGEABLE GULF

The following letter comes from a friend:

> In the *Harijan* dated 30-9-1939, on page 1 at the end of your article[1], you write: "Speed is not the end of life. Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty."
>
> And then you subscribe: "On the train to Simla". I am surprised that, with all the fund of humour you possess, you could not see how the words "On the *train* to Simla" pointed the finger of ridicule to the statement "Man sees more and lives more truly by *walking* to his duty."

Time was when this friend used to believe in my method and was a valuable supporter. Somehow or other I have now fallen from grace. He should have had no difficulty in following the rich humour behind the writing which he exposes to ridicule. But I must deprive the ridicule of its sting by informing my friend that I was in my senses when I wrote the note referred to. I might easily have avoided the exact place where it was penned. But I wanted to add point to my remark and to discover to the reader the vast gulf that separates me from my ideal. Let the waverers take heart from the fact that though my note containing the flat contradiction of the ideal has provided my friend with mirth, I have got the credit for trying my best to live up to the ideals I may profess. If I am to make an ever-increasing approach to my ideal, I must let the world see my weaknesses and failures so that I may be saved from hypocrisy and so that even for very shame I would try my utmost to realize the ideal. The contradiction pointed out by the friend also shows that between the ideal and practice there always must be an unbridgeable gulf. The ideal will cease to be one if it becomes possible to realize it. The pleasure lies in making the effort, not in its fulfilment. For, in our progress towards the goal we ever see more and more enchanting scenery.

Coming, however, to the friend's gibe let me tell him and the reader that I could pen those lines because it is never a pleasure to me to travel by motor or rail or even a cart. It is always a pleasure to walk. Nor should I mind in the least if every rail was removed and men, except the sick and the maimed, had to walk to their businesses. I can not only imagine but am working for a civilization

[1] *Vide* pp. 201-2.

in which possession of a car will be considered no merit and railways will find no place. It would not be for me an unhappy event if the world became once more as large as it used to be at one time. *Hind Swaraj* was written in 1909[1]. Since then it has undergone many editions and has been translated in many languages of the world. I was asked last year by Shrimati Sophia Wadia to write a foreword[2] for the edition that she was bringing out. I had the pleasure, therefore, of having to re-read it carefully. The reader may know that I could not revise a single idea. I had no desire to revise the language. It is a fair translation of the original in Gujarati. The key to understand that incredibly simple (so simple as to be regarded foolish) booklet is to realize that it is not an attempt to go back to the so-called ignorant, dark ages. But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness. I have pictured that as my ideal. I shall never reach it myself and hence cannot expect the nation to do so. But the modern rage for variety, for flying through the air, for multiplicity of wants, etc., have no fascination for me. They deaden the inner being in us. The giddy heights which man's ingenuity is attempting, take us away from our Maker who is nearer to us than the nails are to the flesh which they cover.

Therefore even whilst I am travelling at the rate of 40 miles per hour, I am conscious that it is a necessary evil, and that my best work is to be done in little Segaon containing 700 souls, and in the neighbouring villages to which I can walk. But being a highly practical man I do not avoid railway travelling or motoring for the mere sake of looking foolishly consistent.[3] Let the reader know that during the hurricane Harijan tours[4] that Thakkar Bapa had arranged for me I had gently suggested to him that I would like to do the whole of the year's tour on foot. He would not listen. And we had violent demonstrations during the tour. Twice or oftener we escaped serious injury and it might have been even death. When we reached Puri[5], there was fear of bloodshed. So I put my foot down and insisted on performing the remaining pilgrimage on foot. Thakkar Bapa readily consented.[6] Well, the demonstrators

[1] The source, however, has "1908"; *vide* Vol. X.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXVII, pp. 169-70.

[3] In "Self-reliance", R. W. Emerson says: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do."

[4] From November 7, 1933 to August 2, 1934

[5] On May 7, 1934; *vide* Vol. LVII.

[6] Gandhiji commenced his walking tour from May 9, 1934.

who were prepared only for demonstrations by rail and motor could not overtake the pilgrims who covered only 8 to 10 miles per day in two stages. This was the most effective part of our tour. The awakening was solid. Our experiences were rich. And the demonstrators had no excitement left for them. They had no desire to kill me in cold blood. They were out for sensations. Sensations are not to be had with non-violent men and women walking to their mission without any fear of man and in the certain knowledge of having God as their infallible Guide and Protector.

SEGAON, October 10, 1939

Harijan, 14-10-1939

278. ON TRIAL

In the course of the conversation with the members of the Working Committee, I discovered that their non-violence had never gone beyond fighting the British Government with that weapon. I had hugged the belief that Congressmen had appreciated the logical result of the practice of non-violence for the past twenty years in fighting the biggest imperialist power in the world. But in great experiments like that of non-violence, hypothetical questions have hardly any play. I myself used to say in answer to questions that when we had actually acquired independence we would know whether we could defend ourselves non-violently or not. But today the question is no longer hypothetical. Whether there is on the part of the British Government a favourable declaration or not, the Congress has to decide upon the course it would adopt in the event of an invasion of India. For, though there may be no settlement with the Government, the Congress has to declare its policy and say whether it would fight the invading host violently or non-violently.

So far as I can read the Working Committee's mind after a fairly full discussion, the members think that Congressmen are unprepared for non-violent defence against armed invasion.

This is tragic. Surely the means adopted for driving an enemy from one's house must, more or less, coincide with those to be adopted for keeping him out of the house. If anything, the latter process must be easier. The fact, however, is that our fight has not been one of non-violent resistance of the strong. It has been one of passive resistance of the weak. Therefore there is no spontaneous response in our hearts, at this supreme moment, to an undying faith in the efficacy of non-violence. The Working Committee, therefore, wisely said that they were not ready for the logical step.

The tragedy of the situation is that, if the Congress is to throw in its lot with those who believe in the necessity of armed defence of India, the past twenty years will have been years of gross neglect of the primary duty of Congressmen to learn the science of armed warfare. And I fear that history will hold me, as the general of the fight, responsible for the tragedy. The future historian will say that I should have perceived that the nation was learning not non-violence of the strong but merely passivity of the weak and I should have, therefore, provided for Congressmen's military training.

Being obsessed with the idea that somehow or other India will learn true non-violence, it would not occur to me to invite my co-workers to train themselves for armed defence. On the contrary, I used to discountenance all sword-play and the display of stout lathis. Nor am I even now repentant for the past. I have the unquenchable faith that, of all the countries in the world, India is the one country which can learn the art of non-violence, that if the test were applied even now, there would be found, perhaps, thousands of men and women who would be willing to die without harbouring malice against their persecutors. I have harangued crowds and told them repeatedly that they might have to suffer much including death by shooting. Did not thousands of men and women brave hardships during the salt campaign equal to any that soldiers are called upon to bear? No different capacity is required from what has been already evinced, if India has to contend against an invader. Only it will have to be on a vaster scale.

One thing ought not to be forgotten. India unarmed would not require to be destroyed through poison gas or bombardment. It is the Maginot line that has made the Siegfried line necessary, and *vice versa*. Defence of India by the present methods has been necessary because she is an appendage of Britain. Free India can have no enemy. And if her people have learnt the art of saying resolutely 'No' and acting up to it, I dare say, no one would want to invade her. Our economy would be so modelled as to prove no temptation for the exploiter.

But some Congressmen will say: 'Apart from the British, India has so many martial races within her border that they will want to put up a fight for the country which is as much theirs as ours.' This is perfectly true. I am, therefore, talking for the moment only of Congressmen. How would they act in the event of an invasion? We shall never convert the whole of India to our creed unless we are prepared to die for it.

The opposite course appals me. Already the bulk of the army is manned by the Mussalmans of the North, Sikhs and Gurkhas.

If the masses of the South and the Centre wish to become militarized, the Congress, which is supposed to represent them, will have to enter into competition with them. The Congress will then have to be party to an enormous military budget. There may be all these things without the Congress consent. It will make all the difference in the world whether the Congress is party to them or not. The world is looking for something new and unique from India. The Congress will be lost in the crowd if it wears the same old outworn armour that the world is wearing today. The Congress has a name because it represents non-violence as a political weapon *par excellence*. If the Congress helps the Allies as a representative of non-violence, it will give to the Allied cause a prestige and a power which will be invaluable in deciding the ultimate fate of the war. But the members of the Working Committee have honestly and bravely not made the profession of such non-violence.

My position is, therefore, confined to myself alone. I have to find out whether I have any fellow-traveller along the lonely path. If I am in the minority of one, I must try to make converts. Whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race for armaments is to court suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence the last hope of the world will be gone. I must live up to the creed I have professed for the last half a century and hope to the last breath that India will make non-violence her creed, preserve man's dignity, and prevent him from reverting to the type from which he is supposed to have raised himself.

SEGAON, October 10, 1939

Harijan, 14-10-1939

279. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 10, 1939

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

I have your letter. You seem to have done good work.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Ashrami Kelavani, p. 70

280. DISCUSSION WITH A FRIEND[1]

SEGAON,
[On or after *October 10, 1939*][2]

FRIEND: We have been out-and-out Gandhi-ites for several years and we do not know what we are to do at this juncture. The Working Committee's resolution has puzzled us.

GANDHIJI: But let me know what you mean by 'out-and-out Gandhi-ites'.

Those who are prepared to follow your principles through thick and thin.

Well, then let me tell you, I am not one myself, for in my practice I am far from what I have conceived as the ideals of truth and non-violence.

I quite see what you mean. I simply wanted to say that in our humble way we were trying to do constructive work as shown by you. What are we to do if civil disobedience comes? We voted for the A. I. C. C. resolution[3] because it was the official resolution sponsored by Rajendra Babu, Sardar and others. But when we think of non-violence we do not see how we could have voted for it.

There was nothing against non-violence in voting for the resolution. What you will do is of consequence. And, as you will see from the next *Harijan*, I am writing[4] for friends like you. You will see the position developed from week to week. But I can sum it up for you. There is no question of civil disobedience for there is no atmosphere for it—at any rate there is no question of civil disobedience in the aggressive sense as we launched in 1930 and 1932. We might have to offer it if all constructive work was made impossible, that is to say, if grave irritation was given by Government. I fear no such thing. At

[1] &[2] The discussion is extracted from "Out-and-Out Gandhi-ite" by Mahadev Desai, who explains: "A friend who is running a rural work centre for some years, and who having come for the A. I. C.C., had come to Segaon to see Gandhiji." The A. I. C. C. session was held in Wardha on October 9 and 10.

[3] *Vide* Appendix XI.

[4] *Vide* pp. 249-50.

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any rate I will not keep 'Gandhi-ites' in the dark. You should make a point of following carefully what I write every week.

But my difficulty is this. We believe implicitly in developing strength through constructive work which is non-violence in action. But as we are part and parcel of the Congress, they may come down with a heavy hand on our ashrams and take possession of them as they did in 1930.

It will depend on what the Congress will do. Supposing what is unlikely happens and the Congress decides upon a course of aggressive civil disobedience, for which as I have said there is no atmosphere, you will have to isolate your ashram from the Congress, that is to say, you may have to secede from the Congress even at the risk of being labelled as 'cowards'.

I see, I see. There is one thing more about which I wanted to ask you. We have quarrels in the course of our day-to-day work in the ashram.

Therefore, you see, you are far from being 'out-and-out Gandhi-ites'.

No, but we have implicit faith in your teachings, and it is only in that sense that I used that term.

But if in spite of that faith they quarrel, then they have not understood even the A.B.C. of 'Gandhism'. What is faith worth if it is not translated into action?

We may not go about parroting truth and non-violence and steering clear of them in daily life. Take the law of gravitation. The discovery of the law led to numerous other discoveries based on that law. Even so unless you go on discovering new applications of the law of non-violence you do not profit by it. You have to reduce it to a science. To say that you have bickerings in the ashram which make smooth work impossible or difficult, is to say that non-violence is not being practised. Don't you go away with the impression that we have no bickerings here in Segaon. We have them, and that is why I said that I was not an 'out-and-out Gandhi-ite'. But if I seriously thought that these bickerings would make communal life impossible, I might close down the institution. It is not an improbability. I should not shirk that duty if the idea possessed me. Well, that is only to say that the difficulties are enormous everywhere. Let God guide you and me and us all.

Harijan, 28-10-1939

281. LETTER TO HARIBHAU G. PHATAK

SEGAON,
October 12, 1939

MY DEAR HARIBHAU,

You have done well in writing as you have. What Tatyaji[1] told you is an old complaint. There is no arrogance in me. I do not plead guilty. I do not even understand his allusions. What is this about parties given to me? I have tried to woo him and his friends. I have walked to Savarkar's house. I have gone out of my way to win him over. But I have failed. Having heard me, it is now for you to tell me what I should do to conquer them[2].

I shall glance through your book as soon as I receive it.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 2802. Courtesy: Haribhau G. Phatak

282. LETTER TO DR. B. C. ROY

October 12, 1939

DEAR DR. BIDHAN,

I know your partiality for me. But I feel utterly unable to shoulder the burden.[3] Jawaharlal is the only man with drive to take my place. His difference of outlook will be softened. But what does it matter, if he carries your minds with him in his new ideas? We shall not get a more open and sincere man

[1] Presumably N. C. Kelkar. This honorific was also given to V. D. Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha.

[2] V. D. Savarkar, Chimanlal Setalvad, Cowasji Jehangir, V. N. Chandavarkar (Liberals), N. C. Kelkar and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had issued a statement from Bombay on October 2, expressing the view that the Congress and the Muslim League did not represent the whole or even the bulk of India and that any constitutional or administrative arrangement arrived at between the Government and the Congress and the Muslim League could not be binding on the Indian people.

[3] The addressee had insisted that Gandhiji himself should take over the command of the Congress.

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than Jawaharlal with his driving power. Make therefore what use you can of me through him. I have hitherto influenced the country through the Committee. Now I must do so to the extent that I influence Jawaharlal. Don't you agree?

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

283. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 12, 1939

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I have your letter. If you are feeling better there, it is certainly advisable to stay on. If you ask Rami to leave you, what will you do about your meals? If you can make some arrangement for that, you may let her go. There is no sanatorium in Nagpur. But the T. B. specialist is a competent, experienced and philanthropic doctor. Balkoba and Mathew were treated by him. You will stay at Wardha, i.e., in Segaon, or wherever else I arrange. Hence if you do not feel better, come over. Let the doctor there examine you. If you come here, Rami need not accompany you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9730

284. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SEGAON,
October 13, 1939

I regard the recent resolution[2] of the A. I. C. C. on the situation as moderate and wise. It was bound to reiterate the Congress demand for an unequivocal declaration. Its merit lies in not fixing any time-limit for the declaration. It is noteworthy that the resolution was carried by a majority of three to one. It is to be hoped that the British Government will appreciate the friendly spirit in which the Congress is approaching the situation. It is to be hoped also that the Europeans of India

[1] This appeared under the title "Notes", sub-title, "The A. I. C. C. Resolution". The statement was also published in *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Hindu* on October 14.

[2] *Vide* Appendix XI.

will range themselves alongside of the Congress. But the greatest help can only come from Congressmen themselves. If they do not act on the square, no external sympathy and even help will be of any avail. I see that impatience has seized some Congressmen who want to be doing something to signify their opposition to a war which they believe to be for defending imperialism. I suggest to them that they will be defeating the common purpose by acting in opposition to the Congress decision expressed in the only way open to a democratic organization. They had their say at the A. I. C. C. meeting. They are in honour bound to defer direct action till the Working Committee or the A. I. C. C. decides otherwise. No reliance can be placed upon an organization which is not able to exercise effective control over its members. Imagine an army whose soldiers, under the false belief that they are advancing the common cause, adopt measures in defiance of those taken by the headquarters. Such action may well spell defeat. Therefore I beseech Congressmen at this critical juncture to desist from any action that would savour of indiscipline or defiance. They should surely see that by such action they undermine Congress prestige and weaken its influence.

Harijan, 21-10-1939

285. FALLACY ABOUT SUGAR

The following article by Shri Gajanan Naik on the superiority of palms over cane and beetroot for the purpose of yielding sugar is presented for the criticism of sugar experts:[1]

> Sugar in its pure form is composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen (C_{12} H_{22} O_{11}). As such it does not take anything from the soil, but the crops now mainly cultivated for extracting sugar, viz., the beet and the cane, require for their development a number of substances from the soil in which they grow. Therefore their culture exhausts the soil. What is worse still is that the space now occupied by the beet in Europe and the cane in the tropics, might and ought to serve for the culture of food and fodder crops. . . .
>
> But people must have sugar. Is there a way of getting it without encroaching on the soil fit for superior crops? Yes—according to the opinion expressed by Mr. Devry at the Congress of Giessen. (Watt's

[1] Only extracts from the article by Gajanan Naik, Head of the Gur Department, A. I. V. I. A., are reproduced here.

Dictionary of the Economic Products of India, Vol. I, pp. 301-4.) He says that palms can supply the required sugar for they can be grown on inferior soil where even to try to grow cereals would be a vain endeavour.

The statement throws much light on the place of the palm for the *gur* industry. It would be wrong to take it only as a philanthropic proposition for exploring avenues of employment for the toddy-tappers who will be rendered idle through prohibition. . . . It has immense potentialities in the economics of national agriculture. . . .

Sugarcane cannot be grown with profit in the same field year after year. It has to be rotated with some cereal. . . . Cane has to be cultivated year after year while palms once planted yield sugar for 20 to 50 years. Heavy manuring and regular watering are required for cane while palms require neither. . . . Palm plantations are not affected by wind, flood or shortage of rain. Moreover, and this is very important, factory-made apparatus, such as crushers are indispensable in cane *gur* making while the accessories necessary for palm *gur* manufacture are procurable locally in villages, and their cost is negligible as compared with those used for cane *gur*.

Harijan, 14-10-1939

286. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 14, 1939

DEAR MAULANA SAHEB,

We must declare our policy in this matter[1] or do something.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] The reference is to a letter dated October 9 from Mahomed Yunus, leader of the Muslim Independent Party in the Bihar Legislative Assembly who had said: "In continuation of my previous correspondence on the subject of Hindu-Muslim unity, may I again draw your attention to what I have been writing and if you settle the following questions, I think, the time is now ripe for us to immediately come to an agreement: (1.) Recognition of the right of every individual to exercise his civil rights unhampered and uninterfered with, provided he does not do anything in a manner which may offend his neighbour. (This will include right of every community to take out processions on roads, to kill any animal for sacrificial or other purposes and

287. LETTER TO MAHOMED YUNUS

[*October 14, 1939*][1]

DEAR FRIEND,

You will never tire me. Only I have no powers of an autocrat, whatever may be said to the contrary. The question is no one man's job. I am forwarding your letter to Maulana A. K. Azad.

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

288. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA (C. P.),
October 14, 1939

DEAR DR. HARDIKER,

I have seen the Mysore friends. I am in correspondence with the Dewan. If anything comes out of it, I shall let you know.[2]

---

right of every community to offer prayers in any manner that community likes). (2.) Now that the total number of Muslim population has increased to almost one-third in the whole of India, a representation of one-third in all Central Legislatures and allotment of similar proportion of seats under the Government of India. These are some of the suggestions which I am making, and I am requesting you to kindly take up this question now in all seriousness for immediate solution. I have been writing to you for nearly two years and I hope you will not think it impatient on my part if I earnestly beseech you to kindly expedite matters specially in the present situation." *Vide* also the following item.

[1] From the reference to the addressee's letter, which was forwarded to Abul Kalam Azad on this date; vide the preceding item.

[2] According to *The Indian Annual Register, 1939*, Vol. II, p. 277, the State Government failed to fulfil the promises made by the agreement arrived at in 1938 between the Dewan, Sir Mirza Ismail and Vallabhbhai Patel and J. B. Kripalani. The State Congress was not prepared to acquiesce. However, in order to explore all means of avoiding struggle, they sought interviews with the Dewan but with no response from him. The time limit fixed for launching civil resistance, viz., September 1, 1939, having expired without any response from Government, the fight was launched. *Vide* also p. 284.

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Please tell Diwakar not to go to Mysore at the present moment. I hope you are better.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

289. LETTER TO A. EASWARAN[2]

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 14, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

The best use I can think of is for basic education.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 778

290. LETTER TO TATACHAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 14, 1939

MY DEAR TATACHAR,

C. R. says: "Why does not Tatachar see me?" Do go and see him but don't take his time. What he cannot do no one else can. I know I cannot, in the matter of Harijans[3] at least. There are certain things we must put up with. I shall take up the next step in *Harijan* when the spirit moves me. This is in answer to yours of 9th.

Love.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to N. S. Hardikar", p. 284, and "Fragment of Letter to People of Mysore", 24-11-1939.

[2] Treasurer, Cochin Teachers' Association, Chittur

[3] *Vide* "Case for Inquiry", p. 157.

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291. LETTER TO SYED FAIZUL HASSAN

SEGAON,
October 14, 1939

DEAR SYED SAHIB,

You have done well in writing to me. But I would suggest your writing to the Minister in charge of the Department. I can do nothing without referring[1] the matter to him. This I can do through the Parliamentary Board. This means waste of time. Will you take up my suggestion?

Yours sincerely,

SYED FAIZUL HASSAN SAHIB
PRESIDENT, DISTRICT MUSLIM LEAGUE
BALAGHAT, C.P.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

292. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 14, 1939

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Please read the accompanying letter[2] and after inquiring into the matter reply to the writer. I have sent him a very brief reply asking him to write to the Minister. But that is not enough. We should look into such matters in great detail.

Kishorelal told me yesterday that you said I had handed over all of you to Jawaharlal and that, therefore, you would have to obey him now. I suppose you were joking. I have not handed over any of you. I had a long discussion yesterday and the day before with the people living here. It will not do if all of you refrain from using your freedom and then hold me responsible for that.

Did Rajendra Babu leave yesterday?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 236

[1] *Vide* the following item.
[2] From Syed Faizul Hassan

293. LETTER TO REHMAN JIVABHAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 14, 1939

BHAI REHMANJI,

I have your letter. I am pained but not surprised by what you write. Nowadays there is so much mutual distrust that a Hindu is afraid to employ a Muslim who is a stranger. That fear is bound to disappear. Please do not lose heart.

Meet Mridulabehn. Show her this letter.

Regards from
M. K. GANDHI

DRIVER REHMAN JIVABHAI
TOY MARKET, PANKORE NAKA
AHMEDABAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9654. Courtesy: Mulubhai Nautamlal

294. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

October 14, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have perhaps not understood your words. Your place is secure. What more?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4328

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295. LETTER TO INDIRA NEHRU

SEGAON,
October 15, 1939

MY DEAR INDU,

I had thought that you had forgotten me altogether. Your letter has belied the fear, thank God. I hope you are keeping well. In a way, I envy you for the experiences you are having there[1].

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 9802. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

296. LETTER TO INDIRA NEHRU

[After *October 15, 1939*][2]

CHI. INDU,

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

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] In Europe

[2] In her book, *With No Regrets*, Krishna Hutheesing explains that the addressee went hiking during the autumn of 1939, got soaked and caught a chill which developed into pleurisy. In a letter dated November 6, 1939, Jawaharlal Nehru had written to the addressee that he had a joint cable "from Agatha and Bhandari that you are going to Europe". She went to Leysin (in Switzerland) after having spent some time in Middlesex Hospital. *Vide* also the preceding item and "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", p. 294.

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297. NOTES

A Poser

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

> For India too I think that this is a very critical time. The danger I see is that Britain may promise full Dominion Status or something of the kind, and as a result India will raise an army and become one more military-minded nation. Her witness for the way of non-violence and soul-force would then be largely discounted.
>
> How can Gandhiji as a believer in non-violence ask for clarification of war aims with a view to getting India's support for Britain in this way of war? The only thing that he can do and that we should all be doing is to build up an army of men and women who are committed to the way of love and forgiveness and to receive but never to return violence. We have to work this out to see how it will alter our daily life as well as all our thinking and acting towards other communities and nations. We have to be disciplined in this and also to learn to act together as one man. Along this line I see tremendous possibilities.
>
> Of course we should also use all the influence we can to urge Britain to acknowledge and put into practice full democracy in India as it is a high principle quite apart from whether India helps Britain in the war or not.

The danger that the writer senses is real. I dealt with it last week.[1] The writer cavils at my sympathy with the Allies. I have shown it as an out-and-out believer in non-violence, even because of my belief. Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for, it is even the duty of, a believer in ahimsa to distinguish between the aggressor and the defender. Having done so, he will side with the defender in a non-violent manner, i.e., give his life in saving him. His intervention is likely to bring a speedier end to the duel and may even result in bringing about peace between the combatants. Applying the argument to the present war, if the Congress actively sides with the Allies in a non-violent way, the Congress assistance will lift the Allied cause to a high moral plane and the Congress

[1] *Vide* pp. 243-5.

influence will be effectively used in the cause of peace. What is more it will be the special business of the Congress to see that, if the war is fought to a finish, no humiliation is heaped upon the vanquished. That is the role I have conceived for the Congress. The declaration of independence has become a necessity. The question having been raised, the Congress cannot help Britain if Britain is secretly fighting for imperialism while it declares to the world that the fight is for saving democracies. For Britain to be in the right a clear declaration of her war aim is a necessity, irrespective of the Congress policy.

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

Harijan, 21-10-1939

298. THE FICTION OF MAJORITY

It is painful to find the British Press and Britishers advancing the minority claim to prevent the declaration suggested[1] by the Congress, if I may say so, in the common interest. If the force of the Congress suggestion has not been overwhelmingly felt, the declaration will not come. There need be no dejection among Congressmen if it does not. We shall get our independence when it is deserved. But it would be well for the British Government and the Allied cause, if the minority argument were not flung in the face of a credulous world. It would be honest to say that the British desire to hold India yet awhile. There will be nothing wrong in such a desire. India is a conquest. Conquests are not surrendered except when the conquered successfully rebel, or under an awakened conscience the conqueror repents of the conquest, or when the conquered territory ceases to be a profitable concern. I had hoped and still hope that the British, having become war-weary and sickened over the mad slaughter involved in the present war, would want to close it at the earliest possible moment by being above board in every respect and therefore in respect of India. This they can never be, so long as they hold India in bondage.

I know that many have been angry with me for claiming an exclusive right for the Congress to speak for the people of India as a whole. It is not an arrogant pretension. It is explicit in the first article of the Congress. It wants and works for independence for the whole of India. It speaks neither for majority nor minority.

[1] *Vide* Appendices X and XI.

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It seeks to represent all Indians without any distinction. Therefore those who oppose it should not count, if the claim for independence is admitted. Those who support the claim simply give added strength to the Congress claim.

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

And who are the minorities? They are religious, political and social: thus Mussalmans (religious), Depressed Classes (social), Liberals (political), Princes (social), Brahmins (social), non-Brahmins (social), Lingayats (social), Sikhs (social?), Christians—Protestants and Catholics (religious), Jains (social?), Zamindars (political?). I have a letter from the Secretary of the All-India Shia Conference registering their claim for separate existence. Who are the majority in this medley? Unfortunately for unhappy India even Muslims are somewhat divided and so are the Christians. It is the policy of the British Government to recognize every group that becomes sufficiently vocal and troublesome. I have drawn no fanciful picture of the minorities. It is true to life. The Congress itself has been obliged to deal with every one of the groups I have mentioned. My list is not exhaustive. It is illustrative. It can be increased *ad libitum*.

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

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

> already placed the whole case before the Viceroy and Governor-General and requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the

[1] Dated October 6, 1939
[2] Dated October 5, 1939

> Governors of the Provinces have been expressly authorized under the Constitution and are entrusted with the responsibility to protect the rights and the interests of the minorities.
>
> The matter is now under His Excellency's consideration, and he is the proper authority to take such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans in those Provinces where the Congress Ministries are in charge of the administration.

It is unfortunate that he has rejected Rajendra Babu's reasonable proposal. Is it rejection of the proffered hand of friendship? Be that as it may, nobody can have anything to say against the Viceroy investigating and adjudicating upon the charges brought against Congress Ministries. Let us hope he will soon conduct the investigation. Whether the Muslims are regarded as minorities or otherwise, their as well as any other community's rights and privileges, religious, social, cultural and political, must be regarded as a sacred trust to be jealously guarded. And the independence of India will make no difference to the protection of those rights. In fact they will be better protected in every way, if only because in the framing of the Charter of Independence by the nation's representatives the Muslims and other minorities, real or so-called, will have an effective voice.

Consider for one moment what can happen if the English were to withdraw all of a sudden and there was no foreign usurper to rule. It may be said that the Punjabis, be they Muslims, Sikhs or others, will overrun India. It is highly likely that the Gurkhas will throw in their lot with the Punjabis. Assume further that non-Punjabi Muslims will make common cause with the Punjabis. Where will the Congressmen composed chiefly of Hindus be? If they are still truly non-violent, they will be left unmolested by the warriors. Congressmen won't want to divide power with the warriors but will refuse to let them exploit their unarmed countrymen. Thus if anybody has cause to keep the British rule for protection from the stronger element, it is the Congressmen and those Hindus and others who are represented by the Congress. The question, therefore, resolves itself into not who is numerically superior but who is stronger. Surely there is only one answer. Those who raise the cry of minority in danger have nothing to fear from the so-called majority which is merely a paper majority and which in any event is ineffective because it is weak in the military sense. Paradoxical as it may appear, it is literally true that the so-called minorities' fear has some bottom only so long as the weak majority has the backing of the British bayonets to enable it to play at

democracy. But the British power will, so long as it so chooses, successfully play one against the other calling the parties by whatever names it pleases. And this process need not be dishonest. They may honestly believe that so long as there are rival claims put up, they must remain in India in response to a call from God to hold the balance evenly between them. Only that way lies not Democracy but Fascism, Nazism, Bolshevism and Imperialism, all facets of the doctrine of 'Might is Right.' I would fain hope that this war will change values. It can only do so, if India is recognized as independent and if that India represents unadulterated non-violence on the political field.

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

Harijan, 21-10-1939

299. FAMINE WORK IN MORVI

Referring to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur's visit to Morvi during the *Rentia Jayanti* celebrations, the Dewan writes as follows:[1]

> His Highness the Maharaja Saheb has been giving for some years Rs. 10,000 every year during the Gandhi Jayanti for the benefit of the Harijans and khadi. Sometimes the amount is sent to you as was done last year, and many times the amount is spent in Morvi for Harijans and for the encouragement of khadi. . . .
>
> This year we are hard hit by famine. We have organized relief measures on an extensive scale. . . . Cheap grain and grass depots are opened throughout the State where food and fodder are distributed on cash and credit. . . . Agriculturists are given food and fodder on credit. . . . and . . . are helped to grow fodder crops by giving loans for seeds.
>
> Every available source of water is used for irrigation by setting up small pumping plants.
>
> You will be glad to learn that one of the activities of famine relief is to produce khadi. The Famine Department purchases raw cotton, and all operations from carding to weaving are paid for at reasonable rates. The State takes all the khadi that is being produced. It is hoped that this will give the much required employment to a large section of the people—most of them Harijans—at their doors.
>
> This year His Highness has decided to distribute khadi worth Rs. 1,000 to the needy, and owing to scarcity conditions many will need free help of clothing. This will be his usual donation on Gandhi Jayanti. . . .

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

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

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

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

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

Harijan, 21-10-1939

300. BAPA JAYANTI

Thakkar Bapa, the father of Harijans and all those who are almost like them and classified as semi-civilized races, animists and what not, completes his seventy years on 29th November next. The inmates of Harijan Nivas in Delhi have planned to celebrate the event in a manner that must delight Thakkar Bapa's heart. They want to collect the modest sum of Rs. 7,000 to be presented to Thakkar Bapa on his birthday for the Harijan cause. They want me to bless and advertise the effort. I have written to them accusing them of little faith. Thakkar Bapa is a rare worker.

He is unassuming. He wants no praise. His work is his sole satisfaction and recreation. Old age has not slackened his zeal. He is himself an institution. I once suggested that he might take a little rest. Immediately came the answer, 'How can I rest when there is so much to do? My work must be my rest.' He puts to shame every young man around him in the energy he expends upon his life mission. A purse of Rs. 7,000 is an insult to the cause and to him who carries on his broad shoulders its heavy burden. The workers must aim at collecting nothing less than Rs. 70,000 from all India. Even that amount is nothing for the cause and its father. But it is a respectable enough sum to be collected inside a month. How I wish it was possible to collect coppers from Harijans and Bhils. They know him. But the monied and middle-class men too know Bapa and love him. I have no doubt that they will subscribe liberally to the fund both for the cause and for the great *sevak* who represents it. Subscriptions may be sent to (1) Harijan Nivas, Kingsway, Delhi, (2) Harijan Ashram, Sabarmati, or (3) Segaon *via* Wardha.

SEGAON, October 16, 1939

Harijan, 21-10-1939

301. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 16, 1939

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

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

Love.

MOHAN

[PS.]

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

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

[1] The source is illegible.

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302. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 16, 1939

DEAR MR. ALEXANDER,

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

Yours sincerely,
AMRIT KAUR

From a photostat: G.N. 1431

303. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 16, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] The addressee's article "*Rentia Jayanti* in Rajkot" appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 22-10-1939.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXIX, pp. 420-1.

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304. A SILENCE-DAY NOTE

[On or after *October 16, 1939*][1]

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

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

305. NOTES

Hindu-Muslim Clashes

If proof were wanted to show that the non-violence of the Congress was in effect violence in suspension or inactive violence, it is furnished by the effective though quite indisciplined violence exhibited in Hindu-Muslim clashes. Had the thousands of Hindus and Muslims who took part in the Khilafat agitation been non-violent at heart, they could never have been violent towards one another as they are continually found to be. Nor can it be said that those who take part in the clashes are not Congressmen. If we rule out all those who resort to violence as non-Congressmen, the Congress will cease to be a mass organization. For the combatants in these clashes are derived from the masses. Moreover one finds today violence resorted to by rival Congressmen at Congress meetings. The gross indiscipline and fraud practised at Congress elections are all illustrations of Congress violence. It is difficult to say, therefore, who, if any, are non-violent Congressmen. If they were in a majority in the Congress and if they played an effective part in Hindu-Muslim clashes, they could stop them or at least give their lives in stopping them. If the bulk of Congressmen were truly non-violent, Muslims would be obliged to confess that Congressmen could not be accused of anti-Muslim bias. It is not enough for Congressmen to say that they have not been found guilty of incorrect attitude. I may be proved

[1] From the reference to "article", presumably, "The fiction of Majority", pp. 258-61.

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to be legally correct but may fail miserably if my action was examined in non-violent scales. But this non-violence has to be non-violence of the brave and the strong. It must come from inward conviction. I have, therefore, not hesitated to say that it is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. Violence is any day preferable to impotence. There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.

Not Too Late

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

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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXVII, pp. 125-7.

however, will count as criminal suicide if the suicide has not a heart free from impurity and malice.

SEGAON, October 17, 1939

Harijan, 21-10-1939

306. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 17, 1939

CHI. NARANDAS,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

307. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

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

[1] This appeared under "Notes", sub-title, "Disappointing". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 18-10-1939.

[2] *Vide* Appendix XII.

[3] *Vide* Appendices VIII, X and XI.

again before it becomes strong and pure enough to reach its objectives. I have no doubt that Congressmen will await the Working Committee's decision[1].

SEGAON, October 18, 1939

Harijan, 21-10-1939

308. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 18, 1939

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I must thank you for your kind letter enclosing an advance copy of your pronouncement[2]. I suppose it had to be. I have just issued a Press statement[3] of which a copy is enclosed herewith.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

309. LETTER TO M. R. MASANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 18, 1939

MY DEAR MASANI,

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

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] *Vide* Appendix XIII.
[2 & 4] *Vide* Appendix XII.
[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

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310. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 18, 1939

MY DEAR BHIKSHU,

I had your wire and now have your letter. I hope things will shape themselves as you expect.[1]

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1388

311. LETTER TO HARISHCHANDRA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 18, 1939

BHAI HARISHCHANDRA,

I got your letter of good wishes. Thank you.

M. K. GANDHI

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

312. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEGAON,
October 18, 1939

CHI. PRABHA,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* also p. 221.

313. LETTER TO SURENDRA AND MANUBEHN MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 18, 1939

CHI. SURENDRA AND MANUDI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI SURENDRA MASHRUWALA
BALKIRAN, SOUTH AVENUE, SANTACRUZ

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

314. LETTER TO KANCHANBEHN M. SHAH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 18, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

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

[1] *Vide* p. 249.

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315. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 18, 1939

CHI. NAJUKLAL,

I was glad to have your letter after a long time. Moti[1] should get well.

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

316. LETTER TO B. P. RUSTOGI[3]

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 19, 1939

DEAR SIR,

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

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Addressee's wife
[2] Prahlada's father who defied God
[3] The addressee was Joint Secretary, Pataudi State Praja Mandal.

317. LETTER TO KANTI N. PAREKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 19, 1939

CHI. KANTI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

318. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 19, 1939

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

319. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

SEGAON,
October 19, 1939

CHI. KANAIYO,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

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320. LETTER TO TARA JASANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 19, 1939

CHI. TARA,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. TARABEHN JASANI
ANANDKUNJ
RAJKOT, KATHIAWAR

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

321. SPEECH AT CONFERENCE OF LOCAL BODIES' REPRESENTATIVES, WARDHA[1]

[*October 19, 1939*][2]

I am glad that you have asked me this question. I had better answer it by saying that the present system of primary education was devised without any thought of the economic advancement of the country. The State gets no return whatsoever for the money it is spending on primary education. That we get a few administrators like Shuklaji[3] as products of the so-called higher education is no justification for the waste on primary education. It only

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

[2] From *The Hindu*, 20-10-1939

[3] Ravishankar Shukla, Premier, Central Provinces, who welcomed the representatives

brings into painful relief the pathetic superstition that we cannot carry on the affairs of India except through men with English degrees or possessing a knowledge of English. Directors of Public Instruction have admitted that the present system of primary education is a colossal waste, that a very small percentage of the pupils reach the higher classes, that there is nothing like permanency in the literacy imparted and that, even as it is, it touches but a small fraction of the vast rural areas. What a small fraction of the C. P. villages, for instance, have even these primary schools? And the few schools that there are in the villages bring no kind of return to them.

The question that you have asked me, therefore, really does not arise. But the new scheme is claimed to be based on sound economics, for all education will be through the medium of a craft. It is not education plus training in a craft, but it is all education by means of a craft. Therefore a boy who receives education, say, through weaving, will surely and must be better than a weaver as a mere craftsman. And nobody can say that a weaver is an economic waste. This weaver will know the various tools and the technique of all the processes and will produce better results than a weaver-craftsman. The economic results of the system as it has been carried out during the past few months had better be studied in the facts and figures collected by Shrimati Ashadevi[1]. They have gone far beyond our expectations. That is what I mean by self-supporting education. When I used the word 'self-supporting' I did not mean that all the capital expenditure would be defrayed from it, but that at least the salary of the teacher would be found out of the proceeds of the articles made by the pupils. The economic aspect of the basic system of education is thus self-evident.

Then there is another aspect, viz., that of the national awakening. I wonder if you have read the Kumarappa Committee's report[2] on rural industries. The traditional figure of the average income *per capita* is Rs. 70, but he has proved that the *per capita* income in the C. P. villages does not exceed Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 per year. Spinning and other village industries for basic education have been so selected that they answer village wants. Therefore the boys who receive their education through village crafts must spread their knowledge in their homes. Now you will

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

[2] For Gandhiji's summary of the report, *vide* pp. 34-40.

see that the average income of the villager can be easily doubled by the village crafts being revived. Most of the bickerings in the district boards will also cease if you will become servants of the people and interest yourselves actively in the new system. As I was coming to the meeting I had a letter from a school where the children had earned out of a four hours' spinning for 30 days Rs. 75 odd. If 30 children earned Rs. 75 in a month, you can easily work out how much would be the earning of crores of primary school children in India.

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

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

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

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

A word about capital expenditure. The capital expenditure that you will incur will be no dead loss like the expenditure on buildings. You will have to expend on tools and stock which will be of productive use for years. The spinning-wheels and

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

the looms and the carding-bows you will invest in should be useful to numerous batches of students. Industrialization involves heavy capital expenditure and plenty of wear and tear and depreciation. The present scheme involves nothing like it, as indeed nothing like it is required in a well-planned rural economy.

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

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

Harijan, 28-10-1939

322. LETTER TO RAVISHANKAR SHUKLA

[On or after *October 19*,][2] *1939*

BHAI SHUKLAJI,

The report you have sent me of our talks is not worth revising. You will realize it from the few lines that I have revised.

[1] Mahadev Desai adds that "the members had a discussion after this for several hours" and passed resolutions.

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

There are very few short-hand writers in India who can accurately take down conversations. I have summarized below my thoughts on the subject, which may perhaps better clarify my attitude. You may publish it if you like. If you need an English rendering get it done there. If you want the same thing in English from me I shall send you one. In that case you will please return the Hindi.

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

There is no need to co-ordinate the President's scheme[1] with mine[2]. Both can run parallel but their aims are different. Under the President's scheme the burden of expenditure on primary education is to fall on the individual village. And this through the dedication of the land. This is certainly commendable if it can be done. People will develop an interest in the education of their children. But I doubt the possibility of earning Rs. 15 per month from a plot of land thus acquired. None the less, there can be no harm in making an experiment if some zamindar gifts a large plot in the village. The experiment, if it succeeds, will certainly be beneficial. We shall not come across many people who will utilize the land profitably. Those who graduate from the agricultural colleges are not at all trained for work on the land. Hence the knowledge acquired in agricultural colleges proves generally sterile.

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

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

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

[1] The Vidya Mandir Scheme sponsored by the addressee. A Bill on the scheme was passed by the Central Provinces Legislative Assembly on November 2, 1939.

[2] The Basic Education Scheme

323. LETTER TO V. A. SUNDARAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 20, 1939

MY DEAR SUNDARAM,

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

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3183

324. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

October 20, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

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

BAPU

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

325. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 20, 1939

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I see no comparison between gambling and wine. I have taken donations from many wine merchants. Also from prostitutes. Whose money should I reject and whose should I accept? Yes, I had refused Rs. 12,000 from Gohar Jan[1] because of the condition that I should go and listen to her music. But Alibhai went and collected the money. Tell me what we can do now. Strange are the ways of dharma.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] A noted Muslim singer and Urdu poetess

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[PS.]

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

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

326. INTERVIEW TO "THE TIMES OF INDIA"[2]

SEGAON,
[*October 20, 1939*][3]

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

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

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

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

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

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

What the Congress wants is the clearest possible acceptance of the fact that India is to be treated as an independent nation.

[1] In Delhi

[2] This appeared under the title "An Important Interview" as reproduced from *The Times of India*, 21-10-1939.

[3] From *Gandhi—1915–1948: A Detailed Chronology*

[4] Of October 17; *vide* Appendix XII.

[5] Sir Samuel Hoare

For India to become enthusiastic about participation in this war it is necessary to speak to her in the language of precision, admitting of no other meaning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Harijan, 28-10-1939

327. AM I A MESSENGER OF GOD?

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

> The chief difficulty that stands in your way of right thinking is that your heart has so hardened by looking at and interpreting things in the light of your self-assumed principles, that you cannot bring to bear an open mind on anything howsoever valuable it may be.
>
> If God has not appointed you as his messenger, what you say or teach cannot be claimed to be a word of God. No one would contest the truthfulness of truth and non-violence as teachings of the prophets, and principles of very high spiritual value; but their true understanding and application require a soul that is in direct communion with God. Any person who has only polished his soul by suppressing or acting against the desires and cravings of the flesh and the self is not a prophet.
>
> The fact that you stand as a teacher of the world and claim to have diagnosed the disease from which the world is suffering, and proclaim

[1] *Vide* pp. 161-2 and 169-71.

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

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

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

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

I have omitted no argument used by the writer.

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

For the information of my correspondent, who is a schoolmaster in a high school, I may say that I have reverently studied the works he mentions and also many other works on Islam. I have more than once read the Koran. My religion enables me, obliges me, to imbibe all that is good in all the great religions of the earth. This does not mean that I must accept the interpretation that my correspondent may put upon the message of the Prophet of Islam or any other Prophet. I must use the limited intelligence that God has given me to interpret the teachings bequeathed to mankind by the Prophets of the world. I am glad to find that my correspondent agrees that truth and non-violence are taught by the holy Koran. Surely it is for him, as for every one of us, to apply these principles to daily life according to the light given to us by God.

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

SEGAON, October 21, 1939

Harijan, 28-10-1939

328. TELEGRAM TO PATTOM THANU PILLAI[1]

October 21, 1939

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

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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

329. LETTER TO N. S. HARDIKAR

SEGAON,
October 21, 1939

DEAR DR. HARDIKAR,

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

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

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

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

[2] In his reply dated October 26, the addressee said: ". . . We will mutely suffer everything as advised by you . . . Now as regards the present movement, it was started by the Mysore workers on their own initiative . . . We have, however, been giving some publicity to the actual happenings in the State and . . . necessary suggestions . . . Beyond that we have been doing nothing . . . We were glad to learn from Shri Bhimappa Naik that you were willing to intervene provided the State agreed to it. We feel sure that the Mysore State Working Committee or responsible Mysore workers will certainly jump at the idea of your intervention. . . ." *Vide* also pp. 252-3 and "Fragment of Letter to People of Mysore", 24-11-1939.

330. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 21, 1939

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

Do what you can about the Harijans after discussing the matter with Bapa, Hariji[1] and others.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

331. VIRTUES OF SILENCE

Thus writes Dr. Rajan[2] to Mahadev Desai:

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

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

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

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

[1] Viyogi Hari of Harijan Nivas, New Delhi
[2] Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, Minister of Public Health, Madras
[3] As in the source

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

Now for the questions.

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

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

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

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

SEGAON, October 22, 1939

Harijan, 28-10-1939

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332. ON BRAHMACHARYA

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

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

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

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

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

One should keep the mind engaged in pure thoughts. Constant repetition of Ramanama should go on all the twenty-four hours as naturally as breathing, even during sleep. One should engage oneself in reading good books and thinking about one's own work, which again should be infused with public spirit. Those who are married should not seek privacy. They should

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 59

not sleep in one room or in one bed. If their passion is aroused on seeing each other, they should live separately. If they experience passionate feelings while talking to each other, they should stop talking. One who is aroused at the sight of any woman should abandon the thought of *brahmacharya* and have restrained marital relations with his wife. If he is not married, he should think of marrying. None should insist on exceeding one's own capacity. I can think of many instances when men have fallen in attempting to exceed their capacity.

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

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

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

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

Why should I lose my vitality for the sake of a momentary pleasure? Why should I deceive God by misusing His gift, i.e., by wasting my vitality which has the power of generating

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 59

progeny? Since I can gain power by conserving my vitality, why should I lose that power by wasting it? If a seeker always meditates on these lines and prays for God's grace, it is possible for him to retain his vitality and be a *brahmachari* during this very life. I live in this hope.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 22-10-1939

333. NOTE TO POLICE SUPERINTENDENT AND DEPUTY COMMISSIONER[1]

October 22, 1939

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

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

334. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEGAON,
October 22, 1939

CHI. MUNNALAL,

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

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

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

335. CABLE TO WORLD PRESS[1]

October 23, 1939

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

Harijan, 28-10-1939

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

336. A LETTER[1]

SEGAON,
October 23, 1939

I am quite clear in my mind that what has happened[2] is the best for the cause. It is a bitter pill I know. But it was needed. It will drive away all the parasites from the body. We would have been obliged to do wrong things which we shall be able to avoid. We shall come to power with added strength. I shall still be trying for peace, if I keep my strength.

From a photostat: G.N. 2077

337. CAUSES

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

The greatest weakness lies in our want of full appreciation of non-violence and its many implications. All our other weaknesses are to be derived from that one grave defect. Whilst we have fairly observed physical non-violence, our breasts have harboured violence. Hence our non-violence in respect of the Government is a result of our incapacity for effective violence. But therefore we have been betrayed into violence in our dealings with one another. We have quarrelled with one another in committees; sometimes we have even come to blows. We have refused to carry out instructions of the Working Committee. We have formed rival groups wanting to seize power. Hindus and Muslims have come to blows on the slightest pretext. Congressmen must be held partly responsible for the failure to compose communal differences. It is all very well to blame the British Government for our disunity. But that way we prolong the agony.

[1] This was found among the letters to C. Rajagopalachari. The date-line has been written by Amrit Kaur.

[2] The reference is to the Congress Working Committee resolution of October 22; *vide* Appendix XIII.

We knew that the policy of divide and rule was there in 1920, and yet we made Hindu-Muslim unity part of our constructive programme. We did so because we had expected that, in spite of the Government being in our way, we would achieve unity. What is more we seemed for the time being to have attained it.

These examples of our weaknesses are terrible. They have prevented the Congress from rising to its full height, and reduced our professions of non-violence to a mockery. If my analysis of the causes of our failure is correct, there is the solid consolation that the remedy is dependent not upon any extraneous circumstance but upon ourselves. We must put our own organization in order and make it pure enough and strong enough to command respect, not by inspiring fear among those who impede our march towards the goal but by the indubitable evidence of our non-violent speech and action.

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

We are engaged in a life and death struggle. Violence surrounds us. It is a time of great trial for the country. No camouflage will answer our purpose. If Congressmen find that they have no non-violence in them, if they cannot cast out bitterness against the English officials or the countrymen who may oppose the Congress, they must say so openly, discard non-violence and displace the present Working Committee. Such dismissal will be no calamity. But it will be a calamity of the first magnitude to keep the Committee without full faith in them and in their instructions. So far as I can see, there is no

independence for India except through the strictest adherence to truth and non-violence. My generalship is of no use whatsoever if I have an army which doubts the efficacy of the weapons with which I arm them. I am as determined a foe of the exploitation of my country as anyone can be. I am as impatient as the hottest Congressman for the complete deliverance of the country from the foreign yoke. But I have no hate for a single Englishman and for that matter for anybody on earth. If I may not help the Allies, I do not wish disaster to them. Though the British Government have grievously disappointed the Congress hope, my hope, I do not seek any gain from their embarrassment.

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

SEGAON, October 24, 1939

Harijan, 28-10-1939

338. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 24, 1939

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

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

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] Edward Thompson, British poet and writer; *vide* also "My Life", pp. 312-5.
[2] *Vide* pp. 267-8.
[3] *Vide* Appendix XII.

339. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

October 24, 1939

DAUGHTER,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

340. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 25, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

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

I hope you have good news about Indu.[2]

Love.

BAPU

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

[1] A khadi worker of Punjab
[2] *Vide* footnote 2, p. 256.

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341. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 25, 1939

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

342. DISCUSSION WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF GANDHI SEVA SANGH–I[1]

WARDHA,
October 25, 1939

The problem haunts me. It gives me no rest. I have described[2] in *Harijan* the position of the junior members of the Working Committee. Theirs was a difficult position. They were torn between loyalty to a principle and loyalty to their colleagues. But their eagerness to make their position clear to me was most welcome. It shows that we are all votaries of truth and even our mental struggles and conflicts arise out of our anxiety to be faithful to it. We had a very fine discussion in the Working Committee yesterday, and we discussed threadbare the position of the members as individuals and as representatives of the Congress and the people. The question with you is different. For you are here in your individual capacity and you have to decide your conduct no matter what Congress or Congressmen may think. The question is thus much simpler for you. Will you adopt an attitude of brotherliness to one who has

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

[2] *Vide* pp. 266-7.

done your dear ones a grievous injury? Supposing Rajendra Babu was attacked, would you retaliate or rather stand between Rajendra Babu and the assailant and bear cheerfully the blows meant for him? You will do the latter if you have shed all fear of death and injury to limbs, and all considerations for the domestic ties that bind you. But unless you have nothing but brotherliness for those that despitefully use you, your resolution that you would stand by the principle of non-violence through thick and thin will have no meaning. It would be far better to wind up the Sangh than to have an empty resolution.

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

We have often thought about this question but the hour of our trial has arrived today, as much with reference to war as with the struggle for swaraj and equally with reference to Hindu-Muslim unity. Remember also that your non-violence cannot operate effectively unless you have faith in the spinning-wheel. I would ask you to read *Hind Swaraj*[1] with my eyes and see therein the chapter on how to make India non-violent. You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages. Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process. Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have therefore to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning-wheel.[2]

Harijan, 4-11-1939

[1] *Vide* Vol. X.

[2] According to Mahadev Desai, the members had a discussion with Gandhiji on the next day also; *vide* pp. 299-301.

343. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 26, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

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

Love.

BAPU

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

344. LETTER TO B. G. KHER

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 26, 1939

BHAI BALASAHEB,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

345. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 26, 1939

CHI. KUNVARJI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI KUNVARJI KHETSI PAREKH
HINDU DHARMASHALA, MIRAJ

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

346. LETTER TO DIGVIJAYSINH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 26, 1939

MEHERBAN MAHARAJA[2],

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

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

Yours,

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

[1] Balkoba and Mathew; *vide* p. 249.
[2] Of Nawanagar

347. *DISCUSSION WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF GANDHI SEVA SANGH–II*

WARDHA,
October 26, 1939

QUESTION: How can a believer in the non-violence of your conception[1] be a Minister?

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

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

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

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

[1] *Vide* p. 296.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There indeed is what I flatter myself is going to be my contribution. I want that non-violence of the weak to become

[1] In April 1937; *vide* Vol. LXV.
[2] *Vide* Vol. LIX, p. 263.

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non-violence of the brave. It may be a dream, but I have to strive for its realization.

Harijan, 4-11-1939

348. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 27, 1939

CHI. VALJI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

349. LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

October 27, 1939

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR PRITHVI SINGH
C/O "JANMABHOOMI"
MEADOWS STREET
BOMBAY

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

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350. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SEGAON,
October 27, 1939

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

When the protection of minorities is pleaded against the declaration required by the Congress, the great pronouncement made by Sir Samuel Hoare sounds unreal. What the Congress has asked is not any sounding of Indian opinion but a declaration of Britain's intention. I have endeavoured[3] to show that there is no such thing as real minorities in India whose rights can be endangered by India becoming independent. With the exception of the Depressed Classes there is no minority which is not able to take care of itself. I observe that Sir Samuel Hoare has mentioned the Europeans also as a minority. The very mention of Europeans, in my opinion, condemns the cry of the interest of minorities. But the protection of minorities, whatever they are, is common cause between the British Government and the Congress. I would like the British Government to remember that there is every prospect of Congress India, to use Sir Samuel's phrase, being a hopeless minority. I like Sir Samuel's division of India into Congress and non-Congress. And if non-Congress

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

[2] Replying to the debate on India, in the House of Commons, on October 26; *vide* Appendix XIV.

[3] *Vide* pp. 258-61.

India contains not merely the Princes but the people of Princes' India, all the Mussalmans, all those who might be represented by the Hindu Mahasabha and others who refuse to be classified as part of Congress India, it is Congress India which will be in danger of a non-Congress majority. And the Congress has got to make good its position even though it may represent a minority wholly unarmed, partly by outside force but largely by its own will.

I am glad that Sir Samuel Hoare has declared that the present British policy is to be judged in the moral scales suggested by me. I venture to suggest that if Sir Samuel's speech is the last word on behalf of the British Government, British political morality will be found wanting. Sir Samuel has laughed at non-co-operation as a barren doctrine. I am convinced that it is not as barren as he thinks. It has proved its worth in the eyes of millions of Indians and will do so again if the Congress remains truly non-violent, as I hope it will. The Congress decision[1] is an imperative call of duty. It puts both the Congress and the British Government on their trial. Nothing but good will come out of it if both will play the game.[2]

SEGAON, October 27, 1939

Harijan, 4-11-1939

351. CABLE TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"[3]

[Before *October 28, 1939*]

I HAVE NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER THAT THE VICE-REGAL STATEMENT[4] ON BEHALF OF BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN REPLY TO CONGRESS INVITATION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MADE MORE IRRITATING THAN IT HAS PROVED TO BE. WHAT CONGRESS HAD ASKED WAS NOT AN ANSWER TO INDIA'S DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE BUT IT HAD REMINDED BRITAIN OF NEGLECT TO DECLARE WHETHER HER WAR AGAINST HERR HITLER TO PRESERVE DEMOCRACY INCLUDED

[1] That the Ministries should resign; *vide* Appendix XIII.

[2] *Vide* also "Good and Bad", pp. 317-8.

[3] The cable appeared under the title "Congress Demand Misunderstood" with a note that it was "in response to a request from *The News Chronicle* (London)".

[4] *Vide* Appendix XII.

INDIA. THIS HAD NO CONNECTION WITH INDIA'S READINESS TO DIGEST INDEPENDENCE. BUT THE CONGRESS DEMAND WAS EVIDENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD AND THE VICEROY BEGAN A SORT OF ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE IN WHICH ONE MEMBER DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE OTHER SAID TO THE VICEROY AND AS A RESULT OF THESE TALKS HE WAS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE A STATEMENT WHOLLY UNRELATED TO THE UNPRECEDENTED UPHEAVAL GOING ON IN FRONT OF US. IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WANTED TO MEASURE THE STRENGTH OF THE CONGRESS AND THAT OF OTHER POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS THAT THE CONGRESS COULD NOT SATISFY THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD. BUT THE CONGRESS HAD SET BEFORE ITSELF A HIGHER MISSION. THE CONGRESS WANTED TO HELP BRITAIN BY GIVING HER THE MORAL SUPPORT WHICH WAS ITS SPECIALITY AND THE ONLY THING IT COULD GIVE. THE CONGRESS WOULD NOT GIVE THIS UNLESS IT WAS CLEAR THAT BRITAIN'S POLITICAL MORALITY WAS WHOLLY SOUND. I WISH BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD REALIZE THAT INDIA IS NOT BEGGING FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE CONGRESS ASKED BRITAIN TO SAY THAT BRITAIN WOULD NOT RESIST INDEPENDENCE. THE HINDU-MUSLIM AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES ARE THERE BEYOND DISPUTE. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER BRITAIN WILL STAND ASIDE AND LET INDIA SETTLE HER OWN DIFFICULTIES IN HER OWN WAY WHEN THE WAR IS OVER. THAT IS WHY THE CONGRESS HAS SUGGESTED A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHERE EVERY COMMUNITY WILL BE FULLY REPRESENTED TO FRAME INDIA'S CONSTITUTION. THE MISCHIEF DONE IS VERY REAL. THE WORKING COMMITTEE HAVE PASSED A MILD RESOLUTION[1]. IT STILL AFFORDS SCOPE FOR REPAIRING THE BLUNDER. WILL THE BRITISH PUBLIC REALIZE THAT IT IS A BLUNDER OR WILL THEY PERSIST IN THE HYPNOTIC BELIEF THAT THE INDIA OFFICE CAN NEVER ERR AND THAT INDIA MUST ALWAYS REMAIN THEIR MILCH COW? I CAN ONLY SAY THAT THE CONGRESS WILL NOT REST AND WILL

[1] *Vide* Appendix XIII.

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GIVE NO REST TILL THE GOAL IS WON. ITS VERY EXISTENCE DEPENDS UPON ITS RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF THE GOAL WHICH IS NO LESS THAN COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA.

Harijan, 28-10-1939

352. NOTES

THAKKAR BAPA AND SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY

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

> I endorse every word of your praise[1] of Thakkar Bapa. The only suggestion I would venture to make is that his membership of the Servants of India Society might have been mentioned. The Society may not take credit for his meritorious work; but it has kept him there without a demur and indeed taken pride in his great services to humanity.

The rebuke is well merited. To tell the truth, I did not even know that I had omitted to mention among Bapa's many merits that he had given up his office of Road Engineer for the Bombay Municipal Corporation to become a Servant of India. He is a loan to the Harijan Sevak Sangh by the Society. The Society needs no advertisement from me. And since I call myself an unofficial self-appointed member of the Society, to mention the latter is, in a way, advertising myself. But I am quite capable of performing that somewhat delicate task. The reason for omitting the mention was, however, accidental. I work under tremendous pressure and though it was my intention to connect Bapa with the Society, I evidently failed to carry it out. I hope that this belated reference will bring more funds to the Bapa purse, which is Harijan purse. Let the Servants of India too, official and unofficial, set apart some time daily for the collection of the purse. I do not mind their collecting coppers. The real tribute to Bapa will consist in collecting coppers from Harijans and the numerous poor lovers of Harijans. Let no one plead shortness of notice. Let novices know from me, an experienced collector, that funds big or small do not need months to collect. They are collected in a

[1] *Vide* pp. 262-3.

few days if the collection is well organized and the cause worthy. Let them know that the crore for the Tilak Swaraj Fund[1] was collected in one month.

SEGAON, October 28, 1939

Harijan, 4-11-1939

353. MESSAGE TO POONA BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE[2]

SEGAON,
October 28, 1939

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

M. K. G.

Harijan, 4-11-1939

354. LETTER TO PURATAN J. BUCH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 28, 1939

CHI. PURATAN,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Bal Gangadhar Tilak died on July 31, 1920; *vide* Vol. XVIII.

[2] This appeared under "Notes", sub-title "Basic Education" as a "translation of the message in Hindi".

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355. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SEGAON,
October 28, 1939

CHI. MUNNALAL,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MUNNALALJI OF SEGAON
RAMANA ASHRAM
TIRUVANNAMALAI
SOUTH INDIA

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

356. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEGAON,
October 28, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

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

2. *Ektara*[2] can blend with any music. No other instrument can take its place. Ramanama, like *ektara*, sustains the tune.

[1] The rest of this sentence and the one that follows are in Gujarati.
[2] A musical instrument with only one string

If Ramanama fills our hearts it goes on sounding there like breathing during sleep.

3. We overeat in the name of balanced diet. That is why the *Gita* uses the word *laghwahar*[1]. Limited diet should not mean going hungry. Rarely does a man go really hungry. One should never feel weak. The quantity of food will differ with each individual.

I shall remember about the letter to Panchgani.

You can give up anything else except teaching Hindi to the Japanese brother.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

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

357. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 28, 1939

CHI. HARIBHAU,

I got your letter. I shall not judge in a hurry. I shall bother you no more. Your foremost duty is to recover your health by staying in a quiet place. If the place you are staying in is not suitable, why not go to Delhi? The weather there is excellent these days.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII. 52, however, has '*laghvashi*' which also means one on spare diet.

[2] In a note, at the bottom of the letter, the addressee had remarked that Gandhiji had misunderstood his point. He had himself given up learning Japanese but continued teaching Hindi to the Japanese friend.

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358. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

Unrevised

SEGAON,
October 29, 1939[1]

MY DEAR IDIOT,

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

Do cheer up.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

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

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

359. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 29, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

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

Love.

BAPU

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

[1] This is in Devanagari.

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

360. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

SEGAON, WARDHA,
[Before *October 30, 1939*][1]

CHI. PREMA,

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

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] According to the addressee, the letter was written some time in October 1939. The addressee, who had gone to Bihar to organize a women volunteer corps, came to Wardha on October 30, 1939; *vide* "Letter to Kanchanbehn M. Shah", and "Letter to Shardabehn G. Chokhawala", p. 321.

[2] In *Bapuna Patro–5: Premabehn Kantakne* p. 270, the addressee explains: "In view of the world war, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that ahimsa could not retain its primary place in the party's programme.'

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361. UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT?

Several British friends are puzzled and ask, "Have you really said, you will give unconditional support to Great Britain as you are reported to have said?" The origin of this report lies in my very first statement[1] after my talk[2] with the Viceroy. The phrase 'unconditional support' does not occur in that statement. But had the Congress appreciated the position I took up, Congress support would have been unconditional in the sense that the Congress would not have asked for a clarification of Britain's war aims. But the Working Committee could not honestly take up that position. Therefore it passed, as it had every right and justification for passing, the resolution[3] it did. Events have shown the prudence of the course adopted by the Working Committee. But had it waived the demand for the declaration of war aims, the support would have been unconditional. Remember, according to its constitution, the Congress is a non-violent body. Therefore its support would have been purely moral. It has no soldiers to supply, it has no money to give. But it has its good wishes. In my opinion those good wishes would have been more than many battalions. The Congress support would have put the British cause on an unassailable moral basis. It would have made the British case just, beyond measure. All the dependent races of the earth would have felt an indescribable glow of freedom. British moral stock would have shot up high at a bound. That is what the Congress unconditional support would have meant.

But God had willed otherwise. British statesmen had not faith enough in the Congress profession of non-violence. I must confess that the Congress could not pass the test to the satisfaction of a strict though just examiner. Anyway my British friends should have no difficulty in understanding my position. Of course it is open to them to argue that as a war resister I could not even give moral support. I have already said in these columns[4] that I do not hold such a view. It is open

[1] *Vide* pp. 161-2.
[2] On September 4 at Simla
[3] *Vide* Appendix VIII.
[4] *Vide* pp. 257-8.

to a war resister to judge between two combatants and wish success to the one who has justice on his side. By so judging he is more likely to bring peace between the two than by remaining a mere spectator.

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

Harijan, 4-11-1939

362. MY LIFE

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

> Startling revelations have come to light regarding what has been going round the House of Commons about Gandhiji. It is reported that Mr. Edward Thompson, the British historian who visited Allahabad recently, threw some light on the curious mentality prevailing in England. Mr. Thompson, who met some political leaders here, is reported to have told them three things going round the House of Commons regarding Gandhiji:
>
> 1. Gandhiji was for unconditional co-operation with the British Government.
> 2. Gandhiji could still influence the Congress.
> 3. There were various stories about Gandhiji's sensual life, it being the impression that Gandhiji had ceased to be a saint.
>
> Impressions about Gandhiji's 'sensual life', it appeared to Mr. Thompson, were based on some Marathi papers. He spoke about them, I understand, to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who repudiated them. He spoke about them to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. P. N. Sapru also, who strongly repudiated them.
>
> It appears Mr. Thompson, before leaving England, had seen several members of the House of Commons. Mr. Thompson, before leaving Allahabad, sent a letter to Mr. Greenwood, M.P., on the suggestion of Pandit Nehru pointing out that the stories regarding Gandhiji were absolutely baseless.

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

The 'unconditional co-operation' is dealt with in another note[1].

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

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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The third charge needs clearing. Two days ago I received a letter signed by four or five Gujaratis sending me a newspaper whose one mission seems to be to paint me as black as it is possible for any person to be painted. According to its headline it is a paper devoted to 'the organization of Hindus'. The charges against me are mostly taken from my confessions and distorted from their setting. Among many other charges, the charge of sensuality is most marked. My *brahmacharya* is said to be a cloak to hide my sensuality. Poor Dr. Sushila Nayyar has been dragged before the public gaze for the crime of giving me massage and medicated baths, the two things for which she is the best qualified among those who surround me. The curious may be informed that there is no privacy about these operations which take over 1½ hours and during which I often go off to sleep but during which I also transact business with Mahadev, Pyarelal or other co-workers.

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

Hitherto I have ignored these charges. But Mr. Thompson's talks about them and the importunity of the Gujarati correspondents, who say the indictment sent by them is but a sample of what is being said about me, impel me to repudiate them. I have no secrets of my own in this life. I have owned my

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXII, pp. 372-3 and 428-30; also Vol. LXIV, pp. 341-4, and Vol. LXVI, pp. 70-1.

weaknesses. If I were sensually inclined, I would have the courage to make the confession. It was when I developed detestation of sensual connection even with my own wife and had sufficiently tested myself that I took the vow of *brahmacharya* in 1906, and that for the sake of better dedication to the service of the country. From that day began my open life. I do not remember having ever slept or remained with my own wife or other women with closed doors except for the occasions referred to in my writings in *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Those were black nights with me. But as I have said repeatedly God has saved me in spite of myself. I claim no credit for any virtue that I may possess. He is for me the Giver of all good and has saved me for His service.

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

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

in no time one with India's women. The easy access I had to their hearts was an agreeable revelation to me. Muslim sisters never kept *purdah* before me here even as they did not in South Africa. I sleep in the Ashram surrounded by women for they feel safe with me in every respect. It should be remembered that there is no privacy in the Segaon Ashram.

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

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

SEGAON, October 30, 1939
Harijan, 4-11-1939

363. THE NEXT STEP

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

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

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

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

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

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

Harijan, 4-11-1939

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364. GOOD AND BAD

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

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

Sir Samuel talks of the Communal Award[2] as a meritorious act of the British Government. I am sorry he mentioned it. I

[1] *Vide* Appendix XIV.

[2] *Vide* Vol. L, footnote 2, p. 383.

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

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

Harijan, 4-11-1939

365. NOTES

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity means communal unity. No pact seems to be in front of us. Janab Jinnah Saheb looks to the British power to safeguard the Muslim rights. Nothing that the Congress can do or concede will satisfy him. For he can always, and

[1] *Vide* also pp. 302-3.

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

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

SEGAON, October 30, 1939

Harijan, 4-11-1939

366. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 30, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

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

Love.

BAPU

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
POONA HOTEL
POONA

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

367. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 30, 1939

MY DEAR C. R.,

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

Love.

BAPU

SHRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
48 BAZULULLAH ROAD
THYAGARAYANAGAR
MADRAS

From a photostat: G.N. 2076

368. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

October 30, 1939

CHI. KANAIYO,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] The reference is, presumably, to the "Statement to the Press"; *vide* pp. 302-3.

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369. LETTER TO KANCHANBEHN M. SHAH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 30, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

370. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 30, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

371. THE CONGRESSMAN

The Congressman seems to have become a distinct species. The various groups who make up the Congress organization have one thing in common. They are nationalists to the core. They will

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die for India's independence as they are living for it. They have made nationalism part of their religion, whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Christians or any other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, October 31, 1939

Harijan, 11-11-1939

372. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 31, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

This[2] has just come. You will do what is proper.

Love.

BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 265-7 and 315-6.

[2] The reference is to a telegram to the addressee, at the back of which Gandhiji had written this letter. The telegram dated "Dehra Dun, October 30, 1939" from Ramdev, a leader of Arya Samaj, read: "If possible, arrive one day earlier."

373. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
October 31, 1939

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
11 CHOWPATTY SEAFACE
BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 237

374. TELEGRAM TO SAMPURNANAND

[*October*][1] *1939*

MY SYMPATHY WITH YOU IN YOUR LOSS.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

375. LETTER TO SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN

SEGAON, WARDHA,[2]
ON THE MOVING TRAIN TO DELHI,
November 1, 1939

DEAR SIR SIKANDAR,

You will forgive me please for reverting to Sucha Singh's case. Here is a copy of his reply to my inquiry. There seems to be no reason to doubt his version. Whatever he may [have] said in his

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

[2] Permanent address

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evidence, the Jail Superintendent's evidence should be conclusive. I suggest his indefinite release on parole. His record in the Hazaribagh Jail seems to be clean. His release is not likely to result in any mischief being done by him. I plead for mercy on grounds of humanity.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

376. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO KUNG[1]

[*November 1, 1939*][2]

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

The Hindu, 13-11-1939

377. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO CHILDREN OF CHINA

[*November 1, 1939*]

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

The Hindu, 13-11-1939

378. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO YAN YUN-SHAN

[*November 1, 1939*]

I know I occupy a corner in the Chinese heart.

The Hindu, 13-11-1939

[1] The addressee was the Chinese Premier.

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

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379. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
November 1, 1939

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
POONA HOTEL
POONA

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

BAPU

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

380. SPEECH AT HARIJAN NIVAS, NEW DELHI

November 2, 1939

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

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

[1] Mother of the Chandiwala brothers

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

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

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 4-11-1939

381. INTERVIEW TO "THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

NEW DELHI,
November 4, 1939

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

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

The Hindustan Times, 5-11-1939

[1] On November 2; *vide* also "Statement to the Press", pp. 331-2, and "Is Congress a Hindu Organization?", pp. 341-2.

382. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

RAILWAY STATION, DELHI,
November 4, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Just after you had gone, Kripalani told me that in United Provinces there was great ferment and preparation for civil disobedience. He told me, too, that anonymous placards had been circulated asking people to cut wires and tear up rails. My own opinion is that there is at present no atmosphere for civil disobedience. If people take the law into their own hands I must give up command of civil disobedience movement. I would like you to read this week's *Harijan*.[1] It deals with my position in this connection. It was this that I had intended to discuss with you. But it was not to be. At this critical time in our history there should be no misunderstanding between us and, if possible, there should be one mind.

Love.

BAPU

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

383. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS[2]

NAGPUR,
November 5, 1939

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

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

The Hindu, 6-11-1939

[1] *Vide* pp. 315-6.
[2] Gandhiji passed through Nagpur *en route* to Wardha.

384. TRAVANCORE AGAIN

There was a forced lull in Travancore after the acceptance by the State Congress of my advice[1] to suspend civil disobedience. But things seem to have gone from bad to worse. The inactivity of the State Congress was perhaps mistaken for fatigue or worse. I knew that the State Congress leaders were being held down by me. Their loyalty was great. But when the other day a deputation came to me and asked me whether, in order to avoid civil disobedience, they were to stop even ordinary activity which one knows as political, I told[2] them that even that severe restraint might be part of the people's training. But I also told them that I could not judge for them in such matters. I could not have the data they had. They could not help me in judging the atmosphere in Travancore. Physical presence there was necessary to enable me to judge. No second-hand evidence could be of much assistance, at least not to me. I told them, therefore, that they must judge for themselves, irrespective of my opinion. For I was not prepared to take the risk of curbing even harmless political activity for fear of imaginary consequences. The leaders should, therefore, consider themselves free from any restraint from me.

After the greatest deliberation they took two steps embodied in restrained language. Their resolutions and the Press note in reply are printed below.[3]

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

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

News has now been received that Shri Thanu Pillai, Shri Philipose and three others were arrested on the 2nd instant and that

[1] & [2] *Vide* Vol. LXIX.

[3] The resolutions are not reproduced here; for the Press note, *vide* Appendix XV.

the State Congress office was taken possession of by the Travancore Government. Furniture, it is said, was thrown out.

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

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

SEGAON, November 6, 1939

Harijan, 11-11-1939

385. LETTER TO KUNVARJI K. PAREKH

November 6, 1939

CHI. KUNVARJI,

I was delayed by three days and you have meanwhile gone in for fever. Today is my day for *Harijan*. I, therefore, will not go over there. Besides, it is Silence Day. There is one complaint against you, that you do not take complete rest. You must take complete rest. Strictly follow Sushilabehn's instructions. She told me everything last evening. If you take complete rest, your fever will certainly subside. Only then can you be taken to Nagpur. I hope there is no difficulty. If there is, tell Sushilabehn. Write to me. However, I shall certainly see you tomorrow.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

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386. LETTER TO GHULAM RASUL QURESHI

November 6, 1939

CHI. QURESHI,

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

I have Akbar's[1] letter. Blessings to him. He must be all right now. Is Amina[2] getting fever?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

387. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[3]

SEGAON,
November 6, 1939

The London *Times* editorial seems to me to be unfair. The minorities question has invariably been brought up whenever the question of India's freedom has come to the fore. To represent the Congress and its demand as totalitarian is to misrepresent facts. This misrepresentation is not less serious because it is unconscious. The Congress has deliberately discarded the use of force. It has no military backing or tradition. It has from its inception believed in communal unity. It seeks to represent non-Hindus as well as Hindus. It has had Parsis, Muslims and Christians leading it. It has gone out of its way to placate all communities. It could not do otherwise as its only sanction was constitutional

[1] & [2] Addressee's son and wife

[3] This appeared under the title "Unfair". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 7-11-1939.

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agitation till it forged non-co-operation and civil disobedience as an addition to constitutional agitation and as an effective substitute for violence. Communal differences have been used by the British Government to thwart India's aspiration. That the process is likely to have been unconscious does not make it less mischievous. That the Congress has no desire for loaves and fishes must be crystal clear from wholesale resignations of Congress Ministries. The Congress will never be party to communal quarrels. It will rather stand aside and wander in the wilderness and wait for a better day. Even now the ugly spectacle of playing off the League against the Congress seems to be going on. I had expected that the stupendous European crisis would bring better perception to British statesmen.

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

The Times wants the Congress record of dealings with Muslims and Depressed Classes during the last two years. All that I can say is, 'Let Governors of Provinces speak.' That the Muslim League and some Depressed Class leaders complain is nothing strange. Some discontent is inevitable in democracy. The Congress has made a handsome and sporting offer. Let a Constituent Assembly of elected representatives frame a constitution for future Government of India subject to safeguards for protection of rights of minorities to their satisfaction. Will British statesmen play the game?[1]

Harijan, 11-11-1939

388. OPINIONS DIFFER

An M. A. of Aligarh writes:

> You have said on many occasions that your study of the holy Koran has revealed to you that Islam enjoins non-violence upon its followers. You again say that your study of the life of the holy Prophet confirms you in this belief. Allow me to say that it must be

[1] *Vide* also p. 327.

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

So much for non-violence in Islam. As to the question whether the Muslims are a separate nation or not, I would say that the Muslims have been a separate nation ever since the beginning of Islam. They were so when Mohammed bin Kasim first set foot on Indian soil, they were so during the days of the Moghul Empire, they are so even today, and they will remain the same for ever if they are true to their religion. Akbar attempted to evolve not only a common religion but also a common social system, but were not his attempts doomed to failure? The Muslims are a separate nation in the sense that they cannot merge their identity with any other community. But this need not frighten the champions of unity at all. Co-operation in some particular sphere for some particular goal is always possible. Breathing the same air and inhabiting the same land does not make a nation. It is the unity of thought that really matters. It is religion which moulds the mind. A Muslim may be the next-door neighbour of a Sikh. But their viewpoints, their modes of thought and their modes of life will always differ from each other. The air is the same all round the globe. Is the air of England in any way different from that of India? Physical surroundings affect only the physical features. The mind is not affected by them. Of course, the Christians are also a separate nation, and so are the Parsis. India is a land of nationalities. It will be a red-letter day in the history of India when the Indian National Congress is transformed into a 'Federation of Indian Nations'.

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

Maulana Saheb stand prominent among the members of the Congress Working Committee?

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

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

I have no right to speak for the Maulana Saheb. He is well able to take care of himself. I must confess that I have no recollection of the Maulana Saheb having given the evidence quoted. I do not question the veracity of my correspondent. Only that evidence does not affect the opinion I have held for many years about the central teaching of the holy Koran. Opinions will differ to the end of time. I plead for mutual forbearance.

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

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

If we Hindus, Muslims and others are to evolve democracy, we shall do so only by the whole nation speaking its mind through its representatives elected under the broadest franchise possible, and that either through British goodwill or in the teeth of its opposition. The pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government give no promise of British goodwill. British imperialism is still vigorous and, in spite of Sir Samuel Hoare's declaration[1] to the contrary, it will die hard. The proposal to vivisect India is a contribution to imperialistic growth. For vivisection can only be made by the aid of the British bayonet or through a deadly civil war. I hope the Congress will be party to neither game. British refusal to make the required declaration of Britain's war aims about India has perhaps come as a blessing in disguise. It removes the Congress out of the way to enable the Muslim League to make its choice, unfettered by the Congress administration in eight Provinces[2], as to whether it will keep the British yoke by vivisecting India or whether it will fight for the independence of an undivided India. I hope that the League does not want to vivisect India. I hope that my correspondent does not represent a large body of Muslim opinion in India. Presently the talks[3] between Janab Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will be resumed. Let us hope that they will result in producing a basis for a lasting solution of the communal tangle.

SEGAON, November 7, 1939

Harijan, 11-11-1939

389. LETTER TO SHAMBHUSHANKAR TRIVEDI[4]

November 7, 1939

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

[From Gujarati]

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

[1] *Vide* Appendix XIV.

[2] Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa, United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province

[3] The first round of talks took place in Delhi on November 2.

[4] A constructive worker of Palitana (Saurashtra) known for his fasts

390. TELEGRAM TO RULER OF PALITANA

[After *November 7, 1939*][1]

THAKORE SAHEB
PALITANA

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

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

391. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

SEGAON,
November 8, 1939

I have read with respectful attention His Excellency the Viceroy's broadcast[3] and his introductory remarks[4] on the correspondence between himself and Shri Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah Saheb released by His Excellency. I welcome His Excellency's refusal to accept defeat and his determination to solve what seems to have become insoluble. I share to the fullest extent His Excellency's anxiety to reach a solution. Without, therefore, waiting for the Congress reaction to these two declarations and purely for the sake of assisting the common cause, I would like to suggest that no solution is possible unless an acceptable declaration of war aims about India is forthcoming. The pronouncements hitherto made, whether here or in Great Britain, are after the old style, suspected and discredited by freedom-loving India. If imperialism is dead, there must be a clear break with the past. Language suited to the new era has to be used. If the time has not yet come for the acceptance of this fundamental truth, I would urge that further effort at reaching a solution should be suspended. In this connection I would remind British statesmen that

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] This appeared under the title "End the Game of Seesaw". The statement was also published in *The Hindu*, 9-11-1939.

[3] *Vide* Appendix XVI.

[4] *Vide* Appendix XVII.

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what is wanted is a declaration of Britain's intention regarding her Indian policy irrespective of India's wishes. A slaveholder, who has decided to abolish slavery, does not consult his slaves whether they desire freedom or not.

Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Protection of rights of minorities will then become simple. The game of seesaw will cease. The minorities are entitled to protection, not in stages but to the fullest extent and in one single step. No charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority. The minorities will be full-fledged partners in the framing of the constitution. How that can be attained will depend upon the wisdom of the representatives charged with the sacred duty of preparing the constitution. Britain has hitherto held power—this is inevitable in any system of imperialism—by playing the minorities against the so-called majority and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts well-nigh impossible. The burden of finding a formula for the protection of minorities should be thrown on the parties themselves. So long as Britain considers it her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as a dependency. And patriots impatient for deliverance will fight, non-violently if I can guide them and violently if I fail and perish in the attempt. God's curse of war, I had hoped and still hope, would be turned into a blessing by Britain realizing that the one thing needful for her to justify and hasten the end of this war was to free a great and ancient country like India from her yoke.

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

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 318-9.

Since making the above statement I have read the report of the further statement[1] of the Secretary of State in the House of Lords yesterday. It leaves the main position unchanged.

Harijan, 11-11-1939

392. TELEGRAM TO S. SATYAMURTI

[On or before *November 9, 1939*][2]

MY BLESSINGS YOU HAVE ON YOUR ELECTION[3].

The Hindu, 9-11-1939

393. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,
November 11, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

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

Love.

TYRANT

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

394. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 11, 1939

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your letter. I have no intention of courting imprisonment. Nor have you. The future lies with God. Jayaprakash wishes that you should stay with me so that the household expenses may be saved and your studies may continue. This can be arranged in Segaon or Wardha. I would be generally staying in Segaon. Occasionally when I go out for three or four days, I will not take you with me. Your study must remain uninterrupted. I, therefore, feel that you are needlessly wasting your time

[1] *Vide* Appendix XVIII.
[2] The telegram was reported under the date-line "Madras, November 9".
[3] As Mayor of Madras

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there. Ba asks: "What! Prabha will not come to stay with me or will she never come for my sake? What difference would it make whether or not you are here? Write to her, 'Ba wants you here'." This is her message. She often inquires, "When is Prabha coming?" I have to reach Allahabad[1] on the 19th instant. Come there if you can, and accompany me from there.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

395. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

SEGAON,
November 11, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Let Natwarlal come.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Vijaya's letter is enclosed. Tear it up.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10797

396. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 12, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

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

Love.

BAPU

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

[1] To attend the Congress Working Committee meeting

397. LETTER TO ISWAR SARAN

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 12, 1939

DEAR MUNSHIJI,

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

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MUNSHI ISWAR SARAN
6 EDMONSTON ROAD
ALLAHABAD

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

398. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 12, 1939

Those who are members of committees need not resign just now.[1] It does not matter if a Government official becomes the chairman. It will [in fact] give us an opportunity to test him thoroughly. If necessary we can even resist him. Perhaps these committees will themselves fade out.

A municipality may keep up all relations. The non-co-operation this time is not like that of 1920. These are my personal views and you may discuss them with Sardar.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 174

[1] In accordance with the Congress resolution of October 22, 1939, all the Congress Ministries had resigned; *vide* Appendix XIII. The addressee wanted to know what the Congressmen who were members of Government committees and municipalities should do.

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399. IS CONGRESS A HINDU ORGANIZATION?[1]

Evidently we have not heard the last of Lord Zetland's charge that the National Congress is an organization representing Hindus and therefore national only in name but in reality communal. There cannot be a grosser libel on the Congress than this. From its inception it has been national. Its originator was an Englishman. The late A. O. Hume was long its Secretary. It has always had one or two Muslim Secretaries. It has had Muslim, English, Christian and Parsi Presidents. Dadabhai was, till he became invalid, the soul of the Congress. His was the guiding hand and the directing brain in everything. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency. He was the maker of Presidents both of the Congress and of the Bombay Corporation. Badruddin Tyabji was for years a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress. Who does not know that whilst Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan was alive nothing could be done by the Congress if it had not his *imprimatur*? Dr. Ansari was for years Joint General Secretary. The readers know the influence that the Ali Brothers exercised over the Congress during the Khilafat days. Today the Working Committee does not move without Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's co-operation and wise guidance. His is the decisive voice on Hindu-Muslim questions. Through its whole history now running into the second half of a century the Congress has ever striven to represent the whole of India in a manner no other organization has done. Every victory scored by the Congress has benefited all communities.

"If such is really the case, why has the Congress usurped the function that belongs to the All-India Hindu Mahasabha?" ask some angry correspondents. *The Tribune* has also pointed out what has appeared to the Editor the illogicality of the Congress. The illogicality has to be admitted. But neither life nor institutions are governed by logic. Obviously, the Congress felt the necessity of a communal adjustment for the political advancement of the country, and the Congress-League Pact of 1916 was born. Ever since that time the Congress has made communal unity a plank in the Congress programme. Though the function should logically belong to communal organizations, a mass organization like the

[1] *Vide* also "Interview to *The Manchester Guardian*", p. 327.

Congress cannot look on if communities quarrel and when in the national interest a solution becomes necessary. Thus the Congress could not shirk what came to it as a clear call to duty. The Congress is and should be the organization to take a purely nationalistic and impartial view on communal questions. Whatever may be said to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress embodies the hope and aspirations of India. It can conclude no pact with any person if it does not represent the whole of India in so far as her political aspirations are concerned. Its traditions unfit it to represent Hindus as against Muslims or *vice versa*. It is fit to represent the common interest of all sons of Hindustan. I can see nothing wrong in the Congress trying to arrange pacts with men or their organizations for the furtherance of common interest. Needless to say they must be all mutually helpful, never contradictory. It is a difficult task no doubt. But if people and organizations extend their goodwill to the Congress, the task is not beyond its scope or capacity. It does not inspire that all-round trust today. It may therefore have to wait for that day. If some other organization does it, Congressmen will welcome it.

SEGAON, November 13, 1939

Harijan, 18-11-1939

400. UNNECESSARY ALARM

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

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

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 336-8.
[2] *Vide* Appendix XVII.

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even prolonged. We may not put ourselves in the wrong. Suspension for the sake of the Viceroy is an aid to settlement.

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

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

SEGAON, November 13, 1939

Harijan, 18-11-1939

401. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHAGANJ,
November 13, 1939

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
2 METCALFE HOUSE ROAD, DELHI

HOPE TROUBLE SUBSIDING. KEEP WELL. LOVE.

BAPU

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

402. *POLITICS* v. *MORALS*

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

To take the ministerial resignations[2] first, I feel sure that they have added to the prestige of the Congress. The Working Committee would no doubt have done better to have accepted my proposal, only if it could have assimilated non-violence with all the implications suggested by me. But the members of the Working Committee were too conscious of their duty to accept my proposal mechanically and without heart belief. The Working Committee's resolution was, therefore, the only true course for the Working Committee to adopt. Having done so, resignations were the logical result.

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 321-3.

[2] In his letter, M. N. Roy said that "it was not necessary to have the Congress Ministers resign at this stage."

can never go back to their offices so long as the demand of the Congress remains unsatisfied.

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

Now for the crucial point.[1] Non-violence is the central fact of the civil disobedience technique. It was in 1920 that the Congress hooked its politics deliberately to fundamental morals and vital social reform. It came to the conclusion that swaraj could not be won without non-violence and certain definite social reform, viz., prohibition and removal of untouchability. It also put the charkha at the centre of its economic programme. Indeed it eschewed the then known political programme, i.e., the parliamentary. Hence the introduction of morals into Congress politics was not and is not irrelevant to the Congress fight for freedom. It is its core. There were a few grumblers then. But the vast majority welcomed the programme as the Congress had never done in the whole of its brilliant history. That programme justified itself by giving rise to a mass awakening on a phenomenal scale. By it the Congress gained an importance it had never before enjoyed. Shri Roy would not expect me at this stage to repeat here the argument that led to the enthusiastic acceptance of the programme. He should turn to the pages of *Young India* if he would know the pros and cons of the subject. The Congress became a mass democratic organization from the time of acceptance of the programme, and it framed a democratic Constitution[2] which stands to this day without much material and fundamental alteration.

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

Shri Roy and other Congressmen do not need to be told that I am not in the habit of losing co-workers.[3] I go a long way

[1] M. N. Roy criticized the doctrine of non-violence as "having no bearing upon the political programme of the Congress".

[2] *Vide* Vol. XIX, pp. 190-8, and Vol. LIX, pp. 245-57.

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

with them in winning their affection and retaining it. But there does come a limit beyond which my compromise does not and cannot and should not go. No compromise is worth the name which endangers chances of success.

SEGAON, November 14, 1939

Harijan, 18-11-1939

403. NOTES

AWARD OR DECISION?

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 317-8; also "Notes", 27-11-1939, sub-title, "Communal Decision Again".

[2] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, pp. 301-2.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XLVII, pp. 140-1.

find me among the workers helping to evolve an equitable adjustment. What I will not do is to make an appeal to the British Government to revise it over the heads of the parties affected. It stands till the parties agree to purge it of its absurdities.

SEGAON, November 14, 1939

Harijan, 18-11-1939

404. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 14, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

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

If you need me longer in Allahabad, you will keep me.[2]

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

More when we meet.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

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

B.

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

[1] The reference is, presumably, to the preceding item.

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

[3] *Vide* the following item.

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

November 14, 1939

I OBSERVE THAT THE MAIN ISSUE BETWEEN BRITAIN AND INDIA IS BEING CONFUSED IN THE BRITISH PRESS. DOES BRITAIN INTEND TO RECOGNIZE INDIA AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION OR MUST INDIA REMAIN BRITAIN'S DEPENDENCY? THIS QUESTION HAS NOT BEEN RAISED BY THE CONGRESS TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE OVER BRITAIN, BUT TO ENABLE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA TO DECIDE HOW THEY SHOULD BEHAVE DURING THE WORLD CRISIS. THE ISSUE THUS BECOMES PURELY MORAL FOR, OWING TO HER MATERIAL AND MILITARY CONTROL OF INDIA, BRITAIN IS ABLE TO REGULATE THE INDIAN AND BRITISH GARRISON AND DRAIN INDIA'S WEALTH AT HER WILL. EIGHT PROVINCES OUT OF ELEVEN HAVE SAID IN EMPHATIC LANGUAGE THAT THEY CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN THE WAR, IF IT DOES NOT MEAN, AMONG OTHER THINGS, INDIA'S COMPLETE FREEDOM. ALL OTHER ISSUES ARE SUBORDINATE. THE QUESTION OF MINORITIES IS PURELY A DOMESTIC ONE FOR THE MAJORITY AND THE MINORITIES TO SETTLE THEMSELVES. THE PROPOSED CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IS THE ONLY BODY THAT CAN EVOLVE A PROPER AND LASTING SOLUTION. ANY OTHER CAN ONLY BE A MAKE-SHIFT CARRYING NO POPULAR SANCTION. TO FLING THE MINORITIES QUESTION IN INDIA'S FACE IS TO CONFUSE ISSUES. TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE PRINCES IS STILL MORE UNTENABLE. THEY ARE PART OF THE PARAMOUNT POWER. IT IS PAINFUL TO THINK THAT BRITISH STATESMEN DO NOT SO MUCH AS MENTION THE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE OF THE STATES. HAVE THEY NO VOICE IN THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT? ARE THEY TO REMAIN SERFS, WHICH THEY ARE, THOUGH THEY ARE DRAGGED INTO THE WAR? NO WONDER HERR HITLER HAS CHALLENGED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO PROVE HER SINCERITY BY RECOGNIZING INDIA AS A FREE NATION.

[1] This appeared under the title "The Main Issue".

WHATEVER MAY BE HIS INTENTION IN ISSUING THE CHALLENGE, IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT IT IS PERTINENT. ANYWAY, LET THE BRITISH PUBLIC KNOW THAT THE CONGRESS DEMAND IS UNEQUIVOCAL AND CAPABLE OF BEING SATISFIED IF THERE IS THE WILL TO SHED IMPERIALISM. THE WORKING COMMITTEE MEETS ON THE 19TH INSTANT AT ALLAHABAD TO CONSIDER THE NEXT STEP. THERE SHOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING, THEREFORE, ABOUT THE ISSUE. IF THERE IS TO BE A FIGHT BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE CONGRESS, THE WORLD SHOULD KNOW CLEARLY WHAT IT IS TO BE FOR.

Harijan, 25-11-1939

406. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 14, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

You have been very regular in sending me wires. Yesterday I sent mine[1] before yours came into my hands. Thank God for the ending of the Dehra Dun programme. You must now have complete rest. I hope you will have no worry in Simla. I am well. The strain of work is there. B.P. 180/106 and 160/100. Radha and Lilavati went today, so did Homi.

No more tonight.

Love.

TYRANT

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

407. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 15, 1939

MY DEAR NIRMALANANDA,

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

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1389

[1] *Vide* p. 343.

408. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 15, 1939

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

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

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

409. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHA,
November 16, 1939

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
SIMLA W[EST]

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

BAPU

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

410. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 16, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

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

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

I hope Shummy is well. Tofa[2] must have received you boisterously. The patients are doing well. Love to you all.

TYRANT

[PS.]

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

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

411. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

SEGAON,
November 16, 1939

CHI. AMRITLAL,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Shumshere Singh, the addressee's brother, a retired surgeon
[2] The addressee's pet dog

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412. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN M. PANCHOLI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 16, 1939

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. I, for my part, did write to you. How is Nanabhai's health ? Is your health improving? As Kakasaheb is not here, Amritlal sleeps here for the present. He leads the prayers. Today he is not here because Kamath is ill and laid up at his place.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am going to Prayag for some three days.

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

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

413. LETTER TO DILKHUSH B. DIWANJI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 16, 1939

BHAI DILKHUSH,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

DILKHUSH DIWANJI
GANDHI KUTIR
KARADI, *via* NAVSARI

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

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414. LETTER TO KANCHANBEHN M. SHAH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 16, 1939

CHI. KANCHAN,

I got your two letters. They did not call for any reply. Go to Ramana Ashram only if you feel like going. Recently there has been no news from Munnalal. But there is nothing to worry. Improve your health. I am going to Allahabad for some three days.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

415. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

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

MY DEAR AMRIT,

This letter[1] should have gone to you early. But want of time is the excuse, or is it want of method, or both ?

Love.

BAPU

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

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

416. *INTERVIEW TO A CO-WORKER*[1]

[On or before *November 17, 1939*][2]

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

GANDHIJI: Mine is an insipid leadership. I have nothing but this[3] to show.

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

Why was there one the other day in Nellore?

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

Everything to do with want of communal unity.

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

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

No. In your talks[5] with Jinnah Saheb did you get any such impression from him?

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

But you have mentioned other obstacles.

[1&2] The interview is extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "Puzzled and Perplexed", dated "Segaon, November 17".

[3] Mahadev Desai explains: "Gandhiji was laughing and pointing to the spinning-wheel which he was trying to put right."

[4] *Vide* pp. 336-8 and 342-3.

[5] In Delhi, on November 1 and 2

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

But there is discipline. We do not start civil disobedience when you say we should not start it. I am surprised at the response given by our own leftists. Of course one or two of us have talked extreme language, but otherwise there is discipline.[1]

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

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

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

My objection will have no effect on non-Congressmen.

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

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

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

For example, when they make civil liberty impossible.

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

No, if you are not violent in your speech.

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

Oh, yes.

That won't get us into trouble?

Not certainly with me.

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

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

[1] Mahadev Desai adds: "Gandhiji gave the friend examples of indiscipline."

No, I do not mean on a mass scale.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You may therefore say that my language is not precise. You would have me say, 'Ply the charkha for so many hours, and, if so many people do it for so many hours, we will have civil disobedience'? I am quite prepared to say so.

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

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

I am glad you will do it. When you declared that the Working Committee had left the whole thing in your hands, at any rate as regards

civil disobedience, we were all very happy; you put heart into us, and we gained a feeling of self-confidence. If now you think there is no harm, why should not the Working Committee organize a sort of preparation committee or give all power to you to prepare for all eventualities?

I will see what happens in Allahabad.

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

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

Why don't you assume it?

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

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

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

I will see what can be done. All I would appeal to you to realize is that there should be no question of prestige with the Working Committee.

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

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

But, I wish I could take the same view as you. I have brought into being so many organizations here and in South Africa, and I am not able to say that the Congress compares favourably with them. Wherever the organizations have done well, it was because the members have yielded willing obedience. Whereas here we have had violent disobedience.[2]

Well, take away one thought with you and say how many Congressmen have carried out the khadi clause.[3]

[1] The reference is to the ban imposed on Subhas Chandra Bose by the Congress Working Committee; *vide* pp. 84-5.

[2] Here Mahadev Desai says: "The friend did not agree and was inclined for further argument. But the time was running against him."

[3] Mahadev Desai adds: "Nothing daunted, the friend tried to make out that in his province at any rate there were few culprits among Congressmen.

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

Harijan, 25-11-1939

417. A LETTER

November 17, 1939

"Be careful for nothing."[1] This is the same as *anasakti* of the *Gita*. The book has to be studied with this central theme in view.

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

418. LETTER TO MANUBEHN S. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 17, 1939

CHI. MANUDI,

I am not able to write to you as often as I wish to. Now your confinement should be very near. Hope you are keeping up your courage. Surendra should send a wire. One can say that you passed these last months without any trouble. Krishnadas is progressing and so is Kunvarji. They are improving faster than expected. Rami is fine. What a long name[2] you have given to her daughter? Who suggested that name to you? Or did you take revenge for your having been given a simple name?

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

SHRI MANUBEHN MASHRUWALA
BALKIRAN
SANTA CRUZ

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

[1] *Philippians*, IV. 6
[2] Navamalika

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419. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 17, 1939

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

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

I am not writing separately to Maneklal[1] or the girls.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

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

420. LETTER TO MANEKLAL AND RADHA KOTHARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 17, 1939

CHI. MANEKLAL[2] AND CHI. RADHA[3],

I got the letters of you both. May you prosper during the New Year[4].

Blessings from
BAPU
BA

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

421. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN G. CHOKHAWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 17, 1939

CHI. BABUDI,

What a letter from you! Why do you seem to be getting away from me? Write to me in detail. You cause me worry. I have built high hopes on you. Do not disappoint me. We are going to Prayag tomorrow. I am keeping Pyarelal here. I

[1] Addressee's brother

[2] Maneklal Kothari, son-in-law of Gandhiji's eldest brother, Lakshmidas Gandhi

[3] Wife of Maneklal Kothari

[4] According to the Vikram calendar the day following Diwali is observed as the new-year's day (*Kartik Sud* 1). In 1939, it was on November 12.

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have kept a leprosy patient, Parachure Shastri[1], in the Ashram. We hope to return on the 23rd. Hope you are getting on well. Reply to me immediately.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

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

422. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MAHOMED YUNUS*

November 18, 1939

How can I convince you if you cannot accept my word that my attention is continually devoted to the question of questions? But man can only propose, God alone disposes. Whom He has joined none can keep permanently apart.[2]

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

423. *LETTER TO P. KODANDA RAO*

ON THE TRAIN,
November [*18*][3], *1939*

MY DEAR KODANDA RAO,

Your argument is quite good. But tell me who is today the League of Nations[4]? The situation is baffling but deeply interesting. I am hoping that our country will play an important part in this moving drama.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 6283

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

[2] *Vide* also p. 252.

[3] The source, however, has "10". Gandhiji was going to Allahabad.

[4] With the outbreak of the war in September 1939, all activity of the League of Nations had ceased although it continued to exist till April 1946.

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424. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ITARSI,
November 18, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

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

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

Love.

TYRANT

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

425. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

ITARSI,
November 18, 1939

CHI. BHANSALI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 360.

426. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

ITARSI,
November 18, 1939

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I am pleased with your progress. Go ahead.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4331

427. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

ON THE MOVING TRAIN,
November 18, 1939

BHAI DAHYABHAI,

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

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI DAHYABHAI MANORDAS PATEL
DHOLKA

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

428. THE ONLY WAY

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has compelled me to study, among other things, the implications of a Constituent Assembly. When he first introduced it[1] in the Congress resolutions, I reconciled myself to it because of my belief in his superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy. But I was not free from scepticism. Hard facts have, however, made me a convert and, for that reason perhaps, more enthusiastic than Jawaharlal himself. For I seem to see in it a remedy, which Jawaharlal may not, for our communal

[1] At the Congress Working Committee meeting on September 14, 1939; *vide* Appendix X.

and other distempers, besides being a vehicle for mass political and other education.

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

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

Again, the Constituent Assembly alone can produce a constitution indigenous to the country and truly and fully representing the will of the people. Undoubtedly such a constitution will not be ideal, but it will be real, however imperfect it may be in the estimation of the theorists or legal luminaries. Self-government to be self-government has merely to reflect the will of the people who are to govern themselves. If they are not prepared for it, they will make a hash of it. I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I cannot conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fabled jackdaw could not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion. A diseased person has a prospect of getting well by personal effort. He cannot borrow health from others.

The risks of the experiment are admitted. There is likely to be impersonation. Unscrupulous persons will mislead the illiterate masses into voting for wrong men and women. These risks have to be run, if we are to evolve something true and big. The Constituent Assembly, if it comes into being—as I hope it will—

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

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

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

I think I have said sufficient in the foregoing to answer Syed Saheb's question. By minorities he has Muslims principally in mind as represented by the Muslim League. If once the proposition that all communities desire a charter of independence framed by a Constituent Assembly and that they will not be satisfied with anything else is accepted, the settling of details surely becomes easy. Any other method must lead to an imposed constitution mostly undemocratic. It would mean an indefinite prolongation of imperialistic rule sustained by the help of those who will not accept the fully democratic method of a Constituent Assembly.

The principal hindrance is undoubtedly the British Government. If they can summon a Round Table Conference as they propose to do after the war, they can surely summon a Constituent Assembly subject to safeguards to the satisfaction of minorities. The expression 'satisfaction of minorities' may be regarded

[1] Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*

as vague. It can be defined beforehand by agreement. The question thus resolves itself into whether the British Government desire to part with power and open a new chapter in their own history. I have already shown[1] that the question of the Princes is a red herring across the path. European interests are absolutely safe so long as they are not in conflict with 'the interests of India'. I think this expression finds place in the Irwin-Gandhi Pact[2].

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

ALLAHABAD, November 19, 1939

Harijan, 25-11-1939

429. SPEECH AT KAMALA NEHRU MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, ALLAHABAD[3]

November 19, 1939

After my coming from Africa, I came into contact with Kamala Nehru also. She was a remarkable person. Besides being devoted to her husband as most Indian women are, she loved her country much and this love was great. She was a high-principled lady and candid enough to express her opinion if she differed on principles. She had a noble soul and whatever she did was not for show or gain or favour.

Congressmen have gained the reputation of being agitators only and not being capable of constructive work, but such critics are now inclined to change their opinion. During the Civil Disobedience movement Kamala's heart went out to the sufferers. It was then that she took active interest in the Congress Hospital which had then been started. During my last meeting[4] with Kamala in Bombay while she was leaving for Europe for treatment,

[1] *Vide* pp. 331-2.

[2] Of March 5, 1931; *vide* Vol. XLV, Appendix VI.

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

[4] On May 22, 1935. Kamala Nehru died in Geneva on February 28, 1936.

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she told me that she might not come back and that I should see that the work of the hospital went on. I gave her my word then. This work is my sacred duty and I come to Allahabad specially for it. I would have gone back tomorrow after this work here, but Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru insisted upon my staying here longer.

I gave my signature to the appeal for funds for this hospital, which is for five lakhs. Only half the amount has been collected. I hope you will all contribute to the fund. This hospital is not only for the United Provinces, but for all India. We should now think in terms of the whole of India. There are so many universities in the U.P., and so many students. I hope they will all help to collect funds. Then there are so many industrial magnates in Kanpur. It should not be difficult for you to raise the money. Finally, I wish God that He may give peace and rest to Kamala's soul.[1]

The Hindustan Times, 20-11-1939

430. RAJKOT REFORMS

Having once offended, however unwittingly, against the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot and Durbar Shri Virawala, I have restrained myself against saying anything by way of criticism of the Durbar's doings in that State.[2] But duty to the people of Rajkot who have shown exemplary discipline demands a word from me on the reforms just announced. They expect me to give my opinion on them. It pains me to have to say that they have undone what the late Thakore Saheb had done. The adult franchise which it was the late Thakore Saheb's boon lasting 15 years has been revoked, and it has been reduced to the possession of property qualifications and a stiff residential test. The elected President gives place to the Dewan as permanent President. The original Sabha which was wholly composed of elected representatives is to contain 40 elected members against 20 nominated. The elected members will be sub-divided into minorities. The so-called majority will thus become really a minority. The natural course of reforms is progressive increase of popular control. Here without the slightest justification popular control has been materially reduced. The original Sabha had wide powers of legislation. These have been curtailed.

[1] *Vide* also p. 368.

[2] The reference is to Gandhiji's four days' fast from May 3, which was given up after the Viceroy's assurance; *vide* Vol. LXIX.

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

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

But I do not repent of my repentance. I am quite sure that what was morally right was also politically right. My repentance saved the people of Rajkot from a worse fate. It averted a communal clash. I am quite sure that in the end the people of Rajkot will come to their own. Meanwhile the evil that the reforms in my opinion are, must be allowed to work itself out. Those citizens of Rajkot who have any sense of self-respect must abstain from co-operation in working them. They will, if they take my advice, watch, wait, pray and literally spin. They will find that they will be also spinners of real liberty in Rajkot in the non-violent way which is the only true way.

ALLAHABAD, November 20, 1939

Harijan, 25-11-1939

431. NOTES

Kamala Nehru Memorial

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

A Reminder

Narandas Gandhi tells me that I should remind the readers that all those who want to take part in the spinning *yajna* against

[1] *Vide* pp. 365-6.

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

A Good Suggestion

A khadi-lover says:

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

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

Allahabad, November 20, 1939

Harijan, 25-11-1939

432. LETTER TO SHUMSHERE SINGH

November 20, 1939

MY DEAR SHUMMY,

Have mercy on poor Amrit. She finds her soul with me. She has got what she has been yearning for years. With her it is not a question of what service I want from her, it is a question with her of how she can serve me, i.e., my cause. She wants to be near me. To be near me, to be of use to me is her joy and solace.

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

With love to you all,

BAPU

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

433. CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION[1]

[*November 22, 1939*][2]

The Working Committee have noted with pleasure the response of the country to the policy enunciated[3] by them regarding the war in Europe and its repercussions in India. This policy, based on numerous declarations of the Congress, was laid down in a statement[4] issued by the Committee on September 14, and subsequent events have amply justified its wisdom and expediency. The course of the war and the policy pursued by the British and French Governments, in particular the declarations made on behalf of the British Government regarding India, seem to demonstrate that the present war, like the World War of 1914-18, is being

[1&2]A report dated "Allahabad, November 22" in *The Hindustan Times* read: "The Congress Working Committee considered for seven hours today the draft resolution prepared by Mahatma Gandhi on the present political crisis in India."

[3] *Vide* Appendix VIII.

[4] *Vide* Appendix X.

carried on for imperialist ends, and British imperialism is to remain entrenched in India. With such a war and with this policy the Congress cannot associate itself, and it cannot countenance the exploitation of India's resources to this end.

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

The Committee wish to declare with all emphasis that no communal considerations arise in meeting the demand of the Congress, and the minorities, whatever their other differences might be, do not oppose India's right to freedom and independence. The Princes are represented by, and are emblems of, the Paramount Power in India. In the end, it will be the people of the Indian States who will determine what part they will take in a free India, though the British Government have consistently ignored their wishes in the matter which vitally affects them. In any event, the wishes of those who may oppose India's independence are, and must be, irrelevant to the declaration of the British Government's intentions. The Committee can only interpret this attempt to avoid a statement of their war aims and Indian freedom by taking shelter under irrelevant issues, as a desire to maintain their imperialist domination in India in alliance with reactionary elements in the country.

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

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

[1] The source, however, has "4"; *vide* Appendix XIX.

The Committee wish to declare again that recognition of India's independence and the right of her people to frame their constitution through a Constituent Assembly is essential in order to remove the taint of imperialism from Britain's policy and to enable the Congress to consider further co-operation. They hold that the Constituent Assembly is the only democratic method of determining the constitution of a free country, and no one who believes in democracy and freedom can possibly take exception to it. The Working Committee believe, too, that the Constituent Assembly alone is the adequate instrument for solving communal and other difficulties. This, however, does not mean that the Working Committee will relax their efforts for arriving at a solution of the communal problem. This Assembly can frame a constitution in which the rights of accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction and, in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration. The Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, the existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desire them. The number of these members in the Assembly should reflect their numerical strength.

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

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

The Working Committee appreciate and express their pleasure at the readiness exhibited by Congressmen for launching civil

[1] *Vide* Appendices XII, XIV, XVI, XVII and XVIII.

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

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

Harijan, 2-12-1939

434. TESTIMONIAL TO MUNNILAL

ANAND BHAVAN, ALLAHABAD,
[*November 23, 1939*][1]

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

M. K. GANDHI

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

435. LETTER TO SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

ANAND BHAVAN, ALLAHABAD,
November 23, 1939

MY DEAR SUBHAS,

It is only today that I find a moment to acknowledge your letter and wire. As you know, I attend the Working Committee only when required and deal with only those matters that are referred to me. But having received a letter, I read it to them and

[1] From *Gandhi—1915–1948 : A Detailed Chronology*

told them that if they had no confidence in the present Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and had sufficient reason for it, I agreed with you that they should dissolve it. Any piecemeal measure would fail and only cause irritation.

But I confess that your letter has appeared to me to be a challenge. You have evidently no confidence in the Working Committee. You regard its ban on you as a vendetta. As you know, I am party to the ban which was voted unanimously. Who is to decide between you and the Working Committee? You have never submitted to the ban.

As to action by the Working Committee, I dissent from you. Your way is not mine. For the time being you are my lost sheep. Some day I shall find you returning, to the fold, if I am right and my love is pure.

Ever yours,
BAPU

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

436. DISCUSSION WITH U.P.P.C.C. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS[1]

ALLAHABAD
[*November 23, 1939*][2]

QUESTION : You seem to be placing an exaggerated emphasis on non-violence today. Surely you will not suggest that we were more ready or more non-violent in 1920-21 and in 1930? Or will you say that your standard has now gone up?

ANSWER: Both. There was not then so much violence as is to be seen on the surface today. And my standard too has gone up. I was not so rigid in my conditions then as I am now. If you accept my generalship, you have to accept not only my conditions but my judgment as to whether we are ready or not. It is quite likely that there is really no difference between the conditions of those days and of today; but it is equally true that I did not know then that I was walking on a mine, today I am haunted by that consciousness and I cannot help it.

Is there not a fear that, if we do not strike the nail while it is hot, we may never be able to do so at all? There is that psychology of readiness

[1] The discussion appeared under the title "The Task before Us", as summarized by Mahadev Desai.

[2] *Vide* footnote 2, p. 347.

among the people. If we do not seize the opportunity, their enthusiasm may be damped and their readiness may vanish. The best thing, therefore, today is for you to suggest a programme whereby we may prepare the field and yet keep up the spirit of the people.

I have always been impatient of this kind of language. I cannot understand a readiness which would vanish if it was not availed of at once. That is no readiness at all. Ready is he who is ready at all times and at all places—whenever and wherever he is called. The only meaning of readiness is readiness to carry out the command of the general. To use military language, we should be so prepared as to make war unnecessary. What is essential is the attainment of independence, not the time and the ways and means of civil disobedience. I expect from you enough faith and discipline to instinctively await and obey your general's word. Don't expect me to say anything more. Do not expect me to reveal *how*, if ever, I shall launch civil disobedience. I have nothing up my sleeve, and I will have no knowledge until the last moment. I am not made that way. I knew nothing of the Salt March[1] until practically the moment it was decided upon. This I know that God has rarely made me repeat history and He may not do so this time. There is one thing, however. I may, for reasons you may not reveal to me, be unfit as a general. In that case you must give me up, and I shall not in the least be sorry for it.

Now for the last point in your question. You want a programme which may be directly connected with civil disobedience. If you will not laugh at me, I will unhesitatingly say it is the programme of universal spinning. Listening to the alarms and advice of the doctors I had given it up for some time. I began it in response to Narandas Gandhi's call, and I do not think I shall ever give it up, until of course my hands are paralysed. So I would say that the more you spin the better soldiers you will be. If that is my conviction, why should I be ashamed of declaring it? There cannot be two parts in my advice, one of which you may accept and the other you may reject. My condition is a vital one. It is likely that there may not be the necessary intellectual conviction, but it will follow faith as a necessary consequence. I say this because I have acted in that spirit. I have marched miles upon miles, through bush and briar and along unbeaten tracks, acting on the word of command, during the Zulu Rebellion[2].

[1] On March 12, 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIII.

[2] In Natal; Gandhiji led an Indian Stretcher-bearer Corps; *vide* Vol. V.

But as I have said the whole thing may strike you as chimerical or quixotic. In that case you have but to give up my leadership. I have led for twenty years, and it may be well for me to rest on my oars. It is possible that you may be able to evolve some new technique of satyagraha. In that case the moment I am convinced I shall be ready to follow you. Whatever you do, do not accept my leadership with a mental reservation. You will by doing so betray both me and the country. If I get your co-operation, it must be full and hearty. I have argued the thing for twenty years; I can advance no fresh argument now.

We have proceeded on an altogether different ideology.

Well, there's the rub. That is why I am repeating again and again my suggestion of a change in the leadership.

But if the charkha is with some of us a symbol of your leadership and nothing more?

No, it must be a symbol of non-violence and a specific condition of preparation for a non-violent struggle. I would suggest even a better course—a course I suggested[1] in 1934. Banish spinning and khadi from the Congress programme, so that I automatically drop out. If you do so, the mistake will not be yours but mine. For it is my duty to convince you that there is a vital connection between the charkha and non-violence.[2]

What was the duty of the Congressmen when there was a riot going on ?

To die in quelling it. We had one Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi[3] in 1931, and have had none to copy his example since. So many die during the riots, but they do not offer of themselves willing sacrifices. Those who do not accept this programme should leave me.

But must we allow them to hold up the movement assuming that there will be Hindu-Muslim riots?

[1] *Vide* Vol. LIX, pp. 3-12.

[2] Here Mahadev Desai adds: "It was agreed that when a large section of the population was opposed to a direct programme it could not be launched in the teeth of their opposition. Part of the constructive work, it therefore followed, must be the building up of that unity. Apart from the various bones of contention about which a detailed programme will be taken up at the next meeting of the Working Committee, there was the eternal question of communal riots, no matter what their occasion or cause."

[3] Who was killed in the Kanpur Hindu-Muslim riots in March 1931; *vide* Vol. XLV.

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They cannot indefinitely do so. I have enough faith in Mussalmans to hope that they would rebel against being an obstacle in the way of independence. There is enough love of freedom and democracy in them to make them ashamed of that state of things.

In view of the little time at our disposal, could you tell us what you would regard as the minimum preparation necessary from the point of view of spinning?

Why little time? Is it essential that we should start the movement in three months or six months? Let it take six years. What is essential is the preparation. I would ask you to get rid of impatience. The test for me is not a formal spinning by you all for half an hour or even an hour a day in order to satisfy me or to secure my leadership, but the universalization of spinning so that there may be no mill-cloth—indigenous or foreign—in your province. If I feel that we have made rapid strides in that direction, I shall be satisfied. You boast of several hundred thousand Congress members. If all of these took up the programme and became voluntary workers on behalf of the A. I. S. A., there would be no mill-cloth in the province. It should be part of your daily life. Just as an Afridi cannot do without his rifle, even so every one of you non-violent soldiers should not be able to do without your spinning. And all this, not because this old man wants it, but because you want independence. When you realize this you will not come to me with questions like the one you have asked.[1]

Harijan, 2-12-1939

437. LETTER TO BARIN GHOSH

November 24, 1939

BARIN GHOSH,

The difference about the charkha is not immaterial. My whole life is wound up with it. If you cannot support it, you cannot whole-heartedly support non-violence. And of what use am I without non-violence?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] *Vide* also "Baffling Situation", pp. 388-90.

438. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO PEOPLE OF MYSORE

November 24, 1939

You should do what you think is proper under the circumstances. I should not advise without first-hand knowledge. Here I have no intuitive opinion. You have shown your mettle, you have suffered and [are] prepared to suffer. The people evidently are trained in the art of suffering, and so I should not interfere in Mysore affairs.[1] Forest Satyagraha[2] I certainly did disapprove for thereby we injure our own property. I led the campaign in cutting date-palm trees and took fiendish delight in cutting down thousands of trees. Fiendish because I see now that I acted hastily. I would not now cut down a single tree. *Gur-nira*—even the trunk is useful for hedges, leaves for mats, tree requires no nurture, it grows by itself. I therefore swear by the palm.

And even if this stopping of Forest Satyagraha affected adversely the number of jail-goers, you should not mind it [at] all.

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

439. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI

November 25, 1939

CHI. SARU,

I got your letter. I hope you are well. I am glad that Kanti has arrived. Keep writing to me. I am writing this on the train. We shall reach Wardha today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6176. Also C.W. 3450. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to N. S. Hardikar", pp. 252-3 and 284.
[2] In the Central Provinces

440. LETTER TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

ON THE TRAIN,
November 25, 1939

BHAISAHEB,

Mahadev gave me your message overflowing with love. He also showed the *sloka*[1] in the eleventh canto of *Bhagavata*. I had come to know of this *sloka* in South Africa. I was much impressed by the eleventh canto. But I do not consider all the sayings in our Shastras as gospel truth. One who becomes lustful just by merely touching a woman is not a *brahmachari*. I believe that one who is not moved by passion even after intentionally touching a woman is the only *brahmachari*. And I have spent my *brahmachari* life like this. It is true that I am still not perfect. Kindly give your blessings that I become perfect in this life. My effort is going on every moment. Of course this experiment will be judged only after my death. I have understood the meaning behind your message. I am cautious and shall try to be more so.

What shall I say about the message you have conveyed about women in menses? I have never observed or made anyone adhere to such [restrictions]. I do not consider it a sin to touch woman during that period. My humble opinion is that there is room for change in our customs.

I am with you regarding observing silence. I shall go on increasing the duration.

Your indebted brother,
MOHANDAS

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

[1] Presumably, 11, VIII. 13, which reads:

पदापि युवतीं भिक्षुर्न स्पृशेत् दारवीमपि
स्पृशन् करीव बध्येत करिण्या अङ्गसङ्गतः

A *bhikshu* may not touch even with his feet even a wooden figure of a woman. The elephant itself is caught through contact with an elephant cow.

441. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 26, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your three letters. I gave all letters to Mahadev Desai. I can't account for the understamping and bad sticking. I am ashamed. Shall inquire. The rest of your letters I understand. We must leave some things in God's hands. I had no difficulty in Allahabad. Jawaharlal was quite nice. I had no particular talks. He was too busy for them.

There was a good reply from Shummy.[1]

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3948. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7257

442. LETTER TO TRIAMBAKLAL POPATLAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 26, 1939

BHAI TRIAMBAKLAL,

I had got the *hundi* for Rs. 4,401-6-9. And now I have received another for Rs. 13-6-0. You should get an official receipt from Delhi.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI TRIAMBAKLAL POPATLAL
121 MOGHAL STREET
RANGOON[2]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9830. Courtesy: Triambaklal Popatlal

[1] For Gandhiji's letter, *vide* pp. 369-70.
[2] The address is in English.

443. SWARAJ THROUGH WOMEN

Now that the Working Committee has accepted[1] spinning as an indispensable condition of civil disobedience, the women of India have a rare opportunity of serving the country. The salt campaign brought out tens of thousands from their seclusion and showed that they could serve the country on equal terms with men. It gave the village woman a dignity which she had never enjoyed before. The restoration of spinning to its central place in India's peaceful campaign for deliverance from the imperial yoke gives her women a special status. In spinning they have a natural advantage over men.

Since the beginning of time there has been a division of labour between men and women. Adam wove and Eve span. The distinction persists to the present day. Men spinners are an exception. In the Punjab when during 1920-21 I asked men to spin, they used to tell me that men considered spinning to be beneath their dignity and that it was solely women's occupation. Men nowadays do not object on the ground of dignity. There are thousands who spin for sacrifice. It was when men took up spinning from a patriotic motive that spinning was reduced to a science and inventions as great as in any other field were made. Nevertheless experience shows that spinning will remain woman's speciality. I believe there is a good reason behind the experience. Spinning is essentially a slow and comparatively silent process. Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and therefore non-violence. Her occupations must therefore be, as they are, more conducive to peace than war. That she is now being dragged down for purposes of violent war is no credit to modern civilization. I have no doubt that violence so ill becomes woman that presently she will rebel against the violation of her fundamental nature. I feel that man too will repent of his folly. Equality of the sexes does not mean equality of occupations. There may be no legal bar against a woman hunting or wielding a lance. But she instinctively recoils from a function that belongs to man. Nature has created sexes as complements of each other. Their functions are defined as are their forms.

But a proof of the different functions of the sexes is unnecessary for my purpose. The fact stands, at any rate in India, that millions

[1] *Vide* p. 373.

of women regard spinning as their natural occupation. The Working Committee's resolution automatically shifts the burden from men to women and gives to them an opportunity of showing their mettle. I would love to find that my future army contained a vast preponderance of women over men. If the fight came, I should then approach it with much greater confidence than if men predominated. I would dread the latter's violence. Women would be my guarantee against such an outbreak.

SEGAON, November 27, 1939

Harijan, 2-12-1939

444. NOTES

WHY NOT HINDU MAHASABHA?

A correspondent writes:

> I have read your comments[1] on the speech delivered by Lord Zetland in the Lords' debate on India in which he declared the Congress to be a Hindu organization. I cannot help saying that the attitude of the Congress itself is partly responsible for the mistake into which Lord Zetland has fallen. If the Congress is a national organization, as it undoubtedly is, with what propriety did it enter into a discussion with the Muslim League alone, which is a purely communal organization, for solving the communal question generally and the Hindu-Muslim question particularly? The Congress ought to have remained neutral and permitted Jinnah Saheb to negotiate with Shri Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, or, if it was not practicable, to convene a conference of the representatives of the several communal organizations in the country and to play the role of umpire at such a conference. Any attempt on the part of the Congress leaders to have direct and exclusive talks with the leaders of a single community with a view to the solution of Hindu-Muslim problem was bound to give a handle to the opponents of the Congress, of which they could not be expected to be slow to take full advantage. In my opinion this step on the part of the Congress has lowered the status of the Congress as a national organization.

I have already admitted the force of the correspondent's argument. I have also shown how the Congress could not shirk a duty devolving upon it. I must dissent from the view that the status of the Congress has been lowered by its attempt to solve a difficult

[1] *Vide* pp. 327 and 341-2.

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national problem. I invite all well-wishers to refrain from doing anything to hinder the progress of the talks that are about to take place between Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Communal Decision Again

I gladly publish the following from Shri Radhakant Malaviya:

In your article "Good and Bad"[1] you have stated: ". . . I have very bitter memories of the Award which was being hatched during the Round Table Conference. . . . I regard the Award as discreditable for all parties. . . . But the Congress has loyally accepted it because I was party to the request made to the late Mr. MacDonald to arbitrate."

Is it that, as immediately after your return from the Round Table Conference you were imprisoned, you are not aware of the subsequent developments in connection with the negotiations for the settlement of the communal question? The Communal Decision by Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald is dated 17th August, 1932. That there was not to be an award but a decision by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was made clear by His Excellency the Viceroy on 24th February, 1932. The proceedings of the Consultative Committee of the Round Table Conference held at the Viceroy's House at Delhi on 22nd and 24th February, 1932, should be looked into.

There in the proceedings you will find that in the Committee meeting held on 22nd February, 1932, Mr. (now Sir) Zafarulla Khan stated ". . .that the difficulty could only be solved by a decision by the British Government itself. . . . Your Excellency might well press upon the British Government the necessity of pronouncing an immediate decision upon those questions. . . ." Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan stated: ". . . I have urged your Excellency to ask the Prime Minister to give us a decision." Again, in the meeting held on 24th February, Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan stated: "The Muslim delegation never mentioned the word 'arbitration'. We have said all along that it is for His Majesty's Government to give a decision. Of course we have never asked for arbitration." Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru [said] : "What was said was that the Prime Minister would give a decision." Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan again stated, ". . . he (Prime Minister) will give a decision. . . . We are not asking for his arbitration; we request the decision of His Majesty's Government." Sardar Ujjal Singh stated: ". . . In the Minorities Sub-committee the Prime Minister undertook to decide that question if all the communities submitted it to him for arbitration. That was entirely a different thing. Some members did send him letters on behalf of their respective communities, but the offer was not accepted by all. . . . There is not question of arbitration now." At the end, His Excellency the Viceroy, as Chairman, stated: "I am advised that

[1] *Vide* pp. 317-8. The source, however, has "Hindu-Muslim Unity".

at that time the Prime Minister made an offer, as Chairman of the Committee, but that was not accepted."

If you think it proper, you may publish this in an early issue of *Harijan* so that the wrong impression which has been created by your above remarks may be removed.

I have admitted[1] my lapse of memory. It does one good to record the facts which Shri Radhakant has narrated. They cannot be altered by any error I may have committed. It is fortunate that my error does not in any way weaken the force of my complaint against Sir Samuel Hoare.

When Is Picketing Peaceful?

A correspondent writes:

I find that here in Bombay this weapon of 'peaceful picketing' is being misused on the ground that peaceful picketing, with whatsoever just or unjust object it may be resorted to, is no offence. The aggrieved party against whom such picketing is aimed at, fails to get any protection either from the police or law. For instance, A happens to be a shopkeeper. B, an employee of A, having no legal claim against A, threatens A with picketing his shop in case A does not accede to B's demands and, actually, with the help of C and D posing as 'leaders', starts picketing A's shop, and misleads A's customers with a view to dissuading them from patronising A's shop. Would such picketing, even though there be no actual physical force used, be termed 'peaceful' ?

I cannot speak about the legality of such picketing, but I can say that such picketing cannot be called peaceful, i.e., non-violent. All picketing without indubitably just cause is violent even though no physical force is used. Picketing without such cause becomes a nuisance and interferes with the exercise of private right. Generally no picketing should be resorted to by individuals unless it is promoted by a responsible organization. Picketing like civil disobedience has its well-defined limits without a strict observance of which it becomes illegitimate and reprehensible.

Segaon, November 27, 1939

Harijan, 2-12-1939

[1] *Vide* "Notes", sub-title, "Award or Decision", pp. 346-7.

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445. MESSAGE FOR THAKKAR BAPA BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS[1]

[*November 27, 1939*][2]

I should have been present at the seventieth birthday celebration of Thakkar Bapa, but I am physically unfit for such functions. It is my heartfelt hope that he may live a hundred years. Bapa was born only to serve the downtrodden, whether they be untouchables or Bhils, Santhals or Khasis. Even the appreciation of his service means some little service of these downtrodden. His services have carried India considerably forward towards the goal.[3]

Harijan, 2-12-1939

446. THE PITY OF IT

The following is taken from a letter by a wise and learned Englishman to an English friend who has forwarded it to me:

> Gandhiji seems to me to have completely departed from his original position which was that he would not tolerate any bargaining with the British Government to which in this war he was prepared to give complete support. He seems to me now to have veered round completely to the Congress extreme position, namely, that unless complete and unconditional independence is promised to India now, they will not co-operate in any way with the Government, but where they are in power will resign thus to dissociate themselves completely from the Government which has declared that India is at war with Germany. This seems to me to be sheer bargaining, the exploiting of British need, to secure not only Dominion Status which has been promised in clear and unmistakable terms but absolute independence. Further, I find it hard to reconcile Congress assertion that it contemplates no constitution which does not carry with it the protection of real minorities to their satisfaction and the complete failure of the Congress to come to an understanding with the Muslim League. Surely this failure gives little encouragement to the Muslims to

[1] The message is extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "Bapa Jayanti in Bombay".

[2] From *Bhil Seva Mandal Seva Smriti Granth, 1966*, p. 16

[3] *Vide* also pp. 262-3.

believe and trust the Congress with the supreme power that Indian independence would give them.

As I have stated before[1] I have not departed a tittle from my original position which was taken, as I then said, because I was an out-and-out believer in non-violence. In offering my sympathy (I did not use the word 'support') I had the same end in view that the Congress has. I put my position before the Working Committee. It could not honestly adopt it. Desiring independence, it could not take up any other attitude. The Congress position was as good from its own, as mine from my premises. The Congress had a perfect right to know British intentions, if the British Government desired its help in the prosecution of the war. As a subject nation, India, if she was resolved upon securing her liberty, could not be expected willingly to help the dominant nation without knowing where she stood. If India was violently inclined and had the strength, she would be bound to take advantage of Britain's difficulty and declare her independence and defend it with arms if she was resisted. And she would have commanded the admiration of the world including Britain for seizing the opportunity. But the Congress has chosen the better way—the way of non-violence, however diluted it is. I own too that India is not ready for armed revolt. But this is no matter of credit either for Britain or for India. India is too weak for armed revolt. Britain's connection has made her weaker. Her disarmament is a black chapter in British history.

God has blessed me with the mission to place non-violence before the nation for adoption. For better or for worse the Congress has adopted it and, for the past nineteen years the Congress, admittedly the most popular and powerful organization, has consistently and to the best of its ability tried to act up to it. Hence the sting of forced disarmament has not been felt as it would have been otherwise. It is futile to guess what it would have done if it had not accepted non-violence as its chief means for the attainment of swaraj. The Congress has allowed itself to be judged from the non-violent standpoint. It is possible to question the propriety of the Congress attitude only from that standpoint. Judged according to the ordinary standard, the Congress stands fully justified in the attitude it has taken.

I hope the learned critic does not wish to suggest that as the Congress did not accept my position I should have dissociated myself entirely from the Congress and refused to guide it. My

[1] *Vide* pp. 169-71.

association enables the Congress to pursue the technique of corporate non-violent action.

The writer seems to cavil at the demand for independence as distinguished from Dominion Status. Surely India cannot be satisfied with anything less if she is to rank as a free nation. I had thought that Dominion Status according to the Statute of Westminster was equivalent to independence. The expression Dominion Status has a special connotation. It refers to a commonwealth of whites who are themselves pillars of imperialism engaged in exploiting the non-European races whom they regard as uncivilized. India free will be no party to such exploitation. But there is nothing to prevent free India from entering into an alliance with Britain for the protection of the freedom of all, whether black, brown or white. Therefore, if Dominion Status is less than independence, India cannot be satisfied with less. If it is synonymous with independence, then India has to choose how she would describe her status.

The critic then condemns the Congress for not coming to terms with the Muslim League. It is a pity that even responsible Englishmen will not take the trouble to study questions which they judge freely. The Congress has never given up the effort to solve the communal question. It is even now engaged in the difficult task. But it is wrong to use Congress inability to reach a solution for keeping India from her destined goal. British officials including Viceroys have admitted that they have ruled by following the policy of 'divide and rule'. The British established themselves by taking advantage of our internal quarrels and have remained by keeping them alive. It is unnecessary for my argument to prove that the policy is being followed deliberately.

The British have made themselves believe that they are ruling because of our quarrels, and that they will gladly retire when we have ceased to quarrel. Thus they are moving in a vicious circle. The British rule must be permanent if the adjustment of the communal quarrel is a condition precedent to India becoming independent. It is a purely domestic problem which we are bound to solve if we are to live at peace with one another. May I remind the critic and those who argue like him that only a short while ago it was said that if the British withdrew, Hindus would be left to the mercy of the virile races from the north, that not a virgin would be safe or a monied man retain his wealth ? Now Princes and Muslims, who are able enough to protect themselves against the unarmed millions whom the Congress claims specially to represent, are sought to be protected by the British bayonet against the latter! Be that as it

may, the Congress must pursue its even course. It must work for communal unity in spite of odds against it. It is a plank in its programme. It is part of the non-violent technique.

Another English critic has put the problem in a truer way. He says among many other things: "British people feel that Great Britain needs to carry the Muslim world with her at this time of immense struggle." I have no difficulty in sympathizing with this position. Only let us clear the issues. Great Britain cannot afford to risk defeat for the sake of doing justice. This is just what an overwhelming number of Indians feel. The Congress, before it can offer ungrudging support to Britain, wants to feel sure that hers is an absolutely just cause. The recent events have created a grave doubt about it. Absolute protection of the rights of minorities is a greater concern of the Congress than it ever can be of Great Britain. The Congress dare not seek and cannot get justice, if it is not prepared to do it itself. To be above suspicion is the only way open to non-violent organizations. But British policy may make a just solution impossible at the present moment.

SEGAON, November 28, 1939

Harijan, 2-12-1939

447. BAFFLING SITUATION

Jawaharlal, born democrat as he is, had arranged for a free talk[1] between the Executive Council of the U. P. P. C. C. and me. We had three such talks. I had expected that the talks would result in a parting of the ways. Among the Congressmen whom I was facing there were some who had laughed at the charkha and non-violence. But to my utter astonishment I found them reconciled to both. It is a baffling situation both for Congressmen and me.

I do not know whether I am wise in bearing the heavy responsibility of leading Congressmen who only the other day had no faith in me. Are they not paying too great a price for my leadership in a battle? If they render obedience without faith, is it good for them or me? Can I lead them to success? If I was not good enough in peace, how can I be good in war? There was no peace. The Congress is at war with Great Britain till independence is won. War had never ceased; only civil disobedience had been suspended for better and greater preparation. Congressmen who did not obey instructions during the prepara-

[1] *Vide* pp. 374-7.

tory period were surely not fit soldiers on active duty. And yet I could not distrust the responsible men who faced me in Allahabad. What is true of them is true of the other Congressmen in the other provinces. And so I am shouldering the burden.

Let me then think aloud. I hope that Congressmen will make it a point to read *Harijan* as if it was a weekly bulletin containing instructions for them.

To the impatient Congressmen I say: I see no immediate prospect of declaring civil disobedience. There can be no civil disobedience for the sake of embarrassing Great Britain. It will come when it becomes clearly inevitable. Probably it will come by the goading of the official world. I do not doubt the honesty of the Viceroy or that of the Secretary of State. At the same time I have no doubt whatsoever that they are in error because they cannot get out of the old rut to which they are used. We must give them time to collect themselves. We must do real propaganda by way of educating the public both here and abroad. We cannot all of a sudden dispel the surrounding misunderstandings, not merely on the part of the British people but of our own countrymen. There is no mistaking the fact that many non-Congress Muslims honestly think that the Congress Ministers did not pay enough heed to Muslim complaints. Congressmen wedded to non-violence have to give special heed to the complaints of non-Congress Muslims. It is no use saying that they are frivolous. I know myself that many complaints have been frivolous. But we have to be patient and courteous enough to take them seriously and endeavour to show clearly that they are frivolous. I do not wish to suggest that pains were not taken to deal with them. I am just now concerned with the phenomenon that the complaints persist. We must, therefore, give time to demonstrating that there never has been anything in the complaints. If in the course of further investigation we discover errors, we must make amends. We must prove to the Muslim countrymen and to the world that the Congress does not want independence at the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest, be it Muslim or other. We may leave no stone unturned to carry the minorities with us. This meticulous care for the rights of the least among us is the *sine qua non* of non-violence.

If it is true, as it is, that for the British Government to plead want of communal unity as a bar to independence is wrong, it is equally true that this discord is, nevertheless, a serious handicap in our march towards swaraj. If we had the Muslim League and others with us, our demand would become irresistible.

So much for the external difficulties. Not till we have given sufficient time to their solution, can we possibly think of civil disobedience.

The internal weakness is no less great. I see a vital connection between the charkha and non-violence. Even as certain minimum qualifications are indispensable in a soldier in arms, so are certain other and even opposite qualifications indispensable in a non-violent soldier, i.e., a satyagrahi. One of these latter is adequate skill in spinning and its anterior processes. A satyagrahi occupies himself in productive work. There is no easier and better productive work for millions than spinning. What is more, it has been an integral part of the non-violent programme since its commencement. Civilization based on non-violence must be different from that organized for violence. Let not Congressmen trifle with this fundamental fact. I repeat what I have said a thousand times that, if millions spun for swaraj and in the spirit of non-violence, there will probably be no necessity for civil disobedience. It will be a constructive effort such as the world has not witnessed before. It is the surest method of converting the 'enemy'.

The Working Committee desired to appoint me as its sole representative to carry on negotiations that may be necessary and to conduct the campaign of civil disobedience if they failed. It was a burden I could not carry. Being boxed up in Segaon, I have no direct touch with the people. I have no confidence, I should have none, in my unaided judgment requiring an accurate first-hand knowledge of many facts. I could only act with the constant guidance and direction of the Working Committee. I shall carry on no negotiations to finality. I should be pleased if I was relieved of the burden. But I shall not shrink from any responsibility, so long as I carry the confidence and affection of the Working Committee and Congressmen in general and so long as I feel that I have the requisite qualifications.

SEGAON, November 28, 1939

Harijan, 2-12-1939

448. SIND RIOTS

I have been following the riots[1] in Sind with painful interest. Many people delude themselves with the belief that I possess powers to remedy all wrongs. I wish I had them, though I am not sure that such possession will be an unmixed blessing. I should make people helpless if I made an indiscriminate use of such powers. And they would be of no use, if I might not use them freely. As it is, I use what powers I have to the fullest extent. Thank God, they are too limited to be harmful. My chief work, however, is to teach people to help themselves.

Here is a pathetic wire from Shikarpur:

> Riots, loot, incendiarism. Sukkur District villages Hindus mercilessly butchered, women and girls raped and kidnapped. Hindu life, property unsafe. Situation most critical. Government policy not firm. Pray send enquiry committee immediately to see situation personally.

It is the third of its kind from Sind. I took no notice of the first two mainly because I was preoccupied in Allahabad and I had no concrete consolation to offer. The Shikarpur Panchayat has come to the wrong person for help. For I am myself helpless. The Congress has not yet sufficiently advanced in non-violence to deal with riots and the like. It must develop it enough to deal with such situations if it is to retain its prestige. I suggested 'peace brigades', but the suggestion proved premature if not unworkable. No doubt the Sind Government should be able to protect life and property of the people within their jurisdiction. Evidently the matter has gone beyond their control. Sind is nominally autonomous and to that extent less able to protect life and property than the preceding Government. For it has never had previous training in the police or the military arts. I have shown in previous writings that the Central Government is impotent to prevent loss of life, property and worse during riots. It is able to check their spread and punish the wrongdoers when it wishes. It is organized solely for the protection of imperial trade and

[1] The riots broke out on October 1, 1939, when Muslims at Sukkur launched a satyagraha with a view to securing possession of Manzalgah and, on November 20, the Sind Government had to meet the acts of violence by opening of fire.

therefore for the maintenance of peace in so far as it is necessary for the safety of that trade. Hence it is ill-equipped for real protection of the people. Such protection involves the training of the people in the art of self-defence and securing their co-operation in quelling riots, etc. This would be putting imperial rule in jeopardy.

Now the only effective way in which I can help the Sindhis is to show them the way of non-violence. But that cannot be learnt in a day. The other way is the way the world has followed hitherto, i.e., armed defence of life and property. God helps only those who help themselves. The Sindhis are no exception. They must learn the art of defending themselves against robbers, raiders and the like. If they do not feel safe and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in.

SEGAON, November 28, 1939

Harijan, 2-12-1939

449. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 28, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

I have only a moment to send you a line. Mahadev has gone to Bombay for Bapa.[1] I am over head and ears in work. Weather superb.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3949. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7258

450. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA, C.P.,
November 29, 1939

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Strange, no letters from you for three days running! But I am putting the best construction possible, i.e., the post has been misdirected or sent too late and all is well. All's well here. The

[1] To participate in the seventieth birthday celebrations of Amritlal V. Thakkar

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patients [are] keeping fairly well. I have some time today to overtake postal arrears.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Just received your two letters at the same time. Yours of 25th is in a sad mood—quite unnecessary. The cupboard you shall have but it will be made or bought after your arrival. There is no dictatorship. What is, is as serious. I can't say that J. L. has been a willing party. Time will tell its own tale. *Harijan* is a true reflex of things. You really therefore do not need anything more.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3950. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7259

451. LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

November 29, 1939

DEAR BHARATAN,

Herewith note for Kelappan if he is still there.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3588

452. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 30, 1939

MY DEAR AMRIT,

Today again I have two letters from you. This letter[1] (at the back) with the appeal of which you have sent me copy from *Hindustan Times*, came to your address today by book post. Your note[2] I have kept. I shall see whether it should go in. I have

[1] It was an undated, printed circular signed by J. N. Wilson, Secretary, Kristagraha Committee, inviting Christians "to enlist in a crusade against the underlying causes of war" and urging them to "stand in this crisis against all oppression and exploitation". With it was also enclosed a manifesto to the Viceroy.

[2] This was published under the title "Christian Duty" in *Harijan*, 9-12-1939.

kept your note[1] on education. I have not yet read it. If it is good enough it will go in some day. You have to be patient with me. As to Nayakam[2] and Asha[3] we have to bear with one another.

Mahadev has not yet returned. He should, tomorrow. He did extraordinarily well in Bombay—collected more than Rs. 15,000.[4] The purse amounted to one lac seventeen thousand.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

I hope your boil has disappeared.

From the original: C.W. 3951. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7260

[1] This was published under the title "A Lay Woman's Impressions", in *Harijan*, 30-12-1939.

[2] & [3] E. W. Aryanayakam and his wife

[4] For the Thakkar Bapa purse

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTER FROM SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN[1]

SIMLA,
July 20, 1939

MY DEAR MAHATMAJI,

Many thanks for your letter of the 17th July which I received this morning. This has crossed my letter of the 18th July.

I am sorry I overlooked to answer your query about the representation of Harijans in the proposed Lahore Corporation. I have made enquiries from the Minister concerned and am informed that no provision has been made in the bill to provide separate electorates for Harijans. The method of election and representation is at present embodied in the rules and it is proposed to leave this matter to the rules in the new measure also. I am almost certain that the question of separate representation for Harijans will be raised in the Assembly when the bill is under consideration as several representations have been received from Harijan organizations. So far as Government is concerned, they do not contemplate at the moment to make a departure from the existing practice unless the Harijan representatives in the Assembly press for a revision and, if so, it would largely depend upon what view the Assembly takes regarding this matter. Personally, as you are aware, I am not averse to joint electorates; but unfortunately the trend of events during the past few years has made it even more difficult to achieve this ideal in the absence of a genuine *rapprochement* between the two major communities.

I am grateful to you for giving careful consideration to my alternative scheme of Federation. Allow me to remove one or two misapprehensions which seem to have arisen due to the reason that you have not had time to make a comparative study of my scheme with the one embodied in the Government of India Act. My proposals do not contemplate a wholesale rejection of the scheme adumbrated in the Government of India Act. At the most it would necessitate modification of about half a dozen sections in the Act and the addition of perhaps two or three new sections. It would of course involve a revision of the Federal, Provincial and the concurrent lists as you will have noticed from the revised list which I sent with my letter of the 18th July. As regards the 'Zonal' Legislatures contemplated in my scheme, there again seems to be some misapprehension. You must have noticed that I do not contemplate any executive

[1] *Vide* pp. 4 and 26.

authority for the 'zones', and the legislative powers delegated to the Regional Legislatures are meant only to bring the various units in a 'zone' closer together in order to bring about mutual confidence and trust between the various units. It would not involve any additional expenditure since the members of a Regional Legislature would also be members of the Federal Legislature and will collectively constitute the Federal Legislature. No separate building or organization will be required. If and when necessary, they will meet together to ratify or pass a measure on which the units in a particular 'zone' are agreed. As a matter of fact, my scheme would be comparatively less expensive as I have suggested a unicameral instead of a bicameral Federal Legislature.

As regards the composition of the Army, I have suggested no more than retention of the *status quo* so far as the peace-time strength of the Army is concerned. As I explained to you in the course of our conversation, my insistence on this provision is actuated by a desire to create mutual confidence, and in the interests of national harmony and solidarity.

I appreciate your remarks regarding acceptance of Dominion Status. I am aware that all the important political organizations in the country have now adopted 'complete independence' as their final goal. But I am sure you will agree with me that in the circumstances it would be inadvisable to clutch at a shadow and discard the substance if it happens to be within our grasp. After all, what we want is complete control over the administration and affairs of our country and this will be obtained if we get Dominion Status. I am fully aware of the fact that some of our fellow-countrymen would prefer to chase a will-o'-the-wisp rather than give up their demand for complete independence; but it would be for an eminent patriot and leader like you to persuade them to accept the substance and leave alone the shadow.

You mention in your letter that "Yours is the only proposal of a constructive character on behalf of the League." Let me hasten to make it quite clear that my scheme has got nothing to do with the League. It has been formulated by me alone and without consultation with any member of the League or for that matter of any other party in the country. It has been conceived with the intention of providing a solution of our communal and political problems and I trust it will be examined and studied by all concerned in the spirit in which it has been conceived.

As regards your draft solution of the communal problem and my comments thereon, I shall be grateful if you would kindly give me some more definite indications of your views, if you desire me to[1] proceed with the matter further. I quite realize that the draft represents only *your* views; but that is quite sufficient for my purpose provided you approve of my suggestions with reference to the various items of the draft. I can then proceed to sound impor-

[1] The source, however, has "or".

tant Muslim leaders and the Working Committee of the League and let you know their reactions. It would be no use my trying to bring them round to my point of view unless I am assured of your whole-hearted approval and support in regard to the points mentioned in my note which I handed over to you at Bombay. I need hardly assure you that the correspondence between us will be treated as strictly confidential. Perhaps, you would like to consult the Working Committee of the League and other prominent Muslims. If there is agreement on these points, then we could bring the representatives of the two Working Committees together to approve and ratify them informally.

As regards services, I do not think we need worry about the number of communities which would fall under the category of 'minorities'. The obvious course would be to fix the share of the majority community in each province and leave the balance to be distributed amongst the minorities. This is what we have done in the Punjab. We have given 50 per cent to the Muslims and 50 per cent to non-Muslims. The proportion (7 per cent) surrendered by the the majority community was added on to the share of the smaller minorities in the shape of weightage. So the problem is not so complex as it appears to be at first sight. What we need is a genuine change of heart and once this is achieved there should be no difficulty in adjusting differences. I am afraid my letter has become somewhat lengthy; but in view of the vital issues involved I have taken the liberty of encroaching on your time by answering the points raised in your letter in some detail.

With best wishes and kind regards,

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

APPENDIX II

HARIJAN SEVAKS' CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS[1]

June 4/7, 1939

1. This Conference of Harijan sevaks resolves that Harijan sevaks should not visit those temples which Harijans are not allowed to enter. It should be clearly understood that Harijan sevaks are not to enter such temples, not only for the purpose of worship but also for sight-seeing, provided that this rule is not intended to come in the way of doing service to Harijans. Similarly Harijan sevaks are not to attend public meetings which are not open to Harijans.

2. The Western and Central India Harijan Sevaks' Conference held at Poona very much appreciates the organization of Harijan welfare work in Holkar State as explained by Prof. R. K. Yardye, Hon. Secretary of the Indore H. S. S., but considers that the grant of Rs. 7,000 is too low for the

[1] *Vide* p. 47.

purpose and therefore requests His Highness the Maharaja Holkar and his Government to raise the grant considerably to enable the work to be organized efficiently. This Conference is also of the opinion that the object of the State regarding Harijan emancipation will be better served by the appointment of a special officer, as is done in Bombay, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, to look after Harijan interests.

3. The report of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Gwalior State, submitted by the Secretary to this Conference, shows that the cause of Harijans suffers on account of the utter lack of practical support by the Government of Gwalior. Considering the views of His Highness the Maharaja Saheb as expressed repeatedly in his public speeches, it is most regrettable that such indifference should exist. This Conference respectfully draws the attention of the Administration and the Ruler of the Gwalior State to the necessity of taking an active part in the work of the amelioration of the conditions of Harijans, as well as the removal of untouchability. For this purpose this Conference requests the appointment of a special officer or that of a Committee with an annual grant of a substantial sum of money in the annual budget. This Conference is also of opinion that a public declaration of the State policy granting civic rights to Harijans for the use of public wells, tanks, temples, conveyances and schools should be issued forthwith.

4. The universal disinclination to do physical work, particularly work involving the handling of dirt, is one of the causes that are responsible for the custom of untouchability. For example, scavenging, flaying of dead cattle, tanning, leather work, barber's work and similar duties are regarded as causing pollution. Similarly personal service and hospitality rendered to a member of a so-called lower caste is forbidden.

To achieve total eradication of untouchability, it is necessary to remove as early as possible this false feeling of detestation towards socially beneficial occupations. This Conference therefore appeals to all Harijan sevaks and persons interested in the cause of Harijan uplift that they should feel no hesitation in doing with their own hands the aforesaid duties and thereby demonstrate to the world that they involve no indignity or pollution.

This Conference further appeals to all Hindu sisters and brothers to remain absolutely certain that no individual loses his caste by virtue of personal service of any description. Bearing this religious principle in mind they should extend to guests of whatsoever caste coming under their roof the same cordial hospitality that they render to their own caste people. One need not have a guilty conscience in rendering service to such guests.

A growing tendency is to be noticed among self-respecting Harijans to abandon their hereditary occupations because these are socially despised. Although this Conference does not regard any honest occupation as low, it fully appreciates the feelings of Harijans and declares that they have every

right to give up these occupations if they so choose, and that it would be unjust on the part of caste Hindus to coerce them into doing such tasks.

5. With a view to remove untouchability and bring about a speedy uplift of Harijans, this Conference requests all Provincial Boards of the H.S.S. concerned to take necessary steps in order that elementary education is made free and compulsory at least for Harijan children in those places where there are already schools of a District School Board or a Municipal School Board.

6. This Conference takes this opportunity to point out to the managers of Harijan students' hostels of the H.S.S. that segregation is not the object of conducting Harijan hostels, and that therefore an endeavour should be made to secure the admission of Harijan boys and girls of all Harijan sub-castes and also of a few caste Hindu boys and girls in the Harijan hostels, provided that no monetary burden is thrown on the resources of the Sangh in respect of caste-Hindu pupils.

7. This Conference is of opinion that it is necessary to afford legal protection to Harijans who are subjected to social boycott on account of their enjoying a common civic right, and recommends to the Bombay Government, as a measure of partial protection, that the Government should undertake, along with other legislation contemplated by Government, suitable legislation to provide that refusal on the part of a shopkeeper or a regular dealer in articles which are necessaries of life, to sell such articles to a Harijan or his servants or his family dependants as an item of social boycott on the ground of such Harijans trying to enjoy or having enjoyed any common civic rights, should be made a punishable offence.

8. It is resolved by this Conference that the various Provincial Boards should request the Municipalities in their jurisdiction to start welfare work for their Harijan employees on the lines of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, and the Municipalities may be requested to use at least the Fine Funds for this purpose.

The line of work can be suggested on the following fundamental points: recreational, educational, social, economical. And the welfare work will also include the work of a labour officer, i.e., to receive complaints about the working conditions of the employees and to redress them.

9. This Conference urges the Provincial Boards and the Local Committees of the H.S.S. to make concerted and special efforts for securing to Harijans the enjoyment of civic rights in respect of wells, hotels, etc.

10. This Conference is of opinion that the Government of Bombay should take necessary steps to provide for free studentships to all deserving Harijan students in the secondary grant-in-aid schools in the Bombay Presidency as soon as possible.

11. Whereas in various Harijan localities, there are no grocery shops and the Harijans have to purchase corn and other provisions from shops

belonging to other people at a very high price, this Conference requests the Harijan Sevak Sanghs to endeavour to open such shops on a co-operative basis in those villages where the Harijan population is sufficiently numerous.

12. This Conference requests all Harijan sevaks that they should try their best to enlist active co-operation of women workers in the cause of service to Harijans.

13. Whereas it has been found by experience that in multi-member constituencies for legislatures and local bodies where seats are reserved for Harijans, votes are not, as a rule, mutually given by caste Hindu voters and Harijan voters, and whereas it is necessary with a view to foster brotherly feelings and to fulfil the real purpose of the Poona Pact[1] that the votes should be mutually given, this Conference calls upon all caste-Hindu voters to exercise at least one vote in favour of Harijan candidates, and Harijan voters to exercise at least one vote in favour of caste-Hindu candidates. This Conference is further of opinion that the distributive system of voting is better suited than the cumulative system to achieve the end in view.

SEGAON, July 30, 1939

Harijan, 5-8-1939

APPENDIX III

LETTER FROM LORD LINLITHGOW[2]

VICEROY'S CAMP, INDIA (PURI),
August 2, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your telegram which I have just received. I quite realize your difficulty in getting away at this moment, and I had indeed been a little afraid that it might, as has happened, be impossible for you to do so. I should be most reluctant to impose the least strain on you, and I hope that you will never hesitate to let me know if you feel that any suggestion of mine for a meeting is likely to have that effect; and I shall not in the least misunderstand your doing so.

2. It is very kind of you to suggest that we might meet later this month. I have in fact, as I said, nothing very special to talk about, and my invitation to you to meet me at Delhi was merely in pursuance of my desire to keep in touch with you and maintain contact from time to time. Nor do I want to give you the trouble of the tiring journey to Simla. I think therefore that we might leave matters as they are for the moment, and

[1] Of September 1932, *vide* Vol. LI, Appendix II.
[2] *Vide* p. 52.

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I will look forward to seeing you a little later in the year when I am again back from the hills.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI, ESQ.
SEGAON

From a copy: C.W. 7831. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

APPENDIX IV

KATHIAWAR STATES[1]

The Western India States Agency, comprising all the 284 States in Kathiawar, is, numerically, by far the biggest Agency under the administrative control of the Political Department. The Kathiawar States, between themselves account for just half the number of States in India, the total being computed at 562. These States present the greatest possible variety in size and government. At one end of the scale are Cutch with an area of 8,250 square miles and Bhavnagar with an annual income of about Rs. 15 million; at the other end of the scale . . . Vejanoness which has an area of 0.29 square mile, a population of 206 souls and an income of Rs. 500 a year. . . . Sir George Macmunn must have had these statelets in mind while writing his famous book *The Indian States and Princes*. In the very first chapter he says:

> The Ruling Princes of India number between five and six hundred, and their principalities vary from that of the Nizam, as large as a third of France, to others no larger than Battersea Park.

The real demand of the States subjects, it must be presumed, is self-government or responsible government and not merely good government. Nothing short of extensive democratization of the administrative machinery is likely to satisfy them. As democratization must of necessity involve certain financial commitments, it is neither helpful nor politic to demand it from Rulers of States whose annual income is less than, say, Rs. 50 lakhs. Joint administration is, therefore, the only alternative to the existing arrangement for such States.

Joint administration for small States is no novel or visionary suggestion. His Excellency the Viceroy himself, than whom none can claim to be more solicitous for the welfare of the Princes, is responsible for propagating this view. The germs of this theory, however, are traceable in the Butler Committee Report, 1928-29. Dealing with the classification of States, the Report says:

[1] *Vide* pp. 83, 89 and 171. Only extracts are reproduced here.

> The petty States of Kathiawar and Gujarat, numbering 286 of the total of 327 in the third class, are organized in groups called *thanas* under officers appointed by local representatives of the Paramount Power, who exercise various kinds and degrees of criminal, revenue and civil jurisdiction. As the cost of administration rises, the States find it necessary to distribute it over larger areas by appointing officials to work for several States. Already there is talk in some of the larger States in Kathiawar of appointing a High Court with powers over a group of such States.

His Excellency's views on this question may be gathered from the following extract from his address delivered on the occasion of inaugurating the session of the Chamber of Princes in March last:

> In no case is the need for co-operation and combination more patent, more pronounced and more immediate than in the case of the smaller States. Those States whose resources are so limited as virtually to preclude them individually from providing for the requirements of their people in accordance with modern standard, have indeed no other practical alternative before them. I would take this opportunity to impress upon the Rulers of such States, with all the emphasis at my command, the wisdom of taking the earliest possible steps to combine with their neighbours in the matter of administrative services so far as this is practicable.

Though the principle of combination enunciated by the Viceroy can apply to smaller States all over India, it is particularly suitable in the case of Kathiawar States. One peculiar feature of these States is that, unlike their neighbours, the Gujarat States or the Central India States, they are geographically one compact province. . . . The process of combination or grouping or, to be a little bolder, of confederation, is immensely facilitated by this continuity. The total area of all these States is just over 40,000 square miles and the total population is 42,29,494. The total annual income is estimated at about Rs. six crores.

During the last three months the Kathiawar Princes have met a number of times and . . . they were reported to have discussed the feasibility of having a combined police force, common Excise, Medical, Public Health, Public Works and Forest Departments and a common High Court. . . . It is so easy to see the futility of combined administration in these important spheres without providing for a combined legislature. For, the question arises, to whom will these common administrations be responsible? Certainly not to all one score Princes and their Governments. You cannot earnestly be responsible to twenty authorities unless confusion is their aim and to bungle your wish.

Harijan, 30-9-1939

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APPENDIX V

LETTER FROM SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE TO CONGRESS PRESIDENT[1]

August 7, 1939

I am exceedingly sorry for the delay in replying to your letter of the 18th July, from Ranchi. You have asked me for an explanation of my action in protesting against certain resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee passed at Bombay.

In the first place, one has to distinguish between protesting against a certain resolution and actually defying it or violating it. What has so far happened is that I have only protested against two resolutions of the A.I.C.C.

It is my constitutional right to give expression to my opinion regarding any resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. You will perhaps admit that it is customary with a large number of Congressmen to express their views on resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. when a particular session of that body comes to a close. If you grant Congressmen the right to express their views on resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C., you cannot draw a line and say that only favourable opinions will be allowed expression and unfavourable opinions will be banned. If we have the constitutional right to express our views then it does not matter if those views are favourable or unfavourable. Your letter seems to suggest that only expression of unfavourable views is to be banned.

We have so long been fighting the British Government among other things for our civil liberty. Civil liberty, I take it, includes freedom of speech. According to your point of view we are not to claim freedom of speech when we do not see eye to eye with the majority in the A.I.C.C. or in the Congress. It would be a strange situation if we are to have the right of freedom of speech as against the British Government but not as against the Congress or any body subordinate to it. If we are denied the right to adversely criticize resolutions of the A.I.C.C. which in our view are harmful to the country's cause then it would amount to denial of a democratic right. May I ask you in all seriousness if democratic rights are to be exercised only outside the Congress but not inside it?

I hope you will agree that when a resolution is once passed by the A.I.C.C., it is open to us to have it reviewed or amended or altered or

[1] *Vide* p. 84.

rescinded at a subsequent meeting of that body. I hope you will also agree that it is open to us to appeal against the A.I.C.C. to the higher court of appeal, namely, the open session of the Congress. You will agree further, I hope, that it is open to a minority to carry on a propaganda with a view to converting the majority to its point of view. Now how can we do this except by appealing to Congressmen through public meetings and through writings in the Press? The Congress today is not an organization of a handful of men. Its membership has, I believe, reached the neighbourhood of 45 lakhs. We can hope to appeal to the rank and file of the Congress and to convert them to our point of view only if we are allowed to write in the Press and also to hold meetings. If you maintain that once a resolution is passed in the A.I.C.C. it is sacrosanct and must hold good for ever, then you may have some justification for banning criticism of it. But if you grant us the right to review or amend or alter or rescind a particular resolution of the A.I.C.C. either through that body or through the open session of the Congress, then I do not see how you can gag criticism, as you have been trying to do.

I am afraid you are giving an interpretation to the word 'discipline' which I cannot accept. I consider myself to be a stern disciplinarian and I am afraid that in the name of discipline you are trying to check healthy criticism. Discipline does not mean denying a person his constitutional and democratic right.

Apart from the fact that it is our constitutional and democratic right to protest against resolutions which in our view are harmful to the country's cause, a consideration of the merits of the two resolutions will show that such protests were really called for. In our view these two resolutions, if given effect to, will serve to accentuate the drift towards constitutionalism, to increase the influence, power and authority of the Provincial Ministries at the cost of the Congress organizations, to isolate artificially the Congress from the general public as also the A.I.C.C. from the rank and file of the Congress. Moreover, they will serve to undermine the revolutionary spirit of the Congress. Consequently, in the best interests of the country, these two resolutions should be immediately held in abeyance and ultimately altered suitably or withdrawn.

In this connection I cannot help drawing your attention to certain incidents at the time of the Gaya Congress in 1922 and after. Please do not forget what the Swaraj Party did in those days. Please do not forget either that when the A.I.C.C. amended the resolution of the Gaya Congress, the Gujarat P.C.C. resolved to defy it.

Lastly, please do not forget that Mahatma Gandhi wrote[1] in *Young India*, if my recollection is correct, that the minority has the right to rebel. We

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXII, "Notes", pp. 485-6.

have not gone so far yet as to actually rebel against the decision of the majority. We have simply taken the liberty of criticizing certain resolutions passed by the majority in the teeth of our opposition.

I am really surprised that you have made so much of what we regard as our inherent right. I hope you will accept my explanation as satisfactory. But if you do not do so, and if you decide to resort to disciplinary action, I shall gladly face it for the sake of what I regard as a just cause. In conclusion, I have to request that if any Congressman is penalized in connection with the events of the 9th July, then you will also take action against me. If the observance of an All-India Day of the 9th is a crime then I confess, I am the arch-criminal.

With kindest regards,

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, pp. 219-20

APPENDIX VI

CONGRESS PRESIDENT'S DECLARATION[1]

July 6, 1939

I have been much surprised to read in the papers Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's statement fixing the 9th July for protesting against resolutions passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay. It is well known that the resolution was passed after prolonged debate by a very large majority against the opposition of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. If Committees subordinate to the All-India Congress Committee and office-bearers of such Committees or minorities within the Congress begin to defy such resolutions and organize and hold protest meetings against decisions arrived at after full deliberation by the All-India Congress Committee or the Congress, there will be an end to all discipline within the Congress and a complete disruption of the organization. I therefore desire to impress on all Congress Committees and their office-bearers that the policy and practice of the Congress no less than loyalty to the Congress organization require that they should carry out and give effect to the resolutions passed by the All-India Congress Committee, and participation in and organizing of protests and condemnation against such resolution will be a breach of discipline. I trust the Congress Committees and their office-bearers will desist from organizing or participating in such protests and demonstrations.

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, p. 219

[1] *Vide* p. 85.

APPENDIX VII

LETTER FROM CONGRESS PRESIDENT TO SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE[1]

July 18, 1939

A delicate and difficult situation has been created by your action in organizing protests against certain resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee, passed at Bombay. As I made clear in the statements which I issued before the meetings of the 9th July were held, it appears to me that it will be impossible for the Congress organization to function if subordinate Committees and office-bearers of the Congress, whose duty it is to carry out and give effect to the resolutions of the A.I.C.C. and the Congress, were, instead of doing that, to organize protests and demonstrations against these resolutions. I personally look upon any such action on their part as not only destructive of all discipline but fraught with the gravest consequences for the future of the Congress organization. I shall therefore place the whole matter before the Working Committee for consideration and such action, disciplinary or otherwise, as it may think fit to take. But in order that the Committee may have your explanation of your action and your point of view also before it, I shall be obliged if you will let me have it at an early date.

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, p. 219

APPENDIX VIII

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION[2]

The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the critical international situation and to the danger of war that overhangs the world. In this world crisis the sympathies of the Working Committee are entirely with the people who stand for democracy and freedom, and the Congress has repeatedly condemned Fascist aggression in Europe, Africa and the Far East of Asia as well as the betrayal of democracy by British imperialism in Czechoslovakia and Spain. The Congress has further clearly enunciated its policy in the event of war and declared its determination to oppose all attempts to impose a war on India. The Committee are bound by this policy of the Congress and will give effect to it so as to prevent the exploitation of Indian resources for imperialist ends. The past policy of the British Government as well as the recent developments demonstrate abundantly

[1] *Vide* p. 85.

[2] *Vide* pp. 112, 190, 217, 267, 311 and 370.

that this Government does not stand for freedom and democracy and may at any time betray these ideals. India cannot associate herself with such a Government or be asked to give her resources for democratic freedom which is denied to her and which is likely to be betrayed.

At its meeting held in Calcutta on May 1, 1939, the All-India Congress Committee reiterated this policy of the Congress and expressed its disapproval of the despatch of Indian troops to foreign countries. In spite of this clear expression of opinion, the British Government has sent, or is sending Indian troops to Egypt and Singapore against the declared will of the Indian people. Even apart from the war situation, the Central Legislative Assembly has previously declared that no Indian troops should be sent abroad without the consent of the Legislature. The British Government has thus flouted the declaration of the Congress and the Assembly and has taken steps which might inevitably lead to India's entanglement in a war. It has further prolonged the life of the Central Assembly by another year. The Working Committee cannot accept these decisions of the British Government and must not only dissociate themselves from them but also take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to the Congress policy. As a first step to this end, the Committee call upon all Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session of the Assembly.

The Committee further remind Provincial Governments to assist in no way the war preparations of the British Government and to keep in mind the policy laid down by the Congress, to which they must adhere. If the carrying out of this policy leads to the resignations or removal of the Congress Ministers they must be prepared for this contingency.

In the event of a war crisis leading to danger to any part of India from the air or otherwise it may be necessary for protective measures to be taken. The Committee will be prepared to encourage such measures if they are within the control of the popular Ministries in the Provinces. The Committee are however not agreeable to such protective measures being used as a cloak for war preparations under the control of the Imperial Government.

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, pp. 214-5

APPENDIX IX

LETTER FROM YADAVINDRA SINGH[1]

RANBIR VILLA, CHAIL,
September 9, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I thank you for your letter dated the 30th ultimo enclosing a copy of the letter reported to have been despatched to me on the 3rd August

[1] *Vide* pp. 122 and 174. Only excerpts are reproduced here.

which, as I intimated you in my telegram dated 28th ultimo, was never received by me. I was somewhat surprised to learn of the publication in the vernacular Press of the letter from your correspondent together with your comments and was inclined to think that since you did not consider it worthwhile to await my reply before releasing to the Press your correspondent's letter, it was unnecessary for me to reply to your letter. However, I have since received your message conveyed through my vakil at Simla informing that whereas an intimation had been given in time to the English Press to withhold publication of this matter, owing to rush of work similar instructions could not be conveyed to the vernacular Press. I am, indeed, thankful to you for intimating me that the comments that have already appeared in the vernacular Press will be revised or withdrawn in case it was considered necessary on receipt of my reply.

Your correspondent's letter deals with two issues, namely, (a) the *Hidayat* of 1988 and (b) the threatening language alleged to have been used by me during the course of an interview I gave to the deputation that waited upon me on the 18th July. . . .

The main criticism against the *Hidayat* has been that since it was intended to meet a special situation, its retention as a permanent law of the land was not justifiable. The communal disturbances, as you will agree, were precisely the kind of special situation to meet which the Government have to keep themselves armed with such special legislation. It will appear, therefore, that it is the abuse, by those who were responsible for disturbing intercommunal harmony, of the liberty conferred on them, which was responsible for the subsequent order enjoining the enforcement of the provisions of the *Hidayat*. The fact that this unfortunate occurrence rendered it necessary for me to invoke the provisions of the *Hidayat*, was appreciated even by those who had earlier organized agitation against this enactment, as is evident from their voluntary decision to abide by the order issued by me on the 25th of May. The period for which the enforcement of the *Hidayat* was enjoined is not yet over; however, as the communal situation has since eased considerably and I have exercised clemency and withdrawn cases against those involved in this communal clash, I would have considered the desirability of revising the provisions of the *Hidayat*, but, as you are aware, war has since broken out and while for the successful prosecution thereof emergency measures curtailing civic rights and liberties are being enforced, this emergency legislation has of necessity to be retained on the statute-book. I have not the least intention of going back over the assurance that was given by the District Nazim, Sunam, but I am obliged to await more favourable circumstances to do the needful.

As regards the version of what transpired at the interview I gave to the deputation on the 18th July, I am sorry your correspondent has twisted what I told the deputationists and his letter contains several half-truths and

mis-statements. I had assured them that while I was most anxious to redress the genuine grievances of my subjects, I did not approve of their being misled by those who were actuated by motives not wholly impersonal. I do not precisely remember the words I used, but I think I told them that I would readily respond to all legitimate wishes of my people but would not be intimidated by any agitation engineered by those not directly interested in the points at issue nor would I accept any dictation from any outside agency.

In view of what I have stated above, I feel your comments that have appeared in the vernacular Press do not seem to be called for and I trust you will be good enough to withdraw them. I thank you for the courtesy you have shown me in inviting my comments on your correspondent's letter.

Yours sincerely,
YADAVINDRA SINGH

Harijan, 16-9-1939

APPENDIX X

WORKING COMMITTEE'S MANIFESTO[1]

1. The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and the activities of the Provincial Governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

2. The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognized standards of civilized

[1] *Vide* pp. 175, 190, 217, 267, 362 and 370.

behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathize with those who resist it.

3. The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use Indian resources, for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic State in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

4. The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18, the declared war aims were the preservation of democracy, self-determination and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very Governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent States.

5. Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very Powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

6. Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended, and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee

believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them.

7. If the war is to defend the status quo—imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privileges—then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and imperialism and Fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free, democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilizing the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

8. The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last great war, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganization of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism, and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganization. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

9. The Working Committee have noted that many Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in

India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

10. As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination, or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere.

11. In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

12. The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of imperialism and Fascism alike, will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

13. War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during the past year in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world, and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked

in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and imperialism are removed. To that end, the Working Committee are prepared to give their co-operation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

14. The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the people of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

15. The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.

WARDHA, September 14, 1939

Harijan, 23-9-1939

APPENDIX XI

A. I. C. C. RESOLUTION[1]

The declaration of war in Europe has created an international situation of the gravest import to the world and to India, and the A. I. C. C., charged with the heavy responsibility of guiding the people of India in this moment of world crisis, has sought guidance from the principles and declarations of the Congress in considering this grave situation. The Congress has been guided throughout by its objective of achieving the independence of the Indian people and the establishment of a free democratic State in India wherein the rights and interests of all minorities are preserved and safeguarded. The means it has adopted in its struggles and activities have been peaceful and legitimate, and it has looked upon war and violence with horror and as opposed to progress and civilization. In particular, the Congress has declared itself opposed to all imperialist wars and to the domination of one country over another.

In spite of the repeated declarations of the Congress in regard to war, the British Government have declared India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people and various far-reaching measures have been hurried through the legislatures and promulgated in the form of ordinances, vitally affecting them and circumscribing and limiting the powers of the Provincial Governments.

[1] *Vide* pp. 217, 246, 249 and 267.

The A.I.C.C., however, does not wish to take any final decision precipitately and without giving every opportunity for the war and peace aims of the British Government to be clarified, with particular reference to India. The Committee approves of and endorses the statement issued by the Working Committee on September 14, 1939, on the war crisis, and repeats the invitation contained therein to the British Government to state their war and peace aims.

While the Committee condemns Fascism and Nazi aggression, it is convinced that peace and freedom can only be established and preserved by an extension of democracy to all colonial countries and by the application of the principle of self-determination to them so as to eliminate imperialist control. In particular, India must be declared an independent nation, and at present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The A. I. C. C. earnestly trusts that this declaration will be made by the British Government in any statement that it may make in regard to its war and peace aims.

The Committee desires to declare afresh that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities to which the Congress has always pledged itself.

The Committee approves of the formation by the Working Committee of the War Emergency Sub-Committee and authorizes the Working Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to this resolution and to their statement on the war crisis.

Harijan, 14-10-1939

APPENDIX XII

VICEROY'S DECLARATION[1]

October 17, 1939

Since the outbreak of war and more particularly during the last four weeks I have been in the closest touch with the leaders of political opinion in British India and with representatives of the Princely Order. . . .I have had the advantage of a full and frank discussion with no fewer than 52 people—with Mr. Gandhi, with the President and Members of the Congress Working Committee, with Mr. Jinnah and with representative members of the Muslim League Organization, with the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, and with a great variety of persons prominent in the political life of British India.

As was only to be expected, conversations with representatives of so many different points of view revealed marked differences of outlook, markedly different demands, and markedly different solutions for the problems that lie before us. . . .

[1] *Vide* pp. 267, 268, 279, 293, 303, and 372. Only extracts are reproduced here.

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The essential matters on which a clarification of the position is beyond any question desired are:

First, what are the objectives of His Majesty's Government in the war? To what extent are they of such a character that India with her long history and great traditions can, with a clear conscience, associate herself with them?

Second, what is the future that is contemplated in the constitutional sphere for the Indian Continent? What are the intentions of His Majesty's Government? Is it possible to define those intentions more precisely and in such a manner as to leave the world in no doubt as to the ultimate status envisaged for India as far as the British Commonwealth is concerned?

Third, in what way can the desire of India and of Indian public opinion for a closer association, and an effective association, with the prosecution of the war best be satisfied?. . . His Majesty's Government have not themselves yet defined with any ultimate precision their detailed objectives in the prosecution of the war. It is obvious that such a definition can come only at a later stage in the campaign, and that when it does come, it cannot be a statement of the aims of any single ally. There may be many changes in the world position and in the situation that confronts us before the war comes to an end, and much must depend on the circumstances in which it does come to an end, and on the intervening course of the campaign. . . .

We are fighting to resist aggression whether directed against ourselves or others. Our general aims have been stated by the Prime Minister within the last few days as follows:

> We are seeking no material advantage for ourselves. We are not aiming only at victory, but looking beyond it to laying a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of each succeeding generation. We, like all the peoples of Europe, long for peace; but it must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and threats.

This statement, I think, clearly establishes the nature of the cause for which we are fighting, and justifies, if justification is needed, the extension by India of her moral support and her goodwill to the prosecution of that cause.

Let me turn now to the second question which has been put to me—the question of India's future and of the lines of her constitutional development. . . today, the constitutional position of India and the policy of His Majesty's Government are governed by the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Part III of that Act, which provides for the conferment of Provincial Autonomy on the Provinces of British India, has been implemented. For nearly $2\frac{1}{2}$ years now the Provinces have been conducting their own affairs under the scheme of the Act. That they have done so, on the whole, with great success, even if now and then difficulties have arisen, no one can question. Whatever the political party in power in those Provinces, all can look with satisfaction on

a distinguished record of public achievement during the last 2½ years. The experience that they have had, has shown beyond any question that, whatever minor problems, the application of the scheme of the Act may have presented, whatever difficulties may have confronted us in the operation of the Act from time to time in the provincial sphere, the scheme of the Act is essentially sound, and that it transfers great power and gives opportunities to popularly elected governments dependent on the support of a majority in their legislatures.

The second stage contemplated by the Act was the reconstitution of the Central Government on such a basis as to achieve the essential goal of Indian unity. The method contemplated for that purpose was the achievement of a Federation of all India in which the representatives of all political parties in British India would, together with the Rulers of the Indian States, form a unified Government of India as a whole. . . . I have throughout believed that the federal scheme in its operation would have turned out as satisfactorily as, broadly speaking, we can all of us regard the scheme of Provincial Autonomy as having turned out. I will not dilate on that subject today, for our work in connection with the federal scheme has been suspended. But in reaffirming as I do my belief in the essential soundness of the federal aspects of the Act of 1935, I do so with the greater emphasis because of the evidence which the federal provisions of the Act constitute, of the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to achieve, with the minimum of delay, and on the basis which appears to represent the greatest amount of agreement between the various parties and interests affected, the unity of India, and to advance beyond a further and a most important milestone on the road to India's goal.

Such being the background against which we are working, what are the intentions and aims of His Majesty's Government in relation to India? I cannot do better in reply to that question than to refer to the statement made on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and with their full authority, by the late Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons on the 6th February, 1935. That statement makes the position clear beyond a shadow of doubt. . . . I need not dilate on the words of that statement. They are clear and positive. They are enshrined in the parliamentary record. They stand as a definite and categorical exposition of the policy of His Majesty's Government today, and of their intentions today in this end, the future constitutional development and position of India. I would add only that the Instrument of Instructions issued to me as Governor-General by His Majesty the King-Emperor in May 1937, lays upon me as Governor-General a direction so to exercise the trust which His Majesty has reposed in me "that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within our Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among our Dominions."

That is the policy and that is the position. Those are the intentions of His Majesty's Government. Let me go on to say another word about the Act of 1935. That Act was based on the greatest measure of common agreement

which it was possible to obtain at the time when it was framed. It was based, as is well known to all of us, on the common labours of British and Indian statesmen, and of representatives of British India as well as of the Indian States over a long period of years. All parties were at one stage or other closely associated with those deliberations. . . .

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

And I am authorized now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests, in India, and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such modifications as may seem desirable. I have, I trust, in what I have just said, made clear that the intention and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government is, as stated in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General, to further the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within the Empire to the end that India may attain her due place among the great Dominions. The scheme of Government embodied in the Act of 1935 was designed as an essential stage in that process.

But I have made clear in what I have just said that His Majesty's Government will, at the end of the war, be prepared to regard the scheme of the Act as open to modification in the light of Indian views.

And I would make it clear, too, that it will be their object, as at all times in the past it has been, to spare no pains to further agreement by any means in their power in the hope of contributing to the ordered and harmonious progress of India towards her goal.

Let me in that connection add that in the conversations I have had, representatives of the minorities have urged most strongly on me the necessity of a clear assurance that full weight would be given to their views and to their interests in any modifications that may be contemplated. On that I need say no more than that over more than a decade, at the three Round Table Conferences, and at the Joint Select Committee, His Majesty's Government consulted with and had the assistances of the advice of representatives of all parties, and all interests in this country. It is unthinkable that we should now proceed to plan afresh, or to modify in any respect, any important part of India's future Constitution without again taking counsel with those who have in the recent past been so closely associated in a like task with His Majesty's Government and with Parliament.

That some even more extensive scheme than I have mentioned, some even more widely phrased indication of the intentions of His Majesty's Government,

is desired in certain quarters in this country, I am fully aware from the conversations I have had during these last few weeks.

That that is a desire held with sincerity, and that those who hold it are convinced that it is in the manner in question that the future progress and development of India and the expressed intentions of His Majesty's Government can best be fulfilled, I fully and readily accept. I would utter one word only of caution . . . it is essential in matters of this nature, affecting the future of tens of millions of people, affecting the relations of the great communities, affecting the Princes of India, affecting the immense commercial and industrial enterprises, whether Indian or European, in this country that the largest measure of agreement practicable should be achieved. With the best will in the world, progress must be conditioned by practical considerations. . . .

I would ask that these words of caution be not taken as indicating any lack of sympathy on the part of His Majesty's Government for the aspirations of India, or any indifference to the pace of her advance; and I would repeat that His Majesty's Government are but concerned to use their best endeavours, now as in the past, to bring about that measure of agreement and understanding between all parties and all interests in this country which is so essential a condition of progress to India's goal.

I turn now to the arrangements to be made to secure the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war. India's contribution has already been great to a degree which has impressed the imagination of the world. At the head of the list I would put the contribution which India has made in spiritual, and not in material, terms—the support of her peoples for a cause which they can regard as a good and a righteous cause. In the material field equally her contribution is already most significant, and may be greater still. And in the circumstances the desire, the anxiety of public opinion in India to be associated with the conduct of the war is naturally one with which I personally have throughout felt the greatest sympathy. In the circumstances I have described, the desirability of steps to ensure that leaders of public opinion should be in the closest touch with developments is of the first importance.

I have discussed with the utmost frankness with the leaders of the various parties who have been good enough to come to see me in connection with constitutional position, by what machinery we could best give effect to this desire. . . .

I will only say that in the light of my conversations and of the views (by no means always in accord) of representatives of the great parties and of the Princes, I am of opinion that the right solution would be the establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, over which the Governor-General would himself preside, which would be summoned at his invitation, and which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities.

This group, for practical reasons, would inevitably be limited in size. But His Majesty's Government contemplate that it should be fully representative, and in particular that its personnel should be drawn by the Governor-General from panels prepared by the various major political parties, from which a selection of individuals to attend meetings of the group would be made by the Governor-General.

I hope in the very near future to enter into consultation with political leaders and with the Princes on this question. I have no doubt whatever, that an arrangement of this nature will most materially contribute to associating the Indian States and British India with the steps which are being taken for the prosecution of the war, and with the arrangements that are being made in that connection; and I am confident, too, that in an association of this nature of representatives of all parties and all interests, there lies the germ of that fuller and broader association of all points of view in this country which contains in it the seeds of such advantage for the future of India as a whole.

When I spoke to the Central Legislature a month ago, I made an appeal for unity. I would repeat that appeal today. . . . We live in difficult and anxious days. Great ideals are in issue. Dangers real and imminent face our civilization. Those dangers are as real and as imminent in the case of India as of any other member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Those ideals are as precious to India as to any country in the Empire or in the world. At this grave moment in the destinies of nations my prayer to all parties would be not to dissociate themselves from the common effort, but to lend their co-operation and their assistance in the prosecution of the war. There could be no decisive proof of India's fidelity to her best traditions than the full use of the opportunities afforded to her by the war for concerted endeavour. The ideals we have set before us, the objects to secure which we are engaged in the present struggle, are such as to command widespread sympathy and widespread support in India. They are in harmony with her past history and her highest traditions. It is my hope that in the grave juncture which we face, India will go forward as a united country in support of a common cause.

The Hindustan Times, 18-10-1939

APPENDIX XIII

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION[1]

October 22, 1939

The Working Committee are of opinion that the Viceregal statement in answer to the Committee's invitation for a clear declaration of Britain's war aims, particularly in their application to India, is wholly unsatisfactory and

[1] *Vide* pp. 268, 291, 303, 304 and 340.

calculated to rouse resentment among all those who are anxious to gain, and are intent upon gaining India's independence. This invitation was made not only on behalf of the people of India, but for millions of people all over the world, who were weary of war and violence, and Fascist and imperialist systems which exploited nations and peoples and were ultimately the causes of war, and who yearned for a new order of peace and freedom. The Viceregal statement is an unequivocal reiteration of the old imperialistic policy. The Committee regard the mention of the differences among several parties as a screen to hide the true intention of Great Britain. What the Committee had asked for was a declaration of war aims as a test of Britain's *bona fides* regarding India, irrespective of the attitude of opposing parties and groups. The Congress has always stood for the amplest guarantee of the rights of minorities. The freedom the Congress claimed was not for the Congress or any particular group or community, but for the nation and for all communities in India that go to build that nation. The only way to establish this freedom and to ascertain the will of the nation as a whole is through a democratic process which gives full opportunity to all. The Committee must, therefore, regard the Viceroy's statement as in every way unfortunate. In the circumstances, the Committee cannot possibly give any support to Great Britain, for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end. As a first step in this direction the Committee call upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations.

The Committee earnestly appeal to the nation to end all internal controversies in this hour of great crisis, and to act unitedly in the cause of India's freedom. The Committee call upon all Congress Committees and Congressmen generally to be prepared for all developments and eventualities, and to show restraint of word and deed so that nothing may be said or done which is not in keeping with India's honour or the principles for which the Congress stands. The Committee warn Congressmen against any hasty action in the shape of civil disobedience, political strikes and the like. The Committee will watch the situation and the activities of the British Government in India, and will not hesitate to guide the country to take further steps whenever the necessity for this arises. The Committee desire to impress upon all Congressmen that a programme of resistance, commensurate with the magnitude of the issue before the country, requires perfect discipline within Congress ranks and the consolidation of the Congress organization.

The Working Committee realize that the non-violent resistance offered by the Congress in the past has sometimes been mixed with violence. The Committee desire to impress upon all Congressmen that any resistance that may have to be offered must be purged of all violence, and to remind them of the pledges taken to this effect as early as 1921, during the Congress Session at Ahmedabad, and repeated on many subsequent occasions.

Harijan, 28-10-1939

APPENDIX XIV

SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S SPEECH[1]

October 26, 1939

Mr. Wedgwood Benn and I have very often confronted each other in the field of Indian debate. We have sometimes disagreed, and very strongly disagreed, but we have sometimes agreed. Tonight . . . let us for a few moments look back upon the occasions on which we have agreed. I very well remember one of them when he and I, some eight or nine years ago in this House, were defending Lord Irwin from criticisms of those who said, he ought not to have had conversations with Mahatma Gandhi. . . . I am sure that he and I are agreed that today it is a matter of satisfaction that the Viceroy should see leaders of the principal parties concerned, even the most extreme leaders, even my old fellow-Harrovian, Pandit Nehru.

Since Mr. Wedgwood Benn and I last took part in these Indian debates, many events of staggering importance have taken place in the world. . . . At a time when democracies were being destroyed in Europe, we have seen eleven great democratic Governments come into being in India and join their forces with democratic peoples of the world. These ought surely to be grounds for great satisfaction to every member of the House.

It was with this background on the Indian achievement that on September 3 of this year India and the British Commonwealth of Nations were faced with war. The crisis . . . found India united in its determination to resist brute force and in the realization that the danger was a common danger threatening every part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It was in the face of this unity that the Viceroy . . . showed his whole-hearted and sincere desire for Indian goodwill and co-operation . . . he . . . had a series of interviews with the leaders of Indian opinion and . . . he made two definite proposals. The first was rather in the nature of a pledge. It was a clear and definite statement that, at the end of the war, there would be a reconsideration of the constitutional problem in the light of the experience of recent years. Secondly, with a view to availing himself of Indian advice and with the intention of bringing Indian leaders within his confidence, he suggested that a Consultative Committee should be formed to discuss with him many problems arising out of the war, and to bring him into the closest and most constant contact with the trends of Indian opinion. . . .

[1] *Vide* pp. 302, 317, 335 and 372. Only extracts are reproduced here.

The proposal regarding the Consultative Committee was made with the full desire to obtain the greatest possible co-operation with the principal bodies of Indian public opinion. The Congress, admittedly the greatest party in India, rejected it. Non-Congress India representing, it must be remembered, many millions of Indians, substantially accepted it. It may be asked, would it not have been possible for the Viceroy to have gone further and made some kind of proposal that would have avoided this division of opinion between Congress and non-Congress India? This is the first question, and it is a very important question, to which I would invite the attention of the House. If the members are to follow its implications, they must recall to their minds some of the most important discussions that took place over the Government of India Act. They centred round the pledge of Dominion Status and the aim of the Indian policy. These pledges, as Mr. Wedgwood Benn has said, were repeated time after time. They were reaffirmed in very precise terms in the speech with which I introduced the second reading of the Government of India Bill.

I made it clear, and I make it clear again today, that we stood by Lord Irwin's pledge and that when we spoke of Dominion Status we meant what we said, and did not mean some system of government that deprived India of the full status of equality with other members of the British Commonwealth.

There are no two kinds of Dominion Status as some people seem to think. The Dominion Status that we contemplated was the Dominion Status which has been described by Mr. Wedgwood Benn—the Dominion Status of 1926. I went on to state that Dominion Status is not a prize that is given to a deserving community, but is the recognition of the facts that actually exist. As soon as these facts exist in India, and in my view the sooner they exist the better, the aim of our policy will be achieved. If there are difficulties in the way, they are not of our making. They are inherent in the way they are between the classes and communities in the great subcontinent. It must be the aim of the Indians themselves to remove these divisions just as it should be our aim to help Indians in their task.

So far are we from wishing to divide and govern that we regard these divisions as a calamity and are ready to do our utmost to remove them. We have shown our good faith in the matter. We showed it when we made the Communal Award. At that time supposing we had wished to divide and conquer, we might very well have said: Settle your own communal differences first. Until you have settled them there can be no constitutional advance. We did not take that course, but at great risk to ourselves and in the face of much criticism, we made the Communal Award without which provincial autonomy would have been impossible.

But in spite of our Award, these divisions still exist, and, until they are removed, we have responsibilities to the minorities that we cannot repudiate.

That was our position in 1935, and it is our position today. We wish to see these divisions removed, but we shall never get them removed if we shut our eyes to their existence and refuse to admit that they are there. It is these divisions that have made so difficult the task of setting up responsible government at the Centre and of achieving the great ideal of an All-India Federation.

The Princes are afraid of domination by British India, the Muslims are firmly opposed to a Hindu majority at the Centre. The Depressed Classes and other minorities genuinely believe that responsible government meaning a Government dependent on the Hindu majority, will sacrifice their interests. These anxieties will exist. I wish they did not.

But as long as they exist, it is impossible for the Government to accept the demand for immediate and full responsibility at the Centre on a particular date. If we did so we should be false to the pledges that time after time we have given in the most solemn words to the Muslims, other minorities and the European community.

It may be said, 'Supposing that full and immediate responsibility at the Centre is impossible, are there not other steps that could be taken to show our good faith and to make clear to India that the goal is just as much in our minds today as it was when we made those pledges four years ago?' Mr. Wedgwood Benn himself made a number of these suggestions this afternoon and I will try to deal with them. Firstly, let me disabuse him of the idea which I think he held that we are contemplating in the near future on Imperial War Cabinet in London and that in it India ought to be represented by more than a single representative. At present there is no intention to set up an Imperial War Cabinet of that kind. If and when the time comes, I will certainly remember the observations he has made on the subject, and I imagine they will be given extremely careful attention. Next he spoke on the project that has been discussed more than once before. He asked: "Would it not be possible to introduce into the Viceroy's Council political leaders who would hold portfolios in certain of the great departments?" I have said, this is not a new proposal, as I remember its being made during the discussions of the Joint Select Committee.

I think the Leader of the Opposition himself made it at one time. We went fully into it then and at that time we found ourselves confronted by certain difficulties in the way of its adoption. I do not enumerate those difficulties tonight. I wish to close no door, I wish to explore every possibility within the ambit of the Government of India Act. . . .

Mr. Wedgwood Benn then spoke of the discussions that took place in the last War on the subject of the constitution. He mentioned the Montagu-Chelmsford discussions and asked whether it would be possible for discussions of that kind to take place in the course of this war.

I do not wish to give a final answer but I would point out that in

certain respects the situation today differs a good deal from the situation at the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford discussions. The issues had not then become so bitter as they have today. I am thinking more particularly of the communal issue. Further, at any rate at the beginning of a war, it seems to me impossible for discussions of that kind to take place. The Montagu-Chelmsford discussions only took place, I think, three years after the beginning of the last War. As I have said, however, I would rather not give a final answer tonight on a point of that kind.

Nor indeed would I give a final answer on another point, Mr. Wedgwood Benn has raised, namely, that there should be a general election in India. At any rate, at the beginning of a war general election would seem to me to be almost impossible. In India, officials are working night and day on war work. Moreover, there would be the fact that the communal feelings would, I am sure, be very much aroused in an election and while again I do not want to dogmatize and use terms like 'never' and 'in no circumstances' I would say that as things are today, a general election to the Central Legislature would in my opinion be impossible.

To come back to the broad question of consultation, the Viceroy has not tied himself down to the exact methods of this consultation. It is essentially a question to be settled between him and the political leaders. I am able to state that he is ready to discuss the method and details with the leaders, and he proposes without delay to send an invitation to meet him for these discussions. Until these and other discussions take place, I claim that it would be a blunder of the first magnitude to take up an irrevocable position. Let the Indian leaders weigh these possibilities. Let them meet and discuss them once again with the Viceroy, and let them also ponder once again upon the alternatives.

As regards the alternative of direct and immediate responsibility at the Centre, I hope I have convinced the House that in the present circumstances it is impossible to accept an alternative of that kind.

I come to another alternative, and I would ask the Indian leaders seriously once again to ponder upon it. I wish indeed that I had not to make any reference to it at all. It is the alternative of non-co-operation, an alternative under which the Indian Congress goes its own way, and the British Government and the minority communities in India go theirs. If it came to this issue, we should have no choice. The King Emperor's Government must be carried on, and it would be carried on with efficiency, with strength and with justice. We, like any other Government in similar circumstances, would give the Viceroy our full support. But let every man of goodwill in India and Great Britain contemplate the waste that such a chapter of non-co-operation would mean. There would be a waste of all our constitutional efforts with these many years of Round Table Conferences, Joint Select Committees and debates in this House. . . .

I hoped that when the Act came into force, this chapter would be brought to an end. But it is here now in the face of the greatest crisis that has ever confronted the world, a crisis in which our danger is India's and India's danger ours, in which our determination to set up new and better order in the world is as great as India's and India's is as great as ours. There is grave risk of our drifting into a position in which we shall be wrangling with each other instead of fighting the enemy on the common front.

I am told, though I can scarcely believe it, that it is being said in some quarters in India that the British Government is searching for a conflict. I repudiate that suggestion with all the power I have. The British Government wants co-operation and not conflict. The British Government wants to see the aim of its policy achieved and conditions realized in which India can take its true place in the British Commonwealth of free peoples. Non-co-operation may put the clock back for years. Whether its promoters desire it or not, non-co-operation leads to civil disobedience, to breaches of law and order and to a vicious circle of riot and repression from which we had hoped to have escaped for ever.

Until these things actually happen, I will not believe that they are going to happen. I shall continue to believe that when these great peoples of our own and the peoples of India are faced with a common danger and inspired with a common ideal, non-co-operation of any large section of a community would be a calamity and futility of the first magnitude. Millions of Indians in British India and in the States agree with this view. They wish to co-operate with us just as much as we wish to work with them. And the Congress party itself—I quote the words of Mr. Gandhi spoken three days ago—"wanted to help Britain by giving her moral support which was its speciality. The Congress would not give this unless it was clear that Britain's morality was wholly sound."

I claim that our position is as sound as a bell. In good faith and perfect sincerity, we have started India on the greatest constitutional experiment that the world had ever seen. We have long ago set aside imperialistic ambitions. We believe that our mission in the world is not to govern other people but to help other people to govern themselves. It was in this spirit that Parliament passed a series of great Acts which gave the Dominions their free constitution. It was in this spirit that we passed the Government of India Act of 1935 and under which, of our own free will, we transferred wide authority to the Indian Government. It is in this spirit that we intend to administer the Act and during the war to do our utmost to remove the divisions that stand in the way of the full achievement. And when the war ends, and ends victoriously as a result of the Empire's united efforts, we mean to proceed at once to deal with the constitutional difficulties that have emerged in the experience of recent years. Non-co-operation, and non-co-operation alone, will stop this swift and steady progress. . . . Such a breach in the

common front would be a repudiation at once of the gravest moments in the world's history of the call to both of us to resist the aggressor, to fight brute forces and to build by a new and better order in the world. . . .

"It was not"—I quote the Prime Minister's weighty words of October 12—"with any vindictive purpose that we embarked on the war but simply in defence of freedom." It is not alone freedom of small nations that is at stake. There is also in jeopardy the peaceful existence of Great Britain, the Dominions, India, the rest of the British Empire, France and indeed of all freedom-loving nations. Whatever may be the issue of the present struggle and in whatever way it may be brought to a conclusion, the world will not be the same world that we have known before. . . . In this new world India has a great part to play, perhaps in area the greatest of any Asiatic country, a great part also in the British Commonwealth of Nations, for it will be an outward and visible sign that with us there is no racial discrimination. It has a great part also to play in the world at large, for India should stand out as a model of a League of Nations from which war has for generations been banished and the rule of law and justice firmly set. With this great hope before us let us once and for all abandon the barren paths of non-co-operation and help each other to win the war and to win peace and in this double victory to take a great step towards the fruition of India's hopes.

The Hindustan Times, 27-10-1939; also *The Indian Annual Register, 1939*, Vol. II, pp. 398-403

APPENDIX XV

TRAVANCORE GOVERNMENT PRESS NOTE[1]

In a communique issued on the 23rd September, 1939, the Travancore Government pointed out that they cannot permit an organized scheme of agitation at this juncture in view of the present situation and the industrial and economic position of the people who are affected by the adverse conditions produced by the war in a country so dependent on imports and exports as Travancore. They gave a warning that such a scheme of agitation is bound to give rise to serious repercussions, and the Government who have a duty to protect the law-abiding citizens of the State would be forced to take all necessary steps for maintaining normal conditions.

The Travancore State Congress have now arranged for the holding of public meetings on the 8th, 16th and 24th of every Malabar month, these days being styled as Civil Liberties Day, Responsible Government Day and Political Prisoners' Day respectively. Volunteer rallies, opening of training camps, and what is called organization work are also contemplated. It is

[1] *Vide* p. 329.

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noted that these demonstrations are timed to begin on the day preceding the commencement of the functions in celebration of the birthday of His Highness the Maharaja.

All persons are hereby warned not to take part in these demonstrations and rallies; and against attempts by means of pamphlets, leaflets, etc., to inflame public opinion and promote agitation and unrest. Persons organizing or taking part in such agitation and demonstrations are liable to be dealt with under the Defence of Travancore Proclamation and Rules without further notice.

CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

HUZUR CUTCHERRY, TRIVANDRUM,
October 30, 1939

Harijan, 11-11-1939

APPENDIX XVI

VICEROY'S BROADCAST DECLARATION[1]

November 5, 1939

It is with profound regret that I have to announce that the conversations which, at my instance, had been inaugurated between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League have so far not achieved what I had hoped. The country is entitled to know, in a matter of such moment and at a time of such gravity, what was the nature of the proposition which I invited my friends in those two organizations to consider. I shall tomorrow publish correspondence which will make the position perfectly clear. Let me only say that my object has been, in these discussions, to bring together the leaders of the great parties and to endeavour to secure, as a result of personal contact between them, and with what personal assistance I could myself give, that measure of agreement in the Provinces which, in their view, would enable them to put forward proposals for a constructive advance at the Centre for the period of the war, such as would be represented by some expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council and by the inclusion in it of political leaders.

My declaration of October 17[2] contemplated a consultative group. It offered an arrangement relatively so limited as that group only because of marked divergences of view between the great communities, divergences, the existence of which held out no hope of harmonious working at the Centre on the basis of joint membership of my Executive Council at a time when

[1] *Vide* pp. 336 and 372.
[2] The source, however, has "18"; *vide* Appendix XII.

harmonious working was of first importance. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that that group holds out great possibilities for the future—possibilities, I feel sure, greater than are commonly realized.

I need not say that it is a profound disappointment to me, after so much endeavour on the part of His Majesty's Government, on the part of those leaders with whom I have conferred and of their friends, as well as on my own part, that we have no more to show and that in so many Provinces we should be left with no choice but to use the emergency provisions inserted for that purpose in the Government of India Act. As for those provisions, let me emphasize that they are an expedient and not a sanction. My own strong feeling in regard to their use I cannot better convey than by a paraphrase of the quotation that appears in Arabic characters upon the great gateway at Fatehpur Sikri. That quotation says: "Life is a bridge—a bridge that you shall pass over. You shall not build your house upon it."

Nor, in the wider field, do I propose to take this disappointment as final, or to abandon the efforts I am making to bring about a friendly adjustment of the differences in this country to the end that we can continue to co-operate over the achievement of our common objectives. Differences and difficulties such as those which now threaten to retard—even reverse—the course of constitutional development in India and the earliest attainment of the common goal will not disappear spontaneously, nor will they be conjured away by any refusal to recognize their existence. They will be resolved only by negotiations, carried out in a spirit of mutual accommodation and trust and with a firm resolve to succeed.

I will say no more than that to-night. But I would ask for patience and for the goodwill of the Indian people and of the great political organizations—their members and their leaders—in the efforts I propose to continue to make.

The difficulties are great. How great they are has been most clearly revealed by the events of the last six weeks. But the attempt to reconcile them is one which it is imperative to make and in which, whether I fail or I succeed, I shall spare no effort to bring about the result which is, I know, at the heart of all of those who care for India and for her future.

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, p. 245

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APPENDIX XVII

VICEROY'S PREFATORY REMARKS TO CORRESPONDENCE WITH LEADERS[1]

November 5, 1939

I next invited Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah to come to see me on November 1, and discussed the whole position with them frankly. I had already in my previous conversations discussed with them, as with almost all my visitors, from various aspects the possibility of an expansion of the Governor-General's Council. I now told them that if in regard to association at the Centre, we had been unable to go further than the Consultative Group, it was because of the lack of prior agreement between the major communities such as would contribute to harmonious working in the Centre. I added that the manifestos issued on 22nd October, by the Congress Working Committee and the Muslim League, had shown only too clearly the gulf that existed between the attitude of these two great parties.

I begged my visitors in these circumstances to meet and to have discussions among themselves on the Provincial position, with a view thereafter to putting forward in agreement proposals which could be considered for some expansion of the Governor-General's Council at the Centre. I told them that I saw no necessity for every detail of the differences between them in the Provinces to be resolved. What was needed was a sufficient resolution of those differences to make the devising of scheme for harmonious co-operation at the Centre practicable. I begged them in the most earnest manner to spare no endeavour to reach agreement; and I emphasized that this was essentially a question affecting Indians on which agreement between Indians themselves was what I was anxious to secure. I repeated the profound anxiety not only of myself but of His Majesty's Government to leave nothing undone which would contribute to achieve that agreement.

The discussions which I suggested have taken place. But the result to me has been a profound disappointment. There remains today entire disagreement between the representatives of the major parties on fundamental issues. All I will say now is that I am not prepared to accept this failure. I propose in due course to try again, in consultation with the leaders of these great parties and the Princes, to see if even now there may still be the possibility of securing unity. During all the time I have been in India, there

[1] *Vide* pp. 336, 342 and 372. Only extracts are reproduced here.

is nothing I have been more anxious to secure than unity, and unity matters far more to India than is perhaps always realized. Unity, too, means that Indians, whatever their community or whatever their party allegiance, and whether they dwell in British India or in the Indian States, must work together in a common scheme. It is worth a great deal to try to bring that about. I may have been unsuccessful so far but I will try again. And when I try again I would ask India to remember my difficulties, and give me credit for an earnest goodwill and an earnest desire to assist. We are dealing with a problem that has defeated the united endeavours of the greatest organizations in this country. There are grave differences of view which have to be taken into account, which should be bridged. There are strong and deeply rooted interests which are entitled to the fullest consideration and whose attitude is not a thing lightly to be brushed aside. There are minorities which are great in numbers as well as great in historic importance, and in culture. Those are all factors to which full weight has to be given. But complex as the problems are, I refuse to regard them as insoluble, and I prefer to believe that, like other human problems, they will yield to patient discussion in a spirit of goodwill. In this belief I am encouraged by the friendly feeling which has pervaded my discussions with the leaders of parties. I would ask the country, and I would ask the leaders of the great political parties and their constituents, who I know have faith in those leaders, and are ably led by them, to give me the help which I so much need if there is to be any hope of overcoming our difficulties and reaching the result which I am sure that we all of us desire.

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, p. 411

APPENDIX XVIII

LORD ZETLAND'S STATEMENT[1]

November 7, 1939

I am grateful for this opportunity to make some observations on this matter and the House will, I hope, forgive me if my answer runs to some little length.

I need hardly say that His Majesty's Government share the profound regret of the Governor-General at the failure of the consultations which he had been holding during the last week to produce an agreement between representatives of the Congress on the one hand and the All-India Muslim League on the other. May I remind the House briefly that the previous discussions, which the Governor-General had been so patiently conducting for several weeks past, had convinced him that there was little, if any, prospect

[1] *Vide* pp. 338 and 372.

of securing an agreement on plans which he had been considering with the object of bringing Indians into association with the Central Government of India on the conduct of war, unless some accommodation could first be reached on the difficulties felt by the Moslems as to their position in the Provinces where the Congress Governments were in power?

As the House will have seen from the documents published yesterday, that the Congress has definitely refused to consider any concrete plans such as those outlined by the Governor-General, unless His Majesty's Government should be willing first to make a declaration to the effect that India is an independent nation and that His Majesty's Government will raise no opposition to her future form of Government being determined, without their intervention, by a Constituent Assembly called upon the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation. The Congress have further consistently taken the line which they still maintain that the fact there are racial and religious minorities in India is of no relevance in that connection and that it has always been the intention of the Congress to secure through the constitution to be framed by Indians themselves such protection for their rights as may prove acceptable to the minorities.

His Majesty's Government find it impossible to accept this position. The long standing British connection with India has left His Majesty's Government with obligations towards her which it is impossible for them to shed by disinteresting themselves wholly in the shaping of her future form of Government. Moreover, one outstanding result of the recent discussions in which the Governor-General has been engaged with representatives of all parties and interests in India has been to establish beyond doubt the fact that a declaration in the sense proposed with the summary abandonment by His Majesty's Government of their position in India would be far from acceptable to large sections of Indian population.

But this does not mean that we had in any sense weakened in our determination to assist India by such means as are in our power to reach without avoidable delay the position to the British Commonwealth of Nations to which we are pledged. Let me take this opportunity for removing some doubts and suspicions which appear to have been felt in India about reference in the recent India debate in the House of Commons by Lord Privy Seal to "Dominion Status of 1926" as being the status we contemplate for India. The suggestion, I understand, has been made that the passage of the Statute of Westminster in 1931 has produced for the Dominions to which the Statute applies a status which is somewhat different from and is superior to the relationship described in the Balfour Declaration contained in the report of Imperial Conference of 1926.

This House at all events will have no difficulty in believing me when I say that there is no foundation for any such suggestion. My Right Honourable

friend (Sir Samuel Hoare) referred to Dominion Status of 1926 because it was in that year the Imperial Conference described the status of the Dominions and the status so described has not been altered by anything which has since occurred, the Statute of Westminster having merely given legal effect to certain consequences of the constitutional position as was then recognized.

It was our hope that the plans which the Governor-General has indicated, including as they did the incorporation of the leaders of the main political parties in India in the Central Government, if they could have been brought into play, would have done much towards facilitating the removal of the outstanding obstacle at present in India's path. The Governor-General has made it clear that he is not deterred by his present failure in hoping for a reconsideration by the parties interested and His Majesty's Government warmly approve the readiness which he has expressed to be of such service as he can whenever an opportunity occurs.

Meanwhile the position at the moment is that in Bengal, the Punjab and Sind Ministries which in those Provinces do not owe allegiance to the Congress Party remain in office; in five of the remaining eight Provinces where the Congress Governments have been in power, those Governments have now resigned and in the other three Provinces the Governments are expected to resign in the very near future. There appears to be in one Province — Assam — the possibility of an alternative government, but with this one exception the Governors have found or will very shortly find themselves with no option, since alternative Ministries in a position to command the confidence of the legislature are not forthcoming, but to assume to themselves by proclamation powers which the provisions in the Act enable them to assume in such a situation.

Let me make it plain that Section 93 of the Act under which this action has been taken is in no sense a penal provision; it simply provides a machinery the possible necessity for which Parliament in its wisdom foresaw if, to quote the words of the Act, "a situation has arisen in which the Government of a Province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Act for carrying on the King's Government."

It is our hope that in the absence of opposition from supporters of the Congress or from other quarters, the Governors with the aid of their official advisers and members of the public services will succeed in conducting smoothly and efficiently the administration of the Provinces, the difference being— obviously a fundamental difference — that their actions will be decided in responsibility to this House, to this Parliament; and not in pursuance of advice tendered to them by Ministers responsible to the Provincial legislature. We greatly regret that the Ministries which have with so much zeal been carrying on the Government of their great Provinces and tackling with energy and resource the many problems with which administration has naturally brought them into contact should have found it necessary to withhold their further services from their country, but we refuse to believe that this withdrawal will

be for long and we shall continue to hope, so long as any grounds for such hope remain, that proclamations by the Governors need have only a temporary duration, for I can assure the House that the Governors will be only too ready to recall to their counsels responsible advisers as soon as they are available.

The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Vol. II, pp. 411-3

APPENDIX XIX

LETTER FROM CONGRESS PRESIDENT TO THE VICEROY[1]

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
November 3, 1939

I thank you for your letter of November 2, embodying in concrete form the proposition which you had placed before us when we saw you on November 1. My colleagues and I have given our earnest consideration to it. We have had also the advantage of full talks with Mr. M. A. Jinnah. But we find ourselves unable to vary the answer we gave you during the interview.

At the outset I would like to say that both Gandhiji and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about clarification of war aims without which it was impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal.

The present crisis has arisen owing to the outbreak of the war in Europe and the action of the British Government in declaring India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people. This crisis is entirely political and is not related to the communal issue in India. It raised vital questions in regard to the war aims of the British Government and the position of India in relation to them. The Congress Working Committee, as you are aware, issued a lengthy statement on September 14, 1939, in which they invited the British Government to declare their war aims, and in particular how these aims were going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. It was further stated that the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference and should guide their own policy. On October 10, 1939, the All-India Congress Committee approved of and endorsed this statement, and stated that in the declaration to be made by the British Government, India must be declared an independent nation and present application should be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The Committee further added that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities.

Subsequent to this, the policy of the British Government was declared in the Viceregal statement, extracts from which you have been good enough to

[1] *Vide* p. 371.

send me. This statement was considered by the Congress Working Committee soon after, and the Committee expressed their opinion that it was unfortunate and wholly unsatisfactory. As a consequence of this, they felt compelled to declare that they were unable to give any support to Great Britain and to call upon the Provincial Governments, in Provinces where the Congress is in a majority, to tender their resignations.

It is worthy of note that the Viceregal declaration of British policy met with disapproval of the overwhelming body of opinion in India, even outside the Congress.

Subsequent statements made on behalf of the British Government in Parliament have not made any essential difference to the policy outlined in the Viceregal statement and, as you have rightly pointed out, that policy is still governed by the extracts from it that you have kindly sent us. I am afraid it is quite impossible for us to accept this policy or to consider any steps to further co-operation unless the policy of the British Government is made clear in a declaration on the lines suggested by the Congress.

It has pained us to find the communal question being dragged in this connection. It has clouded the main issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that it is our earnest desire to settle all points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out that this question does not in any respect come in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom as suggested above. Such a declaration applies to the whole of India and not to any particular community, and the Constituent Assembly which will frame India's constitution will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation. We are all agreed that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by agreement between the parties concerned. The British Government talking of sharing the burden has, in our opinion, made a settlement of the question much more difficult than it should have been. It should allay all real anxiety on the part of the British Government when the Congress declares that it contemplates no constitution which does not carry with it the protection of real minorities to their satisfaction.

It seems to us that a clear declaration of the kind suggested is an essential preliminary to any further consideration of the matter. I should like to add that recent developments in the European war have made it all the more necessary for a clear enunciation of war aims. If a satisfactory declaration is made, a discussion of the proposal made by your Excellency will be appropriate and useful and we shall gladly discuss it with you.

It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Gandhiji is in full agreement with this letter. We propose to leave tomorrow evening for Wardha unless your Excellency desires otherwise.

The Hindustan Times, 6-11-1939

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CHRONOLOGY

(*July 16—November 30, 1939*)

July 16: Gandhiji was in Abbottabad since July 7.

July 17: In letter to Sikandar Hyat Khan, expressed inability to agree with his alternative scheme of Federation.

July 22: In statement to the Press, announced cancellation of his visit to Kashmir.

Interview to Provincial Congress Committee members.

July 23: Message to Bombay Government Prohibition Board on decision to promulgate prohibition in Bombay from August.

In letter to Adolf Hitler, Gandhiji appealed to him as "the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state".

Spoke at Abbottabad.

On or before *July 26:* Discussion with Dr. Charles Fabri.

July 26: Gandhiji left Abbottabad for Wardha. Kasturba Gandhi, Mahadev Desai, Pyarelal and Dr. Sushila Nayyar accompanied him.

July 27: At Ghaziabad Station in the morning, Gandhiji got down and proceeded to Delhi in motor-car.

At about 10.30 a.m., at Harijan Colony presided over first convocation of Harijan Industrial Home and gave away certificates to students.

In afternoon, interview to Ghanshyamsingh Gupta, Speaker, Central Provinces Legislative Assembly, Vinayak Rao of Arya Samaj Satyagraha in Hyderabad State, and Deshbandhu Gupta, who placed before him correspondence between Ghanshyamsingh Gupta and Akbar Hydari regarding reforms.

Gandhiji advised Himalayan States Peoples' Conference deputation to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, their President, in connection with firing in Dhami.

Left Delhi for Wardha by Grand Trunk Express.

July 31: S. K. Bole in his letter to Gandhiji said that "the signatories to the memorial acted *bona fide* and they never intended to offer any threat to the Bombay Ministry".

August 1: In telegram to Viceroy, Gandhiji regretted his inability to see him in Delhi on August 5.

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August 3: Bengal political prisoners decided to suspend hunger-strike.

Before *August 4:* In letter to President, Tanzeem-ul-Mominin, Gandhiji advised withdrawal of civil disobedience started by Shias in early June as a result of the Shia-Sunni dispute.

August 5: In discussion, persuaded V. V. Sathe, a satyagrahi, to postpone his proposed fast to seek redress of grievances against Bombay Government.

August 7: Rajagopalachari introduced in Madras Legislative Council Temple-entry Authorization and Indemnity Bill as passed by Madras Legislative Assembly.

August 8: "Arya Satyagraha" was called off.

August 11: The Congress Working Committee passed resolution disqualifying Subhas Chandra Bose from being President of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for three years from August 30.

August 23: In statement to the Press, Gandhiji replied to criticisms against two resolutions of Congress Working Committee—one disqualifying Subhas Chandra Bose and other on war.

August 27: In statement to the Press on international crisis, declared: "I cannot emphasize my belief more forcibly than by saying that I personally would not purchase my own country's freedom by violence even if such a thing were a possibility."

Before *August 30:* In message to Poles, sent "good wishes and blessings".

August 31: In telegram to G. D. Birla, advised commercial community to "remain silent" on international crisis till "actual result is known".

September 2: Left for Simla in response to invitation from Viceroy.

September 3: England and France declared war on Germany.

September 4: Interview with Viceroy.

September 5: Gandhiji left for Wardha.
Issued statement on Simla visit. Sabarmati Ashram was officially declared as 'Harijan Ashram'.

September 8: Congress Working Committee meeting began in Wardha.

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September 11: Viceroy addressed Legislative Assembly; announced postponement of Federation.

September 15: Gandhiji gave statement to the Press on Congress Working Committee's Manifesto.
Congress Working Committee concluded its meeting.

September 20: Gandhiji issued statement suggesting mode of action by the Ministries in view of Congress Working Committee Manifesto.

September 23 and *24:* Discussion with members of Oxford Group.

September 24: Gandhiji left for Simla on being invited by Viceroy for second round of talks.

September 26: In Simla, interview with Viceroy.

September 27: Gandhiji left for Segaon.

September 28: At Nagpur railway station, answered questions on interview with Viceroy.
In statement to the Press, appealed to Lord Zetland to "forget the old language of imperialists and open a new chapter for all those who have been held under imperial bondage".

October 2: In Delhi, discussion with Rajendra Prasad and Jawaharlal Nehru before their meeting with Viceroy.

October 3: In message to British people through *The Manchester Guardian*, Gandhiji appealed for Britain's sincerity in "professions about democracy".

October 5: Interview with Viceroy.

October 6: Gandhiji reached Segaon.

October 7–10: In Wardha attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

October 10: A.I.C.C. passed Working Committee resolution on war.
In *Harijan* article "On Trial", Gandhiji observed that "Congressmen are unprepared for non-violent defence against armed invasion" and he declared, "it is better for India to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders".

October 12: In letter to Dr. B. C. Roy, declined to shoulder burden of leading Congress and suggested to have Jawaharlal Nehru for that post.

October 13: In statement, described A.I.C.C. resolution on war as "moderate and wise" and appealed to Congressmen "to

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desist from any action that would savour of indiscipline or defiance''.

October 17: Viceroy made declaration of India's political future and her attitude to war.

October 18: In statement to the Press, Gandhiji characterized Viceroy's declaration as ''profoundly disappointing''.

October 19: At Wardha, in conference of Central Provinces and Berar Local Bodies' representatives, spoke on the Basic Education Scheme.

October 20: At Segaon, interview to *The Times of India.*

October 22: In note to Police Superintendent and Deputy Commissioner, Gandhiji declined their offer to arrange for his protection.

Congress Working Committee passed resolution calling upon ''Congress Ministries to tender their resignations''.

October 23: In cable to world Press, Gandhiji declared: ''Congress has left the door open to Britain to mend the mistake.''

October 25–26: Discussion with members of Gandhi Seva Sangh.

October 27: In statement to the Press, Gandhiji appreciated conciliatory tone of Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in House of Commons but criticized his plea for protection of minorities in rejecting the Congress demand.

Madras Ministry tendered resignation.

October 28: Message to Basic Education Conference, Poona.

October 31: Gandhiji left for Delhi to meet Viceroy.

In *Harijan* article ''The Congressman'', said, ''for decisive action, the whole Congress has to move forward in confidence and with one mind.''

November 1: During his journey to Delhi wrote to Chinese Premier and children of China, expressing sympathy in their hardship caused by Japanese aggression.

In Delhi, along with Rajendra Prasad and M. A. Jinnah, had joint conference with Viceroy.

Continued talks with Jinnah at the latter's residence.

November 2: Spoke at opening ceremony of Prayer Hall in Harijan Nivas.

November 4: Interview with Viceroy.

In interview to *The Manchester Guardian*, Gandhiji said 'he

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was shocked at Lord Zetland's suggestion that the Congress is a Hindu organization.'

November 5: At Nagpur, interview to the Press.
Viceroy, in a broadcast, declared that his "disappointment" at the leaders' refusal to agree to his proposal to expand Governor-General's Executive Council to include representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League was not "final" and that he would not "abandon the efforts . . . to bring about a friendly adjustment".

November 7: In *Harijan* article "Opinions Differ", Gandhiji expressed hope that talks between Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru would result in producing "a basis for a lasting solution of the communal tangle".

November 8: In statement to the Press, referred to Viceroy's broadcast and Press statement and urged Britain to free India from bondage.

November 14: Cabled statement to *The News Chronicle*, London.

November 18: Left for Allahabad.

November 19: In *Harijan* article "The Only Way", said, "the Constituent Assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem."
At Allahabad, attended Congress Working Committee meeting; laid foundation-stone for Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital and addressed a large gathering.

November 22: Congress Working Committee considered Gandhiji's draft resolution on political situation in India.

November 23: Gandhiji gave testimonial to Munnilal, a barber.
Congress Working Committee passed Gandhiji's resolution.
In letter addressed to Subhas Chandra Bose, Gandhiji explained that he was party to ban imposed on Bose.
Discussion with U.P. Congress workers.

November 24: In letter to people of Mysore, Gandhiji disapproved of Forest Satyagraha.

November 25: Reached Wardha.

November 27: In *Harijan* article "Swaraj through Women", exhorted women to take up spinning.

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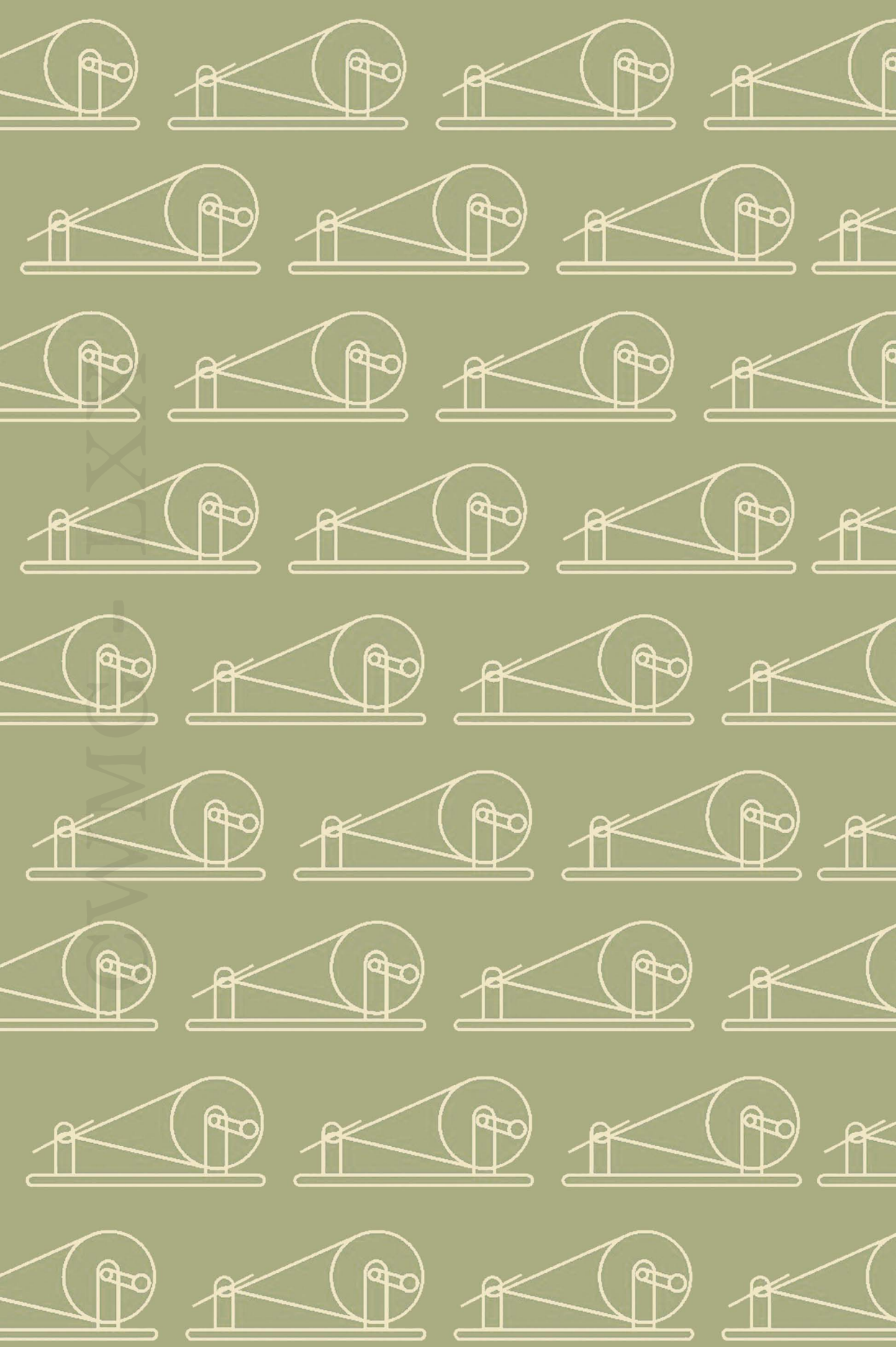
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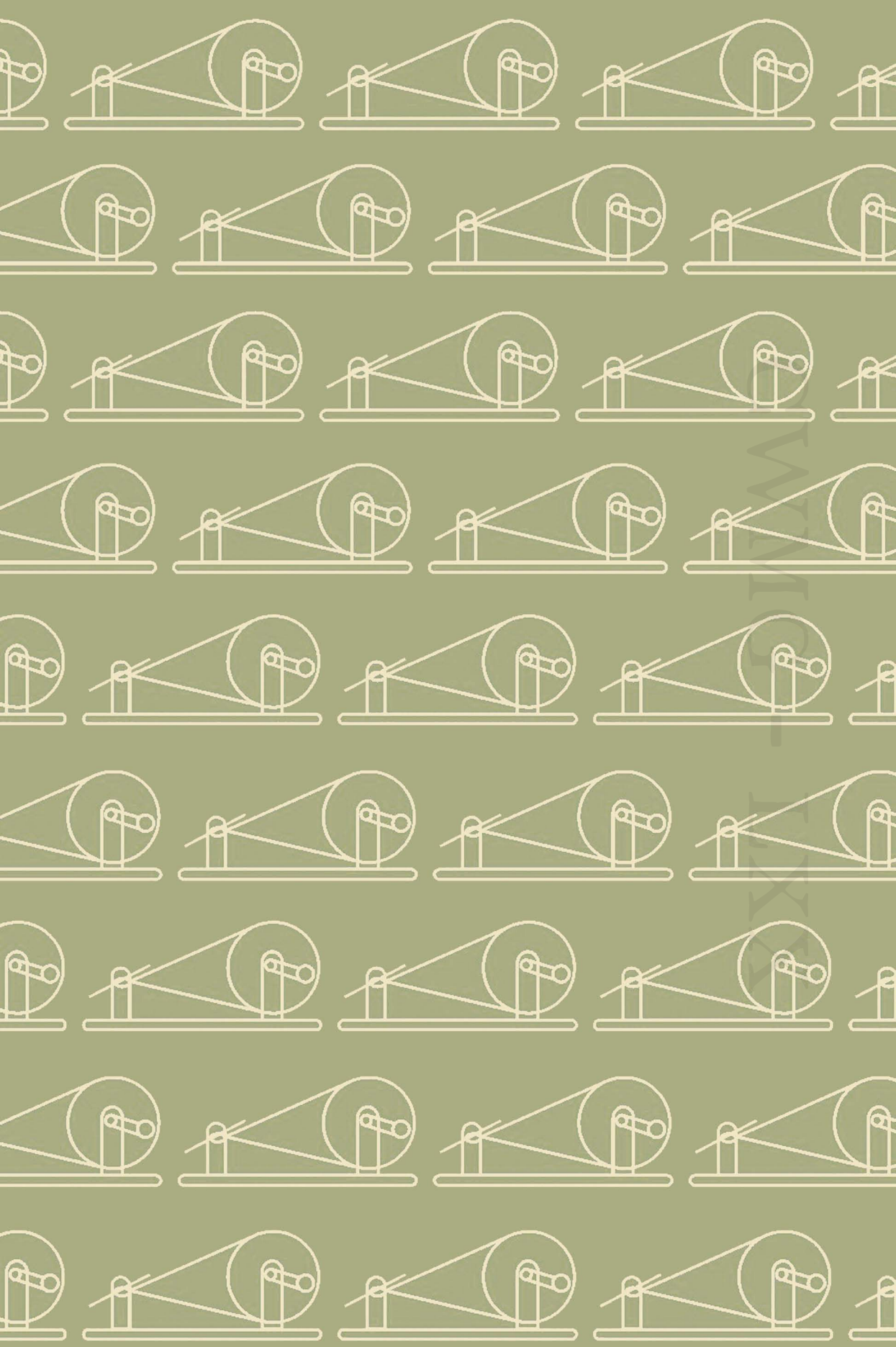
PAGE	FOR	READ
30 * Paragraph 4, line 1	No	Now
81 * Footnote 4	p. 96	p. 95
82 * Item 98, lines 10-1	girls in an institution falling on one another	a girl in an institution lying on top of another
189 * Source-line	*1905*	*1950*
206 * Last line	powerful	powerfully
361 * Item 425, line 2	him	her
368 * Footnote	pp. 365-7	pp. 365-6
406 * Title	*SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE TO CONGRESS PRESIDENT*	*CONGRESS PRESIDENT TO SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE*
425 * Paragraph 3, line 4	ideal that non-co-operation	ideal, non-co-operation
429 * Line 2	and we discussed	and discussed

* Due correction made.

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