THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

LXXV
(1941-1942)

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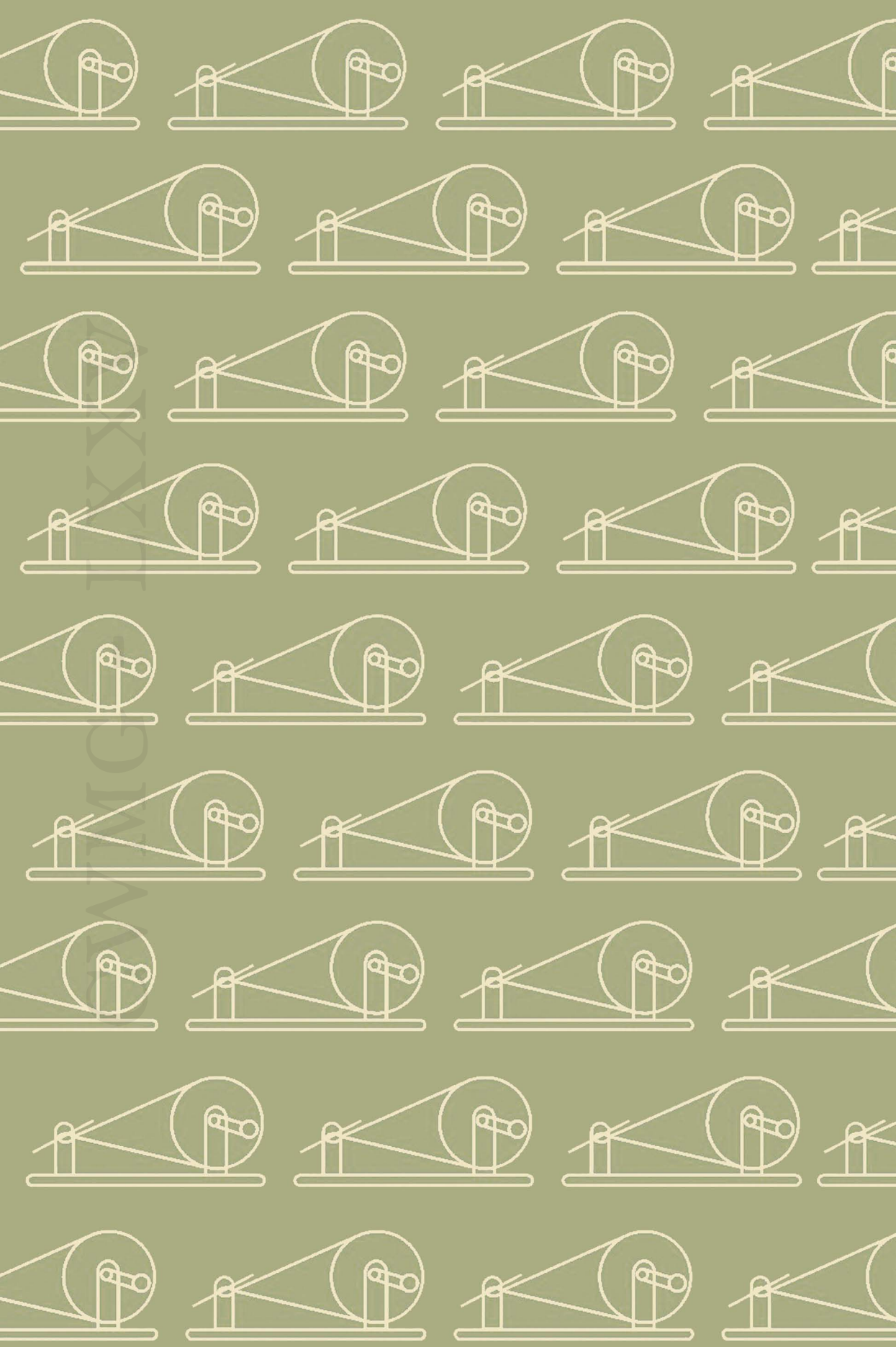


THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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WITH SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
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PREFACE

During the period covered by this volume (October 11, 1941 to March 31, 1942) the individual civil disobedience movement, which had been going on for a year, was suspended, Gandhiji's request to the Congress to be relieved of his "responsibility" was accepted, and the British Government in London sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India on a one-man mission to negotiate with the Indian leaders and secure India's whole-hearted co-operation in the war.

The change in the Congress policy as well as the apparent change in Prime Minister Churchill's stand took place under the pressure of external circumstances. Gandhiji's relinquishment of "responsibility" was the result of a clearer understanding, on his part, of the need for preserving the unity of political India, while keeping alive the embers of the freedom struggle and asserting the elementary right of speaking against war and violence. Several Congress leaders had from the beginning had reservations about the Bombay A.I.C.C. resolution of September 16, 1940 (*vide* Volume LXXIII, pp. 1-3) which had authorized the launching of the struggle under Gandhiji's leadership. Some of these leaders came out of jail "with their doubts confirmed" (p. 55). Their position was strengthened by international developments following the outbreak of hostilities, in December 1941, between Japan and the U.S.A. The Congress Working Committee which met at Bardoli in the last week of December 1941 reiterated the Bombay Resolution and declared once again that "only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis" (p. 452). But it laid down no specific programme of action, while accepting Gandhiji's request for relief from the responsibility of leadership (pp. 450-2). At the A.I.C.C. meeting at Wardha in the middle of January, Gandhiji himself recommended the Working Committee's resolution, withdrawing in effect the power of attorney granted to him, and appealed to the members not even to divide the house on the question (pp. 219-29). Then, as the Japanese armies were over-running Burma, the despatch of the Cripps Mission was announced on March 11 and Sir Stafford arrived in New Delhi on March 23, 1941.

Though Gandhiji was opposed to all wars as such he had no desire to obstruct the British war effort. The civil disobedience

movement was thus largely symbolic and limited in scope, being confined to a few selected individuals, as well as in its purpose, which was to assert the elementary right of non-violent free speech, "the right to speak against participation in this war or all war" (p. 60). The programme, however, did not inspire much faith in some of the Congress leaders and they gave expression to their dissatisfaction with the progress of the struggle. Answering their criticism (pp. 55-62) Gandhiji said that any feverish activity would only promote violence and therefore retard the steady march of quiet, non-violent action and that a mass movement would amount to "naked embarrassment" and a "betrayal of non-violence". It would also mean, in the absence of communal harmony, "an invitation to civil war" (p. 56). Gandhiji conceded that the struggle had yielded no tangible political gain, yet he was fully satisfied with its progress. For in ahimsa there was no room for "sudden miracles". Ahimsa worked in the same mysterious way as other processes of nature. He said: "We watch the sky every day but we see no miracles there. But those who have an eye for it are spellbound with the spectacle. They see new miracles every moment" (p. 8). Gandhiji's faith in the power of ahimsa sprang from his faith in the perfectability of human nature. His experience had convinced him that ahimsa "can change human nature and sooner than men like Churchill and Hitler can" (p. 45).

Thus though it might seem, in the absence of some spectacular show in the shape of a parliamentary programme or mass civil disobedience, that there was no life left in the Congress, Gandhiji felt that things were "going according to plan". The plan was for everyone "to carry on the thirteenfold constructive programme and some select few to offer C. D. in addition" (pp. 60-1). Only a few could go to jail, but "all must work the constructive programme", which would support the chosen satyagrahis as the civilian population supported the army during an armed conflict (p. 57).

Besides these ethical and political considerations, Gandhiji's personal feelings for the British also restrained him from mass action which would obstruct the Government's war effort. Though he used to argue that, from the Indian point of view, there was no difference between Imperialism and Nazism and that Hitlerism was only "a superfine copy of Imperialism" (pp. 72 and 37), he loved the British and admired some aspects of their character. From the very beginning, therefore, he had felt great personal sympathy for the British and had expressed it in his first reaction after the outbreak of the war (*vide* Vol. LXX, pp. 161-2). Recalling

that experience, he wrote to a British correspondent, who had lost his son in the war, "I remain the same true friend of the British that I always have been, whether fighting or co-operating" (p. 122). In a similar spirit he wrote to Agatha Harrison, "I did shed a silent tear when I read about the damage done to the Houses of Parliament, the Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's" (p. 38). Paying a compliment to the courage of the British, Gandhiji advised the people as the war danger came nearer after the entry of Japan: "If we have learnt nothing worth from the contact with the British, let us at least learn their calmness in the face of misfortunes" (p. 325).

Some of the Congress leaders, like C. Rajagopalachari, S. Satyamurti and Asaf Ali, went a step further than Gandhiji on the question of non-embarrassment, favoured the abandonment of even the restricted civil disobedience and advocated resumption of ministerial office on suitable political terms. Satyamurti and Asaf Ali met Gandhiji after their release from jail, but he held out no hope of change of policy (pp. 14, 27 and 30). He even stated publicly, when he observed a move to press the Government to release satyagrahi prisoners, that "there will be on the part of the Congress neither appreciation of nor response to any such gesture by the Government" and that the discharged satyagrahis "will have to be invited to re-offer civil disobedience . . ." (p. 92). The release of Nehru, Azad and other political prisoners was announced on December 3. Gandhiji again stated that it could not "evoke a single responsive or appreciative chord" in him, for he saw no change of policy on the part of the British Government. "Mr. Amery's pronouncements," he said, "do not soothe the festering sore, but are like sprinkling chillies on it." He was therefore confident that, if the Government expected that the leaders would have changed their opinions while in jail, it would soon be disillusioned (p. 131).

Events following the attack on Pearl Harbour (on December 7) brought about a marked change in the war situation. The Congress Working Committee, which met at Bardoli from December 23 to 30, found itself unable to go along with Gandhiji in refusing co-operation in the war effort in any circumstances on the ground of non-violence. Gandhiji pleaded earnestly with the Committee, arguing that he would be committing moral suicide if he abandoned the faith of a lifetime which he had persuaded the Congress also to accept for twenty years as a policy (pp. 188-9). But in the course of the discussions in the Committee he discovered, as he said in his official letter to the Congress President Maulana

Abul Kalam Azad on the last day of the meeting, that the other members of the Committee did not share his interpretation of the Bombay Resolution of September 1940. Gandhiji had interpreted it "to mean that the Congress was to refuse participation in the present or all wars on the ground principally of non-violence", but on re-reading the resolution he found that its letter could not bear the interpretation he had put upon it. The resolution "contemplated material association with Britain ... as a price for guaranteed independence of India". But he himself was convinced that only non-violence could "save India and the world from self-extinction", and he wished to continue his mission whether he was "alone or assisted by an organization or individuals" and he accordingly gave up leadership of the Congress struggle in terms of the Bombay Resolution (pp. 189-90). India, Gandhiji believed, had a message for the world and under his leadership the Congress had for twenty years demonstrated the possibilities of non-violence. He would not, therefore, "be guilty of selling that heritage even for the independence of India because it would not be real independence" (p. 191).

Though Gandhiji thus dissociated himself from the resolution adopted by the Working Committee, which implied that "the door is not barred altogether against Congress participation" in the war (p. 191), yet at the A.I.C.C. meeting in the middle of January he pleaded with the members to accept it unanimously. He had, he explained, seen "the climate in the country and the criticism of our Congress in the world" and he would, as an exponent of ahimsa, persuade the meeting to accept the resolution "deliberately and whole-heartedly". The Congress did not know its own mind, he said, but he knew that the attitude of the Congress was reflected in the resolution, and he wanted the members courageously to follow their judgment regardless of what he himself thought. "I do not want it to be said," Gandhiji insisted, "that in order to retain my leadership you bade good-bye to your senses because you had no courage to give me up. I do not covet leadership by undermining anyone's manhood....This is not the way I work." It was a fraudulent way, Gandhiji said, and he was not going to cheat the Congress after fifty years of national service (pp. 222-3). The decision not to divide the house, Gandhiji explained later to a meeting of Congress workers, indicated his growth or evolution in his own non-violence (p. 248). Among the leaders who opposed Gandhiji's stand was Jawaharlal Nehru and an impression had gained ground that he and Gandhiji had

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been estranged. This was baseless, Gandhiji said. Jawaharlal had been resisting him all the time, but there could be no division between them. On the contrary, he had always said that Jawaharlal would be his successor. "He says whatever is uppermost in his mind," Gandhiji explained, "but he always does what I want. When I am gone he will do what I am doing now.... Ultimately, he will have to speak my language." And even if that did not happen, Gandhiji added, "I would at least die with this faith" (p. 224).

Apart from the question of non-violence, most Congressmen did not appreciate the importance Gandhiji attached to the constructive programme. For him it was not merely a matter of achieving some desired improvements, which probably could be done more efficiently through Government machinery, but it meant building up "the structure of swaraj", that is, preparing for the non-violent society of his conception in free India. Swaraj based on non-violence, he explained, would be "a fulfilment of the constructive programme" and, therefore, if there was no living faith in it on the part of Congressmen, the "whole theme of corporate non-violence", as he had conceived it, would fall to pieces (p. 137). Gandhiji had given a brief outline of the activities he had in mind (*vide* Vol. LXXII, pp. 378-81) before the individual civil disobedience was launched, and he now published a fuller brochure (pp. 146-66), entitled *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*, explaining it as the "construction of *poorna* swaraj or complete independence by truthful and non-violent means." Swaraj through violence, Gandhiji held, would mean ascendancy of those who made "the most effective use of violence", not equality, economic or otherwise. If, on the other hand, the programme he offered "could be successfully worked out", it would result in the swaraj they wanted in which "the independence of every unit, be it the humblest of the nation, without distinction of race, colour or creed" would be assured (pp. 146-7). If Congressmen had no faith in this programme, Gandhiji told them, he must be rejected as their leader, as his handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme would be "like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon" (p. 166).

Of all these items Hindu-Muslim unity had become an urgent problem because of the Muslim League demand for partition. The demand was the logical outcome of separate electorates which "presupposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests" and "tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust" (p. 237). Gandhiji wanted every Congressman to identify himself with all

classes of people and go out of his way to "cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own" (p. 147). He made a similar appeal in his Silver Jubilee speech at the Benares Hindu University: "I would like you to go out to invite Mussalmans to come here, and not to mind if they reject your advances. You are the representatives of a great civilization" which "regards ahimsa as the supreme dharma. . . . Our civilization has absorbed, like the holy Ganga, many streams from outside, and it is my prayer that the Hindu University . . . may invite and absorb all that is best in other cultures and nurse hostility towards none" (p. 245).

In his Ashram prayers Gandhiji had attempted such blending of religions. A *mantra* chanted by a Japanese inmate and the *al Fateha* recited by Raihana Tyabji were included in the Ashram worship. To "an ardent Hindu friend" who reproached him for this, Gandhiji replied, "I am confident that my Hinduism and that of the other Ashram Hindus has grown thereby" (pp. 280-2). He responded with openness of heart to the teaching of Jesus Christ and protested against the exclusiveness of orthodox Christians. "Is all the grandeur of His teaching and of His doctrine," Gandhiji asked, "to be forbidden" to him because he did not accept Jesus as the only "begotten son" of God? Jesus, according to Gandhiji, belonged "not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world . . ." (pp. 69-70).

A trend in communal relations which deeply pained Gandhiji was the frequent publication of writings which appeared to him "to be distortions of truth and vilification of the Congress and Congressmen and Hindus". He publicly drew Jinnah's attention to "a virulent attack on Hinduism" in one of the weeklies and appealed "for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League" (pp. 377-8). Jinnah's "unexpected defence", Gandhiji wrote, "of an article designed to wound deep susceptibilities makes ominous reading" (p. 412).

In the midst of the raging fire of violence in other parts of the world and signs of growing tensions in India, Gandhiji was sustained by the hope of a new order at the end of the war. He had visions "that the end of this war will mean also the end of the rule of capital. I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence" (p. 259). Out of "this holocaust", Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan*, "must arise a new order for which the exploited millions of toilers have so long thirsted. The prayers of peace-lovers cannot go in

vain. Satyagraha is itself an unmistakable mute prayer of an agonized soul'' (p. 305). Commenting on an article by Dr. Maude Royden of the Guildhouse, London, Gandhiji expressed his deep religious conviction: ''There is no cause whatsoever for despondency . . .'' The anti-war effort was ''bound to succeed sooner rather than later, if man is to live as man and not become a two-footed brute'' (pp. 395-6). He consoled Agatha Harrison, saying: ''Let prayer of the heart be our sole and sure refuge. . . . not a blade moves but by His will. He allows this slaughter. We do not know why. But if we keep our hands, head and heart stainless let us believe that in His own good time, He will use us to stop this apparently senseless mutual slaughter'' (p. 39).

On February 11, one of his closest co-workers, Jamnalal Bajaj, passed away suddenly. Never before, Gandhiji wrote, ''have I felt so forlorn except when Maganlal was snatched away from me fourteen years ago'' (p. 323).

Though a karmayogi *par excellence*, Gandhiji knew the limitations of action. The thoughts of a person ''whose intellect is clear and whose aspirations are pure'', he wrote to Vinoba Bhave's brother, ''have a power not to be found in his actions. Just as speech limits thought, so also action limits aspirations'' (pp. 48-9).

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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. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

Unrevised *October 11, 1941*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Ramsarandas is an old devotee of Ludhiana. He has been regularly sending money and khadi. He has a doctor son in England, another in India but married to [a] Scotch girl. She wrote asking for permission for herself and Father-in-law to come and pass a few days at Sevagram. He became ill and was nursed back to health. His teeth were all extracted. They were the seat of disease. Bessie is a fine steady girl, extremely devoted to her father-in-law, nearly as old as I am. He insisted on doing C[ivil] D[isobedience]. He proposes to go again. He says he does not mind dying there.

My tour[1] is off for the time being. For G.[2] says he must try. If he fails, I might be allowed. Of course he won't fail. I have told you about my anxiety.[3] It won't be any more for you than for any other patient. But the point is not your anxiety or mine. It is that you should not become ill. You should find out the art of keeping well. You live on the border line. That is bad.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Lilavati came in today. She has a month's leave.

From the original: C.W. 4095. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7404

2. LETTER TO JAMNADAS

SEVAGRAM,
October 11, 1941

BHAI JAMNADAS,

Who can approach a person dwelling in a dreamland? I do not remember the circumstances you have mentioned in your letter.

[1] To raise funds for the Deenabandhu Memorial; *vide* Vol. LXXIV, pp. 231 and 303.

[2] Presumably G. D. Birla; *vide* Vol. LXXIV, "Letter to G. D. Birla", p. 372.

[3] *Vide* Vol. LXXIV, p. 379.

Possibly I was engrossed in work and I was unable to talk to you at length. The fact is I try to be true to myself and give equal respect to all. But when misunderstandings crop up in a person's mind, he imagines that I have changed.

Received your poem. I have glanced through it. You know I have no knowledge of poetry or of prosody. I am returning it to you. Show it to some well-known poet. Publish it only if he passes it.

Blessings to both of you from
BAPU

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

3. LETTER TO KANHAIYALAL VAIDYA

October 11, 1941

BHAI KANHAIYALAL,

Your letter. Are lawyers from outside given permission to appear in Ratlam without let or hindrance? When will the appeal be heard? How many days is it likely to last? If the High Court exists only in name, what can we hope for by an appeal?

The matter about Gwalior is regrettable.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

4. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 12, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

I can ill afford even to send a postcard. The apples have come. Hancock came yesterday. Can't say whether there was any change in K. The heat for the last two days has been scorching and I felt glad that you were not here to go through the experience.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4096. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7405

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5. LETTER TO S. RADHAKRISHNAN

October 12, 1941

DEAR SIR RADHAKRISHNAN[1],

I have your two letters for which many thanks.

Having yielded to you I cannot interfere with your announcement.[2] Please do what you think best. Do however spare me the degree. These honours must be reserved for those who really deserve them. How can a law-breaker be a doctor of laws? But you may treat the occasion for donations either to the University or Harijan Sevak Sangh or A.I.S.A.

I am glad I wrote to you about young Jasani's conversation. I could not believe it. He is a good man but the foreign medium has often resulted in ludicrous misunderstandings.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SRI S. RADHAKRISHNAN
30 EDWARD ELLIOTS' ROAD
MYLAPORE, MADRAS

From a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. VI, between pp. 48 and 49. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

6. LETTER TO A. AZIZ

SEVAGRAM,
October 12, 1941

DEAR FRIEND,

There is nothing offensive in your letter. It is well argued. But you seem to me to have missed my point. I would ask you to reread my argument if you have got it in full.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SH. A. AZIZ

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Vice-Chancellor, Benares Hindu University

[2] Gandhiji had agreed to attend the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the University; *vide* Vol. LXXIV, p. 264.

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7. LETTER TO SHAVAKSHA

October 12, 1941

BHAI SHAVAKSHA,

I envy you. Where is 84 years and where 72? And you run the mill in full steam and a young man like me remains idle! Let God's will be done and let us be thankful to Him. Received both your books. The beautifully printed one must indeed be costly. I will make full use of it. Because while you may run one or two mills I ply thousands of mills and plan to ply millions.

If a junior may bless a senior here are

Blessings from
BAPU

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

8. LETTER TO CHANDRAGUPTA VARSHNEYA

October 12, 1941

BHAI CHANDRAGUPTA,

It would do to say that there is no truth in the statement made by the person who has not given his address and whom you do not know. Why inquire into it? I sent the letter because I thought he was one of your acquaintances.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI CHANDRAGUPTA VARSHNEYA, B.SC.
AJMER

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

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9. LETTER TO PRABHU DAYAL VIDYARTHI

October 12, 1941

CHI. PRABHU DAYAL,

I have gone through the articles about which you have written. Lately I have not written on this subject for any newspaper nor are these my writings. And there is nothing to indicate the source from which they have been reproduced.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 11695

10. LETTER TO MAITHILISHARAN GUPTA

October 12, 1941

BHAI MAITHILISHARAN,

Your letter. You have done quite well. I have written to Dhirendra[1]. You must not incur expenditure in sending the yarn to me. It may as well be kept there. It will certainly be woven if it comes. I will of course use the khadi made out of the yarn sent by you. A shawl is being made out of it. After using it for a while I shall give it to Kakasaheb[2] for sending it to Kashi. I have gone through your poem. Please convey my blessings to all and say that the more heart they put into spinning the nearer swaraj is bound to be. Never without it.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Dhirendra Majumdar, who was the addressee's fellow-prisoner in Agra Jail

[2] D. B. Kalelkar

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11. SPEECH AT SEVAGRAM

October 12, 1941

I did not know that such a big crowd would collect here. It is good that it has. It is an auspicious augury that two crore eighty thousand yards of yarn and Rs. 12,000 have been collected from the three divisions[1] of Central Provinces.

I have received two letters from Agra Jail also. The prisoners there have spun a good deal of yarn. They did not have all the facilities for spinning. But after Dhirendra Majumdar had reached the Jail, how could he rest content without making everyone spin? He is one of the pillars of the Charkha Sangh. He was not expected to go to jail. But the Government sometimes becomes overgenerous. It picks up some people without any ostensible reason.

Shri Maithilisharanji is also there. He too was arrested without any good reason. He is a famous poet and he has sent me a poem also. But today poetry does not flow from his pen; it flows from the yarn that he spins. I have sent him today a short reply[2]. In that letter, too, I have said that with every round of yarn he and his co-prisoners have spun, they have brought swaraj so much the nearer.

What I wrote to the poet is not mere rhetoric. I mean what I say. According to my definition, there cannot be true swaraj as long as there is exploitation. Mere change from British to Indian rule does not mean swaraj. As long as one class dominates over another, as long as the poor remain poor or become poorer, there will be no swaraj. In my swaraj the millions will live happily. They will get good food, decent houses and enough clothing. By good food I do not mean that they will eat sweets. But everyone must get pure milk, pure ghee and sufficient fruit and vegetables. I know I am talking tall because the poor today do not even know what fruit is. During the mango season, they get a few mangoes and during the guava season they have a few guavas. They do not get any other fruit except these and a few other. They do not get even clean and nutritious foodgrain. They have to live on rotten rice, coarse grain and dirty salt. I wish everyone gets what they

[1] Nagpur, Berar and Mahakoshal

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

call a balanced diet as also a clean and comfortable house. This according to me is real freedom. I have written those words to Maithilisharanji with this kind of freedom in view.

We have never produced as much yarn as we have produced this year. The reports that I get from the prisons make me dance for joy. Maithilisharanji writes to me that in the Agra Jail his Communist companions also join in spinning although they have no respect for my views. No one compelled them. They started spinning on their own. This is the way of ahimsa.

I have also received reports from the Gujrat (Punjab) jail. I am not suggesting that everyone spins. I have the names of those too who are not spinning. But those who spin are in a majority. I become more hopeful when I see these facts. I am an irrepressible optimist. But even I did not entertain such high hopes. The Congress Constitution does include the rule about khadi but till now the Congress Committees insisted on khadi only to conform to the rule. On this occasion, I believe, the work has been done with an element of faith.

While I say all this, I am not so foolish as to believe that khadi is now on its feet. Whatever has been achieved is sufficient to strengthen my hope and my faith. But that is not enough for the growth of khadi. These are good omens. But they are not sufficient for the removal of poverty and unemployment. These problems cannot be solved as long as crores of people do not wear khadi. I have a dream that people will wear home-spun khadi just as they eat home-made food.

I am talking of these things because people continue to ask me one question. Even today I have received a letter. They all ask, 'What will be the outcome of this struggle? It is very slow and has no effect on the Government. The Government does not seem to care. A large number of satyagrahis are wandering in the streets. They are not even arrested. How can such a struggle be effective?'

They may say what they like, but my feeling is that my fight is going on according to my plan. I am satisfied with its momentum. At present I do not want to increase it further. This does not mean that it will never gain momentum. When the occasion demands it will be accelerated. But this is not the occasion for it. Everything is good or bad in a particular context. There are occasions when mere bread is very useful. But when it is inopportune even *jalebi*[1] is harmful. So when an opportune time comes, our fight will be intensified.

[1] A sweetmeat

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Some people expect a miracle this very day. In ahimsa there is no scope for such sudden miracles. Ahimsa does not admit of sudden spurts. But those who will can always see the miracles of ahimsa. We watch the sky every day but we see no miracles there. But those who have an eye for it are spellbound by the spectacle. They see new miracles every moment. And the sky is only a small fragment of Divine Power. That Divine Power is also the source of ahimsa which works according to the Divine Law. That Law is so mysterious that even its miraculous effects do not appear to be such. They look like a natural course of events. Our non-violent struggle will also evolve according to the same Law. When independence comes through non-violence it will blossom forth so naturally that we may never notice the miracle having taken place.

Some people say that this is the opportunity to pressurize the Government. From this point of view, they say, my present struggle of ahimsa is entirely lifeless. I want to point out to them that the contents of the Bombay Resolution[1] are not mere prattle nor were they intended to bluff the world. The Congress is a responsible trustworthy organization. Its resolutions are serious, sincere and without exaggeration. The Bombay Resolution pins its faith on the policy of non-violence. It has a passage[2] which should keep Congressmen always alert and watchful.

When the policy of non-violence has been so clearly stated in the Bombay Resolution, how can we say that England's difficulty is our greatest opportunity? How can the Congress say that we should give her one more blow when England is herself collapsing? And who knows whether England is actually collapsing? Outwardly of course it looks like that. But I do not believe it. Appearances are not always real. During the Boer War also there was an occasion when it appeared that England was almost defeated but the situation took a sudden turn and she came out victorious.

Today also we do not know who is going to win. We do not want any one party to be defeated. We wish that all the warring parties should come to terms and live like brothers. How can you expect me to say that either Germany or Russia or Britain and America should be defeated? I would pray that no one is defeated and they all live like brothers.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXIII, pp. 1-3.

[2] Which reads: "They can have no ill will against them (the Britishers), and the spirit of satyagraha forbids the Congress from doing anything with a view to embarass them."

Ahimsa dictates: 'Consider no one your enemy. Love even him who considers you his enemy.' How can we then think of taking advantage of England's predicament?

You may say, 'Then we are sure to be destroyed. We will suffer defeat at the hands of the British.' This betrays lack of faith. A follower of non-violence suffers defeat at no one's hands. I may repeat once again that 'defeat' has no place in the dictionary of ahimsa. Victory and defeat are the results of violent war. In ahimsa there is only victory and nothing else. At the moment I cannot tell you how our ahimsa is ultimately going to succeed.

Not to embarrass Britain does not mean that we should help them. They are resorting to violent methods. We have to stand firm on our principle of ahimsa. This will no doubt create some difficulty for them. But we cannot help it. How can we give up a principle which is bound to lead to the welfare of the world including that of Britain? But if we violate our principle, we shall be guilty of violence. I wish you to keep this in mind.

People ask me, 'What will be the outcome of this satyagraha? All types of people, good, bad and indifferent, have joined it. Even cheats and rogues are courting arrest in the name of satyagraha.' I know there is not a single province where undesirable men have not courted arrest. But I also know that there is not a single province where people who measure up to my standards have not gone to jail. That is why I have not launched a mass movement. If I launch a mass movement, people may perhaps jump into it. What will the British do in that case? They will enact another Jallianwala Bagh. I am not afraid of it, but I do not want to give them an opportunity to do so. If we remain strictly non-violent and then they force a Jallianwala upon us, I could not care less.

But I say once again that it will be a good omen for India if even a handful of men whom we know to be true remain steadfast to their pledge. That will pave the way for an all-out non-violent struggle.

All this needs an element of honesty. It is a primary condition. Those Congressmen who have no faith in khadi, who decry untouchability in public but observe it in their homes, who, being Hindus, hate the Muslims, or who, being Muslims, hate the non-Muslims, do not deserve to be satyagrahis. Such persons cannot help our cause even by going to jail. They are like thieves and dacoits who also go to jail. They are not satyagrahis but only law-breakers. They cannot produce any wholesome results. Why should they go to jail disrupting their homes and forgoing their incomes? We

wish that only a handful of satyagrahis should go to jail; but their conduct should be such as to produce a moral effect.

Civil disobedience is a powerful weapon. But for employing it, we must fulfil the thirteen-point constructive programme[1] which I have outlined. Till then this weapon cannot be effective. I know that the crores of people in India cannot court arrest. Nor is that necessary. But it is essential that crores of people should have faith in the constructive programme. Khadi is the pivot of the constructive programme. It is essential that crores of people should wear khadi; they should not wear foreign or mill-made cloth and they should not observe any untouchability. If they are not prepared to do even this, how can freedom be won through ahimsa? What right do they have to desire freedom, who are not prepared to take even a little trouble?

If we wish to win swaraj through ahimsa, this is the only way. If, however, we wish to use force, then Hitler would point the way. There are only two courses open—either Hitler's, that is, the way of violence, or mine, that is, the way of non-violence. Hitlerism and Churchillism are in fact the same thing. The difference is only one of degree.

By presenting this yarn and this money to me, you are telling me that you do not want to tread the path of violence. It is my belief that a time will come when everyone in India will realize that the only correct course is to follow ahimsa. The day is soon arriving for khadi when the entire country will be convinced that any cloth other than khadi must be discarded. I shall utilize all the money I have received on the occasion of Khadi Jayanti for encouraging khadi. People ask me, 'Why do you not utilize this money for Congress work?' In a way khadi work is also Congress work. But it is only the parliamentary programme or the movement against the Government that people regard as Congress work. This is a wrong notion. This amount will be utilized only for khadi work.

It is to be considered how this money received from the three divisions of the Central Provinces is to be utilized for the purposes of khadi. These three divisions may jointly or separately send schemes for their areas. Jajuji[2] will welcome and give them due consideration. If we do not accept these schemes, we shall give reasons for rejecting them.

Many people send yarn to me by post. I do not understand why they do so. The amount spent on postage is more than the value of the yarn. I wish people would send me ready-made khadi.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXII, pp. 378-81.

[2] Shrikrishnadas Jaju

Even from the jail they should send khadi woven out of yarn spun by them. Today people ply the charkha. But I wish that they learn operating the handloom. They should send me woven khadi. I do not need khadi for myself. I have enough khadi for my personal use. Hence it would be all right if people weave khadi and send it to the Charkha Sangh of their own Province, though, from one point of view, it is better to send it to me so that I may know how the work is progressing from year to year both in quantity as well as in quality. As years pass the quality of our yarn should improve. But they should not pay railway freight in sending the yarn to me. Only khadi should reach me. It would be enough if just a specimen is sent to me.

All of us should devote greater energy and talent to khadi work. This can be done even in jail.

Those who have been to prison once have to go there again and again. There is no question of going back. It does not mean that we shall do so indiscriminately. We shall have to use our discretion. How can we send to prison again a person whose health has been shattered during imprisonment in spite of the best efforts? It will be a kind of violence.

Some people ask me: 'Why should the same persons go to jail again and again? Why not select new men so that the satyagraha continues without causing much strain?' I have already said that a non-violent war has its own strategy. We cannot follow Hitlerian tactics. A barbaric war is being fought in Europe with large-scale massacres. Young, old, even invalids, are being annihilated. Even barbaric war demands sacrifices. In a non-violent war there is no scope for sacrifices on such a gigantic scale. Here we seek to employ moral pressure. This will entail sacrifices on the part of a select few. We have not been called upon to make any great sacrifices till now. What are our sacrifices worth if we are not prepared to face even the hardship of prison life time and again?

There is one other question. Should we carry on the struggle within the four walls of the prison? Many problems arise there also. The matter of A, B and C classes creates much bitterness. What should we do there? These classes are a creation of Congressmen themselves. I am convinced that these classes will ultimately be abolished. In the mean time, there is much scope for improvement in the diet of C class prisoners. I have already said that doctors can bring about the much-needed improvement in this matter if they so desire. But granting that the doctors cannot do anything, even then this struggle will have to continue. The satyagrahis will repeatedly go to prison. Prison life will be full

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of hardships. It will mean starvation and even if it causes death in some cases I shall be prepared to face that eventuality. We should all be ready for it.

We have simply no other course open to us. Our war demands sacrifices, hardships and suffering. That is how the war of ahimsa is waged.

[From Hindi]

Sarvodaya, November 1941

12. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 13, [1941][1]

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Yesterday was another hectic day. So I had to satisfy myself by sending you a card only.

I think I told you I had your amendments of the Constitution which was placed before the meeting. A small committee was appointed to go into all the suggestions. Rajen Babu is its head.

The heat wave seems to have passed.

Lilavati is free from her fever. Maganlal[2] has returned from Delhi after having sat for his examination. He is plucky. This was his third failure. And he is not sure that it will be a walk-over this time.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4097. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7406

13. LETTER TO CHOITHRAM GIDWANI

October 13, 1941

MY DEAR CHOITHRAM,

Though I have said, if my analysis is accepted by you do as Jairamdas[3] says, I gladly withdraw my condition. Do as Jairamdas

[1] The source has "1934", which appears to be a slip, since the contents of the letter indicate that it was written in 1941. The addressee has also placed it among the letters of 1941.

[2] Son of Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta

[3] Jairamdas Doulatram

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advises, even to the extent of resigning. My faith in his wisdom is a constant factor.

Yours,
BAPU

From the original: C.W. 9259. Courtesy: Jairamdas Doulatram

14. LETTER TO DR. MOOKERJI

SEVAGRAM,
October 13, 1941

DEAR DR. MOOKERJI,

I thank you for your letter.

Supposing Christians as such wanted to get rid of some social abuse and established an association for dealing with it, I should think they would restrict admission to fellow-Christians only. If you admit this, you will appreciate the restriction in Harijan Sevak Sangh. Hindus have sinned and they must purge themselves. The others can extend their sympathy but cannot do repentance. Of course, there is untouchability among Christians and Muslims, thanks to the highly infectious disease in the Hindu body. Hindus can only help the latter by completely curing themselves of the disease, but the rest has to be dealt with by the respective communities.

The obvious is being missed because of the political results. But the root of the evil is in the corruption of religion. If this is not clear, you should pursue the subject, till at least we agree as to the results.

I hope your wife is well. Of course, you will come when you can.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 7865. Courtesy: G D. Birla

15. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

October 13, 1941

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I understand about Dhirubhai[1]. Keep yourself completely aloof in this matter. Nothing is going to happen. What can we

[1] Son of Bhulabhai Desai

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do when the source of whatever power I have is of a different character altogether?

Did Satyamurti meet you? He told me he would. He is quite clear in his mind. If he can have it, he will accept office today. But he will do nothing against the Congress. His loyalty is exclusively to the Congress.

Farid Ansari[1] arrived yesterday. He is going to Hyderabad today to see his sister there, and will return here afterwards. Is it not Monday today?

How is your health?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 261

16. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

October 13, 1941

CHI. BABUDI,

However careful you may have been, the cause of your asthma seems to be some error on your part. Find out what it was. There has been some error in your diet, in your living habits or in your manner of bathing. The error cannot be undone now, but if it is discovered its recurrence can be prevented. It is great news indeed that Anand[2] is showing signs of life again. Take proper care of him, too. This is the time when a baby's future is made or marred.

The rest you will hear from Prabhavatibehn[3].

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10038. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

[1] A socialist leader of Delhi
[2] Addressee's son
[3] Wife of Jayaprakash Narayan

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17. LETTER TO VAIKUNTHLAL L. MEHTA

October 13, 1941

BHAI VAIKUNTH,

Write a letter on the lines of the draft below and accept the appointment if they accept the proviso.

'With reference to your letter extending my appointment for a further period of three years, I have pleasure in accepting it, it being understood that I work as an agent of the A. I. V. I .A. and in accordance with its programmes.'[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sardar so that he can advise us if there is any political snag in your acceptance. I would suggest your writing direct, so that no time is wasted.

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

18. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

October 13, 1941

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I was very glad to read your letter. You all have done a lot of spinning. So is the case almost everywhere. It will be a very good thing if everybody's faith in khadi and other constructive activities increases in this way. Congratulations to all. Whoever wants to keep his yarn may do so. I would like it if all get khadi made out of their own yarn. Like spinning-wheels, looms too should be introduced in jails on which to weave the hand-spun yarn. This can be done easily.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] This paragraph is in English.

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[PS.]

All should learn Urdu and Hindi scripts and also learn to employ both these forms in their speech.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2483

19. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI

[*October 14, 1941*][1]

In view of your very delicate condition and the uncertainty of the period of treatment, I am quite clear that your re-offering civil disobedience should be indefinitely postponed and that you should give yourself complete rest and follow your medical adviser's instructions.

The Hindu, 16-10-1941

20. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,
October 14, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter. Of course you should not worry Shummy[2] until you are uniformly well for at least a fortnight. There need be no hurry to leave the place so long as the weather there agrees with you.

We have here a homoeopath. He is a crank like me. I have entrusted Prabhakar to his care. He took charge yesterday and P. is distinctly better today. As you know I have little faith in h'pathy, though I would like to for its comparative simplicity.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4098. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7407

[1] The report is date-lined "Wardha, October 14".
[2] Kunwar Shumshere Singh, addressee's brother

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21. LETTER TO C. K. NARAYANASWAMY

SEVAGRAM,
October 14, 1941

DEAR NARAYANASWAMY,

I was glad to have your letter and to note that in the end you began to like the Ashram and its people.

You will come with your wife whenever you like.

There is very little difference between your socialism and mine as you subscribe so whole-heartedly to non-violence and the constructive programme.

I am organizing villages along the constructive line but I don't mix with it the political programme so called. The two will not blend, though those working both are Congressmen. The constructive programme is complete in itself.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

SHRI C. K. NARAYANASWAMY
C/O "BOMBAY CHRONICLE"
BOMBAY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

22. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

October 14, 1941

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

Enclosed is a letter from Chimanlal. I have treated it as a pretext for writing this letter. You must have received my previous letter.

I did not get Manilal's letter after all. I have now given up hope of receiving it.

Nilkanth[1] and Surendra[2] were here for a few days. Everybody whom you know here is well.

[1] Nilkanth Mashruwala
[2] Surendra Mashruwala

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Diwali is nearing, but there is no Diwali in my heart. I wonder if you, too, have the right atmosphere for a Diwali there.

Your new High Commissioner is going to call on me. He writes and tells me that he will remain completely neutral. I will write to you after we have met. You will of course meet him at any rate as a matter of courtesy. Invite him to Phœnix.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4923

23. LETTER TO MAGANLAL K. NAYAK

October 14, 1941

BHAI MAGANLAL,

Only now I could get time to read your letter of the 20th. I cannot reach and deal with all letters in time. What can be the value of my opinion now? I will state it, however. Let the friends take the pledge if they wish. I have discovered from bitter experience that they do not know the meaning of a pledge. Perhaps the best course would be to remain in contact with them and be content with whatever they do.

Regards from
M. K. GANDHI

MAGANLAL KAHANJIBHAI NAYAK
KURLA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10115

24. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,
October 15, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

You are right. The extensions to the cottage are so elaborate that there is every danger of our being crowded. The cosiness will be gone. Let us see.

I have suggested full fortnight to test yourself. And otherwise too this is no time for you to come. Nights are good but the days are oppressive. So every way it is good you are not here.

Asaf Ali is in Wardha. He will be coming presently. So good-bye.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4099. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7408

25. LETTER TO DUNICHAND

October 15, 1941

DEAR LALA DUNICHAND,

Many thanks for your letter. I am considering all that is being written or said to me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5586

26. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

October 15, 1941

DEAR AMBUJAM[1],

I have just heard from Jamnalalji that he has been able to sell the jewellery at over Rs. 9,000.[2] He considers this a good price. The letter is misplaced. If I can trace it, I shall let you know the exact amount. You have said something in your letter. Please let me have your concrete suggestion, if you have any.[3]

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

27. LETTER TO MADALASA

October 15, 1941

CHI. MADALASA[4],

As you are constantly in my thoughts, I dreamt about you though I rarely dream. This letter is prompted by that dream.

[1] Daughter of S. Srinivasa Iyengar
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXIV, "Letter to S. Ranganayaki", p. 119.
[3] *Vide* also p. 32.
[4] Daughter of Jamnalal Bajaj, married to Shriman Narayan

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It occurred three days ago, but it is only today that I got the time to write.

Rearing a baby requires as much care as carrying it. The quality of your milk will depend on your diet and your way of living. As the food you eat will affect the quality of your milk, so also will your temper and your thoughts. Please take my word for this, for I am writing it from personal observation. You should, therefore, make it a point to eat food only as medicine, and not to please your palate. The relish which one gets from this 'medicine' is true relish and is nourishing. Do not understand the word 'medicine' in its strict dictionary sense and be repelled by it. Milk can be taken both as medicine and for the pleasure of the palate. The first way of taking it will nourish the body and the second will harm it. The baby should get proper exercise, fresh air, massage, etc. Do not listen to anybody else in this matter. Many people will want to pamper the baby. But whatever they might say, remain firm in your resolution.

This was the idea behind my dream. I hope you are in good health and that the baby is growing well. I hope Mother and you do not quarrel and that you do not cry. After you have left child-bed you should, I think, stay here for a month or so.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 322

28. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN

October 15, 1941

CHI. SHRIMAN,

I have made corrections in your statement. Accept them, if you like, otherwise let the statement go as it is.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 300

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29. LETTER TO VIDYAVATI

October 15, 1941

CHI. VIDYA,

There is no end to your misery.[1] But what is it to you? Some may die today, some tomorrow, all are destined to die. Why grieve over it? Moreover, you have dedicated yourself to the country, then why be perturbed? Be alert, give courage to everyone as before and become even more absorbed in service. May God grant you peace.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Rani Vidyavati Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

30. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

October 16, 1941

MY DEAR C. R.,

Your brother is on his trial.[2] May God give him peace. I had a sweet little note from him.

I shall expect you on 21st. V[allabhbhai] will be here by then.

I fear I cannot accept the compliment for knowing slang better than you. I did not even know that 'O. K.' and 'A 1' were slang. So you see the poverty of my language. Anyway it won't do for you to be worse than you were in jail. And you know the consequence!!

Asaf Ali leaves for Calcutta tomorrow. All eyes are on you, including mine!

Your son-in-law[3] has now become a distinguished journalist. What about Papa[4]?

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10901. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan. Also G.N. 2082

[1] The addressee had lost her husband.
[2] Two sons of the addressee's brother had died just then.
[3] Devdas Gandhi
[4] Addressee's elder daughter

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31. LETTER TO P. C. GHOSH

October 16, 1941

MY DEAR PRAFULLA,

You had no business to lose weight and develop fever. Anyway I hope you are out of the wood now. I had a letter from Suresh and I replied. Sardar and others are due about 20th. All well.

Love.

BAPU
(M. K. GANDHI)

[PS.]

Your record in fine spinning is splendid.

From a photostat: G.N. 3784

32. LETTER TO B. L. RALLIA RAM

October 16, 1941

DEAR R.,

Many thanks for your letter.[1] You and your friends will be welcome on 8th November at 4 p.m.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

B. L. RALLIA RAM
GENERAL SECY.
A. I. COUNCIL OF INDIAN CHRISTIANS

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

33. LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA

October 16, 1941

CHI. CHAMPA,

I have your letter. Leave the three elder children there and come here. Do not bring any jewellery with you. There is no

[1] The addressee had wished to meet Gandhiji and acquaint him with the result of a meeting he along with others had had with M. A. Jinnah.

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place here where they can be safely kept. I will look after you here. Maganbhai left for Mahabaleshwar today. I had shown him your letter. He is willing. I will put you up in the room I have assigned to him. I cannot ensure your safety in Wardha. I cannot protect you there if Ratilal[1] comes.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
Show this to Narandasbhai.

CHAMPABEHN MEHTA
C/O SHRI NARANDAS GANDHI
RASHTRIYA SHALA
RAJKOT (KATHIAWAR)

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1050. Courtesy: Champabehn R. Mehta

34. LETTER TO ABHYANKAR

October 16, 1941

BHAI ABHYANKAR,

You will be welcome. But the Ashram is crowded. How can I refuse you, though? Moreover, there will be a large crowd in the first half of November. If you can put up with inconveniences you may come after the 15th. Please let me know the date of your coming.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 19328

35. LETTER TO RATILAL DESAI

October 16, 1941

BHAI RATILAL,

It seems I have not replied to your long letter. If so, I write now. Your letter has helped me a lot in understanding the problems. I am getting on with the work. Let us see what happens. Can we not cultivate or humour the Burmese?

[1] Son of Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta and addressee's husband who was mentally deranged

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I believe that a person like you can do a great deal of work in this direction. I wish you do your best. I hope all are well.

Blessings from
M. K. GANDHI

RATILAL DESAI
94 MOGHUL STREET
RANGOON

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

36. LETTER TO TULSI MAHER

[*October 16, 1941*][1]

BHAI TULSI,

I got the cloth-piece woven by you from self-spun yarn. I was very much pleased. I will preserve it. I should like others also to copy your example.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4207

37. LETTER TO RUKMINI BAZAJ

[*October 16, 1941*][2]

CHI. RUKHI[3],

I have your *hundi*[4]. The money will be spent as you say. I hope you are keeping perfect health. Who gets the letter-papers for you printed in English? How many letters do you have occasion to write in English?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9162. Also C.W. 10130. Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

[1] From the G.N. Register
[2] From the postmark
[3] Maganlal Gandhi's daughter, married to Benarsilal Bazaj
[4] Bill of exchange

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38. LETTER TO CHAKRAYYA

October 16, 1941

CHI. CHAKRAYYA,

I have your letter. What you write is clear. It is good. Convey promptly to me whatever comes to your mind. I do not like your persistent fever. Let us see what the doctor does and says. Will it not be good to buy a case for the watch? I shall arrange to get one for you from there.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI CHAKRAYYA
"AROGYA BHAVAN"
AVADI, MADRAS

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9113

39. LETTER TO KHURSHEDBEHN NAOROJI

[After *October 16, 1941*][1]

DEAR SISTER,[2]

You are bound to wait for a reply. If it does not come during the next few days, you will write a brief note saying that you will regard the silence as consent and move out as stated in your letter.[3] Wait for a while before writing to Iftikhar.[4]

Farid[5] says he may bring Satyawati[6] here.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] The addressee's letter to which this is a reply is dated October 16, 1941.
[2] The superscription is in Gujarati.
[3] *Vide* Vol. LXXIV, pp. 207-10 and "Letter to Amrit Kaur", p. 317.
[4] Iftikhar-ud-Din, President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee
[5] Farid Ansari
[6] Grand-daughter of Swami Shraddhanand

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40. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

October 17, 1941[1]

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

I have your letter. From your previous letter I read a different meaning from what I read in your letter. I have now asked Kanu[2] to go to you. His love for Abha[3] is still there. But he realizes that he erred and has therefore resigned himself to forfeiture of Abha's hand. If you and your wife wish and Abha is eager to marry Kanu, then and then only should she come to me. If she comes you have to forget her for the time being as you have Sailen[4] and Dhiren[5] till they have finished their course and are on their way to earning their bread. Abha will be trained here and will be sent to Rajkot too, if I pass her. If both restrain themselves and Abha still likes Kanu and likes his parents and surroundings and keeps her health, she will be married to Kanu. So far as I can see both will have to wait for two years before marriage. If all this does not commend itself to you, your wife or Abha, she should not come and you should train her there and do what you think best. I would not take it ill, if she does not come. All I want is her welfare and [to] fit her for marriage. [If] you all and she are desirous that she should marry Kanu, you should talk frankly to Kanu. If she decides to come and if you are agreeable, you may send her with Kanu.

I am glad you are all well now.

Don't expect anything from Sailen now. I hope to prepare them both as early as possible and so I have disengaged them from Ashram work.

Please show this to Kanu, if Abha is to come. The enclosed for him.[6]

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10325. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

[1] The date is in the Devanagari script.
[2] Son of Narandas Gandhi
[3] Addressee's daughter
[4] & [5] Addressee's sons
[6] The letter is not available.

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41. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 17, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

This I am writing after curfew. It will be posted by Prithvichand who is leaving tomorrow.

I am glad you report marked improvement. May it continue.

I have told Satyamurti plainly that so far as I am concerned no change can be made.[1] If he thinks otherwise he is free to cultivate public opinion in his favour.

You are right about Harijans.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4100. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7409

42. LETTER TO NANDAN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
October 17, 1941

MY DEAR NANDAN,

Sarup[2] tells me that I should not on any account let you go. You are the only person to manage the *Herald*. I had taken it for granted when I was prepared to yield that you had weighed all the facts before feeling free to go. You will therefore not think of going till the *Herald* matter is cleared, although Asaf Ali is out.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* "Letter to S. Satyamurti", October 30, 1941.
[2] Vijayalakshmi Pandit

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43. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

[*October 18, 1941*][1]

MY DEAR IDIOT,

One letter was entrusted to P[rithvi]chand for posting. Your note to hand. You should pass a day in Jullundur when you descend and do what you can. The nights are getting colder night after night, not so the days. The cottage is nearing completion. No more now. Munshi[2] and others have come.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4101. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7510

44. LETTER TO KHURSHEDBEHN NAOROJI

SEVAGRAM,
October 18, 1941

DEAR SISTER,[3]

Your letter full of information. Khan Saheb will be all right in time. Your love will conquer.

Surely I never said I did not like your warnings. I remarked about your hasty conclusions, etc. But that had nothing to do with your duty to warn where in your opinion a warning was needed. So let me have a boxful.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI KHURSHEDBEHN NAOROJI
FREDRICH HOTEL
MAHABALESHWAR

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] The date is in the addressee's hand. *Vide* also letter to the addressee, p. 27.

[2] K. M. Munshi

[3] The superscription is in Gujarati.

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45. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

October 18, 1941

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I am returning J's[1]. What was the discrepancy in the receipt given to you? If you have a copy, please send it.

I see no harm in their selecting Nanabhai[2] as President instead of you. Accept whatever office they give and acquit yourself well. You should learn the art of working in an organization. When you feel that the work itself is suffering and conflicts are increasing, you may resign in a spirit of humility. But you should not assume from the beginning that the work is bound to suffer. If they give you the financial functions or control, accept it. However, after duly thinking over all this, do only what you think proper. I have faith in your judgment.

I get letters from Kanaiyo. He is fine. He is coming not tomorrow but next Sunday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8594. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

46. LETTER TO INDU PAREKH

[*October 18, 1941*][3]

CHI. INDU,

New Year blessings to you all.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI INDU PAREKH
"SANZGIRI SADAN"
171 GIRGAUM, BOMBAY 2

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6260. Also C.W. 10450

[1] Jivanlal Shah
[2] Nrisimhaprasad Kalidas Bhatt
[3] From the postmark. The source, however, has "*Padavo*", that is, *Kartak Sud* 1 which corresponded to October 21, 1941.

47. LETTER TO LALJI M. GOHIL

October 18, 1941

BHAI GOHIL,

Received the letter signed by you and the other teachers. The restrictions are imposed on teachers of Government schools mainly with the object of preserving the authority of the Government. This I think is sufficient reason for quitting Government service. But if you want to continue in it, truthfulness lies in following Government rules as long as the fetters are not removed as a result of the freedom movement.

There must be regulations in non-governmental national institutions also. Teachers should have a say in formulating them. It is up to the teachers to continue or not to continue in the service of such institutions. The propriety or impropriety of their regulations can be judged only after scrutinizing them.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

L. M. GOHIL
PRABHAT STORES
346 BUDHVAR, POONA 2

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

48. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 19, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter. Aruna's[1] letter is not so sad as you have felt it to be. I have a sadder one from her but that is on account of Asaf Ali. He passed two days with me. He wants a change. I held out no hope. He will come again. Rajaji comes Tuesday, Sardar and M. tomorrow.

J[amnalal] came in yesterday. Madalasa and baby doing well.

[1] Wife of Asaf Ali

On your return journey it might be well to pass a day in Lahore and go and see Aruna and others. But you know better. I would not like to delay unnecessarily.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4102. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7417

49. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

October 19, 1941

BHAI SATIS BABU,

Will you answer the enclosed?[1] I had forgotten all about it. I had been content with your statement that you had spent not a penny of the Association's[2] money except on khadi work.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

50. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 20, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

You do forget things nowadays. You wrote only the other day that the Simla weather just now was superb and suited you well. You dreaded the heat below. In today's note you say the heat will suit you!!! I had suggested the very thing and [you] had opined otherwise. Anyway the way is becoming clearer daily because the temperature is steadily going down.

How I wish your effort for the porters will succeed. What you say is terrible.

At long last J.'s letter was delivered by M. today. He does not give me a gloomy account of J. Devdas has also come in and so Ramdas, his wife and children less Sumitra who is detained in Bombay for her eyes. Of course Sardar has come. Raihana[3] is still with me, quite merry.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4108. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7412

[1] Presumably the letter from Annada Babu. *Vide* Vol. LXXIV, p. 381.
[2] All-India Spinners' Association
[3] Abbas Tyabji's daughter

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51. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

SEVAGRAM,
October 20, 1941

CHI. AMBUJAM,

I have your letter. I have now got the exact figure. The amount realized is 16,048-15-9. I shall now see what can be done with it. You need not now send Rs. 1,000 unless you want to increase the donation. I would advise you not to at the cost of your other work. I do hope your body will be quite well. You must not worry. We have to resign ourselves to God's will.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI AMBUJAMMAL
96 MOWBRAY'S ROAD
ALWARPET, FORT
MADRAS

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

52. LETTER TO ANNAPURNA C. MEHTA

Diwali [*October 20, 1941*][1]

CHI. ANNAPURNA,

You are improving fast now. What good news! I hope you write regularly to people at home. You must keep perfect health during the coming year[2] and render service.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9433

[1] The source has this among the letters of 1941. The year is also corroborated by the reference to the addressee's health. In 1941 Diwali fell on October 20.

[2] The Gujarati New Year

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53. LETTER TO JUGATRAM DAVE

SEVAGRAM,
October 20, 1941

BHAI JUGATRAM,

I have read both the books carefully. I think they would rank high among the existing text-books. But I have not been able to convince others of my view. You may remember the preface to my efforts in this field. I had said that my attempt was not to add one more book to the number of many good books. I wanted one book to replace all the others for that standard. I stick to my view even now. But I see that it will not hold at the moment. If anyone from among our teachers succeeds in such an enterprise, he may lead the way. I want to prize open the minds of millions. I do believe they must open up. Knowledge of the alphabet develops the intelligence but little. Rather, it thwarts the development. And it costs a great deal, as I do. From that angle these two books do not make the grade. The illustrations are comparatively good but need much improvement.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

54. LETTER TO KANHAIYALAL VAIDYA

October 20, 1941

BHAI KANHAIYALAL,

I have your letter. When you have received everyone's approval about Ratlam you may write to me. I have spoken to Munshiji. When all the material is ready please let me know. The other cases are worth considering. I wish to be able to do something. I have lost the capacity to go to battle over such matters. Still I am trying to figure out what I can do.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

55. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
October 21, 1941

The publication of the statement attributed to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, which he is stated to have attempted to smuggle from his place of detention, does not, so far as I can see, lead us anywhere.[1] If the motive was to discredit the organization of which Jayaprakash Narayan is a distinguished member, it must fail.

Assuming the correctness of the charge against Jayaprakash Narayan, the method advocated by him is against the policy of truth and non-violence adopted by the Congress, and he deserves the severest condemnation. But it ill becomes the Government to condemn or discredit it. Frankly, all nationalist forces, no matter by what name they are described, are at war with the Government. And, according to the accepted canons of war, the method adopted by Jayaprakash Narayan is perfectly legitimate. He has had his training in America for seven long years and is a student of the methods adopted by Western nations in their fight for freedom. To practise deception, to resort to secret methods and even to plot murder, are all honourable and turn the perpetrators into national heroes. Are not Clive and Warren Hastings British heroes? If Jayaprakash Narayan was in the British Diplomatic Service and by secret diplomacy achieved something of importance, he would be covered with distinction.

The sensation with which the event has been disclosed to the Indian world is ill-conceived. The annotations in the communique are probably wholly unwarranted. When it is borne in mind that Jayaprakash Narayan is an untried detenu, the annotations look very like hitting below the belt. The Government should have shown Jayaprakash the document or documents seized, and published his answer if he had any to give.

[1] A communique issued by the Government on October 16 said: "Plans to consolidate the position of the Congress Socialist Party by winning over important members of the terrorist organizations, known as the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Hindustan Republican Socialist Association and by isolating the Communist Party, were seized from Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, security prisoner, Deoli Camp, when he attempted to pass them to his wife, Prabhavati Devi, at an interview."

The way in which his poor wife has been dragged in is unfortunate. She knew nothing of the attempt, for it was frustrated before anything could reach her. I may inform the public that Prabhavati does not share Jayaprakash Narayan's views. She was put under my charge by her parents when she was not yet fifteen and while her husband Jayaprakash was still in America. She has wholly accepted my view of Indian politics and is one of my most faithful co-workers. As husband and wife, Jayaprakash Narayan and Prabhavati Devi are an ideal couple. Jayaprakash has never sought to impose his views on Prabhavati. He has never prevented her from freely coming to me. Indeed, he has encouraged her to come to me whenever she has been ill. She has never been taken into the secrets of the Socialist Party. The alleged communication has completely upset her, for she never thought that her husband would advocate the method attributed to him.

The suggestion made in some newspapers that the restrictions on prisoners should be tightened is wholly irrelevant to Jayaprakash Narayan's attempt. That it was frustrated is enough proof of the efficiency of the C. I. D. Even if there is laxity, it can be no warrant for giving them bad or insufficient food, or keeping them in places far away from their homes, making it difficult or expensive for relatives to visit detenus. I have read Shri N. M. Joshi's very careful and over-moderate recommendations[1] about the Deoli Camp. I have learnt enough about it to enable me to say, in the name of humanity, that the Camp should be disbanded and the prisoners should be sent nearer their homes. It is wrong, from every point of view, to bring prisoners from their provinces and concentrate them in a place where there is no facility either of provisions or medical assistance or other amenities of life. Prisoners of war are treated like princes compared to political prisoners, whose status would be any day superior to that of prisoners of war.

One word to Congressmen. While Jayaprakash Narayan remains the patriot we have known him, they must realize that his method is harmful in the extreme while a non-violent struggle is going on. I have said, repeatedly, that secrecy has no place in a non-violent organization. No underhand or underground movement can ever become a mass movement or stir millions to mass action. I am glad, therefore, that Shri Purshottam Tricumdas, Secretary of the Socialist Party, has repudiated the method said to be advocated by Jayaprakash Narayan. Indeed, I would appeal to

[1] N. M. Joshi had, with the Government's permission, visited Deoli in July and published his impressions and suggestions.

Jayaprakash Narayan to reconsider his philosophy and, if his reason can approve, to repudiate the method as a lapse from sound reason and the loyalty he owes to the Congress. What he has stigmatized as a farce of satyagraha is not a farce. It is the fine fruit of mature experience of thirty-three years' experimenting in truth and non-violence; and, if God wills it, I hope to demonstrate that from this farce will rise a reality which will compel admission even by Jayaprakash Narayan and those who think with him. Jayaprakash did not indeed go to prison as a satyagrahi,[1] but he has not ceased to be a member of the Congress, and so it is not proper for him and others who think with him to retard the movement by their action, which is admittedly disloyal to the Congress.

The Hindu, 23-10-1941

56. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 21, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter. You can't undermine your body because someone else's is much worse than yours. You can try to bring your weak-bodied neighbour to your strength. The same thing applies to one's house. No doubt you have to give up superfluities as you would superfluous fat or even muscle.

The day is full.

Love.

Yours,
BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4104. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7413

[1] Jayaprakash Narayan was imprisoned in March, 1940; *vide* LXXI, p. 322. He was released in December 1940 and rearrested soon after under the Defence of India Rules and sent to Deoli Camp.

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57. LETTER TO R. K. SIDHWA[1]

[Before *October 22, 1941*][2]

The responsibility for the stoppage of satyagraha in Sind is Maulana Azad's and ultimately mine. I shall not grant permission to any Sindhi friend to offer satyagraha without the permission of the Maulana.

I can safely state that neither you nor any other Congressman from Sind has any hand in the stoppage of satyagraha in Sind.

The Hindu, 23-10-1941

58. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

October 22, 1941

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I have kept by me your letter of 15th July. I did not know what to say nor do I know now. I understand your earnestness and grief. But I do not know how to console you. However detached you may try to be, you cannot but be influenced by your surroundings. It is equally true of me, not to talk of others. Add to this the difficulty of answering in the middle of October a letter written in the middle of July. And this when every day means new history. I have therefore the greatest reluctance even to write to you in spite of the pleasure it gives me to write to you. But I must try.

Distrust of the Rulers is growing and spreading. The distance is increasing. We here perceive no difference between Hitlerism and British Imperialism. Hitlerism is a superfine copy of Imperialism and Imperialism is trying to overtake Hitlerism as fast as it can. Democracy is nowhere. In this unholy duel, so far as I can see, non-violence is working its way in a silent but sure manner. My

[1] The addressee had drawn Gandhiji's attention to the allegations made by certain Congressmen in Sind that Sind's case had not been properly placed before the Congress High Command. For Gandhiji's earlier advice, *vide* Vol. LXXIV, p. 12.

[2] The report is date-lined "Karachi, October 22".

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faith in it is daily growing stronger. Whether as Polak says, and as you almost hint,[1] I think, in your most gentle manner, it can stand the strain if bombs were dropping near my feet and I was witnessing dear ones being crushed to death, I cannot say. I rehearse such situations, I pray that the faith might not break under such strain. I flatter myself with the belief that I can feel these things from afar. I did shed a silent tear when I read about the damage done to the Houses of Parliament, the Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. Nevertheless this is all speculation. If I fail in the examination, if it ever came to me, I shall have the courage to admit my weakness but I will not deny my faith in non-violence.

Of communal unity there is no immediate hope, though I believe that it will come sooner than we expect. But that will bring no settlement with the British Government. In their declarations there are many impossible conditions. One is that we must get the Princes also to agree. Now the Princes mean the British Government, for the former are the latter's creation and they cannot even talk openly with anybody but by the latter's consent.

The Rulers feel a sense of security in the existing situation. The Princes obedient, the Muslim League showing its harmless teeth, and the Congress led by me following its equally harmless Civil Disobedience. They find no difficulty in squeezing the last pice and getting as many recruits as they want.

Can you now have a glimpse of why you find endless difficulties in the pursuit of your thankless task? But you must . . .[2] It is never wasted if it is sown in cultivable soil.

My own and hence the Congress method is incredibly simple. Its token Civil Disobedience must continue. It will blaze forth when the question of embarrassment disappears. The Congress is ready for any honourable compromise with any party including the Rulers, consistently with its fundamentals. Nothing short of Complete Independence can be acceptable to the Congress. The Congress cannot be party to the war efforts and therefore cannot take office. But Civil Disobedience can be stopped if free speech consistently with non-violence is recognized and all political prisoners are unconditionally discharged. This excludes those who have been tried and found guilty of actual violence unless they repent. It includes all untried men. So far as I can see, the Congress will not

[1] The addressee explains: "I did not 'hint' that his non-violence could not stand the strain of bombing, but asked him if sometimes 'compromise of method—not of aim' could be considered."

[2] A few words are faded out here.

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change its policy so long as I am alive and well enough to think clearly and advise. There is no one who has any sympathy with Nazism or Fascism but there is no one who has any sympathy for Imperialism [either], not even the recruits who hire themselves out for the sake of bread. Some join because they want military training at any cost.

Now you have a picture as true as I can draw of India to date.

My advice is don't worry, don't fret. You need not write, need not speak, unless you feel an irresistible impulse. Let prayer of the heart be our sole and sure refuge. It is enough to realize that not a blade moves but by His will. He allows this slaughter. We do not know why. But if we keep our hands, head and heart stainless let us believe that in His own good time, He will use us to stop this apparently senseless mutual slaughter.

Amrit is not with me for the moment. She is in Simla resting. Indira is resting in Mussoorie and keeping fairly well. Padmaja[1] is in Hyderabad. She is chronically ill.

I have in mind Andrews constantly. I will not rest till I have finished the Memorial work. Please send my love to his sisters.

I had the joint cable of good wishes from you three.

Thank you.

Love.

BAPU
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1522

59. LETTER TO GANDHI ANNAMALAI

October 22, 1941

DEAR FRIEND,

Gandhiji has your letter of the 14th and the M.O. for Rs. 11. He wishes you a happy and pure married life of service.

Yours sincerely,
MAHADEV DESAI

From a photostat: C.W. 10374. Courtesy: Gandhi Annamalai

[1] Daughter of Sarojini Naidu

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60. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

October 22, 1941

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

How did Babudi[1] fall ill again there? Does she take hip-baths? Does she over-exert herself? What is her diet? Does she use a mosquito-net? The money was to be paid as usual. I was under the impression that it was being paid to Jajuji.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 128

61. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

[*October 22, 1941*][2]

CHI. BABUDI,

Why do you fall ill? If your diet is correct and you have enough fresh air nothing should happen. Do you drink water after boiling it? Do you know how to recite Ramanama?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 128

62. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[3]

SEVAGRAM,
October 22, 1941

As regards diet, I am quite convinced that the food cooked in the Ashram kitchen would, with slight adjustments, be suitable for the people in Sevagram also. The food served at the Khadi

[1] Sharda, addressee's daughter, married to Gordhandas Chokhawala
[2] This is written on the same sheet as the preceding item.
[3] Sevagram workers had sought from Gandhiji an appointment specially to hear his views on an ideal village community.

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Vidyalaya or to C class prisoners would not do. The standard of food prepared in our kitchen here would be found suitable. In this regard we have taken into consideration the opinions of doctors all over India and we consult them even now. At the Ashram we can protect ourselves from a number of diseases. Whatever illness persists is due to the fact that all of us are not frugal eaters.

Everyone must get two lb. of milk, two *tolas* of ghee and two-and-a-half *tolas* of butter daily. Vegetables such as we have here are also essential for everybody. Perhaps in the case of those who do physical labour it may be necessary to increase the quantity of grain; they may need dal too, though we do not use it in our kitchen. But the quantity of milk and butter we take can be reduced to some extent. Skimmed milk can and ought to be used in our kitchen. It is wrong in a way not to use it. It has everything except ghee and it is cheaper too. We certainly want to reduce the cost of our diet. Skimmed milk should suffice for our villagers. They must have some fruit too. At present they get no fruit at all, though they may have some sort of mangoes during the season. They should have fruit in the same proportion as we have for the Ashram inmates. Tamarind, lemons and tomatoes are essential for them. They can manage with them. They may also require some spices, though we do not have them in the Ashram and according to me they are not at all necessary. But I do not believe that spices have no place in our villagers' diet. They can have some vitamins from the spices also. But spices cannot take the place of milk as some people mistakenly believe. I have found that the body grows weak and health deteriorates by the excessive use of spices. This will provide you some basis for calculating the expenditure on food.

The second necessity is clothing. The loin-cloth such as I wear is not meant for everybody and it is not necessary for all to adopt it. *Kurta*, short dhoti and cap should suffice for men.

The women's dress in the Ashram has been rather strange. I am of the opinion, however, that the dress of the women of the Punjab is the most suitable. What Amtul Salaam sometimes wears would be, with some modifications, very good. There is art in the *kurta*, *dupatta* and *shalwar* of the Punjab and in these every part of a woman's body can be properly covered. Mirabehn has nicely adapted it for herself. The *dupatta* is artistic and at the same time very useful and comfortable during winter. The *kurta* covers the woman's body fully, the *shalwar* also is a complete dress in itself and lends the wearer grace. The *ghaghra* is an absolutely inadequate dress and should never be worn without an underwear. If we could not adopt a uniform dress even for the women in the

Ashram, it is a very difficult proposition to do so for the whole of India. There is great scope for improvement in the present dress of [our] women. But I am not particularly bothered about this. For the present it would suffice if we made our dresses entirely out of khadi.

These days people huddle together and sleep in the same room which is sometimes also shared by their cattle. It keeps them warm but it is bad for their health, with the result that the mortality rate in India is the highest. People will enjoy better health if they sleep in the open. This will be possible only when they have sufficient clothing to cover themselves as we have in the Ashram. Everyone must have at least a blanket and a heavy sheet of khadi. People in the Ashram try to use quilt-covers by stuffing them with paper but they become useless during the rains. One does not, however, have to spend a lot on it. Greater expenditure is needed on diet.

Thirdly, we have the housing problem. Here we must first decide how much shelter is required per head. Houses can be built with grass, mud and stalks. At present it is not so in the Ashram. I have allowed houses to be built with bricks but pucca houses are not essential in the villages. They are costly. Thatched mud houses would do in the villages. Even as it is, rain water floods even our houses and we are faced with the problem of saving people from it. Everybody should protect his own house. I see no difficulty in it. Perhaps for years to come the country cannot reach my ideal of housing. I agree that houses in the Ashram are ideal houses. In order to determine the ideal we will have to decide upon the covered area required per head. It is however essential to provide separate shelter for the cattle. At present people in Sevagram keep their cattle also in the house itself. Their houses have poor sanitation. They don't have enough room for the children. Their houses should be so constructed as to admit plenty of fresh air and light. Though the houses in the Ashram are poor dwellings even the rich can live comfortably in them. The villages also should have such houses. Today this is not the case but if the villagers co-operate with us the situation can be improved to a great extent.

What I have said to you today is a matter of great importance. I agree we cannot achieve complete success in the countryside unless we have the reins of government in our hands. But if our dedication and service attain a high degree of perfection we shall not have to depend on the Government and a great many things can be done even without it.

The villagers should co-operate with one another in regard to their cattle. We should first find out the number of cattle in the village, and decide whether all of them are needed or we can do with less by managing them on a co-operative basis. For instance, I do not consider it proper for every villager to own a bullock-cart. Can't we manage with much fewer bullock-carts if we follow the co-operative method ? The same thing applies to oxen and a number of other things. The villagers can make much more profit if they have a co-operative society for selling their grain. The cattle of the entire village can likewise be accommodated on a contributory basis. The villagers can make great progress if they work like this in co-operation with one another. Ours is a small village. We should inquire and find out in which spheres of activity and to what extent we can work on a co-operative basis. Even if all villagers are not inclined to follow the co-operative method we must find out those who are prepared to give it a trial.

Similarly, we should adopt the co-operative method in farming too. The entire produce of the village should be distributed only among those who have laboured for it. This does not mean that the labour put in will not be taken into account. A proper account of the labour put in by each individual will have to be maintained.

We should also decide about the crops we want to raise. Those things which are essential for Sevagram should be given priority. Cultivation for purposes of sale should be kept to the minimum. We have been carrying on trade to some extent since the olden times and shall continue to do so within India as well as with foreign countries. I shall not speak about other countries. Let us consider what we can do here.

We should produce all the other necessities in the village itself. Then we should also find out what other industries we can set up here. We ought to press oil and make shoes locally. Similarly we can think of other industries also.

You should decide what it is that you want to give priority to. It is for you to examine all the aspects of farming. I myself have not gone deep into this aspect and therefore am not at present in a position to guide you in this regard.

We have to think about education in Sevagram. Though you have not asked me any question on this, I may at least tell you that in my opinion there should not be a single illiterate person in Sevagram. I put forward the concept of basic education very late in my life but all the same I attach great importance to it. I had put the following question before the Gujarati Sahitya

Parishad[1]: What kind of literature are the writers bringing out for the crores of illiterate villagers? This task is as huge as it is difficult.

Let me also tell you that our own life, if it is simple and pure, is bound to have its impact on the villagers without our having to tell them in so many words. It is not our way to argue. All our personal conduct should be well regulated and must conform to our ideal. We have enough land in the Ashram and we can cultivate it as a model farm. If I want, I can have the entire land in the village bought up but I have forbidden further purchase of land for the time being and, until I am able to distribute the entire proceeds among the tillers of the soil, I do not want to purchase more land. I must ask you for the present to set through the Ashram an example of ideal farming. They will then try to follow it of their own accord. At present farming in the Ashram is not as it should be and we are far behind the ideal. Our expenditure too is excessive and we must remedy this situation. We shall make steady progress only when we persistently direct all our experiments towards our ideal. I want you to associate the Ashram women also with your experiments. They will be of great help to you. You won't be able to do without them; besides, they have to be trained for this work.

Thus Sevagram will become a sort of republic. You may appoint some person as your leader for a few years but later you will be able to do without him, for a republic has no place for a leader. People know one another closely, unlike what we find in the elections where millions of voters don't even know who the candidate is. A popular leader cannot suppress the people. We had some such institution in the olden days. But the British destroyed everything. They are trying to suppress the villagers through their military strength. Once this force loses its grip, there will be no place for the police, the village headman, the patwari and the like. Only the toughs will remain. But the people can take care of them.

Unless we do this we shall not attain the ideal social order based on truth and ahimsa. I am convinced that a non-violent society can be built only on the foundation of harmony and co-operation, without which society is bound to remain violent. If we argue that this cannot be done it will mean that a non-violent society can never come into being. In that case our entire culture would be meaningless. How can we call this ideal an impossibility while

[1] On October 31, 1936; *vide* Vol. LXIII, pp. 413-7.

professing faith in human nature? Of course it presupposes ahimsa of a high order.

The ahimsa required for driving the British out of India need not be of so high a quality; but the steps we shall have to take to cleanse our own hearts cannot be taken without ahimsa of a very high order. For instance, the Hindu-Muslim tension cannot be removed without true ahimsa. We followed the path of ahimsa to face the British because we had no violent force. This was not true ahimsa. Ahimsa dwells not in the hearts of the cowards but in the hearts of the brave. The Negroes are physically robust, their chests are worth admiration but the British have filled them with fear, so much so that a sturdy Negro trembles at the sight of a white child. The same is the plight of the Indians. Although in physical strength, we are nothing compared to the Negroes, our experiments, imperfect as they are, in ahimsa have had a profound impact.

My faith in human nature is progressively growing. I have concluded, on the basis of my experiments, that human nature can be easily moulded. We have come to assume, because of our inertia, that human nature is always the same and seldom amenable to progress. Churchill and Hitler are striving to change the nature of their respective countrymen by forcing and hammering violent methods on them. Man may be suppressed in this manner but he cannot be changed. Ahimsa, on the other hand, can change human nature and sooner than men like Churchill and Hitler can.

If you can digest what I have said to you today and if you acquire the strength to act accordingly, I shall be saying many more things. Discuss fully all this amongst yourselves and put up before me a definite scheme of what you can do. I shall answer all your doubts from time to time. Today I have talked to you at great length and some of the things I have said to you are not only new but also very vital. You should try to digest them before asking me any questions, for otherwise your questions will lack the force of careful thinking.

[From Hindi]

Sarvodaya, November 1941

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63. AN ERROR

The khadi movement, I find, has gone on for more than 21 years. But while on the one hand we do not have a sufficient number of weavers, on the other the millions of idle weavers in India do not use our yarn for weaving. Is it any error on our part which leads to this double failure? I shall try to answer this question today.

I am of the opinion that this is but the result of our own folly. If I were to find fault with anyone in this effort it could be only myself. When I placed khadi on such a high pedestal I should have considered all aspects of the problem. However, many vital things were first revealed to me in their generality and the finer details were only gradually worked out. The fact that spinning involves carding was discovered only through experience. The process of ginning cotton came to light only later. I knew that the yarn would have to be woven but I had not imagined then that it would be a difficult process. Even when I knew it I did not clearly see the solution as I see it now. The solution is that khadi workers must learn the process of weaving even as a matter of atonement. The best of our spinners have come from the same class. That is how we could make good progress in spinning. In the same manner we should have made weaving compulsory for the khadi workers. When we learn this art we shall fully understand the weavers' difficulties in using hand-spun yarn. Only then can we find a remedy for the difficulties and the professional weavers will follow us in using hand-spun yarn. Not that I had never thought of this. The work of weaving hand-spun yarn was first started long ago by the late Maganlal Gandhi and by Manilal Gandhi. But I did not insist that everyone or certain people must weave, as I used to insist that they must spin. As a result of this error the process of weaving has not been as widely taken up by khadi workers as it should have been. I am of the opinion that one among every five, seven or ten spinners must become a good weaver. Weaving cannot be done by one man. One needs a companion for fixing the warp and for sizing. One also needs the help of a boy or a girl to load the shuttle. Anyone can handle these processes as also the actual weaving on the loom. But what I propose is that a certain proportion should become experts. This will lead to great progress. It is not necessary to tell me that this

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is already the practice at some centres. My complaint is that I have not systematically insisted that one loom must operate where there are, say, five, seven or ten spinners. Had I so insisted I would have got today not yarn but woven goods. The large number of satyagrahis in the prisons would not have been content with merely plying the charkha but would have had a loom and woven their yarn.

Weaving includes tapes, webbing, towels and coarse khadi as well as the fine dhotis or saris from Andhra with elaborately woven patterns. When the processes of weaving all these items are present in our minds we shall not waste a single stretch of yarn. We shall classify the different varieties of yarn, and weave them into appropriate cloth. This error has also led to a lot of waste. We used to throw away broken yarn as so much waste. I know that many of the basic schools have begun taking care to avoid such waste. We have to spread this knowledge. This is just the beginning of basic education. In fact it is the primary function of basic education to give thought to these problems, to investigate them scientifically and to suggest reform accordingly.

The most unfortunate result of this error has been our failure to enlist every weaver for our movement. Why can we not approach the weaver with hand-spun yarn instead of mill-made yarn? If we acknowledge our error and atone for it, there would be such a great improvement in hand-spun yarn that it could compete with mill-made yarn. Perhaps it may not be possible to spin by hand as fine yarn as the mills can produce. However, there need not be this vast difference between the two and the weaver need not have scorn on his face, as he now has, at the sight of hand-spun yarn.

SEVAGRAM, October 23, 1941

[From Hindi]

Khadi Jagat, October 1941

64. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 23, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

I can give you no more than a postcard reporting 'all well'.
Too much occupied in talks.
Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4105. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7414

65. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 24, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter. I have a heavy day before me today too. But I must give you a decent letter.

Your apples have come in time, but the basket was found to contain only 22. I am inquiring. But nothing will come out of it. Sometimes such thefts do take place. The apples are very good.

You need not go to Lahore. Better to give a day to Jullundur.

What you say about the ruling class is but too true.

You held up J.L.'s letter too long. You must have seen my note on J[aya]p[rakash] N[arayan].[1] Prabha is somewhat better now.

The nights are properly cold now. I had all the blankets I wear during winter.

The cottage is nearing completion.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4106. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7415

66. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

October 24, 1941

CHI. BALKRISHNA[2],

I have your letter. Your present visit cannot be said to be successful. But who knows what would have happened if you had remained here? Never think about the future. When I see that your life is a burden [on others] I will not have the slightest hesitation in saying so, but as long as your intellect is clear I will not say that. For a person whose intellect is clear and whose aspirations are pure can never be a burden. The thoughts of such a man have a power not to be found in his actions. Just as speech limits

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 34-6.

[2] Brother of Vinoba Bhave

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thought, so also action limits aspirations. But now we shall meet soon. Let me know the exact date.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI BALKRISHNA
VADILAL SARABHAI AROGYA BHAVAN
PANCHGANI, DISTRICT SATARA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 806. Courtesy: Balkrishna Bhave

67. LETTER TO ORGANIZER, DELHI SATYAGRAHA COMMITTEE[1]

[Before *October 25, 1941*][2]

Briefly put, your question is this: Is an applicant for admission to the Congress on his signing the prescribed form for admission entitled to it or is he not? My answer is: He is entitled.

The Hindu, 26-10-1941

68. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

October 25, 1941

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

I have your letter. You must not be timid. A reform[er] has to brave starvation. It is wrong on your part to live on charity even if it is from your wife's brother. Surely I am aiding you when I am supporting Sailen, Dhiren and Abha, if she comes. That should mean at least Rs. 45 per month. Should you belittle it? But you should act as you think best. You should not expect any more financial aid from me.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10326. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

[1] This was in connection with Prof. Indra who having earlier resigned from the Congress had again signed the membership form with a note that in his opinion "the present Congress Constitution does not make it obligatory for every primary member to forgo his right to use violence in self-defence".

[2] The report appeared under the date-line "New Delhi, October 25".

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69. LETTER TO MADALASA

October 25, 1941

CHI. MADALASA,

Having conveyed my message through Radhakrishna[1], this is not necessary. I am writing this merely for your entertainment. Shall I send some more *papad*[2]?

Why do you cry? Do you know that even your crying has an effect on the baby?

When are you coming over here?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 322

70. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

October 25, 1941

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

Send me Mohansingh's statement. I have read your letter. According to my practice I shall inquire into the matter at my convenience.

You must have fixed up with Chimanlal about yourself.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 397. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

71. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

October 25, 1941

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have preserved the accompanying letter, though it is rather old now. Having some free time today, I read it and am replying to it.

[1] Son of Jamnalal Bajaj's brother
[2] Thin, crisp, spicy, waferlike preparation

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Nothing remains now to be considered about Kanchan.

If the problem about the field and Balvantsinha has not been solved, put it up to me. I will deal with it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8483. Also C.W. 7158. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

72. *LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA*

October 25, 1941

CHI. BABUDI,

Heaps of blessings to you both—be happy, live long and render as much service as possible. We should not make comparisons with other people who, though they do not take care of their health, seem normal. No comparison is possible. You know from experience that you would fall ill if you did not take care of your health as you do. You at any rate should know the laws of health and observe them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10039. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

73. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

October 25, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

Today I have no time to write. This is only to remember you. Everything is all right. You might have seen what I have written about Jayaprakash.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4254. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7886

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 34-6.

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74. LETTER TO JAYANTIPRASAD

SEVAGRAM,
October 25, 1941

BHAI JAYANTIPRASAD,

I have your letter. I can certainly say that 'the Ashram is full of unclean things and that Pratibha may continue her study where she is'. My statement would suggest that you had written to me about Pratibha. Still, if you can find the letter, I should like to see it. I cannot keep Pratibha in the Ashram. I also do not approve of the craze for passing examinations at such great inconvenience. I have no right to give money for such a purpose.

I have received the yarn.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

75. LETTER TO MANEKLAL A. GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,
October 26, 1941

CHI. MANEKLAL,

If you did not give me such detailed information about the family, who else would? I was very glad. I showed the letter to Ba, too.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MANEKLAL AMRITLAL GANDHI
PORBANDAR
KATHIAWAR

From Gujarati: C.W. 893. Courtesy: Maneklal A. Gandhi

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76. LETTER TO MANEKLAL

October 26, 1941

CHI. MANEKLAL,

It was from your letter that I first learnt about Chi. Mridu's engagement. Afterwards I got Maneklal Gandhi's letter. May you all prosper during the new year and may you always be the instrument of some service.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

77. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 26, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your letter. Today also there is a great crowd. Bul[1] got a disappointing reply[2]. Everybody is fine. Discussions are going on.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4255. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7887

78. LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

October 26, 1941

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH,

Prof. Kripalani will reach Bombay on November 1 and perform the opening ceremony[3]. It does not seem proper to send for Khan Saheb from the Frontier Province. Perhaps he may not like it. It is good that 42 students have been enrolled. It does not

[1] Khurshed Naoroji
[2] *Vide* pp. 54-5.
[3] Of the Ahimsak Vyayam Sangh

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matter if the number is small, but we should be perfectly satisfied if they turn out to be first class.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5653. Also C.W. 2964. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

79. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 27, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I must hurry again. I began a serious study of your rendering of K's writing. It has begun ill. English is fairly good but the thought does not run smooth. The whole must read logical. You will see on your return what I mean. It is a most difficult task and if you are found to have failed it won't be accounted as your fault.

Of course I shall deal with your chest. You will stay in Jullunder as long as necessary.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4107. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7416

80. LETTER TO KHURSHEDBEHN NAOROJI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
October 27, 1941

DEAR SISTER,[1]

I have your two letters, received simultaneously.

Here is a draft[2] for your reply. It gives you my reaction to the Government letter. Of course you will reject it, if it does not correctly represent your view.

I understand and appreciate all you say in your second letter. My advice is that you should come here first and stay a few days so that we may have a leisurely chat. Probably Satyawati will come. You will then see her too. I would advise you to see Sarup and

[1] The superscription is in Gujarati
[2] This is not available.

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the Hospital[1] and then see J.[2] and Indu[3]. When you have finished this programme, you may break the order[4]. The rest when we meet.

Love.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

81. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

SEVAGRAM,
October 28, 1941

I have been chary of issuing statements for the guidance of satyagrahis. The deciding reason has been to have them to be self-guided where they are not guided by local leaders. But this chariness can easily be overdone. Time seems to have arrived for a brief review especially as several leaders who have been discharged have met me and there has been much speculation about the trend or the result of these talks. The public should know that those who were not whole-heartedly with the Bombay Resolution[5] have come out with their doubts confirmed. Similarly those who never had any doubts have become firmer than ever before in their opinion. As for me I never had any doubt as to the correctness of the Bombay Resolution and have none about the correctness of the steps hitherto taken in pursuance thereof. If I had, I could not, would not, have led a fight involving not only the fate of the Congress but even of the nation as a whole. There is one saving grace in non-violent action. Unlike violent action, it being good in itself can never do real harm.

Complaints reach me (1) that there is marked deterioration in enthusiasm; (2) that fewer people are coming forward now than before; (3) that those who are discharged are not seeking imprisonment again; (4) that there is no discipline among many satyagrahi prisoners some of whom have no notion of non-violence or truth; (5) that the treatment of C class prisoners is inhuman in that the food given is bad in quality and deficient in balance. The result is that the majority of prisoners have suffered in health, making it impossible for many on discharge to seek imprisonment again without adequate rest and repair. There are

[1] The Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital at Allahabad

[2] Jawaharlal Nehru

[3] Indira, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru

[4] Prohibiting entry in the North-West Frontier Province and the tribal territory

[5] *Vide* Vol. LXXIII, pp. 1-3.

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too complaints about want of newspapers, books and proper sanitation; (6) that the policy of non-embarrassment is unintelligible, as the Rulers themselves do not appreciate it, and the fight therefore should be intensified without regard to embarrassment; (7) that there is no life left in the Congress—there are no meetings, there are no demonstrations, no other activity, and that there should be a change of policy and programme even resulting in the resumption of full parliamentary programme, including ministries, i.e., reversion to the Poona offer[1] with suitable modification.

(1 & 2) I shall consider the first two together. Enthusiasm that is froth is of no use in non-violent action. Showy demonstrations and the like have a value in the initial stages. Continuous feverish activity can only promote violence and therefore retard the steady march of non-violent action, call it battle, if that word is preferred. That fewer are coming forward is but natural. For it must be recalled that civil disobedience is individual and restricted to representatives, be they even elected members of village or *firka*[2] committee. The list of representatives being limited it must one day be exhausted. I have no doubt that if I made a general call and relaxed the conditions of enrollment I should be overwhelmed by applications. I have no machinery to examine such applications. In reality it will be mass action which does not admit of individual examination and choice. That call will not come before the close of the war. There is neither warrant nor atmosphere for mass action. That would be naked embarrassment and a betrayal of non-violence. What is more it can never lead to independence. Mass action at this stage without communal unity is an invitation to civil war. If civil war is to be our lot, it will come, but if I know the Congress mind, it will never come at the wish or invitation of the Congress.

(3) This complaint is partially valid. It is true that some of those who have been discharged are reluctant to go back. This is a novel experience for India. I had to do it in South Africa. The struggle demanded it there as it now does here. Self-suffering has no limit. In the former civil disobedience the occasion had not come to send the same resisters to jail again and again. In the present one it is inevitable. Any other course would reduce the struggle to a farce. The alternative suggested is that substitutes should be found for those who would not go in again. Surely that is not the way of suffering. And how can we think of gaining

[1] The reference is to the A.I.C.C. resolution passed at Poona on July 28, 1940; *vide* Vol. LXXIV, p. 113; *vide* Vol. LXXII, p. 413*fn*.

[2] Group

independence without a full measure of suffering? The greater the cause the richer the suffering. Therefore in this struggle they only will count who will seek imprisonment again and again, come what will. They may be very few. That will not matter. Of course those who are ill will naturally not be required to go till they are restored. Some have interpreted literally my statement[1] that the discharged satyagrahis may take about a week before they go. Each case has to be judged on merits. Shri Vinoba went in twice within 72 hours of his discharge. He had to come to me before re-offering civil disobedience. Hence even that little delay. Shri Pyarelal took nearly a month before going in for the third time. There were unavoidable causes which need not occupy the reader's time and attention. I have mentioned two cases which I was personally regulating. They exemplify the elasticity I refer to. There is no shame or harm in unavoidable delay. Hypocrisy and camouflage must be avoided at all cost. In satyagraha there is no waste of men or time or labour, provided that *Satya* is adhered to in its entirety. I can otherwise utilize the services, as true soldiers of truth, of men and women who will whole-heartedly carry out instructions. Thus those who cannot for some just reason court imprisonment should engage themselves in corporate constructive activity. Difficulty arises because many Congressmen, though they profess or believe in C. D., have no faith in the constructive programme. I must proclaim from the housetop for the thousandth time that constructive programme is an integral part of the national movement and therefore also of C. D. C. D. without the backing of the constructive programme is criminal and a waste of effort. All cannot go to jail. But all must work the constructive programme. Even in armed conflict armies are powerfully helped by the civil population. Imagine the fate of the British forces, if their effort was not co-ordinated with that of the civilians. I was therefore delighted that there was a wide response from the prisoners and the other Congressmen this time in the matter of spinning during the spinning carnival[2]. I dare to believe that if Congressmen were enthusiastic believers in communal unity and removal of untouchability and the like, there would be no communal discord and there would be no antagonism such as it is from Harijans. We are the makers of our own destiny. It has been somewhat justly said that if I am a good General, I must not grumble about my men. For I must choose them from the material at my disposal. I plead guilty.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXIV, pp. 62-3.
[2] Ceremonial spinning during Gandhi Jayanti week

But I have qualified my admission by the adverb 'somewhat', for I laid down the conditions from the very inception of the programme of non-violence. My terms were accepted. If from experience it is found that the terms cannot be worked, I must either be dismissed or I must retire. I retired[1] but to no purpose. The bond between Congressmen and me seems to be unbreakable. They may quarrel with my conditions but they will not leave me or let me go. They know that however unskilled a servant I may be, I will neither desert them nor fail them in the hour of need. And so they try, though often grumblingly, to fulfil my conditions. I must then on the one hand adhere to my conditions so long as I have a living faith in them and, on the other, take what I can get from Congressmen, expecting that if I am true, they will some day fulfil all my conditions and find themselves in the enjoyment of full independence such as has never before been seen on earth.

(4) There are two sides to the complaint about indiscipline. I must here confine myself to satyagrahi prisoners only. I would naturally like the other political prisoners to attend to what I say. It is wrong to say that there is universal indiscipline among Congressmen or that all are unfit to be called satyagrahis. Cases of grave indiscipline have been brought to my notice. I know that violent men have crept into the organization under the guise of non-violence. But I know also cases of exemplary discipline. Everybody knows that there are in the movement and among the prisoners faithful Congressmen. I am conducting the struggle in their name and for their sake. It is through them that we may expect to win. This should mean no reflection on those who are weak but true. Even a child of seven who performs its allotted task faithfully will be entitled to the same credit as those who may cheerfully mount the gallows, if thereto called.

What is happening now is a process of automatic selection. Those who cannot stand the test will stay out without dishonour. Hypocrites and smugglers will be cast out because they will not stand the real heat or they will be rejected when found out.

(5) C class prisoners' is almost a baffling question. I have said more than once that classification is bad in itself. But the Congress has come to no decision on the question. Meanwhile we must do the best we can. There is no manner of doubt in my mind that the treatment of C class prisoners is unhuman. I do not wish to blame either the Government or the prison officials. I admit

[1] In October 1934

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that theirs is a thankless task. For ages almost they have been used to only one tradition. Their mind refuses to grasp the distinction between criminals and political prisoners. They would make no distinction between prisoners guilty of crimes and those who rebel against constituted authority. For them the political are worse than the others. But pressure of public opinion has compelled distinction. The result is highly unsatisfactory. The will on the part of the officials is lacking. Satyagrahis who seek imprisonment cannot with any dignity quarrel with the treatment they get, except when their honour is attacked. An irresponsible government, which the British Government in India is may, as it often does, defy public opinion. Satyagrahis have still to court imprisonment. It is one of the gateways to liberty. They cannot stipulate as to the conditions of jail life.

But weak as public opinion is, it can express itself with effect on a matter of pure humanity. I have suggested that medical men should give the lead in this matter. I understand that a movement on their part is quite likely. It is cruel to distinguish between the food of the different classes. The needs in the majority of cases of the political prisoners are identical. I suggest that the rations of all political prisoners should approach what is known as balanced diet with the permission to replenish it at the prisoner's expense. As to sanitation and other matters, a non-official medical committee should make recommendations which should be given effect to at once. There should be identity of treatment in all the provinces.

Having said this, I must warn satyagrahis against hunger-strikes or the like. It is their duty to conform to the jail regulations in so far as they do not come in conflict with known rules of honour, not self-made ones by hyper-sensitive temperaments. These ought not to court imprisonment. I suggest that it is a satyagrahi's first code of honour that he will conscientiously carry out jail discipline with the reservation just mentioned. Satyagraha is a process of silent conversion. Indiscipline and nagging are wholly inconsistent with the ambition of conversion. I am repeating these views of mine not without fear and trembling. For I know that jail officials have often quoted them on wrong occasions against satyagrahi prisoners. Of course in all I have said there is nothing against carrying out constitutional agitation for jail reforms even as to the so-called criminals. A satyagrahi is a universal reformer. For him there is no distinction between criminals and non-criminals. He is out to render service to the whole of humanity to the extent of his ability and opportunity.

There is the question of newspapers and books. These are as important as food. Some would do without food but not without newspapers and literature. I hold that deprivation of this amenity is additional punishment for a political prisoner.

(6) Although I have dealt with the question of non-embarrassment in my previous statements, I see that it still continues to agitate many Congressmen. For one thing, it is part of the Bombay Resolution and effect should be given to it. It is inherent in non-violence. But it is also expedient. By causing embarrassment at this stage, the authorities must resent it bitterly and are likely to act madly. Of course it would be different if we had resorted to armed rebellion. Then the saying 'their difficulty becomes our opportunity' would apply. It is obvious that exactly the opposite rule should apply when an opposite method is adopted. It is worse than suicide to resort to violence, i.e., embarrassment under cover of non-violence. We may not be "temperate and furious" at the same time.

'But then to be logical you must give up C. D. altogether', says the critic. To give up C. D. would be folly. C. D. is itself completely non-violent action. It is a duty in the face of violence without parallel. C. D. in the present case means assertion of the right to speak against participation in this war or all war. If we cannot do even this much when the occasion demands it, we might as well give up non-violence. C. D. is the assertion of a right which law should give but it denies. If performance of a duty causes embarrassment, it cannot be helped. It is my duty to give up drink. It would cause some loss to the tavern-keeper. I am helpless. The authority can easily avoid embarrassment by recognizing the elementary right of non-violent free speech. Consideration whether the policy of self-imposed restraint creates an immediate impression on the authority is irrelevant. Belief that it must ultimately is inherent in belief in non-violence itself. We may not bear ill will against the bitterest opponent.

(7) I do not share the belief that there is no life left in the Congress. "Still waters run deep." Congressmen are too much attached to the Congress to let the institution die of inanity. There seems to be no life because we have no spectacular show in the shape of parliamentary programme or mass C. D. Things are going according to plan. C. D. is restricted to select individuals. It will be further restricted to those who re-offer C. D. as often as necessary. It does not matter if the number is reduced to ten or two. The two will represent the whole Congress. Does not one ambassador represent his people? One can be multiplied infinitely.

Parliamentary activity has been almost stopped also according to plan. It may be, in my opinion should be, stopped completely. But I do not wish to rush things. Members of local boards have in many cases been withdrawn according to plan.

Then what are the Congressmen to do if they cannot or will not be allowed to offer C. D. and there is no parliamentary programme? The answer is simple. There are only two things for Congressmen to do. All to carry on the thirteenfold constructive programme and some select few to offer C. D. in addition. C. D. is a mighty weapon to be wielded effectively by only a few in the first instance. Constructive programme is to be worked by all Congressmen and even non-Congressmen if they will. How can people shut their eyes to its paramount importance? Even parliamentary programme without it is a mere farce. We have had it till 1920. I do not deny its usefulness even as a farce is useful. But there is no such thing as a farce without the backing of a play. In 1920 the nation came into its own. Constructive programme was described in so many words to be a preparation for C. D. Parliamentary programme was given up *in toto*. The nation lost nothing by it. Parliamentary programme will have its definite place when we have a parliament of our own. Let it not be forgotten that this is expected to be a fight to the finish. It is true that C. D. will be suspended if genuine free speech is granted. If we do not find ourselves free at the end of the war, resumption will be a certainty. But that is idle speculation. If we do our present duty, whatever the circumstances that face us at the end of the war we shall be found ready.

Let me glance at the constructive programme. There is communal unity. It is worth much more than the whole parliamentary programme. Without it, the latter is useless. It becomes a field for interminable wrangling. Complete heart-unity takes us almost straightway to independence. Let me not be told that there will be no unity at all or not in our lifetime. I must refuse to believe the negation so long as there are some Congressmen working for unity. If the Congress cannot, I know that no other institution can. For every Congressman whatever his faith must equally represent in his own person every Indian, no matter what his faith is. In that sense he belongs to all religions.

Then take untouchability. I repeat that if untouchability lives, Hinduism and with it India dies. Is that not a programme worth living for, dying for? And the spinning-wheel whose every turn brings India nearer her destiny? Surely it can fully occupy every day of every Congressman. And the wheel being the centre of our solar system it includes all the planets in the shape of village industries.

The wheel brings us at once to the emancipation of India's manhood, *kisans*, labourers and all those who are weary and heavy-laden. If this all-inclusive and mighty programme is not understood and appreciated by Congressmen they do not know the A B C of non-violence nor do they know the elements of C.D.

This programme gives ample scope for public meetings, demonstrations, exhibitions and the like. No official Congress Committees need function for co-ordinating these activities. Wherever five earnest Congressmen are found, they can group together and organize them.

Congress will now see why I contemplate no change in the programme as it is going and why I am full of hope for the future of the country.

Congress Bulletin, No. 6, 1942, File No. 3/42/41-Pol. (I). Courtesy: National Archives of India

82. ASHRAM NOTE

October 28, 1941

The blood-pressure will remain normal only when people here do their work well and do not indulge in quarrels. Let them do all things according to my wishes and ideals.

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen, p. 384

83. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 28, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have your letter. I have gone through some more sheets of your rendering[1]. It is likely that as I proceed it will run smooth. I have the earth bandage on and am lying on my back as I write this. I do so in the midst of the visitors. Therefore no more.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3680. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6489

[1] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 54.

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84. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

SEVAGRAM,
October 28, 1941

CHI. AMBUJAM,

Your letter has "award". What is it?

Of course you can pray for definite objects so long as they are worthy. The fact is that God is within every one of us. Intense prayer is intense concentration of the right type.

I hope things will go well with you.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

85. LETTER TO AMINA QURESHI

October 28, 1941

DAUGHTER AMINA[1],

I was very pleased to read your letter. When are you and Sultana[2] coming over here?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6669. Also C.W. 4314. Courtesy: Hamid Qureshi

[1] Daughter of Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, popularly known as Imam Sahib. She was married to Ghulam Rasul Qureshi.

[2] Addressee's daughter

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86. LETTER TO SULTANA QURESHI

[*October 28, 1941*][1]

DAUGHTER SULTANA,

I should like you to come and stay with me for a few days. Just now Sardar also is here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6669. Also C.W. 4314. Courtesy: Hamid Qureshi

87. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

October 28, 1941

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I have suggested that you should be appointed Vice-President. I think you should let the Committee be formed. There have to be such bodies. Only thus can we progress.

What is approximately the total figure now?

Kanaiyo is expected on Saturday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8595. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

88. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

October 28, 1941

CHI. VIJAYA,

You are being unreasonable. You do not write but expect me to write. But let that pass. As long as you all are happy, I am satisfied.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] This is written on the same sheet as the preceding item.

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89. LETTER TO RAGHUVANSH GAUR

October 29, 1941

BHAI RAGHUVANSH,

What Prabhavatibehn wrote to you was not correct. I never got your letter. I had asked Prabhavati to reply on behalf of Rajkumari that she herself would not be able to offer help. And you should not go abegging like this. If you do not get money from friends, then leave Patna and do some work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 142

90. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,
October 29, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

It was a tragedy about Raghuvansh. I had asked P[rabhavati] to write for you. She thought it was for me. Hence the serious mistake. Now I have written to him myself.[1] Copy herewith. It is your duty to say 'no' emphatically. You may write accordingly.

For the Harijans you may look to me for Rs. 1,500. I shall manage on your return. Will it be enough?

If necessary you should placate S[hummy] by staying till 15th. But you know best what to do.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4108. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7417

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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91. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

October 30, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter.

Williams is here. He is looking after the cottage.

If you are here before 7th you will see him and his wife.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4109. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7418

92. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI

SEVAGRAM,
October 30, 1941

MY DEAR SATYAMURTI,

I have your letter. You would have got my letter earlier but for the message which Sardar received. You are said to have sent him the message that at least for three months you did not wish to speak.

You are free to speak and convert the people to your views[1]. There never was any idea of suppressing you, but when you ask me as a co-worker to guide you, the question of propriety of speech arises.

In a non-violent society and therefore in true democracy a person has many rights but duty automatically restrains him from using most of them.

I expect you to carry out your promise to look after yourself.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 19-11-1941

[1] On the question of a change in the Congress programme and the resumption of parliamentary activities including office-acceptance in the provinces

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93. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
October 30, 1941

Asked for his reaction to the hunger-strike by detenus[1] in Deoli Camp Jail and the Government communique thereon, Mahatma Gandhi said:

The communique was unfortunate. I am generally averse to hunger-strikes by prisoners but I cannot help recognizing that at times they have no other honourable recourse for the redress of grievances. It is cruel for the Government to say that they will not consider grievances unless the strike is given up. It is tantamount to saying that the sufferers should not suffer for the redress of wrongs done to them.

I should have thought a responsive Government would all the more readily listen to appeals of the wronged when they are accompanied by self-inflicted suffering. If the demands are just, and they seem to be just according to Sri N. M. Joshi's report, justice should be expedited in order to alleviate avoidable suffering.

The Hindu, 1-11-1941

94. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

ASHRAM,
Saturday, [*October 31, 1941*][2]

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I am told that today is your birthday. That means one year less from the number you can devote to service. To say that you may have many more years of service is to wish you a long life. Remember, we wish to depart only after winning swaraj.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 262

[1] Two hundred and four detenus were on hunger-strike.

[2] The source places this among the letters for the year 1941. October 31 was the addressee's birthday which, however, fell on a Friday in 1941.

95. LETTER TO BHOGILAL LALA

October 31, 1941

BHAI BHOGILAL,

Sardar spoke to me about your meeting with an accident.[1] It seems you have escaped a grave danger. Let us hope you will get well in a few days.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. BHOGILAL LALA
"CONGRESS HOUSE"
AHMEDABAD, B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10860. Courtesy: Shashibehn Desai

96. LETTER TO R. K. L. NAND KEOLYAR

October 31, 1941

BHAI NAND KEOLYAR,

The account of the yarn spun by the Kerala spinners during the Khadi Jayanti made me very happy. I have also received the draft for Rs. 236 sent by you for that yarn. Please convey my congratulations to all the spinners. I hope this enthusiasm will endure and the khadi atmosphere will spread.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] The addressee had met with a motor accident while travelling in the countryside for famine relief work.

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97. *WHAT JESUS MEANS TO ME*[1]

Although I have devoted a large part of my life to the study of religion and to discussion with religious leaders of all faiths, I know very well that I cannot but seem presumptuous in writing about Jesus Christ and trying to explain what He means to me. I do so only because my Christian friends have told me on more than a few occasions that for the very reason that I am not a Christian and that (I shall quote their words exactly) "I do not accept Christ in the bottom of my heart as the only Son of God", it is impossible for me to understand the profound significance of His teachings, or to know and interpret the greatest source of spiritual strength that man has ever known.

Although this may or may not be true in my case, I have reasons to believe that it is an erroneous point of view. I believe that such an estimate is incompatible with the message that Jesus Christ gave to the world. For He was, certainly, the highest example of one who wished to give everything asking nothing in return, and not caring what creed might happen to be professed by the recipient. I am sure that if He were living here now among men, He would bless the lives of many who perhaps have never even heard His name, if only their lives embodied the virtues of which He was a living example on earth; the virtues of loving one's neighbour as oneself and of doing good and charitable works among one's fellow-men.

What, then, does Jesus mean to me? To me He was one of the greatest teachers humanity has ever had. To His believers He was God's only begotten Son. Could the fact that I do or do not accept this belief make Jesus have any more or less influence in my life? Is all the grandeur of His teaching and of His doctrine to be forbidden to me? I cannot believe so.

To me it implies a spiritual birth. My interpretation, in other words, is that in Jesus' own life is the key of His nearness to God; that He expressed, as no other could, the spirit and will of God. It is in this sense that I see Him and recognize Him as the Son of God.

[1] The source reproduced this from *Inner Culture*. The date of the writing, however, is not available.

But I do believe that something of this spirit, that Jesus exemplified in the highest measure in its most profound human sense, does exist. I must believe this; if I do not believe it I should be a sceptic; and to be a sceptic is to live a life that is empty and lacks moral content. Or, what is the same thing, to condemn the entire human race to a negative end.

It is true that there certainly is reason for scepticism when one observes the bloody butchery that European aggressors have unloosed, and when one thinks about the misery and suffering prevalent in every corner of the world, as well as the pestilence and famine that always follow, terribly and inevitably, upon war.

In the face of this, how can one speak seriously of the divine spirit incarnate in man? Because these acts of terror and murder offend the conscience of man; because man knows that they represent evil; because in the inner depths of his heart and of his mind, he deplores them. And because, moreover, when he does not go astray, misled by false teachings or corrupted by false leaders, man has within his breast an impulse for good and a compassion that is the spark of divinity, and which some day, I believe, will burst forth into the full flower that is the hope of all mankind.

An example of this flowering may be found in the figure and in the life of Jesus. I refuse to believe that there now exists or has ever existed a person that has not made use of His example to lessen his sins, even though he may have done so without realizing it. The lives of all have, in some greater or lesser degree, been changed by His presence, His actions, and the words spoken by His divine voice.

I believe that it is impossible to estimate the merits of the various religions of the world, and moreover I believe that it is unnecessary and harmful even to attempt it. But each one of them, in my judgment, embodies a common motivating force: the desire to uplift man's life and give it purpose.

And because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that He belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith, or worship a god inherited from their ancestors.

Modern Review, October 1941

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98. TELEGRAM TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

WARDHA,
November 1, 1941

PARIKSHITLAL
SABARMATI ASHRAM
AHMEDABAD

ARJUN[1] WIRE[S] RAMJIBHAI SERIOUSLY ASSAULTED BY RAJPUTS SIMEJ. ADMITTED HOSPITAL. TAKE NECESSARY PROCEEDINGS. IF NECESSARY SHOW ARJUN.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 4045. Also C.W. 154. Courtesy: Parikshitlal L. Majmudar

99. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 1, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I hope this will be my last letter to you for the season.

I do not want you to rush. You may give whatever time may be necessary.

All well.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4110. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7419

100. LETTER TO DUNCAN GREENLEES

November 1, 1941

I have your letter. It makes strange reading. I have no narrow patriotism about me. I would do anything to promote goodwill among men. Nothing can be done without men of the same opinion joining and co-operating. You may call them a party and condemn them. But they are not a party if they are against no one. Did Jesus and his twelve chosen disciples form a party or not?

[1] Son of Ramjibhai, a Harijan

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And is there any difference between Imperialism and Nazism? I see none. The latter is the logical outcome of the first. I cannot take up arms for Imperialism in the vain hope of destroying Nazism. I would rather be ground down between the two in resisting them unavoidably. Surely your logical brain should see this.

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

101. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

November 1, 1941

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

I have sent you a wire today. You must have received it and taken all possible steps. You may get arrested those who in your opinion deserve to be arrested. If you can get hold of those people, and if they apologize and pay compensation to Ramjibhai, we may certainly let them go. But in that case they should promise that they will never again harass Harijans in that manner. If the Harijans have been intimidated, you should pacify them and give them courage. You can explain to them that if they do not understand non-violence they may defend themselves with violence.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4033

102. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,
November 2, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Yes, woman also like man can only propose and God reserves sole right to dispose. So when you come, I shall believe that you have. I am glad you will be leaving with S. It is well he will have his full measure of pleasure. The weather also will be cooler still by the time you return. Poor Prabha!!

You are over-sensitive. Your translation is good so far as style goes. I have simply remarked upon the looseness of thought.[1]

[1] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 54.

Even if it is loose in the original, the translator has to make it definite. It is a difficult thing but it has to be done. But it cannot be done if you cannot take corrections in perfect good humour. I have only begun. It may run quite smooth as I proceed.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4111. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7420

103. LETTER TO SATIN SEN

November 2, 1941

MY DEAR SATIN[1],

I have your letter. We have to do the best we can with the help we can get by dint of Service. The Society was right. I can only distribute relief in accordance with the wishes of the donors. Of course it could reject those donations. But that would be foolish. We can try and get donations for the needy Mussalmans. It may be difficult at the present time. Then we must be content with what personal help we can render.

It would be wrong for me to send money from here even if I can collect some. What you can command locally and by local effort would be solid service. We must learn the secret of rendering service without money and without fuss. Money is often a hindrance.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

104. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

November 2, 1941

CHI. KANTI[2],

I was surprised to read your letter to the grandmother. How small-minded you are! Not a trace of generosity. And no limit to suspiciousness? Who writes to Saraswati[3]? I inquire and learn

[1] Secretary, Baquerganj District Storm and Flood Relief Committee
[2] Son of Harilal Gandhi
[3] Addressee's wife

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whatever I can regarding you. Nor is it that I do not reply to your letters. And, apart from pointing out your errors to you, what else need I do? What Ba wrote was based on experience. But let it be. I have written even this merely to explain your error to you. Kishorelalbhai also wrote his letter at my instance. I myself wished to write, but afterwards, to save my time, I asked him to do so. Even behind my not writing to you there is no other motive but to save my time, though I do not remember any occasion when I did not reply to a letter from you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7364. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

105. LETTER TO DHARMAPRAKASH

November 2, 1941

BHAI DHARMAPRAKASH,

I have your letter. The depressed classes question is very complicated. It transcends politics. If enough money cannot be raised for our conference it should be postponed. How much can you get with my help? It will be more befitting if you make do with whatever you can collect on your own. You must also have a clear aim in view. Remember that Dr. Ambedkar has placed a definite aim before himself. Study it. Digest it. And also understand fully what your own is.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

106. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 3, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

It will be nice to make the help to Harijans dependent upon their conforming to your conditions. You should raise a whole-time worker there.

Your dream was strange. Sometimes these do come. I attach no importance to them.

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When you come you will miss Raihana. She has become a member of the family and sings every evening. She has taught some a few verses from the Koran. She sings the *shlokas*[1] correctly.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4112. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7421

107. LETTER TO SANT SINGH

November 3, 1941

DEAR SANT SINGH,

There is no analogy between my selling blankets to a murderer and your *offering* services on the field.[2] Selling blankets is my calling and I may sell to whomsoever requires them. To offer your services on the field is no part of your duty. My answer therefore is 'no'.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 861

108. LETTER TO S. RADHAKRISHNAN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
November 3, 1941

DEAR SIR RADHAKRISHNAN,

Of course you have to make the official announcement. How I wish I could send you something written.[3] But I must not even make the attempt. By then surroundings will give me the word. But whatever it is, it must be disappointing. You do not know what nervousness creeps over me speaking in front of learned men! It is my deep love of Malaviyaji[4] as elder brother and great regard for you that have compelled me to respond to your invitation.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Verses

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXIV, pp. 329-30.

[3] The addressee had requested Gandhiji to send him an advance copy of his address for the silver jubilee of the Banaras Hindu University for circulation.

[4] Madan Mohan Malaviya, one of the founder–members of the Banaras Hindu University

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109. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,
November 4, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

You must not get ill again but move on from strength to strength.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4113. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7422

110. LETTER TO ANNADA BABU

November 4, 1941

MY DEAR ANNADA,

This[1] has remained with me so long without attention. You will see and return it with such remarks as you may wish to make.

Yours,
BAPU

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

111. LETTER TO ANNADA BABU

November 4, 1941

MY DEAR ANNADA,

This[2] was received after writing to you. What do you say? Please return [it].

Yours,
BAPU

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Satis Chandra Das Gupta's letter, dated October 10, replying to the addressee's allegations; *vide* Vol. LXXIV, "Letter to Annada Babu", p. 381.

[2] A letter dated November 1 from Satis Chandra Das Gupta

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112. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA

November 4, 1941

CHI. MAGAN,

I got your letter only today. I had written to you at the Mani Bhuvan address. I wrote to Urmi[1], too. You never got that letter. Being unable to get your address I wrote to Manibhai.

I think it necessary that you should go and see Ratilal. Naraharibhai, of course, is doing everything possible.

I like your idea of settling in Bombay. I suppose you can join the Chamber only after passing the examination. When will the result be out? More when we meet.

I am not writing separately to Urmi.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1021. Courtesy: Manjulabehn M. Mehta

113. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

November 4, 1941

CHI. JAMNALAL,

You alone can guide me in this matter[2]. You may write frankly. I have sent a wire[3] saying that I am consulting you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3025

[1] Addressee's daughter

[2] Rishabhdas Ranka's future course of action, about which he had asked for Gandhiji's guidance

[3] Not available

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114. LETTER TO SIDDHARAMAPPA G. HARKUNI

November 4, 1941

BHAI SIDDHARAMAPPA,

I have your letter. Work as much as you conveniently can. Keep up your reading and study. Keep yourself fit.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

115. LETTER TO PURSHOTTAM TRICUMDAS[1]

November 5, 1941

BROTHER PURSHOTTAM,

I was dissatisfied with your speech in Bihar[2] to the same extent as I was satisfied with your comments on the statement regarding Jayaprakash. It amounts to this that the teeth for show and for chewing are different. And what a poisonous criticism of the Congress of which you are a member? If the Congress is as you believe it to be, what is the good of your continuing to be a member of the same? Your justification of the Congress policy at present appears to be a favour on it from a high position. I am writing this much as a friend of yours. This is not for discussion in the Press. No institution can advance by adverse criticism of any other institution. It progresses by its own strength.

Blessings from
BAPU

File No. 3001/4, Police Commissioner's Office, Bombay

[1] The Gujarati original is not available. The addressee was General Secretary, All-India Socialist Party.

[2] At the Provincial Socialist Conference

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116. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR[1]

November 5, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

Today only

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4256. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7888

117. LETTER TO PRAN KRISHNA PADHIARY

[Before *November 6, 1941*][2]

Your letter makes sad reading. I can only say even if the Congress contains only a few men who are true to it, it will be well. Those who secede will do so, but if there are a few true and brave Congressmen, people will follow them and not the seceders, no matter whether they are Ministers or not.

The Hindu, 8-11-1941

118. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 6, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Has there not been idiocy somewhere about your collapse? Why did you take that pill? But there you are. "There's many a slip between the cup and the lip." So we shall both believe when you are actually installed here.

Take care of yourself. You should not be anxious about your health whilst you may not be indifferent about it.

Talimi Sangh meetings going on. About sixteen of them dined at the Ashram kitchen.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4114. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7423

[1] This is written at the end of Prabhavati's letter to the addressee.
[2] The report appeared under the date-line "Cuttack, November 6".

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119. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

SEVAGRAM,
November 6, 1941

DEAR DR. JAYAKAR,

I was glad to hear from you. As you know I never told our friends that I would try to raise funds on any account. They never raised enough money themselves to enable me to make an appeal for funds. Now of course it is too late for me to do anything. But you are there to guide them.

Now that I am writing to you, I feel tempted to tell you that I have read the appeals you have made to me from time to time with respectful attention. But I felt sorry that I could not make the response you expected, without denying the faith of a lifetime.

I hope you are keeping fit.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

Enclosure returned.

DR. M. R. JAYAKAR
WINTER ROAD
MALABAR HILL
BOMBAY 6

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

120. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

November 6, 1941

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I will talk to Khurshedbehn. The letter to Kotiji goes with this. Silence is bound to benefit you. Do you weigh yourself ?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3026

121. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 7, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter makes one sad. But you must not be nervous. Take things as they come. Mathuri[1] and Lakshmibehn came here yesterday. Lakshmibehn is Panditji's[2] widow. Mathuri sang a *bhajan* last evening in her magnificent voice. The substance is, man is after pleasure or happiness but it ever flies from him. Why will he not appreciate the fact that substantial pleasure or happiness comes through grief or unhappiness? Cheer up and pass on all your troubles to Him—the Rock of Ages.

I shall see to the apples being inspected at the station.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3684. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6490

122. LETTER TO M. TAYEBULLA

November 7, 1941

DEAR T.,

I was glad to have your letter. Rajendra Babu has invited principal workers to come to Wardha. I have no doubt you will be among them. I need not say anything now. I am glad you are fit and well.

Yours,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Daughter of Narayan Moreshwar Khare
[2] Narayan Moreshwar Khare

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123. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 8, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have your letter. I can't give you up, even if you can. It is a case not even of "till death do us part". For I do not believe in the capacity of death to part soul from soul. Blood relationship is in its very nature a physical connection, not so genuine friendship. But this discussion will take us into deeper waters. No time for it.

I hope you are daily regaining lost ground. If the cold is so severe, can you not get down a few days earlier and await S. in Jullundur?

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

The bathrooms are becoming sumptuous.

From the original: C.W. 3682. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6491

124. LETTER TO T. KANNAN

November 8, 1941

I had your interesting letter. My blessings on your forthcoming birthday.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SH. T. KANNAN

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

125. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

SEVAGRAM,
November 8, 1941

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. Mahadev told me about your being ill. I didn't take much notice of it thinking it would only be something temporary.

I did get telephone calls about the Assembly. I said I didn't like the idea but that I would consider if you wrote to me. The

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matter had ended there. It was good in a way. Sending you to the Assembly means sending you to jail, and right now I do not wish to send you to jail. The work you are doing is of great importance. There will be a time for going to jail.

Blessings from
BAPU

RAMESHWARI DEVI NEHRU
2 WARRIS ROAD, LAHORE[1]

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8001. Also C.W. 3099. Courtesy: Rameshwari Nehru

126. LETTER TO PRITHVI SINGH

November 8, 1941

BHAI PRITHVI SINGH,

I have read the account that you sent me about the opening ceremony. It was very good. I understand you would not be able to come before the 20th. When Bhai Devraj arrives I shall explain a few things.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5654. Also C.W. 2965. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

127. LETTER TO SHRINATH SINGH

SEVAGRAM,
November 8, 1941

BHAI SHRINATH SINGH,

I have your letter. There is no reason to be sorry that Rajendra Babu was not elected[2]. But we must try to remedy the situation of which this is a symptom. Do what you can about the attack on a worker like Kakasaheb.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI SHRINATH SINGH
"DIDI" KARYALAYA
730 KATRA, ALLAHABAD

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5663. Also C.W. 2975. Courtesy: Shrinath Singh

[1] The address is from Pyarelal Papers.
[2] President, Akhil Bharatiya Hindi Sahitya Sammelan

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128. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 9, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter.

I am sorry to have to report to you that the apples were 19 short. They were weighed at the station. The weight showed 2½ seers less. The Station Master won't issue the certificate; though the weighing was in his presence he refused to give the certificate. You should lodge a complaint on your side. I am doing likewise here.

I am well. I wish you could say the same of yourself.

No more possible today.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4115. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7424

129. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI

SEVAGRAM,
November 9, 1941

MY DEAR SATYAMURTI,

Your letter. You are off the track. You need no permission even as those you mention did not.[1] The Congress Constitution recognizes the right of free speech by Congressmen.

I have given you my personal view of the working of non-violence.[2] You are in no way bound to accept it.

No one wants you or expects you to gag yourself even for one day. You are free save for the restraint you put upon yourself by reason of ill health or otherwise.

[1] The addressee's letter, dated November 6, 1941, *inter alia*, read: "The Congress Socialist Party, in spite of my earnest pleading with you, are allowed to carry on a countrywide propaganda against the resolutions of the Congress and there has not been a single session of the Congress or of the All-India Congress Committee in recent years, to my knowledge, where they have not put forward amendments to almost every important proposition of the Working Committee."

[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 66.

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My statement[1] demands the freest expression of their views by Congressmen. Therefore please feel free to express yourself in any manner you like and whenever you like.

Your difficulty has evidently arisen from the mistaken notion that you were labouring under a legal gag which needed lifting.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 19-11-1941

130. LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

November 9, 1941

MY DEAR KHAN SAHEB,

Your letter has come in.

I am trying to send someone for your camp.

The name of the Ashram should be 'Khidmat Gah'[2] or 'Khudai Khidmat Gah'.[3] 'Mazlumabad'[4] offends.

Girdhari Puri is preparing himself as fast as he can. I do not want to send him before he is fully equipped.

Akbar is also being trained for the same purpose.

For your teeth you should come here as early as you can but later than December.

I may not be able to catch the train if I get this typed. I hope you will have no difficulty in deciphering it.

Sardar and Rajendra Babu are here.

Love from all of us.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* pp. 55-62.
[2] House of service
[3] House of service to God
[4] Refuge of the oppressed

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131. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA

November 9, 1941

CHI. MAGAN,

I got your letter. Champa now writes and says that now she will come only after Nirmala's wedding. I advise you to go to Ahmedabad and fetch him[1]. If you wish, all of you may go and live in the Red Bungalow[2], or bring him here. I see no other way.

You must have got my letter addressed to you at Mahabaleshvar. In it I have replied to your question regarding yourself.[3]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1022. Courtesy: Manjulabehn M. Mehta

132. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

November 9, 1941

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have your letter. How did you fall ill? I want you to return completely restored. Here the weather just now is beautiful. The cold has begun. Ki[shorelal]bhai is as he has been. Rajkumari is arriving on the 21st. Amtul Salaam is fine. Vasumati and Lilavati left for Bombay today.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. KANCHANBEHN SHAH
C/O SHRI MAGANLAL KALIDAS
VALOD, DIST. SURAT
T. V. RAILWAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8270. Also C.W. 7160. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

[1] Ratilal P. Mehta, addressee's brother
[2] Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta's house near Sabarmati Ashram
[3] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 77.

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133. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

November 9, 1941

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. You are greedy. But I will see what I can send you. Take care of your health. Today I have sent Vasumatibehn to Bombay for treatment. We have a large number of guests just now—Khurshedbehn, Sultana[1], Gosibehn[2] and so on. They will leave after two or three days.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. VIJAYABEHN
GRAM DAKSHINAMURTI
AMBLA, *via* SONGARH
KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7142. Also C.W. 4634. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

134. TELEGRAM TO NALINI RANJAN SIRCAR

SEVAGRAM,
November 10, 1941

NALINIRANJAN SIRCAR
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR
NEW DELHI

HOPE NOTHING SERIOUS.[3] WIRE CONDITION.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10351

[1] Sultana Razia
[2] Gosibehn Captain, grand-daughter of Dadabhoy Naoroji
[3] The addressee had suffered a mild stroke of paralysis.

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135. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHAGANJ,
November 10, 1941

RAJKUMARIJI
MANORVILLE
SUMMERHILL
SIMLA

MY CONDOLENCES[1] AND CONGRATULATIONS. GOD MERCY. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3684. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6493

136. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 10, 1941

MY DEAR A.,

Your letter. It is well Rajasaheb[2] is gone. He was a living death. I felt I should send you a wire. And so one is going.

Bul has been here for a few days. Gosibehn came in last night from Mussorie having seen Indu and J[awahar] L[al].

I reported to you about the apples.

This record from Vaidya[3] is very good. You should write to him.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3683. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6492

[1] *Vide* the following item.
[2] Of Kapurthala
[3] Shankerlal Kunvarji Vaidya; *vide* the following item.

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137. LETTER TO DR. S. K. VAIDYA

November 10, 1941

BHAI VAIDYA,

Your yarn is very fine indeed. There is room for improvement in the strength. I suppose you will get a piece woven specially from this yarn? Why do you not yourself get a loom installed? I certainly believe that for you your own method is the best one.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5753

138. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

November 10, 1941

CHI. LILI,

You must have reached there safe. Ba misses you very much. Who in your absence will go on talking silly things? Get engrossed in your study. Make up your mind to pass. I shall be satisfied if you drop me a postcard every week.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. LILAVATIBEHN UDESHI
KANJI KHETSI CHHATRALAYA
MINT ROAD
FORT, BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10112. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

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139. STATEMENT ON INDO-CEYLONESE PACT

WARDHA,
November 11, 1941

The proposed Indo-Ceylonese Pact[1] is not open to the fatal objections that have been universally raised against the Indo-Burman thing,[2] which was sprung upon an unsuspecting public as an almost settled fact. What has come from Ceylon is a proposal for examination by the Government and the public. I have studied the relevant papers as much as possible.

On merits, the Ceylon proposal is open to objection in the same manner as the Burman. I suggest to Ceylon Ministers that there is no reason whatsoever for hurry. Adjustment can easily be made about the supply of labour, but wholesale legislation may be left over till after the war. The war is a terrible tragedy, the like of which is unknown to history. But the tragedy will be deeper still, if at the end we find ourselves living the old way without radical changes in every walk of life.

Let me recall here the goodwill mission that was sent by the Congress in July 1939 in the person of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It had created a deep impression upon the Singhalese and their Ministers. It was hoped that the good seed sown by our ambassador would fructify. When the Ceylon deputation came to India in November last, it was arranged that they would meet him in Allahabad. But he was arrested before they could meet. Jawaharlal had prepared a note for them. It will be published, if I find it necessary to do so.

My object in recalling the mission and the attempt made thereafter is to point out the way to lasting peace and brotherliness between Ceylon and India. It is unthinkable that Burma, Ceylon and India should distrust one another or regard the presence of their nationals among their neighbours as antagonistic to one another.

[1] The status and rights of Indians in Ceylon, which were threatened by the proposed Immigration Ordinance of Ceylon Government, were sought to be safeguarded and in some respects improved in the joint report, published in New Delhi on October 16, by the Indian and Ceylonese delegations to the exploratory conference held in September in Ceylon.

[2] For Gandhiji's statement on Indo-Burman Agreement, *vide* Vol. LXXIV, pp. 255-9.

Any harmful migration from one country to the other may surely be regulated by voluntary adjustment without much legal interference. I feel somehow that no harm has accrued to Ceylon by the settlement of Indians there. As elsewhere, Indian merchants and professionals had followed in the wake of labour imported wholly for the benefit of Ceylon.

Sir Edward Jackson's report, I understand, clearly shows that Indian emigration to Ceylon has done no harm to the indigenous population.

But, if my plea for patient waiting falls on deaf ears, I suggest much the same thing that I have suggested for Burma. I should have no difficulty in persuading experienced legislators that in legislation affecting men in the street and addressed to the masses the simplest and shortest method is best. I, therefore, suggest that the whole of the Indian population found in Ceylon on a given date (kept secret) should be registered and clothed with full rights of citizenship. Those who may be outside Ceylon but who can unquestionably be proved to be *bona fide* residents of Ceylon should also be registered on application. This procedure obviates the intricacies which permeate the proposal under examination.

The term 'domicile' should find no place in such legislation. The English law of domicile is the worst possible. Judges have been known to have been confused over the interpretation of the term. Human liberty is a precious thing, which must not be trifled with by legal subtleties and interminable wranglings in courts of law. The wrangling attains no dignity, because it takes place in a law-court. Men should know definitely where they stand in given circumstances.

So far as labour is concerned, I have no doubt that Ceylon should have the sole right to import as much as it likes under contracts easily to be understood and mutually agreed to between the two Governments.

The suggested quota system should have no place in an honourable understanding.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-11-1941

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140. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,
November 11, 1941

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I hope you received my letter.

Yes, *undhi*[*y*]*u*[1] will be available. I have been forgetting to write to you about it.

Radhabai Subbaroyan is here. She will leave for Madras tomorrow.

Here is a letter for you. I think it is from Mridula[2]. She has forgotten to sign the letter.

I am glad you will be bringing someone. Don't make up your mind to send him away at once. But you shall decide.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4116. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7425

141. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
November 12, 1941

I observe that there is a move to press the Government to release satyagrahi prisoners.

It is, perhaps, appropriate to mention that so far as I know there will be on the part of the Congress neither appreciation of nor response to any such gesture by the Government.

Those who may be discharged will have to be invited to re-offer civil disobedience if they are physically fit. Moreover, there will be great resentment if distinction is made between satyagrahis and those who are detained without trial. The Government should not be judges of what is reasonable.

What the public demand is this:

Let the Government keep the prisoners, but give decent treatment to the prisoners whether they hunger-strike or not. They need

[1] Baked vegetables

[2] Daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai

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not take notice of such strikes when there is no reasonable cause for that.

The Deoli prisoners' demands as far as they are known are just. Let them end the terrible suspense by granting the demands and ending the hunger-strike.

Let them also examine the recently published weighty manifesto by representative and prominent medical men from all India on the dietary of C class prisoners and make the necessary changes and redress such other disabilities which have no just basis.

I, therefore, suggest to those who are urging the Government to discharge satyagrahi prisoners that they will do well if they will concentrate on the relief herein suggested.[1] It can be granted quickly without any political or other embarrassment.

The Bombay Chronicle, 13-11-1941

142. TELEGRAM TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

November 12, 1941

STRONGLY ADVISE DISCONTINUANCE OF THE HUNGER-STRIKE BY YOU AND OTHERS. PUBLIC OPINION BEING CREATED FOR SECURING RELIEF. DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD AND MIAN IFTIKHARUDDIN JOIN ME IN THE APPEAL. PRABHAVATI ANXIOUS TO MEET YOU. RESTRAINING HER PENDING DEVELOPMENTS.

The Hindu, 16-11-1941

143. LETTER TO MADALASA

November 12, 1941

CHI. MADALASA,

This is just to cheer you up. I do get news about you. You must be getting my messages. Do you move about a little now? You must go out for walks, provided the doctor agrees.

The fewer the tonic foods you eat the better.

[1] N. M. Joshi, however, moved in the Central Assembly on November 18, 1941, his resolution recommending the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners.

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Is the baby[1] growing well? Dr. Das was to come today.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 323

144. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 12, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

Your letter. You will get this on the 15th. From tomorrow I shall write to your Jullundur address. Today there are Kher[2], Miyan, Ismet, Radhabai, Sultana, etc. All are accommodated in the new hut. Dr. Das and Nimai have come today, and Kanaiyo also.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4257. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7889

145. LETTER TO HAZARIPRASAD DWIVEDI

November 12, 1941

BHAI HAZARIPRASADJI,

I very much like the idea of publishing a quarterly from Visva-bharati. This venture has my full approval.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI HAZARIPRASAD DWIVEDI
VISVABHARATI, SANTINIKETAN
BENGAL

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 10260. Courtesy: Ravindra Sadan Visvabharati

[1] Bharat
[2] B. G. Kher

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146. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 13, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

Today also I shall make do with a postcard. I am all right, and so you are, I hope. I understand what you say in your letter. I have to go to Wardha in connection with the States' People's [Conference]. Hence this much should be enough. Beryl has sent a shawl. Tell her it is good.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4258. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7890

147. LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
November 13, 1941

DEAR KHAN SAHEB,

In accordance with your letter I am sending you Girdharilal Puri and Krishnadas Gandhi[1]. They will be able to help in organizing spinning, etc., and discussing plans for the Ashram. I do not anticipate their stay there beyond seven days. But if you want them longer Puri can give more time. Krishnadas has very great responsibility here.

As to Alighul Khan I am quite clear that he should resign. He cannot help the war effort.

Love to all.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

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148. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
November 14, 1941

I sent the following telegram[1] to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan on the 12th instant.

To this, I have just received the following reply:

> Thanks for the telegram. Have explained the whole position to Sardar Mangal Singh. Our demands are reasonable. Please excuse inability to discontinue the hunger-strike. May do what you can outside. Do not send Prabhavati.

I have heard nothing as yet from Sardar Mangal Singh. I shall, no doubt, do so in due course. But the matter is too urgent to brook delay. I have heard that Shri Jayaprakash has lost heavily in weight. Forcible feeding can only be a temporary makeshift. Shri Jayaprakash is one of the most determined of workers. I flatter myself with the belief that if anything could have melted him our joint telegram should have. His preventing his wife from going to him is ominous. He wants no interference, emotional or other, with his decision.

So far as I can see, there is no political motive behind this hunger-strike. The refusal to consider the case until the hunger-strike is given up is a cruel joke. It would be an act of inhumanity if Shri Jayaprakash and his fellow-detenus are detained till their lives are in danger. I appeal to the Government, in the name of humanity, forthwith to grant the request of the detenus. The plea of ascertaining and carrying out the wishes of the Provincial Governments is irrelevant and untenable. The Central Government is in no way bound to oblige the Provincial Governments in matters where the life and liberty of the citizen is involved. There must be something radically wrong if the Provincial Governments are afraid to keep their own detenus within their borders.

This continuing hunger-strike shows the futility of discharging civil resistance prisoners who have themselves sought imprisonment. With what face can they come out when those who have not sought imprisonment are detained without trial and are hunger-striking

[1] Not reproduced here; *vide* p. 93.

for the minimum of conveniences to which every human being is entitled?

The Hindu, 16-11-1941

149. LETTER TO MAGANLAL AND MANJULA MEHTA

November 14, 1941

CHI. MAGAN AND MANJULA,

I have letters of you both.

I understand about you. Khersaheb and I were so busy, each with his own affairs, that we could meet only for a few minutes. I therefore forgot to talk to him about you. I will now write to him and inquire.

The plan for the building was sent by Chimanlalbhai at the Mani Bhuvan address. If you have received it, let him know your decision about it.

About Ratubhai I believe that you should go and fetch him and keep him with you. Let him have the taste of brotherly love. When you come here, you will of course bring him along with you. If Champa arrives in December we shall see what can be done. I agree with Manju's analysis.

I am glad that Munno often mentions Sevagram. Only if the other children too feel the same way, will they enjoy staying here. If they cannot forget their attachment to city life, they will never be happy in Sevagram.

Blessings from
BAPU[1]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1023. Courtesy: Manjulabehn M. Mehta

[1] At the end of the letter Kishorelal Mashruwala writes: "Your second letter. I will have a talk with Balasaheb on the telephone, since he has not left. Ring him up on the 16th and see him. He lives in Khar."

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150. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,
November 14, 1941

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I accept your suggestion. What about Jamna[1]? Kanaiyo will write to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8596. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

151. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

November 14, 1941

CHI. JAMNA,

I have your letter. I had from the very beginning told you to go to Bombay. But what is done is done. The necessary arrangements will be made whenever you go. If you feel that you must go, I think the earlier you go the better.

Kanaiyo returned the day before yesterday after finishing his job. I am asking him to write to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8596. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

152. LETTER TO SAM HIGGINBOTTOM

November 15, 1941

DEAR PROFESSOR,

I am in need. I want a good, sound man who can guide Seth Jamnalal[2] in the matter of cows and dairying. He must be an expert. Sethji has taken up cow-protection as his life's mission. He has

[1] Addressee's wife
[2] The source has "Jamnadasji".

need of an adviser to guide him. I have advised him to correspond with you in such matters and assured him that you will give him guidance.

I need, too, one who can be director of an agricultural and dairying institute. He can get a good salary. If you have one in view, will you please put me in touch with him?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PROF. SAM HIGGINBOTTOM
AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE
NAINI, ALLAHABAD

From a photostat: G.N. 8938

153. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI

SEVAGRAM,
November 15, 1941

MY DEAR SATYAMURTI,

I have your letter. You should have published the whole of my letter.[1] It did not admit of abbreviation. It has given rise to considerable misunderstanding. I would ask you please to send the whole for publication.

I have no objection to the whole correspondence being published.[2] But it may take time. Hence the necessity for publishing the particular letter separately.

I am glad you propose earnestly to rebuild your broken body. . . .

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 19-11-1941

[1] The addressee had, on November 12, 1941, released to the Press extracts from Gandhiji's letter dated November 9, 1941; *vide* pp. 84-5.

[2] The full correspondence was released to the Press on November 18, 1941.

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154. LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE

November 15, 1941

CHI. MAMA,

I had your postcard. It is well that they have taken away Mother. You must have bid her farewell for ever, for you will not now be able to go to Ratnagiri off and on.

Sardar is here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3844

155. LETTER TO CHANDAN S. KALELKAR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
November 16, 1941

CHI. CHANDAN[1],

I have your letter. All of us liked it. May you both be happy and do as much service as you can. I am not writing separately to [Satish][2]. Take this as addressed to both of you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6267

156. LETTER TO MOHANBHAI

November 16, 1941

BHAI MOHANBHAI,

You must not accept nomination to the Legislative Council in December, whatever your personal relations. Bhai Balwantrai will show you the statement. Don't sign it if you would not; but it

[1] Wife of Satish Kalelkar alias Shankar
[2] The source has "Kanti", obviously a slip.

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would be graceful to keep out of the Legislative Council. Advise the Dewan to withdraw the announcement and postpone everything for the present or to take some befitting step.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

157. LETTER TO NRISINHAPRASAD K. BHATT

November 16, 1941

BHAI NANABHAI,

You may catch my meaning from the statement I have drafted and do whatever you can.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

158. LETTER TO PURSHOTTAM TRICUMDAS

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
November 16, 1941

BHAI PURSHOTTAM,

I have your letter. I read the speech again. It has pained me very much. I stick to the opinion expressed by me.[1] All the comments about the Congress are in bad taste. At present I am preoccupied with the Deoli affair. You may come when that is over, to understand my point of view.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] *Vide* p. 78.

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159. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 16, 1941

CHI. AMRIT,

This is my last letter. We will see about the man. I have read your suggestions. I was present at the time of constitution[-making] and both your suggestions were accepted at my instance. Perhaps they would have been accepted even otherwise.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4259. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7891

160. TELEGRAM TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

November 17, 1941

KAMLADEVI[1] HERE. SHE AND I CONSIDER YOUR DEMAND FOR SAME TREATMENT AS DEOLI INCAPABLE LITERAL EXECUTION. PUTS YOU WRONG BOX. YOU SHOULD BE SATISFIED WITH REPATRIATION AND END STRIKE AND AGAIN YOU WILL ESTRANGE PUBLIC FEELINGS BY PERSISTING IF REPATRIATION ASSURED. SARDAR RAJENBABU KRIPALANI JOIN.[2]

GANDHI

File No. 43/65/41-Pol. (I). Courtesy: National Archives of India

[1] Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya

[2] In reply the addressee on November 18 telegraphed as follows: "Much pained at telegram. Afraid you have not understood situation correctly. Repatriation not our only demand. Cannot fight afresh for remaining after repatriation. Therefore asking for two small assurances. First provincial Governments shall consider sympathetically demands already before India Government. Second pending decision at least Deoli standard shall be applied. Never insisted on literal application Deoli standard. In Punjab detenus are given C class treatment. Fail to understand how our position unreasonable. Both Joshi Mangalsingh considered it reasonable. If you send someone shall convince him completely."

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161. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

November 17, 1941

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

I have your two letters. Dr. Das too had a talk with me and so Kanu.

Abha should not come here without the blessings from her mother too. She will give them if she feels that Abha will have no one but Kanu. Kanu can wait indefinitely.

It is good that Vina[1] is to take [up] work. The post offered is good. It should be accepted. Every one of you should be earning something if not disabled and there would be no penury. It comes when there is insistence on costly education which only a few can have at the expense of the hungry millions.

I understand what you say about debts.

Dr. Das told me that your wife felt most hurt that I stopped sending what I did when you were here. I hope you realized that I would have done you moral harm, if I had continued the payment. I am quite clear that you are better as you are and, if you can remain firm in your resolve, you will set a worthy example to all.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10327. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

162. LETTER TO MANINDRA NATH DAS GUPTA

SEVAGRAM,
November 17, 1941

DEAR MANINDRA,

I have your letter.[2] If you are brave and have no fear of death, you should fearlessly move among Muslims and show them

[1] Addressee's daughter

[2] The addressee had sought Gandhiji's advice for restoring goodwill between Hindus and Muslims.

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affection and wish them well. You should never feel cowed down. I know this is difficult but not impossible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. MANINDRA NATH DAS GUPTA
HINDU HOSTEL
MANIPUR AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL
DACCA (BENGAL)

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

163. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

November 17, 1941

CHI. LILI,

I have your letter. I like my own marks. But if you study regularly you are sure to pass. Do not worry, but go on studying regularly and with confidence. The result is in God's hands.

Take care of your health. Everything is all right here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9596. Also C.W. 6568. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

164. HOW TO PAY THE EIGHT-ANNA WAGE?

The satyagrahis as well as the others who have courted arrest are spinning a lot during the present movement. I am receiving news from all the prisons that spinning is going on with great enthusiasm and interest. For me this is heartening news. It may be said that Shri Dhirendra Majumdar is a paragon among the prisoners. He spins himself, makes others spin and has been deeply pondering over the methods of improving the charkha. I have received a letter from him which deserves serious consideration. I am, therefore, reproducing it below for the benefit of khadi-lovers.[1]

[1] The letter is not translated here. Dhirendra Majumdar had outlined a scheme to implement Gandhiji's suggestion, made four years earlier, that every village craftsman should get one anna for an hour's honest labour. The scheme which involved social as well as economic reform visualized an immediate beginning in a small area and its gradual extension in ten years.

This scheme seeks to realize the dream of paying the spinners and ultimately all labourers, i.e., craftsmen, eight annas for an eight-hour day. It does not attempt to give everyone everything here and now. But the attempt is to show that all this can be achieved within ten years.

Bhai Dhirendra does not express a definite opinion on the scheme but seeks the opinion and comments of other experts. Maybe he does not have in the prison all the necessary literature on the subject. About the scheme at the moment I can only say that all khadi workers should examine it and experiment in this direction. Small experiments need almost no capital. For example, training ten or twenty spinners and a few teachers and keeping a record of the results should not involve much expenditure.

The chief merit of the scheme lies in its being almost self-supporting. It consists of two parts. It does lay a little burden on the institution in the form of enhanced wages. But the other half deals with payment to the spinners after training them for higher production. Another merit of the scheme is the attempt at all-round reform in the spinners' lives. I attach importance to the scheme from this point of view. This scheme is not the handiwork of an ignorant khadi-lover but has been thought out by a responsible and practical worker. Dhirendra Babu is not merely the author of this scheme. He is himself going to implement it.

Every experimenter in the field should remember that the scheme takes into consideration all the processes from cotton-growing to weaving.

SEVAGRAM, November 18, 1941

[From Hindi]

Khadi Jagat, November 1941

165. TELEGRAM TO BHURALAL BAYA[1]

November 18, 1941

BHURALAL BAYA
UDAIPUR

I CONSENT.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's telegram which read: "State desire Kripalaniji Vijayalakshmi its guests. Your consent essential."

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166. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
November 18, 1941

BHAI MUNSHI,

This is about Paranjape. Now write about newspapers. Newspapers are supplied to C class prisoners in other States. I don't know about all. But they are supplied in Bihar and the U.P.

Sarala[1] had been here for two days.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Deshpande's letter and a copy of the reply are enclosed.

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

167. TELEGRAM TO HOME MEMBER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

WARDHA,
November 19, 1941

HOME MEMBER[2]
NEW DELHI

AM COMMUNICATION WITH JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN VIEW ENDING HUNGER-STRIKE.[3] HE AND HIS COMPANIONS REFUSE ABANDON STRIKE WITHOUT KNOWING NATURE FUTURE CONDITION ASSUMING REPATRIATION WILL BE GRANTED. HE WANTS ME SEND REPRESENTATIVE REMOVE POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING. COULD YOU PLEASE WIRE AUTHORITY MAHADEV DESAI PROCEED DEOLI?[4]

GANDHI

File No. 43/65/41-Pol.(I). Courtesy: National Archives of India

[1] Addressee's daughter
[2] Sir Reginald Maxwell
[3] *Vide* "Telegram to Jayaprakash Narayan", p. 102.
[4] The Government on November 20, 1941, authorized Mahadev Desai to visit Deoli.

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168. TELEGRAM TO JOG[1]

November 19, 1941

JOG
CARE STOCK
CAWNPORE
YOU CAN.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

169. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

November 19, 1941

CHI. KAKA,

Herewith the draft. Show it to Rajendra Babu and Jamnalalji also. If absolutely necessary, you may come over here, but it will be better if you revise the draft and send me the final version so that I need do nothing more than sign it. I suppose you know that this afternoon I have no time at all.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10954

170. MESSAGE TO FRONTIER PEOPLE[2]

[Before *November 20, 1941*][3]

Mahatma Gandhi wants every person in the Frontier Province and tribal areas to devote some portion of his daily time to spinning on the *dhanush takli*[4].

The Hindu, 23-11-1941

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's telegram informing Gandhiji of his arrest and asking him if he should seek bail and defend his case.

[2] This was delivered to Abdul Ghaffar Khan by representatives from Wardha who attended the Red Shirt Camp at Utmanzai. *Vide* p. 95.

[3] The report appeared under the date-line "Peshawar, November 20".

[4] An invention of Maurice Frydman, a Pole, also known as Bharatananda

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171. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

November 20, 1941

CHI. MIRA,

In the midst of work, I won't say anything beyond saying may God the Truth, not untruth, guide you. For God is both Truth and untruth. If you do not understand this language you should ask me to give you its meaning.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6490. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9885

172. LETTER TO DR. D. D. SATHAYE

November 20, 1941

DEAR DR. SATHAYE,

I have your letter. You will excuse the delay in writing to you. Of what use can my ignorant word be for a highly technical treatise?[1] From your index I see it is not going to be a popular book telling the man in the street what he should do to keep his 'eyes straight' with all the implications of the last phrase.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: D. D. Sathaye Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

173. LETTER TO AMARNATH JHA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
November 20, 1941

BHAI AMARNATHJI,

I venture to write to you without earlier acquaintance.

Your election as President of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan made me glad as well as sad. Who would not be glad at the election

[1] The addressee had requested Gandhiji to write a foreword to the Hindi portion of his book on ophthalmology.

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of a scholar like you? But I must confess that I was sad, too; because I had, in the interest of work, wanted Rajendra Babu to be the President this year. That is why Seth Jamnalal Bajaj proposed the name of Rajendra Babu.

You are of course aware that I have been closely associated with the Sammelan for many years. I had a hand in framing the policy of the Sammelan towards propagation of Hindi. It has developed some political overtones too. I shall not be able to attend the Sammelan. Hence myself and a few friends thought that the election of Rajendra Babu would safeguard the interests of the Sammelan.

But this did not happen. Now all my hopes rest on you. I hope to secure your help in what I had expected from Rajendra Babu.

It will be common ground between you and me that all of us should endeavour to do our best, keeping in view the accommodating attitude of Tandonji[1] who is the soul of the Sammelan, and all the other things we know he stands for.

I do not know whether or no you approve of the policy adopted at Indore[2] and Nagpur[3]. Some attempts were made at Poona to change that policy. The attempts did succeed to some extent. I do not however regard these changes as intolerable. But further steps in that direction will become unbearable for persons like me. My efforts would be to move a step further than at Nagpur. I am convinced this would secure the progress of Hindi and the welfare of the nation. Hindi-Urdu controversy should not have been started nor should it be continued.

There have been sharp differences about the Wardha office. That office must be subordinate to the Sammelan but I think it should have as much autonomy as the Madras office. If it is agreed that the Wardha office has well served the cause of Hindi, it should, I think, enjoy greater autonomy than it has today.

Rajendra Babu's presence at the Sammelan is uncertain. He cannot stand the December weather of the Punjab. Nor can Seth Jamnalalji go. Kakasaheb Kalelkar and Acharya Shriman Narayan may go. Please lend your ear to them. I wish there should be no conflicts at the Sammelan nor any meaningless controversy. If there are differences on principles, let them be expressed in a friendly spirit. Therefore I would request you, if you can spare the time, to come here for a day so that all of us can meet and talk things over. Rajendra Babu and Jamnalalji are here for the time being. If you cannot come for want of time or for other

[1] Purushottamdas Tandon

[2&3] In 1935 and 1936, respectively

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reasons, I can send Kakasaheb and Shrimanji to you. Please let me know your convenience.

Kindly excuse me for the trouble.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI AMARNATH JHA
GEORGE TOWN
PRAYAG, U.P.

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 10262. Also G.N. 65

174. LETTER TO MADALASA

November 21, 1941

CHI. MADU,

Will you always remain as crazy as you are? Come here at the earliest opportunity, if not to stay here, at least to meet me. And then you may pour out all that is stored up in your heart and cry yourself out to your heart's content. Since I am giving you such a fine opportunity of crying here, stop crying there. For the rest, if you follow the rules I have suggested you will forever be happy.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 323

175. LETTER TO DR. S. MEHDI HASSAN

SEVAGRAM,
November 22, 1941

DEAR MEHDI,

In your words, I cannot give twice, for I have nothing to give quickly or otherwise, but I get the credit of giving half because I refuse at once, i.e., by return post.

You know my limitations.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. S. MEHDI HASSAN
GONANIA MEDICAL COLLEGE
HYDERABAD DN.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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176. LETTER TO SUNDERLAL

[*November 22, 1941*][1]

BHAI SUNDERLAL,

Only today could I reach your telegram of the 18th. So I am not replying by wire. May what you have begun meet with brilliant success.

Blessings from
BAPU

PANDIT SUNDERLALJI
C/O DR. DAVAR
NEW DELHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 10263. Courtesy: Purushottam Prasad

177. LETTER TO NIRMALANANDA

November 24, 1941

MY DEAR NIRMALANANDA[2],

Come if you must.

Yours,
BAPU

BHIKSHU NIRMALANANDA
KRIPA ASHRAM
TIRUVENNAMALIUR
S. INDIA

From a photostat: G.N. 1397

[1] From the postmark
[2] Formerly G. V. Gurjale

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178. LETTER TO MOOLCHAND AGRAWAL

November 24, 1941

BHAI MOOLCHANDJI,

Blessings to Chi. Savitri and her husband. It is good that both are khadi-wearers, and that there will be no purdah during the wedding. I hope both of them will continue to render service and live happily.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 842

179. LETTER TO AMARNATH JHA

SEVAGRAM,
November 24, 1941

BHAI AMARNATHJI,

I have your letter and wire. Thanks. Kakasaheb and Shrimanji will of course be visiting you now, so there is nothing I need say. It is enough that I assure you that nothing will be done at this end that might create ill will and nothing will be done to change Tandonji's policy in his absence.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

180. LETTER TO TEGH RAM

November 24, 1941

BHAI TEGH RAMJI,

I have your letter. I am in correspondence with Shri Amarnathji. It will be enough to tell you that in Tandonji's absence nothing will be done that might affect his policy.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

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181. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

November 25, 1941

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

I have your letter. So long as you feel grieved by my conduct, how can you forgive me? I have no conviction of wrongdoing. Just think clearly a bit. Was I in any way bound to pay you a single pice? You pleaded inability to get on with the Bengal workers. You wanted to come to Sevagram. I took pity and let you come. Inch by inch I came to know of your difficulties and I began to accommodate you. When I thought you to be unworthy of support, I declined to continue, after notice. Was that a wrong done to you? You yourself admit that you acted hastily and thoughtlessly. I acted in the only honourable way I could. I was disbursing public funds. You should know that I brought you here almost against the wish of trusted co-workers. Your wants were and are beyond your market value. I doubt whether I should have given you the support I did. I still continue to do what I can for you because I believe you to be a person willing to serve but with reasoning faculty gone astray. Your present letter is proof of what I say.

I suggest your showing all the correspondence between us to your friends or rather the other workers. Let Dhirendra say what he thinks of it. It is a serious thing for you to harbour the wrong against me and be satisfied that all is well.

Of course if you harbour any wrong against me, your wife cannot help it. And it is but natural that she cannot send Abha to such a man as me. I hope this letter will clear all your doubts. If it does not, you should pursue the inquiry till you convince me of my error or are yourself convinced of doing wrong to me in thinking as you do.

You are wrong about Sailen. He is not going to help Rishabhdas but the latter is willing for my sake to take him up. Had you not been in need of money, I might not have sent Sailen. S[ailen] too likes the job.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10328. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

182. LETTER TO SULTANA RAZIA

SEVAGRAM,
November 25, 1941

MY DEAR SULTANA,

I was delighted to have your letter. The four propositions you have laid down with the approval of the Maulvi Sahib are sound. But how to secure universal acceptance for them is the question. They form a basis for joint action. If you have been able to assure Maulvi Sahib of my *bona fides* the next step for us is to meet and discuss the ways and means. If he can take the trouble to come here, this is a good time. Dr. Rajendra Prasad too is here.[1] You will ascertain his wish and let me know.

As to the fifth proposition I have doubts. It demands clarification and mutual discussions.

I hope you are keeping well. When are you returning? We all miss you.

Did you not take with you that book on women? I miss it on the shelf. I have an idea that you borrowed it.

Love.

BAPU

BIBI SULTANA RAZIA
AUNDER KOT
MEERUT

From a photostat: G.N. 10859. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

183. LETTER TO ANNAPURNA C. MEHTA

November 26, 1941

CHI. ANNAPURNA,

Your work has increased. I am glad. There is no harm at all in going to Mathura, etc. Bow in front of the temples from outside. I have not visited any of those temples. How can we, through mere curiosity, visit a place which is not open to Harijans? You should

[1] The rest of the letter is from Pyarelal Papers.

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not, therefore, enter the temples. Father has raised a fine question. It shows that you are the daughter of a vigilant father. With good wishes for your welfare,

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9434

184. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
November 27, 1941

The discontinuance of the hunger-strike by the Deoli detenus relieves the terrible tension under which the public was labouring. It was not possible to contemplate with unconcern the starvation, even self-inflicted, of patriots, whether one agreed with their method or not. Let us hope that repatriation will be hastened and their treatment will not be worsened for their removal to their respective provinces.

I have read the Government communique describing the bewitching life in Deoli. I recall a similar description of life in the Andamans. It read like a fairy tale and yet most of the inmates preferred to return home. These descriptions, however truthful they may be in the estimation of the writers not themselves detenus, do not answer the reality as the detenus see it. The object of the communique, on the face of it, is to show that the condition in Deoli was superior to what it was in the respective provinces. If such was the case, it shows how correct and proper was the demand of the hunger-strikers that their condition on repatriation should be no worse than in Deoli. I should translate the demand thus:

(1) Repatriation should not be to a remote godforsaken place in the detenu's province. The object of repatriation would be wholly frustrated if the detenus are transferred to a place far away from their homes.

(2) The conveniences and food should be as near to Deoli's latest standard as possible.

That is so far as the prisoners' demands are concerned. But something more is needed. Seeing that the detenus have not been tried, the burden is on the Government to give them as decent a treatment as possible. War economy has no place in this connection, for detention is itself a war measure and could not be justified on any other ground. Therefore, they are entitled to family allowance and travelling expenses for their families when necessary.

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It should be remembered that most of the detenus are poor people. So much as to Deoli.

But I feel that the question of food, sanitation and classification is and should be treated as an all-India question. I confine myself just now only to political prisoners, whether detenus detained on suspicion or satyagrahis who have courted imprisonment. If I had the authority, I would treat all prisoners alike, making a distinction only on the ground of health and habit. But I must not complicate the main issue by raising others [that] do not demand immediate solution. I think that classifications should be scrapped. At best they are arbitrary.

The scale prescribed in the very weighty and reasoned manifesto recently issued by eminent medical men representing the whole of India should be accepted forthwith as the minimum scale for all India, with such variations as staples grown in various provinces may demand. All political prisoners should have the right to supplement their food and other requirements from their own pockets.

All should be supplied with a selection of newspapers and magazines of known standing without any censoring. There should be no restrictions as to choice of books. What is not generally prohibited in India should be allowed to prisoners. They should be allowed to write letters and receive visitors on the same scale as in B class.

It should be common cause that no recognition should be given to hunger-strikes for wringing illegitimate concessions nor need they be penalized by refusal to consider legitimate demands on merits. For a prisoner under stress, hunger-strike is the last non-violent remedy. He seeks to end imposed suffering by self-imposed suffering. He thereby hopes to melt the heart of authority or at least enlist the sympathy of the public. Experience shows that the method is not to be despised. It has succeeded in several cases. But it is not easy to know always whether the cause for which a strike is undertaken is valid. We know, too, that Governments do not always come to a right decision in such cases. I have before me the case of a prisoner, who has given up his strike at my instance. The cause, as transpires in the record of the case before me, seems to have been more than valid. The vegetables served contained a dead scorpion. The men who had resorted to hunger-strike are now being tried for breach of jail regulations in that they refused the food served. There is the Chunar hunger-strike now going on for a fortnight. It is in respect of the treatment of C class prisoners. I have wired pleading for its suspension.[1]

[1] The telegram is not available.

I think that hunger-strikes should not be regarded as a crime, but whenever such a strike takes place it should be referred to a judicial tribunal with the right to the prisoner to be represented by a lawyer of his choice. If the cause is found to be valid, the grievance should be removed. If the hunger-strike is persisted in, although the finding is against the prisoner, the fast should be ignored. If the procedure recommended by me is adopted the probability is that strikes will automatically decrease. Where the cause is valid, the authorities will grant redress on a mere notice of hunger-strike and where the strike is found to be unjustified there will be no public sympathy. It follows that there would be no forcible feeding if the procedure I am recommending is adopted. In rare and obstinate cases a life may have to be lost. It is impossible always to prevent suicide, even by fasting.

Fasting has come to stay as a remedy for redress of grievances. It has its uses. An honest fast draws attention to a felt grievance and compels redress. What I have suggested is regularization of the humanitarian instinct and the rescuing of a useful institution from ridicule or contempt.

The Hindu, 29-11-1941

185. LETTER TO M. S. ANEY

SEVAGRAM,
November 27, 1941

DEAR BAPUJEE,

I have your letter. Three names come to my mind.[1] H. N. Kunzru, Hamid Ali, ex-Collector, Satara, K. A. D. Naoroji (Lieut.) of the Tatas. I have given you enough to choose from.

I have your other letter just now which I have not yet read. Of course all your letters are treated as confidential.

Hope you are not freezing there.

Yours,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] For appointment as Agent in Malaya

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186. LETTER TO GULZARILAL NANDA[1]

November 27, 1941

BHAI GULZARILAL,

As I have said before, if the Majoor Mahajan realize that the value of their labour is always greater than that of capital and if they all combine, they can come into their own without hurting a single individual.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Gujarat Samachar*, 3-12-1941

187. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA

November 27, 1941

CHI. MAGAN,

It is good that Urmi has started going to school. Since you will be spending most of your time in Bombay, why should you construct a big house here? For brief visits you may come whenever you wish and you will be accommodated with the others. You have as yet spent on nothing else besides timber. The timber can be used for other purposes.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MAGANBHAI MEHTA
4 B TEJPAL ROAD, TOP FLOOR
GAMDEVI
BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10117. Courtesy: Maganlal P. Mehta

[1] This was sent on the 25th anniversary of Majoor Mahajan, Ahmedabad, of which the addressee was the Secretary.

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188. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

November 27, 1941

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

It is not necessary to give jaggery to everyone. Some of the guests sitting by my side sometimes take jaggery and sometimes do not. Two children invariably take it. It could be offered to other children also. It is not common practice to offer jaggery. Outsiders have complained that a lot of sweets are served here and the criticism is correct. This may lead to some dissatisfaction; but you should face it and give your explanation. Starch and jaggery have the same food value; but the processes of their digestion are different. Starch has yet to be converted into jaggery.

Twig brushes can be cut only from babul or *neem* trees. It is undoubtedly theft to cut them from trees not belonging to us. We must get them from trees earmarked for us. Tell this to B[alvantsinha] and select a tree or two. Thorns may be used as fuel or put to some [other] use.

Govindrao does not have the strength. He is not idle, he is weak. If a man dare not touch a scorpion, even though each of us can lift it with our hands, how can he be compelled to do so? Govindrao is afraid of contracting leprosy. This fear is not peculiar to him; many people have it. This work, it is quite obvious, can be allotted only to a willing worker.

Cleaning of latrines should be completed before meals. If that is not possible, let it be done at 2 in the afternoon. This should be decided by common consent and from the point of view of hygiene.

Efforts are made to give advance intimation about guests. Lanterns may be bought if necessary. I do try to reduce to the minimum the number of people staying here.

The contact with cities is inevitable. We have to watch whether we earn in the cities or merely help in enabling the cities to exploit the villages. Yes, we should try to reduce to the minimum contact with cities.

We have to create love for physical labour. The difficulty is that guests outnumber regular inmates in the Ashram. How can the guests be expected to labour? Make a list of the regular inmates and you will be surprised to see how few we are.

I understand the reason for your not coming to me.

Do whatever is proper in respect of *jawar*. I do not like that question.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4406

189. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

[*November 28, 1941*][1]

MY DEAR KU[MARAPPA],

Misbehaviour. Punishment was swift and sure. Not the b.p. That was the result but the punishment consisted in the cancellation of the tour. You cannot afford to play ducks and drakes with your body. The nature of the work you have to do demands rigid restraint. It is necessary precaution to cancel the tour. Moral: Don't do it again.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10160

190. LETTER TO DADACHANJI

SEVAGRAM,
November 28, 1941

DEAR DADACHANJI,

I have your letter. I am glad you have written so frankly as you have done. I am entirely at one with you that our relations with the Burmans ought to be of the most cordial character. The correspondence between the Prime Minister and me was naturally perfectly friendly on either side. I myself love the Burmese people and as you know I had come in very close touch with the Phoongis. What concrete steps can be taken at present I do not know. I think the defects that I have pointed out in the Agreement[2] are real and they should be remedied. You should, therefore, not give in on those points but try to remove those defects by friendly negotiation. You

[1] From the G.N. Register

[2] The Indo-Burma Immigration Agreement; *vide* Vol. LXXIV, pp. 255-9.

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ought not to take an attitude of opposition to your colleagues. There is no occasion for it.

I am glad you have not expected me to go through your very long letter to Shri Satyamurti. I tried to read it nevertheless but had to leave it for want of time.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

191. INTERVIEW TO "THE DAILY HERALD"

WARDHAGANJ,
November 28, 1941

Mr. Amery's Manchester performance[1] does not excite any new reaction in me. Mr. Amery has said nothing new. It is difficult for me to say anything more. Mr. Amery holds certain views which he is entitled to hold. But he does not know India as well as I do. Therefore, I see that by repeating his statement, he is doing no good either to his own country or to India. His repeating the same untruths would not convert untruth into truth.

The Hindu, 30-11-1941

192. LETTER TO M. S. ANEY

SEVAGRAM,
November 29, 1941

DEAR BAPUJEE,

Why did you give so much time to explain the wretched unfortunate incident? If you had given me a line I should have been satisfied. I sent you the papers because I did not want to have anything about you on my mind without your knowing it. We may

[1] In a speech at Manchester on November 19, L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, said: "We can be proud of Britain's contribution to India. What the Magna Carta won for us in the rights of the individual under the law, that we have given to India. We have now set ourselves to achieve in co-operation with Indian statesmanship the far greater miracle of building up within the space of a few years that superstructure of responsible freedom which we took centuries to complete. In spite of suspicion we still retain the underlying goodwill and confidence in India. But above all there is need of goodwill between Indians themselves."

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travel along different roads but my regard for you shall never suffer diminution.

I got the benefit of Malaviyaji's *kaya kalpa*[1] by resisting it. It was all so unnatural.

Yours,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

193. LETTER TO SIR GEORGE

November 29, 1941

DEAR SIR GEORGE,

It was an unexpected pleasure to hear from you after such a long time.

I was sorry to learn of your son's death. But I suppose there is hardly an English family that has not to its credit such heavy sacrifice. This mention brings to the mind a rush of thoughts which you can imagine.

When I get your book I shall read it and write to you if there is anything to tell you. Meanwhile let me tell you that I remain the same true friend of the British that I always have been, whether fighting or co-operating.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

194. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

November 29, 1941

BHAI SAMPURNANAND,

I got your letter and the book. I like your line of thinking, so I shall certainly try and read the book. Prabhavati will read it first. She asked for the book as soon as she saw it. At the moment she is on her way to Jayaprakash from where she will proceed to Bihar. I shall get the book only at Benares.

[1] Rejuvenation of the body

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I hope you were all right in the jail.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI SAMPURNANANDJI
JALIPADEVI
BENARES

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

195. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

November 30, 1941

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

You should go to the Harijan Sevak Sangh and present the case[1]. Don't rush to the Press.

As to my retiring from politics,[2] I might as well wind up non-violence as retire from politics. It would be like denying myself.

I hope you had my previous letter.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10329. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

196. LETTER TO LAKSHMI GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
November 30, 1941

CHI. LAKSHMI,

I have your letter. I learnt more from the newspapers. We should send an address to our Chief Justice for having raised Devdas's status so high. He saved him Rs. 1,000 and gave him complete rest for one month. Let Ramu[3] also go to jail and enjoy himself.

Anna[4] had fallen ill. Ramachandran Brahmachari says he is now better.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2144

[1] Of the Harijan employees of Nabadwip Municipality whose condition was pitiable

[2] The addressee had suggested Gandhiji's retirement from politics.

[3] Ramchandra, addressee's son

[4] C. Rajagopalachari

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197. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

December 1, 1941

CHI. LILI,

I have your letter. Never mind the loss of the scholarship. But you should not have taken a vow not to pass. Try your best. Let God, then, do as He wills. You ought to like your solitary life. That is a sign of a studious nature. When one is going along the straight path there is no need to keep count of the days, for there is no other path to follow. Prabhavati is leaving today. She is going in order to meet Jayaprakash. From there she will most probably go to Bihar. Lakshmibai[1] arrived today. Khurshedbehn and Kamala Devi are still here. Sardar is going to Bombay today. From there he will go to Bardoli. I am also going to Bardoli on the 9th. I will stay there for a month. We are all well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10113. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

198. LETTER TO MADALASA

SEVAGRAM,
December 1, 1941

CHI. MADALASA,

The doctor says now you are quite free. So you can come when you wish. I have to go to Bardoli on the 9th for one month. So I would like you to come before the 9th. I hope you are happy. I learn from the doctor that the baby is also making progress.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Please hand over the enclosed receipt in the office.

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 323

[1] Lakshmibai Vaidya, a khadi worker and educationist of Poona

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199. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

December 1, 1941

CHI. SUSHILA,

I have your letter. It is certainly sad about Sita[1], but you need not get frightened. Such a thing could have happened here, too, though of course there would be less danger here.

It is clear that you cannot leave. I think it is the duty of you both to spend your lives there. You may bring up Sita there as best as you can. If I brought her up, I would do so under my close personal supervision, as I did the four [brothers] and other [children]. I do not repent having done that. According to me, they have lost nothing. If Harilal went to school, etc., you see the result. We cannot see the weaknesses of barristers and degree-holders, for we are overawed by them. In fact, there are many even among barristers and doctors who, like Harilal, lead immoral lives and are given to drinking. But they are big men, holding degrees, and so their weaknesses are not noticed. And, moreover, I myself condemned Harilal, and that also is one reason why he is on the streets. It was my duty to denounce him, though I think "denounce" is not the right word in this context. If, however, you are not convinced of the correctness of my advice, and if you can overcome your desire to keep Sita with you and she herself is willing, you may send her over and she will be educated in the manner you desire. Devdas and Ramdas bring up their children as they think best. You both have the same right. I can only advise you as a friend. The right belongs to the parents alone, and it is their moral duty, too, to bring up their children in the way they think best.

Do ask Virji's son, too. You need not feel awkward about it. You did well, of course, to explain to Sita a woman's function. Instruction in regard to sex organs will do her nothing but good. If the instruction is pure, the children will understand the right function of the organs and will learn self-control. Everything will depend on how the instruction is imparted. You yourself should think over this matter. Naraharibhai has written something.

[1] Addressee's daughter

Kishorelalbhai also will write to you and send you some useful literature. Please do not get frightened.

I had Manilal's letter also. I have sent him a reply, too.[1]

I am pained to read about Sorabji and Jalbhai. But that is how the world goes on.

Everybody is well here. Ramdas's children are here for the present. Nimu[2] is arriving tomorrow with Sumi[3]. She had to undergo an eye operation.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4925

200. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

December 1, 1941

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Yes, there has been some misunderstanding. I had told Aryanayakum[4] clearly; some books are to be kept and for them a couple of almirahs, too. I have . . .[5] to Aryanayakum. His language is such; pay no heed to it.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4407

201. NOTE TO BALVANTSINHA[6]

December 1, 1941

What is all this? Why all this unhappiness at the insult from a member of the weaker sex? I do not know at all what names . . .behn[7] called. Even the abuses from our sister should be looked upon as praises. I shall of course investigate but I do not like your writing to me, for whatever reason. Insult is to be put up with. You ought to have laughed it away. And where is the question of sending you away? One can drive away only oneself. The Ashram belongs to you and also to . . .behn[8]. If you both quarrel,

[1] Gandhiji, however, had not; *vide* "Letter to Manilal Gandhi", p. 128.
[2&3] Ramdas Gandhi's wife Nirmala, and Sumitra, her daughter
[4] E. W. Aryanayakum, Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh
[5] One word is illegible.
[6] The addressee, who was then observing silence, was pulled up by a woman member of the Ashram for his failure to supply rice to the kitchen. Exasperated, he complained to Gandhiji, asking to be sent away.
[7&8] The names are omitted in the source.

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who can ask whom to go away? The *Gita* truly says: Wrath breeds stupefaction, stupefaction leads to loss of memory, loss of memory ruins reason and so on.[1] I find you in such a situation. Wake up and laugh at your own folly.

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen, p. 291

202. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

December 2, 1941

MY DEAR KU[MARAPPA],

Unless you are sure of getting on well and if you are permitted to travel come here. I have to leave here for Bardoli on 9th. If you leave tomorrow 3rd you are here on 4th. That gives me clear five days. You must be the judge.

Love.

BAPU

PROF. KUMARAPPA
C/O SHETH SHOORJIBHAI
CUTCH CASTLE
GIRGAUM, BOMBAY

From a photostat: G.N. 10161

203. LETTER TO S. RADHAKRISHNAN

SEVAGRAM,
December 2, 1941

DEAR SIR RADHAKRISHNAN,

I have not given you the number of my party because I am myself uncertain. But provisionally you may count on three—Mahadev Desai, Kanu Gandhi and myself. I do not want to bring my wife with me.

As to Swami Bhawani Dayal, I am taking no notice of the matter. Our people in S.A. or elsewhere must show the weaknesses to which they are heir[2].

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 63-4

[2] The source has "of which they are heirs".

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204. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

December 2, 1941

CHI. MANILAL,

I was under the impression that I had replied to your letter. But Kishorelal tells me that I have not done so. If you cannot be happy there, you may come over, but it will not look proper. It will not be proper to desert your co-workers. All the same, I do not wish to force you to stay on. You two, therefore, may do what you consider is your dharma. What further guidance can I give you than this?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4926

205. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

December 2, 1941

CHI. BABUDI,

I hope you have not been frightened. It is not an easy thing to be a mother. Children are bound to get one illness or another. Manjulabehn will come and see you. I am reaching Bardoli on the 10th. You may come over to me then. By that time Anand will be full of *ananda*[1]. Fix your thoughts on God and do what you can. If you want Shakaribehn[2] to go there, send a wire. She is ready. Since you are staying with your family, I have been wondering whether I should send her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10040. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

[1] Joy
[2] Addressee's mother

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206. LETTER TO MADALASA

December 4, 1941

CHI. MADALASA,

At half past ten this morning I received your letter of yesterday. You had asked for permission to come. Now that permission is useless. You can now come over any time you wish.

There is no need to drag yourself here if you are happy there. I will peep in there on the 9th. But if you can relax better by coming here, then you should certainly come.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 324

207. LETTER TO MAHAVIR GIRI

December 4, 1941

CHI. MAHAVIR,

I have your letter. Munshiji says you should send your application in March. I learn that there will be no point in sending it before that. You should, therefore, wait till March. Write to me in March. There is no need at all to send Satyadevi[1] just now. I am likely to leave this place for Bardoli on the 9th.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MAHAVIR
C/O SHETH BHIMJI KARA
CHANDAVARKAR ROAD
BORIVLI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6244

[1] Addressee's sister

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208. LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

December 4, 1941

BHAI SAMPURNANAND,

I just got your letter. Even before your letter arrived I had, in the course of a letter to a friend, stated that you were fully entitled to offer criticism. It has had no adverse effect on me, although I maintain that there is absolutely no ground whatsoever for your criticism. At the back of [the struggle for] freedom of speech there is [the claim for] independence as it was at the back of the Salt [Satyagraha]. But then this is a controversial subject. Time will reveal everything.

That leaves the question of Hindi. This controversy is meaningless and stems from ignorance. No one in the Congress is antagonistic towards Hindi. And no one will suspect me of such antagonism. But I may differ in my policy [regarding Hindi]. And if this happens to be the case, what would be my position in the Sammelan[1]? I have been dragged into the Sammelan and I can quit this moment. I regard Urdu and the Persian script as included in Hindi. I have been maintaining this view since the Indore [session]. The man responsible for giving to the national language the name Hindustani [and getting it] accepted by the Congress is Tandonji. Now what can be done? I think the resolution was all right. And if it was so we should regard Hindustani as a synonym for Hindi. Now tell me if there is anything wrong in it. Rajendra Babu is not in a condition to go to Kashi. And he is certainly not going to Abohar. Kakasaheb and Shrimanji are on their way to meet Dr. Amarnathji.[2] Maybe, now Tandonji himself will come out. Whatever he says will be done.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] Akhil Bharatiya Hindi Sahitya Sammelan
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Amarnath Jha", p. 112.

209. *INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS*

WARDHAGANJ,
December 4, 1941

In the course of an interview, this afternoon, on the Government of India's communique[1] regarding the release of political prisoners, Mahatma Gandhi said:

As I have said before the event,[2] I must repeat after the event, that, so far as I am concerned, it cannot evoke a single responsive or appreciative chord in me.

From my student days onward, I have been, and still claim to be, a friend of the British people. But my friendship cannot blind me to the fact that British representatives hold India as a bondslave. All the freedom that India enjoys is the freedom of a slave and not the freedom of an equal, which is otherwise known as Complete Independence. Mr. Amery's pronouncements do not soothe the festering sore, but are like sprinkling chillies on it. It is in that setting that I am called upon to examine this release.

If the Government of India are confident of the determination of all responsible opinion in India to support the war effort, the logical conclusion would be to keep the civil disobedience prisoners in their custody, because they produce a jarring note. The only meaning I can attach to the release, therefore, is that they expect that the prisoners will have changed their opinions in their self-invited solitude. I am hoping that the Government will be soon disillusioned.

Civil disobedience was not taken up without the most careful consideration. It was certainly not taken up out of any vindictiveness.

[1] Issued on December 3, 1941, which stated: "The Government of India, confident in the determination of all responsible opinion in India to support the war effort until victory is secured, have reached the conclusion that those civil disobedience prisoners whose offences have been formal or symbolic in character, can be set free. Effect will be given to this course as soon as possible. There are provinces in which local conditions may mean delay; but before the end of the year the Government of India hope that throughout India practically all such persons will have been set free. With them there will be released also Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru."

[2] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 92-3.

It was taken up, and I hope will be continued, in order to make good the claim of the Congress to let the British people and the world know that there is, at the very least, a large body of public opinion represented by the Congress which is utterly opposed to participation in the war, not because it wishes any disaster to the British arms or victory to the Nazi or Fascist arms, but because it sees no deliverance from blood-guiltiness either for the victor or for the vanquished, and certainly no deliverance for India out of this war.

The Congress, which seeks and claims to represent the dumb millions, has, for the past twenty years, accepted non-violence as its unbroken policy to achieve India's independence. To stop civil disobedience, symbolic though it may be for the time being, will be to deny its policy at a crucial moment. The Government claim that, in spite of the Congress efforts, they are able to get all the men and money from India. Therefore the Congress opposition, in their estimate, can only be a moral effort and a moral demonstration. I, for one, am entirely satisfied with it, because I am convinced that from that moral demonstration will arise, when the moment comes, a demonstration which will result in the attainment of India's independence, not the ascendance of this party or that. The Congress struggle covers every single unit in India.

Now that the Congress President[1] is expected to be out, it will be for him to consider whether and when to call the Congress Working Committee or the A. I. C. C. These two bodies will determine the future policy of the Congress. I am but a humble instrument of service in conducting the civil disobedience.

I would, however, say one word about the detenus and other prisoners. It sounds strange that those who have sought imprisonment are to be discharged and not those who are either detained without trial or imprisoned because they hold the freedom of their country dearer than their personal liberty. There is surely something utterly wrong somewhere. Therefore I cannot rejoice over the Government of India's decision.

The Hindu, 6-12-1941

[1] Abul Kalam Azad

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210. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

December 5, 1941

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

It is nice to be able to write to you outside the jail. But the pleasure is only momentary for I cannot reconcile myself to these discharges. However, we meet this new menace.

This is merely to tell you that I delayed answering your question as the rumour about your discharge was in the air.

I have read your letters most carefully. I agree with your conclusions and I like the very generous manner in which you have treated the whole thing. I had one and only one chat with F[1]. and he accepted my proposition that he would not think of marrying Indu without your consent and blessing. Indu wrote to J. that she was coming and seeing me too. Now that you are out and probably will be for a few days if not longer, you will shape this thing as you wish.

I hope you have liked the recent statements issued by me. You will tell me when you are coming. Maulana[2] telephoned today saying he proposed to come after two or three days. I propose to leave here on 9th for Bardoli for one month. Sardar wants me to give one month to Gujarat. He is under treatment, mostly dietetic. I have prescribed the diet. I think his pain is most bearable under that regime. So far as it is possible our talks and meetings should take place in Bardoli. The discharges are a challenge. I feel that we should hold the W[orking] C[ommittee], A. I. C. C. meetings as early as we can. But of this you and Maulana are the best judges.

I am writing this against time.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1941. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] Feroze Gandhi
[2] Abul Kalam Azad

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211. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SEVAGRAM,
December 5, 1941

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter.

Now that you have been released, your responsibility and mine have increased. There is no question of your returning [to jail] immediately. I am thinking [about it].

I am leaving for Bardoli on the 9th. Go to Rajkot meanwhile and come to Bardoli after finishing your work there. I will not be in a hurry to send you away from there.

I am fully satisfied with Lakshmibai. She is a very good and thoughtful lady.

I hope you keep fine health. I have no time to write more. All those released from Nagpur have come to see me. I am writing this surrounded by a large crowd.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10421. Also C.W. 6860. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

212. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

December 5, 1941

BHAI MUNSHI,

Kanhaiyalal Vaidya will be seeing you. He will tell you about Ratlam. Go there. Do what you can. Whether your efforts as a lawyer succeed or not, the poor prisoners will feel comforted by your going. Meet the officials there and see that, outside your sphere of duty too, compassion prevails.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7671. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

213. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

December 5, 1941

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I got your letter and the doctor's report. Before that I had two letters from Mahadev. Please make no changes before I arrive there. We shall have a talk with Dr. Gilder. I am unshaken in my faith that your present diet is sufficient and that you must improve with it. Nevertheless, we must respect the doctor's findings. Do not be negligent about taking rest. You must take walks both morning and evening. Listen to the doctor's advice and walk as much as possible or lie down but do not sit for too long. We had already decided about a belt when you were here. But if there is any speciality in the Powell belts, let one be procured there.

I am busy with the problem of the prisoners. You must have seen my statement[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
SWARAJYA ASHRAM
BARDOLI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 263

214. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

WARDHA,
December 6, 1941

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
LUCKNOW

WROTE YESTERDAY. YOUR WIRE. COME WHEN YOU CAN. SARDAR HAD LONG SETTLED BARDOLI PROGRAMME.[2]

[1] *Vide* "Interview to the Press", pp. 131-2.

[2] The addressee's telegram dated December 4, 1941, *inter alia*, read: "Would not Bardoli involve longer journey for Maulana others?"

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HIS BODY SHATTERED. I AM SOLE GUIDE ON CARE HIS BODY. WOULD AVOID DISTURBING HIM BUT YOUR AND MAULANA'S OPINION SHALL PREVAIL. LOVE.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1941. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

215. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
December 7, 1941

The jail delivery that is going on apace of satyagrahis must be taken as a challenge to convene a meeting of the A. I. C. C. which, the Government of India have been evidently induced to expect, will reverse the Bombay decision, whose working is reflected in my conduct of the satyagraha campaign. I have, therefore, advised the Maulana Saheb to convene a meeting of the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. at an early date, but until that decision is reversed civil disobedience has to go on.

I must admit, however, that the conduct of the campaign has been rendered difficult by the Government action in discharging civil disobedience prisoners, but if we are to reach our goal, we have to cut our way through every difficulty. This one is nothing compared to what we are likely to have to face before we come into our own.

If the A. I. C. C. meeting is to come, as it must, pending the meeting members of the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. must not offer civil disobedience, nor should those who are interested in reversing the Bombay decision.

Apart from these, civil disobedience should continue without interruption. Of course it will stand suspended on Xmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

The question naturally arises whether civil disobedience is to be offered in the usual manner by reciting the prescribed formula[1] or in some other manner.

I like the formula method. It gives directness and symmetry to the movement. There is great power in the reciting of the same formula in the same manner. It rivets the attention of the masses

[1] Namely, "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance." *Vide* Vol. LXXIII, p. 157.

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and men on identical theme. The formula is not a mean thing. It is a protest of the nation against war as an arbitrator. It is a message of peace on earth and goodwill towards mankind. What is individual formula today will become, in due time, that of the masses, but the authorities having discharged symbolical satyagrahis may refuse to rearrest them for reciting slogans.

There are then two ways open to us: if they do not rearrest, there need be no dismay and demoralization, the jail is not our objective. Freedom of speech is the immediate objective. If recitation is not objected to, we have advanced somewhat towards our objective and it will be foolish to court imprisonment for the sake of it.

Dismay and demoralization arise because Congressmen in general have not realized the inevitable connection between constructive programme and civil disobedience. Civil disobedience without the backing of constructive programme can never lead us to independence. Shorn of it, civil disobedience becomes a method of violence bound to prove ineffective in the end.

Moreover, civil disobedience, even when it is mass, will only be offered by those who are bodily fit, whereas constructive programme is for all and will never be suspended. If the whole nation took it up in earnest it is enough to give us complete independence. The prosecution of the constructive programme means constructing the structure of swaraj.

The whole theme of corporate non-violence, as I have conceived it, falls to pieces if there is no living faith in the constructive programme.

To my mind, swaraj based on non-violence is a fulfilment of the constructive programme; hence, whether the authorities jail us or not, we must pursue the constructive programme.

I have been asked whether discharged satyagrahis should hold or attend meetings and deliver speeches. They should do so. I do not want or expect them to re-offer civil disobedience immediately. That would be indecent haste, but ordinary civil disobedience may go on. For the discharged ones let there be breathing time. Let them address meetings in their constituencies and study things. At the meetings they will expound their views on the general situation and not hesitate to interpret anti-war Congress policy.

Symbolic satyagraha has a definite meaning but it is open to the authorities to arrest Congressmen for their speeches even if they do not intend thereby to offer C. D. That was how they had arrested the Maulana Sahib and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, not to mention lesser lights.

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Let it be known that I have no authority to suspend C. D. on extraneous grounds. That is for the Congress to do. For me personally there is no choice.

As a man sworn to peace, at this critical moment to suspend my anti-war activity would be to deny myself.

Therefore, for those who think like me, whether we are misunderstood or worse befalls, we must express our faith through our action hoping thereby that ultimately our way will be accepted by all warring powers as the only escape from a blood-bath which is reducing man to his lowest depth.

The Bombay Chronicle, 8-12-1941

216. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

December 7, 1941

MY DEAR C. R.,

I have your heart-rending letter. I can quite imagine your brother's condition.

I have written to Prakasam without mentioning the correspondence. Of course you will come in the afternoon and have as much time as you need. This is just to let you know how you occupy my thoughts.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

So you could not come. I have wired. I must go to Bardoli. Vallabhbhai has made elaborate preparations. And he is so weak. I hope you have cancelled the Lucknow address. It is a big risk. Do come to Bardoli as soon as you can.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10902. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan. Also G.N. 2083

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217. LETTER TO KANHAIYALAL VAIDYA

SEVAGRAM,
December 7, 1941

BHAI KANHAIYALAL,

I have sent a telegram. You will have seen Munshiji[1]. Being too busy I could not answer your letter [earlier]. Also, there was nothing to say.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

218. ASHRAM NOTE

December 8, 1941

The rules deducible from the eleven observances[2] and essential for a well-regulated Ashram life are as follows:

All members—whether permanent or otherwise—will turn every minute of their time to good account. They will take part in every corporate activity of the Ashram. When free from Ashram work they will spin or carry out some other process connected with cotton. They will prosecute their private studies from 8 to 9. p.m. or during daytime, when they have no Ashram work to do and have done at least one hour's spinning.

They may not spin when they are ill or otherwise unable to spin owing to circumstances beyond their control.

No one should talk idly or in a loud voice. The Ashram must bear the impress of perfect peace as well as of truth. Our relations with one another must be marked by affection and restraint, and with guests and visitors by courtesy. Whether a visitor is dressed in rags or in gorgeous robes, we should treat him with the same respect. We must not make any distinction between the rich and the poor, the high and the lowly. This does not mean that we may expect a delicately nurtured guest to live as simply as ourselves. That is to say, in waiting upon guests, we must always

[1] *Vide* "Letter to K. M. Munshi", p. 134.

[2] Ahimsa, truth, non-stealing, *brahmacharya*, non-possession, body-labour, control of the palate, freedom from fear, equal regard for all religions, swadeshi and looking upon all human beings as touchables

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take into consideration their habitual mode of life. This is true courtesy. If an unknown visitor arrives at the Ashram, we must ask him the purpose of his visit, and if necessary take him to the manager. This is the duty of every inmate of the Ashram, because we cannot know whom such a visitor is likely to meet first.

Our every word and every act should be well considered. Whatever we do we should do with a will and in complete identification with the work of the moment.

Food must be taken like medicine, under proper restraint, only for sustaining the body and keeping it a fit instrument for service. We must therefore take food in moderation or even abstemiously. We must be content with what food we get. If the food is insufficiently or badly cooked, we must not talk about it at meals, but courteously speak about it later to the manager of the kitchen. Bad or imperfectly cooked food should not be eaten. We must not champ while eating. We must eat our food slowly, decorously and tidily in a spirit of thankfulness to God.

Everyone must wash his own dish thoroughly and keep it in its place.

Guests and visitors are requested to bring their own plate, drinking pot, bowls and spoon, as well as lantern, bedding and mosquito-net. They must not have more clothes than necessary. Their clothes should be made of khadi. Other things must be as far as possible village-made or at least swadeshi.

Everything must be kept in its proper place. All refuse must be put into the dust-bin.

Water must not be wasted. Boiled water is used for drinking purposes. Pots and pans are finally washed with boiled water. Unboiled water of the Ashram wells is not safe to drink. It is necessary to learn the distinction between boiling water and hot water. Boiling water is that in which pulses are cooked; and which gives out lots of steam. No one can drink boiling water.

We should not spit or clean the nose on the road, but only in an out-of-the-way place where no one is likely to walk.

The call of nature must be attended to only at the appointed place. It is necessary to clean oneself after answering either call of nature. The water-jug used in the toilet is, as it should always be, set apart. After a visit to the latrine, we must wash our hands with pure earth and pure water, and wipe them with a clean napkin. The night-soil must be fully covered with dry earth so as not to attract flies and in such a way that nothing but dry earth is visible.

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One must sit carefully on the latrine seat, so that the seat does not get dirty and the stool drops into the receptacle. A lantern must be carried if it is dark.

Everything which can attract flies should be properly covered.

Teeth must be cleaned with care at the proper place. The end of the twig must be well chewed into a soft brush, and the teeth and the gums must be brushed with it inside and out. The saliva discharged during brushing must be spat out. It must not be swallowed. After the teeth are well brushed the twig must be split into two to clean the tongue with. Then the mouth should be carefully washed. The nose also should be cleaned by drawing in water. The split twigs should be washed well, and collected in a pot. When they dry up they should be used for starting a fire, the idea being that nothing which can be used should be thrown away.

Waste paper, which cannot be used for writing on the other side, should be burned. Nothing else should be mixed with it.

The refuse from leafy vegetables must be kept separate and converted into manure.

Broken glass should be thrown into a pit at a safe distance from houses.

If anyone visits the Ashram or comes as a guest he should be received with love. He should not feel an outsider.

In the Ashram everything should be in its proper place and every nook and corner should be clean. No dust should be allowed to collect on the doors, nor should they be sticky.

Everyone should do with great care the work allotted to him.

No one should absent himself from a collective task. There should be the most scrupulous care in cleaning the utensils.

The latrines should always be kept dry. The night-soil must always be covered with dry earth.

Much water stagnates near the water-room; this is not good. Food should always be kept covered, so that it does not attract flies.

In the matter of food everyone should remember our vow about control of the palate, and eat all the things as medicine. We should not be perturbed if occasionally we miss an item. Whatever we get should be accepted as God's grace.

We should learn to understand correctly the meaning of our prayer. Take care of the Ashram property while you are using it, as if it were your own.

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen, pp. 384-7

219. LETTER TO R. M. SANYAL

SEVAGRAM,
December 8, 1941

DEAR PROFESSOR,

As you know I am doing all I can. I suppose your brother will be transferred in due course to U. P. The release is a different and difficult matter. You will have seen my statement[1] on it.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

220. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

December 8, 1941

DEAR SATIS BABU,

Please read and return the file[2] with your reply.
Love.

BAPU

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

221. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA

December 8, 1941

CHI. MAGAN,

I have your letter. If one's brother is mad and by his behaviour frightens one, can one cast him out on the streets? Suppose it is one's own son, what would one do? When Ratu[3] had run away, the Doctor[4] had lost all peace of mind and recovered it only when he had found him. I do not suggest that Prabhashankar[5] is right.

[1] *Vide* pp. 136-8.
[2] Containing five documents of the All-India Spinners' Association, sent by Annada Babu
[3] & [4] Ratilal, addressee's brother, and Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta, addressee's father
[5] Prabhashankar Parekh, Ratilal's father-in-law

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If Ratu is not as mad as we think, it is certainly a good thing. If he is worse, it would do nothing but good for you to go. Maybe, your very presence will calm him. The children may be kept away for their own safety. They may stay with Manjula and you may live somewhere with Ratilal. Here, of course, you are always welcome.

I have the following gentleman in view. He knows about you. I had written to him:

Dolatram Sundarji Dave, 2nd Floor, 355 Vithalbhai Patel Road.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1024. Courtesy: Manjulabehn M. Mehta

222. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM K. JERAJANI

December 8, 1941

BHAI KAKUBHAI,

I for one like your recommendation regarding the women. I have not spoken to Jajuji, I have not been able to see him.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10852. Courtesy: Purushottam K. Jerajani

223. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

WARDHAGANJ,
December 9, 1941

In the midst of the human conflagration which envelops the world powers who believe in the strength of their arms, little knowing what in reality they are fighting for, it is healthy and uplifting to contemplate what a man like Badshah Khan, the first among the Khidmatgars, is doing for the cause of peace and for qualifying himself for taking an effective part by non-violent means in the freedom movement. He has undying faith in non-violence though he has not worked out all its implications. For

the last few months, he has been holding little camps for non-violent training of Khudai Khidmatgars. But during the third week of November he held a biggish one,[1] to which he had invited neighbouring workers from the Punjab, Kashmir and Baluchistan. Charkha was the important activity. Over three hundred wheels plied daily. *Dhanush takli* was also introduced in the camp. Its cheapness and the ease with which it could be manufactured in every village appealed to everyone. Sanitation work was done in the surrounding villages and there were speeches explaining non-violence. A resolution was passed appealing to tribesmen to be peaceful and non-violent. Copies of it were printed for distribution among those tribesmen who came into British territory. Here is the daily routine:

6 a.m. *azan*[2] for prayers; from 6 to 7.30 prayers; from 7.30 to 7.45 morning exercise; from 7.45 to 8 tea; from 8 to 10.55 village cleaning; from 11 to 12 noon, school; from 12 to 2 p.m. morning meal and rest; from 2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. spinning; from 3.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. public meeting; 4.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. flag salutation; from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. informal discussion; 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. evening meal; 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. roll call.

Village cleaning was done in perfectly orderly manner. Workers were divided into several parties, carrying their own brooms. Villagers supplemented these from their own stock and joined Khidmatgars in this loving service. They did not leave out even police stations. Men in charge of these gratefully accepted the service.

The camp worked like this for seven days from November 16 to 22. There were about 20 Hindus and two women in the party. Badshah Khan, though ill himself, took part in every activity. The camp was of the simplest character. There were no servants. One medical man had volunteered his services which were most useful as many men were suffering from malaria. The Government had also sent a doctor with some medicines.

The following was the daily menu: 7.45 a.m. tea and bread; 12 noon, bread made from wheat and maize with dal or vegetables; 7 p.m. ditto.

The camp consisted of about five hundred representatives and guests from all over the N. W. F. Province. They were accommodated in little tents without side flaps. The total cost of running the camp was about Rs. 1,500. Congressmen and others could

[1] For Gandhiji's message to this camp, *vide* p. 107.

[2] Call to the faithful

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profitably copy the simplicity, economy and orderliness of this camp.

The Hindu, 12-12-1941

224. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
December 9, 1941

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your letter. I am off to Bardoli tonight with Rajen Babu. Do come as early as you can.

Maulana Saheb wires W[orking] C[ommittee] is to be held on 18th at Bardoli. If he has not already issued notice I have suggested 23rd as I have heavy meetings on 17, 18, 19. But I have left the decision to Maulana Saheb.

I hope you got my letter.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1941. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

225. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

December 9, 1941

BHAI VIYOGI HARI,

I have your letter. You may start a goshala. You must have a good cattle-breeder. But the question is whether you will be permitted to put up constructions at the place.

I shall certainly love to spend one month every year at the goshala. If possible I may let you have the next October or November. Keep this to yourself.

Do not close the paper department. We should absorb the boys who are well-trained.

Madhav Prasad is very liberal; I write to him from time to time.

I am taking the account with me.

Those who embrace Sikhism should not be regarded as Harijans.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1080

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226. LETTER TO AMARNATH JHA

BARDOLI,
December 12, 1941

BHAI AMARNATHJI,

I have your letter. I did not answer your previous letter because Kakasaheb and Shrimanji were going to visit you.

Kakasaheb has given me a full report. Let us see what Tandonji has to say. We must at all cost avoid friction.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 10261

227. "CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME: ITS MEANING AND PLACE"[1]

[*December 13, 1941*][2]

INTRODUCTORY

The constructive programme may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of *poorna* swaraj or complete independence by truthful and non-violent means.

Effort for construction of independence so called through violent and, therefore, necessarily untruthful means we know only too painfully. Look at the daily destruction of property, life and truth in the present war.

Complete independence through truth and non-violence means the independence of every unit, be it the humblest of the nation, without distinction of race, colour or creed. This independence is

[1&2] According to *Mahatma*, Vol. VI, Gandhiji wrote this on the train from Wardha to Bardoli. Gandhiji left Sevagram on December 9, 1941, and reached Bardoli on December 10, 1941. However, in his letter to Mirabehn dated December 13, 1941, Gandhiji says, "I was immersed in writing work which is just finished." Apparently he commenced writing this on the train and finished it later at Bardoli.

The version reproduced here was "thoroughly revised" and date-lined "Poona, 13-11-1945". The Foreword and the two Appendices appear in their chronological places under the dates November 13, 1945, January 16, 1946, and January 27, 1948.

never exclusive. It is, therefore, wholly compatible with interdependence within or without. Practice will always fall short of the theory, even as the drawn line falls short of the theoretical line of Euclid. Therefore, complete independence will be complete only to the extent of our approach in practice to truth and non-violence.

Let the reader mentally plan out the whole of the constructive programme, and he will agree with me that, if it could be successfully worked out, the end of it would be the independence we want. Has not Mr. Amery said that an agreement between the major parties, translated in my language, any agreement *after* communal unity which is only one item in the constructive programme, will be respected ? We need not question his sincerity, for if such unity is honestly, i.e., non-violently, attained, it will in itself contain the power to compel acceptance of the agreed demand.

On the other hand there is no such thing as an imaginary or even perfect definition of independence through violence. For it presupposes only ascendancy of that party of the nation which makes the most effective use of violence. In it perfect equality, economic or otherwise, is inconceivable.

But for my purpose, which is to convince the reader of the necessity of following out the constructive programme in the non-violent effort, the acceptance of my argument about the ineffectiveness of violence for the attainment of independence is not required. The reader is welcome to the belief that independence of this humblest unit is possible under a scheme of violence, if this effort enables him also to admit that it is a certainty through the complete execution of the programme by the nation.

Let us now examine the items:

1. COMMUNAL UNITY

Everybody is agreed about the necessity of this unity. But everybody does not know that unity does not mean political unity, which may be imposed. It means an unbreakable heart unity. The first thing essential for achieving such unity is for every Congressman, whatever his religion may be, to represent in his own person Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Jew, etc., shortly, every Hindu and non-Hindu. He has to feel his identity with every one of the millions of the inhabitants of Hindustan. In order to realize this, every Congressman will cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own. He should have the same regard for the other faiths as he has for his own.

In such a happy state of things there would be no disgraceful cry at the stations such as "Hindu water" and "Muslim water" or

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"Hindu tea" and "Muslim tea". There would be no separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in schools and colleges, no communal schools, colleges and hospitals. The beginning of such a revolution has to be made by Congressmen without any political motive behind the correct conduct. Political unity will be its natural fruit.[1]

We have long been accustomed to think that power comes only through Legislative Assemblies. I have regarded this belief as a grave error brought about by inertia or hypnotism. A superficial study of British history has made us think that all power percolates to the people from parliaments. The truth is that power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people. It has been my effort for the last twenty-one years to convince the people of this simple truth. Civil disobedience is the storehouse of power. Imagine a whole people unwilling to conform to the laws of the legislature, and prepared to suffer the consequences of non-compliance. They will bring the whole legislative and executive machinery to a standstill. The police and the military are of use to coerce minorities however powerful they may be. But no police or military coercion can bend the resolute will of a people who are out for suffering to the uttermost.

And parliamentary procedure is good only when its members are willing to conform to the will of the majority. In other words, it is fairly effective only among compatibles.

Here in India we have been pretending to work the parliamentary system under separate electorates which have created artificial incompatibles. Living unity can never come out of these artificial entities being brought together on a common platform. Such legislatures may function. But they can only be a platform for wrangling and sharing the crumbs of power that may fall from rulers whoever they may be. These rule with a rod of iron, and prevent the opposing elements from flying at one another's throats. I hold the emergence of complete independence to be an impossibility out of such a disgrace.

Though I hold such strong views, I have come to the conclusion that so long as there are undesirable candidates for elective

[1] The first edition here has the following additional paragraph: "The implication of such heart unity may seem startling, though it is the logical necessity. Congressmen cannot aim at parliamentary power in opposition to persons of other faiths. Congressmen, therefore, will refrain, so long as these differences last, from entering the parliamentary arena,"

bodies, Congress should put up candidates in order to prevent reactionaries from entering such bodies.

2. Removal of Untouchability

At this time of the day it is unnecessary to dilate upon the necessity of the removal of this blot and curse upon Hinduism. Congressmen have certainly done much in this matter. But I am sorry to have to say that many Congressmen have looked upon this item as a mere political necessity and not something indispensable, so far as Hindus are concerned, for the very existence of Hinduism. If Hindu Congressmen take up the cause for its own sake, they will influence the so-called *sanatanis* far more extensively than they have hitherto done. They should approach them not in a militant spirit but, as befits their non-violence, in a spirit of friendliness. And so far as Harijans are concerned, every Hindu should make common cause with them and befriend them in their awful isolation—such isolation as perhaps the world has never seen in the monstrous immensity one witnesses in India. I know from experience how difficult the task is. But it is part of the task of building the edifice of swaraj. And the road to swaraj is steep and narrow. There are many slippery ascents and many deep chasms. They have all to be negotiated with unfaltering step before we can reach the summit and breathe the fresh air of freedom.

3. Prohibition

Although like communal unity and removal of untouchability prohibition has been on the Congress programme since 1920, Congressmen have not taken the interest they might have taken in this very vital social and moral reform. If we are to reach our goal through non-violent effort, we may not leave to the future government the fate of lakhs of men and women who are labouring under the curse of intoxicants and narcotics.

Medical men can make a most effective contribution towards the removal of this evil. They have to discover ways of weaning the drunkard and the opium addict from the curse.

Women and students have a special opportunity in advancing this reform. By many acts of loving service they can acquire on addicts a hold which will compel them to listen to the appeal to give up the evil habit.

Congress committees can open recreation booths where the tired labourer will rest his limbs, get healthy and cheap refreshments, and find suitable games. All this work is fascinating and uplifting. The non-violent approach to swaraj is a novel approach. In it old values give place to new. In the violent way such reforms

may find no place. Believers in that way, in their impatience and, shall I say, ignorance, put off such things to the day of deliverance. They forget that lasting and healthy deliverance comes from within, i.e., from self-purification. Constructive workers make legal prohibition easy and successful even if they do not pave the way for it.

4. KHADI

Khadi is a controversial subject. Many people think that in advocating khadi I am sailing against a headwind and am sure to sink the ship of swaraj and that I am taking the country to the dark ages. I do not propose to argue the case for khadi in this brief survey. I have argued it sufficiently elsewhere. Here I want to show what every Congressman, and for that matter every Indian, can do to advance the cause of khadi. It connotes the beginning of economic freedom and equality of all in the country. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Let everyone try, and he or she will find out for himself or herself the truth of what I am saying. Khadi must be taken with all its implications. It means a wholesale swadeshi mentality, a determination to find all the necessaries of life in India and that too through the labour and intellect of the villagers. That means a reversal of the existing process. That is to say that, instead of half a dozen cities of India and Great Britain living on the exploitation and the ruin of the 7,00,000 villages of India, the latter will be largely self-contained, and will voluntarily serve the cities of India and even the outside world in so far as it benefits both the parties.

This needs a revolutionary change in the mentality and tastes of many. Easy though the non-violent way is in many respects, it is very difficult in many others. It vitally touches the life of every single Indian, makes him feel aglow with the possession of a power that has lain hidden within himself, and makes him proud of his identity with every drop of the ocean of Indian humanity. This non-violence is not the inanity for which we have mistaken it through all these long ages; it is the most potent force as yet known to mankind and on which its very existence is dependent. It is that force which I have tried to present to the Congress and through it to the world. Khadi to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately, in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, "the livery of India's freedom".

Moreover, khadi mentality means decentralization of the production and distribution of the necessaries of life. Therefore, the formula so far evolved is, every village to produce all its necessaries and a certain percentage in addition for the requirements of the cities.

Heavy industries will needs be centralized and nationalized. But they will occupy the least part of the vast national activity which will mainly be in the villages.

Having explained the implications of khadi, I must indicate what Congressmen can and should do towards its promotion. Production of khadi includes cotton-growing, picking, ginning, cleaning, carding, slivering, spinning, sizing, dyeing, preparing the warp and the woof, weaving, and washing. These, with the exception of dyeing, are essential processes. Every one of them can be effectively handled in the villages and is being so handled in many villages throughout India, which the A.I.S.A. is covering. According to the latest report the following are the interesting figures:

2,75,146 villagers, including 19,654 Harijans and 57,378 Muslims, scattered in at least 13,451 villages, received, as spinners, weavers, etc., Rs. 34,85,609 in 1940. The spinners were largely women.

Yet the work done is only one-hundredth part of what could be done if Congressmen honestly took up the khadi programme. Since the wanton destruction of this central village industry and the allied handicrafts, intelligence and brightness have fled from the villages, leaving them inane, lustreless, and reduced almost to the state of their ill-kept cattle.

If Congressmen will be true to the Congress call in respect of khadi, they will carry out the instructions of the A. I. S. A. issued from time to time as to the part they can play in khadi planning. Only a few broad rules can be laid down here:

1. Every family with a plot of ground can grow cotton at least for family use. Cotton-growing is an easy process. In Bihar the cultivators were by law compelled to grow indigo on 3/20 of their cultivable land. This was in the interest of the foreign indigo planter. Why cannot we grow cotton voluntarily for the nation on a certain portion of our land ? The reader will note that decentralization commences from the beginning of khadi processes. Today cotton crop is centralized and has to be sent to distant parts of India. Before the war it used to be sent principally to Britain and Japan. It was and still is a money crop and, therefore, subject to the fluctuations of the market. Under the khadi scheme cotton-growing becomes free from this uncertainty and gamble. The grower grows what he needs. The farmer needs to know that his first business is to grow for his own needs. When he does that, he will reduce the chance of a low market ruining him.

2. Every spinner would buy—if he has not his own—enough cotton for ginning, which he can easily do without the hand-ginning roller frame. He can gin his own portion with a board and an

iron rolling-pin. Where this is considered impracticable, hand-ginned cotton should be bought and carded. Carding for self can be done well on a tiny bow without much effort. The greater the decentralization of labour, the simpler and cheaper the tools. The slivers made, the process of spinning commences. I strongly recommend the *dhanush takli*. I have used it frequently. My speed on it is almost the same as on the wheel. I draw a finer thread and the strength and the evenness of the yarn are greater on the *dhanush takli* than on the wheel. This may not, however, hold good for all. My emphasis on the *dhanush takli* is based on the fact that it is more easily made, is cheaper than and does not require frequent repairs like the wheel. Unless one knows how to make the two *mals*[1] and to adjust them when they slip or to put the wheel right when it refuses to work, the wheel has often to lie idle. Moreover, if the millions take to spinning at once, as they well may have to,[2] the *dhanush takli*, being the instrument most easily made and handled, is the only tool that can meet the demand. It is more easily made even than the simple *takli*. The best, easiest and cheapest way is to make it oneself. Indeed one ought to learn how to handle and make simple tools. Imagine the unifying and educative effect of the whole nation simultaneously taking part in the processes up to spinning! Consider the levelling effect of the bond of common labour between the rich and the poor!

Yarn thus produced may be used in three ways: by presenting it to the A. I. S. A. for the sake of the poor, by having it woven for personal use, or by getting as much khadi for it as it can buy. It is clear enough that the finer and better the yarn the greater will be its value. If Congressmen will put their hearts into the work, they will make improvements in the tools and make many discoveries. In our country there has been a divorce between labour and intelligence. The result has been stagnation. If there is an indissoluble marriage between the two, and that in the manner here suggested, the resultant good will be inestimable.

In this scheme of nationwide spinning as a sacrifice, I do not expect the average man or woman to give more than one hour daily to this work.

5. Other Village Industries

These stand on a different footing from khadi. There is not much scope for voluntary labour in them. Each industry will take the labour of only a certain number of hands. These industries

[1] Straps

[2] The first edition here has, "even under the stress of war".

come in as a handmaid to khadi. They cannot exist without khadi, and khadi will be robbed of its dignity without them. Village economy cannot be complete without the essential village industries such as hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing, etc. Congressmen can interest themselves in these and, if they are villagers or will settle down in villages, they will give these industries a new life and a new dress. All should make it a point of honour to use only village articles whenever and wherever available. Given the demand there is no doubt that most of our wants can be supplied from our villages. When we have become village-minded, we will not want imitations of the West or machine-made products, but we will develop a true national taste in keeping with the vision of a new India in which pauperism, starvation and idleness will be unknown.

6. Village Sanitation

Divorce between intelligence and labour has resulted in criminal negligence of the villages. And so, instead of having graceful hamlets dotting the land, we have dung-heaps. The approach to many villages is not a refreshing experience. Often one would like to shut one's eyes and stuff one's nose; such is the surrounding dirt and offending smell. If the majority of Congressmen were derived from our villages, as they should be, they should be able to make our villages models of cleanliness in every sense of the word. But they have never considered it their duty to identify themselves with the villagers in their daily lives. A sense of national or social sanitation is not a virtue among us. We may take a kind of a bath, but we do not mind dirtying the well or the tank or river by whose side or in which we perform ablutions. I regard this defect as a great vice which is responsible for the disgraceful state of our villages and the sacred banks of the sacred rivers and for diseases that spring from insanitation.

7. New or Basic Education

This is a new subject. But the members of the Working Committee felt so much interested in it that they gave a charter to the organizers of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh which has been functioning since the Haripura session[1]. This is a big field of work for many Congressmen. This education is meant to transform village children into model villagers. It is principally designed for them. The inspiration for it has come from the villages. Congressmen who want to build up the structure of swaraj from its very foundation

[1] Of the Congress in 1938

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dare not neglect the children. Foreign rule has unconsciously, though none the less surely, begun with the children in the field of education. Primary education is a farce designed without regard to the wants of the India of the villages and for that matter even of the cities. Basic education links the children, whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future, in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school. Congressmen would find it of absorbing interest benefiting themselves equally with the children with whom they come in contact. Let those who wish put themselves in touch with the Secretary of the Sangh at Sevagram.

8. Adult Education

This has been woefully neglected by Congressmen. Where they have not neglected it, they have been satisfied with teaching illiterates to read and write. If I had charge of adult education, I should begin with opening the minds of the adult pupils to the greatness and vastness of their country. The villager's India is contained in his village. If he goes to another village, he talks of his own village as his home. Hindustan is for him a geographical term. We have no notion of the ignorance prevailing in the villages. The villagers know nothing of foreign rule and its evils. What little knowledge they have picked up fills them with the awe the foreigner inspires. The result is the dread and hatred of the foreigner and his rule. They do not know how to get rid of it. They do not know that the foreigner's presence is due to their own weaknesses and their ignorance of the power they possess to rid themselves of the foreign rule. My adult education means, therefore, first, true political education of the adult by word of mouth. Seeing that this will be mapped out, it can be given without fear. I imagine that it is too late in the day for authority to interfere with this type of education; but if there is interference, there must be a fight for this elementary right without which there can be no swaraj. Of course, in all I have written, openness has been assumed. Non-violence abhors fear and, therefore, secrecy. Side by side with the education by the mouth will be the literary education. This is itself a speciality. Many methods are being tried in order to shorten the period of education. A temporary or permanent board of experts may be appointed by the Working Committee to give shape to the idea here adumbrated and guide the workers. I admit that what I have said in this paragraph only points the way but does not tell the average Congressman

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how to go about it. Nor is every Congressman fitted for this highly special work. But Congressmen who are teachers should find no difficulty in laying down a course in keeping with the suggestions made herein.

9. WOMEN

I have included service of women in the constructive programme, for though satyagraha has automatically brought India's women out from their darkness as nothing else could have in such an incredibly short space of time, Congressmen have not felt the call to see that women become equal partners in the fight for swaraj. They have not realized that woman must be the true helpmate of man in the mission of service. Woman has been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she had no hand. In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his. But as every right in a non-violent society proceeds from the previous performance of a duty, it follows that rules of social conduct must be framed by mutual co-operation and consultation. They can never be imposed from outside. Men have not realized this truth in its fulness in their behaviour towards women. They have considered themselves to be lords and masters of women instead of considering them as their friends and co-workers. It is the privilege of Congressmen to give the women of India a lifting hand. Women are in the position somewhat of the slave of old who did not know that he could or ever had to be free. And when freedom came, for the moment he felt helpless. Women have been taught to regard themselves as slaves of men. It is up to Congressmen to see that they enable them to realize their full status and play their part as equals of men.

This revolution is easy, if the mind is made up. Let Congressmen begin with their own homes. Wives should not be dolls and objects of indulgence, but should be treated as honoured comrades in common service. To this end those who have not received a liberal education should receive such instruction as is possible from their husbands. The same observation applies, with the necessary changes, to mothers and daughters.

It is hardly necessary to point out that I have given a one-sided picture of the helpless state of India's women. I am quite conscious of the fact that in the villages generally they hold their own with their menfolk and in some respects even rule them. But to the impartial outsider the legal and customary status of woman is bad enough throughout and demands radical alteration.

10. Education in Health and Hygiene

Having given a place to village sanitation, the question may be asked why give a separate place to education in health and hygiene? It might have been bracketed with sanitation, but I did not wish to interfere with the items. Mention of mere sanitation is not enough to include health and hygiene. The art of keeping one's health and the knowledge of hygiene is by itself a separate subject of study and corresponding practice. In a well-ordered society the citizens know and observe the laws of health and hygiene. It is established beyond doubt that ignorance and neglect of the laws of health and hygiene are responsible for the majority of diseases to which mankind is heir. The very high death-rate among us is no doubt due largely to our gnawing poverty, but it could be mitigated if the people were properly educated about health and hygiene.

Mens sana in corpore sano is perhaps the first law for humanity. A healthy mind in a healthy body is a self-evident truth. There is an inevitable connection between mind and body. If we were in possession of healthy minds, we would shed all violence and, naturally obeying the laws of health, we would have healthy bodies without an effort. I hope, therefore, that no Congressman will disregard this item of the constructive programme. The fundamental laws of health and hygiene are simple and easily learnt. The difficulty is about their observance. Here are some:

Think the purest thoughts and banish all idle and impure thoughts.

Breathe the freshest air day and night.

Establish a balance between bodily and mental work.

Stand erect, sit erect, and be neat and clean in every one of your acts, and let these be an expression of your inner condition.

Eat to live for service of fellow-men. Do not live for indulging yourselves. Hence your food must be just enough to keep your mind and body in good order. Man becomes what he eats.

Your water, food and air must be clean, and you will not be satisfied with mere personal cleanliness, but you will infect your surroundings with the same threefold cleanliness that you will desire for yourselves.

11. Provincial Languages[1]

Our love of the English language in preference to our own mother tongue has caused a deep chasm between the educated and politically-minded classes and the masses. The languages of India

[1] In the first edition this and the following topic are discussed under the heading "Propaganda of Rashtrabhasha".

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have suffered impoverishment. We flounder when we make the vain attempt to express abstruse thought in the mother tongue. There are no equivalents for scientific terms. The result has been disastrous. The masses remain cut off from the modern mind. We are too near our own times correctly to measure the disservice caused to India by this neglect of its great languages. It is easy enough to understand that unless we undo the mischief the mass mind must remain imprisoned. The masses can make no solid contribution to the construction of swaraj. It is inherent in swaraj based on non-violence that every individual makes his own direct contribution to the Independence movement. The masses cannot do this fully unless they understand every step with all its implications. This is impossible unless every step is explained in their own languages.

12. National Language

And then for all-India intercourse we need, from among the Indian stock, a language which the largest number of people already know and understand and which the others can easily pick up. This language is indisputably Hindi. It is spoken and understood by both Hindus and Muslims of the North. It is called Urdu when it is written in the Urdu character. The Congress, in its famous resolution passed at the Cawnpore session in 1925, called this all-India speech Hindustani. And since that time, in theory at least, Hindustani has been the *Rashtrabhasha.* I say "in theory" because even Congressmen have not practised it as they should have.[1] In 1920 a deliberate attempt was begun to recognize the importance of Indian languages for the political education of the masses, as also of an all-India common speech which politically-minded India could easily speak and which Congressmen from the different provinces could understand at all-India gatherings of the Congress. Such national language should enable one to understand and speak both forms of speech and write in both the scripts.

I am sorry to have to say that many Congressmen have failed to carry out that resolution. And so we have, in my opinion, the shameful spectacle of Congressmen insisting on speaking in English and compelling others to do likewise for their sakes. The spell that English has cast on us is not yet broken. Being under it, we are impeding the progress of India towards her goal. Our love of the masses must be skin-deep, if we will not take the trouble of

[1] The first edition here adds: "The picture that I have drawn in this paragraph is true to life as it was before 1920."

spending over learning Hindustani as many months as the years we spend over learning English.[1]

13. Economic Equality

This last is the master-key to non-violent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.

I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it. It is true that it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence. But we made up our minds in 1920 to negotiate that steep ascent. We have found it worth the effort. It involves a daily growing appreciation of the working of non-violence. It is expected that Congressmen will make a diligent search and reason out for themselves the why and the wherefore of[2] non-violence. They should ask themselves how the existing inequalities can be abolished violently or non-violently. I think we know the violent way. It has not succeeded anywhere.[3]

This non-violent experiment is still in the making. We have nothing much yet to show by way of demonstration. It is certain, however, that the method has begun to work though ever so slowly in the direction of equality. And since non-violence is a process of conversion, the conversion, if achieved, must be permanent.

[1] The first edition here has the following additional paragraph: "Love of one's own language: I need hardly add anything to what I have said in the foregoing paragraph. The two propositions hang together for those who view India as one country."

[2] The first edition has after this: "what they are called upon to do," and adds: "They may not be satisfied with the mere conformity, honest or half-hearted, with the instructions issued from time to time."

[3] The first edition here adds: "Some claim that it has in Russia in a large measure. I doubt it. It is too early to make an unchallengeable claim. And now that the war has broken out between Russia and Germany, we are unable to say what the ultimate result will be."

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A society or a nation constructed non-violently must be able to withstand attack upon its structure from without or within. We have moneyed Congressmen in the organization. They have to lead the way. This fight[1] provides an opportunity for the closest heart-searching on the part of every individual Congressman. If ever we are to achieve equality, the foundation has to be laid now. Those who think that major reforms will come after the advent of swaraj are deceiving themselves as to the elementary working of non-violent swaraj. It will not drop from heaven all of a sudden one fine morning. But it has to be built up brick by brick by corporate self-effort. We have travelled a fair way in that direction. But a much longer and weary distance has to be covered before we can behold swaraj in its glorious majesty. Every Congressman has to ask himself what he has done towards the attainment of economic equality.

14. KISANS[2]

The programme is not exhaustive. Swaraj is a mighty structure. Eighty crores of hands have to work at building it.[3] Of these *kisans*, i.e., the peasantry, are the largest part. In fact, being the bulk of them (probably over 80%) the *kisans* should be the Congress. But they are not. When they become conscious of their non-violent strength, no power on earth can resist them.

They must not be used for power politics.[4] I consider it to be contrary to the non-violent method. Those who would know my

[1] The first edition here adds, "which is conceived as the last".

[2] In the first edition this and the succeeding two topics, viz., "Labour" and "Students", are discussed under a single heading "Kisan, Labour and Students", which begins as follows: "I have now finished the inquiry about the thirteen items of the constructive programme. I have attempted to show how each item fits in with the scheme of swaraj and how it can be worked by individual Congressmen.

[3] The first edition here has: "Therefore, many other items of a piece with the thirteen can be added, the centre being always the charkha round which all other activities should come from the charkha.

"The reader will notice, as some of my co-workers have noticed, the absence of any reference of *kisans*, factory hands or labour and students. I have deliberately avoided reference to their work as parts of the constructive programme. They have to work the thirteen items same as any other worker in the cause. My avoidance is not intended to belittle the part they can play in the movement. I am quite conscious of the great importance they have in the movement for freedom. The question underlying the inquiry is who is to organize them and how."

[4] The first edition here has: "About the *kisan* movement too, there is, I fear, an ugly competition to use *kisans* for power politics."

method of organizing *kisans* may profitably study the movement in Champaran[1] when satyagraha was tried for the first time in India with the result all India knows. It became a mass movement which remained wholly non-violent from start to finish. It affected over twenty lakhs of *kisans*. The struggle centred round one specific grievance which was a century old. There had been several violent revolts to get rid of the grievance. The *kisans* were suppressed. The non-violent remedy succeeded in full in six months. The *kisans* of Champaran became politically conscious without any direct effort. The tangible proof they had of the working of non-violence to remove their grievances drew them to the Congress and led by Babu Brijkishore Prasad and Babu Rajendra Prasad they gave a good account of themselves during the past civil disobedience campaigns.

The reader may also profitably study the *kisan* movements in Kheda[2], Bardoli[3] and Borsad[4]. The secret of success lies in a refusal to exploit the *kisans* for political purposes outside their own personal and felt grievances. Organization round a specific wrong they understand. They need no sermons on non-violence. Let them learn to apply non-violence as an effective remedy which they can understand, and later when they are told that the method they were applying was non-violent, they readily recognize it as such.

From these illustrations Congressmen who care could study how work can be done for and among *kisans*. I hold that the method that some Congressmen have followed to organize *kisans* has done them no good and has probably harmed them. Anyway they have not used the non-violent method. Be it said to the credit of some of these workers that they frankly admit that they do not believe in the non-violent method. My advice to such workers would be that they should neither use the Congress name nor work as Congressmen.

The reader will now understand why I have refrained from the competition to organize *kisans* and labour on an all-India basis. How I wish that all hands pulled in the same direction! But perhaps in a huge country like ours it is impossible. Anyway, in non-violence there is no coercion. Cold reason and demonstration of the working of non-violence must be trusted to do the work.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XIII.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XIV.
[3] *Vide* Vol. XXXVI and XXXVII.
[4] *Vide* Vol. XXIII.

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In my opinion, like labour, they should have under the Congress a department working for their specific questions.

15. LABOUR

Ahmedabad Labour Union is a model for all India to copy.[1] Its basis is non-violence, pure and simple. It has never had a set-back in its career. It has gone on from strength to strength without fuss and without show. It has its hospital, its school for the children of the mill-hands, its classes for adults, its own printing press and khadi depot, and its own residential quarters. Almost all the hands are voters and decide the fate of elections. They came on the voters' list at the instance of the Provincial Congress Committee. The organization has never taken part in party politics of the Congress. It influences the municipal policy of the city. It has to its credit very successful strikes which were wholly non-violent. Mill-owners and labour have governed their relations largely through voluntary arbitration. If I had my way, I would regulate all the labour organizations of India after the Ahmedabad model. It has never sought to intrude itself upon the All-India Trade Union Congress and has been uninfluenced by that Congress. A time, I hope, will come when it will be possible for the Trade Union Congress to accept the Ahmedabad method and have the Ahmedabad organization as part of the All-India Union. But I am in no hurry. It will come in its own time.

16. ADIVASIS[2]

The term *adivasi*, like *raniparaj*[3], is a coined word. *Raniparaj* stands for *kaliparaj* (meaning black people, though their skin is no more black than that of any other). It was coined, I think, by Shri Jugatram. The term *adivasi* (for Bhils, Gonds, or others variously described as Hill Tribes or aboriginals) means literally original inhabitants and was coined, I believe, by Thakkar Bapa.

Service of *adivasis* is also a part of the constructive programme. Though they are the sixteenth number in this programme, they are not the least in point of importance. Our country is so vast and the races so varied that the best of us cannot know all there is to know of men and their condition. As one discovers this for oneself, one realizes how difficult it is to make good our claim to be one

[1] The first edition here has: "As to labour, I am responsible for the organization of Ahmedabad labour. I am of the opinion that it is a model for all India to copy."

[2] The first edition does not have this and the following topic.

[3] "Forest people"

nation, unless every unit has a living consciousness of being one with every other.

The *adivasis* are over two crores in all India. Bapa began work among the Bhils years ago in Gujarat. In about 1940 Shri Balasaheb Kher threw himself with his usual zeal into this much-needed service in the Thana District. He is now President of the Adivasi Seva Mandal.

There are several such other workers in other parts of India and yet are too few. Truly, "the harvest is rich but the labourers are few". Who can deny that all such service is not merely humanitarian but solidly national, and brings us nearer to true independence?

17. Lepers

Leper is a word of bad odour. India is perhaps a home of lepers next only to Central Africa. Yet they are as much a part of society as the tallest among us. But the tall absorb our attention though they are least in need of it. The lot of the lepers who are much in need of attention is studied neglect. I am tempted to call it heartless, which it certainly is in terms of non-violence. It is largely the missionary who, be it said to his credit, bestows care on him. The only institution run by an Indian, as a pure labour of love, is by Shri Manohar Diwan near Wardha. It is working under the inspiration and guidance of Shri Vinoba Bhave. If India was pulsating with new life, if we were all in earnest about winning independence in the quickest manner possible by truthful and non-violent means, there would not be a leper or beggar in India uncared for and unaccounted for. In this revised edition I am deliberately introducing the leper as a link in the chain of constructive effort. For what the leper is in India, that we are, if we but look about us, for the modern civilized world. Examine the condition of our brethren across the ocean and the truth of my remark will be borne home to us.

18. Students

I have reserved students to the last. I have always cultivated close contact with them. They know me and I know them. They have given me service. Many ex-collegians are my esteemed co-workers. I know that they are the hope of the future. In the heyday of non-co-operation they were invited to leave their schools and colleges. Some professors and students who responded to the Congress call have remained steadfast and gained much for the country and themselves. The call has not been repeated for there is not the atmosphere for it. But experience has shown that the lure of the current education, though it is false and unnatural, is

too much for the youth of the country. College education provides a career. It is a passport for entrance to the charmed circle. Pardonable hunger for knowledge cannot be satisfied otherwise than by going through the usual rut. They do not mind the waste of precious years in acquiring knowledge of an utterly foreign language which takes the place of the mother tongue. The sin of it is never felt. They and their teachers have made up their minds that the indigenous languages are useless for gaining access to modern thought and the modern sciences. I wonder how the Japanese are faring. For their education, I understand, is all given in Japanese. The Chinese Generalissimo knows very little, if anything, of English.

But such as the students are, it is from these young men and women that the future leaders of the nation are to rise. Unfortunately they are acted upon by every variety of influences. Non-violence offers them little attraction. A blow for a blow or two for one is an easily understandable proposition. It seems to yield immediate result though momentary. It is a never-ending trial of brute strength as we see in time of war among brutes or among human beings. Appreciation of non-violence means patient research and still more patient and difficult practice. I have not entered the list of competitors for the students' hand, for the reasons that have dictated my course about *kisans* and labour. But I am myself a fellow-student, using the word in its broader sense. My university is different from theirs. They have a standing invitation from me to come to my university and join me in my search. Here are the terms:

1. Students must not take part in party politics. They are students, searchers, not politicians.

2. They may not resort to political strikes. They must have their heroes, but their devotion to them is to be shown by copying the best in their heroes, not by going on strikes, if the heroes are imprisoned or die or are even sent to the gallows. If their grief is unbearable and if all the students feel equally, schools or colleges may be closed on such occasions, with the consent of their principals. If the principals will not listen, it is open to the students to leave their institutions in a becoming manner till the managers repent and recall them. On no account may they use coercion against dissentients or against the authorities. They must have the confidence that if they are united and dignified in their conduct, they are sure to win.

3. They must all do sacrificial spinning in a scientific manner. Their tools shall be always neat, clean, and in good order and

condition. If possible, they will learn to make them themselves. Their yarn will naturally be of the highest quality. They will study the literature about spinning with all its economic, social, moral and political implications.

4. They will be khadi-users all through and use village products to the exclusion of all analogous things, foreign or machine-made.

5. They may not impose *Vandemataram* or the national flag on others. They may wear national flag buttons on their own persons but not force others to do the same.

6. They can enforce the message of the tricolour flag in their own persons and harbour neither communalism nor untouchability in their hearts. They will cultivate real friendship with students of other faiths and with Harijans as if they were their own kith and kin.

7. They will make it a point to give first aid to their injured neighbours and do scavenging and cleaning in the neighbouring villages and instruct village children and adults.

8. They will learn the national language, Hindustani, in its present double dress, two forms of speech and two scripts, so that they may feel at home whether Hindi or Urdu is spoken and Nagari or Urdu script is written.

9. They will translate into their own mother tongue everything new they may learn, and transmit it in their weekly rounds to the surrounding villages.

10. They will do nothing in secret, they will be above board in all their dealings, they will lead a pure life of self-restraint, shed all fear and be always ready to protect their weak fellow-students, and be ready to quell riots by non-violent conduct at the risk of their lives. And when the final heat of the struggle comes, they will leave their institutions and, if need be, sacrifice themselves for the freedom of their country.

11. They will be scrupulously correct and chivalrous in their behaviour towards their girl fellow-students.

For working out the programme I have sketched for them, the students must find time. I know that they waste a great deal of time in idleness. By strict economy, they can save many hours. But I do not want to put an undue strain upon any student. I would, therefore, advise patriotic students to lose one year, not at a stretch but spread it over their whole study. They will find that one year so given will not be a waste of time. The effort will add to their equipment, mental, moral and physical, and they will have made even during their studies a substantial contribution to the freedom movement.

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PLACE OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

I have said in these pages that civil disobedience is not absolutely necessary to win freedom through purely non-violent effort, if the co-operation of the whole nation is secured in the constructive programme. But such good luck rarely favours nations or individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to know the place of civil disobedience in a nationwide non-violent effort.

It has three definite functions:

1. It can be effectively offered for the redress of a local wrong.
2. It can be offered without regard to effect, though aimed at a particular wrong or evil, by way of self-immolation in order to rouse local consciousness or conscience. Such was the case in Champaran when I offered civil disobedience without any regard to the effect and well knowing that even the people might remain apathetic. That it proved otherwise may be taken, according to taste, as God's grace or a stroke of good luck.
3. In the place of full response to constructive effort, it can be offered as it was in 1941[1]. Though it was a contribution to and part of the battle for freedom, it was purposely centred round a particular issue, i.e., free speech. Civil disobedience can never be directed for a general cause such as for independence. The issue must be definite and capable of being clearly understood and within the power of the opponent to yield. This method properly applied must lead to the final goal.

I have not examined here the full scope and possibilities of civil disobedience. I have touched enough of it to enable the reader to understand the connection between the constructive programme and civil disobedience. In the first two cases, no elaborate constructive programme was or could be necessary. But when civil disobedience is itself devised for the attainment of independence, previous preparation is necessary, and it has to be backed by the visible and conscious effort of those who are engaged in the battle. Civil disobedience is thus a stimulation for the fighters and a challenge to the opponent. It should be clear to the reader that civil disobedience in terms of independence without the co-operation of the millions by way of constructive effort is mere bravado and worse than useless.

CONCLUSION

This is not a thesis written on behalf of the Congress or at the instance of the Central Office. It is the outcome of conversations I had with some co-workers in Sevagram. They had felt the want

[1] The first edition here has: "as it is being offered at present."

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of something from my pen showing the connection between the constructive programme and civil disobedience and how the former might be worked. I have endeavoured to supply the want in this pamphlet. It does not purport to be exhaustive, but it is sufficiently indicative of the way the programme should be worked.

Let not the reader make the mistake of laughing at any of the items as being part of the movement for independence. Many people do many things, big and small, without connecting them with non-violence or independence. They have then their limited value as expected. The same man appearing as a civilian may be of no consequence, but appearing in his capacity as General he is a big personage, holding the lives of millions at his mercy. Similarly, the charkha in the hands of a poor widow brings a paltry pice to her, in the hands of a Jawaharlal it is an instrument of India's freedom. It is the office which gives the charkha its dignity. It is the office assigned to the constructive programme which gives it an irresistible prestige and power.

Such at least is my view. It may be that of a mad man. If it makes no appeal to the Congressman, I must be rejected. For my handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon.

Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place

228. THE PLACE OF SILK

Shri Jajuji writes:[1]

All these are good points. They have also been pretty well discussed. But some questions are raised again and again and need to be discussed again and again.

I shall answer the questions in the order in which they have been asked.

(1) The question of violence and non-violence does arise, for there is violent silk and non-violent silk. The best thing of course is for people who like to consider everything from the point of view of non-violence to give up silk altogether.

[1] The letter is not translated here. Shrikrishnadas Jaju, Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association, had formulated the following views and sought Gandhiji's opinion on them: (1) Bearing in mind that sericulture involves violence, the worker should give it at best secondary importance; (2) silk competes with fine khadi; (3) it tends to make people luxury-loving; and (4) it calls for a much larger capital outlay.

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But from the point of view of khadi we should not raise this question. We should stock both kinds of silk in our bhandars, though we should give encouragement only to non-violent silk.

(2) We should never allow silk to reach a point where it can compete with khadi. The idea behind giving a place to silk was that it should supplement khadi. It has also been the view that hand-spun silk is always to be preferred to foreign silk and silk manufactured in Indian mills. But silk must never be given the place of cotton cloth. That is why a limit has been put upon the quantity of silk to be stocked in khadi bhandars.

(3) This is not an important point. In a way even Andhra khadi, coloured khadi and khadi with woven designs make us luxury-loving. Khadi is as much for the fastidious as it is for the poor. From the very beginning it has been our endeavour to introduce into khadi as much beauty and decoration as we can. We display this at every khadi exhibition. We have been showing progress in the appearance of khadi every year. This was and still is the correct [attitude]. Khadi-mindedness does not mean that art and design should have no place in khadi, and that it is to be only the attire of the poor. Therefore the restraint we should place on ourselves here is that we should put what art and design we can into khadi and be satisfied. From this point of view silk is to be and should be discarded. From this point of view too we compare the fine Andhra khadi with silk. Then the silk-lovers say they find silk cheaper than the Andhra khadi. I answer that we cannot advance the work of khadi in this way. Khadi, though it may be costly, comes out cheap in the end.

(4) If silk-making calls for twice as large a capital outlay, we have a very strong reason for giving it up. But having regard to human nature we do not or cannot wholly renounce silk. In our definition of khadi we have given a place to hand-spun silk and hand-spun wool. But we cannot encourage woollens and silk with a view to increasing profits. There will have to be some restraint in regard to these. Service of the millions is possible only through cotton khadi.

BARDOLI, December 13, 1941

[From Hindi]

Khadi Jagat, December 1941

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229. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

BARDOLI,
December 13, 1941

CHI. MIRA,

This is just to tell you that you are never out of my mind. I was immersed in writing work which is just finished. I hope you are getting stronger and having greater inner peace.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

I am in excellent form.

From the original: C.W. 6491. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9886

230. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

December 13, 1941

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter. I am glad Indu will be coming with you. There is no winter worth the name here. The nights are cool, the days hot.

The questions we have to discuss are many. I trust you and Maulana Saheb will be here before the date of the Working Committee.

I have heavy meetings of the A. I. S. A. and G. S. S. beginning from 17th. I expect to finish all on 20th.

Sardar is bearing himself well.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1941. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

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231. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

December 13, 1941

CHI. ANAND,[1]

I am now comparatively free to write to you. The photograph I have signed.

You may publish the books according to your notion. But it is not possible to bind Jivanji[2] not to publish anything of the kind himself. You are catering for one class of readers, he for another. You have no pecuniary ambition, nor has J. All the earnings from the books, etc., go to the public purpose, so I must not prevent either.

You can pass on to me all the requests for translations.

I hope you are better and that Vidya[3] is flourishing.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI ANAND HINGORANI
UPPER SINDH COLONY
KARACHI SADAR

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

232. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

December 13, 1941

CHI. PRABHA,

How is it that there is not a single letter from you? Ba makes inquiries every day. How are you and what are you doing? And is your work now properly arranged? My health is fine. There is no sign of winter yet.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3563

[1] The superscription is in the Devanagari script.
[2] Jivanji D. Desai, Manager, Navajivan Press
[3] Addressee's wife

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233. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

December 13, 1941

CHI. SHARMA,

How are you getting on? How do you pass your day? I am somewhat worried. I am here till January 9.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 309

234. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

BARDOLI,
December 14, 1941

CHI. DEVDAS,

You will be released soon now. I shall expect a detailed letter from you. You must have got in jail all the rest you needed. Did you eat jail food or did you get any from outside? Who were your companions, how did you spend the month, how much weight did you lose or gain? What was the result of the appeal?

Ramu was to follow you. Tell him that he will be my first satyagrahi next time and ask him to win over the jailors.

I hope Lakshmi and the others were all right during your absence.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am perfectly happy here in Sardar's regime.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2145

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235. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

December 14, 1941

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I hope you are well. Be patient both in solving your mental problems and doing your work. Do only what you can. Kanchan is getting along. It is rather warm here. There is no sign at all of winter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8482. Also C.W. 7161. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

236. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

December 14, 1941

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I keep thinking about your health. You must bring it round. Sankaran wrote and told me that he was planning something. Write to me and give me the news. Babu is expected in a day or two.

I am all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10605

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237. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

BARDOLI,
December 15, 1941

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

Of course I will try to show you how utterly wrong you are. But when a man believes in a different philosophy from the one another subscribes to, it is difficult for that other to carry conviction. Such is my plight.

You quote from the Bible but your application is quite new and utterly selfish. You turn a donation into a debt. What is to be done? I brought you out of Bengal because you were disgusted and now you think that you did me a favour in coming out.

Of course a labourer is worthy of his hire. You want money without work. And when you do work, you want more than the highest you and I have agreed upon, viz., 8 as. for 8 hours' work. But you think you have a claim upon me, i.e., society, for Rs. 2-12 per day for practically very little work. Let me not be misunderstood. I know Abha is doing something, so also perhaps you. But your letter shows that even if all of you were doing nothing, you will claim the above amount as if it was a right. I suggest to you that you are wholly wrong in making the claim and defending it on high morality. My notion is different. I must not carry the argument any further.

God will give you light if you are humble and will seek it in the right spirit.

If my letter does not convince, you should wait till we can meet some day, if ever we do. Meanwhile we must agree to differ.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10330. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

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238. LETTER TO CHANDAN S. KALELKAR

December 15, 1941

CHI. CHANDAN,

I am glad that you wrote to me, though only from a selfish motive.[1] You would certainly have money in Baroda, but your Prince may have to sell his soul there. Occasions may arise in Indian States when, if you refuse to obey the State's order, you would in no time find yourself disgraced. That is why, when an opportunity arose earlier, it was decided that a hundred rupees elsewhere would be preferable to a lakh in an Indian State. You will not get elsewhere the opportunity for service which you two have in Kashi. Did you not know, when you decided to marry Shankar, that he was a poor man's son and had grown up in simplicity, that he was a man of self-respect and that he would be prepared to sacrifice his all for the sake of his honour? Yes, he might welcome comfort if he can have it by straightforward means. Perhaps there is this difference between Kaka and him.

See that you do not tempt Shankar. If he is patient, he will rise where he is at present. What he earns is enough to meet your needs. Have patience. Remember the line "Be equi-minded in happiness and suffering, for they are born with the body", and let Shankar follow his straight path.

You and Baby will be well. I have written at greater length than I had intended. Of course I could not afford the time, but, then, it was you!

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 955. Courtesy: Satish D. Kalelkar

[1] The addressee had complained about her husband's reluctance to take up a more lucrative job in Baroda.

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239. LETTER TO TARAMATI M. TRIKUMJI

December 15, 1941

If Mathuradas[1] is destined to render still more service, he will come to no harm. I have no doubt in my mind that if he observes complete silence and fixes his thoughts exclusively on God, that would be the best medicine.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, pp. 181-2

240. LETTER TO NARENDRA DEV

BARDOLI,
December 16, 1941

BHAI NARENDRA DEV,

I deliberately withheld the reply to your letter. I was hesitating to say no. In the mean while other demands also started coming in. I realized that the time for accepting invitations had gone. I resisted many from Kashi. But I could not reject them all. How long could I resist Malaviyaji's pressure? So please spare me Lucknow.

I hope you are all right. Will you come here?

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi: Gandhi–Nehru Correspondence. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] Addressee's husband

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241. LETTER TO SUNDERLAL

December 16, 1941

BHAI SUNDERLAL,

I have your letter. Your optimism is terrific. I have answered Sultana.[1] She has not written back. I am ready. So far as I am concerned there is no quarrel.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

242. LETTER TO SULTANA RAZIA

BARDOLI,
December 17, 1941

MY DEAR SULTANA,

I have your letter. I will write to Maulana Saheb. You have to come again.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10860

243. SPEECH AT A. I. S. A. MEETING

BARDOLI,
December 17, 1941

I had received Jajuji's letter[2] many days ago. I liked many things in the letter. But I feel that we should have some discussion on the letter today. If I were to put down the things that Jajuji

[1] *Vide* p. 114.

[2] Saying that khadi workers did not show the qualities of self-sacrifice and hard work required of them

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has said in his letter, my language would have been a little different though the substance would have been the same. The principles he has enunciated are sound. It is another matter to what extent they can be put into practice. But it is better that we clearly understand the principles. When the principles have been clearly formulated we are able to look at things in a uniform way. There is then no room left for disagreements. If there is some slackness in practice we must put in more effort. What else could we do but make the effort?

As Jajuji has pointed out, no matter how much khadi we produce, if we have not understood the principles behind khadi, khadi work is bound to languish. India wore khadi even before. Indeed, we exported khadi to the biggest countries of the world. But we cannot pride ourselves upon it today. Khadi then was not associated with politics. Kings and officials, out of avarice, forced the poor to part with khadi and sold it to make themselves rich. This makes it difficult for us even today to explain khadi activity to the masses.

But today we agree that khadi is the means to our freedom. This first occurred to me in 1908. The very thing that was a cause of our slavery will open the door to our freedom. We have to understand this.

We have therefore based khadi on truth and non-violence. If we forget it and think of producing khadi anyhow, a time will come when we shall be burning khadi. No other constructive activity is so much ridiculed and denounced as khadi. The coming of the mills has given people all the more occasion to do so. In their own way they are justified. Since khadi was there in the past, they ask, why did we become slaves. How can we treat the same khadi as a means to our freedom? It is the duty of the Sangh to answer them. This is the question Jajuji has placed before us.

We have to produce khadi on a large scale. We also have to think how. But if we forget truth and non-violence, no matter how much khadi we may produce, we shall lose it in the end. If we do not hold on to the basic thing, impurities will creep in. Khadi workers should therefore see that the whole khadi business is kept pure. Today when we contemplate producing khadi on a mass scale we ought not to forget the basic thing. Today I shall not say that all our spinners too should understand truth and non-violence. But I must say this about our 3,000 workers. If they do not abide by truth and non-violence we shall sink. Shri Bharatanandaji has formulated a graduated plan to provide for meeting the demand of khadi for the whole of India at the end of

ten years. Today the plan is a mere set of figures on paper. But it can be turned into reality. How is it possible, however, if we do not find good workers? If we but make up our minds we can become really good workers. Jajuji is right in giving this matter the first place. The question before us is: 'How can we produce such workers?' If we are always awake we shall develop the spirit of non-violence and self-sacrifice. Even a votary of violence is capable of self-sacrifice. Hitler too is said to be self-sacrificing. He is violence incarnate. It is said he is a vegetarian. I find it difficult to imagine how, if he is one, he is able to countenance so much slaughter. Anyway, his is said to be a life of self-sacrifice. He has no vices. He has not married. His character is said to be clean. He is always alert. What we require is both self-sacrifice and non-violence. Non-violence means love. First the chief workers should manifest it. We may begin with myself, then Jajuji and then the members of the Council. Let us be vigilant and alert. Our example is bound to influence the workers, even if unconsciously. Then we shall be able to make ourselves free of doubts and fears about khadi. It does not matter if our speed is slow. We must never renounce the principles we have evolved. If we do not forsake them, we are bound to be successful.[1]

The question of a living wage is a difficult one.[2] I myself have not been able to form any opinion on it. If I come across a man who is good and qualified I should be tempted. I shouldn't want to lose him. If we frame a certain rule then we must follow that rule. I have been trying to frame some rule. But we must confess that at the moment we are helpless. We cannot frame a rule which will make it difficult for us to find workers. To make such a rule would mean that we do not move with the times. We shall thereby even lose the ability to pay a wage of three annas to each spinner. It is true and just that if we pay spinners three annas we should ourselves learn to live on three annas. Today we are taking many times more than what the spinners get. Even the lowest paid worker amongst us receives many times more. But I must confess with shame that this disparity has put us in difficulties. However, I have no satisfactory solution.

[From Hindi]

Khadi Jagat, December 1941, and January 1942

[1] What follows is from *Khadi Jagat*, December 1941.

[2] Shrikrishnadas Jaju had also raised certain questions concerning a living wage for khadi workers and suggested that the workers should be satisfied with what they got.

244. LETTER TO MIRABEHN[1]

December 18, 1941

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. Of course, you should now have your correspondence and everything. You must lead your own natural life without let or hindrance and grow to your fullest stature. The heat here continues but I bear it well. The place is full but Sardar's arrangements are perfect.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 10874. Courtesy: Prithvi Singh

245. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

BARDOLI,
December 19, 1941

As the war approaches the Indian border, people begin to get scared. I have a typical letter from Assam and others from various parts. They expect guidance from me as a war-resister and director of satyagraha.

So far as satyagraha is concerned, in areas such as Assam responsible Congressmen should not offer satyagraha but should devote themselves to steadying those who are under Congress influence.

As to the guidance of those who would listen to the Congress or me, the people will presently have directions from the Working Committee.

But so far as I am concerned, I am quite clear that the people should refuse to be scared even though bombs may be dropped in their midst. For the time being at any rate the danger is to be expected only in the big cities. Those who do not wish to run any risk would do well quietly to leave their cities.

It is wrong to make a rush on every scare and crowd the railway stations. The railway staff cannot possibly cope with sudden

[1] The addressee had sent this along with a letter to Prithvi Singh.

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rushes. It is unmanly to rush for saving oneself. A wise and brave man will wait till the last man is safely out. What I have said applies to all Congressmen and others. I would not like it to be said of us as a nation that we run about like mad men on the approach of the slightest danger. We must face bravely any situation that may befall us.

Congressmen who are war-resisters will remain at their posts and offer such assistance to the people as is within their power. They will run, at any risk, to the help of those who may be injured.

Whilst I have been and am still against Congressmen joining A.R.P., I have never thought or suggested that Congressmen should leave points of danger or fields of service.

It is not necessary to belong to any Government organization to be able to render effective service without expectation of reward or praise.

The chief thing is to preserve complete equanimity, no matter what danger faces us. This is especially so for those who are war-resisters and fear no enemy.

The Bombay Chronicle, 20-12-1941

246. TELEGRAM TO THIMMA REDDY[1]

December 19, 1941

NEVER SAID CONGRESSMEN SHOULD NOT.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

247. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

BARDOLI,
December 19, 1941

CHI. LILI,

I have your two letters. Who is to blame if, even though I write, you do not get the letter? I dropped you a postcard on December 10. After that I have a letter from you only today.

[1] The addressee who was President, Nandidurga Labour Association, had in his telegram dated December 18 sought Gandhiji's advice regarding the propaganda carried on by the Ramachandra group that Gandhiji disapproved of Congressmen guiding labour organizations.

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You must make good preparation. You are not forbidden to come here, but overcome that temptation if you can and go on studying there. The gas trouble was due to your own negligence. Ba had fever. Mahadevbhai has taken away Durga[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati:C.W. 10114. Courtesy:Lilavati Asar

248. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

BARDOLI,
December 20, 1941

I have been asked for a brief statement on the entry of America in the war. It is not possible for me to join the chorus of current opinion. I cannot welcome this entry of America. American tradition singles her out as an arbitrator and mediator between the warring nations. By her territorial vastness, amazing energy, unrivalled financial status and owing to the composite character of her people she is the one country which could have saved the world from the unthinkable butchery that is going on.

I do not know whether America could have avoided the entry. I have no data for giving a decisive opinion on the question. I have only expressed my fervent wish that it might have been possible for her to play her natural part. It is tragic to contemplate that with America as party to the war there is no great Power left which can mediate and bring about peace for which I have no doubt the peoples of all lands are thirsting. It is a strange phenomenon that the human wish is paralysed by the creeping effect of the war fever.

The Bombay Chronicle, 21-12-1941

[1] Mahadev Desai's wife
[2] Gandhiji gave this statement in response to a request from abroad.

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249. MESSAGE TO BHAGINI SAMAJ, BOMBAY

BARDOLI,
December 20, 1941

I hope the silver jubilee of the Bhagini Samaj will be celebrated in a splendid manner and the Samaj will grow from day to day.

M. K. GANDHI

BHAGINI SAMAJ
MAGANLAL GHIA BUILDING
255 KHETWADI MAIN ROAD
BOMBAY 4

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Bapujini Shital Chhayaman*, facing p. 1

250. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

December 20, 1941

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. Your mother and brother were here only yesterday. I also would have been happy if you had been here. Nothing is certain about Ahmedabad. I shall let you know if I decide to go. It is enough for me that you are quietly doing your work there. Ba has been slightly ill. She is better now. Mahadev has gone to Unai with Durga, but she has taken ill there. There is no cause for worry. Tell Nanabhai that Bhai Vithaldas Jerajani wishes to join the Kathiawar Khadi Committee. They should take him and inform him, and invite him to attend when a meeting is called.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7143. Also C.W. 4635. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

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251. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

December 20, 1941

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. You can introduce this change immediately. The telephone cabin should be located outside the office, so that the telephone would be accessible even when the office is closed and the cabin should be so fitted that the receiver could be picked up from inside the office and the telephone used whenever necessary. If it can be shifted outside the dak-room, there would be sufficient accommodation. If you have followed this, make the change. This answers your question. I have spared some hours for Kanchan. She is getting on with her studies.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7162. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

252. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SWARAJ ASHRAM, BARDOLI,
December 21, 1941

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Get the work done through the All-India Spinners' Association as suggested by Bhai Jugalkishore in his letter. We will certainly spend as much as possible in Kangra as also in Pilani.

I think it would be best to call a meeting of the A. I. C. C. in Wardha. If you agree, send invitations by wire. The meeting should start on the day after my arrival and be over before the 19th.

Indu has come here.

I hope Madalasa is all right. The baby must be growing.

I missed you very much at the All-India Spinners' Association and will miss you again at the Working Committee. But I think your good lies in my not pressing you.

I am keeping good health. I hope you too are all right.

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You can fix a meeting of the Goseva Sangh on any date after January 27. Has Janakimaiya[1] returned? I hope she has not spoiled her health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3027

253. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

December 21, 1941

CHI. SHARMA,

I am not worried about the house. My worry is this: You do not carry on your work as a physician in the way I would like you to do. There are so many sick persons in the Ashram. Why do you not treat them? If a man or a woman falls ill I cannot send you to attend to the patient. So far as I know you do nothing at Khurja, either. You have given me to understand that you can do nothing until the house is ready. Where there are houses already you will not work. Do you follow what I mean? I have a moral responsibility towards you. It irks me that I cannot give a satisfactory account to people about you. Patients come to me. Why should I have to call a doctor rather than you? Your letter which is before me gives me no satisfaction. I have not written this for the sake of argument.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

254. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

December 24, 1941

CHI. JAMNALAL,

How foolish and selfish I am! I had no consideration for your health, and thought only of myself. I sought your permission but did not wait for it, and insisted on the Committee holding the meeting at Wardha.[2] In this I committed violence and that too

[1] Janakidevi, addressee's wife
[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, pp. 182-3.

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not of an ordinary kind. I misused our friendship, your generosity. To beg pardon of you is no atonement. True atonement would be not to repeat such callousness towards you or anyone else.

You only deserve to be congratulated. You were courageous enough to tell me what you felt and also accepted your limitations.[1] This is not a small thing. Do not worry at all. By your saying no, my regard and love for you have only increased, if that were possible.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3028

255. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

BARDOLI,
December 27, 1941

The action of the Bihar Government in banning the meeting of the Hindu Mahasabha has always appeared to me to be inexplicable.[2] Those who had proclaimed their desire to hold the meeting were responsible men and, what is more, so far as I am aware, trusted by the Central Government and known to be pro-Government. They had and have identified themselves with the war effort. Why such people could not be trusted by the Bihar Provincial Government to behave decently passes my comprehension. I see that Vir Savarkar[3] had accommodated the Bihar authorities to the extent of postponing the session with a view to coming to an understanding.

When all attempts at a settlement failed, civil resistance was the only remedy open to the suppressed Hindu Mahasabha. And I must confess it fills me with delight to find Vir Savarkar, Dr. Moonje and other leaders being arrested[4] in their attempt to assert the very primary and very fundamental right of holding an orderly meeting subject to all reasonable restrictions about the preservation of the public peace. I observe that even Dr. Shyama

[1] The addressee had expressed his inability to make arrangements for the A.I.C.C. meeting at Wardha.

[2] The Bihar Government had banned the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha from being held between December 1, 1941 and January 10, 1942, "so as to avoid the possibility of communal clashes" at the time of Bakr-id.

[3] V. D. Savarkar, President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha

[4] On December 23

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Prasad, the new Finance Minister of the Bengal Government, has successfully courted arrest by committing the same honourable offence that his colleagues have committed. I congratulate the leaders of the Sabha on their dignified and peaceful protest against the utterly arbitrary action of the Bihar Government. There is surely something terribly wrong in it. But out of evil somehow or other good often results. Let me hope that this action of the Bihar Government has brought the Hindus and Muslims of Bihar, and even all India, together on the common platform of human liberty. For I am quite sure that the Muslim League could not possibly wish the denial to their sister organization of a liberty which they could claim for themselves. I hope that there will be only one end to this Bihar episode, viz., lifting of the ban on the Hindu Mahasabha and the men who are imprisoned today holding their session without let or hindrance.

The Hindu, 28-12-1941

256. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SWARAJ ASHRAM, BARDOLI,
December 27, 1941

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter. I have accepted Punamchandji's[1] suggestion believing that he would give you no trouble and that he has the ability to complete this work[2]. I cannot think of your taking any trouble in this regard.

Indu will certainly come on the occasion of the A. I. C. C. [meeting]. She is happy here.

About the States' People's Conference, as discussed between us I have given my opinion that its office should be brought over to Wardha.

Bapu could not finish this but wants it to be dispatched as it is....

AMRIT KAUR

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3029

[1] Punamchand Ranka, President, Nagpur Provincial Congress Committee
[2] Of arranging the A.I.C.C. meeting at Wardha

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257. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

December 27, 1941

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I had hoped to write to you at length on purity. But I have not a minute to spare. I will say in brief that a person who understands the relation between the body and the spirit can easily attain inner purity by meticulously practising external purity. On the contrary, one who disregards external purity in the struggle for inner purity loses both.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4408

258. LETTER TO NELLIE FISCHER[1]

BARDOLI,
December 28, 1941

DEAR SISTER,

I have yours of October 17th received yesterday.

To send you season's greetings is a mockery when hatred reigns supreme and God of Love and Truth is disowned.

Here are a few lines for your book[2].

"I had the privilege of coming in close contact with the late Bishop Fischer. He seemed to me to be one among the few Christians who walked in the fear of the Lord and therefore feared no man."

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Wife of Frederick B. Fischer
[2] Biography of Frederick B. Fischer

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259. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

December 28, 1941

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Babudi has gone to Surat. Anand had cough and felt uncomfortable in the crowded atmosphere here. They will come here on Tuesday to get Anand's stitches removed. I shall try and detain them.

Shakaribehn has gone to Ahmedabad. Ba has gone to Maroli for four days.

I hope you are doing well.

What did you do about the book and the money with Surendra? Does Lakshmidas wish now to work under Balvantsinha?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10606

260. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

BARDOLI,
December 28, 1941

CHI. BABUDI,

I was not at all happy to let you go, but I felt that I ought to. When I told Ba, she got angry. She said she was not at all inconvenienced. I would be glad if you come over on Tuesday prepared to stay here longer. The doctor says he can treat Anand only if he can examine him daily. Ba has gone to Maroli and I have sent Sumi with her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10041. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

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261. MESSAGE TO ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

[Before *December 29, 1941*][1]

The most important work before the Conference is to recognize the special obligation of the women of India to enforce the constructive programme which I have put before the nation in my recent pamphlet[2]. It should satisfy the highest ambition for service of the tallest woman in India.

The Hindu, 31-12-1941

262. DISCUSSION AT WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING[3]

[On or before *December 30, 1941*][4]

So far as I am concerned, even if I was given the utmost power conceivable, even if I was made the Viceroy of India today, would I ask the people of India to take up the sword to keep the Empire alive? I for one should feel that I was committing moral suicide in that I would be abandoning the faith of a lifetime, the faith which I had persuaded the Congress to accept for twenty years as a policy. The steady unflinching pursuit of that policy has brought us quite close to the achievement of the objective. Am I to abandon the very boat which has brought me quite close to the

[1] The sixteenth session of the All-India Women's Conference commenced in Cocanada from December 29 under the Presidentship of Vijayalakshmi Pandit.

[2] *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*; *vide* pp. 146-66.

[3] In his article "The Month in Bardoli–I" from which this discussion is reproduced, Mahadev Desai gives the following introduction: "Though the actual decision [of the Working Committee] came to be made on the basis of the interpretation of the Bombay Resolution, what was of vital importance was the actual feeling in the minds of men. No matter how the Bombay Resolution was interpreted, were we clear about certain fundamentals? Were we clear that the policy of non-violence that we had followed, to the best of our ability, for twenty years was no religious creed or for no religious purpose, but a wholly political method for the achievement of the political independence of India? Gandhiji had no doubt on the question. The next question was—could we at this critical hour in our nation's history give up that policy even for the sake of proffered freedom?"

[4] The Congress Working Committee meeting concluded on December 30, 1941.

shore? Yudhishthira[1] would not forsake his faithful dog and enter the gates of Heaven without him. For he knew that the Kingdom of Heaven would be as naught to him without the dog, i.e., his faith. Would the Arab (i.e., the Congress) give up towards the end of the journey the faithful steed (i.e., non-violence) that had made it possible for [him][2] to make that journey? It would be an act of betrayal or faithlessness on my part. Could I, when the war is at my door and when I am in the same predicament as they, forget the sovereign remedy I suggested to them[3] and clutch at the method I have denounced and discarded? No matter what the country would say, what should be the attitude of individual Congressmen who had sworn by the method of non-violence?

He was clear that, if it was felt that we had committed a mistake, that it was worth while bargaining a principle for what seemed to be a richer gain, they should declare their conviction, and if and when the objective was gained, they should convert the whole of India into a recruiting ground, ask every man and woman to contribute his or her share in the war effort, and even extinguish themselves in so doing. What was needed was downright honesty. He at any rate had never conceived this possibility. If he knew that some day India would have to engage in a violent war in order to win independence, he would long ago have addressed every youth to go in for military discipline, and he would not have placed tireless emphasis, day in and day out, on the various items of the constructive programme.

Harijan, 18-1-1942

263. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

BARDOLI,
December 30, 1941

DEAR MAULANA SAHIB,

In the course of discussion in the Working Committee, I discovered that I had committed a grave error in the interpretation of the Bombay Resolution. I had interpreted it to mean that the Congress was to refuse participation in the present or all wars on the ground principally of non-violence. I found to my astonishment that most

[1] Eldest of the Pandavas, also known as Dharmaraja for his adherence to truth

[2] The source has "it".

[3] Gandhiji had advised the same course to the Abyssinians (Vol. LXI, pp. 301-2), the Chinese, the Gzechs, the Spaniards (Vol. LXVII, pp. 250-2, 404-6 and 428), and the Poles (Vol. LXX, pp. 141 and 163-4).

members differed from my interpretation and held that the opposition need not be on the ground of non-violence. On rereading the Bombay Resolution I found that the differing members were right and that I had read into it a meaning which its letter could not bear. The discovery of the error makes it impossible for me to lead the Congress in the struggle for resistance to war effort on grounds in which non-violence was not indispensable. I could not, for instance, identify myself with opposition to war effort on the ground of ill will against Great Britain. The resolution contemplated material association with Britain in the war effort as a price for guaranteed independence of India. If such was my view, and I believed in the use of violence for gaining independence and yet refused participation in the effort as the price of that independence, I would consider myself guilty of unpatriotic conduct. It is my certain belief that only non-violence can save India and the world from self-extinction. Such being the case, I must continue my mission whether I am alone or assisted by an organization or individuals. You will, therefore, please relieve me of the responsibility laid upon me by the Bombay Resolution. I must continue civil disobedience for free speech against all war with such Congressmen and others whom I select and who believe in the non-violence I have contemplated and are willing to conform to prescribed conditions.

I will not, at this critical period, select for civil disobedience those whose services are required to steady and help the people in their respective localities.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

A.I.C.C. File No. 1375. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also C.W. 10904. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

264. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

BARDOLI,
December 30, 1941

If anyone had thought, as I had thought, that the door to Congress participation in the present war on the ground of Congress non-violence was closed for ever by the Bombay Resolution, then they may now know that the Bombay Resolution had not quite

[1] For the Congress Working Committee's resolution in response to this, *vide* Appendix I.

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closed the door. Undoubtedly, as the resolution said, the Poona resolution had lapsed, therefore, the Poona offer had lapsed. But the Congress has now, through the Working Committee, made it clear that the door is not barred altogether against Congress participation, certainly not on the ground of non-violence.

The key for unlocking the door remains principally in the hands of the British Government. The Working Committee has very properly declined to state the terms on which that door can be opened. It will depend upon varying circumstances, but, in my opinion, the chief circumstance is the Government. Having been insulted often enough, the Working Committee would not court any further insult by making any offer. After all, its position is absolutely clear. Everybody knows what the Congress stands for and what it wants. Everyone should, therefore, know that nothing will be accepted by the Congress short of what it stands for. Therefore, the burden of the next step is cast on the Government. This is the chief thing that is relevant at the present time.

I have a pressing cable from those English friends who are interested in India's freedom and who are lovers of their own people. I have not replied to that cable. They have reminded me of Mr. Andrews' legacy. Whatever the meaning of their reminder, my meaning could only be one. The one indissoluble bond between Charlie Andrews and myself was that we would never compromise our conscience on any account whatsoever. And, in all that I have done, I can fearlessly claim that I have been guided by my conscience.

I have made it clear in my letter[1] to the Maulana Sahib that I could not possibly identify myself with the door to participation being kept open in any shape or form, because that would mean, in my opinion, a recantation of all that the Congress has stood for for the last twenty years or more. I would not be guilty of selling that heritage even for the independence of India because it would not be real independence.

I feel that if any country has a message for the world, which is groaning under violence unknown perhaps to history, it is India. When India, through the Indian National Congress, accepted the policy of non-violence, so far as I know, no Congressman had thought that another war—and such a bloody war—was to come so soon as it has. The testing time, however, has come for India and I, who have an unchangeable belief in the efficacy of non-violence for the present distemper from which mankind is suffering, could

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

not possibly in any manner, directly or indirectly, associate myself with participation in the war; and so I have stood out.

But the Congress contains men and women holding varying shades of opinion and, therefore, it should be no wonder that the Working Committee represents those varying shades of opinion. It has at least three bodies or, rather, it has at least three bodies representing three schools of thought: a minority party, believing in non-participation on the ground of non-violence, pure and simple; the other believing that the Congress should not carry non-violence to the point of refusing association in the war under any circumstances and there is the third, which has many reasons almost as strong as the decisive reason of non-violence guiding the minority. The resolution[1] which has been just handed by the Secretary of the Working Committee to the Press is a resultant of the efforts of these three bodies. I would like the public and Congressmen to read that resolution in that light. I hope everybody will appreciate the fact that the Working Committee has not come to any hasty decision. It did not mind what time it took in order to produce a resolution worthy of the great national organization that it represents.

I would say one thing to Congressmen that those who are believers in non-violence in the same sense that I am, have nothing to fear, as I interpret the resolution of the Working Committee. It not only leaves them absolutely free to hold that opinion but to propagate it for the acceptance of anybody who chooses. Only they remain in the Congress so long as the Congress is not called upon to participate in the war effort. It is open to them to convert all Congressmen to their view. I am quite sure that the Working Committee will welcome such a conversion but I would warn Congressmen against indecision at this critical period in the national life and I would warn them also against weakly following this party or that for the sake of gaining power in the Congress. Those who do so will miserably fail to gain power for the nation. Personally, I would like the Congress, as I would like the whole world, to accept non-violence as the law of life in every department, social, political and domestic. But there is no room for cowardliness. I would far rather that we all became violent than cowards. Let me hope, therefore, that every Congressman will have his own convictions and the courage to enforce them.

The Hindu, 31-12-1941

[1] *Vide* Appendix II.

265. LETTER TO PRABHULAL

[*December 30, 1941*][1]

BHAI PRABHULAL,

I have your postcard. We learn and grow only through experience. Though today the khadi was spoiled tomorrow it may improve, provided we learn the correct lesson.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4137

266. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

BARDOLI,
December 31, 1941

CHI. ANAND,

Jairamdas informs me that Vidya had fallen ill. God is testing you. You have to pass the test. Do not worry about the deafness, either. Everything depends on God. Do not labour beyond your capacity.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

267. LETTER TO KHWAJA SAHEB

[*1941*][2]

KHWAJA SAHEB,

I am much obliged to you for your kindness in sending me a Hindi version of the Koran.

I hold Urdu in the greatest respect. I am also a student of Urdu and I desire its progress. In my opinion the Hindus who

[1] From the G.N. Register
[2] The letter is placed in the file for 1941.

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want to serve both should know Urdu and read Urdu books and newspapers. Similarly the Muslims who wish to serve both should know Hindi and keep in touch with Hindi books and newspapers.

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

268. LETTER TO FARID

January 2, 1942

MY DEAR FARID,

I have seen yours to A. K. I have read the judgment. If what the magistrate says is true about her[1] speech, it was not non-violent. The B class should be accepted not because it is B class but because of the food obtainable. She need not use the other facilities which are not required from the medical standpoint.

About the situation you will know from my statement[2].

How is Zohra[3]? Are you keeping well?

Love to you all.

M. K. G.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

269. LETTER TO MADALASA

January 2, 1942

CHI. MADALASA,

I got your letter and was very pleased. Your joy was evident in it. Your welfare is assured. Remember that there is no happiness except through self-control. It is very happy news indeed that you sisters are all together just now and enjoying yourselves.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 324

[1] The reference is to Satyawati, grand-daughter of Swami Shraddhanand; *vide*, "Letter to Satyawati", p. 197.

[2] *Vide* pp. 190-2.

[3] Addressee's wife

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270. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

January 2, 1942

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter. Inform Bhai Haribhau[1] that I welcome his decision. Now he should not leave the Khadi Vidyalaya.

About the States we shall talk when I reach there.

Hold back Poonamchandji from heavy expenditure. I hope you are careful about your diet.

Jawaharlal will reach one day in advance.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3030

271. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SWARAJ ASHRAM, BARDOLI,
January 3, 1942

CHI. MIRA,

You catch scorpions, rats, snakes![2] Presently you will have a museum!!! I am glad you are nearing the end of your selections.

Love to you all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6492. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9887

[1] Haribhau Upadhyaya

[2] The addressee explains: "I had now come out of my silence and was staying in Ashadevi's home, in order to revise and complete, with her assistance, my English rendering of selected Vedic hymns. In the cottage, where I had stayed during the last months of silence, I had caught and removed to the fields not less than 52 scorpions. One or two snakes also inhabited the place. In Ashadevi's house, I set about catching the rats and within about a week removed over thirty to a distant upland."

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272. LETTER TO JAFAR HASAN

BARDOLI,
January 3, 1942

MY DEAR JAFAR HASAN,

Your letter.

My address was written and distributed. My remarks in the course of the discussion could only be in the same strain as my address. My address was published in the papers too. There is nothing in that address to warrant the Maulana's criticism.

Yours,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

273. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

BARDOLI,
January 3, 194[*2*][1]

CHI. BABUDI,

I really owe an apology to Anand. Will he forgive me now? I do not get even a minute. Tell Anand I wish him to grow up, live long and give *ananda*[2] to everybody. Ba will come on the 7th or maybe even later than that. See if you can go to Sevagram earlier. I do not like your keeping poor health. Go and join Shakaribehn wherever she is. I should advise you to leave Surat and improve your health. What Ghia says regarding the effect of circumcision is not likely to be correct. There will be no harm in repeating the operation once, if it is necessary to do so. But there may possibly be some risk in removing too much skin.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10031. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

[1] The source has 1941 which is obviously a slip. Gandhiji was at Bardoli on this date in 1942.

[2] Happiness or joy

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274. LETTER TO SATYAWATI

BARDOLI,
January 3, 194[2][1]

CHI. SATYAWATI,

I received your letter. I hope you are well. There is no need to refuse B class. We should accept such amenities as the rules permit. We may well refuse others.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

275. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SWARAJ ASHRAM, BARDOLI,
January 4, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

You may or may not attend the meeting but ought not to miss your [hip-] bath. You must, therefore, have it, just now.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 378

276. SPEECH AT GUJARAT PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEETING[2]

BARDOLI,
January 4, 1942

[Gandhiji] first asked everyone if he had understood all the implications of the Bardoli Resolution.[3]

Then let me put it to you in a nutshell. The resolution means that, if the Government gave a guarantee that full freedom would

[1] The source has "41", which is evidently a slip. The letter is written below another dated January 2, 1942, on which date Gandhiji was in Bardoli.

[2] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "The Month in Bardoli–I"

[3] In reply several people did not raise their hands. For the Resolution, *vide* Appendix II.

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be given after the war, the Congress would help in keeping this Empire alive. It was not that the bargain had been actually made, but the terms had been agreed upon, whereas, if I did not want to enter into any bargain at all, I should plainly say so. If you feel that on your agreeing to offer full co-operation in the war effort, India will have complete independence after the war, that the British will thereafter remain in India at your mercy and sufferance, that even during the war you will run your own affairs provided of course that your Defence Minister will carry on the war to victory, you must confirm the Bardoli Resolution. The temptation is very great indeed. If for that sake you are ready to reverse the Congress policy and purchase swaraj and pay as price thereof ahimsa, you must confirm the resolution. Remember that the very greatest of our leaders are party to the resolution and they have not chosen to do so lightly. As against this there are those who think that ahimsa is a pearl of great price and that it cannot be given up, that it can never be the price of swaraj, then their position is different. But if you are in doubt, if you feel that in sticking to ahimsa you lose both ahimsa, because you are incapable of it, and swaraj, that Gandhi is a good man but it would be prudent not to go the whole length with him, then you must accept the resolution. Only those will express their disapproval of it who are sure in their heart of hearts that prudence, political insight, policy, every consideration demands that ahimsa may not be sacrificed for swaraj. Now let those who will vote for the Bardoli Resolution raise their hands.[1] Good. Now let the *acharyas* (masters) of ahimsa raise their hands.[2]

There were about ten neutrals who wanted to put questions, but Gandhiji said as the vote was quite informal the neutrals need not trouble themselves.[3]

Mahatma Gandhi stated that he had not left the Congress, and his position was the same even at Bombay. He said:

I am a servant of the Congress and I want to serve the Congress in consonance with the principles of truth and non-violence. The Working Committee has decided to co-operate with the Government in war if Britain grants swaraj to India.

Whatever be my opinion, you must exercise your free judgement in this matter.

It is not a fact that the Congress has violated the principle of non-violence but it has only made a small opening for violence just with a view to shaking hands with Britain.

[1] Thirty-six raised their hands.

[2] Twenty-seven voted for ahimsa.

[3] What follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle.*

Rajaji thinks that all of us should go to war fully armed, but it may not be the opinion of all.

We should continue the constructive programme. Of course it will be now very much restricted. I do not want to send workers to jail nowadays when their services can be better availed of in alleviating panic.

Harijan, 18-1-1942, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6-1-1942

277. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

BARDOLI,
January 5, 1942

CHI. MARY,

You can come at any time. You can never be a burden. Your friends too may come if they can be cooped up in odd corners. Do just what you like. There is no depression in me.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6083. Also C.W. 3413. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

278. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

January 5, 1942

BHAI NARAHARI,

Sardar and I send our good wishes for the success of the inauguration function of the school.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

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279. LETTER TO MANUBEHN S. MASHRUWALA

BARDOLI,
January 6, 1942

CHI. MANUDI[1],

I have your letter. You did well in going there. Write to me regularly from Bombay. The cold seems to have ended here.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. MANUBEHN MASHRUWALA
BAL KIRAN
P.O. JUHU, BOMBAY 24

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2680. Courtesy: Kanubhai Mashruwala

280. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA

January 6, 1942

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

Who has ever succeeded in controlling his mind? One should not, therefore, let the mind remain empty. How will impure thoughts enter it if it is never empty? It is for this reason that so much importance is attached to reading, pondering and seeking the company of the good. And this is also why Ramanama is the supreme remedy.

Your diet, etc., seem all right.

You need not start a dispensary, but you should practise as a vaid. You may, if necessary, store the required drugs. It is necessary to remain in practice, too.

The evils of registration are indeed showing themselves. The fraud will continue for some time, but will end by and by. Do not fret over it at all, for it cannot be prevented.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] Daughter of Harilal Gandhi, married to Surendra Mashruwala

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[PS.]

Why must you fall ill? And if you do should not your own treatment cure you soon?

From Gujarati: C.W. 2920. Courtesy: Vallabhram Vaidya

281. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

BARDOLI,
January 7, 1942

As far as may be, I have been endeavouring to study the internal and external reaction to the Working Committee resolution.[2] My being relieved of the direction of Congress civil disobedience does not reduce my responsibility but increases it manifold. For one thing, my official disconnection with the Congress itself increases my detachment; but since detachment never means indifference, my attachment to every Congressman increases and I must speak to him more than before. The voice of silence was enough to direct the campaign of civil disobedience, but it is not enough to explain and interpret in terms of non-violence the day-to-day puzzles that arise in the minds of Congressmen and others by reason of the overwhelming events happening near us.

Rangoon was naturally and culturally part of us before Burma years ago became part of British India and, therefore, it remains part of us though now sundered. What has happened there,[3] has had its repercussions all over India.

So far as I can see, civil disobedience in the sense in which it was launched is not likely to be revived on behalf of the Congress till the war has ended. In a purely symbolic manner it may have to be kept up not in the name of the Congress but on behalf of resisters of all war on the pure ground of non-violence, no matter how few they are. It will be kept up for the sake of asserting the right of resisters to carry on propaganda against all war. They dare not keep still in the midst of the unhuman slaughter that is going on. They must not only speak and write against it, they must, if need be, sacrifice themselves in the attempt to stop the torrent of blood. Whether they are a few or many they have to live their mission.

[1] This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "The Next Phase".

[2] This sentence is from *The Bombay Chronicle*. For the Working Committee resolution, *vide* Appendix I.

[3] Rangoon was bombed by the Japanese on December 23, 1941.

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Before taking any step in the direction of civil disobedience I propose to restart the three weeklies[1] and understand the reaction of Government to the new orientation. I hope that they will have no objection to propaganda, naturally non-violent, against all war. It would be non-embarrassing in the sense that there cannot be, as there never was, any idea of surrounding or picketing munition factories or recruiting offices.

If the right is not conceded, there must be token civil disobedience by the fewest possible, even one or two known believers in resistance to all war. I must not select many, because every worker is wanted to educate the people in the art of non-violent behaviour in the face of impending danger.

Strange as it may appear, I suggest that ceaseless occupation in constructive programme is the best preparation to face danger. For it means concentration in villages of the city people and their being occupied and occupying the villagers in productive and educative work.

This removes unemployment and with it fear. Such movement on a large scale at once inaugurates a new social order. It will constitute the greatest contribution to internal peace, and should render nugatory formidable panicky ordinances just issued.

Harijan, 18-1-1942, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8-1-1942

282. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

January 7, 1942

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your postcard. I see that you will not be able to recover completely. Why does Nanabhai fall ill so often? Would he not come to Sevagram for a few days?

Vasumati has reached Sevagram. We leave the day after tomorrow. Ba is expected to return from Maroli today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7144. Also C.W. 4636. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

[1] Namely, *Harijan*, *Harijan Sevak* and *Harijanbandhu*

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283. LETTER TO HARI-ICHCHHA KAMDAR

January 7, 1942

CHI. HARI-ICHCHHA,

Valjibhai tells me that your husband has passed away. You are a brave woman and have wisdom. Bear the separation patiently. Look after the children and engage yourself in some public service. Do not cry. Write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7473. Also C.W. 4919. Courtesy: Hari-ichchha Kamdar

284. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

BARDOLI,
January 8, 1942

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. Yes, since Bombay agrees with you it will be good if you go there. Weakness and cough must not persist. It would never do if they become chronic. Come over to Sevagram when I return from Kashi. You may come even earlier. But it is true that without Shakaribehn you will take no rest.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10042. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

285. SPEECH AT KHADI VIDYALAYA[1]

BARDOLI,
January 8, 1942

Needless to say that it gives me pleasure to declare this Khadi Vidyalaya open. There should be many such *vidyalayas* in Gujarat. As a matter of fact Khadi Vidyalaya may be said to have

[1] The translation has been collated with Mahadev Desai's report "The Month in Bardoli–I" published in *Harijan*, 18-1-1942.

been opened when in 1921 we decided to prepare for launching satyagraha. I had not then discovered the word *vidyalaya*[1] and had at any rate not associated it with khadi, though I knew that khadi was a *vidya* (science), and most important of sciences. But I had then not the courage to say it. But the beginning was made here, anything that was invented in the line took the name of Bardoli—as for instance, the 'Bardoli *pinjan*' (carding-bow.) Then we had a big depot here for the manufacture of all our implements. This depot has, for several reasons, been moved to Sabarmati. Whilst, therefore, it is a pleasure to me to open the Vidyalaya, it is a matter of sorrow that we should be opening it at this late day.

It needs no argument today to prove that the charkha is linked with ahimsa and therefore with swaraj. What is going to be the part that crores of our people will play during the deadly carnage that is going on ? We know the part that Government are playing, we know the part that some of us are playing at their behest, and to satisfy the pangs of hunger and starvation. They are rushing headlong to take part in the work of destruction. Millions are being collected from the rich and the poor, and yet the Government coffers are ever empty. But barring those that are thus directly and indirectly helping in the work of destruction, what are the rest going to do, what *can* they do ? How are they to carry on ? There is starvation and poverty everywhere. There is scarcity of water, and unlike in South Africa where there is every provision against droughts, there is none here, and we and our cattle die like flies for want of water. Those that go to war do so in the hope of returning alive after killing others, some may not return at all. But shall we be content to die like flies? We have sworn by ahimsa and pledged ourselves to win swaraj by ahimsa. It is twenty years since we took the pledge, yet we do not know how to redeem it. What then is the thing that will enable us to work for swaraj, and to stand erect and strong in the face of this conflagration? It is the charkha and all it means. Land we have, but the land system, uneconomic holdings and methods, have reduced us to the level of beasts of burden, it does not yield us enough to eat all the year round, and we are workless for almost half the year. We have, therefore, to take up subsidiary industries. Those are the charkha and the allied activities.

I do not want to repeat the argument or go into the implications of the science of khadi. It is a good thing that this Vidyalaya

[1] Literally, 'abode of learning'

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is being opened. Let this Vidyalaya generate a force that may universalize the charkha in Gujarat. There are, I am told, seventy thousand Congress members in Ahmedabad. If all these were regular spinners, did they give their quota of yarn to the Congress? Congress soldiers should not forget that their chief weapon is the charkha and spinning regularly is their 'military' discipline. The military weapons and munitions today have proved futile. They have failed to keep Czechoslovakia, Poland and France free or alive, though they boasted of renowned soldiers. Hitler has enslaved them all. Besides, we can no more guarantee the welfare of a country that engages in armed warfare. President Roosevelt says he and the Allied Powers are fighting the Axis Powers to make the nations of the world free, and that the Axis Powers are fighting to enslave the world. But to me both the parties seem to be tarred with the same brush.

What shall we do in the midst of this mutual destruction which spells freedom for none? The charkha and all it means is the only thing that will enable us to live and make us stand in honour and self-respect. This we can do if we can combine faith with understanding, for un-understanding faith will not carry us far. The work has been placed into Uttamchand's hands. The responsibility has been entrusted to him, not because he is an expert, but because he has the faith. If he refuses other responsibilities and concentrates on this task, he is sure to bring credit to this venture, difficult as it is.

Don't think that you have come here just to learn the art of khadi. If you labour under such a misunderstanding you will not be able to turn out any work anywhere. You have come here to bear the burden of the work for swaraj. It is a tremendous burden to bear, and the very first lesson you have to learn is to know the qualifications of the soldiers of swaraj. The very first is restraint and patient labour. That is what the charkha will teach you. The renowned cities of the world are crumbling into dust. London is changed out of recognition, the edifices which the builders thought would stand the ravages of time are no more. St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace have all been bombed with the result that what is called the capital of the world today looks, to use Narmadashankar's word, "devastated". And our cities like Rangoon will share the same fate. The age of cities is thus coming to an end. The slogan of 'Back to the villages' was never so true as today. Therefore all of you at any rate have to go to the villages. The mills will not be of any avail. They are producing cloth for the belligerents and may ere long cease even to do that work, and may

have solely to engage in producing munition. We have therefore to produce all our cloth and to make our villages self-sufficient in all respects. That you cannot do without a life of restraint and patient toil. For this you will have to know all the processes right from identifying the different varieties of cotton to the stage when it becomes fit to be woven into khadi. The course you have to prepare for is not simple. It will require all your energies and your faculties, for it is an all-comprehensive one. What about girls? Girls also may be admitted, but that depends upon Uttamchand's courage. We cannot admit them right now. Every one of us, man or woman, has to lend his hands and his mind and his heart to the work of building our nation and swaraj.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 18-1-1942

286. DISCUSSION WITH HARIJAN WORKERS[1]

BARDOLI,
January 8, 1942[2]

The first was the question about the wells: Should we seek the co-operation of Harijans, and, if so, to what extent?

Co-operation is necessary, but we must not take the Harijans in a body and invade the *savarna* quarters. We should visit the wells, ascertain the classes of people using them, and reason with these to let the Harijans use them. Regarding Local Board wells the help of officials may be freely sought, and such Harijans may be asked to go and use the wells as may be prepared to stand ill-treatment. But the brunt should be borne by the sevaks[3], care being taken to stand between the Harijans and those who would threaten to molest or belabour them. The Harijans should be invariably asked to use clean vessels and observe all the ordinary rules of cleanliness. We can also dig wells for Harijans and invite the *savarnas* to use them. It is likely that the Harijans may be boycotted, we should see that they get employment elsewhere. The Harijans have to be taught to learn to assert themselves firmly and non-violently, and the *savarnas* may be gently reminded that injustice

[1] This is reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "The Month in Bardoli–II". Harijan workers who had met in Sabarmati under the Presidentship of Thakkar Bapa came to Gandhiji with ready-framed questions.

[2] From *Gandhi—1915–1948: A Detailed Chronology*

[3] Workers

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cannot last for ever. These are broad principles, but everyone has to take measures suited to the circumstances in each case.

Q. Can't we insist on the admission of Harijan boys to hostels where *all* non-Harijan Hindu boys are admitted?

A. Of course, but care should be taken to see that the hostel is not exclusively for a particular community or section of Hindus. Where all sections are admitted and only the Harijans are excluded, the workers should strain every nerve to get the Harijans admitted.

When I said that removal of untouchability did not include the removal of restrictions on inter-dining and intermarriage, I had the general Hindu public in mind, not the Congress workers or Congressmen. These have to abolish untouchability from every part of their life.

The next question was about the temptations given by missionaries in the shape of books, school fees, etc., with a view to the boys' ultimate conversion. How was one to deal with them?

[A.] The missionaries have of course the right to preach the gospel of Christ and to invite non-Christians to embrace Christianity. But every attempt to press material benefits or attractions in the aid of conversion should be freely exposed, and the Harijans should be educated to resist these temptations.

Q. What are the qualifications that a Harijan *sevak* should have in order to make his work felt?

A. Such a question is rather late in the day. But I shall try to answer it again. It is a misfortune that politics have been mixed up with anti-untouchability work, which is essentially one of self-purification, justice, humanity. Long before I took to politics I felt that abolition of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity were essential for national well-being. In order to prevent the vivisection of Hinduism I had to fight it with my life, and the question did receive a political complexion, but in essence it is a purely religious and moral question. Every *sevak* must be fired with a passion to purify Hinduism, and must be ready to lay down his life in the attempt. Such a *sevak* will be ready to sacrifice his all—family connections, social advantages, and life itself—in order to wipe out the blot on Hinduism. The work should be as one of life's essential functions, e.g., offering one's prayers, ablutions, etc., not carrying emolument or reward. If the worker is fired with this passion, the way will be clear before him. Thus a worker would rather starve than allow the Harijans to be starved, would hesitate to use amenities

which are denied to the Harijans and feel increasing identification with them every day. All this work is to be done without regard to the political results. Assuming for a moment that swaraj does not come as a result of the abolition of untouchability, the work has to be done in order to keep Hinduism pure and alive. I know that with some of the Congressmen the work has only a political meaning, but it is wrong. If they seek justice from an alien Government, they must first do justice to their own kith and kin. That is the fundamental maxim of equity—he who seeks equity must do equity.

There is, I know, a section who says that political freedom must be won first and social reform would follow later. It is a wrong idea, and certainly inconsistent with one who would win swaraj by non-violent means. But the Harijan worker has to educate both the orthodox and exclusively political-minded people. Let him not judge others, but by selfless self-effacing service set an example to them.

Harijan, 1-2-1942

287. ADVICE TO KHADI WORKERS[1]

BARDOLI,
[On or before *January 9, 1942*][2]

[Q.] We are producing two lakhs of rupees worth of khadi, but the demand exceeds 12 lakhs. How are we to meet it? We have not enough weavers and workers, and there is the question of funds too.

[A.] Let me take up the last question first. It is my firm conviction which has grown upon me with the years that, if there are workers, no work suffers for want of funds. But the real question is of the capacity to produce. Supposing someone gave you one crore of rupees, I know you cannot produce ten crore rupees worth of khadi. The reason is lack of workers, lack of efficiency, and lack of faith. It is good that there is a growing demand for khadi—though twelve lakhs of rupees worth of khadi is nothing extraordinary where eight crores of rupees worth of khadi could be used. But the increased sales mean that the liking for khadi is also on the increase. We should contact these consumers and persuade them to spin. And here comes in the *dhanush takli*. You may know that I can spin on the ordinary wheel better, but I have made a point of using only the

[1] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "The Month in Bardoli–II"
[2] Gandhiji left Bardoli on January 9, 1942.

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dhanush takli, and I am now almost an expert in it. The reason is that, whereas Lakshmidasbhai[1] cannot execute an order for 25 lakhs of wheels, the people can themselves make as many *dhanush taklis*. It is so easy to make, so cheap, takes very little material and practically no technical skill. It is a wrong policy to manufacture wheels in Sabarmati in order to export them to the Punjab or South India. They should be made locally everywhere, and for that purpose the *dhanush takli* is the thing. Universalization of this will increase production by leaps and bounds.

You have to catch the increasing love of spinning by the forelock. In none of our previous campaigns was spinning done on such a large scale as during the last campaign. The figures for Sabarmati Jail were good, but the figures for Agra and Bareilly were also good. Badshah Khan has been able to popularize spinning as he had never been before. We have, therefore, to take this tide at the flood and bring expert knowledge to bear on the love for spinning that is growing.

We have to go from house to house and enlist willing spinners ready to contribute their yarn.

I take it that all khadi workers are believers in the attainment of swaraj by non-violent means. Yours then should be the largest contribution to constructive work.

Some of you have to be weavers too. There are enough handloom weavers in India to produce all the cloth we need. We have to persuade them to take to weaving hand-spun yarn and also to get their womenfolk and children to produce yarn in their homes.

Harijan, 1-2-1942

288. NOTES

To The Subscribers

The Manager tells me that the subscribers of *Harijan* have appreciated the unavoidable suspension and exercised extraordinary patience. With a few understandable exceptions they have not recalled the balance of the unused subscription due to them. I am glad to be able now to say that they will have their copy again regularly. It will not be possible to retain the old rate for reasons they know. The subscriptions left over will be credited to the subscribers who will be notified when they are to be exhausted. I hope

[1] Lakshmidas Asar

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that the three editions will retain their old popularity. I expect even a visible increase, for I believe in the intrinsic value of the menu that will be served to the reader from week to week. The three weeklies are purely and simply media of service. Never have they been a business enterprise.

"Violence Is Disastrous"

Shri S. V. Thakar, the quiet but efficient worker in the Harijan and other causes, sends me a note drawing attention to a violent feud between two parties of Bhils which his intervention with Government assistance has just prevented. The late Gula Maharaj, himself a Bhil reformer, had by his earnestness and simplicity appealed to the Bhil imagination, and thousands of them inspired by him had abandoned drink and other evil habits. He died a year ago leaving a successor. There was a social boycott proclaimed by the reform party against those who would not give up bad habits. This bred bad blood. Violence seemed imminent. Shri Thakar's timely intervention referred to above stopped bloodshed. But the reform has suffered a setback. The party of opposition is in the ascendant, and unless the pure ethical spirit again pervades the movement it may collapse. Shri Thakar rightly wishes to draw the moral that violence even in a good cause will not answer, and that every reform must be broadbased on the willing and enlightened association of the people concerned. They cannot be coerced into good habits.

Adivasis

Thakkar Bapa complains that, whilst he likes the pamphlet dealing with the constructive programme, he misses in it mention of *Adivasis* or the so-called aboriginals, such as Santhals, Bhils, etc.[1] The complaint is just. Many other causes are included in the constructive programme by implication. But that cannot and should not satisfy such a humanitarian as Thakkar Bapa. The *Adivasis* are the original inhabitants whose material position is perhaps no better than that of Harijans and who have long been victims of neglect on the part of the so-called high classes. The *Adivasis* should have found a special place in the constructive programme. Non-mention was an oversight. They provide a vast field of service for Congressmen. The Christian missionary has been more or less in sole occupation of the field. Great as his labour has been, it has not prospered as it might have, because of his ultimate aim being

[1] A chapter on *Adivasis* was added in the revised edition of the *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*; *vide* pp. 146-66.

the *Adivasis'* conversion to his fold and their becoming de-Indianized. Anyway, no one who hopes to construct swaraj on the foundation of non-violence can afford to neglect even the least of India's sons. *Adivasis* are too numerous to be counted among the least.

ON TRAIN BARDOLI-WARDHA, January 9, 1942
Harijan, 18-1-1942

289. PEACE ORGANIZATION

If the Congress were an organization with a military bias, there is no doubt that today it would be a full-fledged military unit every member becoming trained to be an efficient soldier. Fortunately for India and humanity, the Congress is not such an organization. No other purely national organization is or can be in the India of today. Fortunately again for India and humanity, the Congress has pledged itself since 1920 to win India's freedom through non-violent means. But up to now it has been largely a debating society, offering civil disobedience at intervals and all the time only playing with its vital programme of construction. At one time every Congressman was expected to create something for the nation. He or she was to spin for the nation. Congressmen would not respond, and the clause about spinning was dropped. There were other items too which every Congressman was to work. But he has not done so to the extent expected. The moment has now come for him to make a definite choice. The only programme before him is to become a servant or soldier of peace. A soldier of peace, unlike the one of the sword, has to give all his spare time to the promotion of peace alike in war time as in peace time. His work in peace time is both a measure of prevention of, as also that of preparation for, war time.

If then I was a Congressman with a vote, I would vote, as an emergency measure, for requiring every Congressman now on the Congress register or to come hereafter to possess the minimum qualifications for working the constructive programme. It would be wrong to remind me that the Congress should retain its democratic character. It will not lose it because, of its own motion, it becomes an efficient working body which anybody undertaking to obey its discipline and conditions of membership may join. The Congress will cease to be popular, if it cannot deserve popularity in times of stress. If it cannot provide work for the workless and hungry, if it cannot protect the people from depredations or teach them how to face them, if it cannot help them in the face of danger,

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it will lose its prestige and popularity. No person or corporation can live long on his or its capital. The latter has to circulate and multiply itself.

The Congress has become popular because it has been foremost in fighting imperialism. Today the old way is of no avail. Nobody thinks of mass revolt at the present moment. The best, quickest and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom. The psychological moment has come. 'Back to the villages!' has become a necessity from every point of view. Now is the time to decentralize production and distribution. Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic. This does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work. As far as I know at the present moment this is common ground between the rulers and the people.

Let every Congressman answer for himself whether he will be a soldier or servant of peace or whether he will become a non-entity unwilling to take his place in building up swaraj.

ON TRAIN BARDOLI-WARDHA, January 9, 1942

Harijan, 18-1-1942

290. WHY?

While I was engaged in organizing and conducting the civil disobedience movement on behalf of the Congress I could not issue the three weeklies without noticing the doings of civil resisters and the general progress of the movement. That would have been to turn the weeklies into civil disobedience organs and to challenge the Government to suppress them. The Government in their turn could not but have accepted the challenge and suppressed the papers and even prosecuted me. Whilst I must always be ready to welcome imprisonment, I was not then ready to court it. Nor was it my plan to invite suppression when my avowed object was to organize strictly and only individual civil disobedience. Therefore, even at the price of sacrificing the pleasure of serving the people in various ways through the weeklies, duty demanded their stoppage. I feel that the step taken was correct in every way.

The reason for suspension now no longer exists. On the contrary I should fail in my duty, if I did not resume publication. As I have repeatedly said I am no enemy of Britain. I have many dear and personal friends among Britishers. I cannot wish ill to Britain. My resistance to war does not carry me to the point of thwarting those who wish to take part in it. I reason with them.

I put before them the better way and leave them to make the choice.

But we have arrived at a stage where it is no longer merely a question of resisting war effort. There are questions which confront war-resisters as much as they confront war-mongers. And they can be decided only one way by both, though the approach must vary. Such are questions of dealing with scarcity of food and clothing, looting and bread riots, etc. I have views on all these and like questions. Resumption of the weeklies is needed for the dissemination of my views on these and like matters. In the ability of the people to deal with them without fuss and even without Government effort lies the way to swaraj whose basis is non-violence. Mere Government effort cannot deal with crises affecting millions of people unless there is voluntary response from them.

If we wish to achieve swaraj through truth and non-violence, gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way. This rules out the deliberate creation of an anarchical state for the overthrow of the established order in the hope of throwing up from within a dictator who would rule with a rod of iron and produce order out of disorder.

These columns will then deal with the day-to-day problems that face the people.

ON TRAIN BARDOLI-WARDHA, January 9, 1942

Harijan, 18-1-1942

291. TALK AT SEVAGRAM[1]

[On or after *January 10, 1942*][2]

I knew the Sardar's power of organization, but I discovered for the first time that the Sardar was a skilled agriculturist. Every inch of space in the banana garden and every drop of water that was being given to it had been made careful use of. The banana yielded a yearly crop, but in between the plants at convenient distances were fruit trees like the mango and the *lichi* and the *chiku* and grape fruit, and on the ridges were various vegetables. Surrounding the garden had been planted permanent trees, and inside the garden were walks making it easy for the field-worker to take care of the trees and also providing enough space with velvety earth for those

[1] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "The Month in Bardoli–I".

[2] Gandhiji returned to Sevagram on January 10, 1942.

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who desired to have their morning and evening constitutional. All this was enough to rest and please the eyes and the mind. The Sardar's labour had yielded the Ashram several thousand rupees and set an example to others. As a result dozens of people had taken to banana-growing.

Harijan, 18-1-1942

292. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
January 11, 1942

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have just learnt that both you and Maulana Saheb have arrived. I had told M. S. that I would take silence at 2. When I said so I had forgotten that I had given an appointment to Prof. Copeland for 4.30 p.m. I could not cancel it. I took silence, therefore, at 5.25 p.m. I should be at your and his disposal after that time. I am sorry but I was helpless.

Please read this to M. S.

Indu should be coming tomorrow.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1941. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

293. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

January 11, 1942

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

Herewith a letter for Kanta. I like your observing silence.[1] I will not ask you to give it up. You may, however, give it up, if you like, for the sake of serving others or even without any reason.

I would like it if Lakshmidas or someone like him works with you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1942

[1] On Gandhiji's advice the addressee observed silence for two months and broke it on January 16, 1942.

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294. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

January 12, 194[2][1]

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I had dictated two letters to you C/o Brij Bihari[2]. The address was given by you. You need not get frightened by anybody's criticism. I shall reach Benares on the 21st, and return from there on the 22nd. Babuji will be accompanying me. If you reach earlier, go to Sir Radhakrishnan's or Shankar's and come over to me after I arrive there. There will be no harm if you cannot come. Do not come at the cost of your work. Shankar's address is: Prof. Kalelkar, Chandan Kutir, University.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3550

295. HAND-SPUN AS MEASURE OF VALUE[3]

In my part of India shells and seedless dried almonds were used as coins accepted by the people and the State treasury. They had no intrinsic value. They were a measure of people's deep poverty. They could not afford the lowest metal coin. Five shells would buy them a little vegetable or a needle. I have suggested a measure which will not be a mere token but which will have always an intrinsic value which will also be its market value. In that sense it will be an ideal measure. For the present and by way of experiment I have suggested a warp length of a single thread of yarn as the lowest measure and to be used in dealings principally with the spinners and generally with khadi-lovers. The spinners can have all their daily wants supplied as against a fixed quantity of yarn. Stores will need to be maintained by the A. I. S. A. in combination with the A. I. V. I. A. and ultimately with those who will give their co-operation. As I conceive it, the system can be worked only if it is decentralized. This is not its demerit but merit.

[1] From the postmark. The source, however, has "1941" which is a slip.
[2] Addressee's brother
[3] This appeared under "Notes".

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The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral development. I use the adjective moral as synonymous with spiritual. This end can be achieved under decentralization. Centralization as a system is inconsistent with non-violent structure of society. I have presented to khadi workers and those who are interested in the solution of the problem of India's poverty, the idea of a measure of value in its barest outline. Let them work it out and find for themselves flaws, if any, in the conception, and if they do not, let them enforce it where they can.

SEVAGRAM, January 13, 1942
Harijan, 18-1-1942

296. NOTE TO BALVANTSINHA

January 13, 1942

I have felled hundreds of palm-trees with my own hands, and got them felled before my eyes. I cannot bring those trees back. According to your argument any tree can be cut down. Of course, it is all right that you did what you deemed proper. I am pained that you cut down so many trees without consulting the others. The palm is a poor man's tree. Do I have to explain to you its usefulness? If all the palm-trees are cut down, life at Sevagram will be severely affected. The palm-tree is interwoven with our life. Grass, etc., could have been sown in some other place. But you should not brood over it. It would be good if you take whatever lesson you can from it. I cannot spare any time. Speak to Gajanan[1]; explain this to others. Assess the utility of the palm-tree.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen, pp. 293-4

297. SIR AKBAR HYDARI[2]

The late Sir Akbar Hydari[3] was a rare combination. He was a great scholar, philosopher and reformer. He was a devout Muslim,

[1] Gajanan Nayak who was in charge of the palm-gur department of the Ashram

[2] This appeared under "Notes".

[3] Who died in Delhi on January 8

but he saw nothing antagonistic to Islam in Hinduism. He was a student of various religions. He was catholic in the choice of his friends. On the return voyage from the second Round Table Conference[1] we found ourselves in the same boat. He was a regular attendant at the evening prayers I used to have on board. He was so interested in the *Gita* verses and the *bhajans* we sang that he had got them all translated for him by Mahadev Desai. He had made me promise that we should tour together in India in the interest of communal unity. But God had willed otherwise. The late Lord Willingdon had a different programme for me. I was plunged into the civil disobedience fight. Sir Akbar and I could never carry out the programme. He had come under the influence of Shri Aurobindo Ghose. He was almost invariably in Pondicherry during the days when the sage of Pondicherry gave the quarterly *darshan* to his devotees. Sir Akbar's death is a great loss to the country. My respectful condolences to the deceased's family.

SEVAGRAM, January 14, 1942
Harijan, 18-1-1942

298. LETTER TO SIR FRANCIS WYLIE

January 14, 1942

DEAR SIR FRANCIS WYLIE[2],

Rajkumari showed me your letter containing reference to me. I must plead guilty. I was angry over what I considered to be unworthy of you of whom I had glowing accounts. I had been told that you were a follower of Tolstoy. I could not very well write to you about my great grief. For though I have accepted your adjective, I was more grieved than angry. Needless to say that I would have been delighted to have your son with me. He would have enjoyed the novel life at Sevagram. And of course I was and am sorry that we could not meet each other though we were so near each other.

I hope you are having a pleasant time in Afghanistan, if anywhere at this time life could be called pleasant.

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

[1] In December 1931
[2] British Minister to Afghanistan since August 1941

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299. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

SEVAGRAM,
January 14, 1942

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

I hope you got my letter from Bardoli.

Abha is most disconcerted. You will see my letter[1] to her.

My suggestion is that you should bring her to Benares and I shall take her with me. She should promise her mother that she will not marry Kanu without her blessing, but that she will marry no other person. Abha shall remain under my charge. I may send her to Rajkot, if she wishes.

But of all this we can talk in Benares. Of course, I shall pay the fares.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: C.W. 10335. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

300. LETTER TO MANJULA M. MEHTA

January 15, 1942

CHI. MANJULA,

I had your letter. There was one from Magan, too. Can't you stay in the room next to Champa's? If you cannot do that, will you stay in the same block? If you cannot do even that, you may stay in my room. You will not be a burden to me. You will get there privacy, too. I will not mind . . .[2] In short, I will make whatever arrangements you wish.

I am going to Benares on the 19th and will return on the 24th or the 25th. Come after that. You may come even during my absence.

Ratilal is in a miserable plight in Rajkot. I would still advise Magan to go there. He will be able to find an attendant. I cannot find one from here.

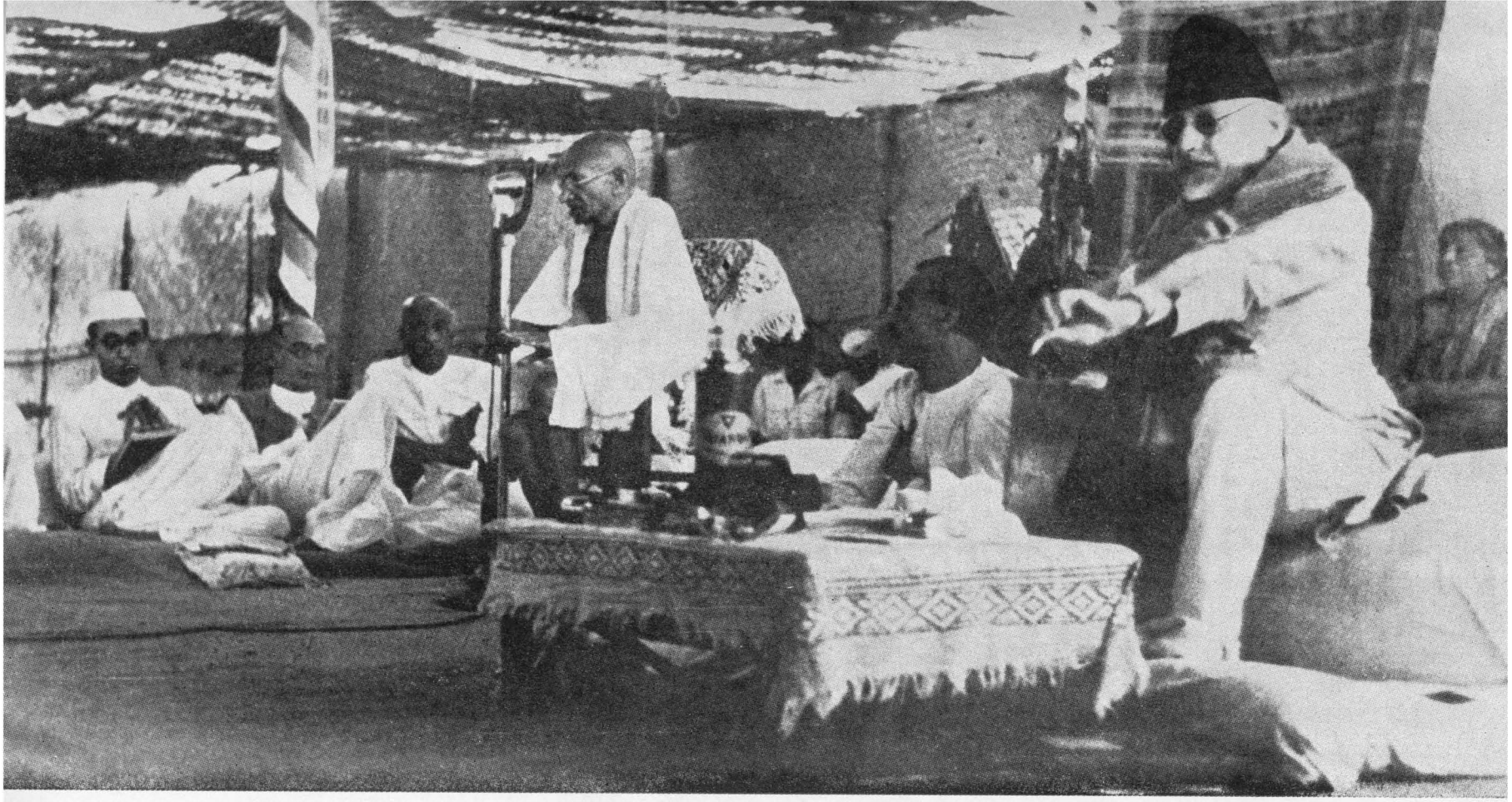
Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 1615. Courtesy: Manjulabehn M. Mehta

[1] This is not available.
[2] Illegible



ON WAY TO A MEETING



MEETING OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE, WARDHA

301. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,
January 15, 1942

CHI. NARANDAS,

Champa tells me that Ratilal's condition is very bad. She is staying here. A letter from Atmasarupanand is enclosed. Can you suggest or do anything in this matter?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am leaving for Kashi on the 19th, and shall return on the 24/25 th.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8597. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

302. SPEECH AT A. I. C. C. MEETING[1]

WARDHA,
January 15, 1942

The President has put me in a quandary by raising me sky-high, as if, one may think, I were a dweller in the clouds. That is not at all true. I have not yet used an aeroplane—of course, I have seen them flying in the skies, like birds but I have not touched one. So the question of flying does not arise. It is misuse of language to call such a man a dweller in the skies. I am of the earth, earthy. I am an ordinary mortal composed of common clay.

The question of ahimsa would not have come up before you, had it not come up before the Working Committee at Bardoli. We discussed it for seven days. And it was well that it came up. The result has been good, not bad. But before I say anything on this question, let me make one or two things clear.

Please note that I am, as I have said, an ordinary mortal like you. Had this not been the case, we should not have been

[1] This translation has been collated with the summary by Mahadev Desai published in *Harijan*, 25-1-1942, under the title "Don't Divide the House".

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able to work together these twenty years. Ahimsa with me is a creed, the breath of life. But it is never as a creed that I placed it before India or, for that matter, before anyone except in casual or informal talks. I placed it before the Congress as a political weapon, to be employed for the solution of political problems. It is a new experiment in ahimsa which I have undertaken. As far as I am aware, no one has hitherto employed ahimsa in the political arena in this manner. If someone has, at least I am not aware of it. Maybe it is a novel method, but it does not on that account lose its political character. I tried this for the first time in South Africa, with good results. I have brought it from there. The question there was exclusively of the political existence of Indians who had no political consciousness but had settled in South Africa as merchants, petty hawkers, etc. And there I used ahimsa as a political weapon. It was for them a question of life and death. The whites wanted them to quit. They had only two alternatives. They could either quit or stay there with the status of animals. We tried everything that was humanly possible. We found that all the so-called constitutional remedies, with which the Congress work in India had made me familiar, had failed. I was an expert in petition-writing which had yielded me lots of money. I have been for long a draftsman for the Congress here, which work I used to do there also. They submitted many petitions, but when all other methods failed they resorted to satyagraha. The various measures that I adopted there were not the work of a visionary or a dreamer. They were the work of an essentially practical man dealing with practical political questions. As a political method, it can always be changed, modified, altered, even given up in preference to another. If, therefore, I say to you that our policy should not be given up today, I am talking political wisdom. It is political insight. It has served us in the past, it has enabled us to traverse many stages towards independence, and it is as a politician that I tell you that it would be a grave mistake to think of giving it up. If I have carried the Congress with me all these years, it is in my capacity as a politician. It is hardly fair to describe my method as religious because it is new.

Maulana Saheb has affectionately used high words of praise for me, but I cannot accept them. A thing can yet be discarded after showering all praise on it. A person can be raised sky-high and then cast down to the dust. I have been taunted as a Bania. It is all right. How can I help it? I was born a Bania. I shall stay a Bania and shall die as a Bania. Trade is my profession. I am trading with you and with the world. The article in my possession is an

invaluable pearl. It has to be weighed in the proper scales—as Maulana Saheb rightly said, pearls, grass and men need different scales. I am a trader in ahimsa. Those who can pay the price for it may have it. In my view, it cannot be bartered away even for independence. But you do not value this thing as I do; because you do not have the scales with which to weigh it.

Please do not think that I am speaking to you from a high pedestal. The simple question is why are we prepared today to discard a thing which we have cherished for so many years. No doubt, you have not discarded it yet, but you will if your terms are accepted. This much I am able to see. I do not raise the question of what we shall do after swaraj. I am myself not aware what I will do after swaraj. But today you are eager to barter away ahimsa for swaraj. You had taken a pledge that you would win swaraj only through ahimsa, and through no other means. Today you are ready to depart from it. I want to tell you that this bargain will not bring you complete independence. Independence for me means the independence of the humblest and poorest among us. Today we are at the threshold of independence on the strength of ahimsa. For the Congress to abandon ahimsa and to join war[1] is to undo the work of the past twenty years. It is my discomfiture that I could not make you see this.

This is not the time for counting votes.

In spite of holding this view, I stand before you today to plead with you to accept this resolution[2], and not even to divide the house. If I can convince you of this, you should accept my advice, otherwise leave it. This is not the time when we may canvass support for our groups and seek a vote. If we merely talk tall about independence but do nothing to attain it, how can we aspire for it? I had once said that everyone would become his own leader after my arrest. Today also you can become your own leaders and think for yourselves. But I want you to remember one thing. I am a man who won't exchange ahimsa even for independence; and yet I am giving you this advice as an exponent of ahimsa.

Along with this, I wish to reiterate that I do not wish to withdraw a single word from what I had written about the Poona Resolution[3] and I have no regrets for what I said. However, the

[1] Mahadev Desai here adds: "before the attainment of complete independence".

[2] Adopted by the Working Committee at Bardoli. For the resolution, *vide* Appendix II.

[3] *Vide* Vol. LXXII.

Bardoli Resolution, though it looks like the Poona Resolution, is a different thing. The Poona Resolution attempted to interpret ahimsa. The Bardoli Resolution does not do so. The Poona Resolution was the outcome of my mistake for which I have already atoned. But the Bardoli Resolution is the outcome of deliberations over many days. At one time after the Bardoli Resolution, I had thought of dividing the A. I. C. C. and testing how many members supported my view. But as the situation developed stage by stage, as I saw the climate in the country and the criticism of our Congress in the world, I came to the conclusion on the basis of my ahimsa that if I could persuade the A. I. C. C. I should advise them to accept this resolution deliberately and whole-heartedly. My advice to those who agree with me, that is, to those who have faith in total ahimsa, is to remain neutral and not vote for or against the resolution. But if their abstention helps the opponents of this resolution to defeat it, they should vote in support of this resolution and not allow it to be defeated.

I have no doubt that the Working Committee has taken a retrograde step in passing this resolution. Rajaji may not agree, because he thinks I am in the wrong. Jawaharlal also may say that there is no retrograde step in this resolution. But in my opinion this step-back is a prelude to a step forward. A withdrawal sometimes becomes necessary. We have a right to take a step back for jumping forward. Therefore a man who has parted company with you, who claims to be a satyagrahi and in whose life there is no room for tactical manipulations comes to you and advises you to accept this resolution, however imperfect, because it correctly reflects the Congress mind. Even if the protagonists of ahimsa have a majority in this house, they should help the adoption of this resolution. The Congress does not know its own mind but I know that the attitude of the Congress is reflected in this resolution.

The Congress has a great reputation. This resolution has enhanced it. The whole world is watching us, the eyes of our countrymen are fixed on us. Several people contemplated the prospect with trepidation, lest the Congress should flounder in response to Gandhi's formula and become a religious organization instead of a political one. Let me dispel their fear, and say that the Congress which accepted ahimsa as a creed can do no such thing, that we have not wasted the past twenty years. Whatever a doubting Thomas may think, when the moment of settlement arrives in Delhi, everyone will realize that the Congress remains the same with or without Gandhi. The language may differ, but the demand will remain the same.

No one can cheat it. It will go on repeating '*Neti, neti*'[1] until it wins the real substance it wants. If you can get what you want and you strike the bargain, you may be sure that I will not shed a single tear. If I am allowed to vent my views through my three weeklies, you will find me saying that I did become a trader but I could not sell my ahimsa.

Whatever, therefore, our opponents inside and outside India may think and feel happy about, I won't let them say that Gandhi was after all a crazy person. I do not want the Congress to look ridiculous in the eyes of the world. I do not want it to be said that in order to retain my leadership you bade good-bye to your senses because you had no courage to give me up. I do not covet leadership by undermining anyone's manhood. If the Congress alters its resolution for fear of losing my leadership and if I allow this transaction, this will result in the degradation of the Congress as well as my own. This is not the way I work. It is a fraudulent way. Am I going to cheat the Congress after fifty years of national service?

I have removed the very roots of this risk. I have told Maulana Saheb that you have not lost me by relieving me. You would lose me only if I cease to be loyal to the Congress, only if I become a visionary, only if I cease to be a practical man. It is not at Bardoli that I left the Congress; I did so seven years ago in Bombay[2], and I did so in order to be able to render greater service to the country and the Congress. If I am relinquishing the Congress now, I do so only to serve it better. Colleagues like the Sardar and Rajendra Babu are not happy over the resolution but I am asking them not to leave the Congress. If the real hour for leaving the Congress arrives, and if they continue to cling to their present convictions, then they may say good-bye to the Congress. But even if they leave the Congress, the Congress is not going to cease to function. Its work will go on whether they are there or not. No man, however great, is indispensable to the Congress. Those who built up the Congress like Dadabhai, Pherozeshah and Lokamanya are no more, but the Congress still functions. For they have left for us an edifice to work upon and expand. Why should then my withdrawal or that of other leaders make any difference? The Congress will survive and will strike the bargain it is striving for.

I wish to stop you from dividing the house by seeking a vote on this resolution. I do not want the Congress to look ridiculous

[1] 'Not this, not this', formula in the Vedas rejecting all verbal descriptions of the Reality; here, rejection of every offer falling short of the national goal of complete independence.

[2] In October 1934; *vide* Vol. LIX, pp. 269-70.

in the eyes of the world. We have not a clean slate to write on. Our leaders have taken a step which has produced world-wide reactions. To alter the resolution out of shape is to ignore these. It would be unwise to change the policy adopted by the Working Committee. It will make the Congress appear ridiculous before the world. The world has a right to expect that the Working Committee's policy will be endorsed by the A. I. C. C. We have no valid grounds to alter it. To those who want to catch up with me and introduce a new resolution for preserving ahimsa, I would say: 'Yes, it does bring you credit. If you have chewed and digested ahimsa, I shall follow in your footsteps and so will Maulana Saheb. But I see no such evidence in you. If you bring another resolution merely to retain my leadership, it will be a foolish step. In fact, it will amount to violence. Therefore you should accept this resolution, however imperfect it may be.'

Do not please go away with the idea that there is a rift in the Congress lute. As Maulana Saheb has said, the Working Committee has functioned like members of a happy family. Somebody suggested that Pandit Jawaharlal and I were estranged. This is baseless. Jawaharlal has been resisting me ever since he fell into my net. You cannot divide water by repeatedly striking it with a stick. It is just as difficult to divide us. I have always said that not Rajaji, nor Sardar Vallabhbhai[1], but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says whatever is uppermost in his mind, but he always does what I want. When I am gone he will do what I am doing now. Then he will speak my language too. After all he was born in this land. Every day he learns some new thing. He fights with me because I am there. Whom will he fight when I am gone? And who will suffer his fighting ? Ultimately, he will have to speak my language. Even if this does not happen, I would at least die with this faith.

There is another reason why this resolution should be supported. (By chance this resolution has) become a mirror of the Congress in which all groups can see themselves. I can see my own reflection, and so can Rajendra Babu, Badshah Khan, Sardar and the rest. Those who have spent a lifetime in cursing the Government as also those who wish to compromise with the Government can see their own reflections in this mirror.

Maulana Saheb has not properly described how this resolution was framed. This is not the resolution as drafted by Jawaharlal. His draft has been materially amended. Rajaji also had a hand

[1] Mahadev Desai's summary here makes no mention of Sardar Patel.

in revising it. People have an erroneous impression about Jawaharlal that he never budges from his views. Today at least he cannot get that certificate. He argues vehemently, but when the time for action arrives, he can make considerable compromises. This resolution is a product of a general consensus. The views of all the members of the Working Committee are reflected in this resolution. Like *khichri* it contains pulses, rice, salt, chilli and spices. Maulana Saheb has already explained the different points of view within the Working Committee. We have many groups amongst us. One is represented by Jawaharlal. His opposition to participation in the war effort is almost as strong as mine, though his reasons are different. He will not concede that he has retraced his steps in consenting to this resolution. But he himself will agree that the Rajaji group can take a different view of this resolution. The original draft had left no room for Rajaji and his followers to function. Rajaji would like to participate in the war effort if the Government accepted the conditions laid down by the Congress. So he has opened a tiny window for himself. Through this window Rajaji will try to pull Jawahar towards him and Jawahar will pull in the opposite direction. It is no longer open to the Government and the Congress critics to say that the Congress has banged the door against negotiation on the doctrinaire ground of non-violence. The resolution throws on the Government the entire burden of wooing the Congress by meeting its legitimate demands and securing its participation in the war effort. That nothing much is to be expected from the Government is probably too true. Only the resolution puts the Congress right with the expectant world by debunking the criticism that the Congress is an organization of doctrinaires. And since there is a party in the Congress ready to welcome an honourable offer that will satisfy the rigidest test, it is as well that the resolution has accommodated this party. It has to be seen which group ultimately pulls the others. Whichever group wins, how can it harm us? We need have no objection.

Although different points of view have thus been accommodated in this resolution, it is not open to the charge of duplicity. It seeks to give an opportunity to different points of view to influence one another. This is how I understand it. Jawahar, Rajaji, Rajendra Babu as well as a man like me have each some elbow room in this resolution.

How does this resolution leave any scope for Rajendra Babu? We have contemplated some step for the future, which upsets him. But we are not here to decide what we shall do in the future.

When India becomes free, the resolution says, we can defend ourselves with arms. If we wish to help China and Russia, the resolution leaves us free to do so. We have no ill will against the Britishers, and for that matter against Germans, Italians or Japanese. How then can we have any ill will against China and Russia? The Russians[1] have created a brave new thing. But I have my doubts as to how long they can defend their freedom in this manner. Experience tells us that any great work founded on force does not last. The Chinese sail in the same boat with us. It is a vast country and I am proud of it. I would like all these nations to be at peace with one another. If China seeks to defend herself with arms, she will have to become like Japan. She will have to do everything that Hitler and Mussolini are doing. I would like to think that when the occasion arises India would defend herself through non-violence and thus be a messenger of peace to the whole world. Jawahar will also then work for it—not for war. Rajendra Babu can therefore support this resolution. As a political [weapon] non-violence is no small thing; it can bring about all these results.

You should all remember that non-violence is the common factor among Jawaharlal, Rajaji, Rajendra Babu and Maulana Saheb. We are all agreed that today we have to work only through non-violence. We will think of other things at the appropriate time. That is why I find myself supporting this resolution. Rajendra Babu can today propagate to his heart's content the message of ahimsa from the Congress platform. This resolution leaves him free to do so. Besides this, the instructions about the constructive programme[2] for Congressmen will promote ahimsa. It includes almost all the items of the thirteen-point constructive programme put forward by me. The U. P. Congress Committee has recently passed a resolution which is praiseworthy. It refers to ahimsa too. It covers everything that I should like it to.

We have made a clean breast of everything in this resolution. When all of us are sailing in the same boat, why do you want to introduce a new resolution? Ahimsa is not a thing which can be established through mechanical means. Did I serve the Congress for the last twenty years on the strength of a 'vote'? On the contrary, when matters reached the stage demanding a 'vote' I voluntarily retired from the Congress. Voting is all right in small matters, but our work will be hampered if we decide larger issues by 'vote'.

[1] Mahadev Desai's summary has: "who have done great things for the proletariat".

[2] *Vide* Appendix III.

The Congress is like a non-violent army. Our effort will be to keep it non-violent to the end. I am not going to restrain it if on the basis of experience we realize that we were on the wrong path.

The real strength of the Congress lies in those people who are outside the Congress but rally to its support when the call goes out. They do not care for name or fame, nor have they any personal axe to grind. We have to become their true representatives. You have to forge the Congress into a strong, solid and disciplined organization.

In the past 15 months Congressmen have evinced some sense of discipline. Occasionally there were lapses but I tolerated them because I had to steer the Congress ship. But now we shall have to observe stricter discipline. The time has now arrived when the Congress should act with one mind. The ultimate weapon of the Congress today is ahimsa. Until this creed is altered, no Congressman can preach violence openly or secretly. If he does so, he will be disloyal. No one can however judge what lies inside a man's heart. But we will have to enlist all those who promise to march in step with us. This resolution keeps the door open for every honest Congressman.

Finally, some friends ask, 'What has the Congress done, after all?' They complain that the resolution has no operative clause. The complaint is true so far as the resolution is concerned. The Congress will issue separate instructions for this purpose. The resolution had to be merely explanatory. It is addressed less to Congressmen than to the world. It is not even addressed to the Government.

Let there be no misunderstanding nor lack of zeal among Congressmen because the resolution has postponed satyagraha. Neither Jawaharlal nor Rajaji will let you remain idle. I certainly will not. Let those who think the constructive programme is insipid know that there is nothing in the Working Committee's resolution to prevent a Congressman at his own risk from leading civil disobedience —individual or mass. If he succeeds, he will win nothing but praise from all and I myself will kiss his feet. The more a person advances in ahimsa, the more proud will the Congress feel of him. But such advance should not need any *imprimatur* from the Congress. But let me warn the enthusiasts that they will not handle the weapon with any success. They will only damage themselves and the cause by any hasty or ignorant action. And let me say as an expert in the art of satyagraha that those who regard the constructive programme as insipid do not not know what non-violence is and how it works. So much for civil disobedience.

Let us now turn to the parliamentary mentality. Though it has come to stay in spite of my efforts to eradicate it, the parliamentary programme can, I hold, have no place in Congress work so long as the war lasts. The Congress cannot handle it without identifying itself with the war effort. I have always held that at all times it is the least important part of a nation's activity. Legislators are not the masters but servants of their electors—the nation. The less, therefore, we look at and depend upon parliaments the better. Power resides in the people either through their arms or through their civil disobedience, more comprehensively described as non-violent non-co-operation. But the power of non-co-operation comes only through solid, incessant constructive work. Non-violent strength comes from the constructive programme only and not through destructive activities. Hence the constructive programme is the only thing before the Congress today. And in this all parties are at one.

There are instructions about the constructive programme for Congressmen. They form the operative part. If properly implemented, this would be a complete substitute for civil disobedience and the parliamentary programme. Civil disobedience has been wisely reserved for me as an expert in satyagraha. It is good, so long as I am alive and well in mind, that it is so reserved. I have almost put a stop to it today. But the suspension of satyagraha is not linked with the resolution. So far as I am concerned, there will be no need for satyagraha, if the Government do not interfere with *Harijan*. For these three weeklies will constitute enough propaganda against all war. *Harijan* will try to carry the message of peace to all corners of the country. But if this is not permitted, then will be the time for civil disobedience as a gesture. I want every worker to be out for constructive activity.

Today we have to serve the millions and that work does not allow us to get shut up in prisons. We do not wish that thieves and robbers may ransack the country. Even if we want to unleash a revolution, we shall have to provide for the prevention of pillage. The Congress will disappear if it fails to do this. The work of providing adequate food and clothing to the famished devolves on our shoulders. But if even the pen is snatched away from my hands, I may be compelled to become the sole resister. But I have no fixed plans. Events will point the way.[1]

[1] What follows is a report of Gandhiji's brief English speech, in reply to Shri Prakasam's question, reproduced from *Harijan*.

The suspension of satyagraha has connection only with the present condition of the country, and I want every single man who thinks with me to remain outside and do work rather than go to jail and read the Koran and the *Gita* and lead an easy life there. I won't let them lead an easy life. Jawaharlal will ask for diaries from thousands of men. He is not going to sleep. Therefore, if you will go away with the real message to the country, do not criticize this resolution. Nobody is rendered incapable of giving the fullest possible service, in fact he is made capable of the fullest growth, by reason of this resolution. Civil disobedience remains under my control, and the reason for its suspension is wholly extraneous to my retirement from office. Every one of you has to give a good account of yourself. If all will pull your full weight in the fulfilment of the constructive programme, you will find a different India in six months' time.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 25-1-1942, and *Harijan*, 25-1-1942

303. LETTER TO SULTANA RAZIA

January 16, 1942

MY DEAR SULTANA,

You are quite right about non-violence.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10861

304. LETTER TO D. D. SATHAYE

January 16, 1942

DEAR SHRI SATHAYE,

Gandhiji had your letter in Bardoli and now he has your p.c. He has been so busy that his personal correspondence is in arrears. He wishes me to tell you that you are of course on his list of satyagrahis but there is no satyagraha just now. The constructive programme is there for everyone to follow.

Yours sincerely,
AMRIT KAUR

SHRI D. D. SATHAYE
127 GIRGAON ROAD, BOMBAY 4

From the original: D. D. Sathaye Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

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305. LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

SEVAGRAM,
January 17, 1942

DEAR KHAN SAHEB,

Here are the two copies[1]. You will show them to the Maulana Saheb and to Jawaharlal. The letter to the Government you will send when and if you come to the conclusion that you will better serve the cause by being in the jail than by being outside and working among the people. For you are not likely to get the permission asked for.

The resignation you will send if your co-workers and Dr. Khan Saheb agree.[2]

Yours,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

306. ADDRESS TO CONGRESS WORKERS[3]

WARDHAGANJ,
January 17, 1942

Gandhiji explained what had been achieved at Sevagram in regard to the restoration of communal unity and removal of untouchability and urged that they were assets which should be acquired whether freedom was obtained or not. He also pointed out what work had been done with regard to khadi and basic education.

He dealt with the various aspects of the constructive programme, with particular reference to Hindu-Muslim unity, the removal of untouchability, charkha and the organization of a volunteer corps.

Mahatma Gandhi emphasized that a mere pact between the Congress and the Muslim League would not solve the problem; such a pact was applicable only to the carrying out of the parliamentary programme. He

[1] Not available

[2] *Vide* also pp. 232-3.

[3] Gandhiji addressed representatives of the Provincial Congress Committees and members of the Congress Working Committee.

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referred to the Lucknow Congress-League Pact[1] and said that real Hindu-Muslim unity could only be brought about by active constructive work.

Answering a question, Gandhiji said that volunteer bodies must be organized but only on the basis of non-violence. The volunteers must render all help to the people. It was possible that these organizations might not be allowed to function. In such circumstances, they must carry on their work, if it was indispensable, even at the risk of their lives.[2]

Everyone who is a four-anna member of the Congress must become a Khudai Khidmatgar now by service to the people.

Concluding, Gandhiji exhorted them to carry out the instructions given by the Working Committee carefully, which alone would strengthen them in the struggle for freedom.

The Hindu, 18-1-1942

307. TALK WITH A WORKER[3]

[Before *January 18, 1942*]

The would-be satyagrahi[4] said he was a believer in ahimsa. Gandhiji asked him:

How much do you spin—5 yards or 50 yards?

Never more than 50, and sometimes even less than 5.

Do you spin every day, or once every week, or every month?

I don't spin more than 50 or 100 yards in a month.

Do you make your own slivers?

No, Mahatmaji.

Then where do you get them from? Get them by post?

No, I get them from the khadi bhandar, and when I do not get them there, I get them through friends coming from places where slivers can be had.

Do you make your *mal* (string) yourself or do you purchase a reel from the market?

His friend intervened and said: "Mahatmaji, he is a believer in ahimsa, and that, I thought, was the essential qualification. According to the test you now apply we are all likely to fail."

[1] Of 1916; *vide* Vol. XIV, Appendix II.

[2] For another question, and Gandhiji's answer to it, *vide* "Constructive Programme and Government", p. 236.

[3] This is reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "On the Path of Ahimsa".

[4] From an Indian State

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Well, then it is better that none of you takes part in satyagraha than that you should go without being properly qualified. My standard is inexorable. I want you to spin not only regularly but intelligently. I want you to know how to test your yarn, how to draw fine yarn and coarse yarn, to know the economics of khadi and so on. And when you will say to me, 'I know all these things', I will ask you: 'What about your life?' Do you observe non-violence in your relations with the members of your family and in your daily affairs? Where is the good of your saying you accept non-violence in theory? Supposing you said you accepted the theory of khadi, but purchased and used foreign cloth, how would your acceptance of the theory help me? And please understand that, while in British India I am prepared to reconcile myself to belief in ahimsa as a policy, I want you in the States to believe in it as a creed. Violence in many Indian States is greater than in British India, and we want the supreme purity and sacrifice of a Prahlada to meet the violence there. Give me a Prahlada, and I shall give him my blessings.

Harijan, 18-1-1942

308. LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

SEVAGRAM,
January 18, 1942

DEAR KHAN SAHEB,

Maulana Saheb and Jawaharlal had a long talk with me over your retiring from the Congress. They say that they never understood that you had contemplated withdrawal from the Congress. They said that the talk was plainly about withdrawal from the Working Committee only. They said too that in their opinion your withdrawal even from the W.C. was sure to be misunderstood and would harm the very cause you have at heart. Naturally you are the best judge of the situation. You would give due weight to their opinion. I can have no opinion. I rely entirely upon your judgement on the facts. If the facts are as they say, their opinion should prevail. If they are otherwise and you have no such fear as they entertain, your opinion should prevail.

They further said that you should take no step without the approval of Dr. Khan Saheb and your co-workers. They say

too that if you go, Dr. K. S. must come to the W.C. You will now tell me and Maulana Saheb what is to be your judgement.[1]

I hope my letter is clear. With love,

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

309. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

January 19, 1942

CHI. LILI,

I have your letter. I have not a single minute to spare. It is not proper for you to lose heart. You must make up your mind to pass. We are going to Kashi today, and shall be back on the 24th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10089. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

310. REAL WAR EFFORT

The greatest need of the immediate present is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. There is already scarcity in the land both of food and clothing. As the war progresses, both the scarcities must increase. There are no imports from outside, either of food-stuff or of cloth. The well-to-do may not feel the pinch as yet or at all, but the poor are feeling it now. The well-to-do live on the poor. There is no other way. What is then their duty? He who saves gains as much, that is to say, he produces as much. Hence those who feel for the poor, those who would be one with them must curtail their wants. There are many ways. I shall only mention some here. There is much, too much food eaten and wasted by the well-to-do.

Use one grain at a time. Chapati, rice, and pulses, milk, *gur*, ghee, and oil are used in ordinary households besides vegetables and fruit. I regard this as an unhealthy combination. Those who get animal protein in the shape of milk, cheese, eggs or meat need not use pulses at all. The poor people get only vegetable protein. If the well-to-do give up pulses and oils, they

[1] The addressee resigned from the Congress Working Committee on February 8, 1942.

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set free these two essentials for the poor who get neither animal protein nor animal fat. Then the grain eaten should not be sloppy. Half the quantity suffices when it is eaten dry and not dipped in any gravy. It is well to eat it with raw salads such as onion, carrot, radish, salad leaves, tomatoes. An ounce or two of salads serves the purpose of eight ounces of cooked vegetables. Chapatis or bread should not be eaten with milk. To begin with, one meal may be raw vegetables and chapati or bread, and the other cooked vegetables with milk or curds.

Sweet dishes should be eliminated altogether. Instead, *gur* or sugar in small quantities may be taken with milk or bread or by itself.

Fresh fruit is good to eat, but only a little is necessary to give tone to the system. It is an expensive article, and an over-indulgence by the well-to-do has deprived the poor and the ailing of an article which they need much more than the well-to-do.

Any medical man who has studied the science of dietetics will certify that what I have suggested can do no harm to the body, on the contrary it must conduce to better health.

This is only one way of saving food-stuff. It is obvious. But by itself it cannot produce much visible effect.

Grain-dealers have to shed their greed and the habit of making as much profit as possible. They must be satisfied with as little as possible. They run the risk of being looted, if they do not gain the credit of being keepers of grain for the sake of the poor. They should be in touch with the people in their neighbourhood. Congressmen have to visit grain-dealers within their beat and give them the message of the time.

By far the most important part of the work consists in educating the villagers to keep what they have and to induce cultivation of fresh crops wherever water is available. This requires widespread and intelligent propaganda. It is not generally known that bananas, potatoes, beetroot, yam and *suran*, and in a measure pumpkin are a food crop easily grown. They can take the place of bread in time of need.

There is, too, scarcity of money. There may be grain available but no money to buy it with. There is no money because there is no employment. This has to be found. Spinning is the readiest and the handiest. But local needs may supply other sources of labour. Every available source has to be tapped so that there is no want of employment. Only the lazy ones need and must starve. Patient handling will induce even this class to shed their laziness.

The problem of clothing is much easier than feeding, if it is handled well and in time. The mills may not be relied on in these times. There is ample cotton to be had in India. It is a problem for cotton cultivators how to dispose of their stock. The outside market is closed to them. Our mills cannot absorb the whole of the crop. It can be utilized, if the nation takes to spinning not for wages but for the sake of clothing the naked. Of course those who need employment will spin for profit. This number must be limited. They need organizing. Much money will be needed for the purpose. But national spinning does not need so much organizing. Profit motive being eliminated and willingness being assumed, organization is reduced to simplest terms.

This is no time for multiplying wheels. They take time to manufacture. Raw materials are daily becoming dearer. Wheels cannot be manufactured everywhere. Places where they are can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Therefore I suggest the plying of the *dhanush takli* and even the simple *takli*. The former should be manufactured locally. Indeed it is difficult to manufacture the simple *takli* at once in lacs. The *dhanush takli* is the only thing which can be easiest manufactured. Slivers cannot be supplied to spinners. Each one should get some cotton for himself or herself, and card it as well as may be with the hand or with a home-made small bow such as the children in the Bihar basic schools have. All this can be done because no one is expected to manufacture a large quantity of yarn. If every one of our available millions span for one hour daily, there would be enough yarn to keep every handloom going. The reader should know that there are lacs of handloom weavers in the land. There is danger of their starving for want of yarn.

Here is a great task for every Congressman to undertake. He has to become a good spinner and carder and know how to manufacture the *dhanush takli*. Let every Congressman begin with himself and his family and neighbours, and he will find that the life-giving contagion spreads like wild fire which envelops you before you hardly know what you are witnessing.

Any organization that tackles these two problems successfully will command the love and confidence of the people. I hope that all will join in this real war effort. It is none the less effective because it is peaceful and constructive.

Will the Princes let their people do this work without let or hindrance? Will Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah allow the members of the Muslim League to co-operate with the Congress workers

in this truly national but non-political work which is also humanitarian? There are 23,000 Muslim spinners, carders and weavers earning their daily bread through the A.I.S.A.

ON THE WAY TO KASHI, January 19, 1942

Harijan, 25-1-1942

311. CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME AND GOVERNMENT

Will not the working of the constructive programme bring Congressmen into conflict with the Government? This was one of the many questions asked at the meeting of the principal members of the A. I. C. C. I addressed in Wardha on the 17th. My answer was that the whole programme was so conceived as to avoid conflict. Of course the most innocent activity may be so manipulated as to provoke conflict. I expect every Congress worker to do his best to avoid it. But there is no help for it, if the Government prohibit such activities because they are undertaken by Congressmen who believe that the working of the constructive programme will bring swaraj. That is the only non-violent way to achieve the end. Swaraj by non-violent means must come from the creative effort of those who desire it. The Government should welcome every such effort, unless they want to prevent even cent per cent non-violent movement. In that case conflict will become unavoidable. But I am of opinion that no conflict is possible, at any rate while the war lasts, unless the Congress workers want or provoke it. They have to work, work and work. They will make no speeches or demonstrations in doing their constructive work. As I have already said, today most of the items of constructive work happen to be — like feeding and clothing — common cause between the Government and the people.

ON THE WAY TO KASHI, January 19, 1942

Harijan, 25-1-1942

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312. COMMUNAL UNITY

Freedom will not come through parliamentary effort. Therefore communal pacts, whilst they are good if they can be had, are valueless unless they are backed by the union of hearts. Without it there can be no peace in the land. Even Pakistan can bring no peace, if there is no union of hearts. This union can come only by mutual service and co-operative work.

Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They presupposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust.

How to get out of the tangle is the question. I want just now to confine myself to the four Muslim majority provinces. In them there is natural Pakistan in the sense that the permanent majority can rule the minority. I hold it to be utterly wrong thus to divide man from man by reason of religion which is liable to change. What conflict of interest can there be between Hindus and Muslims in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice, or the use of public conveniences? The difference can only be in religious usage and observances with which a secular State has no concern.

Congressmen, if they are not to merge in the Hindus as Hindus, must rigidly abstain from the legislatures and local bodies governed by separate electorates. In these provinces the separate electorates must be taken to have come from the Hindu demand and in the supposed Hindu interest. But a Congress Hindu has no interest apart from his Muslim brother. Therefore he must not enter the electoral bodies where Hindu and Muslim interests are falsely regarded as separate and even antagonistic. If he enters these bodies, he can do so only to divide the majority members, i.e., to take sides with one Muslim party or another. If I could make all Hindus Congress-minded, I would withdraw every Hindu member from these bodies and put the Muslim members on their honour. I would seek to influence them from outside these bodies by being friends with them and rendering disinterested service. I would be indifferent to their manning all the services. At the most an infinitesimal percentage can have a share in them. And it is a superstition to suppose that these services can oppress a people who have become

conscious of human dignity and human rights and know how to enforce them. Since the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus in at least three Muslim majority provinces, they have a rare opportunity of showing their non-violent strength, their disinterestedness, their utter freedom from the communal taint, and their ability to submit to the rule of their Muslim fellow-countrymen. They will do this not in a huff but as true nationalists and friends of the Muslims. Remaining outside they will probably better protect the just interests of Hindus as citizens. For a Congress Hindu is not any the less a Hindu because he claims to represent equally, as he must, all the other faiths in himself. For as I have said, so far as the State is concerned, its capacity for service stops short of the service of the different faiths, and the services it can render apply to all irrespective of their faiths. Therefore Congressmen have a rare opportunity of showing undefiled nationalism in these provinces. They will incidentally show the other minorities that they have nothing to fear from the majorities if they know the true way. We must get out of the miasma of religious majorities and minorities. Why is a Parsi's interest different from a Hindu's or Muslim's so far as the State is concerned? Did not Dadabhai and Pherozeshah rule the Congress while they lived, not by Congress grace or patronage, but by right of service and merit? Did their rule injure any Hindu or Muslim interest? Were these interests ever in conflict on the Congress platform? And is not the Congress a voluntary State?

ON THE WAY TO KASHI, January 20, 1942
Harijan, 25-1-1942

313. QUESTION BOX

CONGRESS AND A. R. P.

Q. Can a Congressman belong to A.R.P. and such other committees connected with the war?

A. I think not. But this does not mean that he will render no help in caring for those who may be injured by bombs or otherwise. On the contrary he will be expected to be most assiduous in rendering such help.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Q. While working the constructive programme, can a Congressman preach economic equality? How can working the civil disobedience programme bring it about?

A. You can certainly preach it, if your speech is strictly non-violent and not in the manner of some who, I know, have preached forcible dispossession of landowners and capitalists. But I have shown a better way than preaching. The constructive programme takes the country a long way towards the goal. This is the most auspicious time for it. The charkha and the allied industries, if fully successful, practically abolish all inequalities, both social and economic. The rising consciousness of the strength which non-violence gives to the people, and their intelligent refusal to co-operate in their slavery must bring about equality.

STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION

Q. What is the meaning of strengthening the Congress organization?

A. You can strengthen it no doubt by enlisting members who know the meaning of the fundamental article of the Congress, namely, attainment of Purna Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means. Enlisting of bogus members and members for seizing power in the Congress is vicious and harmful.

There is no room for power politics within the Congress, if the Congress is to end the power or the system that grinds the people and be itself in power. Therefore real strengthening of the organization consists in every Congressman working the constructive programme to its fullest capacity. Enlisting *bona fide* members without much effort provides running expense of the Congress, only if the enlisting itself does not eat up the subscriptions you collect from members.

'OTHER ORGANIZATIONS'

Q. What do you mean by associating with other volunteer organizations working for similar ends? Do you include communal organizations?

A. I do. Unfortunately we have very few other non-communal organizations. 'Similar ends' naturally means constructive ends, using 'constructive' in the widest sense of the term. Thus you will tender your help to a Muslim League or Hindu Sabha volunteer in putting out fire or tending the wounded. You will also invite their help in such matters.

ON THE WAY TO KASHI, January 20, 1942

Harijan, 25-1-1942 and 1-2-1942

314. SPEECH AT BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY[1]

January 21, 1942

REVERED MALAVIYAJI, SIR RADHAKRISHNAN, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You all know very well that I have neither the physical strength nor the inclination to undertake a long journey, and yet when I received Sir Radhakrishnan's invitation to deliver an address on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Convocation of the Benares Hindu University I had not the heart to decline it. You know the strong bond of affection that binds me to Malaviyaji, and it is with a certain amount of pride and satisfaction that I obey his behest whenever it is at all possible for me. I therefore could not say 'no'. Sir Radhakrishnan's letter was a call to a pilgrimage.

Great as are Malaviyaji's services to the country, I have no doubt that this University constitutes his greatest service and achievement, and he has worn himself out for the work that is dear to him as life itself. It was out of my great regard for him that twenty-five years ago I accepted his invitation to attend the foundation ceremony of this University.[2] I knew that in that august function, which was to be attended by the Viceroy and the ruling Princes of India, there was no place for a poor man like me. I had not then been made a Mahatma, and if anyone called me by that name, I knew I must have been mistaken for Mahatma Munshiramji, as the late Swami Shraddhanand was then called. For there cannot be a number of Mahatmas, and I knew even when I was in South Africa that Munshiramji's great work had entitled him to that name. He also was one of those who sent me messages of congratulations and compassion. In those days too Malaviyaji Maharaj showered his kindness on me. But he has a knack for detecting servants of the people, however obscure they may be, and bringing them into his fold. This is his usual trick.

People have great admiration for Malaviyaji Maharaj as you must have heard today. He deserves every word of it. I know the Hindu University is a huge affair. There is no

[1] This has been collated with Mahadev Desai's translation in *Harijan*, 1-2-1942, under the title "Kashi Vishwavidyalaya Address".

[2] *Vide* Vol. XIII, pp. 210-6.

greater beggar than Malaviyaji on the face of the earth. He has never begged for himself; by the grace of God he has never been in want, but he became a voluntary beggar for causes he has made his own, and God has always filled his bowl in an overflowing measure. But he has an insatiable appetite, and although he got a crore and ten lacs instead of the crore he wanted he is still asking for more. Even at this moment he whispered into my ears that he had a good donation from the Maharaja of Darbhanga, our Chairman. I know how Malaviyaji leads his own life. It has been my privilege to be acquainted with every aspect of his life. It is a rare good fortune to have him still in our midst, a living example of a pure life of plain living and high thinking; the students particularly can draw many a lesson from his life but I have a fear that, though he is physically in your midst, many of you are untouched by his great example. The fault is wholly ours, not his. The sun radiates heat and light to all on earth, but how can even the sun help those who will shut themselves from him? But I am not here to sing Malaviyaji's praises. Who can be more unfortunate than the one who in spite of being so near to him fails to imbibe his noble qualities such as his simplicity, sacrifice, patriotism, generosity and universal love?

I must now address a few words to you—the teachers and the students of the Vidyapith. When I accepted Sir Radhakrishnan's invitation he had asked me to send a copy of my address to him. I told him that I had no time to write anything, I did not even know what I should be able to say. A feeling of nervousness overpowers me when I am in the midst of learned men. Ever since my return to India my lot has been cast among the poor and the downtrodden—those whom the Congress represents—and whilst in their midst I feel no sense of constraint or hesitation. In your midst I feel tongue-tied. I simply said to Sir Radhakrishnan that I should trust to the inspiration of the moment. That inspiration has come, but I do not know how you will welcome my plain-speaking.

As speaker after speaker spoke and left the dais, I longed for someone who would address the audience in Hindi or Urdu, or Hindustani, aye, even in Sanskrit,—even in Marathi, or for that matter in any of the Indian languages. But no such good luck befell me and you. Why? We are slaves and have hugged the language of those who have kept us enslaved. It has become a fashion to blame the Englishmen for all our ills. I have not hesitated to blame them for many things they have

done. I have never charged them with compelling us to adopt English as the medium of expression. We devote precious years of our lives to learning the English language, our ambition being to be able to speak English as Englishmen, and our breast swells with pride when an Englishman pats us on our back for speaking flawless English. Think of the time and energy of our youth expended on learning the English language, as if it was our mother tongue, and calculate by simple multiplication the number of years and the volume of precious energy that are lost to the nation.

And yet all this is happening in the Benares Hindu University which has been extolled today as the living embodiment of Indian culture. Malaviyaji did all that was necessary to draw the best possible teachers by attractive salaries, but he could not do the rest. It was not his fault that Hindi did not take the place of English. The teachers are the product of the tradition which they have inherited, and the students are content to accept what they get from them. They need not be. They go on strikes and even hunger-strikes, often for trivial reasons. Why will they not insist on having their tuition in the all-India language? There are, we were told today, 250 students here from the Andhra Province. Let them go to Sir Radhakrishnan and ask for an Andhra section of the University and ask to be taught through the medium of Telugu if they will not learn the all-India language. But if they were to be guided by my lights, being Indians they should demand as the medium of instruction a language understood throughout India. And Hindustani alone can be that language.

You know what has happened in Japan—a country which I do not regard as essentially great — but which is regarded as great in Asia in that it has successfully challenged the supremacy of America and England. The thousands of boys and girls in the Japanese schools and colleges receive their education not through the medium of English but through Japanese. Their script is difficult, but it is no bar to their learning it and they have not given it up in preference to the Roman. Not that they boycott English and other European languages. But they economize their energy. Those who need to learn them do so for enriching the Japanese thought with knowledge which the West alone can give. They take care to turn into Japanese all that is worth taking from the West. That is because the mind of Japan's youth is fresh and alert. The knowledge gained thus has become national property. There would have been no greater folly if

instead of doing so they had thrown their mother tongue to the winds and opened English medium schools and colleges such as we find in other countries. In this way they might well have learnt a new language but the Japanese people could not have gained the new knowledge. Our ambition does not go beyond becoming clerks in Government offices, lawyers, barristers, judges, all helplessly serving the system they would fain destroy. And we have not succeeded in mastering the English language either. After all, is it not an alien language? I get numerous letters from English-educated people—some of them possessing the highest degrees of our universities—but they betray a woeful ignorance of the English language. The reason is simple. Malaviyajis and Radhakrishnans are rare, and the thousands cannot achieve what they have done.

As I was listening to the English speeches I was amazed at the patience and innate courtesy of our people who, though they do not understand a word of what is said, do not mob us, as they well might do. If there is any doubt in your minds about this, I can demonstrate to you by a show of hands how few—even from among the students—have followed the proceedings here. I had said all this when I came here twenty-five years ago. What I have seen today compels me to repeat it all.

There is another thing to which I am tempted to draw your attention. I witnessed this morning a scene that I had least expected here. There was a Vasant Panchami day[1] procession of the students who had to march past Malaviyaji's house after receiving his silent blessings. The way in which they were walking betrayed a lack of even elementary physical training. Instead of walking in step, erect and disciplined like soldiers on the march, they walked haphazardly in a desultory fashion. Their walking could hardly be called a march. In my opinion they are so much burdened with English that they find no time to attend to other things. That is why they are unable to learn the things they must.

I noticed another thing while returning after a visit to Shri Shivprasad Gupta in the morning. I cannot help saying a word about the sight that greets you as you enter the great portals of the University. Thanks to the money that Malaviyaji can get for the asking, the gate is in consonance with the splendour of the edifices here. But what did I find on the top of the gate?—the bulk of the space (three-fourths) taken up by the words BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY in English, and one-fourth given to the inscription

[1] On which the Goddess of Learning is worshipped

in Hindi which is the language through which you would derive your knowledge. I wondered what need there was of the English language ? Malaviyaji cannot be blamed for this. It must have been the work of some engineer. Just a little thought on the part of those who were in charge of such things would have been enough to tell them that what was needed there was the name written in Devanagari and Persian scripts—which would have symbolized to the people the desire on the part of Malaviyaji's University and Sir Radhakrishnan for communal harmony. It would have been in the fitness of things too, as both Hindi and Urdu are understood in this region and both the scripts are familiar. The fact that it is written in English is an indication of the domination of the English language over our minds.

We are scared of learning a new language or a script, whereas for us learning an Indian language or a script should be as easy as anything. Surely it is no difficult thing for a non-Hindi-speaking person to learn Hindi or Hindustani. I can undertake to teach Hindi to anyone knowing Gujarati, Bengali or Marathi in the space of three months. Even the South Indian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada—are full of Sanskrit words and, if there was just a little fervour and love of the country in us, we should not hesitate to decide to write all the languages derived from Sanskrit as also the Southern group in the Devanagari script. These languages have not only a fairly common vocabulary, there is also a striking resemblance in the scripts. If our minds were not fagged, we would easily know half a dozen Indian languages. Then there is Urdu which should not be difficult to learn, if only our Urdu scholars did not make it a matter of pride to pack it with Persian and Arabic words, as the pundits pack Hindi with Sanskrit words. The result is that I am completely at a loss when high-flown Urdu of the Lucknow style is flung at me.

One more thought I should like to leave with you. Every university is supposed to have its tradition, its distinctive feature — Oxford and Cambridge, for instance, have theirs. They take pride in the fact that the students they turn out can at once be identified for the distinctive impression left on them by the universities. Our universities leave no such distinctive mark. But I am afraid our universities are the blotting-sheets of the West. We have borrowed the superficial features of the Western universities, and flattered ourselves that we have founded living universities here. Do they reflect or respond to the needs of the masses ? Now I am told that a special feature of your University is that engineering and technology are taught here as nowhere else. I should not consider this a distinguishing

feature. Let me make a suggestion to you. Have you been able to attract to your University youths from Aligarh? Have you been able to identify yourselves with them? That, I think, should be your special work, the special contribution of your University. Money has come in, and more will come in if God keeps Malaviyaji in our midst for a few more years. But no amount of money will achieve the miracle I want — I mean a heart-unity between Hindus and Muslims. I would like you to go out to invite Mussalmans to come here, and not to mind if they reject your advances. You are the representatives of a great civilization which according to Lokamanya Tilak is 10,000 years old and according to later scholars even older. This civilization regards ahimsa as the supreme dharma. This has been our tradition from the times of the Vedas. The special contribution of that civilization is to befriend the world, to turn so-called foes into friends. Our civilization has absorbed, like the holy Ganga, many streams from outside, and it is my prayer that the Hindu University which is endeavouring to represent Hindu culture and Hindu civilization may invite and absorb all that is best in other cultures and nurse hostility towards none. That should be its distinctive feature. English will not help you to evolve this. It is our own ancient learning that will teach you this—our scriptures learnt and understood in the proper spirit.

One thing more and I have done. You are living in palatial hostels, but you should not get used to living in palaces. Look at the little house in which Panditji lives in utter simplicity and without the least splendour. You enter his room. There is no decoration and only the barest furniture. You, who will be his heirs, should model your lives accordingly. Many of you are children of poor parents. Don't forget that you have to represent the poor, and that therefore a life of ease and luxury is inconsistent with the poverty of our land. May you be all models of plain and simple living and high thinking like Malaviyaji. May God bless you with long life and the wisdom to carry out what I have said, if it has appealed to you.

[From Hindi]

Benares Hindu Vishwavidyalaya Rajat Jayanti Samaroh, pp. 41-7

315. DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESS WORKERS[1]

BENARES,
January 22, 1942

Q. What is your ultimate object? Do you want the Congress to accept your principles or to achieve its object?

A. Every plan and programme that I have placed before the Congress has been placed with a view to achieving the goal of independence. Truth and non-violence are a matter of creed for me —you may call it my religion, but it has not been my object to propagate that religion through the Congress. Before the Congress they have been placed as effective means to an end—as political means for a political objective, as I did in South Africa. If it was otherwise, I should cease to be a political worker and occupy the position of a *dharmaguru*[2]. The political method can be changed whenever expedient, but the change should be honest and deliberate. But one should not pretend to adhere to the method when really in practice one has given it up. That would be deceiving oneself and the world.

Q. We should like to have a glimpse of the next six months or a year as you picture it to yourself. You have often said that this is a fight to the finish, your last fight which will not end until the goal is won. What are likely to be the future developments as you can visualize them?

A. It is a good question, and also a difficult question. Not that I am not clear, but because it takes us into the realm of speculation. I let things and happenings react on me—though I confess I do not follow everything as Jawaharlal with his study of foreign affairs can. Jawaharlal is convinced that the British Empire is finished. We all wish that it may be finished, but I do not think it is finished. We know that the Britishers are tough fighters, we know what the Empire—especially India—means to every home in Britain, and therefore they will never consent to be 'Little Englanders'. Mr. Churchill has said that they are not "sugar candies", and that they can meet rough with rough. Therefore it will be long before

[1] Mahadev Desai in "Benares Notes–II", from which this is extracted, reported the proceedings of two meetings—one of the Executive of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee and the other of the U.P.P.C.C.

[2] Religious head

the Empire is finished. There is no doubt, however, that they are nearing the end, and what Jawaharlal has said is very true that, if we could do nothing to prevent the war, we certainly will do much to prevent a peace in which we have no voice. That is what every Congressman has to bear in mind. We have, therefore, to be up and doing. If we sit with folded hands, we may have a peace which we do not desire.

I adhere to the statement that it is my final fight, but we have had to alter our programme because of the latest developments, because war has come to our door. The suspension had nothing to do with my retirement from the official leadership of the Congress. Even if it had continued, how could I today ask Jawaharlal to march back to jail? Of course he will be in jail, if he is prevented from doing the work we have chalked out. But things have happened so rapidly that we had not the slightest idea of what was coming. How then can I talk of a year or even six months ahead? That we are marching swiftly towards independence I have no doubt. There is no doubt about the programme ahead of us. No Congressman should rest content with just paying his four-anna fee. He has to be active all the twenty-four hours. Even the one concrete programme of production of cloth is sufficient to occupy all our energies. There are 4,000 students in the Benares Hindu University. Will they spin an hour every day? I am talking of spinning because it is a thing nearest my heart, but there are a hundred and one other things. Have the villagers enough food to eat? Have they enough to cover themselves in this bitter cold? These are the questions that occur to me again and again. On our capacity to feed the starving and clothe the naked and generally to serve the masses in the time of their need will depend our capacity to influence the peace whenever it comes. What I have said applies to all parties. Whoever serves the purpose best will survive and have an effective voice.

Q. You think they cannot have a treaty just as they like?

A. I do. The days of secret treaties are gone, I hope. If we behave ourselves, we can have a decisive voice at least so far as we are concerned. But Jawaharlal can explain these things better. I am no student of history or even of contemporary events in the world.

Q. Why did you advise the A.I.C.C. members to support the Bardoli Resolution, though at one stage you had decided to divide the house? Rajaji's speeches after the A.I.C.C. are against the Bombay Resolution, and even expediency dictates that there can be no co-operating with a dying Empire.

A. I am afraid you are 'estopped' from asking the question, if I may use a legal term. But as you have asked the question, and there is nothing to hide, I may answer it. In fact I answered it in my speech before the A. I. C. C.,[1] if you listened to it with attention. Well, then, let me tell you that, though I am old in age, my mind is not decaying. It is ever growing, and the decision not to divide the house indicates my growth or evolution in my own non-violence.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi said that after he had made his attitude on the question known since the Bardoli decision, he had come to realize that as the majority of the Working Committee members, representing, as they do, the large bulk of Congressmen, were not prepared to go the whole hog with him on the question of non-violence, it would have become unfair to clinch the issue at Wardha, for he was confident that if he had insisted upon the question being decided by a vote, a large number of the A.I.C.C. members, perhaps in spite of their conscience, would have voted in support of his attitude. That could have been a decision obviously misrepresenting the real situation. It would have been harmful in the extreme, and hence he decided that he should plead for the support of the Working Committee's resolution. Wrong assumptions could never lead to right results.[3]

To divide the house appeared to me a piece of violence. If every one of the members of the A. I. C. C. was a pukka believer in political non-violence, it would have been a different matter. But I knew that such was not the case. The Bardoli Resolution was a true reflection of the Congress mind. In such matters majority and minority do not count. And there was nothing to prevent the whole-hoggers to go whatever length they liked.

The contingency of co-operation is, if anything, very remote. Until then all have to act in terms of non-violence. When the contingency does arise the whole-hoggers can secede from the Congress. In fact we can then meet again and put the whole matter to vote.

Q. Would it be proper or improper to defend oneself with arms against *atatayis* (confirmed offenders) in case of disturbances?

A. The answer has been already given by me and also by the Congress. And the word *atatayi* is bad for our purpose. And don't ask what is proper and improper. If you were to ask *me*, I should say it is improper. If you are non-violent, do not have resort to

[1] *Vide* pp. 219-29.
[2] The following paragraph is from *National Herald.*
[3] This sentence is from *The Hindu.*

arms. If you cannot muster non-violence of the brave, defend yourself as best [as] you can. The law gives everyone the right of self-defence against a dacoit, and the Congress does not take away the legal right. But in riots or communal disturbances, he who calls himself a Congressman has to act non-violently. That is the resolution of the Congress. Even there if your courage fails you and you use force, the Congress will not censure you, for the simple reason that the Congress never intended to encourage cowardice.

Q. You are said to have permitted khadi bhandars to sell blankets to Government. Is it not co-operation in the war effort?

A. I did. It was not proper for me to ask whether the blankets were for the use of soldiers or for someone else. The case is different when a man sells fire-arms or swords or poison. The vendor has to inquire how the fire-arms are to be used, and the chemist has to ask for the doctor's certificate. On the other hand a rice-seller will not, and is under no obligation to inquire who is going to consume the rice.[1]

Admitting that it was very difficult to draw the line of demarcation, Mahatma Gandhi said the principal criterion from his point of view was for the supplier to consider how his supply would be utilized. Of course, his view on the question was not necessarily that of the Congress and Congressmen were free to object to it without acquiescing in the butchery in which the soldiers were engaged. It was quite conceivable that the blankets supplied to them served to spare them the hardships of a severe winter, the more so when they were maimed or wounded in the battle. There was the underlying humanitarian motive in making these supplies and that could not be questioned as co-operation in the war effort.

But you may go further than I did. If you think I erred, you are at liberty to denounce me. If you think a non-violent man may not sell rice or blankets to soldiers, you are welcome to your interpretation of non-violence. I for one will not hesitate to give water or food to a soldier who comes to me with hands red with murder. My humanity would not let me do otherwise.

The question of spurious khadi was next discussed, and Gandhiji said:

A great deal depends on intelligent and wide-awake public opinion. If the public takes it into its mind to prevent the spread of this khadi, it can easily do so. But we have not cultivated what Lord Willingdon used to call the courage to say 'No'. Those who are interested in khadi are all shareholders of the A. I. S. A., and it is

[1] The following paragraph is from *National Herald*.

their duty to take up this work. To feed the hungry and clothe the naked is our immediate programme, and you have all to lend a hand effectively. If you all do so, the question of spurious khadi will not arise. No Congressman can deal in spurious khadi.[1]

Stressing the importance of Congressmen concentrating on khadi, Mahatma Gandhi said that by virtue of their commitment to the Congress constructive programme whereof the khadi movement was the most important part, the responsibility of clothing Indians in the immediate future was devolving upon the shoulders of Congressmen and they would soon be tested as to their ability to discharge it. Inquiries made by him from Indian mill-owners had revealed that cloth stocks were very limited and fast diminishing. And such of them as were held were being manipulated by persons dealing in futures (*satta*). Not only the public, said Mahatma Gandhi, but also the Government of the country would knock at his doors for more and ever more of khadi in the near future. That time was fast approaching. He hoped that Congressmen would not be found unprepared to meet the situation.

The last question was about the Congressmen's duty in times of raids and scares and consequent disturbances.

The emergency is there today. Dacoities are rampant, and unless the Congress asserts itself effectively, the situation will go out of our hands. The need for peace brigades was never more urgent than now.[2] The risk of death is there, whether you choose violence or non-violence. Why not then prepare yourselves to die non-violently? It will also enable you to offer effective resistance in case of a civil war. As for the protection of the wounded in air raids, the bulk of the work will come upon yourselves. You will not join the A. R. P., simply because you will be then parts of a machine over which you have no control and you would be active participants in the war effort[3]. But it is certain that the Government will not be able to render assistance everywhere. Did they do so in Rangoon? We have harrowing tales of the dead and wounded lying on the streets of Rangoon uncared for. Wherever, therefore, the authorities fail there will be enough scope of work for us. We have to prepare

[1] The following paragraph is from *National Herald.*

[2] *National Herald* adds here: "In this connection he said that the danger, far from lying in the future, was ever present and, saying that his suggestion for the formation of peace brigades still held the field, he complained that Congressmen had doubted his seriousness in making it and had dismissed it as impracticable without earnestly examining its implications and potentialities."

[3] *National Herald* adds here: "in regard to which the Congress position had been already made clear."

volunteers for this work ready to take risks and to act with initiative. We may have to remove the dead and wounded, take charge of vacant houses, and so on. In this work you will heartily co-operate with the authorities wherever they will accept your co-operation.[1]

Mahatma Gandhi said that . . . nothing was expected to deter them from organizing volunteer squads and offering such relief as was possible in emergencies in co-operation with the Government organization, if necessary, and in spite of it, if possible, regardless of the consequences. For instance, after an air raid if there were persons trapped in a crumbling house or a house on fire, it was the duty of Congressmen to extricate them and pull down the house, lest it should collapse and take a toll of life, without waiting to see whether the official organization's aid, sanction or a request for co-operation was forthcoming.

Mahatma Gandhi was all humour at the conference and Acharya J. B. Kripalani, General Secretary of the Congress, was the butt of it. Mahatma Gandhi said:

Kripalani was morose formerly, because I thought he was not married. But, even when he is married and has a very good partner in life, his mood haunts him.

Harijan, 8-2-1942, and *National Herald*, 24-1-1942

316. HINDUSTANI

(a) The proceedings of the Congress, the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee shall ordinarily be conducted in Hindustani. The English language or any Provincial language may be used, if the speaker is unable to speak in Hindustani or whenever permitted by the President.

(b) The proceedings of the Provincial Congress Committee shall ordinarily be conducted in the language of the Province concerned. Hindustani may also be used.

—Article 25 of the Congress Constitution

The Congress has not carried out this resolution to any appreciable extent. It is a sad reflection. The fault is Congressmen's. They will not take the trouble of learning Hindustani. Their effort for learning languages is evidently exhausted with the performance of the impossible task of acquiring a knowledge of the English language equal to a learned Englishman's. The result is tragic. It has meant

[1] What follows is from *National Herald*.

impoverishment of the provincial languages and displacement of the all-India language described by the Congress as Hindustani. It has also meant a break between the millions and the English-educated few who happen to be the natural leaders for the simple reason that they are the only educated class. There is no education worth the name apart from the schools established by the Government. The Congress has to perform the Herculean task of displacing the English language with Hindustani. With the passing of the resolution it should have created a bureau for fulfilling the purpose as it might do even now. But if it does not, individual Congressmen and those who are interested in evolving an all-India language should do so.

But what is Hindustani? There is no such language apart from Urdu and Hindi. Urdu has sometimes been called Hindustani. Did the Congress mean Urdu in the Article quoted? Did it exclude the more extensively known Hindi? Such a meaning would be absurd. It evidently meant, and could only mean, a scientific blend of Hindi and Urdu. There is no such written blend extant. But it is the common speech of the unlettered millions of Hindus and Muslims living in Northern India. Not being written, it is imperfect, and the written language has taken two different turns tending to widen the difference by each running away from the other. Therefore the word Hindustani means Hindi and Urdu. Therefore also Hindi can call itself Hindustani, if it does not exclude Urdu but tries to assimilate Urdu as much as is scientifically possible without damaging the natural structure and music of the original. Urdu can do likewise. There is no separate Hindustani body attempting to blend the two streams which today threaten to run away from each other.

The noble task can be performed by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and Anjuman-e-taraqqi-e-Urdu. I have been connected with the former since 1918[1] when I was invited to preside at its session of that year. I acquainted the audience with my views on the all-India medium. When I presided again at its session in 1935[2], I was able to persuade the Sammelan to define Hindi as the language spoken by Hindus and Muslims of the North of India and written either in Devanagari or Persian script. The natural consequence should have been for the members of the Sammelan to expand their knowledge of Hindi by living up to the definition and producing literature that could be read by both Hindus and Muslims. This

[1] The source has "1917"; Gandhiji had presided over the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in March 1918 in Indore. *Vide* Vol. XIV, pp. 292-7.

[2] Also at Indore; *vide* Vol. LX, pp. 443-55.

should have meant the members learning the Persian script. They seem to have denied themselves this proud privilege. But better late than never. Will they bestir themselves now? They need not wait for the Anjuman to respond. It will be a great thing, if the Anjuman does. Each Association can, if it will, work in harmony with the other. But I have suggested unitary action independent of the other party. That Association which will adopt my plan will enrich the language it stands for, and will ultimately be responsible for producing a blend which will serve the whole nation.

It is unfortunate that the Hindi-Urdu question has assumed a communal shape. It is possible for either party to undo the mischief by recognizing the other and incorporating the acceptable part in a generous spirit. A language that borrows unstintingly from the others without harming its special characteristic will be enriched, even as the English language has become enriched by free borrowings.

ON THE WAY TO WARDHA, January 23, 1942

Harijan, 1-2-1942

317. SPEECH AT CHOKHAMELA BOARDING HOUSE[1]

NAGPUR,
January 24, 1942

Gandhiji began to address the gathering. There was noise. In a moment a youth[2] sprang to his feet and said: "This is not the ordinary noise. We are protesting against your coming." Gandhiji invited him to come to the rostrum and say what he wanted to say. He had nothing more to say than this: "We do not want you here. Those who invited you here had no right to do so." Asked Gandhiji of him:

But why don't you want me here?

Because you have done nothing for the Harijans.

That's all? Have you anything more to say?

"Nothing more," he said, and after a while disappeared.

I am told by the friend who raised the voice of protest that those who invited me here had no right to do so. The fact is that it was the students of the Chokhamela[3] Boarding House who came to

[1] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "An Unexpected Experience". Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the Boarding House. On his arrival a number of Mahar youths shouted anti-Gandhi slogans.

[2] S. K. Mathurkar

[3] Name of a Harijan saint of the Mahar community

Wardha to invite me. I had begged to be excused, but Shri Chaturbhuj Jasani intervened and told me that, if the work that carried me to Benares was after my heart, this might be even dearer inasmuch as it was the silver jubilee of an institution that had served Harijan boys. And since the abolition of untouchability is my life's work and I even toured the country for the same cause for one whole year[1], I agreed.

But assuming that those who invited me had no right to do so, it was surely not my fault. These protests do not displease me. The Harijans have suffered all these centuries at the hands of the *savarna* Hindus as from no one else, and as I am one of the latter I am participant in their sin. And I am never accustomed to weigh my sins in golden scales. I can atone for them only if I made a mountain of a molehill. The reason is simple. Man can never see his faults in proper perspective, and if he really did so, he would scarcely survive them. The remedy is, therefore, to magnify one's shortcomings. And the sin of untouchability is so heinous that it is impossible to exaggerate it. Those who suffer from it are naturally liable to be angry with those who are trying to wipe it out. They may well say to me: 'Who are you to remove untouchability? We shall wipe it out with our own strength.' Now the way of demonstrating one's strength is of two kinds: one is the eternal, God-given way of self-purification, where man takes the blame upon himself of all the wrongs he is suffering from; the other is the way of retaliation, the Mosaic law of tooth for a tooth and nail for a nail. The latter is quite natural in that we have descended from the state of brutes, and some of their qualities may have been exaggerated in us. It is Hitler's way. Because a Jew or many Jews may have wronged the Germans he thinks it is his duty to exterminate the whole Jewish race. To those Harijans who would destroy caste Hindus and Hinduism I would say that the Hindus deserve it. But the caste Hindus too owe a duty to themselves and their religion. Let them receive lathis and stones from Harijans. But they should continue to serve them.

What, however, is to be done, if they will not receive our service?[2]

Let the stones rain on us, we have to keep quiet and to hold this meeting. I had promised to stay here for ten minutes, but I am in no hurry to go now. Send word to the demonstrators that, if

[1] From November 1933 to August 1934

[2] At this stage there was a slight interruption because stones were thrown at the audience, injuring a few persons.

they will have a separate meeting, I am prepared to stay and address that meeting and answer the charges they may have to make against me. And what after all is my crime? That I am labouring for them? That I am endeavouring to put a little money into their pockets? That I am telling the sanatanists day in and day out that they have to purge themselves of their sin? And why rain stones on the innocent audience?

They wanted to hurt me, but what have they succeeded in doing? They have hurt a few innocent people including two children in the audience. If they wanted to punish me or those who invited me, they should have gone directly for us. Let me tell them that this hooliganism is the opposite of bravery, humanity, civility. Let me tell them they are going about the wrong way. They are injuring their own cause.

Now a word to those assembled here. Though this is a boarding house, those who receive their board and lodging here are all students. I hope your stay here will be fruitful and give you what is real education. Let today's demonstration be a lesson to you. It should make you neither angry nor afraid, for anger and fear are twin sins. Let the demonstration awaken you to your sense of duty and burn the eternal truth indelibly on your minds that only Truth quenches untruth, Love quenches anger, self-suffering quenches violence. This eternal rule is a rule not for saints only but for all. Those who observe it may be few but they are the salt of the earth, it is they who keep the society together, not those who sin against light and truth.

I ask you not only *not* to punish the demonstrators but not even to have the wish. They are not wicked. It is through them that God works to open our eyes to the wickedness within us. Let, therefore, today's demonstration purify you, as I know it will purify me. True *vidya* (knowledge) is the art of self-purification. Now I want you to stay here until the storm ceases, lest your going out just now should infuriate them. Let us wait until their fury ceases, and then quietly go back to our homes. In the mean while let us all recite *Ramdhun* together, let someone give us a hymn, and we shall disperse only when we are told that everything is quiet outside.[1]

Harijan, 1-2-1942

[1] Krishnanand Sokhta then invited the audience to join him in reciting Ramanama and the meeting dispersed peacefully thereafter.

318. TO GUJARATIS[1]

You have sacrificed a great deal in the cause of swaraj. But it is not enough. You can contribute still more in the form of money, labour, and increasingly intelligent and fresh minds.

Is it not sad that Rs. 2 lakhs worth of khadi only is being produced in Gujarat whereas Rs. 12 lakhs worth is wanted? It may be that there is not so much poverty in Gujarat as in the other provinces. But that does not mean that Gujaratis cannot, if they wish, produce all the khadi they need. Reckoning the population of Gujarat at 1 crore, the people would need at least 3 crores worth of cloth. You should produce at least this quantity, i.e., 15 crore yards.

The time is fast approaching when we shall not be able to get mill-cloth. There is scarcity even today, and what if the mills are bombed, what if they are used as munition factories? Either each one of us, young and old, rich and poor, man and woman, has to spin and provide for his own clothing or else go naked. There is not the least exaggeration in this. In the warring countries people are rationed for food and clothing,[2] and as the war is prolonged even the necessities of life are being used up and munitions are produced only to end in smoke. The war is thus working double destruction.

We have been willy-nilly dragged into the vortex. But we are not yet so hard put to it as the people in the warring countries. If, however, we sit with folded hands until the trouble comes upon us, we shall be found to have been fools[3]. We must be wise and adopt the necessary measures in time.[4]

It is my request then to those Gujaratis whose ears I can reach that they should give as much money and as much yarn as they can to the Mahagujarat Khadi Mandal. Receiving centres should be opened where necessary so as to save people the cost of posting yarn. The master-key to producing the requisite khadi lies

[1] The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 1-2-1942.

[2] The Gujarati here adds: "no one can get more than his rations."

[3] The Gujarati here adds: "who would start digging a well only when overcome by thirst."

[4] The Gujarati here adds: "We should erect our bunds before the waters overtake us."

in the wheel plying in every home. If good yarn is spun, weavers will be available, though I have already advised that we should take time by the forelock and train voluntary weavers also.

Will every Congressman rise to the occasion and spin for the nation?

SEVAGRAM, January 25, 1942
Harijan, 1-2-1942

319. A DEPLORABLE INCIDENT[1]

As Sardar Vallabhbhai was leaving Sevagram the other day he told me of a dacoity in a home[2] in Kheda District. Armed dacoits entered the house, belaboured the inmates, and escaped with the loot. The story was heart-rending. What should I do under similar circumstances, I thought to myself. What should Congressmen do in the circumstances was the next thought; and since then the train of thought arising from the dacoity has taken possession of me. The Congress has been working continuously since 1920 under the policy of non-violence. The province of Gujarat has also had the advantage of a leader of the Sardar's calibre. And yet daring dacoities can take place. How far then can Congress influence be said to have penetrated? People imagine that, if the British Government were to cease to function today, it would be the non-violent Congressmen who would automatically take over. But it is not so. I have been working to this end for the last twenty years, but my dream has not materialized. For the Congress has not had a living faith in the very means which it adopted in 1920. Therefore the non-violence of the Congress has really been non-violence of the weak. But governments can only be run by the strong. And a non-violent government can only be run by those who believe that non-violence is the mightiest force on earth. If we had had this strength, there would be no Hindu-Muslim riots, there would be no robbers or dacoits. Some might say that for such strength you need either a Jesus or a Buddha. But this is not so. Neither Jesus nor Buddha tried non-violence in the political sphere, or it would be truer to say that the present-day type of politics did not exist in their day. The Congress experiment is, therefore, a new one. The tragedy is that Congressmen have not tried it with full faith, full understanding and sincerity. If they had had these three essential qualities, the Congress would today have been far taller

[1] The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 1-2-1942.
[2] The house of one Jesangbhai

than it is. But I may not cry over spilt milk. I refer to the past only in order to guide us in the present. Even if we wake up now, the game is ours; if we do not, we shall surely lose. Power invariably elects to go into the hands of the strong. That strength may be physical or of the heart, or, if we do not fight shy of the word, of the spirit. Strength of the heart connotes soul force. If today we decide that we should try to get power by force of arms, we shall have to undo all the work of twenty years among the masses. We shall have to spend a considerable time in giving people a contrary training. We cannot afford to give the required time at this critical juncture. It is certain that today whoever has any strength of any kind will use it for seizing power. It is my firm conviction that, if Congressmen are to get power, it should only be through non-violence or soul force.

We have neither time nor material to do new work even in this line. When we have so far employed non-violence as a weapon of the weak, how can we all of a sudden expect to convert it into a weapon of the strong? But in spite of this I feel that at the present moment this experiment alone is feasible and proper for us. There is no risk involved in it. Even failure in it takes the form of success because, even if the people are not able to go the whole length in the experiment, they cannot possibly be led into a ditch. By following the way of physical force they may not only be proved cowards, but in attempting to follow an untrodden path thousands may also be destroyed.

It is then the duty of Congressmen to seek out dacoits and robbers. They should try to understand and convert them. Such workers cannot be had for the asking; but Congressmen should know that this work is just as important as it is fraught with risk, and a certain number of them have to devote themselves to it.

The second thing requisite is that we should prepare such workers as would, under difficult circumstances, stand up to dacoits and, whilst trying to check or convert them from their evil ways, be prepared to suffer hurt or even death. Perhaps few workers will be forthcoming for this task too, but peace brigades throughout the country are a definite necessity. Or else in times of chaos Congressmen will lose all the reputation they have so far gained[1].

Thirdly, the rich should ponder well as to what is their duty today. They who employ mercenaries to guard their wealth may find those very guardians turning on them. The monied classes

[1] The Gujarati here adds, "and whatever we have achieved till now will be undone".

have got to learn how to fight either with arms or with the weapon of non-violence. For those who wish to follow the latter way the best and most effective *mantra* is: तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथाः[1] (Enjoy thy wealth by renouncing it.) Expanded, it means: 'Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society.' This truth has hitherto not been acted upon; but, if the monied classes do not even act on it in these times of stress, they will remain the slaves of their riches and passions and consequently of those who overpower them.

But I have visions that the end of this war will mean also the end of the rule of capital. I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence. Let it be remembered that[2] physical force is transitory even as the body is transitory. But the power of the spirit is permanent, even as the spirit is everlasting.

SEVAGRAM, January 25, 1942
Harijan, 1-2-1942

320. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 25, 1942

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter. Your pathetic note was received in Kashi. I could not understand why you should have felt so grieved at our not meeting as I went.[3] You had met me in the morning, had you not? But even if you had not, you should be now above these outward demonstrations of affection which is a permanent thing independent of outward manifestation. Let your work be your sole absorption.

I am glad you are keeping fit.

Babla[4] is all right.

Ignore what you may read about the row in Nagpur.[5]

[1] *Ishopanishad*, 1

[2] The Gujarati here adds: "the power acquired by."

[3] The addressee explains: "Never in all these years had I not touched Bapu's feet before he left for a journey; but on this occasion he had departed before I realized what was happening."

[4] Narayan, Mahadev Desai's son

[5] *Vide* pp. 253-5.

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I am all right.
Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6493. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9888

321. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
January 25, 1942

CHI. NARANDAS,

I had your letter in Kashi. Pay the money as may be desired by the Association. I was very pleased by your decision to stay on in it[1].

I have brought Abha with me. May I send Vina, her elder sister, to you? She keeps weak. She may work well under your protection and guidance. I am sure Jamna will like it.

Vina is in Calcutta at present. I am trying to fix her up somewhere and hence the question. Do not say yes merely to please me. I do not wish to put the slightest burden on you. I only wish to train a worker.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8598. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

322. LETTER TO NRISIMHAPRASAD K. BHATT

SEVAGRAM,
January 25, 1942

BHAI NANABHAI,

Received your letter only today. It was good that you were able to keep Narandas. Your encouragement will drive away his fear. I have him with me because we have only a small number of honest and able workers like him. The money should be deposited with Bachharaj & Co. only. But do what all of you think proper. If Jerajani[2] continues to insist, take him on. He too is an old

[1] Kathiawar Khadi Mandal
[2] Vithaldas K. Jerajani

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hand. He will be useful to you. You will have to look carefully into this. Don't give too much of your time and certainly not your physical strength. But if you are aware of this responsibility, you can without stirring from Ambla rectify everything and remove the irregularities. You are the helmsman.

Preserve your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Please give the enclosed to Narandas. Don't starve him of finances for khadi work.

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

323. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

January 25, 1942

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have read all. I see no need for making any payment today before the office[1] moves over. Menon's[2] monthly salary must be paid under any circumstances; so also in the cases of Vaze[3] and Aryabhushan. Has Vaze's bill been stopped? I think Menon should be asked to send over the things. He will send them to Wardha from where they will be brought in a bullock-cart.

We must think over the annual budget and also about the sum of Rs. 1,500. We shall discuss this later.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I will write to Balwantrai[4].

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3031

[1] Of the States' People's Conference
[2] K. B. Menon
[3] S. G. Vaze
[4] Balwantrai Mehta; *vide* the following item.

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324. LETTER TO BALWANTRAI MEHTA

January 25, 1942

BHAI BALWANTRAI,

I was able to read your letter only today. You should certainly be relieved. Talk to Prof. Dantawala. Let me know his requirements. So long as alternate arrangements are not made and your visits are necessary, please do the needful. If Himmatlal takes over, what else can we hope for?

Send him immediately to the office. Dr. Menon will certainly look after the general work in your absence. R. K. will supervise it. Jamnalalji has decided to keep the office at Sevagram for the present. The other staff is freshly recruited, isn't it? You will have to go there once.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

325. LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

January 26, 1942

DEAR KHAN SAHEB,

Puri tells me you would like me to appeal for funds for your work. If he has understood you correctly I would gladly make the appeal. Will you please confirm the information and tell me how much is the need?

I hope you had my letter[1] sent to you at the Maulana's instance.

Love.

Yours,
BAPU

PS.

Are the teeth giving satisfaction?

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* pp. 232-3.

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326. LETTER TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

January 26, 1942

BHAI SAHEB,

How can I express the joy I experienced on meeting you? I hope you have started what you spoke of. Please arrange to send a wire.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SHRI 5 MADANMOHAN MALAVIYAJI
P. O. BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2202

327. "CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME"

While I was writing the pamphlet[1] on the thirteenfold, now fourteenfold, constructive programme, Rajendra Babu was doing likewise in his own way. His pamphlet[2] has now been published by the Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad, at 4 annas (postage 1 anna extra). It may be called a companion to mine. The reader will find much of interest and instruction in Rajendra Babu's treatise. It gives details which I have omitted. No worker should be without either.

SEVAGRAM, January 27, 1942
Harijan, 1-2-1942

328. QUESTION BOX

UNITARY METHOD

Q. You seem to be advocating what you call the unitary method in the solution of many questions. Will you explain it a little more fully than you have done?

A. It is as simple as it is sure. A contract or pact is between two parties. There is also consideration passing from one to the other. Such was the Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the

[1] *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*; *vide* pp. 146-66.
[2] *Constructive Programme—Some Suggestions*

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Muslim League. The same thing could have been accomplished by the unitary method. Only then there would have been no compromise dictated by fear and distrust. The Congress could have done, according to its notion, absolute justice, i.e., yielded the maximum consistent with the welfare of the whole nation without the expectation of any consideration from the League. In a well-regulated family the relations are governed by the unitary method. Thus a father gives to his children not as a result of a pact. He gives out of love, a sense of justice without expecting any return therefor. Not that there is none. But everything is natural, nothing is forced. Nothing is done out of fear or distrust. What is true of a well-regulated family is equally true of a well-regulated society which is but an extended family. My advice about the adoption of two scripts by Hindus and Muslims is based on the unitary method. My equal love for all communities dictates its adoption. Properly applied, the method never fails. It disarms criticism and opposition. It presupposes a clean conscience and clean action. I propose to unfold in these columns the application of the method in all our communal relations. The views will be personal to me, as are all such since the Bardoli Resolution. They will be addressed to Congressmen for adoption only in so far as they appeal to their reason.

RAJAJI

Q. What has come over Rajaji? You and he seem to be drifting away from each other.

A. Yes, we seem to be and yet we are not. The seeming drift is but a prelude to a closer bond and clearer understanding. His loyalty is above suspicion. He would have gladly suppressed himself, if I had not strongly encouraged him to propound his views with a view to their adoption by the public. We owe allegiance to the same goddess. Our interpretations differ. If he is erring, he will retrace his steps as soon as he discovers it. And he knows that I would do likewise, if I discover mine. I feel, therefore, absolutely safe with him, and I ask all questioners to do likewise.

UNTRUTH

Q. Do you know that you are reported to have said at Benares that it is sinful for any Indian ever to study or speak in English and you are charged with insincerity in that you make such liberal use of the hated language when it suits you?

A. The report is wholly untrue. But once an untruth gets a start it is most difficult to overtake. Many untruths about me have had such a start. They created a temporary sensation and got a

decent burial without any effort on my part. So will this one. No untruth has ever done any harm to anyone if there was no bottom to it. I am answering the question, not to protect my reputation but to carry my point further. The charge of insincerity is itself the best refutation of the untruth. For my free use of the English language is not a thing of today. The charge should have been regarded as unworthy of belief. Let it be known that I am a lover of the English language and the English. But my love is wise and intelligent. Therefore I give both the place they deserve. Thus I do not allow the English language to displace the mother tongue or the natural all-India language—Hindustani. Nor do I let my love of the English displace my fellow-countrymen whose interest I can in no way allow to be injured. I recognize the great importance of the English language for international intercourse. I hold its knowledge as a second language to be indispensable for specified Indians who have to represent the country's interest in the international domain. I regard the English language as an open window for peeping into Western thought and sciences. For this too I should set apart a class. Through them I would spread through the Indian languages the knowledge they have gained from the West. But I would not burden India's children and sap their youthful energy by expecting the expansion of their brains through the medium of a foreign language. I do hold it to be a sin on the part of those who are responsible for producing the unnatural condition under which we are being educated. Such a thing is unknown in any other part of the world. Being too near the scene of the wreck we are unaware of the damage the nation has suffered by it. I can see the enormity of the damage because of my daily and close contact with the dumb and suppressed millions.

ANOTHER UNTRUTH

Q. You are reported by the Press to have approvingly referred to the progress made by the Japanese in adopting Western methods with a thoroughness hitherto unknown in the East. Is not this a contradiction of all you have written about the West? Or is there one law for India and another for Japan?

A. This is another untruth like the one about the English language. The reader will find out for himself from Mahadev Desai's report of my Benares speech[1] as to what I actually said about the Japanese. The burden of my speech was the undesirability of making English the medium of instruction and all-India

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Benares Hindu University", pp. 242-3.

speech. I said in this connection that, however harmful in my opinion the Japanese adaptation of the West was, the rapid progress was due to the restriction of the learning of the Western mode to a select few and using them for transmission of the new knowledge among the Japanese through their own mother tongue. Surely it is easy enough to understand that the Japanese could never have adapted themselves to the new mode, if they had had to do so through a foreign medium.

SEVAGRAM, January 27, 1942
Harijan, 1-2-1942

329. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

January 28, 1942

CHI. LILI,

I am replying to your letter the moment I got it. I did not like your account of how you were working. I have told you a thousand times not to get impatient. Whatever knowledge you acquire will not be wasted. You should thoroughly understand the subjects. Learn only what you can without over-exerting yourself. Have a talk with your Principal and other professors. Let me know what they say. I would not at all like your giving up your studies. I am not keen that you should take the examination this year. Of course if you can do so without difficulty, you may. But I should regard it as sheer folly and theft of public money for you to benumb your brain by keeping awake at night and drinking pots of tea. A person like you ought not to throw away money like this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9597. Also C.W. 6569. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

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330. TALK TO KHADI VIDYALAYA STUDENTS[1]

SEVAGRAM,
January 29, 1942

I have something to say about the manner in which you just came and sat here.[2] The task before us is so great and pure that it should influence our manner of speech as well as movement, in fact all our actions as well as thoughts. When we assemble to hear someone we should sit in a decent posture, without being huddled together. And we should make it a point to sit up straight and erect and in an attentive posture. The way you are huddled together, one upon another, shows a lack of manners, of culture. Every tradition has its own definite style of deportment. In Western countries, people sit on chairs in a prescribed manner. The military training they receive also influences their style. We also have our own concept of good manners. But we have forgotten it. We have learnt nothing new from the West. That is why our plight is like Trishanku's[3], neither here nor there. We have our own code of postures, which helps make physical as well as spiritual progress. It is something we can offer the world provided we assimilate it in our lives. But we have now grown indolent. This is about the ancient Hindu tradition. The Arabs too have their own code of etiquette. They also have a graceful manner of sitting and rising. Their prayers too are offered in their own prescribed style. In short, the only purpose of my saying all this is that whatever we do should have a method about it—a code to govern it. If you fulfil the expectations entertained about you, you can surpass the students of Government schools or colleges. In my view the importance of this Vidyalaya is not less but in fact more than that of a school or college. You are judged also by the way you lie and sit, by the manner and matter of your talk. Every action of a man from the cradle to the grave should be steeped in his culture. I would like to see your own culture in every

[1] After the evening prayer Gandhiji addressed the students from different provinces who had one month's training at the Vidyalaya.

[2] There was some confusion when the students took their seats at the meeting.

[3] Who hung between heaven and earth

one of your actions. It is not enough for you merely to learn spinning and weaving; it is only a means.

Two things are most essential for man to subsist. One is food and the other clothing. There are three ways of solving the problem of food and clothing. One of them is to get them in the form of charity. But it is not proper. It does not mitigate the poverty of the people. On the contrary, it makes beggars of them. The other way is to take up employment and earn wages with which to subsist. This too makes us dependent. The third way is to arrange the production of food and clothing. This can be done in two ways. Either through spinning-wheels or through mechanized factories. By mass-producing the goods we can certainly become self-dependent collectively, but not individually. In case of air-raids where will they drop the bombs if not on the workshops and factories? Certainly not on the [small] dwelling units where *taklis* and spinning-wheels are plying. If eventually we are left with no other means of producing cloth, we shall be obliged to depend on others for our needs. And if the factories are diverted to the manufacture of ammunitions, there will be no other means but the spinning-wheel left with us.

All this can happen in future. If we can foresee it we should provide for it right from today. Today we need khadi worth one billion rupees, out of which we shall be able to produce at the most khadi worth one crore. It is no great achievement in my view. You are being trained here so that when you leave you may teach the people to produce their own requirements and stand on their own legs.

Today if someone comes to me even after passing his M.A., I would ask him too what his ultimate aim in life was. What does he want to do? Employment of some sort, isn't it? To secure employment and earn his bread. But that is not your aim. If you come here to be trained so that you can earn your bread you cannot interest a man like me. Here is before you a course covering one year, not several as in the schools and colleges. The aim is to devise a scheme by which the whole of India, every single man in the country, can stand on his own feet. By producing cloth in the mills the money does not go to the poor but it moves from the poor man's pocket into the rich man's. On the other hand, if I buy khadi, I transfer some money to the poor and help them to be self-reliant. In this way if we succeed in making them self-reliant in one matter alone, they will themselves learn to be so in all other matters. Khadi is like the carpenter's set square. When with its help he corrects one angle, the remaining angles stand corrected in

consequence. In the same way, if we could establish khadi, many other things would take root without special effort on our part. As a result of the work we have done for khadi, many village industries have now been revived and the activities of the A. I. V. I. A. are gaining ground. If you look at khadi work from this angle, you will realize what splendid thing khadi is and consequently your work and its impact too will be equally splendid.

Bear in mind that you are learning the way of filling the poor man's pocket and not your family's. If we fail to appreciate this point, we all shall have to repent in the end. You had better look out now, quit this work and take up another profession or employment.

In this context, I have deliberately omitted to mention the country's independence and politics, although they are all interconnected. If we could make the poor people of India self-reliant in necessaries, swaraj will be within our reach. In my view, that alone would be real swaraj, and nothing else. If you will go through Shri Rajendra Babu's recent essay on constructive programme you will know what an important role khadi has in the struggle for independence.

Those of you who are leaving today should understand that whatever they have learnt or done here during these four weeks is nothing more than superficial introduction. They must increase their knowledge. If you have not developed a scientific outlook, if you have not learnt to think the scientific way, you will not be able to develop whatever you have gained here, nor will you be able to fulfil the expectations entertained of you. Here you have been entrusted with a key to a store of knowledge and if you have learnt to use it, I trust you will draw from that store new things every day and enrich yourselves.

A teacher who establishes rapport with the taught, becomes one with them, learns more from them than he teaches them. He who learns nothing from his disciples is, in my opinion, worthless. Whenever I talk with someone I learn from him. I take from him more than I give him. In this way, a true teacher regards himself as a student of his students. If you will teach your pupils with this attitude, you will benefit much from them.

In my opinion the late Maganlal Gandhi was such an ideal khadi worker. He proved his worth beyond my expectations. Even struggling against the most formidable difficulties, he used to learn something useful to him wherever he could. He was neither afraid nor tired of hardships. Till his death he engaged himself in learning more and more about khadi. I want you to follow in your life this ideal of Maganlal Gandhi. Remember, if on returning to

your home provinces you do not develop the knowledge acquired here, you will lose very soon what you carry with you. If you want to develop your knowledge, know that it can grow only by teaching it to the others. If you continue to be such progressive and brilliant workers you will, I am sure, grow from 13 to 130 in a very short time.

So, I am placing a great burden on the teachers who are leaving this place today. Please carry it with you. From wherever you will go and work I expect to hear that you are honest gentlemen and devoted servants of the country.

If anyone wants to ask any question he may do so.

Q. What should a khadi worker do to guard himself against lethargy and pride?

GANDHIJI: He should spin regularly and attentively for eight hours every day without a break. If, while plying the wheel, he thinks only of service to *Daridranarayana*, pride will not be able to cast its shadow on him, and how can lethargy remain?

Q. What should a khadi worker do in case his subordinates do not carry out his instructions? Should he punish them? Should he get angry?

GANDHIJI: He should try to convert them through patience without losing his temper. It has been my experience that when I become angry, I fail to convince. Anger is an enemy of reason. That is why we should not lose temper. Similarly, we cannot also mete out punishment. If any punishment is necessary, we should ourselves undertake a fast. But if the interest of khadi work demands it, the person concerned can be relieved.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 15-2-1942

331. LETTER TO MANJULA M. MEHTA

January 30, 1942

CHI. MANJULA,

I have your letters. I acted upon them immediately. I took Champa to task. She has realized her error somewhat and feels ashamed. But my words are likely to have no permanent effect on her. After my rebuke, she gave me the accompanying letter[1]. I have read it. It means nothing.

When are you coming here? If you wish, I would shift Champa from that room. It is reserved for you exclusively. It will take

[1] This is not available.

some time before your building is ready. Till then you may treat this room as your own. I have put Champa there as your representative.

Ratilal has run away to Wankaner on somebody's mare. It is not proper for Magan not to go and see him. An attendant can be found there.

I hope all of you are doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1025. Courtesy: Manjula M. Mehta

332. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SEVAGRAM,
January 30, 1942

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. Your work there seems to be going on quite well.

You did well to draw my attention to my habit of talking too much. I will continue to call you silly, but I will bear in mind your criticism. You cite the remarks of others in support of your criticism and they too will caution me.[1] I do admit that there is substance in one point. My past experiences are no valid arguments. They may give me strength, but as arguments their value is limited. If the experiments in the past were based on error, the error is not mitigated but multiplied by repeating those experiments.

I plead completely guilty to your second charge. I am in no position now to write long and interesting letters. I can do that only if I went to jail. Nor can I talk interestingly. The pressure on my time has become much too heavy for that.

Lakshmibai is leaving today. I like her very much. Her health is fully restored.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10422. Also C.W. 6861. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

[1] The addressee had conveyed to Gandhiji the criticism of some leaders and constructive workers that he had grown argumentative and referred too often to his experiences in South Africa.

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333. MY SINCERITY

I have been asked which way my sympathy lies. From a purely humanitarian point of view, undoubtedly, it is all with England. I do not wish that the British should be defeated, nor do I wish the defeat of the Germans. There will be very little meaning and charm for us in the rest of the world if an entire people, to whichever nation they belong, remain downtrodden, humiliated and embittered. Will not bitterness in any one nation constitute seeds of a future war ? Whatever it is, if the present war continues till the bitter end, civilization itself will be reduced to ashes in this conflagration. Let us pray that it will stop before it is too late. Still, can it stop so long as there is hatred in the hearts of men ? If I have hatred for even one individual, will it not imperceptibly spread to all his countrymen? Of course, there is ample reason for condemning the German dictator. But if I wish that armies bid farewell to arms and refrain from bloodshed — since this is the only meaning and message of ahimsa — I should adhere to my conviction and should have no hatred for any living human being. Although I am pained at his deeds, I can have no hatred even for Adolf Hitler.

[From Hindi]

Sarvodaya, January 1942

334. DHANUSH TAKLI

I think *dhanush takli* is going to play a big role in the constructive programme. Today I am not going to enter into the relative merits and demerits of *dhanush takli* and the spinning-wheel. I am convinced that we cannot manufacture spinning-wheels by thousands. It requires plenty of money which we do not have. Nor can they be manufactured at every place. They are also hardly portable.

It is not possible either to make good *taklis* at every place, nor can we spin fast with them.

That leaves only the *dhanush takli* which can be made with little labour and less money. We can also spin fast with it.

Therefore, I request all khadi workers to study the *dhanush takli*, learn to make it and popularize it.

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Manufacture of new spinning-wheels should be postponed for the time being. By all means make the best use of the existing ones. Those who can and wish to manufacture the spinning-wheels locally may do so. But in order to create an atmosphere for *dhanush takli* all the new spinners should be supplied with *dhanush taklis* only.

All khadi workers should peruse from *Harijan* my article[1] on the subject.

[From Hindi]

Khadi Jagat, January 1942

335. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 1, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Your question is right. Ordinarily such things cannot be passed. But it is reasonable to give this much to Lakshmidas. He should be paid every month, if he asks for it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4411

336. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA GOSEVA SANGH CONFERENCE[2]

WARDHA,
February 1, 1942

Gandhiji with biting irony . . . cast . . . lurid light on the worship of the cow as seen in the streets of Bombay.

We catch her by the tail and sanctify our eyes with its sacred touch. We regard even her urine as sacred and full of medicinal value and drink it. Alas, the poor cow is innocent of all this worship, and so our worship is lost on her. It even scares her. When it scares her she answers our attentions with a kick; when she is not scared she suffers us. . . .

All this is too true and those who claim to protect the cow betray a criminal ignorance of the real method of protecting her and her progeny. Those who claim to worship the cow cruelly ill-treat the bullocks. Chaunde Maharaj has been working at the problem assiduously for years, but whilst he accepts my facts and

[1] *Vide* "Real War Effort", pp. 233-6.

[2] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "Goseva Sangh-I and II". Gandhiji inaugurated the first conference held under the presidentship of Vinoba Bhave.

even argument, he says, 'What about the public sentiment? They somehow want to save the cow from the butcher.' But they go about the wrong way and succeed in defeating the very object they are trying to achieve. I do not say this in a carping spirit, but shocking ignorance and want of understanding of the essentials of the problem betrayed by most of the people who run our pinjrapoles[1] dismay me.

He referred in passing to the wrong way of protecting the cow from a Mussalman wanting to slaughter her, and said that he would repeat *ad nauseam* that to quarrel with the Mussalman and to kill him in order to protect the cow was to instigate more slaughter.

The whole milk and ghee trade is in the hands of the Hindus. But have we been able to ensure a supply of pure milk and ghee? The milk is adulterated, and even the water used for adulteration is not clean. The cruel and criminal process of *phooka*[2] is well known. The ghee sold in the market can often be described as poison rather than ghee. The butter we get from New Zealand, Australia or Denmark is guaranteed pure cow's butter, but there is no guarantee about the butter or ghee available here. There is not a shop in Wardha, where some of us are keen on this problem, where one could go and buy a seer of cow's ghee of guaranteed purity.[3]

I therefore say that if I can really protect the cow by adopting proper ways and means, I would protect the rest of the animals. But it can be done only if we know the true science and economy of it. Only then shall we be able to interest Perinbehn in the problem.[4] I am amazed at our partiality for buffalo's milk and ghee. Our economics is short-sighted. We look at the immediate gain, but we do not realize that in the last analysis the cow is the more valuable animal. Cow's butter (and

[1] Place where aged and infirm cattle are cared for

[2] Blowing

[3] Mahadev Desai introduces the next paragraph with the following note: "Every animal—in fact all life—is sacred and should be protected, but unless we really protect the one that was most valuable in national economy, other animals could not be protected. In our neglect of the cow we had brought both the cow and the buffalo at death's door."

[4] Perinbehn Captain, on being invited to the conference, had declined saying: "None of this travesty of worship for me. I might attend when you have put it on a rational footing and shown by concrete work that the Hindus really care for the cow. And if you will protect the cow, why not the horse and the dog too—both of them equally noble?"

ghee) has a naturally yellowish colour which indicates its superiority to buffalo's butter (and ghee) in *carotene*. It has a flavour all its own. Foreign visitors who come to Sevagram go into raptures over the pure cow's milk they get there. Buffalo's milk and butter are almost unknown in Europe. It is only in India that one finds a prejudice in favour of buffalo's milk and ghee. This has spelt all but extinction of the cow, and that is why I say that, unless we put an exclusive emphasis on the cow, she cannot be saved. It is a tragedy that all the cows and buffaloes put together cannot give us enough milk for the 40 crores of our people. We ought to realize the value of the cow as a giver of milk and the mother of draught and agricultural cattle. And how far is one to pamper popular prejudices? A cow proves valuable even if she dies, if we would make use of the skin, the bone, the flesh, the entrails and so on. But the good Chaunde Maharaj wonders if people can be persuaded to believe that dead cow's hide is sacred. Why not? I would not hesitate to go into my house with shoes made of dead cow's hide, provided of course the shoes are clean. I should not hesitate to have my meal with such clean shoes on. I have to do all this in order to show that the cow is an asset and not a liability. Today in many places they bury dead cows or sell them away for a song. We despise the Harijans who eat carrion, but we forget that it is due to our own fault. If we treated the hide properly, if we knew the manurial value of the flesh, and the use of the bone and the entrails—which we are demonstrating at Nalwadi—there would be no carrion-eating.

Ever since my return to India from South Africa I have been harping on the question of the reform of pinjrapoles. Unless we realize and define their proper functions, they are sure to remain the economic waste they are. Their proper function is to take care of dry, old and disabled cows, of which individual owners cannot possibly take care—certainly not in towns and cities. Their function is not that of a dairy—though they may run a separate dairy if they can—but the care of the old and the disabled animals, and to provide the raw material for a tannery. There should be a well-equipped tannery attached to every pinjrapoles. They should maintain the best stud-bulls and loan them out for public use, they should provide every facility for the humane and scientific castration of bulls to be turned into bullocks, and there should be instruction centres for the agriculturist and the dairy farmer. Here is plenty of scope for our agricultural and dairy graduates who should receive additional training

for the special work and then be attached to every one of our pinjrapoles. All the pinjrapoles should then be affiliated to our Association which should be the central institution for expert advice, collection and co-ordination of information and statistics, and so on. The Association has made it a rule to have as its members those who take the following pledge:

> I agree with the object and means of the Association.
>
> I promise to use cow's milk and its products exclusively, except for medical purposes or under unavoidable circumstances or in the articles of food containing milk and its products in a negligible quantity. I will refrain from the use of the leather of slaughtered cows, bullocks and calves.
>
> I will donate a sum of rupee one or 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn to the Association every year.

Do not magnify the so-called difficulties and the embarrassment you would cause to your hosts. You can go about with cow's ghee wherever you go—as Kakasaheb does—or you can do without it. It will be good propaganda, and you may succeed in converting your hosts also. But duty is not always easy of performance. To run away from it is the opposite of manliness, opposite of humanity.[1]

Answering a question, Gandhiji said that *goseva* formed part of the constructive programme of the Congress.

Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the audience to stabilize and organize pinjrapoles. Even Muslims could co-operate in this cow-protection and preservation work, as it would increase milch cattle, give nutrition and preserve a good supply of bullocks for cultivation.

Unless you offer your full co-operation to Jamnalalji, especially on the question of pinjrapoles, his best efforts cannot succeed. Today the cow is on the brink of extinction, and I am not sure that our efforts will ultimately succeed. But if she dies, we also die along with her—we, i.e., our civilization. I mean our essentially non-violent and rural civilization. We have, therefore, to make our choice. We can choose to be violent and kill all uneconomic cattle. Like Europe we should then breed our cattle for the purposes of milk and meat. But our civilization is fundamentally different. Our life is wrapped up in our animals. Most of our villagers live with their animals, often under the same roof. Both live together, both starve together. Often enough the owner starves the poor cattle, exploits them, ill-treats them, unmercifully extracts work out of them. But if we reform our ways, we

[1] The following two paragraphs are from *The Hindu*.

can both be saved. Otherwise we sink together, and it is just as well that we swim or sink together.

The question today is to solve the problem of our starvation and poverty, but I have confined myself to the problem of the starvation and poverty of our cattle. Our *rishis*[1] showed us the sovereign remedy. 'Protect the cow,' they said, 'and you protect all.' We have to add to the talents they have left us, and not to waste them. We have invited the experts,[2] and we shall make every use of their advice. Nothing that we laymen say is final, we shall get the experts to test it with their knowledge and experience. We shall, therefore, always seek their advice and invite their criticism.

Harijan, 8-2-1942 and 15-2-1942, and *The Hindu*, 2-2-1942

337. THREE ESSENTIALS

Assuming the presence of the will among the millions, rapid spread of hand-spinning is possible only by the adoption of the following three things:

1. Use of unginned cotton from the nearest spot when it is not grown on one's own plot.
2. Ginning it on a polished board with an iron or smooth wooden rod and carding the cotton by manipulation of the cotton with fingers assisted by a wooden knife made on the spot. This process is called *tunai* (तुनाई).
3. Spinning the slivers on the *dhanush takli*.

Hand-gins cannot be manufactured to order today. All available unginned cotton should be prepared first by the method explained in 2 above.

Where unginned cotton is not available ginned cotton from factories has got to be used. It too lends itself to *tunai*, though much more time is required for carding by the *tunai* process when bale cotton has to be used. Where a carding-bow is available, naturally it will be used. But what is true of ginning is equally true of carding. It is not possible to manufacture bows and gut in a moment. *Tunai* is a method devised and being perfected by Shri Vinoba with an artist's skill and ardour.

[1] Seers

[2] Kothawala of the Bangalore Dairy, Sam Higginbottom of the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Viswanathan of the Agricultural Research Institute and Datar Singh of the Montgomery Dairy Farm attended the conference.

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When spinning spreads among the millions it will be impossible to supply slivers from a centre or centres. The utmost that is possible is for families or groups to set apart one or two hands per a fixed number for carding. The ideal, the best, and in the long run the quickest, way is for each one to prepare his own slivers. It makes spinning more interesting, and the variety of occupation breaks the monotony.

I suggest that, though the crisis is not yet felt and the mills are working, khadi workers will do well from now to adopt the suggestions I have made. When the crisis does come, we shall then be found ready.

SEVAGRAM, February 2, 1942
Harijan, 22-2-1942

338. HINDI+URDU=HINDUSTANI

The following letter[1] was written on the 29th ultimo and sent to me by its writer by registered post. It was received at Sevagram on the 31st ultimo:

The writer has signed the letter, but as it is marked personal I refrain from giving his name. In any case the name does not matter. What the writer says is, I know, the belief held by many Muslims. My repudiation has not undone the mischief.

But my article[2], which was written on the 23rd ultimo and has appeared in *Harijan* of the 1st instant, should soothe the writer so far as I am concerned.

I entirely agree with my correspondent that all who want one all-India speech should today learn both the forms—Hindi and Urdu. Those who do will ultimately give us a common language. That form which is more popular and more understood by the masses, whether Hindu or Muslim, will surely be the all-India speech. But if my proposal finds general acceptance, the language question will cease to be a political issue or a bone of contention.

I do not subscribe to the correspondent's statement that Urdu is "more developed, more beautiful, more attractive, more concise, and more expressive". No language is intrinsically all that

[1] The letter, not reproduced here, alleged that Gandhiji was advocating the cause of Hindi in the name of Hindustani.

[2] Entitled "Hindustani"; *vide* pp. 251-3.

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the correspondent says. A language becomes what its speakers and writers make it. English had no merit apart from what Englishmen made it. In other words, a language is a human creation and takes the colour of its creators. Every language is capable of infinite expansion. Modern Bengali is what Bankim[1] and Rabindranath have made it. If, therefore, it is true that Urdu is more everything than Hindi, it is because its creators are abler than those of Hindi. I can give no opinion, for I have not studied either as a linguist. I know just enough of both for my public work.

But is Urdu a language distinct from Hindi as, say, Bengali is from Marathi? Is not Urdu a direct descendant of Hindi, written in the Persian character with a tendency to borrow new words from Persian and Arabic rather than Sanskrit? If there was no estrangement between the two communities, such a phenomenon would have been welcomed. And when the animosities have died out, as they will one day, our descendants will laugh at our quarrels and will be proud of the common Hindustani speech which will be a mixture of words indifferently borrowed from many languages according to the tastes and equipment of its multitude of writers and speakers.

Let me correct one misimpression of my correspondent. He seems to think that Hindustani will finally displace all the provincial languages. That is neither my dream nor of those who have been thinking of an all-India speech. Their dream is that Hindustani should displace English which has almost become a common medium of communication between the educated classes resulting in a gulf being created between them and the masses. The tragedy can be prevented only if the common speech spoken by the largest number of India's inhabitants is adopted as the inter-provincial speech. The fight, therefore, is not between Hindi and Urdu, but between the two on the one hand and English on the other. The result is a foregone conclusion in spite of the heavy handicap that the sisters are labouring under, not to speak of the temporary mutual quarrel.

My correspondent quarrels with my connection with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. I am proud of my connection with that body. It has a record of which it has no reason to be ashamed. The name Hindi was common to both the communities. Both have written in Hindi and promoted its growth. Evidently my correspondent is ignorant of what my connection with

[1] Bankimchandra Chatterjee

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that body has meant. It was under my instigation that it wisely, and shall I say patriotically and generously, adopted the definition of Hindi to cover Urdu. He asks whether I ever joined an Urdu Anjuman. I have never been seriously asked to join any. If I was, I would have made a stipulation with my inviters similar to the one I made with those who induced me to preside at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. I would have asked the Urdu-speaking inviters to let me ask the audience to define Urdu so as to include Hindi speech written in Devanagari script. No such luck came my way.

But now, as I have already hinted in my article of the 1st instant already referred to, I would like to form an association advocating the learning of both forms of speech and both the scripts by its members and carrying on propaganda to that end in the hope finally of a natural fusion of the two becoming a common interprovincial speech called Hindustani. Then the equation would be not Hindustani = Hindi + Urdu, but Hindustani=Hindi=Urdu.

SEVAGRAM, February 2, 1942

Harijan, 8-2-1942

339. THE ASHRAM PRAYER[1]

The Ashram prayer has become very popular. Its development has been spontaneous. The *Ashram Bhajanavali*[2] (Hymn Book) has gone into several editions and is increasingly in demand. The birth and growth of this prayer has not been artificial. There is a history attached to almost every *shloka* and every selected *bhajan*. The *Bhajanavali* contains among others *bhajans* from Muslim Sufis and Fakirs, from Guru Nanak, and from the Christian Hymnary. Every religion seems to have found a natural setting in the prayer book.

Chinese, Burmese, Jews, Ceylonese, Muslims, Parsis, Europeans and Americans have all lived in the Ashram from time to time. In the same way two Japanese sadhus came to me in Maganwadi in 1935. One of them was with me till the other day when war broke out with Japan. He was an ideal inmate of our home in Sevagram. He took part in every activity with zest. I never heard of his quarrelling with anyone. He was a

[1] The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 8-2-1942.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XLIV.

silent worker. He learnt as much Hindi as he could. He was a strict observer of his vows. Every morning and evening he could be seen going round with his drum and heard chanting his *mantra*. The evening worship always commenced with his *mantra* नं म्यो हो रेंगे क्यो, which means "I bow to the Buddha, the giver of true religion." I shall never forget the quickness, the orderliness, and utter detachment with which he prepared himself the day the police came without notice to take him away from the Ashram. He took leave of me after reciting his favourite *mantra* and left his drum with me. "You are leaving us, but your *mantra* will remain an integral part of our Ashram prayer," were the words that came spontaneously to my lips. Since then, in spite of his absence, our morning and evening worship has commenced with the *mantra*. For me it is a constant reminder of Sadhu Keshav's purity and single-eyed devotion. Indeed its efficacy lies in that sacred memory.

While Sadhu Keshav was still with us, Bibi Raihana Tyabji also came to stay at Sevagram for a few days. I knew her to be a devout Muslim but was not aware, before the death of her illustrious father, of how well-versed she was in Koran Sharif. When that jewel of Gujarat, Tyabji Saheb, expired no sound of weeping broke the awful silence in his room. The latter echoed with Bibi Raihana's sonorous recitation of verses from the Koran. Such as Abbas Tyabji Saheb cannot die. He is ever alive in the example of national service which he has left behind.[1] Bibi Raihana is an accomplished singer with an ample repertory of *bhajans* of all kinds. She used to sing daily as well as recite beautiful verses from the Koran. I asked her to teach some verses to any of the inmates who could learn them, and she gladly did so. Like so many who come here she had become one of us. Raihana went away when her visit was over, but she has left a fragrant reminder of herself. The well-known 'al Fateha' has been included in the Ashram worship. The following is a translation of it.

1. I take refuge in Allah from Satan the accursed.
2. Say: He is God, the one and only
God, the Eternal, Absolute,
He begetteth not nor is He begotten,
And there is none like unto Him.
3. Praise be to God,

[1] The Hindi here has: "On her arrival I said to Raihana jestingly, 'You convert the Ashram inmates to Islam. I shall convert you to Hinduism."

The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds,
Most Gracious, most Merciful,
Master of the Day of Judgment,
Thee do we worship
And Thine aid we seek.
Show us the straight way,
The way of those on whom
Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
Those whose (portion) is not wrath
And who go not astray.

I am writing this note in reply to an ardent Hindu friend who has thus gently reproached me: "You have now given the *Kalma* a place in the Ashram. What further remains to be done to kill your Hinduism?"

I am confident that my Hinduism and that of the other Ashram Hindus has grown thereby. There should be in us an equal reverence for all religions. Badshah Khan, whenever he comes, joins in the worship here with delight. He loves the tune to which the *Ramayana* is sung, and he listens intently to the *Gita*. His faith in Islam has not lessened thereby. Then why may I not listen to the Koran with equal reverence and adoration in my heart?

Vinoba and Pyarelal studied Arabic and learnt the Koran in jail. Their Hinduism has been enriched by this study. I believe that Hindu-Muslim unity will come only through such spontaneous mingling of hearts and no other. Rama is not known by only a thousand names. His names are innumerable, and He is the same whether we call Him Allah, Khuda, Rahim, Razaak, the Bread-giver, or any name that comes from the heart of a true devotee.

SEVAGRAM, February 2, 1942
Harijan, 15-2-1942

340. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM,
WARDHA,
February 2, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

An ideal secretary keeps her chief straight where he is going astray. She hovers round him and watches all the movement about him, picks up his papers, even torn, lest he might

have torn important ones in mistake, collects all she has given him, if it is to be found anywhere. Therefore she leaves after him and seeks what he has left behind and if not owned by anybody else, collects it.

Now I was right in correcting you yesterday but wholly wrong in showing disappointment or irritation. Forget the wrong and treasure the right. What I have said is by way of indication. Follow the spirit of this note and you will be an ideal secretary.

This is my birthday present which goes loaded with all the good wishes that I am capable of conceiving.

Love.

BAPU

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
SEVAGRAM

From the original: C.W. 3686. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6495

341. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ[1]

Unrevised *Silence Day, February 2, 1942*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Your question deserves to be considered. Does the Goseva Sangh belong to Hinduism or is it a public institution? If it is a public institution, then do all religions accept it, or will they? If it is not a sectarian body, then we should try to draw to it followers of all religions.

Your list does not contain names of persons from different provinces; there is nothing like *goseva* in the South nor in Bengal and the Punjab. Is no one from these places to be included?

Of late I have not come in contact with Chaunde Maharaj, but my experience of him is not quite encouraging. He has one or two workers who are good. My attitude is to accept from him whatever help he can give. He has his own institution. It should not be interfered with. We should learn from each other, and have a fraternal feeling.

Yes, there ought to be a woman. By all means do have Manibehn. It will be very difficult to get Rajkumari. At home it will not be possible for her to follow the rules about the cow.

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's letter of the same date. He has however noted in his diary that he did not understand Gandhiji's reply.

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If you enlist supporters or friends, you can include persons like Rajkumari.

I shall look into the accounts of the old Sangh.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3032

342. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

Silence Day, February 2, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

You should see the knife they give me. It is full of dirt. In jail the knives are kept shining clean. This can also be as clean; in fact all our implements should be as clean.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4412

343. QUESTION BOX

HINDU-MUSLIM PUZZLE

Q. In your proposed solution of the Hindu-Muslim puzzle[1], do you expect all the Hindus to abstain from the legislatures or only a part? If only a part, will not the most reactionary Hindus get in and make things worse than now? And if you expect Congressmen to affect the Muslim mind from outside, why can't you do the same and perhaps more effectively by being inside?

A. I do not expect all the Hindus to abstain. I know that all Hindu seats will be filled by non-Congress Hindus. Congress Hindus, if they go in, will be ground down between the two stones of the communal *chakki*[2] without doing any good to anybody. I do not approach the question as a Hindu. I approach it as a Congressman seeking to represent equally all communities. But for the artificial system introduced in the composition of the Indian legislatures, all the members would be representing not communities but their parties grouped according to their non-communal shibboleths. As one representing all communities I

[1] *Vide* "Communal Unity", pp. 237-8.
[2] Grinding-stone

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would expect not only Hindus but Congress-minded Muslims and others too to avoid the legislatures and elective bodies. These abstainers will hold the scales evenly between all communities and seek to affect the legislatures from outside. Whether they are many or only a few, they will play the role of wise men. If all listened to me, the communal question would disappear from our midst. By entering the legislatures the Congress Hindus become interlopers, and act weakly for fear of offending one party or the other. This I know, that at the present moment the legislatures are, and must become, part of the war machinery. They have no choice. They will not be allowed to function, if they obstruct the war effort. How could the rulers whose sole occupation is to prosecute the war do otherwise?

Why Not in Hindu Majority Provinces?

Q. Why not advise Congressmen to withdraw from the provincial legislatures too where the Hindus are in a majority?

A. Because I do not want the non-Muslim minority parties to act as if they were the majority and carry on the government in these provinces. It would be a false position to which the Congress would be a willing party, if the Congress members withdrew. In these provinces, therefore, abstention cannot solve the communal tangle, and will bring about an unintended and undesirable state of things.

Torturing the Language?

Q. Surely you are torturing the language when you use the word "unitary" in the place of 'unilateral'.[1] For that is obviously what you mean.

A. I must plead not guilty. 'Unilateral' has a definite legal meaning which does not fit in with what I am struggling to convey. It is not onesidedness. It is no-sidedness. It has impartiality implied in it. But it is not the method of impartiality. It is something more. I represent a party, say, the Congress. For the solution of the problem I apply a method whereby I seek to affect those who are estranged from me. I am not merely impartial, because I may or may not please them. Impartiality has to be felt by the aggrieved party. My conduct is independent of the feeling of the aggrieved party. I go the utmost length to placate the offended party, and trust my out-and-out pure conduct to affect them. I may not succeed at once. But if there is a real sense of justice in the method, it must succeed.

[1] *Vide* "Unitary Method", pp. 263-4.

For want of a better word I have called the method "unitary". The dictionary meaning satisfies my test which I have imperfectly described here.

SEVAGRAM, February 3, 1942

Harijan, 15-2-1942

344. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

February 3, 1942

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Sailendra has many complaints. He says he does not get the *bhaji*[1] soup regularly, and that there is nobody to help him in preparing the *bhaji*. Have a talk with him and make the necessary arrangements.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8479. Also C.W. 7164. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

345. DISCUSSION AT ALL-INDIA GOSEVA SANGH CONFERENCE[2]

February 3, 1942[3]

Did Gandhiji mean to say that even as khadi saved the Indian mill-cloth, the protection of the cow would mean the protection of the buffalo? Gandhiji said:

Yes, but I mean something more. I have often said that I should not shed a single tear, if all the mills were to be destroyed. I would never say this regarding the buffalo.

Explaining the matter at greater length he said:

No, my point is that, unless we protect the cow today, we will fail to save both the cow and the buffalo. And it is not possible to make a combined endeavour to save both. The combined endeavour will result in the buffalo devouring the cow.

[1] Leafy vegetable

[2] In his article "Goseva Sangh–II", from which this is reproduced, Mahadev Desai gives the following introduction: " . . . no one seemed to be clear as regards the attitude to be adopted regarding the buffalo, and no one seemed to see how, if we saved the cow, the buffalo would also be saved."

[3] From *Bapu-smaran*

The cow is the more neglected animal, and that is why we should concentrate on the cow. But not even if Jamnalalji got a few crores of rupees can we achieve our object until we have converted the people to our view—especially the people who run goshalas and pinjrapoles.

There is no question of 'boycott', much less of the killing of buffaloes. Slaughter is a thing that suggests itself easily to Western economists. That is why they cut the Gordian knot by slaughtering the inferior breed of cows and bulls. But that solution is no good for me. It is my firm conviction that, if we master the real science of saving the cow, the science of saving the buffalo and other animals would automatically be revealed to us.

[Q.] But, supposing you were to boycott all the buffaloes in Sevagram, what would happen to them and their owners?

I promise to take charge of the buffalo in case you succeed in your mission of the cow to that extent. If the mill-owners voluntarily close down the mills, I shall dance with joy, but not if the owners of the buffaloes were to slaughter them. Western economics is divorced from ethics; our ethics and economics coincide or should, if they do not. My exclusive emphasis on the protection of the cow is due to the undue neglect of the cow although she in my opinion is a sound economic proposition. I do not need the aid of the Vedas to show me this, and this is a matter in which I would test the Vedic precept on the anvil of reason. Reason convinces me that if I save the cow I save the cow and the buffalo both. If anyone can convince me that the cow is dead beyond redemption, and that the buffalo alone needs to be protected, I am quite prepared to organize a 'Buffalo Protection Association'. But the reverse is the case. The buffalo needs no special protection, the cow needs it. The buffalo and the goat are as much my mothers as the cow. But I know that the poor goat cannot be saved, that the cow badly needs to be saved, and when we have saved the cow the buffalo will be automatically saved.[1]

Gandhiji tentatively suggested that co-operative owning of cows and co-operative owning of pasture for them would go a great length in improving both the breed and the milk yield and in helping to solve the question of grazing.

[1] Various other questions were then discussed, the most important one being that of grazing-areas.

For the next year the Goseva Sangh should, suggested Gandhiji, concentrate on making cow's milk available throughout Wardha and its neighbourhood, on sending experts to pinjrapoles in order to collect material, throw out suggestions, and help in making them approximate to the ideal pinjrapole contemplated by the Sangh, and on having a laboratory in Wardha for the testing of milk and ghee, and so on. The Sangh will also try to enlist at least a thousand members.

Harijan, 15-2-1942

346. TO CORRESPONDENTS

Correspondents will please note that I neither open nor read all the correspondence that comes to me. And now that I have taken up the care of the three weeklies, the fewest possible letters are put before me, and even those I often do not get the time to read. Correspondents should regard the weeklies as my public letter to them. Therefore they may not as a rule expect personal replies. Many apply for admission to the Sevagram Ashram. For one thing there is hardly room for further admissions. Some insist on replies in my own hand. It is not possible to satisfy this desire, much as I should like to. I would therefore request all correspondents to spare me and my overworked assistants as much as possible.

SEVAGRAM, February 4, 1942

Harijan, 8-2-1942

347. BASIC CURRENCY

Bharatanandji's active brain, having approved of my note[1] on hand-spun yarn as a measure of value, has produced the following note[2]. Let knowing workers study it and see if they can improve upon the scheme propounded by the author.

SEVAGRAM, February 4, 1942

Harijan, 15-3-1942

[1] *Vide* "Hand-spun as Measure of Value", pp. 215-6.
[2] Not reproduced here

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348. ASHRAM NOTES

February 7, 1942

I think it is very good to eat raw vegetables at least once a day. The vegetables may include spinach or *luni* as also turnip, carrots, cauliflower, radish and tomatoes. They give us the salts, strengthen the teeth and help digestion. Raw vegetables are four times as valuable as the same quantity when cooked. They lead to better mastication and taste better than when cooked. I have tried them for two months. Those who have no special objection may try this experiment.

Everyone should be more alert in his or her work. The work hitherto has not been as systematic as it should be. Our standard of cleanliness leaves much scope for improvement.

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen, p. 387

349. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,
February 7, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have been intending to write to you for some time, when, lo and behold, today I got your letter. Do try and arrange to get uncooked vegetables from somewhere. The experiment has benefited me greatly. I have, therefore, advised Ghanshyamdas to make the same experiment and have him put on four ounces of butter. This has increased his energy and strength. Please do not, therefore, give up the experiment. If you keep the leaves immersed in salt water solution, they will remain fresh. It will be enough if you eat only four or five of these. But you can eat onions, carrot, knoll-cole, radish, etc., even after two or more days. You need not take more than two ounces in all. The rest is all right.

I am writing to Prithvi Singh.

You may send . . .[1] over here. I will train him further here and then let him go. He may then utilize your help. He is indeed

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

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a good man. He is a little immature, but will learn here. You may send for him if you need him again.

Please take it that the adhesions in your intestines can be cured only through a carefully selected diet. You should not strain at all when passing stools.

I understand your eagerness to get Mahadev over there. But he cannot look after *Harijan* properly from there. He would naturally like to show me what he writes and I to see it. After reading what he writes I often find it necessary to make some essential, though only a few, changes. I have asked Narahari to go over there.

Ghanshyamdas is staying in the room which you used to occupy. If he were to stay in Wardha, I would not be able to treat him. I would not be able to judge clearly what to do.

Ba is not keeping quite well. When your planned stay at Hajira is over, please remember you have to come here. You may go out from here only when necessary. You must have read my suggestion regarding spinning in Gujarat.[1] See that it is fully implemented. And collect some money for the Spinners' Association.

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
HAJIRA, *via* SURAT

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 266

350. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

February 7, 1942

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. I am writing to Mathura Babu regarding the honey. There is no stock here just now.

There is no harm in adding salt to vegetables, but it would be better not to. Or you may add just a little. There is no need to add salt to uncooked vegetables.

Ripe tomatoes should never be cooked.

When you get honey, you need not eat palm *gur*.

Sushilabehn's address is: C/o Dr. Gopichand[2], Lajpat Rai Bhavan, Lahore.

[1] *Vide* "To Gujaratis", pp. 256-7.
[2] Gopichand Bhargava

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Ba's health is not quite good.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3570

351. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 7, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Read both your letters. What you say is quite correct. Advance notice about [the arrival of] guests must be sent. But extraordinary situations will always arise. We should be prepared for that—whether as regards utensils or accommodation. If you have none, you should send word that the guests would be called in as soon as accommodation becomes available. If the food is not enough you will make do with whatever you have. If we have some we should serve it to the guests and ourselves go without any. This will be an emergency decision. If you do not get proper notice owing to carelessness, you will warn those responsible for the confusion. What more can we do?

As for the plates, do this. Collect all the utensils. The new ones should be withdrawn. So many new utensils have come and still there is shortage! What could be the reason?

Collect all the spoons; they should be given to those who need them.

If you find any difficulty in doing either of these things, take my help.

The rest later.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4413

352. LETTER TO PUSHPA SUNDARAM

February 7, 1942

CHI. PUSHPA,

Father[1] has to give another twenty-five years to the Kashi Vishwavidyalaya. Who is going to be satisfied with twenty-five years?

Why do you write in English?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3189

[1] V. A. Sundaram

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353. DISCUSSION WITH DR. JOHN[1]

[Before *February 8, 1942*][2]

Gandhiji laughingly said:

I will not accept the messages, unless Dr. Carver[3] comes and delivers them himself.

Dr. John said Dr. Carver was too old now to come to India. But he . . . remembers Gandhiji whenever he has an Indian visitor. . . . The very first question that Gandhiji asked Dr. John about Dr. Carver was:

But even this genius suffers under the handicap of segregation, does not he?

Oh yes, as much as any Negro.

And yet these people talk of democracy and equality! It is an utter lie.

But Dr. Carver is never bitter or resentful.

I know, that is what we believers in non-violence have to learn from him. But what about the claim of these people who are said to be fighting for democracy?

Harijan, 15-2-1942

354. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

5.45 a.m., February 8, 1942

MY DEAR KU[MARAPPA],

I have decided to drink the cup to the full. I become President of the A. I. V. I. A.

I would like Jairamdas[4] to come on the Executive if it is at all possible.

You may occupy a column of *Harijan* every week.

[1&2] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "British and American Nazism", dated February 8, 1942

[3] Dr. George Washington Carver, Professor of Botany at Tuskegee, had sent through Dr. John messages and pamphlets for Gandhiji.

[4] Jairamdas Doulatram

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You should give me a plan for the use of the threatened plot of land. The quicker the better.

You all three must do your Hindi as quickly as possible.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10162

355. NOTES

MISBEHAVIOUR OF TROOPS

I have piteous letters from correspondents complaining of misbehaviour by troops, white and Indian. There are detailed letters from Dohad and Rutlam stations and others too. The troops are said to have molested the hawkers on the platforms, helped themselves to eatables and hit the salesmen who protested. The station-masters were powerless to afford protection. I do not know how much credit is to be attached to the descriptions I have received. The evidence is so detailed and given with so much moderation as to command belief. Anyway I draw the attention of the authorities to the complaints. Any such misbehaviour should be put down summarily and repetition made practically impossible, if panic is to be prevented and bitterness avoided. I would advise the aggrieved parties to lodge their complaints to the proper authorities with authentic evidence in support.

HYDERABAD STATE

Swami Ramanand Tirtha of the banned State Congress has issued the following sober statement[1]:

> Some of the workers of the Hyderabad State Congress which was banned on 2nd March, 1940, offered individual satyagraha in the month of September 1940. . . . The Government of H.E.H. the Nizam released them unconditionally on 16th December, 1941. Immediately after the release, I issued a statement saying . . . that it was incumbent upon us to continue the satyagraha till our demand for lifting the ban was conceded by the Government. After our release we consulted Mahatmaji and . . . he advised us to abstain from re-offering satyagraha at this hour, and directed us to concentrate our energies wholly on the constructive programme. . . . We therefore appeal to the people in general and workers in particular to devote their energies to this programme. . . .

[1] Of which only extracts are reproduced here

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This suspension, however, does not mean any alteration in our goal which is the attainment of responsible government under the aegis of H.E.H. the Nizam and the Asafjahi Dynasty.

How I wish the Government of H. E. H. the Nizam would remove the ban. They cannot wish to prevent people from carrying on a constitutional movement in favour of responsible government under the aegis of H. E. H. the Nizam. The recent release of the satyagrahis loses all grace if the ban on the State Congress is not removed.

SEVAGRAM, February 8, 1942

Harijan, 15-2-1942

356. NOT NECESSARILY IMPURE

Thus writes Shri Shankerrao Dev:

In the last issue of *Harijan*, in your article "A Deplorable Incident"[1] you say to the rich: "Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society." When I read this, the first question that arose in my mind was: 'Why first earn crores and then use them for society?' As society today is constituted the means of earning crores are bound to be impure; and one who earns crores by impure means cannot be expected to follow the *mantra* तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा: because in the very process of earning crores by impure means the man's character is bound to be tainted or vitiated. And moreover you have always been emphasizing the purity of means. But I am afraid that there is a possibility of people misunderstanding that you are laying an emphasis here more on the ends than on the means.

I request you to emphasize as much, if not more, on the purity of means of earning money as on spending. If purity of means is strictly observed, then, according to me, crores could not be accumulated at all and the difficulty of spending for society will assume a very minor prospect.

I must demur. Surely a man may conceivably make crores through strictly pure means, assuming that a man may legitimately possess riches. For the purpose of my argument, I have assumed that private possession itself is not held to be impure. If I own a

[1] *Vide* pp. 257-9.

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mining lease and I tumble upon a diamond of rare value, I may suddenly find myself a millionaire without being held guilty of having used impure means. This actually happened when Cullinan diamond, much more valuable than the Kohinoor, was found. Such instances can be easily multiplied. My argument was surely addressed to such men. I have no hesitation in endorsing the proposition that generally rich men and for that matter most men are not particular as to the way they make money. In the application of the method of non-violence one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment. We must appeal to the good in human beings and expect response. Is it not conducive to the well-being of society that every member uses all his talents, only not for personal aggrandisement but for the good of all? We do not want to produce dead equality where every person becomes or is rendered incapable of using his ability to the utmost possible extent. Such a society must ultimately perish. I therefore suggest that my advice that monied men may earn their crores (honestly only, of course) but so as to dedicate them to the service of all is perfectly sound. तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथाः is a *mantra* based on uncommon knowledge. It is the surest method to evolve a new order of life of universal benefit in the place of the present one where each one lives for himself without regard to what happens to his neighbour.

SEVAGRAM, February 8, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

357. INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE?[1]

Shri Jamnalal Bajaj has bravely taken the burden of the great work of cow service (in other words, cattle preservation) on his shoulders. The most important question for consideration before the recent Goseva Sangh Conference[2] was whether cow-farming should be in the hands of individuals or done collectively. I myself had no hesitation in saying that she could never be saved by individual farming. Her salvation, and with her that of the buffalo, could only be brought about by collective endeavour. It is quite impossible for an individual farmer to look after the welfare of his cattle in his own home in a proper and scientific manner. Amongst

[1] The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 15-2-1942.
[2] Held on February 1, 1942

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other causes lack of collective effort has been a principal cause of the deterioration of the cow and hence of cattle in general.[1]

The world today is moving towards the ideal of collective or co-operative effort in every department of life. Much in this line has been and is being accomplished. It has come into our country also, but in such a distorted form that our poor have not been able to reap its benefits. *Pari passu* with the increase in our population land-holdings of the average farmer are daily decreasing. Moreover, what the individual possesses is often fragmentary.[2] For such farmers to keep cattle in their homes is a suicidal policy; and yet this is their condition today. Those who give the first place to economics and pay scant attention to religious, ethical or humanitarian considerations proclaim from the house-tops that the farmer is being devoured by his cattle due to the cost of their feed which is out of all proportion to what they yield. They say it is folly not to slaughter wholesale all useless animals.

What then should be done by humanitarians is the question. The answer obviously is to find a way whereby we may not only save the lives of our cattle but also see that they do not become a burden. I am sure that co-operative effort can help us in a large measure.

The following comparison may be helpful:

1. Under the collective system no farmer can keep cattle in his house as he does today. They foul the air and dirty the surroundings. There is neither intelligence nor humanitarianism in living with animals. Man was not meant to do so. The space taken up by the cattle today would be spared to the farmer and his family if the collective system were adopted.

2. As the number of cattle increases, life becomes impossible for the farmer in his home. Hence he is obliged to sell the calves and kill the male buffaloes or else turn them out to starve and die. This inhumanity would be averted, if the care of cattle were undertaken on a co-operative basis.

3. Collective cattle-farming would ensure the supply of veterinary treatment to animals when they are ill. No ordinary farmer can afford this on his own.

4. Similarly one selected bull can be easily kept for the need of several cows under the collective system. This is impossible otherwise except for charity.

[1] The Hindi here adds: "This burden is no doubt beyond the strength of an individual farmer."

[2] The Hindi here adds: "And whatever little he has only adds to his problems."

5. Common grazing ground or land for exercising the animals will be easily available under the co-operative system, whereas today generally there is nothing of the kind for individual farmers.

6. The expense on fodder will be comparatively far less under the collective system.

7. The sale of milk at good prices will be greatly facilitated, and there will be no need or temptation for the farmer to adulterate it as he does as an individual.

8. It is impossible to carry out tests of the fitness of every head of cattle individually, but this could easily be done for the cattle of a whole village and would thus make it easier to improve the breed.

9. The foregoing advantages should be sufficient argument in favour of co-operative cattle-farming. The strongest argument in its favour is that the individualistic system has been the means of making our own condition as well as that of our cattle pitiable. We can only save ourselves and them by making this essential change.

I firmly believe too that we shall not derive the full benefits of agriculture until we take to co-operative farming. Does it not stand to reason that it is far better for a hundred families in a village to cultivate their lands collectively and divide the income therefrom than to divide the land anyhow into a hundred portions? And what applies to land applies equally to cattle.

It is quite another matter that it may be difficult to convert people to adopt this way of life straightaway. The straight and narrow road is always hard to traverse. Every step in the programme of cow-service is strewn with thorny problems. But only by surmounting difficulties can we hope to make the path easier. My purpose for the time being is to show the great superiority of collective cattle farming over the individual effort. I hold further that the latter is wrong and the former only is right. In reality even the individual can only safeguard his independence through co-operation. In cattle-farming the individual effort has led to selfishness and inhumanity, whereas the collective effort can abate both the evils, if it does not remove them altogether.

SEVAGRAM, February 8, 1942

Harijan, 15-2-1942

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358. ASHRAM NOTE

February 8, 1942

My advice is that no one should keep with him more utensils than required and those who have the new utensils should exchange them for old ones, so that we can keep the former for our guests.

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen, p. 387

359. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
February 8, 1942

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

As I have suspended civil disobedience, I make bold to write this letter for humanity's cause.

The statutory law says that charitable institutions, though they make profits, are free from income-tax. I am the founder and President of the All-India Spinners' Association. I can give you my word that it is a purely charitable association. It exists to serve the poorest in the land through hand-spinning and hand-weaving. But simply through legal quibbles, disbelief of the evidence tendered and, I apprehend, for its connection with the Congress in that it got its charter from the Congress, the officials have decided to levy the income-tax. The profits are not denied but they have never been used for private or personal gain. The whole of the Executive of the Association is honorary. The Association has gone to the High Court of Bombay which has thrown out its petition on a legal flaw. It is appealing to the Privy Council. I do not know what will be the result. Meanwhile the Association has already paid a certain amount of the tax and is likely to be called upon to pay up to five lacs. They will not stay the levy pending the proceedings. But my request is for you to intervene and save the five lacs for the poor. Let me tell you that during the past 20 years of its existence the Association has distributed among the poor nearly four crores as wages.

I am not burdening you with further facts or any papers. You can have these for the asking.

You will forgive me for inflicting this on you when every moment of yours is pre-mortgaged for winning the war. Though I cannot sympathize with your enterprise, much less help in the manner you would wish, you will believe me when I say that I am as much today a friend of your people as I ever have been. Hence I understand what a strain it must be for you and Lady Linlithgow.

When you write to Lady Anne[1] and Southby[2], please send my love to them. I have purposely refrained from acknowledging their letters in answer to my congratulations. I hope they with the baby are faring well.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, pp. 135-6

360. ADIVASIS

Adivasis have become the fourteenth item in the constructive programme.[3] But they are not the least in point of importance. Our country is so vast and the races so varied that the best of us, in spite of every effort, cannot know all there is to know of men and their condition. As one comes upon layer after layer of things one ought to know as a national servant, one realizes how difficult it is to make good our claim to be one nation whose every unit has a living consciousness of being one with every other.

The *Adivasis* are $2\frac{1}{4}$ crores in all India, i.e., $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent of the total population or nearly half of the Harijan population.

Shri Balasaheb Kher has thrown himself with his usual zeal into this much needed service in the Thana District. He says in the pamphlet issued by him, on behalf of the Adivasi Seva Mandal of which he is President:[4]

Balasaheb has made a modest beginning. He has started with a hostel for *Adivasi* boys. His work is all unassuming and solid. If

[1&2] Lady Anne Hope, addressee's eldest daughter, and her husband Patrick H. J. Southby

[3] *Vide* "*Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*", pp. 161-2. In the revised edition it became the sixteenth item.

[4] The pamphlet, not reproduced here, described the miserable plight of the *Adivasis* and their exploitation by zamindars and forest contractors.

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he gets the true type of workers, what is a small beginning may one day blossom forth into an all-India organization covering the whole of the *Adivasi* population. Truly "the harvest is rich and the labourers few." Who can deny that all such service is not merely humanitarian but solidly national and brings us nearer to true independence?

SEVAGRAM, February 9, 1942

Harijan, 15-2-1942

361. QUESTION BOX

THE ETERNAL PROBLEM

Q. Why can't you see that whilst there is possession it must be defended against all odds? Therefore your insistence that violence should be eschewed in all circumstances is utterly unworkable and absurd. I think non-violence is possible only for select individuals.

A. This question has been answered often enough in some form or other in these columns as also in those of *Young India*. But it is an evergreen. I must answer it as often as it is put, especially when it comes from an earnest seeker as this one does. I claim that even now, though the social structure is not based on a conscious acceptance of non-violence, all the world over mankind lives and men retain their possessions on the sufferance of one another. If they had not done so, only the fewest and the most ferocious would have survived. But such is not the case. Families are bound together by ties of love, and so are groups in the so-called civilized society called nations. Only they do not recognize the supremacy of the law of non-violence. It follows, therefore, that they have not investigated its vast possibilities. Hitherto out of sheer inertia, shall I say, we have taken it for granted that complete non-violence is possible only for the few who take the vow of non-possession and the allied abstinences. Whilst it is true that the votaries alone can carry on research work and declare from time to time the new possibilities of the great eternal law governing man, if it is the law, it must hold good for all. The many failures we see are not of the law but of the followers, many of whom do not even know that they are under that law willy-nilly. When a mother dies for her child she unknowingly obeys the law. I have been pleading for the past fifty years for a conscious acceptance of the law and its zealous practice even in the face of failures. Fifty years' work has shown marvellous results and strengthened my faith. I do claim that by

constant practice we shall come to a state of things when lawful possession will command universal and voluntary respect. No doubt such possession will not be tainted. It will not be an insolent demonstration of the inequalities that surround us everywhere. Nor need the problem of unjust and unlawful possessions appal the votary of non-violence. He has at his disposal the non-violent weapon of satyagraha and non-co-operation which hitherto has been found to be a complete substitute of violence whenever it has been applied honestly in sufficient measure. I have never claimed to present the complete science of non-violence. It does not lend itself to such treatment. So far as I know no single physical science does, not even the very precise science of mathematics. I am but a seeker, and I have fellow-seekers like the questioner whom I invite to accompany me in the very difficult but equally fascinating search.

SEVAGRAM, February 9, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

362. PASSING OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE A.I.V.I.A.[1]

One would have thought that I had enough on my hands without taking the additional burden of the presidentship of the A. I. V. I. A. I have been its guide ever since its inception[2], but the importunity of the Board was irresistible. Readers will lighten my task by sharing it with me by (a) becoming members, (b) contributing funds, (c) contributing solid work.

SEVAGRAM, February 9, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

[1] J. C. Kumarappa's article about the new constitution of the A.I.V.I.A. to which this note was appended is not reproduced here.

[2] In 1934; *vide* Vol. LIX.

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363. FROM THE OLDEST CONGRESSMAN

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I congratulate you upon your dissociation with the believers of violence as far as possible. God gave you an opportunity to do so at Poona, but at Bombay you forgot all about that God-given opportunity. At Bardoli God gave you that opportunity again. I am exceedingly glad that you did not make the same mistake at Wardha as you had done at Bombay. . . .

. . . Violence was created by God who gave it a limited life. God in His infinite wisdom now finds that violence was given a trial and found wanting in preserving world peace. . . . This world war may not be the longest but it must be the last, and a new world with perfect peace and tranquillity will emerge out of the ashes of violence and armament for the benefit of mankind. . . .

God-believing India will not have man-given violence and armament-controlled freedom for exploiting the weaker section of humanity. She must have God-given freedom for their service—*seva*.

God-given freedom can be obtained only by satyagraha, sufferings for which can be successfully undertaken only by those whose surrender to Him is complete. The number of satyagrahis is steadily increasing. Let the advocates of violence say and do whatever they may, the number of believers in non-violence will steadily go on increasing and the world will have real peace.

HARA DAYAL NAG

Chandpur, 24-1-42

Though the foregoing[1] has an intrinsic value as an expression of robust faith, it is printed as being from the pen of the oldest living Congressman who clings to non-violence as an infant to its mother's breast.

SEVAGRAM, February 9, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

[1] Of which only extracts are reproduced here

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364. LETTER TO MAGANLAL AND MANJULA MEHTA

February 9, 1942

CHI. MAGAN AND MANJULA,

I have the letters of you both. Why this infatuation for the examination? It is strange that Manjula should press you. A man may sacrifice his all for his parents, children or brothers. Would you mind so much sacrificing studies for the sake of Ratilal? If you are determined to complete your studies, what is the harm in dropping the examination once? I still think you are failing in your duty to Ratilal. How can you expect to impose on somebody else a duty which you yourself are not ready to perform? If I had anybody with me, I would have taken charge of Ratilal long ago. I acknowledge no duties even to my sons now, otherwise I myself would have run down to Rajkot. You have no reason to refuse to go.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I will certainly try to shift Champa from your room to some other room.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1026. Courtesy: Manjula M. Mehta

365. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 9, 1942

Inform Balvantsinha that the scales are meant exclusively for men. They are costly and belong to the hospital. We have another for vegetables which should be kept in order.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4414

366. LETTER TO B. S. PATHIK

SEVAGRAM,
February 9, 1942

BHAI PATHIKJI,

I duly received your letter. I have also read what you wrote to Ramnarayanji. I need all the sincere comrades I can find. What answer can I give to your questions? I remain what I have always been. There has been no change in my ideas. If my writing or my work has provided any light to you, and if your reason accepts it, do come and have further experience of my method. I generally can spare very little time for conversation. What I want is that you should acquaint yourself with the atmosphere here and get to know the people.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. B. S. PATHIK

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

367. 'SUPPOSE GERMANY WINS'

> Suppose Germany wins with India not having entered the war, would Hitler leave India alone? Certainly not, my dear Mr. Gandhi, he will have a greater say in India than what Britain has now. The difference is this. You can fight the Englishman, but you cannot fight the German once he puts his foot on India's soil. Civil disobedience is the terror of the Englishman, it is the daily bread of the Nazi.

This is a question extracted from a very long and earnest letter from an English correspondent from South Africa. The first fallacy is that India is assumed not to have entered the war when to all intents and purposes she is in the war in spite of the powerful protest of the Congress. She is so much in the war that Great Britain is effectively using all the available fighting material which her generals have brought into being and trained, and is draining all the money she can. Politically-minded Indians have never been trained except for doing the rulers' clerical work. They are certainly

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holding themselves aloof until certain obviously necessary conditions are fulfilled. I do not see how they can be blamed for demanding the very liberty in defence of which the Allied Powers are said to be fighting. What Indians can do even if their demand is accepted is to give their moral weight to the struggle. This the rulers evidently do not care for. It cannot, in their opinion, turn the scales in their favour. Moral values do not count when each party swears by its material and physical resources. The Congress, with all the will in the world to defeat Nazism, cannot thrust its help on Great Britain which evidently does not want it or about which it is at least indifferent. If, therefore, Great Britain suffers defeat, it will not be for want of Congress co-operation but for causes over which the Congress can have no control.

If the Nazis come to India, the Congress will give them the same fight that it has given Great Britain. I do not underrate the power of satyagraha as the questioner does. But that is pure speculation. Imperialism has kept its grip on India for more than 150 years. If it is overthrown by a worse type of rule, the Congress can have the negative satisfaction of knowing that no other 'ism' can possibly last beyond a few years even if it establishes a foothold in India. That is as I read the Congress mind. Personally I think the end of this giant war will be what happened in the fabled Mahabharata War. The *Mahabharata* has been aptly described by a Travancorian as the permanent History of Man. What is described in that great epic is happening today before our very eyes. The warring nations are destroying themselves with such fury and ferocity that the end will be mutual exhaustion. The victor will share the fate that awaited the surviving Pandavas. The mighty warrior Arjuna was looted in broad daylight by a petty robber. And out of this holocaust must arise a new order for which the exploited millions of toilers have so long thirsted. The prayers of peace-lovers cannot go in vain. Satyagraha is itself an unmistakable mute prayer of an agonized soul.

SEVAGRAM, February 10, 1942

Harijan, 15-2-1942

368. SETH JAMNALAL BAJAJ[1]

In Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, death has taken a mighty man.[2] Whenever I wrote of wealthy men becoming trustees of their wealth for the common good I always had this merchant prince principally in mind. If his trusteeship did not reach the ideal, the fault was not his. I deliberately restrained him. I did not want him in his enthusiasm to take a single step which in his cool moments he might regret. His simplicity was all his own. Every house he built for himself became a dharmashala. His contribution as a satyagrahi was of the highest order. In political discussions he held his own. His judgements were sound. As an act of renunciation his last was the crown of all. He wanted to take up a constructive activity to which he could devote the rest of his life and in which he could use all his abilities. This was the preservation of the cattle wealth of India personified in the cow. He threw himself into the work with a single-mindedness and zeal I had never seen surpassed. His generosity knew no distinction of race, creed or colour. He wanted to perform a rare thing for a busy man. He wanted to control his thoughts so as to prevent a single intruder from coming in. The world is poorer for his death. The country has lost one of the bravest of its servants. Janakidevi, the widow, has decided to take up the work to which he had dedicated himself. She has divested herself of all her personal property valued at about two and a half lacs. May God enable her to fulfil the trust she has undertaken.

SEVAGRAM, February 11, 1942

Harijan, 15-2-1942

369. LETTER TO CHIANG KAI-SHEK

February 11, 1942

DEAREST FRIEND,

As you know I am living in a village out of touch with the outside world. I came to know of your arrival in my country

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

[2] Jamnalal Bajaj had died of cerebral haemorrhage in the afternoon. For an account by Mahadev Desai, *vide* Appendix IV.

side by side with the precious message from Pandit Nehru that you were coming to Wardha and to grace my cottage with your presence. And so I refrained from sending you a word of welcome. But to my great sorrow I have just learnt that you would not be able to come to Wardha and you would not think of letting me come to you. I must leave you to imagine my sorrow that although you are in my country I shall miss seeing you and your noble partner. We know each other through correspondence but much more through Jawaharlal Nehru. I have many ties with your country. I know that yours is a vaster country than mine. And I do not know that yours is not a more ancient culture than ours. I know what it is to lose one's liberty, having lost it for so many centuries. My whole heart goes out to you in your fight to preserve your own. May God crown your effort with success. The knowledge that circumstances over which you and I have no control make it impossible for us to meet brings us closer in spirit.[1]

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK

From a copy: Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1942. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

370. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA

February 11, 1942

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I have your letter. You may not take charge of Ratilal, but you must go there, see him, and make whatever arrangement you can for him.

I could not read correctly the name you have mentioned, but take whomever you can get and save a dying brother.

Manjula may come over whenever she wishes. One part is occupied by Champa. Is it necessary to shift her from there? But I will consider after Manju arrives. I am not shifting her till then.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1029. Courtesy: Manjula M. Mehta

[1] However, Gandhiji met the addressee on February 18, 1942.

371. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

February 11, 1942

We wondered where we should perform the cremation rites—at the Sevagram hillock, the public cremation ground or Gopuri. And it was decided to perform the rites at Gopuri where Jamnalalji had finally settled and for which work he had finally dedicated himself by renouncing his all. I was neutral in the matter but I welcomed the decision.

Thousands of people converged on Gopuri to bid farewell to the body. After the cremation Vinoba recited the full text of the *Ishavasyopanishad* in his sweet voice. Then I asked him to recite Chapter XII from *Gitai*[1] so that all those who were assembled could understand. He recited the 9th. I had suggested the 12th because it is short. But Vinoba has everything committed to memory. Hence he recited the 9th. But I was not to be satisfied with that. I asked him to recite an *abhanga*[2]. He recited one from Tukaram. Lastly I requested him to sing '*Vaishnavajana*'. He then sang this *bhajan* too. Parachure Shastri had of course arrived there. He recited hymns from the Vedas and, at my request, explained their gist to the assembly. The hymns selected conveyed, as was proper, the most solemn thoughts. Their purport was to this effect:

> The light that was confined within Jamnalalji has now merged in the Cosmic Light [present] in us all. The body is reduced to ashes but what was enduring and yet confined within certain bounds has now come to us all. Jamnalalji belonged to a few, now he belongs to the universe. The body has been cast off, but his vows, his pledges, his *goseva*, his khadi work, his devotion to truth and non-violence, these have merged in us all; they have become our legacy. Whatever he has done in pursuance of all his vows belongs to us no doubt, but what remains to be done is for us to complete. Today he hands it over to us to learn and practise.

What message could have been more proper? How can I say that I am not grieved over his passing away? It is but natural.

[1] Vinoba Bhave's metrical Marathi rendering of the *Gita*. Chapters IX and XII deal with devotion.

[2] Devotional verse

I may say he was for me a *Kamadhenu* cow. If I was in a quandary, I would send for Jamnalalji; if I wanted to undertake anything I would consult Jamnalalji. He always responded to my call. How can I then help being grieved? But I forget my grief when I think of the work he has done and the message he has left for us.

What we have to bear in mind today is that we are occupying what he built. I know his love for Sevagram. He was concerned how every cowrie in Sevagram was spent and how it was accounted for, because in his life he kept account of every pie. And he always insisted that the conduct and behaviour of anyone who went out of Sevagram were worthy of its fair name.

And what a life he himself lived! Once he came to me saying: "You love me well enough, but I want to be a son to you just as Devdas is." How could I make a son of that mountain of a man? But I gave in to his love and insistence and granted his request. One adopts another as a son but here the son adopted the father. And having adopted me mark what he said to me: "Now I have to entrust my heart as well as my outward [life] to you. Impure thoughts persist in my mind but I shall speak them out before you so that I may be pure and have peace." He kept his word to the last. [Government] had conferred the title of Rai Bahadur on him. My association with him is as old as the conferment of this title. I let him accept it assuming it would be of some use. When the question of giving it up arose he discarded it in a moment. His fearlessness had hardly any parallel. Since he became my son he made it a practice to discuss with me every activity of his. And his act of final renunciation was also backed by my advice after he had fully discussed it with me. Having once undertaken a task he would not mind dying for it. When he was earning money he did earn a lot of it. But I can say that never to my knowledge did he earn a single pice by unfair means. And his money he used for the public benefit.

We can all imagine Janakidevi's agony. She had almost gone mad. She said she wanted to commit *sati*; she could not live without him. I said to her, "Don't think that people will worship you if you committed *sati*. On the contrary, they will criticize you.[1] But neither I nor anyone else will restrain you, if you kindle the fire of yoga and consign yourself to its flames. But this is not possible. That is why I say you can now prove

[1] The following three sentences are from the Hindi.

yourself a devoted wife only by becoming a yogi, i.e., by pursuing his ideals. You can become a true *sati* by renouncing your all for the sake of his work." Ghanshyamdasji who was present said, "We have a custom of taking a pious vow on such occasions. Advise Janakidevi to take one." Janakidevi spontaneously said, "Here is my vow: I dedicate for his ideals everything that he has left me." She showed me her accounts also. The amount was more than two lacs. All this she has devoted to *goseva* and vowed to bury herself in the work at Gopuri. In this way she became a true *sati*. But who can say whether all this is a result of pure renunciation or of momentary impulse? She herself wondered if God would grant her the strength to do all this. Vinoba who was present there told her that if there was a pious wish God was sure to give the strength to realize it. This reminds me of Queen Victoria. She was just nineteen when she succeeded to the throne. When the elderly Prime Minister came to pay her his obeisance as the Queen she left the throne and came down to bow to him. When it was announced that she was to be the Queen she simply said: "I will be good."[1] That was all. It was a pious pledge and was fulfilled with the help of her ministers and others. We were under her rule. It is not that we never suffered during her reign but history stands testimony to the fact that she did mean to serve her subjects when she took the solemn vow. Janakidevi can achieve complete success in keeping her vow, as Queen Victoria did, by taking up the task of *goseva*.[2]

Later as she stood in the glow of the pyre I said to her again: "This is not enough. You have now become penniless by surrendering your all to the Lord. You shall now eat only if your sons feed you, otherwise you will come to me and share my beggar's bowl. But besides this, you shall now dedicate yourself too to this cause, with the pyre as witness. Henceforth, you shall live not for your own sake, but for Jamnalalji's work of *goseva*."

Let me say it again. We must always bear in mind that we stand on Jamnalalji's ground. We have to exalt his good name. May we never do anything that might tarnish it. Let us make thoughtful use of the wealth he built up through fair dealings. May our hands never misuse it and may we follow the example of self-restraint he set.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 22-2-1942, and *Harijan Sevak*, 22-2-1942

[1] This sentence is in English.

[2] The following paragraph is from the Hindi.

372. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
February 11, 19[42][1]

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Why should I not write to you too in the national language after my Kashi speech[2]? I write to Sarup in the national language and to Ranjit in Gujarati. Why should I write to you in English ?

Here are the two letters[3]. Pass them on if you approve of them. I shall send a telegram[4] also to the Generalissimo. I am writing this letter at night after returning from the cremation ground so that it may be cleared in the morning.

What should I write about Jamnalalji?

Chandra Singh[5] has settled down here. He is happy. He is learning khadi work on his own initiative. His wife cannot remain calm at the Vikasgriha. She writes letters to Chandra Singh. I have written to Mridu[6] that she may send her when she likes.

The office of the States' People's Conference is being shifted here. Should Jamnalalji's death make any difference? The office can, of course, work here with the help of Amrit. But you have to think this over. Now it is getting late and I shall not write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] The source has "1941", which is a slip, as is evident from the reference to Jamnalal Bajaj's death.

[2] *Vide* "Speech at Benares Hindu University", pp. 240-5.

[3] One of which is not available; for the other, *vide* "Letter to Chiang Kai-shek", pp. 306-7.

[4] *Vide* p. 313.

[5] Of the Garhwal Regiment who in 1930 had refused to fire upon the Khudai Khidmatgars and had undergone a long sentence

[6] Mridula Sarabhai

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373. TALK WITH BAJAJ FAMILY

February 12, 1942

To Kamalnayan Bajaj, the eldest son of Jamnalal Bajaj, Gandhiji said:

According to Hinduism the eldest son like the other sons does inherit the father's wealth but along with it he also becomes the trustee of the family's traditions and his father's ethics and principles. Hence I would say to you that if you are already engaged in business, continue to do so; earn wealth if you want, but like Jamnalalji all your earnings should be fair earnings. Again, bear in mind that for the good of the people you too have to be a trustee of your wealth. You shall spend what you earn not for your own self but to serve the people. Only then will your trusteeship have meaning.

Then explaining things to the younger brother, Ramakrishna, he said:

Now, I expect you to dedicate your whole life to service and completing whatever work Jamnalal left incomplete. But I don't want to compel you to do it. Pledge yourself to it, if you have the strength. Remember God always grants us the strength to carry out all our pious vows. And there will be no harm even if we do not succeed. According to the *Gita* even one who has fallen from yoga does not meet with a sad end.

Then he spoke to Jamnalalji's brother's son, Radhakrishnaji:

You very well know the vow that Janakidevi has taken. I think if she comes by a right adviser, as Queen Victoria had in Melbourne, she is sure to add prestige to the Presidentship of the Goseva Sangh. She is a daughter to Mother Cow, she can therefore render the best service to her own 'mother'. I don't want to lay greater burden on her in her present failing health. But I know the strength born of resolve makes the body of an 'incarnation of sacrifice' strong as the thunderbolt. You will remember that after all the responsibilities are shared what remains shall rest on your shoulders.

Finally, talking to Jamnalalji's daughters[1] Gandhiji said:

You have heard all that I have just spoken to Kamalnayan and Ramakrishna and the others. Remember you too have to

[1] Kamala Nevatia, Madalasa and Umadevi Agrawal

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do likewise. I shall expect from you too sacrifice according to your own strength. Never forget, whatever Jamnalalji had earned he had surrendered to Lord Krishna. If you have any share from it know that you have it subject to the condition of trusteeship. It is not for your personal comforts and luxuries but only so that you too like Jamnalalji should act as its trustees.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 22-2-1942

374. TELEGRAM TO CHIANG KAI-SHEK

WARDHAGANJ,
February 13,[1] *1942*

GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK
DELHI

IT HAS CAUSED ME GREATEST GRIEF TO LEARN YOU AND YOUR PARTNER CANNOT VISIT SEVAGRAM WHERE MY WIFE AND THE LITTLE SETTLEMENT WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOU. FAILING THIS I WOULD HAVE GONE ANYWHERE TO SEE YOU WHILST YOU WERE ON INDIAN SOIL. BUT I UNDERSTAND FROM PANDIT NEHRU THAT IT COULD NOT BE. I MUST BE SATISFIED WITH BEING IN SPIRIT WITH YOU. ALL GOOD WISHES FOR YOURSELVES AND YOUR COUNTRY FOLLOW YOU.

GANDHI

From a copy: Gandhi–Nehru Papers, 1942. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

375. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

February 13, 1942

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

Your letter.

You can send Vina when you like. She will be well kept in Rajkot.

[1] This was sent on February 12, 1942, to Jawaharlal Nehru who passed it on to the addressee the next day.

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Sailen will send you at least Rs. 25 per month.

As for yourself I am not sure of your being happy here, less sure of your wife. Then the Ashram is crowded. Where to put you is also a question. If you come, how many will you be? Will you be where I put you and do the work that may be entrusted to you? You will see that I am anxious to help you to the best of my ability.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10336. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

376. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

February 14, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

Your letter and wire. I am keeping quite fit. B.P. is under restraint, therefore don't worry.

I am still engrossed in looking after J's[1] affairs. He is growing on me. I can't think of anything outside him. The meeting of friends comes off on 19th.[2] The invitation goes as from me.[3]

Love.

BAPU

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
C/O COLONEL DEENANATH PRADHANJI
INDORE

From the original: C.W. 4117. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7426

377. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

February 14, 1942

CHI. AMALA,

It seems I have not written to you. If I have not, it is not through any negligence on my part but because I forgot about it owing to pressure of work.

[1] Jamnalal Bajaj

[2] The meeting, however, took place on the 20th and 21st; *vide* pp. 342-9 and 351-3.

[3] *Vide* pp. 315-6.

You may come whenever you wish.[1]
Come when you wish.
Love.

BAPU

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

378. A LETTER[2]

SEVAGRAM,
February 14, 1942

DEAR BROTHER/SISTER,

You know how close Jamnalal and I were. I seldom undertook an activity in which he did not co-operate with body, mind and wealth. I never fancied what goes by the name of politics, nor did he. He came into it because I was involved in it. But my real political activity was confined to the constructive programme. So was his. I had hoped that after me he would completely take over all those activities which are regarded as peculiarly mine. He had even assured me to this effect. But man's wish is fulfilled only by God. Our wish could not bear fruit. My faith teaches me that fulfilment will be found in this disappointment. Whatever it be, now I have to decide who would attend to Jamnalalji's work in his absence, and how. I am giving you this trouble so that this question can be further discussed and a solution found out. In this connection no one can be prevailed upon to come. A list, in chronological order, of all those activities in which Jamnalalji had a special interest is attached herewith. Do come and take up these activities if you want to participate in these and if you can. It is not that you should come just for the sake of courtesy although you cannot participate.

If, in spite of your interest, you cannot take up an activity for any reason, you may write to me in what activity and in what way you would like to take active part. A discussion and deliberation will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, February 20, 1942. It would be convenient if you inform by wire whether you can attend. A list of the invitees is also enclosed. I have

[1] What follows is in English.

[2] This was addressed to about 190 friends of Jamnalal Bajaj. Copies in Urdu script were also sent.

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mentioned all those names that occurred to us. If any have been left out such persons can ask for the invitation, regarding the omission as nothing more than a slip.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

Jamnalalji's activities—in chronological order

1. *Goseva*
2. Nayee Talim
3. Village Industries
4. Women's Service
5. Service of Harijans
6. Gandhi Seva [Sangh]
7. Khadi
8. States' People's [Conference]
9. Propagation of Rashtrabhasha Hindi as well as of Urdu
10. Satyagraha Ashram and Service of the Villages
11. Marwari Education Society, 1910 — Navabharat Vidyalaya and College.

[From Hindi]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, pp. 261-2

379. LETTER TO SHAMLAL

February 14, 1942

BHAI SHAMLAL,

Consider this letter to be for you, for Bapa[1] and for Viyogiji[2]. Balkoba is a saintly person. Mojubhai will no doubt do all his work but give him whatever facilities he wants. Give him whatever he needs for his expenses and put it down to my account.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1190

380. TESTIMONIAL TO GANESHRAM

February 14, 1942

Bhai Ganeshram the barber had come to Sevagram to serve. He lived here for many months and shaved the Harijans free and with great love. He has vowed that wherever he might be he

[1] Amritlal V. Thakkar
[2] Viyogi Hari

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would serve the Harijans. May God increase Bhai Ganeshram's spirit of service day by day.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3092

381. LIMBDI EXODUS ANNIVERSARY[1]

The Limbdi exodus has entered upon its fourth year.[2] The *hijratis*[3] who took part in it deserve congratulations. Some have dropped out, out of weakness, as happens in all movements. Not all that are born into this world live. Quite a lot die at birth. Many survive their childhood. Only a few cover the full span of life. Even so it is with human endeavour. Many rally to the call, but only a few persevere till the end. But those who do, vindicate the sacrifice of those who have dropped by the wayside, and serve as beacon-lights to subsequent generations. The *hijratis* must be prepared to prove their mettle in the final heat. Success will be theirs, only if they show themselves to be capable of making full sacrifice for the cause which they hold dear and to which they have dedicated themselves.

SEVAGRAM, February 15, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

382. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

February 15, 1942

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. You should write to the sisters and to Janakibehn. A meeting will of course be held here on the 20th. I myself have called it.[4] I have asked Rajen Babu to attend. I do not have the courage to ask you. I had a letter from Jayaprakash. It is good. They have struck out three lines

[1] This appeared under "Notes". The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 22-2-1942.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXVIII, pp. 434-7 and Vol. LXX, pp. 144-5.

[3] Evacuees

[4] *Vide* pp. 315-6.

from it.[1] A full account of Jamnalalji's passing away has appeared [in the newspapers] and, therefore, I am not writing about it here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3567

383. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

February 15, 1942

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter, together with the matter enclosed. I have gone through everything. I liked your reply. Others also gave you good help. You could have taken up a stronger attitude. This is not a time for gentleness. A very heavy responsibility rests on you, not the least to the country. If you fail to treat it [the Government] to some plain speaking, who else can be expected to do so? It is the duty of journalists to guide the Government as much as the people. If the Government does not permit you to do so, it will be their responsibility. If the journalists, however, lead the people astray, would it not be their responsibility? Broadly that is our plight, for everybody is concerned about his own stomach. You have no such problem. This is not by way of criticism of you, but is intended to make you alert. Manilal is fighting in South Africa, and that is a matter of credit for us. You will get a detailed letter from him. I have asked him to write. Ba is better today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2150

[1] The last three lines of the letter were struck off by the jail authorities in Hazaribagh where Jayaprakash Narayan was imprisoned. *Vide* also "Letter to Jayaprakash Narayan", p. 331.

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384. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

February 15, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

Your letter. I expect you have the letter I wrote yesterday. Everything is all right. Ba is well. I am not taking on any great burden.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
C/O PRINCIPAL SECRETARY
INDORE

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4260. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7892

385. OASIS IN A DESERT[1]

In the midst of the desert of adverse but ill-thought criticism of Government officials of basic education it is refreshing to find the following appreciation of the basic schools of Bihar from the pen of Mr. E. R. J. R. Cousins, Adviser to H.E. the Governor of Bihar, received by Shri Aryanayakum, Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.[2]

> . . . I was able to meet the teachers and pupils of 18 out of the 27 schools . . . I was impressed with the cleanliness, intelligence and obvious pleasure of the pupils in their work, and I am confident that we are proceeding on the right lines, and that children of 14 who have gone through the entire basic curriculum will not fail in comparison with those who have gone through the ordinary school course up to the same age.
>
> A particularly encouraging feature, and one upon which I place the greatest emphasis, is that the schools have undoubtedly succeeded in capturing the goodwill and interest of the village people, and as long as this can be retained it is impossible for the system to fail of being a

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

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success. . . . I feel confident that . . . in addition to education in the ordinary sense the village boys of the future will acquire at the school such attributes of mental alertness, manual dexterity, health and cleanliness as will make the villages in future more healthy, attractive and enlightened places than they have been in the past.

SEVAGRAM, February 16, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

386. MODEL SCHOOLS FOR HARIJANS

Seth Ghanshyamdas Birla, President of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, writes:

We are thinking of establishing a few residential schools mainly for educating Harijan boys, though not exclusively. So far, whenever we have talked of Harijan hostels or schools, we have thereby meant cheap schools or cheap hostels conducted by ill-educated and ill-paid teachers and wardens with boys half-starved. So long as we educate Harijans or children of poor parents in these cheap institutions, the boys will never succeed in shedding the inferiority complex from which they often suffer. And what will they learn from these unqualified and ill-paid teachers? These boys never get the opportunity to mix with the other boys. The harm due to this lack of contact between the poor and the well-to-do or between Harijans and *Savarnas* is mutual. I therefore propose that we should have a few residential schools established in pleasing environment. They should be of a standard that would compare favourably in every respect with a well-conducted public school. We should start a few such schools first of all as a trial.

They should be of the matriculation standard and affiliated to a university. They should, of course, be mostly residential. Personal attention to students should be a speciality. Education should be imparted through the medium of the mother tongue. English should be taught as a second language. During the period of this education, the boys should be taught useful handicrafts chosen for their educative value.

In order to make this education thorough and self-sufficient, we should take two years more than the time needed for the matriculation examination. These two years should be utilized in giving extra training to the boys besides what they learn for the matriculation course.

We propose to have three crafts, one of which will be taken up by every boy at his option. These will be:

Either (1) Carding, Spinning, Weaving, Dyeing and Bleaching; or (2) Carpentry and Smithy; or (3) Paper-making, Book-binding, and Ordinary Composing.

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It is intended to employ a superior staff, adequately paid, to ensure good qualifications. The underlying idea is that the boys may not feel the want of a college education. There will be no bar to such. The boys, it is hoped, will not find it difficult to earn an honest livelihood after finishing the course. It will be the duty of the Board to accommodate such boys as may like to be.

Besides the university course and craft, special attention will be given to increasing their general knowledge and hygiene. Music games, exercises, riding, swimming, etc., should be taught. Religious or moral training should not be neglected. Equal respect for all religions should be inculcated, along with a good grounding in the principles of Hinduism and the peculiar beauties of our own culture.

Half the number of the students should be Harijans who would have free education and free boarding and lodging. The other half of the students, i.e., *Savarnas*, should be charged fees.

This is a very rough and brief outline of my idea of a good high school.

But there is difference amongst us about this outline. Some say: Why should we have the matriculation course? Others say: We should not undertake costly education as this will be a bad example to set. It is argued that we may employ most qualified men, but only if they come on a bare maintenance and out of a spirit of sacrifice. In other words, in their opinion, in this school there would be no room for teachers other than those prepared to lead a simple life of sacrifice. Some go to the extent of saying that we should rather have no school than start one which is not manned by a highly self-sacrificing staff.

I consider all this unpractical. I need not give my arguments. They are obvious.

Will you express your views on this question?

I whole-heartedly support Seth Ghanshyamdas's scheme. The arguments advanced in opposition seem to be based more on caution than on principle. I too should side with the opposition, if the scheme was to be financed out of the meagre funds of the Harijan Board. But I assume that the model schools would be financed by special donations enough to guarantee their full working. Having lived in South Africa for twenty years where every Indian is treated almost as a pariah, I know how sensitive the mind becomes under unnatural treatment. I took some time to regain my balance though I never lost the sensitiveness. I felt that I was a strange creature in the company of the general body of Europeans. The plight of Harijans in India is much worse because of their much greater ignorance

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and still greater poverty. Therefore, if we are to break down the double complex, we have to bring up a fair number of Harijan lads in surroundings in no way inferior to those that are available to the well-to-do class boys. The scheme under examination does not contemplate the production of clerks who would be too big for their boots and who would be naturally discontented because no one would have them as clerks. Boys trained under the scheme would be in no way inferior in knowledge to the other matriculates. But these will be better placed because their bodies will be specially looked after and their hands will have their cunning fully developed. Such boys will have their future assured. They will have self-confidence. They will not be torn from their kith and kin; on the contrary, they will be expected to serve fellow Harijans and give them benefit of the teaching they have received.

It may be objected that I am inconsistent in that I have written and spoken against the present system of education. The objection would be superficial. In the first place, the worst features of the system will be eliminated in that the training will be in the mother tongue and the boys will be taught handicrafts which should enable them to earn an independent and decent living. Secondly, an objection that may be applicable to boys who can be better educated cannot be held good in the case of boys who have no choice and who smart under the knowledge that they cannot have the education that thousands of boys have simply because they are not Harijans. I would not insult Harijan lads by arguing with them that what the thousands of non-Harijan lads are doing is wrong, and that therefore they had better be satisfied with the shanties which Seth Ghanshyamdas has referred to in his letter.

I plump for his scheme. I wish him all success. The sooner it is launched, the better for Harijans and better for India. These schools will be potent instruments for exorcising the demon of untouchability.

SEVAGRAM, February 16, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

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387. FIERY ORDEAL

Twenty-two years ago a young man of thirty came to me and said, "I want to ask something of you."

"Ask, and it shall be given, if it is at all within my power to give," I replied with some surprise.

"Regard me as your son Devdas," the young man said.

"Agreed," I replied. "But what have you asked of me? You are the giver, I am the gainer."

The young man was no other than Jamnalal Bajaj. People know something of what this sacrament meant. But few know the extent of the part played by the self-adopted son. Never before, I can say, was a mortal blessed with a 'son' like him. Of course I have many sons and daughters in the sense that they do some of my work. But Jamnalalji surrendered himself and his without reservation. There is hardly any activity of mine in which I did not receive his full-hearted co-operation and in which it did not prove to be of the greatest value. He was gifted with a quick intelligence. He was a merchant prince. He placed at my disposal his ample possessions. He was constantly on the vigil and looked after my work, my comforts, my health and my finances. He would also bring up the workers to me. Where am I to get another son like him now? The day he died he and Janakidevi were to come to me. We had to decide a number of things. But God willed it otherwise and he died almost at the very hour he should have been with me. The death of such a son is a stunning blow to the father. Never before have I felt so forlorn except when Maganlal was snatched from me fourteen years ago[1]. But I had no doubt then, as I have none now, that a calamity of that kind is a blessing in disguise. God wants to try me through and through. I live in the faith that He will give me the strength too to pass through the ordeal.

SEVAGRAM, February 16, 1942

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 22-2-1942

[1] In April 1928; *vide* Vol. XXXVI, "My Best Comrade Gone", pp. 261-3.

388. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

Silence Day, February 16, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Treat Kanchanbehn as ill, give her whatever fruit she would have, such as a couple of *mosambis* or oranges with milk. The same quantity in the evening. In the afternoon give *papaya* or tomatoes, whichever is available.

I have passed on the information. You may write what you have in your mind when the [time] comes. What you had mentioned in your letter of yesterday you may write out. I shall deal with the rules and regulations myself. Let us see what the result is.[1]

If *mosambi* is taken with lemon it will taste just like orange. Take the pulp of the *mosambi* and then add the lime [juice] to it.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4415

389. NOTE TO KRISHNACHANDRA

Silence Day, February 16, 1942

I feel neither you nor anyone else is to blame for this. Circumstances alone are responsible for it. However, things will improve gradually. Sooner if I could devote my attention to it. In the mean while the only course open is to bear with it.[2]

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4416

[1] The following paragraph is in Gujarati.

[2] This was in reply to the question: "What is the reason for people's apathy to social service activities?"

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390. LETTER TO SULTANA RAZIA

February 16, 1942

DEAR SISTER,

Bapuji has received your letter. He says he has not had any further correspondence with Maulana Abdul Haq.

These days, we are all learning Urdu with great interest.

Yours,
AMRIT KAUR

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 10862

391. PLEA FOR CALMNESS

The recent British reverses ought not to create panic in the land. In all the wars that Britain has fought or in which she has been engaged there have been reverses some of which may be considered disastrous. But the British have a knack of surviving them and turning them into stepping-stones to success. Hence the saying peculiar to them that they blunder through to success. Failures do not dismay or demoralize them. They take them with calmness and in a sportsmanlike spirit. Wars are for them a national game like football. The defeated team heartily congratulates the successful one almost as if it was a joint victory, and drowns the sorrow of defeat in an exchange of glasses of whisky. If we have learnt nothing worth from the contact with the British, let us at least learn their calmness in the face of misfortunes.

And is there the slightest cause for alarm? Certainly not for those who believe in non-violence. For fear and distrust of self are no part of their composition, nor are they part of a panoplied soldier. The attribute of non-violence is perhaps only a copybook maxim. We do not see it in actual practice in any measure. But this war is abundant proof that neither party though steeped in violence betrays any fear or distrust. I am filled with amazement and admiration at the reckless bravery displayed by combatants on either side. This war is a demonstration of the unthinkable nerve that human beings are capable of possessing.

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Looked at from either standpoint, therefore, we should be ashamed of fear, distrust and nervelessness in the face of danger. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of every worker to steel himself against cowardly panic and prevent its spread as far as he can. "Cowards die many times before their death." Let this not be proved of us.

The true danger exists only for cities. It may be very near due to the fall of Singapore and probable loss of Burma. One of the best precautions consists in those people who are not wanted in the cities or those who want to shun danger, migrating to the villages in an orderly manner. There should be no panicky rush. Those who must remain in the cities whether for business or otherwise should carry out instructions that may be issued by the authorities from time to time. Those who will not, for any reason whatsoever, should clear out in good time. If this simple precaution is taken, we may face the future without perturbation. More I cannot say, for we are a house divided against itself and there is no living bond between the rulers and the ruled. It is tragic but it is true. The tragedy is deepened by the knowledge that all parties feel so helpless.

ON THE TRAIN TO CALCUTTA, February 17, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

392. EYES TO THE BLIND[1]

Though I had heard a lot about the reputation of Dr. Mathuradas of Moga, I had never had occasion to witness any of his famous operations for cataract, until I saw them in Wardha last month. He came specially at the invitation of Jamnalalji, and with his assistants restored eyes to about three hundred people who had been blinded by cataract.

These mass operations have been described as a *yajna* (sacrifice). And *yajna* it certainly is, as any act of selfless service is a sacrifice. This *yajna* began some years ago in the Bhagavadbhakti Ashram at Rewari, with which Jamnalalji was closely connected. He therefore invited the doctor this time to Wardha. I bowed to Dr. Mathuradas in admiration for his unerring and quick surgical hand. He performed operations at the rate of one in a minute, there was scarcely a mishap. Thousands thus get back their eyes free, as he charges no fee to the poor.

[1] This appeared under "Notes". The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 22-2-1942.

The doctor told me that nowhere except in India was cataract so common as was also rhinoplasty. These operations, therefore, place him in the forefront of the surgeons for cataract throughout the world. No doubt many doctors have now taken up the work and copy his example. It is just as it should be, for the medical profession should be one of selfless service. And there was no humanitarian mission for which Jamnalalji was not ready. It came to him as naturally as any of his business enterprises. That was why he had a scheme in hand for making these operations a periodical feature in C.P.

I hope that the scheme will not be interrupted by his death, and Dr. Mathuradas is always ready for these *yajnas*.

ON THE TRAIN TO CALCUTTA, February 17, 1942

Harijan, 22-2-1942

393. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

GONDIA,
February 17, 1942

Owing to my preoccupations due to the untimely death of Jamnalalji I have not been able to attend to even important matters. I have just learnt of the arrests of Shri Hare Krushna Mahtab, a staunch believer in non-violence, and other co-workers.[2] Shri Mahtab wanted to be bailed out but the application has been rejected. I hope that the matter will be taken to the High Court. It is preposterous that bail should be refused in such cases.

I have learnt further that the Orissa Ministry has effected these arrests in order to prevent a motion of 'no-confidence' being carried at the forthcoming meeting of the Orissa Legislature. If this is true, the action is mean and vindictive. Let us hope that the members of the Orissa Assembly will have the courage and gentlemanliness to support the motion of 'no-confidence' irrespective of party bias.

The Hindu, 18-2-1942

[1] This appeared in *Harijan*, 22-2-1942, under "Notes", sub-title, "Mean and Vindictive", with the date-line "On the train to Calcutta, 17-2-1942".

[2] *Harijan* here has "workers".

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394. LETTER TO MUNSHI AHMED[1]

February 17, 1942

Let us agree to differ where we cannot meet.

I have been invited to attend conferences and have also been invited to join associations. I do not call that serious.[2]

Although my opinion may not be of a learned man, it may be given for what it is worth, surely, if you have no quarrel with those who do not know Urdu learning Urdu! My effort merely means that and *vice versa.*

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

395. LETTER TO MILDRED

February 17, 1942

MY DEAR MILDRED[3],

Just a p.c. to send you and yours our love. Your contribution is welcome. Every copper tells when it becomes part of a heap. Yes, we are going through a terrible ordeal.

Love to you both.

BAPU

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

396. LETTER TO ALFRED BARKER

February 17, 1942

DEAR PROF. BARKER[4],

Many thanks for your kind letter. May we have peace.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] Of Meerut

[2] *Vide* "Hindi+Urdu=Hindustani", pp. 278-80.

[3] A Canadian lady who had met Gandhiji in Kingsley Hall, London

[4] Of the University of Melbourne. He had once come to the Ashram.

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397. LETTER TO SAM HIGGINBOTTOM

February 17, 1942

I thank you for your letter of sympathy. I know that the Sangh[1] can rely upon your full co-operation. I have a meeting at Wardha on the 20th instant to consider the ways and means of continuing Sheth Jamnalal's work.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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

398. LETTER TO SARANGADHAR DAS

February 17, 1942

DEAR SARANGDHAR,

I hope you have seen my statement about Mahtab in the Press. Please let me know the progress of the prosecution. It is terrible. Who will look after his activities in his absence?

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

399. LETTER TO DR. BARETO

ON THE TRAIN,
February 17, 1942

MY DEAR BARETO,

As you left the amount of the bill[2] to me, I have taken the liberty of reducing it by Rs. 50. I hope you had the cheque for Rs. 150 from Sevagram.

From a photostat: G.N. 133

[1] Goseva Sangh
[2] For the dental treatment of Amtussalaam

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400. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

February 17, 1942

MY DEAR MALKANI,

I was able to read your letter of 4th only last night. This is being written on the train taking me to Calcutta.

You know the reason for the delay.

I feel like writing to you in Hindi or Urdu. But I will spare you for a month or two. You must learn both the scripts and write too.

You are making good progress.

You shall have a chairman. I shall try to send you Kher, failing him someone else.

Enclosed is a letter to Swami Bhagwandas.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 948

401. LETTER TO BHAGWANDAS

February 17, 1942

SWAMI BHAGWANDASJI,

Bhai Malkani writes that you are regularly helping him in his work of service. My thanks to you for the same.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 945

402. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

February 17, 1942

I am going to Calcutta to meet Chiang Kai-shek. I have not taken Pyarelal with me. Ba is not too well and, therefore, one of us three must remain with her. Pyarelal also thought so. Ba's complaint is the old one. She has lost heart now. If she remains alive till you arrive, you will examine her and see what

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can be done. Just now I am trying out things without much hope. A mere doctor cannot help her. She must have somebody who would command her respect. Let us see now what miracle Pyarelal works. He accompanied me today when he went to fetch Shirin. She has got herself admitted in the hospital at Wardha. I have not gone and seen her yet. Rajkumari will arrive tomorrow at Sevagram from Indore. Lilavati has come. She did not get the form[1]. Let us wait and see what happens now. She refused to go back and continue her studies.

We shall return tomorrow itself. On the 20th I have called Jamnalalji's friends. I have sent about 190 invitations.

[From Gujarati]

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

403. LETTER TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

February 17, 1942

I had your letter. The last three lines had been struck off. I have conveyed all the answers to Prabha. Even then I am giving here the answers to your questions. There is no danger in practising *pranayama*[2] Western style. Breathe slowly through the nose in and out sitting erect or standing in the open air. Doing it on an empty stomach daily morning and evening will make you feel better.

Your giddiness must go with hip-baths. Many people have been cured thus.

Eat raw lettuce, radish, carrot and onion with your meals. Take garlic also, not more than one *tola*, with curds or with cooked vegetables. I prefer castor oil in small quantity instead of liquid paraffin.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

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

[1] To appear for her examination
[2] Breathing exercise

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404. LETTER TO GOVINDLAL, SHIVLAL AND MOTILAL

February 17, 1942

GOVINDLAL, SHIVLAL, MOTILAL,

Your letter. It is no more as clear to me as you think. You know of course that I am not responsible for the present policy of the Congress, nor have I any influence over it.

[From Hindi]

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

405. LETTER TO MAYADEVI BHANDARI[1]

February 17, 1942

My blessings to Chi. Mohini[2] and her groom[3]. May they both live long.

[From Hindi]

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

406. LETTER TO R. ACHUTHAN

February 18, 1942

DEAR ACHUTHAN,

I have your letter. I am glad you are all spinning and make wise use of your time. I am asking Dr. Pattabhi[4] to attend to your requirements.

Yours,
BAPU
(M. K. GANDHI)

SHRI R. ACHUTHAN
STUDENT DETENU
CENTRAL JAIL
RAJAHMUNDRY, ANDHRA

From a photostat: G.N. 10852

[1] Wife of Colonel Bhandari
[2] Addressee's daughter
[3] Captain Bhagat
[4] Pattabhi Sitaramayya

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407. DISCUSSION WITH CHIANG KAI-SHEK AND WIFE[1]

CALCUTTA,
February 18, 1942[2]

"I would not think of asking you to come to the Government House," said the Generalissimo. "We would come again, after you have had your meal and rest." Gandhiji replied:

But I have had my meal on the train in order to give you the whole of my time here, and I would suggest, if it were not inconvenient to you, to stay here, have an Indian meal with us, and we can then talk until the minute of my departure. We can thus save the time of going to and coming back from Barrackpore.

And so the guests stayed on . . . and talked with Gandhiji until the moment of his departure for the station . . . .

Part of the time was taken up by Gandhiji in explaining the genesis and course of satyagraha and non-co-operation, and also in demonstrating to the Generalissimo and the Madame the action of his "weapon of war"—a weapon which, as he explained, "makes no noise, which does not kill, but which, if anything, gives life". The Madame watched the working of the *dhanush takli* and said: "You will have to teach me this."

Come to Sevagram, and I shall teach it to you. Let the Generalissimo leave you here as his ambassador, and I adopt you as my daughter.

For half an hour or so the official interpreter who accompanied the Generalissimo interpreted him. Then, said Gandhiji:

But surely ours is not a formal official talk. Why should not the Madame interpret you?

"Now, now, Mahatmaji, that is devastating," she said. "Now I know how everyone succumbs to you. My husband is most taxing. Whenever there is something very difficult to interpret, some delicate nuances of his thought to be conveyed, I must interpret him. But for one year I have been having an easy time asking the official interpreter to do it for me." Said Gandhiji, laughing:

[1] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's "A Historic Meeting". Chiang Kai-shek and his wife called on Gandhiji within an hour of his arrival at Birla Park.

[2] From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*

That means that you are a faithless wife.

"Surely," retorted the Madame, "he did not marry an interpreter, he married a woman."[1]

The Generalissimo was sure that non-co-operation was good for India, but he was not sure that it would serve equally well for other countries—unless of course they were like India in their circumstances and environments. He was naturally full of indignation at what Japan had done and was doing in China, and he had grave fears of India having to go through China's terrible fate if the Japanese overran India. It was not possible for Gandhiji to discuss the whole of our non-violent technique, but he left the Generalissimo in no doubt that Japan or Germany would be confronted with fierce non-co-operation or civil resistance. "Your civil resistance," said the Generalissimo, "is not mere passivity, I am sure. But these foes may not listen to active civil resistance, and may make even the preaching of non-violence impossible."

All I can say is that God gives me the guidance to react to situations as they arise. Though, therefore, I cannot say how exactly I will react in case of an invasion, I know that God will give me the proper guidance. But this talk cannot, I know, satisfy you. I would invite you to come to Sevagram where we can discuss the subject quietly for days. I know of course that it is an impossible request, for you cannot possibly stay.

"Who knows," said the Madame, "we may be back here sooner than later. And after all Calcutta is only 12 hours from Chunking."

As he bade a hearty good-bye to the distinguished visitors, Gandhiji said:

Then you will pay me a monthly visit.

"Where's my wheel?" said the Madame, "where's my wheel?" as she was leaving the Birla Park.[2] Gandhiji said:

You shall have it. I shall send it on to you from the station.[3]

Harijan, 1-3-1942

[1] At the end of the first talk the Madame said: "I have met too many men to succumb to anyone. But the Mahatma has captivated me."

Introducing the next paragraph, Mahadev Desai writes: "The rest of the talk had better be guessed."

[2] By mistake the *dhanush takli* offered to the Madame had been taken to the station along with Gandhiji's luggage.

[3] Approached by correspondents regarding the nature of the talks, Gandhiji said: "Take it from Jawaharlal, I won't give you anything."

408. A LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCE

A Bengali correspondent writes:[1]

> I am sorry to inform you that Dr. Suresh Bannerji has been interned within Naria P. S. . . . there is no qualified medical man available in the vicinity. The nearest steamer station is 20 miles from the village, where the conveyance is a country boat. . . . the present order savours even of vindictiveness. . . . there was a labour strike in the Budge Budge jute mill area. Labourers wanted dearness allowance . . . . If Dr. Bannerji's stay in the labour area was undesirable in the opinion of the Government, they could have externed him from the labour area.
>
> There is another case also which you should know. Shri Pitabas Das, of village Kakra, post Gopinathpur in the Contai sub-division of Midnapur, has been interned in his village. He had been offering satyagraha for nine months and was moving from village to village and uttered the slogan as usual. He was not arrested. He stopped satyagraha on 30th December after the Bardoli Resolution. Then on the 23rd of January, he was served with an internment order to reside within his village and not to communicate or converse with several Congressmen. . . . I cannot understand why a man who was not arrested for reciting the anti-war slogan for months together is interned under the Defence of India Rules as soon as he stops satyagraha. I know Pitabas Babu thoroughly well. He is perfectly non-violent. I cannot understand this action of the Bengal Government which is supposed to depend for its existence upon the vote of Congressmen who are in the legislature.

The action against Dr. Suresh Bannerji is decidedly cruel. 'Vindictive' may be a strong word to use in this connection. I prefer to use the word 'cruel', for Suresh Babu is not an unknown man. He is himself a member of the Bengal legislature. He is known to be an ill man. He was dying of tuberculosis of the bone. But by his indomitable will to live, not for the sake of living but for the sake of the country, he survived the fell disease. He put himself in a plaster of Paris jacket for a long time, rigorously carried out medical instructions, and reached a workable condition. All this is known to the Bengal Government. They know that he needs constant medical advice. He needs careful nursing and the use of medical amenities. It is therefore cruel to intern Dr. Bannerji.

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

I do not know how far the Bengal Government are justified in interning the Doctor. I do not know their side of the case. But there can be no case for his internment, and that in a place, though his own village, where he cannot keep his health and where medical aid and other comforts are not easily procurable. I do hope that the Bengal Government will redress this palpable grievance.

The other case my correspondent refers to is of a different category. To all intents and purposes there seems to be no cause for the internment of Pitabas Babu. The Bengal Government is responsible to the people. The order could not have been passed over their heads by the Governor. They cannot enforce the Defence of India Act in an arbitrary manner. They must justify to the public every action they take. The Assembly, if it is to justify its existence, has to keep itself informed of the reasons for the acts of the responsible Executive. The taunt of the correspondent against the Congress members of the Bengal legislature has substance behind it. They have a special reason to demand justification of steps like those taken against Suresh Babu and Pitabas Babu.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, February 19, 1942

Harijan, 1-3-1942

409. CRIMINAL ASSAULTS[1]

The whole world is on trial today. No one can escape from the war. Whilst the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are products of poets' imagination, their authors were not mere rhymesters. They were seers.[2] What they depicted is happening before our very eyes today. Ravanas are warring with each other. They are showing matchless strength. They throw their deadly weapons from the air.[3] No deed of bravery in the battlefield is beyond their capacity or imagination.

Man would not fight in this manner, certainly not the gods. Only brutes can.[4] Soldiers drunk with the pride of physical strength

[1] The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 1-3-1942, under the date-line "Sevagram, 23-2-1942".

[2] The Gujarati here adds: "Of these artists the medium was not words, but human nature. We, therefore, need not try to ascertain whether what they wrote actually happened in their times."

[3] The Gujarati here has: "They had been shedding, as if it were water, their own blood and blood of those whom they regarded as enemies."

[4] The Gujarati here adds: "Thus we see that the brute in man has cast off his sense of shame."

loot shops and are not even ashamed to take liberties with women. The administration is powerless in war time to prevent such happenings. The army fulfils their primary need, and they wink the eye at their misdeeds. Where a whole nation is militarized the way of military life becomes part and parcel of its civilization. Therefore a soldier's taking such liberties is not a matter for condemnation.[1] But it would take generations for India to become so.

Hence arise questions like the following which a sister sends me:

> (1) If a soldier commits an assault on a woman, can she be said to have lost her virtue?
>
> (2) Is such a woman to be condemned and ostracized by society?
>
> (3) What should women and the public do under such circumstances?

Whilst the woman has in point of fact lost her virtue, the loss cannot in any way render her liable to be condemned or treated as an outcast. She is entitled to our sympathy for she has been cruelly injured and we should tend her wounds as we would those of any injured person.

A woman is worthy of condemnation only when she is a willing party to her dishonour.[2] In no case are adultery and criminal assault synonymous terms. If we were to view the matter in this light, we would not hide such instances as has thus far been our wont. Public opinion against such conduct on the part of men towards women would then be created and freely exercised.

If the Press carried on a sustained agitation, soldiers white or brown would probably cease to behave in this manner. Their officers would be compelled to prevent such misbehaviour.[3]

My advice to women is that they should leave the cities and migrate to the villages where a wide field of service awaits them. There is comparatively little risk of their being assaulted in villages. They must, however, live simple lives and make themselves one with the poor. If they will display their wealth by dressing in silks and satins and wearing jewellery, they will, in running away from

[1] The Gujarati here adds: "It has almost assumed the garb of civilization."

[2] The Gujarati here adds: "But the woman who suffers the injury can more aptly be described as a victim of rape rather than as one who has lost her virtue."

[3] In the Gujarati the following paragraph begins with the sentence: "Today every city-dwelling woman is faced with this risk and hence the menfolk are worried on her account."

one danger, expose themselves to a double. Naturally the advice cannot refer to those whom duty compels to live in cities.

The main thing, however, is for women to know how to be fearless. It is my firm conviction that a fearless woman who knows that her purity is her best shield can never be dishonoured. However beastly the man, he will bow in shame before the flame of her dazzling purity. There are examples even in modern times of women who have thus defended themselves. I can, as I write, recall two such instances. I therefore recommend women who read this article to try to cultivate this courage. They will become wholly fearless, if they can, and cease to tremble as they do today at the mere thought of assaults. It is not, however, necessary for a woman to go through a bitter experience for the sake of passing a test of courage. These experiences mercifully do not come in the way of lakhs or even thousands. Every soldier is not a beast. It is a minority that loses all sense of decency.[1] Only twenty per cent of snakes are poisonous, and out of these a few only bite. They do not attack unless trodden on. But this knowledge does not help those who are full of fear and tremble at the sight of a snake. Parents and husbands should, therefore, instruct women in the art of becoming fearless. It can best be learnt from a living faith in God. Though He is invisible, He is one's unfailing Protector. He who has this faith is the most fearless of all.

But such faith or courage cannot be acquired in a day. Meantime we must try to explore other means. When a woman is assaulted she may not stop to think in terms of *himsa* or ahimsa. Her primary duty is self-protection. She is at liberty to employ every method or means that come to her mind in order to defend her honour. God has given her nails and teeth. She must use them with all her strength and, if need be, die in the effort. The man or woman who has shed all fear of death will be able not only to protect himself or herself but others also through laying down his [or her] life. In truth we fear death most, and hence we ultimately submit to superior physical force. Some will bend the knee to the invader, some will resort to bribery, some will crawl on their bellies or submit to other forms of humiliation, and some women will even give their bodies rather than die. I have not written this in a carping spirit. I am only illustrating human nature. Whether we crawl on our bellies or whether a woman yields to the lust of man is symbolic of that same love of life which makes

[1] The Gujarati here adds: "Knowledge of a single case is enough to frighten a woman who is already a victim of fear."

us stoop to anything. Therefore only he who loses his life shall save it; तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथाः। Every reader should commit this matchless *shloka* to memory. But mere lip loyalty to it will be of no avail. It must penetrate deep down to the innermost recesses of his heart. To enjoy life one should give up the lure of life. That should be part of our nature.

So much for what a woman should do. But what about a man who is witness to such crimes? The answer is implied in the foregoing. He must not be a passive onlooker. He must protect the woman. He must not run for police help; he must not rest satisfied by pulling the alarm chain in the train. If he is able to practise non-violence, he will die in doing so and thus save the woman in jeopardy. If he does not believe in non-violence or cannot practise it, he must try to save her by using all the force he may have. In either way there must be readiness on his part to lay down his life.

If old, decrepit and toothless as I am, I were to plead non-violence and be a helpless witness of assault on the honour of a sister, my so-called Mahatmaship would be ridiculed, dishonoured and lost. If I or those like me were to intervene and lay down our lives whether violently or non-violently, we would surely save the prey and at any rate we would not remain living witnesses to her dishonour.

So much about the witnesses. But if the courageous spirit pervades the entire atmosphere of our country and it is known that no Indian will stand women being assaulted, I venture to say that no soldier will dare to touch them. That such a spirit does not exist is a matter of shame for us. But it will be something, if persons ready to wipe out this blot are forthcoming.

Those who have influence with the Government will try to get authorities to take the necessary action. But self-help is best help. In the present circumstances we may rely only on our own strength and God's help.[1]

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, February 19, 1942

Harijan, 1-3-1942

[1] The Gujarati here adds: "Those who use their strength to subdue others get none from the Lord. Thus they fritter away their strength. Those who merge their own strength into the Lord's become unassailable."

410. QUESTION BOX[1]

HINDUSTANI

Q. Will you tell me what I should do? You should know that I believe in the Wardha Resolution.

A. That is to say, you believe that, if the Congress demand is satisfied, you will take your full share in the war effort. But whatever happens the Wardha Resolution on the constructive programme[2] invites you to contribute your full quota to the fourteenfold constructive programme. Therefore, and even apart from it, I suggest your learning Hindustani so as to be able to establish contact with the masses. And Hindustani, as I have shown, means today Hindi and Urdu till a chemical compound is formed of the two. You may not quarrel with this labour of love. Your earnestness will make everything easy. You know some Hindi. You should make considerable advance in it. The Persian script is very easy to learn. There are very few fundamental signs to represent the thirty-seven letters. No doubt the joining of the letters causes some difficulty, but learning of the alphabet including the joining is a matter of a week at the most, if you give one hour every day. Then it is a question of daily practice for half an hour, and you will have a workable knowledge of Urdu in six months. Surely it is a fascinating study to compare the two scripts and the two styles for the same speech. All this would be true, if you have love of the country and its people. If our minds were not fatigued by the effort to master the difficult English language, we should find it a light labour, or rather recreation, to study provincial languages.

But the learning of Hindustani in its double form is but the beginning of the constructive programme. You have also to spin regularly, if you are to identify yourself with the poorest in the land, and then add to this the many things in the programme whose complete fulfilment is Complete Independence in the truest sense of the word.

[1] The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 15-3-1942.

[2] For the instructions recommended by the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli and passed by the A.I.C.C. at Wardha, *vide* Appendix III.

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Test of Honesty

Q. What you have said about Congressmen in the Muslim majority provinces is true enough.[1] But your honesty will be tested by the readiness with which Congressmen follow your advice.

A. I must emphatically repudiate the test. I have begun to write about the subject in order to educate the Congress mind. If I had carried conviction to the members of the Working Committee, I would not have needed to preach my solution. It would have been reduced to practice long ago. But I failed. The step I have advised carries weighty implications without whose acceptance the solution has no meaning. One implication is confidence in the truth of one's step.

I admit it is unusual. The general tendency is to make use of the opportunities which seem to be open to you for seizing power. It is difficult for people to understand when I suggest that the opportunity is a trap. To my mind it has already proved to be so. But it is not so clear to the average Congressman. I hope through these columns to make clear what is at present obscure. Those who doubt my honesty do not help me or themselves. But whether they do or not, I must continue to preach so long as I hold to the truth of my solution.

On the Train to Wardha, February 19, 1942

Harijan, 1-3-1942

411. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

Nagpur,
February 19, 1942

"Will there be any rapprochement between the Congress and Government in view of your meeting Marshal Chiang Kai-shek?" asked our representative[2] of Gandhiji when the Mahatma passed through Nagpur *en route* to Wardha this evening. The emphatic reply was:

No.

Our representative queried, "Gandhiji, you had four hours' meeting with the Generalissimo. Did your discussions include politics?" Gandhiji smilingly said:

Four hours were not enough for our conversation. We discussed many things and also politics but in the broader sense of

[1] *Vide* pp. 237-8.
[2] Of *The Bombay Chronicle*

the term. We wanted to discuss many other things but time did not permit. . . .[1]

When his attention was drawn by the Associated Press to the comment that his interview with the Generalissimo might have resulted in the creation of a united front of China and India against Japan, Mahatma Gandhi smiled and said:

Let *The New York Times* ask the Generalissimo what the result of the interview is.

Mahatma Gandhi did not give a direct reply to questions about the interview.

The Bombay Chronicle, 20-2-1942, and *The Hindu*, 20-2-1942

412. TALK WITH FRIENDS–I[2]

WARDHA,
February 20, 1942

There has never been an occasion like this in the past nor, as far as I can see, will there be one in future. You must have noticed that we have not elected a president to conduct the proceedings. The reason why I cannot preside will soon be revealed to you. My relations with Jamnalal began with my entry into public life in my own country. He had completely identified himself with all my activities. So much so that I was hardly required to do anything. As soon as I embarked upon a new project he would take responsibility for it on himself and relieve me of most of my burdens. It had almost become with him the mission of his life. Thus our activities were going on smoothly, but with his departure the entire responsibility has fallen on my shoulders. I therefore thought that friends who had been participating in the various activities should be invited to share my burden. I am before you as a beggar. How then could I preside over the meeting? Though a beggar I am not begging for money. I have done enough of this too in my life. I have utilized the poor man's pice and the millionaire's millions. But money does not matter so much in the fulfilment of my present task. If I were so inclined I could have called

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

[2] Gandhiji had invited about 190 friends and co-workers of Jamnalal Bajaj to "discuss the best ways and means" of honouring his memory. The meeting was held in the Navabharat Vidyalaya in the afternoon.

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together Jamnalal's monied friends and compelled them to open their coffers by coaxing them and appealing to their sentiments. I know this art and I have practised it all my life. But if I were to do so, it would be a blot on the name of the departed one who had given me his all, who had come to test me but instead became my son and shouldered all my burden. I want to know how many of you will share the burden that has come to me owing to Jamnalal's death — this I beg of you. This task cannot be accomplished by a single man; all of us have to make our contribution and share the responsibility.

Before I proceed further, let me tell you what I have done in this regard. By the time I arrived at Jamnalal's home on February 11, he had already breathed his last. Earlier I had received a message only for sending medicine to bring down blood-pressure. I could have contented myself by sending the medicine but I was impelled to go there personally. When I arrived on the scene the situation had taken an altogether different turn.[1]

No one can really be heartless on such occasions, but I may have seemed so, for instead of sorrowing with Janakidevi I pleaded with her to renounce her all and carry on Jamnalalji's work and be a living *sati* in the place of burning herself on the funeral pyre as she wanted to. It has been my wont throughout life to throw burdens on people and get the most from them. Janakidevi hesitated a bit and said she had not the ability. I said, if she had the desire, Vinoba would tell her that God would give her the ability and strength. She rose to the occasion. She has renounced not only all her material possessions—about $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs—but has dedicated all her time to the work of the Goseva Sangh.

After Janakidevi had taken her vow of renunciation, I thought her sons, daughters and sons-in-law should also follow her example, and I became heartless in their case too. I said: By all means carry on your business as Jamnalal did but also follow his tradition, that is, conduct your business in a religious or charitable spirit. Earn what you can through rightful means and spend it on sacred purposes—not on your comforts or luxuries. That is to say, you must act as the trustees of your earnings.[2]

Jamnalal had entrusted about Rs. 6 lakhs to his sons to be used for public work—that is, for beggars like me. The sons could have argued that once they had enjoyed all the luxuries and comforts to their hearts' content they could turn to sacrifice.

[1] The following paragraph is from *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.
[2] *Vide* also "Talk with Bajaj Family", pp. 312-3.

But, no, after deliberations for a day or two they made over the entire sum to me. Besides, they have, on behalf of Bachchhraj Jamnalal and Co., taken up the responsibility to continue the expenditure of Rs. 2,000—an amount which during Jamnalal's time was spent annually on hospitality to Congressmen and other workers, etc. Jamnalal had made provision of a portion in Bajajwadi, for his children and Janakidevi. But his family have decided not to occupy any of these bungalows which instead will be utilized solely for public work or housing the guests. The family itself has chosen to live in Gopuri.

This work has thus begun with noble resolves. No sooner did Jamnalalji's eyes close than I set about distributing his burdens. You will see that in the catalogue of his works[1] that has been sent to you the first place is occupied by the very last work that he took up. This work is more difficult than winning swaraj. With the coming of swaraj this work will not be accomplished by itself. Nor can money alone accomplish it. I can testify to the unique dedication which this man brought to this task, this man who worked with a superhuman faith all his life. Seeing him working thus I could not help asking him whether his body would be able to stand the tempo. What if it should fail in the middle of it? The words have turned out to be prophetic. It is as if God had spoken through me. To sum up, this work can be accomplished by dedication alone. Of the Rs. 2,50,000 that Janakidevi has donated she had already earmarked Rs. 2,500 for khadi work. Then she has also wished to set up a maternity home in Wardha. Some money will go into that. That leaves about Rs. 2,25,000 for the service of the cow. We also have some twenty thousand or twenty-five thousand rupees of the Goseva Sangh. This, added to the sum donated by Janakidevi, is sufficient for our present purposes. But there are not enough workers. The way this work has so far been conducted satisfied neither Jamnalalji nor me. To carry on the work satisfactorily I shall require your physical and mental co-operation. So long as this remains undone, I shall know no peace. Properly speaking he should have succeeded me. But he has gone ahead and won the race. Now the test is mine. Now I have become his successor, that is to say, I have inherited the burden of all his work. But this is an inheritance which you can all share with me. If you can together take up all these activities, they

[1] *Vide* "A Letter", pp. 315-6.

can be carried on even more systematically and satisfactorily than before, and only then can I pass the test.

Jamnalalji was blessed with good fortune. We can also be blessed with good fortune provided we can see clearly after he is no more what we were not able to see so clearly during his lifetime, provided the awakening that was denied us can come to us now. It is all quite difficult, but also in a way easy. If you can undertake this arduous work go ahead, but I do not want you to undertake it merely as a matter of form, for then you would not be showing genuine devotion to Jamnalalji. But if you can, without misgivings and after calm reflection, render even the least little help to Jamnalalji's work you will have done a great thing.

His most important activity was that of *goseva*. The work had been carried on even before him, but it was slow. He was not satisfied with it. He wished to increase its tempo and he increased it to such an extent that he himself succumbed to it. If we wish to save the cow we must work with the same speed and sacrifice our lives. If we can save the cow we ourselves shall be saved. One way is that which people in the West follow, namely, to sell the cow and thrive on her flesh. This way is not acceptable to you and me, nor was it acceptable to Jamnalalji. We must therefore work within the four corners of the restrictions he had accepted for himself. Today we are caught up in the web of many doubts and illusions. If we can free ourselves of these and adopt a proper attitude towards this work the cow will be saved from the blot of being a cause of strife between Hindus and Muslims, between duty and self-interest. Jamnalalji has shown us the way. You are probably aware that he had prepared two schemes of *goseva* — one for the country as a whole and one for Wardha. First I shall speak of the scheme for the country as a whole. In brief, it meant our making the pinjrapoles throughout the country conform to our ideas. If we can work according to the plan we have formulated for this a good deal can be accomplished with little effort. It has behind it the spirit of religion. Crores of rupees can be spent on it. This is a work in which you can all help.

The other scheme, which Shri Rameshwardas Birla has formulated, is that of producing stud-bulls. Improvement in the breed of cattle is only possible through stud-bulls. It is an intricate task. Collecting money alone, without all of us helping, will not achieve anything. By myself alone I should not even be able to spend the money. Stud-bulls are not bred in a moment. I shall require your whole-hearted co-operation for this. Technical

knowledge is an essential prerequisite for this. You will have to go wherever this technical knowledge can be had and acquire it through humility and service. "Learn it through humble homage and service and by repeated questioning."[1]

Now take another thing, khadi work for instance. Jamnalalji's interest in it was no whit less than mine. He gave as much time to khadi as I did. And he gave as much thought. He used to hunt for workers and bring them to me. In a word, if I invented the *mantra* of khadi he informed it with reality. After khadi work was initiated I withdrew and sat quietly in jail. But Jamnalalji knew that to me khadi meant swaraj. If he had not given himself to it and organized it the whole work would have languished away in my absence. The same is true of village industries. He had of course given Maganwadi for it. But he had also made up his mind to buy some land adjacent to Maganwadi for it. Now Chi. Kamalnayan has added that land too to Maganwadi. The work of village industries is so vast in scope that untold amounts of money can be spent on it. But at the moment I do not want to speak to you of money. You can help this work in two ways. Of the khadi-wearers that are here some use only a quarter part khadi, some half and some three-quarters. All of their friends and relatives too are not khadi-wearers. This means that enough propaganda has not been done to take khadi to all homes. This is an occasion for weeping but I do not want to make you weep. There are moments when weeping best expresses love. But I wish to change your weeping into something else. How shall we use this occasion of grief and lamentation? Shall we rise from here with the resolve to make ourselves and those near and dear to us full khadi-wearers? Recently I had occasion to see Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in Calcutta[2]. All through the interview I kept plying the *dhanush takli* and when we parted I presented the yarn I had spun as also the *takli* to the Generalissimo so that the message of the charkha may also reach China. Thus love suggested to me that I should use the occasion for propaganda. If we can thus influence a guest, can't we likewise influence friends and relatives?

Another thing. Jamnalalji used to say that people were willing to wear khadi everywhere except when visiting a bank. They seem to think that their prestige would suffer if they did not wear their Marwari turban on the occasion. But Jamnalalji himself

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, IV. 34
[2] On February 18

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gave no thought to this whatever the consequences. I want that we should develop in ourselves enough self-respect to be able to go anywhere without hesitation, clad in khadi.

Today a great threat hangs over our heads. Singapore is gone. Rangoon seems to me on the way and Calcutta itself is in danger. If some third power enters India tomorrow shall we bow before it and sell our freedom to it to protect our businesses? Or shall we declare that we do not wish to get rid of one slavery to embrace another? Jamnalalji's spirit today wants us to answer this question. What his own answer would have been I know as well as I know my own answer.

A point to ponder. Shall we also love one who approaches us as an enemy, who has malice for us? Shall we have compassion for him? Today the hearts of many of us are filled with violence and hatred towards the British, because we have not properly understood non-violence. It is true that we can show compassion only towards one whom we have the power to forgive. What can it mean if a poor mouse forgives a cat? But if we can associate a mouse with courage it will cease to be the food of a cat. And as for the cat it will never become the food of a mouse. The hatred which we have for the British in our hearts today springs from the fear we have of them. If we eject this fear from our hearts and secure swaraj not through the non-violence of the weak but through the non-violence of the strong, we shall be afraid of no one in the world and shall become invincible. I would wish you not to harbour enmity against the invader, not to wish him ill but at the same time not to surrender to him. Are you ready for this? The future is in God's hands. The British are a brave nation. They have weathered many a storm before this. But they never gave up courage and fate was good to them. We should learn from them never to give up courage in the face of danger and to meet any crisis boldly.

The business community bears a large share of responsibility for India losing her freedom. Jamnalalji was always troubled by it. I therefore had to explain all this to you at length. I had said the same thing twenty years ago. But then no one could even imagine the present situation. At that time the British Empire had appeared to be as permanent as the sun and the moon. But today when Japan is knocking at our door we must search within our hearts to see what it says.

I do not want to speak of the other activities of Jamnalalji and take up more of your time. They are already known to you. Take the Mahila Ashram. It is his special personal creation. It

has been running according to his conception. The question before Jamnalalji was how the children of those who had become destitute in the country's service should be educated. He thought at least the girls would get here better education than in Government schools. With this idea he started the Mahila Ashram. Today the Ashram needs a self-sacrificing educated woman. You can help in finding someone to fill the place.

It is the same about Basic Education and the work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. You can take part in these activities. Jamnalalji was dedicated to Hindu-Muslim unity. He was wholly free from communal hatred. You should imbibe this quality from Jamnalalji's life.[1]

There is again the question of the national language. As you know he was interested in the propagation of Rashtrabhasha. He was principally concerned in drawing me to the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. It was due to his sole effort that the great work of propagating Hindi in the South became possible. It was again due to his help that I was able to carry the resolution about giving an extended meaning to Hindi so as to include Urdu. I ask you all as a token of your regard for Jamnalalji, to try, if you will, to learn the Urdu character today. You will find it quite easy to learn the primary letters.

I have said what I wished to say. If any of you have made any resolves please let me know. I may again remind you that you should not say anything that you do not mean. You should not say anything out of fear of what people might say or from politeness. I wish to rid you of all fear. Only today Ghanshyamdasji asked me if I wanted him to speak at the meeting. I said no. Of course if someone on his own feels like saying something, something which he cannot contain and must express in words, I should very much like to hear it.

This will also point a way to others. Today I do not want anything for show. We cannot perpetuate Jamnalalji's memory by erecting a memorial to him. People will read the inscription and forget it after a time. But if someone resolves to perpetuate the work of this man, who did so much for the world, it will be a true memorial to him. But I do not want to force you, nor do I expect anything from you. If anyone wants to do anything let him do it for the good of his own soul. If anything

[1] The following paragraph is from *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.

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is done for appearances it will hurt me and it will hurt the spirit of Jamnalalji.[1]

I have deliberately conducted everything today in an informal manner because I do not want any artificiality in this work. I consider this a grave moment in my life. I want to keep alive the religious spirit that Jamnalalji showed to the very end. Therefore if anyone wants to do anything he must do it in the same religious spirit. Let him withdraw into solitude, turn his thoughts inward and with God as witness pledge himself to what he wants to do.

Before the meeting adjourned [Gandhiji] had made one more suggestion. What pledge could everybody translate into action the day it was taken ? He spoke of two things, one of which was learning the national language, which means Urdu as well as Hindi. The late Jamnalalji paid special attention to this task in his later jail life. He learnt the Urdu script, besides Devanagari which he knew already. Gandhiji told the assembled people that the Urdu script could be learnt easily, hence they should immediately start learning it.

The other pledge was to be taken in the form prepared by the Goseva Sangh.[2] At one time this was regarded as a difficult task but Gandhiji explained that by his example Jamnalalji had shown the way. How hard the discoverer of the law of gravitation must have had to work to prove it! Today even a child understood it with ease. If later generations too experienced as much difficulty in understanding the law as Newton himself did, one would be constrained to say that all Newton's labours had gone in vain.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 8-3-1942 and 15-3-1942

413. LETTER TO KULSUM SAYANI

February 21, 1942

DEAR KULSUM[3],

I inadvertently began the letter in English. I shall convey your feelings to Janakibehn.

My congratulations on your doing the work of teaching.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Begum Kulsum Sayani Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] At this point a number of proposals were put forward which Gandhiji did not like.

[2] *Vide* "Speech at All-India Goseva Sangh Conference", pp. 273-7.

[3] The superscription is in English.

414. LETTER TO BHAILALBHAI D. PATEL

February 21, 1942

BHAI BHAILALBHAI,

Narahari described to me the help you gave him. God himself rewards such services. Sardar also had talked to me about you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Dr. Bhailalbhai Patel 75mi Varshaganth Abhinandan Granth, p. 21

415. LETTER TO ANNAPURNA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
February 21, 1942

CHI. ANNAPURNA,

So at last you are caught in the bond of marriage. I always knew it. Those who are not the marrying type have a different way of life. But there is nothing to be ashamed of in this. You are doing what everyone does. May you both be happy and render fourfold service.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2790

416. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 21, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I never lost sleep on account of your letter. Who told you so? I had lost it with Jamnalalji's death.

When I heard about the utensils, I sent the girls to perform their duty.

When each one brings the utensils they should be checked then and there so that everybody knows how to clean them. Since

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everybody cannot be supplied with a towel, it is better that one person wipes the utensils with it as they come.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4417

417. TALK WITH FRIENDS–II

WARDHA,
February 21, 1942

I feel a little hesitant; nevertheless there is something I must ask you. Yesterday I had told you that if you understood Jamnalalji's thoughts and feelings you ought to start learning the Urdu language and script right away. I want to know how many of you made such a beginning yesterday.[1]

You ought to have begged for one. Had you come to me, I would have sent you to any one of my co-workers. Then Babu Rajendra Prasad was there within your reach. You could have gone to him. Yudhishthira had asked: "How may one know dharma?" The answer was, "Through practice and effort." If we want to profit from Jamnalalji's death we shall have to be much more alert, learn much more restraint and self-sacrifice. There is a terrible war going on in the world today. When I think of the hardships of those who are participating in it, I am astounded. They have to be alert all the twenty-four hours. You must know that a soldier of non-violence has to be even more alert.

One night during the Zulu rebellion in South Africa an order was issued that no matches were to be used and if any fires had been lighted they were to be put out. We used to camp in tents at the time and were always afraid that if there was the least little light showing the enemy would discover our camp. If therefore anyone was found lax in obeying the order he was immediately arrested or shot. Another order followed the same night that we were to march, and in darkness. No one could carry any light. We were to guide ourselves only by sound. Everyone had to obey.

I often think if each one of us had a year's experience of army discipline our condition today would be very different. Jamnalalji had been to no military school. But through his own efforts he had learnt to obey discipline as rigid as any army's. We shall all have to cultivate such discipline.

[1] Someone from the audience then said that the books were not available.

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No one coerces us. We merely get advice, and even that only if we seek it; it is for us to accept or not to accept it. I have been telling you for the last twenty-one years that any advice regarding the practice of ahimsa is as good as an order to a satyagrahi. A satyagrahi can defy an order from without, as he can a Government law, but he voluntarily accepts something that comes from within. He cannot ignore the advice coming from within. Yesterday should have been a golden day for us, for we were engaged in awakening the religious spirit in us. If the question that has been raised today had been raised yesterday I could have suggested a way. If nothing else I would have got a lesson or two written down on the black-board. What has happened is indicative of our mental lethargy. We have to rid ourselves of it. Do you suppose that during the days of the Zulu rebellion, if that night we had been ordered to learn a few key Zulu words before the break of day any laxity in this regard would have been tolerated? Often the armed forces are made to learn some rudiments of the language of the enemy country before marching into that country. Here I had asked you to learn the language of friends. Please do not think that I am complaining. I am only telling you what your duty is. There is a saying in Gujarati, 'Morning is when you wake up'. Forget about yesterday and make an earnest beginning today. Learning of Urdu requires perseverance and if we can acquire similar perseverance in other things a great power can arise out of the number of people sitting here. But today we have fallen a prey to a kind of inertia which makes it difficult for us to do anything. Inertia by itself is a very useful thing. Without it nature cannot proceed even one step. But when it grows too much it becomes a flaw. Many today say: 'Today we are sunk in *tamoguna*[1]. We shall first have to traverse through *rajoguna*[2] and then we shall arrive at *sattva*[3].' Is this necessary? Today we permit heaps of garbage to lie in front of our homes and thus feed the disease and the doctors. Is not this same inertia at the bottom of it?

I had therefore told myself yesterday that if on this occasion rather than collect money I could caution you I would be doing better business. I again ask you to examine your hearts. If you find inertia in any corner of it cast it out. And go from here with a resolve for the future that when you get

[1] Quality of blindness and lethargy
[2] Quality of restlessness and selfishness
[3] Quality of purity and selflessness

some good advice or inspiration from within, you will at once set to work. What better beginning could there be for setting up a real memorial to Jamnalalji![1]

Swami Anand said Jamnalalji had hoped to enlist at least 1,000 members for the Goseva Sangh during the year. You can all help in this direction.[2]

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 15-3-1942

418. KHADI STUDENTS[3]

I have been asked to write something in regard to khadi students of today. I have already written a little but it cannot be too clearly stated nor enough stressed that knowledge of spinning, carding and the other processes alone does not constitute true khadi learning. That may be termed its mechanics. To understand the inner meaning of khadi one has to know why it has to be turned out by hand and not by power machinery. Why should innumerable hands be employed when a single person can manipulate an engine which can produce the same amount of cloth in far less time? If khadi has to be produced by hand, why not by the *takli* only? And if the *takli*, why not the bamboo *takli*? And if we could get the necessary work by suspending yarn by means of a stone, why even *takli*? Such questions are perfectly natural. To find proper answers to all such is a necessary part of khadi research. I do not want to discuss these questions here. All I want to say is that true knowledge of khadi goes far beyond the mechanical processes, and requires patient research. We have not the means of imparting such knowledge today. Therefore khadi instructors have to improve their knowledge even whilst they are teaching. And students have to acquire knowledge through their own diligence. In olden times when no scientific knowledge was available, students

[1] What follows is from *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.

[2] Several persons pledged support to Jamnalal Bajaj's activities. Proposing Janakidevi's name for the presidentship of the Goseva Sangh, Gandhiji said: "When I asked Janakidevi to take up this difficult task I thought that it was perhaps woman's work, and that where men had so far failed women might succeed." Janakidevi was then unanimously elected.

[3] This appeared under "Notes". The Hindi original appeared in *Khadi Jagat*, February 1942.

used to be their own teachers and became first-rate scholars and experts. We are more or less in the same position today.

SEVAGRAM, February 22, 1942

Harijan, 1-3-1942

419. "HARIJAN" IN MARATHI[1]

A Marathi edition of *Harijan* will be published from Bajajwadi, Wardha, from March 1st. The subscription will be Rs. 5 per annum. Shri Gopalrao Kale, one of the early members of Satyagraha Ashram, is the Editor. He will be assisted by Shri Dada Dharmadhikari of *Sarvodaya*. I have advised that the weekly ought not to be published unless it becomes self-supporting. Shri Gopalrao and his associates have accepted the advice. I hope that the venture will be supported by the Marathi-reading public.

SEVAGRAM, February 23, 1942

Harijan, 1-3-1942

420. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,
February 23, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Mahadev has had a serious attack. Yesterday he left with Ghanshyamdas for a seven-day visit to Nasik, but felt giddy on the way to the station. He, therefore, wisely decided not to proceed further and went to the Civil Surgeon instead. After getting himself treated there for a while, he returned home. He is better now. The blood-pressure has come down to normal. But he had a narrow escape. This is an indication that he needs a long rest. Do not worry. He has the same trouble that Narahari had. He is of course sure to get well.

How are you yourself?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

If Prithvi Singh comes to you, give him some time.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 268

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

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421. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

February 23, 1942

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got all your letters. I sent Vinabehn yesterday under Narahari's escort. He will bring her to you. I am hopeful that she will prove a worthy worker. If she works well, we will fix some pay for her. Money must be remitted to Pyarelal's mother regularly. Or is it necessary for her to ask for it? I do not know the position. I note that you have paid the money for khadi. Do you still continue to do khadi work, or does it mean that you have given it up? I hope Jamna is quite well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8599. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

422. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

February 23, 1942

BHAI JIVANJI,

Mahadev is down. He has had a narrow escape. The blood-pressure has come down, but yesterday's attack of giddiness is an indication that he will have to take prolonged rest. There is no cause for worry. It only means that I will have to carry a slightly heavier burden. But since your work is very well organized, I have no misgivings.

Send me the figures from time to time. Ask me whenever necessary.

The article on British History[1] included in this week's matter may be held over for the next week.

I will await your reply concerning Urdu. It would be an excellent thing if it could be done.[2]

[1] "A Peep into British History" by Mahadev Desai which appeared in *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.

[2] What follows is from G.N. 9953.

The burden of translating from English into Gujarati will now fall chiefly on Chandrashankar[1]. Let him take care of his health.

There will of course be no increase in Kashinath's[2] burden.

See that everything is done so well as to bring you credit. I am not able to revise anything, though I should very much like to do. Where is the time? I am conserving my strength as much as I can.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9947 and 9953. Also C.W. 6922. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

423. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

February 23, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Now you may be a little free. What is to be done about the office of the States' People's [Conference]? And what about the journal[3]? Pattabhi writes that be can publish the paper from Masulipatnam. His letter is enclosed. Dr. Menon is here. Balwantrai cannot take up the secretaryship. Nor can Jainarayan Vyas. Rangildas is available. Bapa does not like it. If the office is here, it can, of course, be kept going; but financial arrangements will have to be made.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I hope you find no difficulty in deciphering my handwriting.

From the Hindi original: Gandhi-Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] Chandrashankar Pranshankar Shukla
[2] Kashinath Trivedi
[3] *States' People*

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424. LETTER TO HAMIDULLAH AFSAR

February 23, 1942

BHAI SAHEB,

I have your letter. Please read my article again. You will find that I have answered all your questions.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

425. QUESTION BOX[1]

RICHES *v.* POVERTY

Q. How is it possible to earn lakhs in a righteous way?[2] Jamnalalji, the merchant prince, used to say it was not. Moreover, however careful a rich man is, he is bound to spend more on himself than his actual requirements merit. Therefore why not lay more stress on *not* becoming wealthy than on trusteeship of riches?

A. The question is apt and has been put to me before.[3] What Jamnalalji could have meant was in the *Gita* sense that every action is tainted. It is my conviction that it is possible to acquire riches without consciously doing wrong. For example, I may light on a gold mine in my one acre of land. But I accept the proposition that it is better not to desire wealth than to acquire it and become its trustee. I gave up my own long ago, which should be proof enough of what I would like others to do. But what am I to advise those who are already wealthy or who would not shed the desire for wealth? I can only say to them that they should use their wealth for service. It is true that generally the rich spend more on themselves than they need. But this can be avoided. Jamnalalji spent far less on himself than men of his own economic status and even than many middle-class men. I have come across innumerable rich persons

[1] The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 1-3-1942.

[2] *Vide* "A Deplorable Incident", pp. 257-9; also "Talk with Bajaj Family", pp. 312-3.

[3] *Vide* "Not Necessarily Impure", pp. 294-5.

who are stingy with themselves. For some it is part of their nature to spend next to nothing on themselves, and they do not think that they acquire merit in so doing.

The same applies to the sons of the wealthy. Personally I do not believe in inherited riches. The well-to-do should educate and bring up their children so that they may learn how to be independent. The tragedy is that they do not do so. Their children do get some education, they even recite verses in praise of poverty, but they have no compunction about helping themselves to parental wealth. That being so, I exercise my common sense and advise what is practicable. Those of us, however, who consider it a duty to adopt poverty and who believe in and desire economic equality may not be jealous of the rich but should[1] exhibit real happiness in their poverty which others may emulate. The sad fact is that those who are thus happy are few and far between.[2]

The Duty of a Manager

Q. Is it correct for the head of an institution, while demanding the utmost from his subordinates in the way of simple life, to live in comparative luxury himself even though the money he spends on himself be his own earnings?

A. The manager who expects more from his co-workers than what he does is bound to fail. This of course applies only to philanthropic institutions whose managers have accepted the ideal of poverty.

Individual *v.* Collective Cow-keeping

Q. Please explain more fully why individual care of the cow is violent and collective effort non-violent.

A. The present pitiable condition of cattle is surely enough proof. The cow today is a burden simply because individual ownership and care have failed. In a previous article[3] I have explained how the individual cannot take proper care of his cattle, how he cannot keep a bull or grazing-ground for himself, and how difficult it is for him to make proper arrangements for the sale of milk and ghee. It would be quite impossible for individuals in any

[1] The Hindi here adds: "be content if the latter put their wealth to noble use, and".

[2] The Hindi here adds: "We should therefore show through our own lives that poverty adopted as a matter of dharma is the true wealth."

[3] *Vide* "Individual or Collective?" pp. 295-7.

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country to make their own arrangements for sending their letters with the ease that the postal department does for crores of people, rich and poor alike. The same applies to cows. If at all the problem can be solved, it will be through collective ownership or use. Ownership and service go ill together. I may belong to one person, but thousands can serve me. If one person alone were to claim the right to serve me, where would I be? This is exactly what is happening to the cow. Individuals own the cow, they do not serve it.

How to Serve With the Body?

Q. You say we should devote our body, intellect and wealth to Jamnalalji's many activities. I can understand giving [wealth] and to some extent I can understand how we can serve with our intellect. But how with the body?

A.[1] A's heart may lean towards cow-service or khadi. But he has no money, he has to earn his own living, then how can he spare time for either service? When he can spare a few moments after his day's work he can persuade his friends to become members of the Goseva Sangh. He can sell and distribute literature without charge; he can do propaganda for and sell cow's milk and ghee or sandals made from non-violent cow hide; he can sell khadi too. If he wants to devote his whole life to the cause, he can do so by entering on a living wage the service of the Sangh concerned.

Sevagram, February 24, 1942

Harijan, 1-3-1942 and 8-3-1942

426. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Sevagram,
February 25, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I must reply to your letter addressed to Mahadev. He is completely out of danger now, but he has stopped all work and will do none for some time.

About Chiang Kai-shek you will read in *Harijan*. He came empty-handed and left empty-handed. He amused himself and entertained me. But I cannot say that I learnt anything. And in any case what was there to learn? He had only one thing to say: "Help the British anyhow. They are better than the others and will improve further hereafter."

[1] The Hindi begins with the following: "The question sounds rather puzzling. But in fact it is not as puzzling as it appears to be."

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We had a gathering of friends here. It would of course have been a fine thing if you could have come. All met in a friendly atmosphere. There were long discussions regarding Jamnalalji's work. A plan of work was chalked out. Ghanshyamdas took a leading part in the discussions. Janakibehn has become President.

I would add bread to your diet only under my supervision. You may eat papaya and increase the quantity of dates. I am afraid about bananas. But you may try perfectly ripe ones, pulped. There will be no harm in increasing the calories. Are you satisfied with this?

I did not at all like Indulal's[1] letter. Can you not reply to him thus: 'You have been so unsteady in the past that it is difficult to judge when you can be trusted. It is therefore better that you should work independently of the Congress or of me. If your work strengthens the Congress, there will be no friction. You should not mind my writing to you frankly.'

Raja left yesterday and Rajendra Babu is leaving today. He will meet Maulana in Calcutta and then go to Patna. We had a discussion about the Hindustani [Talimi] Sangh. Learn Urdu.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 268-70

427. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

February 25, 1942

BHAI HARIBHAUJI,

Bapu received your long letter yesterday evening.

Since Mahadevbhai has taken ill he will not be able to go to Kota. He will need complete rest for a long time. Janakibehn too will not be able to go now. She will not be going anywhere for the time being. What should be done about Kota now? Bapu says if you invite Dr. Katju[2] he might accept the invitation. At the moment he has no other person in view. Dada Dharmadhikari does not want to go out since he has taken up the responsibility of *Marathi Harijan.*

[1] Indulal Yajnik
[2] Kailash Nath Katju

Bapu was pained to learn that Omkarnathji could not meet his mother. . . .[1]

Yours,
AMRIT KAUR

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

428. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAMDAS TANDON

February 25, 1942

BHAI TANDONJI,

I had your letter. The group of friends whom I had invited after Jamnalalji's death included Rajendra Babu, Rajaji, Kaka-saheb, Bhai Satyanarain and Bhai Shriman. I had discussed with them the formation of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. Rajaji advised me, and others agreed with him, that I should write to you in detail. The said Sabha will propagate both the forms simultaneously, prepare the [text-] books and sell them, conduct the examinations and so on. Could the members of such a sabha also work for the Rashtrabhasha Samiti which is functioning at Wardha? How could they call Hindi alone the national language? If national language means Hindi+Urdu, Hindi or Urdu should only be regarded as a part of the national language and not *the* national language. Does not your Abohar resolution imply that Hindi alone should be considered the national language, not Urdu? If this interpretation is correct, would it not be better for the members of the Hindustani Prachar [Sabha] to sever their connection with the [Hindi] Sahitya Sammelan? Whatever it be, all of us desire that the Standing Committee should discuss the point dispassionately and come to a decision.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi: Rajendra Prasad Papers. File No. 1-H/42. Courtesy: National Archives of India

[1] The rest of the letter, not being connected with Gandhiji's message, is not reproduced here.

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429. MESSAGE TO "MARATHI HARIJAN"

SEVAGRAM,
February 26, 1942

I am very glad that *Marathi Harijan* is coming out. I hope the Maharashtrian community will appreciate it.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Marathi Harijan, 1-3-1942

430. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

February 26, 1942

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

Very many thanks for your kind letter[1] and all the trouble you took over the matter about the A. I. S. A. referred to you by me.[2] Your decision tides over my present difficulty.

Your postscript breaks the pervading gloom. I wish the general public had the privilege of knowing that your cheerfulness never forsakes you. May God be with you always.

I am,
Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, p. 254

431. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

February 26, 1942

DEAR MOTI BABU,

I have a complaint from Barisal that the P. Sangh[3] is to open an uncertified khadi shop and that propaganda is being carried on

[1] *Vide* Appendix V.
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow," pp. 298-9.
[3] The Pravartak Sangh of Calcutta

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against the A. I. S. A. for maintaining the system of certificates; what is this?

I understand too that the promissory notes have yet not been sent. All this is surely against the spirit of your teaching.

I hope you are keeping well.

Love.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 11056

432. LETTER TO SARANGADHAR DAS

February 26, 1942

DEAR SHRI SARANGADHAR DAS,

Bapuji desires me to acknowledge yours to him of the 23rd instant. He wants you during your leisure hours to study both Hindi and Urdu in their respective scripts and get a working knowledge of them. He has noted the other news you give. Re: what you say about Sri Gopabandhu will be borne in mind. Bapu will ask him to do the needful.

Yours sincerely,
AMRIT KAUR

From a copy: C.W. 10445. Courtesy: Government of Orissa

433. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

February 26, 1942

CHI. MUNNALAL,

What can I do ? I simply could not reply to your letter before now. How may I calm you? What you regard as bondage and burdensomeness, I regard as freedom and lightness; this being so, how can we see eye to eye? The only way left is that you should pour out your heart in letters and, feeling light, smile, and that I should carefully read your letters. Do not so over-exert yourself as to fall ill. You may certainly go out somewhere whenever you think it necessary for your peace of mind. You may go for the sake of your health also. You must not let your health suffer in any circumstances.

CWMG - LXXV

What should we do regarding Kanchan ? Do you wish that she should go to Dehra?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8478. Also C.W. 7165. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

434. LETTER TO MANGALDAS PAKWASA

February 26, 1942

BHAI MANGALDAS,

I saw your letter of the 16th only just now. Mahadev is ill and in bed. Does load of work ever leave a man unharmed? May your labours for adult education bear fruit, and let nobody in Bombay remain illiterate.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Why do you write in English ?

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 4686. Courtesy: Mangaldas Pakwasa

435. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

February 26, 1942

CHI. VIJAYA,

I should have written this letter four days ago, but I could find no time at all. I would not have known about your heroism had Vallabhram Vaidya not written to me about it. Why need you feel embarrassed about the fact or hide it from me? When you got married I knew that there could be but one result, and we have it now. It is indeed a blessed one. The real test of you two will come now. We have to see whether, even while living a householder's life, you can render the fullest service. "Fullest" means not double but four times [the previous service]. As the number increases, strength increases not in the same proportion but at least twice as much as the increase in the number, that is, four times, if the number has doubled and six times if it has trebled. This is by the way.

CWMG - LXXV

It is your duty now to be calm always and nourish the baby inside you. The baby's education starts from the moment of conception. Your thoughts, the work you do and the food you eat, will have an effect on it. Get a copy of Dr. Tribhovandas's very old—but ever-fresh—book, *Mane Shikhaman*[1], and read it. Nanabhai will help you to get one. Manubhai will be knowing of other books of that type. Go through them also. Start preparing from now on. Make your body strong. Don't stint in the matter of your food. Drink milk and eat ghee, fruit and uncooked vegetables in quantities you can digest. If uncooked vegetables do not agree with you leave them out.

Ba is quite well.

After Jamnalalji's passing away the burden on me has increased very much indeed. But God still gives me enough strength. Otherwise I would stop working.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7145. Also C.W. 4637. Courtesy: Vijaya M. Pancholi

436. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

February 27, 1942

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I am stupid. I forgot to tell you yesterday that the A. I. S. A. had tried to keep within and under the law. But I will not weary you with the technicalities. You know how the law often floors the lawyers. This case is one such. But no more at the present juncture.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, p. 255

[1] Meaning "Advice to a Mother"

CWMG - LXXV

437. LETTER TO A. V. THAKKAR

February 27, 1942

BAPA,

Spend up to Rs. 300, from the amount marked, for putting up four lavatories in the fair at Okha. Why did you not think of it earlier?[1]

* * *

Have gone through the papers about Dharma Prakash. It was good that they were sent to Viyogi Hari. The payment should be made only when the account is submitted and I pass it.

* * *

I have sent Balkrishna there. I hope I have not encumbered you thoughtlessly. In my view, it is beneficial to us to accommodate people like him. But if you hold a different view, I will not do such a thing again. I do not believe that everybody should relish what I like.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

438. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

February 27, 1942

CHI. BRIJKISAN,

I have your letter. Blessings on your birthday. What can I do? I have sent you not one but many letters. How is it possible that I could write to all others and not to you? Mahadev himself had written quite a few letters to you. How is it that you did not receive them? The register here has also the dates. Send me your reply soon.

You are gaining good experience. Since you are in good health there is nothing to worry about.

[1] The paragraphs which follow have been separated in the source by two dashes.

CWMG - LXXV

Everything is all right here. Because of Jamnalal's death the work-load has increased very much.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2486

439. PLEA FOR MORE FRUITS

Dr. Menkel, who is also a dietetist, comments[1] as follows in *The Oriental Watchman* on my note on 'Real War Effort'[2] in *Harijan* of January 25th:

While I appreciate Dr. Menkel's endorsement of my remarks, I like better his correction of my apparent lukewarmness about fruit. No one perhaps, as far as I know, has eaten as much fruit as I have, having lived for six years entirely on fruits and nuts and always having had a liberal supply of fruit as part of my ordinary diet. But I had in my mind, when writing, the special conditions of India. Its people should have, by reason of its extent and variety of climate, a most liberal supply of fruit, vegetables and milk. Yet it is the poorest country in this respect. I therefore suggested what seemed to me to be feasible. But I heartily endorse the proposition that for retaining health fresh fruit and fresh vegetables should form the main part of our diet. It is for the medical profession to study the peculiar conditions of India and suggest the list of vegetables and fruits which are or can be easily and cheaply grown in the villages for local consumption. Wild berries, for instance, grow abundantly. They may not be taken to the market for sale but can be had[3] for the picking. This is a vast field for research. It can bring neither money nor perhaps fame. But it may earn the gratitude of the dumb millions.

SEVAGRAM, February 28, 1942

Harijan, 15-3-1942

[1] This is not reproduced here.
[2] *Vide* pp. 233-6.
[3] The source has "used".

440. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,
February 28, 1942

CHI. NARANDAS,

Why is Jamna getting fever? Do you need Kanaiyo? I have sent him to learn the art of training a stronger and more powerful body than Prithvi Singh has. He has gone for two weeks. If, however, you need him to look after Jamna, send for him.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II/489. Also C.W. 8600. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

441. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

[*February 28, 1942*][1]

CHI. JAMNA,

Why are you getting fever? Give up all worries. Come over here whenever you wish.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8600. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The letter is written below the one to Narandas Gandhi of this date.

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442. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

February 28, 1942

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter. Did I seem to have written to you to criticize you?[1] I had no such intention. I did try to warn you, of course. But I entirely agree that you can act only within the limits of your capacity and according to your lights.

I concede that the existence of your Association has enabled the newspapers to do something, but that is very little. The newspapers have no real freedom. But I do admit that whatever little they have is not to be sacrificed.

You did well in sending a cable to Manilal. I have not sent any. I did not intend to send one, either.

Ba is keeping very well these days. Mahadev is better. He will of course have to take prolonged rest.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Keep in touch with Balkrishna[2].

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2149

443. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

February 28, 1942

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I learnt only today that a cable was sent to you regarding Nanabhai.[3] Kishorelalbhai has come here. Both have become a little thin. But otherwise both are sensible and have stood the loss well. The other members of the family also have behaved in a manner worthy of it. Vijayabehn[4] has displayed great courage. She will come here. I think she should stay here now. My intention in saying all this in this letter is not to console you but

[1] *Vide* letter to the addressee dated February 15, 1942.
[2] This appears to be a slip for "Brijkrishna".
[3] Nanabhai I. Mashruwala, Sushila Gandhi's father, had passed away.
[4] Widow of Nanabhai I. Mashruwala

to point out to you your dharma. I myself behaved thus on Jamnalalji's death and advised others, too, that instead of crying over it they should meditate over the virtues of the beloved one who had passed away and cultivate them in their own lives, so that they could claim that he was still living through them. Did I not say that in its essence every soul was immortal? I am sure you will follow my advice.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4927

444. *LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI*

SEVAGRAM,
February 28, 1942

CHI. KANTI,

We got a letter about Saraswati's[1] illness when we were all expecting her to come. Even if she had come here instead of going there she would have had treatment. But we ought to do what you think right, shouldn't we? Everything here is all right. Mahadevbhai has however grown a little weak.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Chhaganlal Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad

445. *TALK TO MEMBERS OF MAHILA ASHRAM*[2]

SEVAGRAM,
[Before *March 1, 1942*][3]

Members of the Mahila Ashram, in particular, owed a deep debt of gratitude to him. How were they going to repay it? There must be no idle tears. The best memorial to him was service.

The soul does not die. It is the body alone that perishes. But not everyone lives for ever in the hearts of men as Jamnalalji

[1] Addressee's wife

[2&3] Reproduced from Amrit Kaur's article "Jamnalalji and Women", dated March 1, 1940. The members of the Mahila Ashram joined the evening prayers and presented their sacrificial yarn, spun in memory of Jamnalal Bajaj.

will. The Mahila Ashram students and staff must pull their full weight in making Wardha an ideal town. Clean it, remove illiteracy, spread the gospel of khadi, remove untouchability and serve the women. Then all of you can become members of the Goseva Sangh and help in enlisting members too. The pledge is not a rigid one, and, if you love the cow, you will willingly sign it. Last but not the least there is Urdu. Each one of you should begin to study the Urdu script. Only those who know both Hindi and Urdu will be able in due course to create that beautiful mixture, the Hindustani of my dream, which shall be the national language.

Jamnalalji created the Mahila Mandal in order to create women workers. The least each one of you can do is to imbibe his spirit of service and take it as your armour when you go into the wider sea of life. Most of you will marry. It is the natural thing to do, and I used to chaff Jamnalalji and call him a registrar of marriages because he was always arranging marriages. He was no less anxious than I that many of our girls should elect to remain unmarried for the sake of serving their less fortunate sisters, but such women are rare. In any case I shall expect service from you, and when married you will be two persons and will have to give fourfold. In many ways married life—if well and truly lived, not for the sake of satisfying carnal desires—is harder than celibacy.

Jamnalalji was a rare man. He was born to serve and serve universally. Nothing that he did was done half-heartedly. His diligence was amazing. He had even begun to tend the cow that gave him milk. Such was his thoroughness. He died in harness as he would have wished. Everyone cannot follow him in everything, but, at any rate, if you really loved and admired one who did so much for you, you should learn one lesson from his life. Work hard and give yourselves utterly to the fulfilment of those high ideals of womanhood which he set before you.

Harijan, 15-3-1942

446. DISGRACEFUL[1]

The Punjab Press reports a deliberate and unprovoked attack on Pandit Sunderlal and Lala Jagannath of the Servants of People Society by four young Hindus at 11 o'clock at night while

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

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they were on their way to Lajpatrai Bhavan. The attack is said to have been made because of Pandit Sunderlal having delivered addresses in Lahore on Hindu-Muslim unity in which all offensive language was studiously avoided. One can understand, though never pardon, an attack on some provocation. But an attack such as was delivered on Pandit Sunderlal has no extenuating circumstances. These young men are reported to be members of the Hindu Mahasabha. I hope that the responsible officials will repudiate the action of the youths. Public opinion should make such hooliganism impossible. As for Pandit Sunderlal, his cause will prosper for the savagery, and more so because of his dignified disregard and forgiveness of it.

SEVAGRAM, March 1, 1942

Harijan, 8-3-1942

447. LETTER TO VITHALDAS V. JERAJANI

March 1, 1942

BHAI JERAJANI,

I got your letter and the copies enclosed with it. I cannot think of any modifications in your suggestion. The time may come, of course, when it may be necessary to stop all our activities in cities. The better course would be for the people to buy up now all the cloth they might need. I can see no harm in advancing money to the bhandars. Let us see what Jajuji has to say about it.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI JERAJANI
AKHIL BHARATIYA CHARKHA BHANDAR
396 KALBADEVI ROAD
BOMBAY 2

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9804

448. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

March 1, 1942

CHI. MUNNALAL,

You are a king unto yourself. What shall I say to you? Go as God leads you. There are two types of powers that lead

us, the demoniac and the divine. See that you are not led by the former.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8480. Also C.W. 7166. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

449. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,
March 1, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I replied to your letter regarding food the moment I got it.[1] You can make up the calories with jaggery, glucose, raisins and dates. It is quite possible to do so.

Do not worry in the least about Mahadev. He is resting, he ought to rest. He eats well. Ba also is all right. Maganlal[2] and his family came today. That Garhwali Chandra Singh's wife also has come. The place is thus crowded again. But you may rest assured that accommodation will be available for you when you come. There is a bath-tub, too. Is the Working Committee meeting to be held here?

How is Dahyabhai's daughter?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 270

450. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 1, 1942

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

Please don't worry about Mahadev. He is all right. He must have rest. Mental peace is absolutely essential for him. I do not wish to send him out for the time being.

[1] *Vide* letter to the addressee, pp. 359-60.
[2] Maganlal Mehta

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I hope your experiment is going on well. How about [your] weight and strength? What did you do about what I wrote to you regarding Jamnalalji?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8053. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

451. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

March 1, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

I got your letter yesterday. I did not intend replying, nor do I want to do so now. I wish to remind you of the hot weather. The heat is severe. I am having a wet-pack on my head. Indu should not come this side during such heat. I would suggest that both of them should go to Khali or Kashmir. They should visit Sevagram and other places only after the rains. But if Indu has the courage to face the heat here, I shall, of course, be happy to meet the two.[1]

One thing more. Khurshedbehn had written to you. She says you have written to her that you are awaiting an invitation from the Mahatma. Why do you need an invitation from me? It is always there for you. There was no special work for which I should put you to the trouble of coming here. I do not understand the implications of an "open city", that is why I have said: "I must consult Jawaharlal before I say anything. I depend upon Jawaharlal in such matters."

We are meeting soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Gandhi-Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] Indira Nehru was engaged to Feroz Gandhi on February 26.

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Indira Nehru's Engagement

I have received several angry and abusive letters and some professing to reason about Indira's engagement with Feroz Gandhi. Not a single correspondent has anything against Feroz Gandhi as a man. His only crime in their estimation is that he happens to be a Parsi. I have been, and I am still, as strong an opponent of either party changing religion for the sake of marriage. Religion is not a garment to be cast off at will. In the present case there is no question of change of religion. Feroz Gandhi has been for years an inmate of the Nehru family. He nursed Kamala Nehru in her sickness. He was like a son to her. During Indira's illness in Europe he was of great help to her. A natural intimacy grew up between them. The friendship has been perfectly honourable. It has ripened into mutual attraction. But neither party would think of marrying without the consent and blessing of Jawaharlal Nehru. This was given only after he was satisfied that the attraction had a solid basis. The public know my connection with the Nehrus. I had also talks with both the parties. It would have been cruelty to refuse consent to this engagement. As time advances such unions are bound to multiply with benefit to society. At present we have not even reached the stage of mutual toleration, but as toleration grows into mutual respect for religions such unions will be welcomed. No religion which is narrow and which cannot satisfy the test of reason will survive the coming reconstruction of society in which the values will have changed and character, not possession of wealth, title or birth, will be the sole test of merit. The Hinduism of my conception is no narrow creed. It is a grand evolutionary process as ancient as time, and embraces the teachings of Zoroaster, Moses, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak and other prophets that I could name. It is thus defined:

विद्वद्भि: सेवित: सद्भिर्नित्यमद्वेषरागिभि:।
हृदयेनाभ्यनुज्ञातो यो धर्मस्तं निबोधत॥

> Know that to be (true) religion which the wise and the good and those who are ever free from passion and hate follow and which appeals to the heart.

If it is not that, it will perish. My correspondents will pardon me for not acknowledging their letters. I invite them to shed their wrath and bless the forthcoming marriage. Their letters betray ignorance, intolerance and prejudice—a species of untouchability, dangerous because not easily to be so classified.

SEVAGRAM, March [2][1] 1942

URDU MADE EASY

Charity begins at home. As I was speaking to Jamnalalji's friends[2] on the necessity of their learning Urdu if they believed in Rashtrabhasha as recommended by the Congress, I thought of the good English proverb, and I began the charity of spreading the knowledge of Urdu in Sevagram. The result was a quick and good response. A class commenced last Wednesday, i.e., 25th February. Practically all, young and old, women and men, joined the class. The teacher captured their imagination. They learnt the primary letters in two sittings of thirty minutes each. By the time this is in print they should have learnt the forms for joining the letters. They will have learnt the alphabet in practically three hours. I know a friend who mastered it in four hours at a single sitting. The difficulty of reading Urdu is undoubtedly there. That can only be overcome by practice. Given the will, the way is easy. And love of the country should surely be sufficient spur to the will.

SEVAGRAM, March 2, 1942

Harijan, 8-3-1942

453. QUESTION BOX

PRAJA MANDALS AND THE CONGRESS

Q. Please clarify the position of the Congress *vis-a-vis* Praja Mandal Committees in States. Who should be responsible for political policies there?

A. Praja Mandals are independent bodies having no official connection with the Congress. They may or may not take their inspiration from the Congress policies. Such being the case I should advise them not to irritate State authority by an unnecessary identification with the Congress.

[1] The source has this under the date-line "1-3-1942". However, in the letter to Jawaharlal Nehru dated March 4, 1942, Gandhiji mentions having written this on Monday which fell on March 2.

[2] *Vide* "Talk with Friends", pp. 342-9 and 351-3.

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WOMEN

Q. While you have advised women in cities to go into the villages in order to escape from the danger of assaults,[1] do you not think that some of us, at any rate, should be brave enough to face the risk? After all women cannot become brave or self-reliant, if they are always to be kept out of harm's way. Will not one death bravely faced help the woman's cause? There is danger today of our girls being put back into *purdah*, as it were by their parents.

A. Of course, those who are wanted in the cities must remain at all cost and face the worst. Nothing should be done in bravado. When they go to the villages there will be no *purdah*. It will be all work and no freedom from danger anywhere on this godforsaken little ball which two teams are kicking for all they are worth. The days of the *purdah* are gone for good.

SEVAGRAM, March 2, 1942

Harijan, 8-3-1942

454. AN APPEAL TO QUAID-E-AZAM

I have been painfully but regularly going through the English weeklies that come to me and that are devoted to the cause of the Muslim League. I read them so as to keep myself informed of what the Muslim mind as influenced by the Muslim League thinks. Not a week passes but these weeklies contain what to me appear to be distortions of truth and vilification of the Congress and Congressmen and Hindus. What has prompted me to write these lines is a virulent attack on Hinduism in one of the weeklies. Here is an extract from the article:

> Hinduism is the greatest curse of India, and it is based on intolerance and inequality. To call oneself a 'Hindu' is to confess that one is reactionary and narrow-minded. No decent, civilized, honest and sincere human being who knows what Hinduism is and what it stands for, would like to be known as a Hindu or join this faith of primitive barbarians. For it is on barbarity that this so-called religion is based. No other word can describe the state of 97 per cent of the population who have been decreed by the gods and goddesses of this precious religion as impure and unclean beings fit only to serve the remaining 3 per cent of the population. . . . We would far rather suggest to the students to prepare in their laboratories of the mind deadly bombs which would

[1] *Vide* "Criminal Assaults", pp. 336-9.

completely smash and destroy Hinduism, the greatest menace to India's welfare and well-being.

I hope I shall not be told that the article in question is taken from another newspaper. It has been taken in order to hold up Hinduism to scorn. Though the founder of this paper is Quaid-e-Azam himself and it is issued under the direction of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Hon. Secretary of the League, I fancy that they have not seen the article in question.

What will be the state of Hindus under Pakistan? Will they be suppressed as barbarians? There is no attempt in the papers at looking at the other side. The policy adopted in the papers must lead to the promotion of bitterness and strife between the two communities. If the end is to be attained through strife and force and not by persuasion and argument, I can have nothing to say. But I observe from Quaid-e-Azam's speeches that he has no quarrel with the Hindus. He wants to live at peace with them. I plead, therefore, for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League.

SEVAGRAM, March 2, 1942

Harijan, 8-3-1942

455. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 2, 1942

CHI. MARY,

I have your letter for which I was waiting. I am glad you are flourishing. Continue to report progress. Yes, Jamnalalji's death is a great blow. We must resign ourselves to God's will.

Love.

BAPU

Bapu—Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi, p. 206

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456. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

March 2, 1942

MY DEAR C. R.,

What you say is not brutal. Fear is writ large on our faces. Fear of doing wrong, fear of running into the imaginary enemy's trap, is all a species of fear and dangerous at that. However, you have to submit till you patiently convert your companions. They are the best material we have. And it is from that that we have to weave the national fabric. What about the Quaid-e-Azam?

I am counting the days against 20th.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 2084

457. LETTER TO ANNAPURNA

March 2, 1942

CHI. ANNAPURNA,

You are foolish. You have not at all fallen by marrying. How can you conquer your nature? But you could surely be said to have fallen if you led a life of luxury and forgot your duty. Marriage can become a means of rising high if it can be utilized for practising restraint. You would be committing a great mistake if you think you have fallen because of marriage, for then it would slacken your effort to rise. Hence have the faith that by marrying you are sure to rise higher.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI ANNAPURNA DEVI
GANDHI ASHRAM
P.O. BARI
CUTTACK
ORISSA[1]

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9299. Also C.W. 10270

[1] The address is in English.

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458. THE MARRIED ESTATE[1]

A sister, who is a good worker and was anxious to remain celibate in order better to serve the country's cause, has recently married having met the mate of her dreams. But she imagines that in doing so she has done wrong and fallen from the high ideal which she had set before herself.[2] I have tried to rid her mind of this delusion.[3]

It is no doubt an excellent thing for girls to remain unmarried for the sake of service, but the fact is that only one in a million is able to do so. Marriage is a natural thing in life, and to consider it derogatory in any sense is wholly wrong. When one imagines any act a fall it is difficult, however hard one tries, to raise oneself. The ideal is to look upon marriage as a sacrament and therefore to lead a life of self-restraint in the married estate. Marriage in Hinduism is one of the four *ashramas*. In fact the other three are based on it. But in modern times marriage has unfortunately come to be regarded purely as a physical union[4]. The other three *ashramas* are all but non-existent.

The duty of the above-mentioned and other sisters who think like her is, therefore, not to look down upon marriage but to give it its due place and make of it the sacrament it is. If they exercise the necessary self-restraint, they will find growing within themselves a greater strength for service. She who wishes to serve will naturally choose a partner in life who is of the same mind, and their joint service will be the country's gain.

It is a tragedy that generally speaking our girls are not taught the duties of motherhood. But if married life is a religious duty, motherhood must be so too. To be an ideal mother is no easy task. The procreation of children has to be undertaken with a full sense of responsibility. The mother should know what is her duty from the moment she conceives right up to the time the child is born. And she who gives intelligent,

[1] This appeared under "Notes". The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 8-3-1942.

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

[3] The Hindi here adds: "But I know there are many other sisters like her and for their benefit I am giving a gist of the letter I wrote to her".

[4] The Hindi here adds: "thus giving rise to harmful results".

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healthy and well-brought up children to the country is surely rendering a service. When the latter grow up they too will be ready to serve. The truth of the matter is that those who are filled with a living spirit of service will always serve whatever their position in life. They will never adopt a way of life which will interfere with service.

SEVAGRAM, March 3, 1942

Harijan, 22-3-1942

459. TOURING BY THAKKAR BAPA AND RAMESHWARI NEHRU

Old age flees from Thakkar Bapa. He never takes a moment's rest. If he did he would fall ill. Service has become his food, and he has chosen such a form of service that he is required to undertake frequent travelling. He does not travel first or second. Of course he can, if he wants to, but mostly he prefers to travel third. Rameshwaridevi is infected with his spirit. Therefore they both travel together to many places. Sometimes they go to different places. Thakkar Bapa's speech also deserves notice; it also hurries along like the speaker himself. He has many things to say and so he speaks in short, sweet sentences that can be understood even by a child, and after reading his articles the reader longs for more and more. How can a person writing in haste and from odd places afford to adorn his language? Why should he choose his words? Words as it were rush in to carry his thoughts and he picks them up as they occur.

The reader will see all this in the following letter[1].

SEVAGRAM, March 4, 1942

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 8-3-1942

[1] Not reproduced here. In it A. V. Thakkar had given an account of his Rajputana tour.

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460. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 4, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Received your letter yesterday. Hope you will not find it difficult to read this letter.

About Indu's marriage, I hold the firm opinion that no one from outside need be invited. A few persons who are at Allahabad may, however, be called as witnesses. You can send invitation cards to as many people as you like. Ask for blessings from everybody but make it clear that no one in particular need take the trouble of coming. If one person is asked to come, others cannot be left out.

It has to be considered whether or not Indu likes to go to this extent of simplicity. In case you too do not like to go so far, you can rule out my suggestion.

I have seen your statement about Indu. I like it. I receive letters [concerning her marriage] every day. Some are horrid. I have destroyed all of them. In reply to all these, I have sent a note in *Harijan*[1], a copy of which I am sending herewith. The note was written on Monday. Since yesterday, letters from Muslims are pouring in, making Sarup the target of their attack. This will go on.

I will do all that is possible for the Indian States. Funds will be a constant difficulty. Jamnalalji had taken all the responsibility upon himself; how he would have done it was not decided. I am now wondering how to raise the money. I am consulting Pattabhi about the paper.[2] Balwantrai will not be able to come. That will not make much difference. We shall be getting help from here. When you come here, we shall talk over the matter. Menon is going to Bombay today to complete the work there.

I saw Chiang Kai-shek's statement. It was good. Your consent was received but I thought that there was no need now to make that letter public. The subject has become stale.

Bhagirathi has come. It is rather difficult to keep Chandra Singh. He is very much given to indulgence; and she is very

[1] *Vide* "Indira Nehru's Engagement", pp. 375-6.
[2] *Vide* the following item.

weak.[1] He quarrels on petty matters. I will not be surprised if he beats up someone. I, however, find him hard-working. You need not worry. If you feel any difficulty in reading my letters, I will try to write more legibly. But it is our duty to start writing to each other in the national language. After some time we will find it easier to do so. The poor will be immensely benefited.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

461. LETTER TO PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

SEVAGRAM,
March 5, 1942

MY DEAR PATTABHI,

I have now heard from Jawaharlal. He leaves everything to me. With Jamnalalji's death the question of finance becomes most difficult. I suggest some such notice by you as Editor. 'Arrangements are being made to turn the *States' People* into a weekly and to make it a kind of guide to the people of the States from week to week. For the time being therefore the publication will be suspended. Meanwhile I would like the workers in the different States to inform me how many copies they would take, the payment being in advance. The idea is to make the paper self-supporting from the start. The paper is intended to supply a felt want. A sure test of a felt want is that there are enough subscribers to pay for the upkeep. The estimated cost of the paper for one year would be not more than, say, Rs. 5,000, the Editor being honorary. For 1,000 subscribers, therefore, the annual subscription will be Rs. 5 each. This ought not to prove an unbearable burden. The sooner the names are sent to me the better it is for the cause. In any case all the names should be sent to me with contributions which will be refunded if the paper is not issued within one month from the date of closing the list.'

This you will issue if you agree with my proposal. You will check the estimates before publishing this figure and I presume

[1] *A Bunch of Old Letters* however has: "He is very much given to indulgence and has little intelligence".

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that you have no difficulty about paper. I would like you to keep yourself in touch with Jawaharlal.

Either I have destroyed your estimates or have mislaid your letter and estimates. Please send me a copy of the latter. If you feel like coming, do come.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy. Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

462. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

[*March 5, 1942*][2]

(1) Should human society be constituted by holding it within the confines of religion or by means of the levelling-stone of democracy? What should be a man's contribution to it? Does the training in truth and non-violence pass from an individual to society or does society train the individual?

With the bonds of religion alone. A man can make his contribution by fulfilling his dharma. All the training comes to society through its members.

(2) A community can be raised high through one's own [spiritual] uplift. You are achieving public weal through your efforts towards spiritual uplift whereas we all seem to have equated our entire duty with the welfare of the masses. Could it be the reason why we meet with difficulties in achieving either?

Ultimately the obstruction is bound to go.

(3) Is it proper to employ the language of war in a movement based on truth and non-violence? Indeed, isn't it true that aspirants to this category cannot be guided by the ways of war?

There is nothing wrong in employing the same phraseology, although it would surely be better to adopt a new one.

(4) I believe, after having accepted a certain way [of life], one must perform the ritual practices that go with it. If however they are found to be uninteresting, it should mean that one's own faith in it or one's understanding of it is not perfect.

It is quite natural that what is good seems [at first] uninteresting. However, after it has had its impact what is good is bound to hold one's interest.

[1] Submitted in writing from time to time by Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

[2] The last answer was written on this date.

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(5) The idea of Pakistan is a result of Muslim fears and the want of a liberal attitude on the part of our Hindu brethren. One of the demands of the Muslim League is for equal representation on the central cabinet. It may be an unjust demand. But if we want to achieve independence and trust that communal strife will not survive the passage of time, doesn't it deserve to be accepted? Since the present circumstances will then have undergone a change, will not the hearts of both the communities unite?

If [the idea of] Pakistan is not right its acceptance is a violation of truth. Pakistan to my mind is far from right. Unity ought to be that of hearts, and unity of hearts cannot be achieved by dishonest acts.

(6) If the state of affairs cannot be mended by top-level [approaches] we should start from the bottom to establish contacts with the Muslims. A man like you had to spend so much time to persuade prominent Hindu leaders. Then, will the common man's mentality change easily? There is no sincere desire for it, nor enough effort in the direction. In some quarters the attitude is that the Muslims should come forward if they care.

It is right that we should start from the bottom. There is a serious flaw in the attitude that Muslims should come forward if they care. It ought to be overcome.

(7) Under the Act of 1935 members of the School Boards are elected on communal basis. A few of the seats are reserved as general seats. In order to popularize joint electorates, it would be good to set an example by electing from these constituencies candidates belonging to other communities.

Morarjibhai[1] should be a better guide in these matters.

(8) One of the tenets of Islam lays down that no one but God deserves to be worshipped. Will you please say something on the subject?

It is true. I understand it to mean that no one is as worthy of worship as God is. Our parents no doubt deserve to be worshipped, but they cannot take the place of God.

(9) So many of our country's workers wish to benefit from your company. Since you no more undertake tours this advantage no more reaches them. So now they have to come to you. If some regular programme can be organized, without rushing through it, it is likely to have a fine effect on the thinking of many workers.

This is quite true. And if some such arrangement can be made it should prove very convenient.

[1] Morarji R. Desai

(10) I seem to be constantly thinking about the Muslim community. Is that all right? I try to look upon all as equals. And being myself a Muslim I am quick to perceive the weakness of my own people and promptly draw the attention of my fellow-beings to it. Is this communalism?

I see no communalism in it. Fair-mindedness does not mean that one may not think of one's own religion, or refrain from serving one's own community. But it certainly implies that given an opportunity one should serve members of another faith as well as those belonging to one's own.

(11) In these parts it is difficult for the nationalist Muslims to obtain monetary help from their own community. The nation's Muslim wing is weak. If it is considered improper to accept help from Hindu brethren this wing will have little ground for growing strong. Is it right to divide the people of a nation on the basis of religion only to obstruct the flow of aid?

You should not put it this way. Receiving aid from members of another faith will only expose your own weakness. Besides, other members of your own faith will view it with suspicion and the poison will spread. The matter needs to be viewed with discretion. We come across very few nationalist Muslims who are strong enough. They lack self-confidence. They would not even be able to explain why they are nationalist. The whole question deserves to be studied.

(12) A majority of the well-to-do Muslims belong to the League, because they see their interests better served that way. The poorer Muslims are handicapped by paucity of funds in their nationalist activities. If they ask for funds it is assumed that they are [in it] for the sake of money, and then they are advised to make their own arrangements for their finances. How can this dilemma be avoided?

By carrying on your work. All the reformers of the world had sold their shirts to subsist, yet gone ahead with their mission. If the poorer Muslims love their country and do not wish to vivisect it they will withstand any calamity.

(13) Although it has been a victim of the terrible flare-up, Ahmedabad, I feel, still has possibilities of a favourable atmosphere for establishing emotional integrity. I have succeeded in rallying men and women for the task. I have briefly outlined the programme to be undertaken which is likely to prove useful in the present circumstances. Please advise me what I should do for the funds required for organizing the activities.

I think this job has now been completed, hasn't it? Sardar has sanctioned the budget as it was presented.

(14) We should appoint tribunals, either permanent or temporary, consisting of members who enjoy the confidence of both the communities, for the whole country, the provinces, cities, etc., to prevent incidents likely to hurt communal feelings. And then act according to their decision. Where this cannot be done the Congress should have a tribunal of their own impartial workers appointed to see that no injustice is done to the minorities.

This is quite all right.

(15) Isn't it proper to have laws enacted to deal with the questions of music [before mosques] and cow[-slaughter] ? What will be the advantages and disadvantages of such a measure?

This cannot be achieved by legislation. In the first instance people ought to be trained. Hindus have got to put up with cow-slaughter. Killing Muslims will not stop them from slaughtering the cow. Similarly Muslims also should bear with the Hindus' music. This is one's dharma. What can the law do in this ? The middle path is that they should make mutual allowances. But these, [I am afraid,] would be vain efforts.

(16) When violence erupts in a frightening form, such as during communal riots, should we offer such sacrifices as it demands or should we try to escape from it by adopting all possible measures to quell it? The first alternative appeals [to me]. But I cannot swallow the other as I interpret Kakasaheb's statement to suggest.

What is it about the second alternative that you do not understand ? We have got to take all possible measures.

(17) Your views on inter-communal marriages between Hindus and Muslims.

I would approve of such alliances only if they are formed as a result of pure love and without detriment to either's faith.

(18) The A. I. S. A. was established for khadi, the Harijan Sevak Sangh for the uplift of Harijans. Can we not have a small permanent board to keep the feeling of unity alive and growing? It should keep us ever aware of this feeling and help us take the steps needed for this purpose from time to time.

What kind of a board do you mean over and above the one that already exists?

(19) It is not difficult to see that God is Truth. But it gives me a jolt from within when I try to persuade myself that Truth is God. Is it due to my *samskaras*[1] ? According to this conception Truth takes the concrete form of certain reality whereas God is beyond conception.

[1] Influence of upbringing

God is Truth, then why isn't Truth God?

(20) There are some overzealous champions of Hindu-Muslim unity in the country. One comes across such people with differing degrees [of zeal]. How can we make use of them all? Do you think it would be desirable to have some limits in this respect? Will it be all right to organize it?

Such things tend to organize themselves. It cannot be done artificially.

(21) You have defined "non-violence" in your own way. Can other people also similarly restrict or widen it for the purpose of their resolve? You regard Zeke as non-violent. Thus, whoever faces his wicked assailants single-handed is a non-violent person, is he not?

One can certainly restrict or widen [one's idea of non-violence]. You ought to understand why Zeke was considered non-violent. If a lone unarmed person struggling against an attack by a hundred, uses his teeth, shouldn't he still be regarded as non-violent? Can you say that the mouse is violent to the cat? Try to grasp this thoroughly.

(22) Your thoughts on Islam, please.

Islam is a true religion. Corruption has crept into it as into all the other religions.

(23) Your opinion of Paighambar Saheb.

I regard the Prophet as a prophet.

(24) Your idea of reforming the Muslims if you were entrusted with their helmsmanship.

If I were entrusted with the helm I would rid them of their bigotry. I would remove their dislike of the Hindus.

(25) In connection with the note on page 24[1] Sjt. Jugatrambhai says that people subscribing to the Ashram's philosophy should settle in Muslim localities and also cultivate direct contact.

This is right.

(26) When national leaders are seen to be enthusiastic about opening, running or supporting communal institutions, it is not likely to have a healthy influence on the minds of the other communities. Will you say something about it? Please tell us something in this regard.

National leaders should never have a hand in such communal institutions as are anti-national.

[1] The reference is to question (18).

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(27) I have met Dr. Deshmukh at Bombay in connection with Amina's[1] fistula and her indifferent health. He had advised me to have her examined at Bombay. He was very nice to me. For fistula he gives a course of injections, and the improvement lasts for many years. May we then have the benefit of his treatment which he had offered in the course of our talks? The treatment will involve staying in the place. Can you suggest a convenient place to stay?

You may have the benefit of his services. You can put up with Kanti Parekh.

(28) What are the possibilities of a peace brigade? Can you suggest ways of expanding it?

What I think about a peace brigade has already appeared in *Harijan.*[2]

(29) Don't you feel that religious zeal is gradually fading away? Can we say it will lead to the disappearance of minority religions? Isn't the League agitating partly because of such fears?

Religious zeal will ultimately become pure and strong. If it does not, human values will come to nought.

(30) There is hardly any education of women among the Muslims of Gujarat. The community does not seem to take note of it. Thus ignorance among the masses is ever growing. What can we think of doing in this matter?

You can start with educating the girls that come under your influence. If Sultana[3] grows into an ideal girl she would do any amount of work. I had brought her here with many fond hopes.

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10898. Courtesy: Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

463. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 5, 1942

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have relieved Vaidyaraj today. I had kept him for so many days in order to console Ba. Now that Ba has also agreed, I am relieving him. I hope the work did not suffer. After

[1] Wife of Ghulam Rasul Qureshi
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXVII, pp. 125-7.
[3] Daughter of Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

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keeping him here for so long it appears pointless to say this. But it is not so, because it makes one cautious for the future. I should have made prior enquiries whether the work in the dispensary was likely to suffer. I did ask you but that was just by the way. Now it is a thing of the past. Narayandas is a gentleman.

Were you affected by the heat outside or the internal heat? Whatever it be, it is good you have reduced the quantity of butter. It has to be reduced during summer. Whether it is due to the weather or the heat in your system the quantity of leafy vegetables, carrots, onion, knoll-cole and celery should be increased. Out of these lettuce leaves and celery are the best.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C. W. 8054. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

464. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

March 6, 1942

CHI. PRABHA,

I had your letter. Everybody is well here. Ba is fairly well. A letter from Jayaprakash is enclosed. I am also sending a copy of my reply[1], so that if my letter gets lost on the way he may get the copy sent to you. And if you have anything to ask, you may also be able to write immediately.

Mahadevbhai also is better. Janakibehn has come to stay here. Kamala and her children also have come with her.

I did not invite you for the meeting in connection with Jamnalalji because I did not think it proper to do so. I did not mean anything more by "courage".[2] Does not dharma-consciousness make a man timid? My feelings would always be in favour of inviting you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Khurshedbehn and Lohia[3] have arrived for talks. The Working Committee may perhaps meet here on the 17th.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3572

[1] The reference is not ascertainable. *Vide*, however, "Letter to Jayaprakash Narayan", p. 331.

[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, pp. 317-8.

[3] Ram Manohar Lohia

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465. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 6, 1942

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I received your letter yesterday. I had duly received all the dhotis sent by you and I promptly began using them. Your letter was received in Bardoli.

It is a good sign that Satyawati is keeping good health.

Mahadev is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

My blessings to all the companions.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2487

466. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

March 7, 1942

CHI. AMALA,

To help you, I better write in English. Khurshedbehn says you are likely to come on 10th with your mother and dog. You are welcome but if the dog needs meat it is not to be had in Sevagram. I do not know if it is even obtainable in the village bazaar.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

CHI. AMALA,

Will you get a box of Spratts biscuits which has meat extract in it and you can arrange [for them] after a day or two in Wardha. Be happy.

With love from

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

467. LETTER TO M. K. SYED AHMED

[*March 7, 1942*][1]

DEAR SYED SAHEB,

Your undated letter before me. My blessings on your marriage. May your union result in happiness to you and greater service to the nation.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

JANAB M. K. SYED AHMED
MEMBER DISTRICT BOARD
DEEVO STREET
KAYALPORTNAM, S. INDIA

From a photostat: G.N. 8036

468. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,
March 7, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have your letter. If you do not have the courage to stay in Sevagram in the summer, I will try to go where you may be staying. I believe that your health can be completely restored. Till then you may go wherever you like, but keep the hours of rest, baths and meals. If the Viceroy is careful about all this, why should we too not be?

There was a letter from Maulana saying that he would start in a day or two and come here. Aunt[2] is coming tomorrow to see Janakibehn.

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
VITHAL KANYA VIDYALAYA, NADIAD

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 271

[1] From the postmark
[2] Sarojini Naidu

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469. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

March 7, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Your letter of yesterday I could read early in the morning and that of today I could read only now.

Yes, I shall help you fully. You will have to look after the management. It is not possible to manage things otherwise. You shall do physical work, no doubt, as also whatever else has to be done. Ask me if need be about the management. There can be no harm in pointing out the mistakes committed by others. Of course it is only proper that you should try to explain things to them. But do ask me if my speaking to them will expedite the work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4418

470. TRIBUTE TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ[1]

March 7, 1942

The more I think the more I am convinced that there was no activity for the good of the nation with which Jamnalalji was not connected, and therefore he was sure to have been associated with the Sasta Sahitya Mandal[2]. His life was a living literature.

[From Hindi]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 262

471. ON ITS TRIAL

I am a pacifist still in one sense; that is to say, I realize that Christians should be able to meet material force with spiritual power. It is horrifying to reflect that after nineteen hundred years, we are still unable to do it except in individual cases and on a small scale. But to

[1] This was sent for the *Jamnalal Smriti Anka*.
[2] Publishers of Hindi books

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me it seems merely 'wishful thinking' to act as though we had a power which in fact we have not and for which we have neither trained nor disciplined ourselves in the past. Such power does not come to those who have not disciplined themselves, at the last moment, in the hour of need. It has not come to us. I would rather, therefore, do what I can in defence of principles which I believe to be both right in themselves and of enormous importance to the future of the human race, than stand aside and do nothing. It is *doing nothing* that is the worst expedient of all.

When, therefore, my pacifist friends ask me whether I can imagine Jesus Christ dropping a bomb or firing a gun I am entitled to reply: 'No, I cannot; but neither can I imagine him standing aside and doing nothing at all.'

I am compelled to echo the words of a very dear relative of mine who, loathing war as much as any pacifist that ever breathed, said to me at the beginning of the last war (in which he lost his life): "If you can stop war with spiritual power, do it. If you can't, let me do what I can; and if you are right in thinking that war is so damnable that anyone who takes part in it is damned, then I would rather be damned than let these things go on without doing all I can to stop them, even at the cost of my own life."

Is this not very close to the meaning of our Lord when he said: "He that loseth his life shall save it"?

The foregoing is the concluding portion of a touchingly sorrowful article contributed to *The Survey Graphic* of December 1941 by the celebrated Dr. Maude Royden of the Guildhouse, London. She is one of the foremost pacifists of the West. Like many she has felt compelled to revise her position and is now most reluctantly but fully ranged on the side of the defenders of the British Isles.

The article demands a considered reply. I have been in constant touch with the Western pacifists. In my opinion Dr. Royden has surrendered her position in the portion I have quoted. If individuals have lived up to the Christian teaching (i.e., on non-violence) and that on a small scale, one would think practice should make such a life possible for many people and on a large scale. It is undoubtedly wrong and foolish "to act as though one had the power which in fact one has not". "But," says the worthy writer, "such power does not come to those who have not disciplined themselves, at the last moment, in the hour of need."

I suggest that with the knowledge of the defect no time should be lost in seeking to remove it. That by itself is doing not only something but the right thing. To deny one's faith by contrary practice is surely the worst thing one can do.

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And I am not sure that "doing nothing is the worst expedient of all." In sceptic treatment, for instance, doing nothing is not only expedient, it is obligatory.

There is no cause whatsoever for despondency, much less for denial of one's faith at the crucial moment. Why should not British pacifists stand aside and remodel their life in its entirety? They might be unable to bring about peace outright, but they would lay a solid foundation for it and give the surest test of their faith. When, in the face of an upheaval such as we are witnessing, there are only a few individuals of immovable faith, they have to live up to their faith even though they may produce no visible effect on the course of events. They should believe that their action will produce tangible results in due course. Their staunchness is bound to attract sceptics. I would also suggest that individuals like Dr. Maude Royden are not mere camp-followers. They are leaders. Therefore, they have to live their lives in strict accord with the Sermon on the Mount, and they will find immediately that there is much to give up and much to remodel. The greatest thing that they have to deny themselves is the fruit of imperialism. The present complicated life of the Londoner and his high living is possible only because of the hoards brought from Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. In spite of the fierce criticism which has been levelled against my letter "To Every Briton",[1] I adhere to every word of it, and I am convinced that posterity will adopt the remedy suggested therein against violence however organized and fierce. And now that the enemy is at the gates of India I am advising my countrymen the same course of action I advised the British people. My advice may or may not be accepted by my countrymen. I would remain unmoved. Their non-acceptance will be no test of failure of non-violence. I would subscribe to the charge of my imperfection. But a satyagrahi does not wait for perfection before he invites others to experiment with him, provided always that his faith is immovable like a mountain. The advice that Dr. Royden's relative gave her and which she quotes approvingly is altogether wrong. If the war is damnable, how can he stop the things that go on by taking part in it, even though it may be on the defensive side and at the cost of his own life? For the defence has to resort to all the damnable things that the enemy does, and that with greater vigour if it has to succeed. Such a giving of life is not only not saving it but a mere waste.

I have attended the Doctor's services in her Church where a living belief in the efficacy of prayer is much in vogue. When the

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXII, pp. 229-31.

impenetrable gloom surrounded her, why did she not find strength and consolation and real action in heart-prayer? It is never too late to mend. She and her fellow-pacifists, many of whom I have the privilege of knowing, should take heart and, like Peter, repent of the momentary loss of faith and return to the old faith in non-violence with renewed vigour. Their return will mean no material loss to the war effort but will mean a great deal to the anti-war effort which is bound to succeed sooner rather than later, if man is to live as man and not become a two-footed brute.

SEVAGRAM, March 8, 1942
Harijan, 15-3-1942

472. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

[Before *March 9, 1942*][1]

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. That Jamna got well was good news.

I believe what you say regarding Nanabhai. But I will not be able to do anything in the matter. Let them do what they wish. I will do what you suggest, if I can, when an opportunity offers itself. You possess a special gift for working, which others lack.

I wish to send Kanchan there as I did Vina. She also is filled with the spirit of service. She is Munnalal's wife. He wants to observe *brahmacharya*. If, therefore, they live in the same place, he might find it difficult to adhere to his vow. Kanchanbehn is willing to go there. Let me know if you can absorb her also. If you have no place for her there or cannot keep her for any other reason, please tell me so.

About Pyarelal's mother I shall write later.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8601. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] According to the C.W. source the letter was received on March 9, 1942.

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473. NOTES

Untouchability and Indore

The Maharaja Saheb of Indore sent a message to the organizers of the Harijan Day in Indore on the 1st instant. It is published in the *Holkar Government Gazette* of 2nd March, and will repay perusal. It is on a par with the Travancore Proclamation[1] which declared the abolition of untouchability. The opening lines[2] demonstrate the spirit in which the problem is approached by the Maharaja. They are:

> . . . I, for one, could not conceive of the continuance of this evil in Holkar State, and with a view to eliminating it issued a proclamation in 1938 thereby placing the so-called untouchables on the same footing as any of us. . . . There is plenty more to be done in this field, and I can commend this urgent work to everyone interested in public welfare. I want to point out with all the emphasis at my command that it is impossible to evolve a sound body politic on democratic lines in this country unless we achieve social solidarity among ourselves. In achieving this we must, in the first place, liquidate the very word 'untouchability' from our vocabulary.

Gram Panchayats in Aundh

The Raja Saheb writes:[3]

> Since we last met at Wardha three years ago, the system of village administration by the panchayats has been introduced in Aundh State, and I have great pleasure in saying that the results so far achieved are most hopeful and encouraging. Every village now has a school. Most of these schools are built with local help and partial grants from the taluk *samitis*[4]. The villagers have made their own roads, they have made water arrangements, and every inhabitant in almost all the villages has come to feel a sort of consciousness of his right as well as of responsibility and of love for his village. . . .

[1] In November 1936; *vide* Vol. LXIV, pp. 45-8.
[2] Of which only excerpts are reproduced here
[3] Only an excerpt is reproduced here.
[4] Committees

STUD-BULLS

At the meeting of friends of the late Jamnalalji which recently met in Wardha[1], one of the schemes announced was the production of 1,000 good bulls. It was conceived by Seth Rameshwardas Birla. He has not allowed the grass to grow under his feet. He has already issued an appeal for assistance. The scheme is likely to cost five lacs which should be forthcoming without an effort. The following form the committee of management:

1. Shri Rameshwardasji Birla—President
2. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
3. Shrimati Suvratadevi Ruia
4. Shri Laskhminarainji Gadodia
5. Shri Bhagirathji Kanodia
6. Shri Hiralalji Shastri
7. Shri Keshavdevji Nevatia—Secretary

GOPALAN NAMBIAR

Gopalan Nambiar is a patriotic youth who in the heat of the moment is said to have instigated a crowd, at a meeting in Malabar, to assault a Sub-Inspector of Police resulting in his unfortunate death. The High Court at Madras has sentenced him to be hanged. I take it that the evidence justified the sentence, but it is a clear case for commutation of the sentence by the Government. This is no case of private murder deliberately committed. We are living in the midst of murders on a wholesale scale which no court of law can ever reach. It is a mockery to send a young man to the gallows for an act, however indefensible otherwise, in which malice is wholly absent. I am glad, therefore, that leaders of public opinion and the Press are moving in order to secure a reprieve. It is hoped that the Government will listen to the public voice.

SEVAGRAM, March 9, 1942

Harijan, 15-3-1942

474. HINDUSTANI[2]

Dr. Tara Chand, who has made a close study of the vexed question of the national language, recently wrote a Hindi letter to Shri Kakasaheb, from which the following important extracts are translated below:[3]

[1] On February 20 and 21

[2] The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 15-3-1942.

[3] Of which only excerpts are reproduced here

Hindustani and Brij were both colloquial languages at one time. Hindi or Hindustani made its first appearance in the 13th century, and its literature actually came into being in the 14th and 15th centuries in South India. Its language is the same as *Khari Boli* (खड़ी बोली) and is the basis of modern Hindi....

The Muslims were the first to create literature in Hindustani. Their fakirs and saints used this language for their religious teachings and explained the principles of the Sufi religion in it also. Later, poets adopted it, and because Muslims used the language there came about a mixture of Persian and Hindi words. The sounds of Persian and Arabic letters also crept in which are not found in Brij but which have remained in Hindi up to date.

The colloquial language which the Muslims employed is the language spoken even today round about Meerut and Delhi. It is termed *Khari Boli* or Hindustani.

Modern Hindustani, Hindi and Urdu are three forms of this language. Hindi and Urdu are its literary forms, into which many Sanskrit and Persian and Arabic words have freely crept. Hindustani is that form of the language which includes both Sanskrit and Persian words. Writers of Hindustani lean towards one or the other according to their taste. But they try to avoid both as much as possible.

In my opinion neither Hindi nor Urdu should be the lingua franca of India. Either we must agree to call Hindi the language of the Hindus and Urdu that of the Muslims, or we must try to make Hindustani the common language. So long as we call either Hindi or Urdu the national language we are certain to raise a controversy.

SEVAGRAM, March 9, 1942

Harijan, 29-3-1942

475. SCARCITY OF WATER[1]

The Secretary of the Kathiawar Harijan Sevak Sangh, Shri Chhaganlal Joshi, has issued a statement apprehending scarcity of water at many places in Kathiawar this year. Death by starvation is already rampant. In this context, khadi activity has to be intensified along with other constructive work. For all this, workers are in

[1] This appeared under "My Notes".

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greater demand than funds. The statement asks for both. Those workers who are willing have to send their application in detail to the Kathiawar Harijan Sevak Sangh at Rajkot. Everywhere there is a dearth mainly of workers. The scarcity of water can be overcome only if the Kathiawar Princes make joint efforts. Private institutions will be able to achieve precious little in spite of their great efforts. Kathiawar can be saved only if the Princes fully co-operate with one another as as well as with their subjects.

SEVAGRAM, March 9, 1942

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 15-3-1942

476. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

March 9, 1942

BHAI JIVANJI,

I am going to send less matter in English this week, so that you may be able to include whatever is lying with you excepting the long articles in English. I will of course send something more in addition to what is being sent today.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Keep yourself ready for Urdu.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9948. Also C.W. 6923. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

477. LETTER TO SHASHI R. MEHTA

March 9, 1942

CHI. SHASHI[1],

I tried but could not reply to your letter immediately. Come soon after you have passed the examination. Tell Prabhashankarbhai[2] that I got his letter. I have asked Maganbhai to write to him and he does, so that I need do nothing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 1051. Courtesy: Champabehn Mehta

[1] Daughter of Ratilal P. Mehta
[2] Addressee's maternal grandfather

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478. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 9, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter. I had promptly replied to your earlier letter. I hope you got it.

Mukerji is a good and honest worker. He has some land. I had asked him. He said he did not seek charity. I have no doubt he will return the entire amount. He was prepared even to pay interest. We have given much aid to other workers. I am clearly of the view that we should lend Rs. 3,000 to Bhai Mukerji for six months.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

479. DESIRABILITY OF EXODUS

A correspondent asks for my detailed views on the exodus that I have advised[1] from the cities of all who are not wanted there and all who are unfit or unwilling to stay there. No one is obliged to stay in against his will. In the event of bombardment, it is clear that non-combatants can only be a burden in every way. Successful defence against a powerful enemy requires exclusive concentration on holding the enemy at bay. The defenders' attention must not be divided. This is from the military point of view.

But we have war-resisters too, either humanitarian or political. They may not stay unless their object is merely to cause embarrassment for the sake of it. I hope there are none such. They should, therefore, be out of the cities. Then there are those who do not know what to do in the event of bombardment. They should all evacuate. As the reader will see, my opinion has little to do with my war-resistance. For in this case and up to a point military necessity and duty of war-resisters demand the same action.

If I could convert any city or all cities wholly, including the combatants of yesterday, I should welcome the invading host and

[1] *Vide* "Plea for Calmness", pp. 325-6.

try to convert even them or challenge them to do their worst, without offering retaliation. But no such good luck awaits me. If the cities were converted, all India including the rulers would be converted and there would be peace in India and peace in the world. But that must remain a day-dream yet awhile. Only I won't be moved from my position by being told that the Jap or the Nazi is not the same man as the Englishman. I draw no such fundamental distinction between man and man. But I must not detain the reader on the speculative side of the matter-of-fact question that faces us.

Assuming then that all who should or a part of them have evacuated the cities and have gone to the villages or are about to go, what should they do? They must go with the village mind to live the village life as much as possible. They may not reproduce city conditions and build temporary palaces. They should go to the villages in a spirit of service, study their economic and other conditions, and ameliorate them not by giving alms but by giving the villagers work of a permanent nature. In other words, they should work the constructive programme among the villagers. Thus they will identify themselves with the villagers and become a kind of co-operative society with an ordered programme of economic, social, hygienic and political reconstruction.

The greatest problem the new-comers will have to tackle will be to deal with loot and dacoities. It will tax their resources to the utmost. The non-violent way is there. If that is not clear to them, with the co-operation of the villagers they should organize themselves for armed defence against robbers and dacoits. We have too long looked to the Government to do this elementary work for us, not excluding even the reclamation of castes called criminal tribes. The Government cannot do much, if anything at all, at this critical time. The work has perforce to be done by the evacuees violently, non-violently, or both ways.

SEVAGRAM, March 10, 1942

Harijan, 15-3-1942

480. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

March 10, 1942

BHAI BEHRAMJI,

I hear that you have again fallen ill. If you have survived so many illnesses in the past, why may you not survive this one,

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too? But after all we are in God's hands. He will do what He wills. Let not, therefore, your serenity be affected.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7562. Also C.W. 5037. Courtesy: Tehmina B. Khambhatta

481. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,
March 10, 1942

CHI. KANTI,

Got your letter. I shall certainly try to detain Saraswati. I shall train her in whatever I can. She will certainly be useful in the dispensary. Shanti[1] will get many companions.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Chhaganlal Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad

482. LETTER TO PADAMPAT SINGHANIA

March 10, 1942

BHAI PADAMPATJI,

I have your letter and the draft. I had no knowledge of what talks you had with Jamnalalji, so I thought it would be better to ask Shriman Narayan. I enclose his letter. The question arises because the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti is related to the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. A situation has now arisen in which the Samiti here may have to break away. Jamnalalji, I and other members had agreed that Urdu must have a place in the national language. The language that is formed from the blending of the two is Hindustani as defined in the Congress Resolution. It is possible that the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan will not be prepared to accept this change. What will be your position in such an event? Would you give your approval to the propagation of Hindustani, that is, Hindi plus Urdu? Your wishes will be respected. Some money from the

[1]Addressee's son

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previous Rs. 15,000 is in Jamnalalji's office. I shall not send the cheque to the bank till I hear from you.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

483. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

[After *March 10, 1942*][1]

CHI. KANTI,

I am just not able to write to you. You do understand the pressure on my time. I am trying to detain Saraswati. At one time she had agreed to work in a hospital. But now she says she is uncertain, and that I should not depend on her. She is as simple as she was. Shanti mixes with all well. He is as full of pranks as you were. His face too resembles yours. Like an old friend he has taken possession of my bed. He likes jaggery as much as you like it. On the whole he is all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Chhaganlal Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad

484. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

March 11, 1942

BHAISHRI JIVANJI,

You should keep here a stock of English copies of *Constructive Programme*[2]. Either give an agency to somebody or send the copies here. I will try to sell them. A note may be published in *Harijan*, too.

Regarding *Bhajanavali*, I will have to study the question carefully. How is that possible? Please, therefore, be satisfied with what we have. If I am imprisoned any time, I may undertake this and other such tasks.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9949. Also C.W. 6924. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

[1] The source has "February 26, 1942", obviously a slip. From the contents it is evident that this letter was written after the letters to the addressee dated February 28 and March 10. *Vide* pp. 370 and 403.

[2] *Vide* pp. 146-66.

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485. LETTER TO HIRALAL SHASTRI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,
March 11, 1942

BHAI HIRALAL SHASTRI,

You did well to remind me about the Jaipur worker. I had forgotten. Jamnalalji should be the model for all constructive workers generally and for Jaipur workers particularly. To sing praises of Jamnalalji's virtues or to commission statues of him would be an insult to him. You may do it, but if along with it you do not emulate Jamnalalji all the praising of Jamnalalji will be in vain.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Hiralal Shastri Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

486. TALK TO STUDENTS OF KHADI VIDYALAYA[1]

SEVAGRAM,
March 11, 1942

Every day morning and evening we recite the *Ekadashavrata mantra* at the conclusion of the prayer. Mere observance of a vow, whether it is big or small, is enough to make one's life. The whole world of sentient beings, the whole universe, the earth, the sun, the moon and the like are said to follow, each its own vow, for they move on their different paths according to their set motions. After all even inertia is relative. We cannot call it mere inertia where laws are so strictly followed. Astronomers tell us that if a single planet or stellar body in the sky should cease in its motion or deviate in the slightest degree the whole planetary system would go out of order and come to an end. Thus if the whole of Nature reveals the supremacy of laws there must be some agency to preserve and to enforce those laws. That agency is God. With Him as witness the cosmos follows its preordained path. But we puny creatures cannot follow even the little vows that we take.

[1] The students had assembled to observe the *masika* (the monthly ceremony) of Jamnalal Bajaj. After half an hour's spinning they read out the vows they had taken.

You who have taken vows here are all students of the Khadi Vidyalaya. You have come here in pursuit of a specific aim, to fulfil a specific programme. You must remember that in the years to come the Charkha Sangh will depend on you. Our experience showed that if the Charkha Sangh was to make progress a school was necessary where instruction in the techniques of khadi should be imparted. What is taught in ordinary schools is forgotten as soon as the examinations are over. But you have to absorb in your lives what you learn here. So far as I know there is no other institution of this kind anywhere in India. You therefore carry a great responsibility. If after completing your education here some of you want to become rich you may, but the ideal which has brought you here requires that your entire life should be dedicated to Lord Krishna. You have a loftier aim than riches. You have to transact business worth crores of rupees, but not for yourselves. You have to do so in order to meet the wants of the poor. Today we do not have enough khadi even to meet the needs of the poor. But in the years to come you will have to manage the production, sale and accounting of khadi worth hundreds of crores of rupees, and, what is more, you will have to do it scientifically. Today we do not have a theory of khadi production. We do not even know the rudiments of village economics. We have to learn all this. Thus you have taken upon your shoulders something that affects the whole world. For this we require workers who are firm in keeping vows. If we unite the heart and the head the result will be far-reaching and beyond our imagination. You should move ever forward. You should develop the habit of introspection and correction. You should observe what happens around you in the Ashram. But you should have eyes only for what is good, not for flaws. If you can absorb good qualities the result is bound to be good.

[From Hindi]

Khadi Jagat, March 1942

487. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 13, 1942

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your two letters. Your work is always clean and steady. Your speech was short and to the point.

Ba may improve with some quack remedy, as Jamna did. A man who is a quack like me is here and is treating Ba. Acharya

Narendra Dev also has been put in his hands. We have some hope now that he will recover. Ba suffered a great deal. Chimanlal also is examined by the same man.

See that Vina looks after Jamna properly. I am arranging to send Abha there. I like to send girls to you. I am assuming that when the burden on you becomes too heavy, you will unhesitatingly refuse to accept any more.

I suppose the money being sent to Pyarelal's home is sent from the Satyagraha Ashram Fund. Do you keep on hand any balance from it?

Kanaiyo will arrive here the day after tomorrow.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8602. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

488. LETTER TO ANNAPURNA C. MEHTA

March 13, 1942

CHI. ANNAPURNA,

Why should you fall ill? Anyway, make the necessary changes and get well soon. Do you read anything?

Ba is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9435

489. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

March 15, 1942

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. I am glad you have seen the untruth. Danger is not yet over. But God is your sure guide and friend. Trust Him through and through. Your body is a good index for you.

The Ashram is overcrowded but it goes on.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6494. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9889

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490. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

SEVAGRAM,
March 15, 1942

MY DEAR KU[MARAPPA]

Jhaverbhai tells me you have approved of his plan and budget for oil-presses in selected areas throughout India. Please let me have your formal approval so as to enable me to examine the plan.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10163

491. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

March 15, 1942

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. Jayaprakash must take milk if he cannot take curds. It may even be better. He may drink as much milk as he wants. It would be better to avoid butter for the present. He can grow some vegetables in the jail garden to meet his needs of uncooked vegetables. Throughout the year Khan Saheb ate vegetables, grown by himself. It is difficult to preserve good health without greens.

You need not feel unhappy for not being able to stay with Father. You are wedded to service. You should not worry. I can see no other way.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3573

492. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 15, 1942

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter. The Vaidya did take great pains but Ba could not get the desired relief. Now a naturopath has come.

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He has many faults, but he has some knowledge. Today is the fourth day [of his treatment] and Ba is feeling better. For three days he made her vomit with *akda*[1] milk, which removed the phlegm, and she felt some relief.

I will write about the policy regarding . . .[2].

Can I send someone to the Nasik sanatorium, that is, is accommodation usually available? If it remains full I do not want any special arrangement to be made.

I do not wish to trouble Bhaiji to come here specially.

I shall be glad, however, if he comes of his own accord.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8055. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

493. 'SCORCHED EARTH'

The Russian technique of scorched earth has staggered humanity, but humanity has been powerless to do anything except applaud the amazing sacrifice and bravery that counted no cost too great to circumvent the enemy. I have shared the amazement with the admirers but not their admiration.

We like to imitate what we admire. Now that the prospect faces us, are we able to contemplate with equanimity, or feel the glow of bravery and sacrifice at the prospect of India's earth being scorched and everything destroyed in order that the enemy's march may be hampered?

As a war-resister my answer can only be one. I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy — that is, out of a humanitarian motive.

But in India's case there is, too, a practical consideration. Unlike Russia's, India's masses have no national instinct developed in the sense that Russia's have. India is not fighting. Her conquerors are. Supposing that the conquerors are worsted and the Japanese come, the inarticulate masses will not even notice the change for the time being or for a long time. The intelligentsia are divided on the issue of the war. The motive here is

[1] Ceiotropis Gigantica
[2] One word is illegible.

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irrelevant. India's soldiers are in no sense a national army. They are soldiers because it is their profession. They will as soon fight under the Japanese or any other provided they are paid for fighting. In these circumstances the policy of scorched earth would be a wholly indefensible act.

It is therefore a matter for satisfaction that Indian opinion is being expressed against the policy of scorching. I know nothing of the requirements of the military, but they can never be allowed to supersede national or humanitarian considerations which the nation may have accepted. The military must thus be an arm of the dominant civil power, not its substitute. The Government of India will considerably ease the situation and allay anxiety by declaring in unequivocal terms that they will not apply, if the occasion ever arise, the scorched earth policy to India, especially regard being had to her peculiar position.

SEVAGRAM, March 16, 1942

Harijan, 22-3-1942

494. A HARIJAN COLONY IN BIHAR[1]

Raja Bahadur Kamakhya Narayan Sinha, while opening a Harijan Colony in Arrah the other day, spoke against the sin of untouchability in a way which reminds one of the recent message[2] to Harijans sent by the Maharaja Saheb of Indore:

> It is a crime on the part of us so-called caste Hindus to treat lakhs of people as untouchables. They too are God's creation. They have the same physical form as we, they are activated by the same human desires, they feel insults and misery just as keenly as we do. But they are today powerless to raise their voice in protest. Their cry of distress, however, does go up to heaven, and we shall surely be damned by it if we do not mend. We must atone for our sins. That we have put up for them a dwelling-place of bricks and mortar is only a drop in the ocean. We shall have atoned only when we give them a dwelling-place in our hearts and shall embrace them as the great Bharat embraced the humble boatman Guha and thereby raised himself.

If all caste Hindus were to root out untouchability from their hearts as Raja Bahadur has done, this blot would soon be removed from our society.

SEVAGRAM, March 16, 1942

Harijan, 22-3-1942

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

[2] *Vide* "Untouchability and Indore", p. 397.

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495. *QUESTION BOX*[1]

How to Ward off Starvation?

Q. Is it not far more important today to find some solution for the shortage and high prices of food-stuffs than to organize civic guards? Speeches will not quench the fire of hunger. And we have neither enough capitalists nor capitalists with the right ideals to set things right.

A. It should be part and parcel of the work of civic guards to protect people as far as possible from hunger and exploitation. I have already given some advice as to how to economize in food during times of stress.[2] Such economy should begin from today.

1. Food should be regulated scientifically so that there is no waste and a maximum of economy.

2. Whatever seasonable food-stuffs can be sown should be planted at once.

3. Use should be made of herbs, etc., which grow wild and which can be eaten with advantage. Research therein is necessary.

4. No one must remain idle. If he cannot find employment, he should provide work for himself, such as spinning.

5. I fear that if the war does not come to a speedy end and the Japanese invade India, it will become difficult or even impossible to transport food-stuffs. Therefore, if there happens to be any surplus anywhere, efforts should be made to send it where it is most needed.

I am aware that all this is no easy task. But I see no other way out of the difficulty.

What for City Employees?

Q. You have given the rich an idea of what their duty is if they migrate to the villages.[3] But there will be thousands of evacuees who have been employed in the cities all their lives. They have no money and no ancestral homes in the villages where they can take refuge. What of them?

A. It is possible that many such workers will migrate with their masters. Those who do not will have to seek out some

[1] The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 22-3-1942.
[2] *Vide* "Real War Effort", pp. 233-6.
[3] *Vide* "Desirability of Exodus", pp. 401-2.

occupation for themselves in the villages. One of these is spinning. It would be as well for all such to prepare themselves for the crisis.

SEVAGRAM, March 16, 1942

Harijan, 22-3-1942

496. DEFENDING THE INDEFENSIBLE[1]

I have read Quaid-e-Azam's answer to my appeal[2]. It has caused me deep pain. I had expected a better response. The reproduction of the whole offending article would make worse reading. For the whole of it is venomous. Quaid-e-Azam knows that I do not hesitate to criticize any party or person whenever the occasion demands criticism. I have more than once criticized unbecoming writings in the non-Muslim Press.

I do not know the writer of the offending article. If he is a Hindu, it makes Quaid-e-Azam's defence of it all the worse for it. I am sorry that Quaid-e-Azam has resorted to special pleading for defending the indefensible. This unexpected defence of an article designed to wound deep susceptibilities makes ominous reading.

SEVAGRAM, March 17, 1942

Harijan, 22-3-1942

497. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SEVAGRAM,
March 17, 1942

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. And the dhotis[3], too. I will wear one of them when I go out tomorrow. I will not write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10423. Also C.W. 6862. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

[2] *Vide* "An Appeal to Quaid-e-Azam", pp. 377-8.

[3] Woven from yarn spun by the addressee who had sent them through Shankarrao Deo and wanted him to see Gandhiji wearing them.

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498. A CORRECTION[1]

In *Harijan* of February 22nd 1942[2], there was an announcement that Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh had been nominated a member of the Board of Management of the A.I.V.I.A. This was a mistake, as he being a member of the Congress Working Committee cannot become a member of the A.I.V.I.A. Board.

Sevagram, March 18, 1942

Harijan, 29-3-1942

499. FOREWORD TO "THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION"

March 18, 1942

Principal Shriman Narayan Agrawal's treatise is timely and should go a long way in dispelling the fear and distrust about the possibility and desirability of giving the highest instruction through the mother tongue. For me it is tragic that such an obvious truth requires arguing. Although Principal Agrawal imbibed all that his ambition could desire of the English language, he never allowed his love of mother tongue to be displaced by his regard for English. He is, therefore, well equipped for the mission which he has made his own. I hope that he will not rest till the mother tongues in the various provinces have come into their own.

I have no doubt whatsoever that if those who have the education of the youth in their hands will but make up their minds, they will discover that the mother tongue is as natural for the development of the man's mind as mother's milk is for the development of the infant's body. How can it be otherwise? The babe takes its first lessons from its mother. I, therefore, regard it as a sin against the motherland to inflict upon her children a tongue other than their mother's for their mental development.

The Medium of Instruction

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

[2] In the article "Passing of the First Stage of the A.I.V.I.A."

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500. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

March 19, 1942

CHI. MALKANI,

I like your letters in Hindi very much. I am returning the cheque for Rs. 200. It has been signed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 943

501. THE ANDHRAS

The following has been sent to me by Maharaj Kumar Vijaya Anand of Vizianagram:

> There is a strong feeling amongst us Andhras that you do not like us, that you are against the formation and the establishment of a separate province. Despite Andhra Desh being overwhelmingly Congress, it never received your blessings. If three crores of yearning hearts are asking for a separate existence, would you not allow them the "right to sing" as the great Tilak Maharaj once said? People of my Desh are so definite about your dislike for the Andhras that they even attribute your visit to Benares recently for the purpose of commanding me to drop the Andhra agitation. The Andhras would like to know whether you ever gave any advice to Tamil Nad regarding Andhras, and also wish to know whether during the last ministry the Andhra question was referred to you or not; if so, what advice did you give them? Do you put the Andhra question on the same footing as that of Karnataka and Kerala whose revenues may not be enough to have separate provinces? Pray, what is your opinion regarding Andhra Desh being self-supporting? Is it not a fact that, owing to steadfast loyalty of the Andhras to the Congress movement, they did not achieve what Orissa did? It is felt that, had the Andhras taken a different line of action when the Simon Commission came to India, they would have got their hearts' desire.

I can only say that the Maharaj Kumar is in bad hands. Being a novice in the art of handling masses, he has evidently not taken care to inquire into the credentials of his informants. I should like to know the Andhras who have given him the information which he has chosen to transmit to me. I am not

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a stranger to Andhra Desh myself. I refer the Maharaj Kumar to Deshabhakta Konda Venkatappayya, Shri Prakasam, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Kaleshwara Rao and Shri Sitaram Sastry. They will probably bear witness to the fact that I was principally instrumental in securing from the Congress the recognition of the redistribution of the Provinces for Congress purposes on a linguistic basis. I have always agitated for the acceptance by the Government of such redistribution. I have indeed advised Tamil Nad, when such advice was needed, not to resist the Andhra demand. I know that the Congress ministry headed by Shri C. Rajagopalachari tried its best to get Andhra recognized as a separate province, and it was no fault of the ministry that Andhra Desh has not yet been so recognized. But it is true that I recognize no distinction between Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra or for that matter any other province recognized by the Congress as a separate province. I do not know enough about any province to be able to say which can be self-supporting on being recognized as separate. As to my visit to Benares, the purpose is too well-known to need any clarification. The Maharaj Kumar is a sportsman, and he should be above worrying about baseless suggestions made about him. He would be an unworthy leader who can be deflected from his mission even by a Mahatma. I hope this answer will satisfy the Maharaj Kumar, if not even those who duped him into putting the questions he has.

Sevagram, March 20, 1942

Harijan, 29-3-1942

502. LETTER TO NATWARLAL M. PATEL

SEVAGRAM,
March 20, 1942

BHAI NATWARLAL,

I have your letters. Considering everything I feel that the Spinners' Association cannot sanction another store. The existing store is almost under the Spinners' Association. It is a result of considerable efforts. I am afraid, sanctioning the two stores will be harming both of them. If you really love khadi, build up the existing store as much as you can.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

NATWARLAL MOTILAL PATEL
JOGIDAS VITTHALNI POLE, BARODA

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

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503. LETTER TO DESMOND YOUNG

March 21, 1942

DEAR MR. YOUNG,

I was glad to read your letter to Mahadev Desai and know that you had returned safe and sound. I hope you are none the worse for the hard life you must have had at the front.

With reference to the subject matter of your letter, I can only give you my assurance that I am not in the habit of writing anything without ascertaining facts. And when I have evidence from persons I know, for the sake of truth and for the sake of protecting the public I write and then, too, cautiously. If you think that absence of complaint means absence of guilt, you are vastly mistaken. The behaviour of troops, white or brown, has become a public scandal. Even respectable and well-known women are not free from danger. You may not know that an Indian official's wife was recently ravished by soldiers (Indian) on the train. The official had lodged a complaint too but at the instance of his superiors he withdrew it. The instances of looting in the open are too common to be decently challenged. There are guarded admissions of some of these by high functionaries. I get almost daily complaints of such cases. Having been absent for some time you do not know how things have deteriorated in such matters. No wonder. Full-blooded soldiers not on duty find vent for their exuberant physical energy by taking liberties which cannot be allowed in a society not used to such conduct.

In Wardha, only a few days ago, soldiers who were loitering in the streets of the town were molesting a woman. A strong gymnast, seeing the molestation, belaboured the soldiers and they took to their heels. A wealthy merchant was waiting for his train at Wardha Station when a troop train steamed in. He saw two of them take milk from an old woman on the platform without payment. On seeing the latter weeping this merchant intervened. He was thereupon slapped, caught by the neck and taken to the soldiers' compartment to receive proper punishment. Happily, the bystanders who knew the merchant intervened and he was saved from serious injury. I can multiply such cases. I have thought fit not to give publicity to them. Nor have I advised reporting to the authorities.

You will ill serve the common cause by ignoring facts behind the worn-out plea that absence of complaint before the police means absence of crime. Happily in responsible quarters there has come over a slow but sure awakening. I wish you would find leisure to study facts and help as much as you can to remove a growing menace.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 10369. Courtesy: India Office Library, London

504. LETTER TO VITTHAL L. PHADKE

March 21, 1942

MAMA,

Ramprasad tells me that you are very much troubled by the itch. If you are eating dal, give it up. Take the juice of as many lemons as you can, eat uncooked onions, chew one *tola* of uncooked *luni* or spinach. If you have no teeth, crush the *bhaji* and eat it. Sit in cold water in the afternoon and wrap the whole body with a wet sheet. Eat oranges, *mosambis* and other fruits if available. Eat less of starchy foods. Take milk and curds. And take soda-bi-carb regularly. If you do this, the itch will disappear.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MAMASAHEB PHADKE
HARIJAN ASHRAM
DOHAD, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3845

505. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

March 21, 1942

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I am firmly of the view that Kanchan must not come here. Let her stay where she has gone and then go to Valod. I think it futile to attempt to ascertain the truth in such matters. Please, therefore, hold back the express telegram and write a letter.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8477. Also C.W. 6167. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

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506. A LETTER

SEVAGRAM,
March 22, 1942

DEAR FRIEND[1],

I have your letter. There is a fallacy running throughout your letter. Conversions without conviction I hold to be always bad. They are no conversions. They are a convenience. They are no proof of the looseness or badness of the religion changed. They proceed from selfishness or worse. I am not intolerant when I deplore my friend's forsaking his religion for a selfish motive.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

507. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

March 22, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

The accompanying is for your information. I have given no reply.

You must have got your teeth treated. I am also eager to know about the yogi.

Acharya[2] is improving very rapidly. He even went out for a walk today. His digestion is improving.

It is getting hotter.

Mahadev and Vanu[3] must get well. As for news, it is for you to give me some.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 271-2

[1] An Englishman
[2] Acharya Narendra Dev
[3] Vanamala, daughter of Narahari D. Parikh

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508. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

March 22, 1942

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. I wear Deo's gift[1] every day. The dhoti[2] is very light. It is beautiful.

Write to Sucheta[3] thus:[4] 'I have been asked to take up this work. Please let me know what things I will have to do. My hands are always full. I am already doing women's welfare work. What more should I do that we are not doing?'

Write as above and let me know what her reply is.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1042. Also C.W. 6863. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

509. COW'S MILK FOR LEPERS

Dr. Santra is an authority on leprosy. What he says should carry weight.[5] Apart from my views on the cow, the medical profession owes a duty to the country to discover the relative values of different milks.

SEVAGRAM, March 23, 1942

Harijan, 29-3-1942

[1] The addressee had two shawl lengths woven out of yarn spun by Shankarrao Deo and had them presented to Gandhiji.

[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, p. 412.

[3] Wife of J. B. Kripalani, Chief of the Women's Wing of the A.I.C.C., had suggested to the addressee to accept leadership of its Maharashtra branch.

[4] The rest of the paragraph is in Hindi.

[5] Dr. Santra's views are not reproduced here.

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510. *INHUMAN IF TRUE*

The Honorary Secretary of the Social Service Department of the Marwari Relief Society writes:[1]

I have to place before you a very brief review of the activities of the Marwari Relief Society, Calcutta, in connection with rendering relief to evacuees from Burma and Malaya, absolutely irrespective of caste, creed and colour, and also to humbly seek your invaluable advice on a very grave matter. . . .

In this connection I beg to report a certain very regrettable incident to you, and shall be grateful if you kindly advise me as to my duties in the matter.

On the night of the 14th March, shortly after the arrival of the Chittagong Mail, as I, in company with a number of volunteers, was attending to the wants of the evacuees, a British tommy got hold of a small child belonging to one of the poor evacuees and threw it under the train. Although I am a humble follower of your noble creed of non-violence, it was with the greatest difficulty that I restrained myself and my volunteers from punishing the soldier bodily for his brutal act. I reported the matter to the station military authorities, but their attitude was anything but sympathetic. I later approached Mr. K. C. Sen, I.C.S., over the matter, and though he promised to duly enquire into the matter, nothing has been done as yet to rectify it. There are still large numbers of soldiers loitering about the platforms every night, and a violent clash between these soldiers and relief volunteers and the public is a possibility which has to be tackled in no time. I have already placed the matter before the Bengal Congress Civil Protection Committee.

I should be thankful, if you kindly advised me on the following points:

1. Should I start an agitation in the Press over the matter?

2. Supposing a soldier behaves indecently towards a helpless female evacuee, are we to put up with it silently, or should the soldier be forcibly dealt with?

It would help us very greatly, if you kindly issued a statement in *Harijan* in this connection. I am prepared to accept all responsibility regarding the truthfulness of the above incident.

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

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I have suppressed many letters giving me authentic details about the misbehaviour of soldiers. I have published them when it would have been wrong, if not cowardly, to suppress them. The letter in question demands, in my opinion, the widest publicity, not merely for the safety of the public but also for the sake of the soldiers and the Government. The Marwari Relief Society is a big philanthropic institution of twenty-five years' standing having an all-India reputation. It has funds and seasoned workers. Its prestige should have been enough security for the good behaviour of the soldiers in the presence of its workers. The soldier must have run amuck or been under the influence of drink to have behaved as he is reported to have done. I trust that the Marwari Relief Society will not leave the matter till it is thoroughly thrashed out; and I trust too that the authorities will not wish to hush up the matter but will make ample amends, if the case is proved as reported by my correspondent.

So much for the case itself. The correspondent desires my guidance about similar cases in future. The action of *himsa* or ahimsa would have been identical. The volunteers should have, if they could, bodily prevented the soldier from touching the child or snatched the child from him, even if the soldier had been hurt in the act of preventing or snatching. The proceedings after the delivery of the child or the failure of the attempt would vary according as the deliverers were actuated violently or non-violently. Non-violent behaviour would dictate generous and gentle behaviour towards the culprit. But generosity and gentleness would have to be thoughtful and reasoned. It is difficult to lay down in advance the rule of conduct applicable in all cases. I can say this much that a truly generous act demands sincere recognition on the part of the culprit. I have known instances of Africans in South Africa insulted at railway stations saying to the rude white men, "My brother, God will forgive you for your rudeness," and the white men giggling, if not adding injury to insult. In similar circumstances I have myself remained silent and suffered the insult. I am quite clear that the Africans' so-called generosity was a mere mechanical act justly evoking derision. Mine was timidity. I did not wish to evoke further insult. I certainly did not want to take legal proceedings. I was trying then to shape my non-violent conduct. If I had had the real courage, I would have expostulated with the insulters and risked the worst.

I have interpolated an examination of so-called non-violent conduct in cases of personal insult or injury. What about the child injured or the injury imagined by my correspondent? I think non-violent conduct would not, should not, be different. The distinction that is often drawn between personal injury and injury done to wards is unjustified, if not wrong. A man is not expected to do more for his wards than he would for himself. He would no doubt sacrifice himself for his ward's honour, but he would be expected to do likewise for his own. If he did otherwise, he would be voted a coward and is not likely to protect his ward's honour, if he is not able to protect his own. But I own that correct non-violent conduct does not come through mere reasoning. Reason is a necessary preliminary. But correctness of conduct will come only through repeated practice, maybe even repeated failures.

What violent conduct should be surely needs no examination.

SEVAGRAM, March 23, 1942

Harijan, 29-3-1942

511. QUESTION BOX

ABOUT CHILDREN

Q. I quite agree that as society advances marriages between the different communities will increase and should be welcomed. You rightly advocate no change of religion for the parties concerned.[1] But what do you advocate for the children? In which religion should they be brought up, the father's or the mother's?

A. Presumption in such marriages is that the parents respect each other's religions. If they are religiously minded, the children will unconsciously imbibe what they think is best for them and choose their own faith without let or hindrance from the parents. If the latter are indifferent, the children will also be probably indifferent and label themselves anyhow. This is what I have observed in such marriages. The difficulty crops up when there is a serious difference arising between the parents as to the upbringing of the children.

CONVERSION WITHOUT CONVICTION

Q. You oppose all conversion without conviction. But are you not inconsistent? You profess equal respect for all religions. Why then worry about how the conversion is brought about?

[1] *Vide* "Indira Nehru's Engagement", pp. 375-6.

A. I have extracted the question from your long and plausible letter, cleverly written. Conversion without conviction is a mere change and not conversion which is a revolution in one's life. You seem too to forget that equal respect implies respect for my own faith as much as for yours or any other neighbour's. My respect for my own faith forbids my being indifferent to my children abandoning their parents' faith without conviction. And I should have little respect for you, if you led my children astray by making all kinds of worldly promises in which matters of the spirit had no play.

SEVAGRAM, March 23, 1942

Harijan, 29-3-1942

512. NOTES

THE NATIONAL WEEK

The National Week comes every year with the certainty of seasons. It has come for over twenty years now, and yet we seem to be as far as ever from our freedom or communal unity or universalization of khadi. We started the celebration with these three definite things. They were convertible terms. If we had unity, we could get freedom, and so also if all were converted to the khadi cult. Though we have added many things since to our constructive programme, the original is as true today as it was when it was first conceived and started.

How shall we behave during the forthcoming Week? Let us not treat freedom apart from its components. Then there remain communal unity and the thirteen other items, at the centre of which stands khadi in its widest sense.

Communal unity at the top will come in its time. We want freedom for the masses, and so do we want communal unity for and among the masses. If we have it in our hearts, let us show it in our daily little acts towards one another.

I will not mention the other items. All organizations will look after them. A word is necessary about khadi. Hitherto we have had khadi sales. This time, thanks to many causes, we have no khadi to sell. But we can all produce, we can all collect funds. If we have enough capital, we can produce more khadi. But we can also do *tunai* or carding and even weaving, not for self but for the nation. We would therefore give our output to the A.I.S.A. at its depots in our localities.

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And let me not forget the 24 hours' fast on the 6th and the 13th April.[1] Thousands believed in it when we began. We did not err in fasting. Let those who have faith in it not forget fasting and prayer.

THE CURSE

A Harijan *sevak* writes:

> 1. There are in our country hotels, hair-cutting saloons, etc., which deny admission to Harijans. Is it not expected of our national workers—khadi, Hindi and Congress propagandists—to boycott such institutions and use their influence to get these disabilities of the Harijans removed?
>
> 2. There are washermen employed by the A.I.S.A. Some of these washermen observe untouchability in their profession and are not prepared to wash the clothes belonging to persons other than Brahmins and Nairs. The A.I.S.A. dispenses with the washermen who are addicted to drink. Similarly, should not the A.I.S.A. dispense with those washermen who observe untouchability in their profession?

The questions are appropriate. Both have to be answered only in one way. All institutions which deny access to Harijans should be boycotted by those, whether Congressmen or others, who feel keenly that the curse of untouchability has to be removed if Hinduism is to remain as a faith to live for and, if need be, to die for. In the posers put by the *sevak* the difficulty is sometimes serious. But nothing can be achieved unless serious difficulties are seriously faced and surmounted.

The question gives rise to a dilemma on some occasions. The washermen are supported by the A.I.S.A. in common with the other artisans. These cling to untouchability with a tenacity that defies all attempt to make them see the superstition that the curse is. Whilst I cannot offhand ask A.I.S.A. workers to boycott the artisans that observe untouchability, there is no doubt that there should be greater vigilance than heretofore in these matters. Preference should certainly always be given to those who have shed the superstition. Much will depend upon the spirit in which the persons afflicted with the virus of untouchability are approached.

SEVAGRAM, March 23, 1942

Harijan, 29-3-1942

[1] *Vide* Vol. XV, pp. 145-6.

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513. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

March 23, 1942

BHAI JIVANJI,

All the English matter is being dispatched today. I hope there is enough.

I do not know how much Hindi and Gujarati matter is being sent. If what is being sent today is not enough, supply the rest from there.

Why does Kashinath feel hurt? What did Pyarelal write? He says he did not write a word which could have pained him.

Give me more details.

Blessings from
BAPU[1]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9951. Also C.W. 6926. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

514. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

March 23, 1942

CHI. VIJAYA,

I replied to you and also made immediate arrangements for oranges. Nanavati will send [them] every week. You must have already received one basket. Everybody is well here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7146. Also C.W. 4638. Courtesy: Vijaya M. Pancholi

[1] In the postscript Amrit Kaur writes: "Please send one copy of *Harijan* to Shri Mirabai, Women's Conference Camp, Abrama, *via* Vedchhi, B.B.&C.I. Rly., for the duration of the camp, i.e., 3½ months. Bapu is agreeable."

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515. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM,
March 23, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I realized its importance, that is why I acted promptly. I agree, you have to wait when I am busy. It cannot be helped. I have got to attend to the problems of the Ashram as quickly as I can, for does it also not form a part of swaraj?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4419

516. LETTER TO HAMID QURESHI

March 24, 1942

CHI. HAMID,

Today I have a letter from Father[1] telling me that you have not received my reply. I distinctly remember to have replied to you. Well, whatever it is, here is another. It seems you are doing well. Come over here some time. Why does not Sultana write to me?

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. HAMID QURESHI
HARIJAN ASHRAM
SABARMATI, B.B.&C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10774. Courtesy: Hamid Qureshi

517. *LITERARY* v. *CRAFT WORK*[2]

Shri Narahari Parikh writes:

I feel that in many of our khadi and other schools the emphasis laid on literary training is wholly wrong. Certain hours are assigned

[1] Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

[2] This appeared under "Notes". The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 5-4-1942.

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to craft work and certain to literary work, but it is believed that knowledge can only be imbibed through book-reading. I hold that more intellectual progress is possible for our students through craft work than books. I shall be grateful if you will give your opinion on this issue.

The writer's complaint is justified. Literary training does not always mean expansion of the intellect. Primarily it is a matter of memorizing. A letter is imprinted on the brain in the same way as any other picture. But literary training is more than mere reading.[1] The same thing is true of handicrafts. A knowledge of handicrafts is not limited to the mere craft. It includes a knowledge of its science. Then the expansion of the intellect is much greater and quicker than in high schools and colleges.[2] Therefore, to run down craft work or give it a secondary place in the school programme is greatly to be deplored. Students thus underrate the value and place of craft knowledge in the expansion of the intellect.[3] Book-learning damages the eyes and cramps thought and originality.[4] There is no such danger in learning crafts and their science. This too involves some study of books. But that study is related to crafts and, therefore, requires the exertion of the intellect. This is what I mean by basic training. It must, in time, come into its own, for it is so true. But meanwhile let there be no differentiation made between book-learning and craft work. The latter must be looked upon as an integral part of education and must have the same status as any other subject.[5] This obvious truth should be recognized at least in national schools.

SEVAGRAM, March 25, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

[1] The Gujarati here has: "Reading and understanding books on different subjects is also included in literary training."

[2] The Gujarati here adds: "It is memory rather than intellect that is developed by literary training. This can be said of hundreds of students who graduate from the high schools and colleges. But in the case of scientific knowledge of a craft there can be no such undesirable result. And the hours of training should not be divided under the heads 'Learning' and 'Craft'."

[3] The Gujarati here adds: "They are lured by books and then both suffer. Mere reading does not develop the intellect."

[4] The Gujarati here has: "And when one develops a dislike for craft work one's knowledge of its science remains superficial. Everything fits into its own place."

[5] The Gujarati here adds: "The illusion that craft work is a subject outside the scope of education must go. So long as it does not, the students' development is likely to be arrested."

518. TELEGRAM TO STAFFORD CRIPPS[1]

[*March 25, 1942*][2]

THANKS FOR YOUR WIRE. I WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE[3]. IT WAS AGREED THAT ON BEHALF OF THE CONGRESS ONLY THE PRESIDENT AND PANDIT NEHRU SHOULD SEE YOU. YOU KNOW MY ANTI-ALL-WAR VIEWS. IF DESPITE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ME I SHALL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU.

Political Life of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Volume I, pp. 334-5

519. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 25, 1942

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I am not very much inclined to publish the list of contributions to the Gandhi Jayanti Fund. Most of them will have to remain anonymous. I do feel inclined, however, to go as far as sending the list to all important persons. Show this to Nanabhai.

Ba is fine. I understand about the women. I will send those I can.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8603. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in New Delhi on March 23, with the proposals of the British War Cabinet, for discussion with the Indian leaders. He wired Gandhiji, expressing his desire to meet him. For the proposals and the report of the interview with Stafford Cripps, *vide* Appendices VI and VII.

[2] From *Gandhi*: *1915–1948—A Detailed Chronology*

[3] Which met at Wardha on March 17 and 18

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520. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

March 25, 1942

CHI. MUNNALAL,

If you must leave you may. I leave the decision to you. You may take up the Charkha Sangh work if you can. You yourself will have to decide that. Peace you will find only in the cave of your heart, neither in the nether world nor in heaven, nor in the the forest. But that is only my personal opinion. Do not write anything during the night even if you wake up and are unable to sleep again.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8475. Also C.W. 7168. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

521. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

March 25, 1942

CHI. MUNNALAL,

If you lose sleep during the night, you may start repeating Ramanama, but do not yield to the temptation of taking up writing. What is written at such an hour is useless. Without peace of mind you will not know what your duty is.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8476. Also C.W. 7169. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

522. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

March 25, 1942

BHAI JIVANJI,

It seems we will have to bring out the Urdu *Harijan*, in litho. Can this be done there? I think you did point out some

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difficulty. I am trying to make the arrangements at this end about the editor and so on. The matter thus has not been forgotten. We also wish to run an Urdu press.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI JIVANJI
NAVAJIVAN KARYALAYA
P.O.B. 105
AHMEDABAD
B. B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9950. Also C.W. 6925. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

523. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

March 25, 1942

CHI. VANUDI,

One hour you are pleased and the next displeased. This won't do. If there is somebody to teach the *asanas*[1], etc., they do benefit. Since nobody has studied the technique scientifically, they have not been systematically popularized. Learn them patiently.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5788. Also C.W. 3011. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

524. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

March 25, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Munnalal's is not an example for you to follow. Do whatever you can, and be content.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Who would be the next to go after Shastriji?

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4420

[1] Postures of yogic exercises

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525. NOTES

Praja Mandals and Congress

Thus writes a correspondent from an Indian State:

> On page 67 of *Harijan* (of March 8, 1942) there is a question which is of great interest and importance to Praja Mandals in Indian States.[1] The latter part of the question is, "Who should be responsible for political policies there (in States)?" I am afraid that the answer does not sufficiently clear the position. From what appeared in this connection in *Harijan* before, and from the present answer, in an indirect way, it seems that you wish the Praja Mandals to be responsible for the political policy in the States concerned. It would follow that the local branch of the Congress would not independently initiate any political policy or come into conflict with the policy of the local Praja Mandal.

I think there was no confusion about my answer. The Congress organization has its centre and chief work in British India. It has branches in some States. They are not expected to dabble in local politics. They are, therefore, advised to confine themselves to constructive work. But Praja Mandals have to do constructive work always, and political work properly so called wherever it is allowed or where there are brave and able enough men to carry on the political struggle. It is thus purely a question of local ability and opportunity. At the present moment when everything is in the melting pot, no heroics in politics are called for in the States.

Stopping Animal Sacrifice

A Belgaum correspondent writes:[2]

This is indeed good news. Shri Keshwain deserves congratulations for his humanitarian spirit. Those who wish to may eat what meats they like, but it is defaming God to offer animal sacrifices in temples. What God wants, if He can be said to want anything, is the sacrifice made by a humble and contrite heart.

On the Way to Delhi, March 26, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

[1] *Vide* "Question Box", pp. 376-7.

[2] The letter, not reproduced here, described how S. N. Keshwain, President, Canara District Harijan Sevak Sangh and one of the trustees of the Sirsi temple, had the custom of animal sacrifice abolished.

526. *A YOUNG CANADIAN'S QUESTION*

From my American post I pick up the following typical letter from Vancouver:[1]

Denuded of the courtesies, the writer's straight question is, "Will there be room for Britishers and foreigners in free India?" The question should have nothing to do with my spirituality supposed or real. It does not arise for free America or free Britain. And it will not arise when India becomes really free. For India will then be free to do what she likes, without let or hindrance from anybody. But it is pleasing to speculate what India would do if she becomes free, as she must sooner or later. If I have any influence over her policies, foreigners will be welcome, provided their presence is beneficial to the country. They will never be allowed to exploit and impoverish the country as they have done hitherto.

What free India will otherwise look like remains to be seen.[2] She has nothing to fear from the contemplation of the helplessness of the small nations of Europe, if she continues to tread the non-violent course she has done with more or less perfection and with more or less success. For a non-violent State bigness is wholly unnecessary for its protection against aggression. Such a State will need spend nothing for protection against aggression from without. Whether such a State will ever come into being is a fair question to ask. Reason suggests no flaw in the theoretical conception of it. Whether human nature will respond to what has been called an exacting[3] call is another question. It has been known in individual cases to rise to unimaginable heights. There is nothing to prevent its multiplication by patient endeavour. Anyway I am not going to lose my faith and abandon the attempt because I can show no visible sign of such a response from India. One might as well abandon all hope, as some have done, for the attainment of India's unadulterated freedom. For they say, it will take centuries for India, which is largely and wholly unarmed, to become a military nation. I refuse to be prey to such despair. In the ringing words

[1] The letter is not reproduced here.

[2] The correspondent had further asked: "I should like to know just what stand your new democracy would take in world politics. The small countries of Europe thought that they would keep their finger out of the pie, as the saying goes, but look where they are now."

[3] The source has "exactious".

of Lokamanya, "Freedom is India's birthright, and she will have it cost what it may." Glory lies in the attempt to reach one's goal and not in reaching it. I passionately believe in the possibility of attainment through the perfection of the non-violent technique whose hidden resources no one has fathomed. We have only found a foothold. Perseverance opens up treasures which bring perennial joy. If the toil is great, so is the fruit thereof.

ON THE WAY TO DELHI, March 26, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

527. VACATION WORK

A Poona correspondent writes:

> Students are now going on long leave for their summer vacation. Most of them will leave the cities and go to their native places. Looking to the urgent exigencies in the country due to the war situation, and its consequent responsibilities on the people of India, will it not be useful if a message is sent to the student world reminding them of their responsibility and duty at this critical juncture? May I therefore request you to kindly issue an appeal at the earliest to the students calling them for some action during the vacation and after? My humble suggestions are as follows:
>
> 1. Reading out the news to the villagers about the war and the Indian political situation and special articles from *Harijan*.
> 2. Explaining to them the present emergency and possible events.
> 3. Organizing *Nagarik samrakshan dals*[1].
> 4. Propagating and organizing the idea of self-sufficiency in villages, so far as food and clothing is concerned.
> 5. A persistent campaign against untouchability. It is possible that the students, some of whom are under the fanatic influence of communal organizations, might harm rather than help the cause in view. But we have to take the chances with the students as they are, and hence I have deliberately dropped, out of the above list, items of communal unity and Congress ideology and mentioned only such items as would give least scope for either communal or ideological differences.

I have no difficulty in endorsing the suggestions made by the correspondent.

Self-sufficiency is a big word. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has adopted that and self-reliance as slogans in his U.P. speeches. They

[1] Civil defence corps

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should prove catching at this juncture. Villages will be swept away, if they are not self-sufficient as to their primary wants and self-reliant as to their protection against internal disruption by dissensions and disease and external danger from thieves and dacoits. Self-sufficiency, therefore, means all the cotton processes and growing of seasonal food crops and fodder for cattle. Unless this is done there will be starvation. And self-reliance means corporate organization ensuring adjustment of internal differences through arbitration by the wise men of villages and cleanliness by corporate attention to sanitation and common diseases. No mere individual effort is going to suffice. And above all villagers must be taught to feel their own strength by combined effort to make their villages proof against thieves and dacoits. This is best done by corporate non-violence. But if the way to non-violence does not seem clear to workers, they will not hesitate to organize corporate defence through violence. I am not having in mind Congressmen who have adopted non-violence as their final creed and so have no choice in the matter.

Thus the students, if they will, can have a strenuous vacation. Who knows that the vacation may not prove even indefinite? But if it is not, two months are good enough time for laying down a good foundation for self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

My correspondent is timid. There is no cause to fear communal strife. Students who take up village reorganization cannot afford to be communal. Communalism is an urban product fated to flourish only on urban soil. In rural areas the people are too poor and too interdependent to find time for communal quarrels. Be that as it may, student workers are assumed, for this note, to be free from the virus.

ON THE WAY TO DELHI, March 26, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

528. FROM UNOFFICIAL NOTES

I extract the following useful information from the unofficial notes[1] published from time to time by the Principal Information Officer of the Government of India, which sometimes make interesting and instructive reading.

ON THE WAY TO DELHI, March 26, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

[1] Not reproduced here. They deal with reports of researches in indigenous medicinal plants, fish-liver oils, manuring of paddy and registration of cattle.

529. *QUESTION BOX*

Weakening Non-violence?

Q. In the instructions issued by the Working Committee of the Congress in the matter of organizing Congress volunteers it has been clearly stated that the organization should be based on "strictly non-violent basis". In the pledge forms prepared in this behalf by some Congress committees, however, it is stated that volunteers when on duty only should observe non-violence.

The Karnataka P. C. C. has prepared the volunteers' pledge in this form. The Chief Organizer of volunteers in the Province appointed by the K.P.C.C. declared in a public meeting held for the purpose of enrolling volunteers that a Congress volunteer even on duty might exercise the right of private defence by resorting to violence in an emergency, and further that such an action on his part did not contravene the instructions of the Working Committee. All this is creating confusion. If the instructions of the Working Committee are not to be strictly carried out, it would be better that the condition of non-violence were dropped altogether rather than were allowed to be diluted to suit individual ideas. What is your opinion in the matter?

A. My answers must not be taken as authentic in questions the answers to which require the *imprimatur* of the Congress as this one does. My personal opinion is decisive. Violence in self-defence has no place in any corps organized by or in the name of the Congress. There can be no laxity in the enforcement of this rule without risking a breakdown of the whole non-violent structure in the Congress. Use of violence in private self-defence is said to be permitted by the Congress because the Congress does not and cannot regulate the personal and private life of individual Congressmen. The individual in his private life is unfettered by the rules of the Congress. He is dominated by his own ethical code, if any.

Full Faith in Non-violence

Q. There are some Congressmen, though their number is very small, who have full faith in non-violence and who desire to organize on that basis. Should not Congress committees organize such men? Or should not Congress committees allow such men to form their corps under the auspices of the Congress?

A. Congress committees cannot organize sections. The Congress can have only one policy. Today it is pure non-violence so far as internal affairs are concerned. Therefore I see no reason

for separate peace committees. Purists, if they are humble and not self-opinionated, will act as a leaven in bodies which may contain men and women even of doubtful faith, as there must be in democratic organizations.

Bewildering Conflict

Q. There is a bewildering conflict of opinion among Congress leaders. Sardar speaks with one voice, Rajaji with another, Maulana with a third and Jawaharlalji with a fourth—not to speak of the lesser lights. Whom is one to follow, who is to be regarded as the sole authority to interpret the Congress policy and resolutions?

A. Legally and constitutionally the President is the sole authority. If there is a conflict of opinion between the majority of the Working Committee and the President, as was once the case in the early stages, the majority view would supersede the President's. But on critical occasions legal opinion is not of much value. People have their favourite heroes, and they will follow the heroes even blindly. My advice, therefore, is that in the ticklish question of ahimsa each one should be his own authority not on the law but on interpretation. If all the four distinguished leaders whom you have mentioned were to sit together, they would probably give the same interpretation, but in the course of their speeches each would put his special emphasis on one aspect or another of the same matter.

On the Way to Delhi, March 26, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

530. DEPLORABLE

A student writes from Poona:[1]

> I am a student of the Law College in Poona. After reading your article "*Sacho Yuddhaprayatna*"[2] I thought of a total abjuration of sweets. And I have vowed not to partake of such rich food so long as the war lasts.
>
> I am a boarder in the college hostel where, on every Sunday, they serve two or more kinds of sweets. These are more wasted than consumed. . . . After the feast some students stealthily throw at one another things like pies. They are proud of indulging in this kind of fun. . . . While on your way to Benares you spoke of students boycotting you. Bapu, this is not the whole truth.

[1] Only extracts from the letter are translated here.
[2] *Vide* "Real War Effort", pp. 233-6.

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The talk of my being boycotted was only a joke. I am experiencing every day the sorrows of being called a great man. If there is any joy in it I am yet to experience it. I do have sweet memories of the days before I became a Mahatma. I can however fill several pages with the unpleasant memories of the days after I became a Mahatma. One such experience that I have to undergo every day is that I cannot utter a single word without being reported in the papers. It is no doubt painful to have the words reported, although correctly; but one can bear it. But it becomes insufferable when all sorts of meanings are attributed to them. I am now hardened and don't care if I am hurt. This is only my nature, not that they no more hurt me.

This talk of my being boycotted is such an instance of twisting words. Had they interpreted the boycott as a joke they could have derived a different kind of pleasure and an altogether different meaning from it. But let it be. How have I wronged the students that they would boycott me? There is bound to be ebb as well as flow. Indeed, I cannot always say or write sweet things. I have to administer bitter rebukes too and then some students are annoyed for a little while. But their annoyance is momentary. I consider myself a student and hence my contact with students is sure to endure.

The correspondent deserves to be congratulated on his sacrifice I hope it will be sustained.

He gives a painful picture of student-life. In my view, student-life should be one of restraint. Students should [learn to] enjoy the special pleasure that is to be found in restraint. 'They may have innocent pleasure from wherever they like.' It is a grave error to delight in tossing about things like food or in filthy jokes or in committing secret acts of sin.

Many boarding-houses have the practice of serving sweets every week. If the students and their guardians realized that education in our country is had at the cost of the poor millions, no thoughtful student would live a life of luxury. And at this time when there is an ever-growing scarcity of all food-stuffs, anyone consuming a grain more than necessary should be regarded as more than committing a crime. What then need I say about the students?

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, March 26, 1942

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 5-4-1942

531. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

March 26, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

You are a child in several things. You were cut up because I would not take you to Delhi even as I was because I was not to be sent to Kanpur by my father!!! How stupid! I am quite positive that it would have looked and been bad to have taken you with me. And in Sevagram your presence is most essential. There are the patients, there is Chandrasinha and several others. There is Hayatulla. If you do not realize these things now, when will you? You must be *wise*. Cheer up and do your work there.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

The enclosed[1] is for A[mtul] S[alaam].

From the original: C.W. 4118. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7427

532. LETTER TO PADAMPAT SINGHANIA

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,
March 26, 1942

BHAI PADAMPATJI,

I had received your letter quite promptly but I am able to answer it only today.[2] There is one question you must still answer: Do you approve in your heart of the course I have adopted? The course is this: to give a wider shape to the resolution passed at Indore and to teach Urdu along with Hindi and arrange for examinations in Urdu. I shall be able to decide on hearing from you.

Blessings from
BAPU

SETH PADAMPAT SINGHANIA
KANPUR

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

[1] This is not available.
[2] *Vide* letter to the addressee, pp. 403-4.

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533. LETTER TO GULABCHAND AGRAWAL

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,
March 26, 1942

BHAI GULABCHANDJI,

I have only now been able to reach your letter of January 12. What can I do? Please forgive me.

Nothing will be gained by discussing in the Press the question you have raised. What has first to be asked is: Is the disease in a very advanced stage? I doubt it. When you have time and can see me we shall talk about it and perhaps even find some solution.

Blessings from
BAPU

SETH GULABCHAND AGRAWAL
DALMIA COMPANY
15 F, ELPHINSTONE CIRCLE
BOMBAY

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

534. TELEGRAM TO HIRALAL SHASTRI

NEW DELHI,
March 27, 1942

HIRALAL SHASTRI
JAIPUR

HERE TILL SUNDAY.

GANDHI

From the original: Hiralal Shastri Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

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535. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[After *March 27, 1942*][1]

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Khurshedbehn is very unhappy. She feels that your heart has dried up towards her. Send for her, give her some affection. You know she adores you.[2]

Today I woke up at two. I was thinking of you and Rajaji only. I am clearly of the view that we cannot accept this 'offer'[3]. If you also agree, then talk to Rajaji and reach a final decision. If you are inclined to agree with Rajaji then the matter deserves further consideration.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

536. INTERVIEW TO EVE CURIE[4]

[Before *March 29, 1942*][5]

Miss Curie's question was direct—on the present situation. She admired the sincerity with which Sir Stafford Cripps was trying to bring about a settlement, and she wanted to know Gandhiji's reaction to his efforts.

Sir Stafford is a very good man, but he has entered bad machinery — British Imperialism. He hopes to improve that machinery, but in the end it will be the machinery that will get the better of him.

[1] This was written on the back of a bill bearing this date. This is also confirmed by the reference to the "offer" brought by Sir Stafford Cripps. Gandhiji met him on March 27. *Vide* also Appendix VII.

[2] Gandhiji started writing this letter during massage. It appears from a dash in the source that the following paragraph was written some time later.

[3] The British War Cabinet's proposals. *Vide* Appendix VI.

[4] Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's report entitled "With Foreign Correspondents". Eve Curie represented *New York Herald, Tribune* and allied newspapers in London.

[5] The interview took place before the Congress Working Committee session began on March 29.

"Axis Powers' triumph would bring India to a fate comparable to that inflicted on Poland and France. That is why the average citizen of conquered countries puts his belief and hope in Allied victory," she said.

India can win her laurels only through non-violence. What we have achieved during the last twenty years shows what immense results could be obtained if the principle of non-violence was generally practised by our people.

But Indians will have a tougher time opposing by non-violence German and Japanese divisions than undermining British rule.

Quite possible. But this is the hour to live up to our faith. If the Japanese invaded India, I would not encourage our people to fight with arms. Neither would I suffer them to make a pact with aggressors. Our struggle will be hard, but it will bring out the best in us.

So you accept the idea of India refusing to fight or even to be defended by others.

It is physically impossible to transform India suddenly into an armed nation. To give our people weapons and to teach them non-violence are two different methods of making them strong. Both take time. I simply believe that my method is surer, more precise, and in the long run more successful. In order to beat the Japanese and German armies by force, you must become stronger than they are, and therefore worse and more ruthless. Then what have you won? Nothing. On the contrary, nations fighting with non-violence are unconquerable, for their strength does not depend on the number of rifles and machine-guns they possess. And when the method is good, there is no need to worry about immediate results. Success is bound to come in the end. In a non-violent struggle there are two alternatives: either the enemy comes to terms with you, then you win without blood; or the enemy annihilates you. This last solution is not worse than what a violent war in any case brings about. I don't blame you for wanting to liberate France just as I want to see India free; but it is a sign of too great impatience to think that any country can really be liberated by use of arms.

Harijan, 19-4-1942

537. CAVEESHAR[1]

Lala Dunichand of Ambala writes:[2]

> I have been asked by the dear and near ones of S. Sardul Singh Caveeshar, who is being detained without trial, to write this letter to you.
>
> Since his arrest about a fortnight ago, he is being detained inside the Lahore Fort, and he is not being allowed to have any kind of contact with his relations and friends. . . . I am reliably informed that S. Caveeshar is being kept by himself in a cell, and this amounts to solitary confinement. He is not being allowed even those few facilities such as newspapers, correspondence, etc., which other detenus enjoy. The fact that he had been suffering from fever for a long time at the time of his arrest adds poignancy to his case. Other detenus of similar position such as Babu Sarat Chandra Bose and others are being treated properly.

One can understand detention, in these times, of persons who are suspected of complicity with the Japanese. Therefore, in spite of my having received angry letters, I have observed silence about Sarat Babu's detention[3] though I have felt keenly about it. There was no question of his ill-treatment. Sardar Sardul Singh's is a different case, if what Lala Dunichand says is true. There can be no cause for the ill-treatment of any prisoner, no matter what his offence is. Caveeshar is detained on mere suspicion. The public know nothing about the evidence against him. In war times it is difficult to demand an open trial or even disclosure of evidence in certain cases. All the greater, therefore, is the reason for the special treatment of such prisoners. I hope that Caveeshar's case will receive the attention of the authorities concerned and all cause for complaint will be removed.

NEW DELHI, March 29, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

[1] This appeared under "Notes".

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

[3] Sarat Chandra Bose was arrested in December 1941.

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538. TELEGRAM TO PRABHAVATIDEVI BOSE[1]

NEW DELHI,
March 29, 1942

THE WHOLE NATION MOURNS WITH YOU THE DEATH OF YOUR AND HER BRAVE SON. I SHARE YOUR SORROW TO THE FULL. MAY GOD GIVE YOU COURAGE TO BEAR THE UNEXPECTED LOSS.[2]

GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 30-3-1942

539. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
March 29, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

I had your letter. No time till now to write to you. I am sorry J[awahar] L[al] won't let me leave till Tuesday. I wonder what you have done about coming here. I adhere to my opinion though you did not like it.

I know this, if I have to be out of Sevagram I cannot keep my health.

I am writing this in the midst of a meeting.

M[ahadev] is here looking well.

Love.

BAPU

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA, C.P.

From the original: C.W. 4119. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7428

[1] Mother of Subhas Chandra Bose

[2] For the contradiction of this, *vide* telegram to the addressee, p. 445.

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540. LETTER TO DR. B. S. MOONJE

March 29, 1942

DEAR DR. MOONJE,

I had your two letters. Want of time is my excuse for the lateness of reply.

I am out of all this thing. The Working Committee has the matter in hand.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

B. S. Moonje Papers, File No. 40/1945-48. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

541. SCORCHED EARTH[1]

From the well-reasoned Press statement of Shri Gaganvihari L. Mehta, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, I give below the following important extracts[2]:

> It should be pointed out that economic relationships are so close, complex and delicate that it would be impossible to demolish important industries or plants without grave repercussions on the economic fabric and life of the country. For example, if industrial plants like those of jute, cotton or sugar are destroyed, they will take years to be rebuilt even after the war and, meanwhile, not merely the owners of the factories but also the cultivators of these commodities, the industrial workers as well as those engaged in ancillary and subsidiary industries, trades and occupations would all suffer. Such demolition of industries built up after years of struggle at large expense and often against heavy odds will cause economic dislocation and disorganization altogether disproportionate to any benefits secured as a measure of war. . . .

Scorched earth policy is a self-defeating measure.[3] Time will show how true this remark is.

NEW DELHI, March 30, 1942

Harijan, 5-4-1942

[1] This appeared under "Notes".
[2] From which only an excerpt is reproduced here
[3] *Vide* "Scorched Earth", pp. 409-10.

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542. TELEGRAM TO PRABHAVATIDEVI BOSE[1]

NEW DELHI,
March 30, 1942

THANK GOD WHAT PURPORTED AUTHENTIC HAS PROVED WRONG. WE CONGRATULATE YOU AND NATION.

The Bombay Chronicle, 31-3-1942

543. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
March 30, 1942

RAJKUMARI
SEVAGRAM
WARDHA

SORRY. DETAINED TOMORROW. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4120. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7429

544. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

March 30, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

I have not a minute to spare. I shall try to start tomorrow. I hope Ba, Narendra Dev, Sharda and Abha are well. Tell Krishnaverma to take proper care of Janakibehn. What happened to the friend from Morvi who was on a fast ?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4261. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7893

[1] This was sent by Gandhiji and Abul Kalam Azad.

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545. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

DELHI,
March 30, 1942

DEAR SISTER,

I got your letter. The statement is good. Very good work has been done in Multan. It is surely a very good thing to meet our Muslim brethren in this manner.

Chandwani had come to Wardha and had a long talk. Rajkumari must have written all about it, or even Chandwani might have. I do not have the time to write a long letter.

I hope I shall be able to leave for Sevagram tomorrow.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8002. Also C.W. 3100. Courtesy: Rameshwari Nehru

546. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

DELHI,
March 31, 194[2][1]

DEAR SISTER,

Read your letter of March 21, 1942. The resolutions you have sent are no doubt good. They should be placed before the Board. Let us see what happens. Both the things are important.

Blessings from
BAPU

RAMESHWARI NEHRU
2 WARIS ROAD
LAHORE
PUNJAB

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7993. Also C.W. 3091. Courtesy: Rameshwari Nehru

[1] The source has "1941"; the postmark, however, bears the date 1-4-1942.

ADDENDA

1. LETTER TO M. R. MASANI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA (C.P.),
October 24, 1941

DEAR MASANI[1],

I was glad to have your letter and to find that it had pleased you.[2]

I hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 10983. Courtesy: M. R. Masani. Also *Bliss Was It in That Dawn*, p. 174

2. LETTER TO DR. A. G. TENDULKAR

BARDOLI,
December 28, 1941

MY DEAR TENDULKAR,

I was glad to hear from you. Nasik weather must suit you well.

I would like to see Indumati again and have her in the Ashram as long as she wishes to be there.

Love.

BAPU
(M. K. GANDHI)

From a photostat: C.W. 10953. Courtesy: Indumati Tendulkar

[1] (b. 1905); Joint Secretary, All-India Congress Socialist Party (1934-39); Member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1945-47; Constituent Assembly, 1947-48; Ambassador of India in Brazil, 1948-49; Member, Lok Sabha, 1949-52, 1957-62 and 1963-70; Chairman, U.N. Sub-Commission on Discrimination and Minorities, 1950-52; President, Swatantra Party, 1970-71

[2] Referring to Gandhiji's statement to the Press dated October 21, the addressee, in his letter dated October 22, had written: "As one who was once a colleague and is still a friend of Jayaprakash, may I say how much I appreciate what you have said as reported in the morning papers? If the proverbial 'cat may look at a queen', I hope someone who has fallen out of the active ranks may still be permitted to pay homage to the General!"

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3. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SWARAJYA ASHRAM, BARDOLI,
December 29, 1941

MY DEAR C.R.,

I have studied the resolution[1] sent by you. Maulana Saheb came in and just introduced it to me. I am sorry I do not like it. It evades the main issue and does not give the true lead to the nation. I am quite clear that the difference between the Committee and me should be brought out and dealt with. If we do not want to help this Government on other grounds than those of non-violence, they ought to be clearly stated. If we can under certain circumstances they should be defined. The scope of Congress non-violence should also be defined.

You can share this with J[awaharlal] and come to me at 1.30 if you think it necessary. The silence finishes at 1.25.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10903. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

4. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA (C.P.),
January 12, 1942

MY DEAR C.R.,

I like your letter to the president of your Committee immensely. Of course your resignation adds to your dignity.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
48 BAZLULLAH ROAD
THYAGARAYA NAGAR
MADRAS

From a photostat: C.W. 10906. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

[1] For the final resolution, *vide* Appendix II.

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5. LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA[1]

February 23, 1942

MY DEAR RAM MANOHAR,

I have received your letter.[2] How far can the term "open" be applied? How can one believe that a town occupied by the enemies is an open town? According to Japan, Hindusthan is an enemy country. If Japan declares Tokyo an open city will it be spared by the English? In modern times it is very difficult to believe the enemies. If you[3] differ, please come and convince me. What shall I understand if you do not come?

Quit India Movement, p. 372

[1] The Hindi original, of which this is a translation, is not available.

[2] The addressee had sought Gandhiji's support for launching an agitation to have the big towns like Calcutta, Bombay, etc., declared "open cities".

[3] The source here has "I".

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION[1]

December 30, 1941

The Working Committee have received the following letter from Gandhiji and recognize the validity of the point he has raised and therefore relieve him of the responsibility laid upon him by the Bombay Resolution referred to by Gandhiji. But the Committee assure him that the policy of non-violence adopted under his guidance for the attainment of swaraj and which has proved so successful in leading to mass awakening and otherwise will be adhered to by the Congress. The Working Committee further assure him that it would like to extend its scope as far as possible even in free India. The Committee hope that Congressmen will render him full assistance in the prosecution of his mission, including the offering of civil disobedience.

A.I.C.C. File No. 1375. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

APPENDIX II

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION[2]

December 30, 1941

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and the nation at this critical stage, when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India bringing new problems in its train, is a heavy one which the Committee can only shoulder worthily with the full co-operation of the people of India. The Committee have endeavoured to keep in view the principles and objectives for which the Congress has stood during these past many years and considered them in the larger context of world conditions and world freedom. The Committee are convinced that full freedom for the people of India is essential even, and

[1] *Vide* pp. 190 and 201.
[2] *Vide* pp. 192, 197, 221 and 448.

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more especially, in the present state of world turmoil, not only for India's sake but for the sake of the world. The Committee also hold that real peace and freedom can only be established and endured on the basis of world co-operation between free nations.

The Committee gave full expression to their attitude towards the war in their statement issued on September 14, 1939,[1] wherein they condemned Nazi and Fascist aggression and expressed their willingness to help the cause of freedom and democracy, provided the objectives of the war were clearly stated and acted upon, in so far as was possible, in the present. If freedom and democracy were those objectives, then they must necessarily include the ending of imperialism and the recognition of the independence of India. Subsequent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government and their reactionary and oppressive policy made it clear that this Government was determined to maintain and intensify its imperialist hold and exploitation of the Indian people. British policy was one of deliberate insult to Indian nationalism of a perpetuation of unrestrained authoritarianism and the encouragement of disruptive and reactionary elements. Not only has every offer made by the Congress for an honourable compromise been rejected, but public opinion voiced by organizations regarded as moderate has also been flouted.

The Congress was, therefore, compelled, in order to defend the honour and the elementary rights of the Indian people and the integrity of the nationalist movement, to request Gandhiji to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. Mahatma Gandhi desirous of avoiding embarrassment to his opponent as far as possible, especially during the perils and dangers of war, limited the satyagraha movement which he started to selected individuals who conformed to certain tests he had laid down. That satyagraha has now proceeded for over fourteen months and about twenty-five thousand Congressmen have suffered imprisonment, while many thousands of others who offered satyagraha in the Frontier Province and elsewhere were not arrested. The Committee desire to express their respectful appreciation of Gandhiji's leadership and of the response of the nation to it, and are of opinion that this has strengthened the people.

Throughout this period the attitude of the British Government has been hostile to Indian freedom and it has functioned in India as a completely authoritarian government, insulting the deeply cherished convictions and feelings of the people. Neither the professions of freedom and democracy nor the perils and catastrophes that have come in the wake of war have affected this attitude and policy, and such changes as have taken place have been for the worse.

The recent release of a number of political prisoners has no significance or importance, and the circumstances attending it, and official pronouncements made, make it clear that it is not connected with any change of policy. Large numbers of detenus, who are kept in prison under the Defence of India Act

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXX, Appendix X.

without trial, and whose only offence seems to be that they are ardent patriots impatient of foreign rule and determined to achieve the independence of the country, still remain in prison. Recent arrests of prominent persons and their treatment in prison also indicate that the old policy is being pursued as before.

While there has been no change in Britain's policy towards India, the Working Committee must nevertheless take into full consideration the new world situation that has arisen by the development of the war into a world conflict and its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the people who are the subject of aggression and who are fighting for their freedom. But only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war. The whole background in India is one of hostility and of distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promises can alter this background, nor can a subject India offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from Fascist authoritarianism.

The Committee is, therefore, of opinion that the resolution[1] of the A. I. C. C. passed in Bombay on September 16, 1940, holds today and defines Congress policy still.

A. I. C. C. File No. 1375. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

APPENDIX III

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE'S INSTRUCTIONS[2]

This meeting of the A. I. C. C. endorses the following instructions issued by the Working Committee and calls upon all Provincial and other subordinate Congress Committees to give effect to them within their respective areas. The Provincial Congress Committees are authorized to supplement them wherever necessary. The Committee expects every member of an elective Congress Committee to devote himself actively to the execution of some item of this programme, and to send periodical reports of the work done by him to his Committee:

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain cool and collected and on no account to give way to nervousness and excitements. Congressmen must remain at their posts and continue their

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXIII, pp. 1-3.
[2] *Vide* pp. 226 and 340.

service of the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its organization is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Congress Committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organization and reviving and maintaining contacts with the people in the villages and towns. Every village should, as far as possible, receive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress, and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture. It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the co-operative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contacts with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee therefore call upon Congress Committees and workers to further this programme intensively, and thus exercise a steadying and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organized in both the urban and rural areas. Such organizations should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence, and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle. These volunteers may co-operate with other organizations working for other ends, this volunteer organization is meant for rendering service to the people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should therefore avoid conflict with the authorities.

Prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessaries of life as well as of many other things which are of everyday use. Big-scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war, and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has largely overcome these difficulties by a widespread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems, and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself, and more particularly, suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of

dislocation of trade and transport. It is therefore necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked up with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessaries of life. The Committee would specially recommend to the villagers the growing of food crops at least to cover the needs of the village and appeal to the grain dealers not to hold up stores for profit but to release them for consumption at fair prices.

In cases of emergency, when instructions are issued to the public by the authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order, Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities. They should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

Harijan, 25-1-1942

APPENDIX IV

MAHADEV DESAI'S LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI[1]

SEVAGRAM,
February 14, 1942

MY DEAR RAJAJI,

You are right. Bapu is in greatest need of consolation. He is bearing himself up bravely, trying to console all—Janakibehn and the children—and incessantly think of plans to carry on with redoubled zeal his great work, but as he was speaking to these members of the family yesterday he broke down. I think his grief is as deep and profound as it was on Maganlal Gandhi's death. Everything here—even Sevagram with Bapu—seems empty without him.

The whole thing happened so suddenly. He was here two days before his death to see Ghanshyamdasji. He did not look well and even complained of a giddy feeling in the head. On the 11th evening he spoke to me at length on the phone about Chiang Kai-shek's expected arrival, discussed the arrangements of his reception and cracked a few jokes with me. "If Bapu will not release me from work of this kind, why should he have entrusted me with the work of *goseva*?" he asked. "But you must have guests like Chiang Kai-shek nevertheless! For some days you can leave Gopuri and come to stay in Janakipuri," I said. "You don't know", he rejoined. "Janakidevi is already in Gopuri which therefore is Janakipuri. And as for guests I have the greatest man of the world as my guest and I can't have a greater guest." The next morning, i.e., the day of his death—a talk on the phone in the same merry strain. Om and her husband had arrived from Bombay that morning and they were entertained to a meal by Kamalnayan's wife at the old paternal home.

[1] *Vide* p. 306.

Jamnalalji would not consent to go—as he was observing *Ekadashi*—but Janakidevi insisted and he went. He had the *Ekadashi* food, there is a fear that he ate slightly more as he was pressed by all, played cards with the daughter and son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and felt like going to sleep. He had a vomit and within a few minutes had a splitting headache which made him almost scream. Doctors were call[ed] in. The b[lood] p[ressure] was 250/125. They thought of blood-letting. Bapu was immediately informed and a car was sent to Sevagram to take him. But he reached when all was over. The whole thing happened in about ten or fifteen minutes.

And now he has gone leaving us all desolate. It is difficult to recover from the shock.

You are having a stre[nuous] time. I hope you are not overdoing it. Are you keeping well? Don't address more than two meetings a day.

I had a talk with Dr. Radhakrishnan, but about it in my next.

Yours affectionately,
MAHADEV

[PS.]

Bapu wants you, if it is at all possible, to attend a private meeting he is calling of Jamnalalji's fri[end]s, on the 20th. Your presence will be a solace and a sure consolation to him.

MAHADEV

From a photostat: C.W. 10907. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

APPENDIX V

LETTER FROM LORD LINLITHGOW[1]

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
February 20, 1942

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I have now been able to ascertain the position about the Income-tax demanded from the All-India Spinners' Association.

2. You may rest assured that the action taken to assess the profits of the Association to tax was not dictated by any ulterior motive on the part of my Government or of the higher Income-tax authorities, but was a simple performance of his duties by an officer who is bound under the law to take action to assess the profits of any business within his jurisdiction. The Bombay High Court which decided the case was, I am informed, prepared to admit the charitable nature of the objects of the Association, but could not hold the

[1] *Vide* p. 362.

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Association exempt from the liability to pay Income-tax because the property of the Association is not held *under trust or other legal obligation* for charitable purposes.

3. As the law stands my Government are themselves powerless to grant an exemption from the provisions of the law and cannot refrain from giving effect to the Court's decision unless it is reversed, but as an earnest of their goodwill instructions have been issued to stay the collection of the tax pending the result of the Privy Council appeal which has been lodged.

4. In this state of affairs I think you will agree that the Association would be well advised so to arrange its affairs legally as to come within the exemption conferred by law on property held under trust for charitable purposes. But the exemption that would follow from such a course would be prospective only, and I regret that it is beyond the power either of my Government or myself to make such exemption retrospective if the present decision of the Court stands.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

[PS.]

The closing paragraphs of your letter are kindly, and I understand, even when I cannot agree.

I will give your message to Southby and my daughter, and I know they will value it. We hear often from her. "Richard" is the most wonderful baby in the world, and the very flower of the flock! So life will triumph in the end despite all our blunders!!

The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, pp. 212-3

APPENDIX VI

BRITISH WAR CABINET'S PROPOSALS[1]

The conclusions of the British War Cabinet as set out below are those which Sir Stafford Cripps has taken with him for discussion with the Indian Leaders and the question as to whether they will be implemented will depend upon the outcome of these discussions which are now taking place.

His Majesty's Government having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of promises made in regard to the future of India have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union, which shall constitute a Dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs.

[1] *Vide* pp. 428 and 440.

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His Majesty's Government, therefore, make the following Declaration :–

(a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities steps shall be taken to set up in India in the manner described hereafter an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.

(b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for the participation of the Indian States in the Constitution-making body.

(c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to:

(i) The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution, giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

(ii) The signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the Constitution-making body. This treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from the British to Indian hands, it will make provision, in accordance with the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government for the protection of racial and religious minorities; but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in the future its relationship to other Member States of the British Commonwealth.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The Constitution-making body shall be composed as follows unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities:

Immediately upon the result being known of the provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of Provincial Legislatures shall as a single electoral college proceed to the election of the Constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the electoral college.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole, and with the same powers as British Indian members.

(e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility

of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, pp. 565-6; *The Indian Annual Register, 1942*, pp. 220-1

APPENDIX VII

INTERVIEW WITH SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS[1]

March 27, 1942

I gave Mr. Gandhi the document to read after a few short introductory remarks, and he impressed upon me that he had not, of course, anything to do with Congress officially and that any views he expressed would not necessarily be those of the Congress. In the first instance he expressed the very definite view that Congress would not accept the document, basing this upon two main points—firstly, the paragraph dealing with the Indian States, secondly, that dealing with accession or non-accession of Provinces. Curiously enough, he also, in rather a vague way, questioned the point as regards the retention of Defence in the British hands.

So far as the Indian States point was concerned, he stated that Congress took the view that they could not tolerate the continuance of those autocratic States under the aegis of the British Government with the right to call upon the British armed forces to enforce the arbitrary power of their rulers. He elaborated a number of instances of the arbitrary action of the rulers against the States' peoples and suggested that the document envisaged the continuance in perpetuity of such a regime in the case of those States that did not actually come into the new Indian Union. I pointed out that this was not so, but that the first basis for any reform in State administration was the setting up of an independent British India which by its influence and its economic power would inevitably set up a movement of democratization in the States, immediately in so far as they came into the new Indian Union and more gradually so far as those that stayed out were concerned; that beyond this the question was an administrative one and that I was certain once the new basis was laid down for British India that it would be the object of the British administration to encourage the States in the direction of a greater amount of democratic government in order that they might

[1] As reported by Sir Stafford Cripps. *Vide* pp. 428 and 440.

more easily associate themselves with British India. I asked him what his solution was, whether he suggested that we should immediately force all the States into the Indian Union; and he replied that he was against any such idea, he would like to see them all converted immediately into independent States having no reliance upon the paramountcy of the British Government as he felt certain that this would accelerate a movement for power by the States' peoples. He did not wish to see the States' rulers disappear immediately but he wished them to convert their States, in the case of the larger ones into constitutional democracies, while the smaller States would have to be absorbed into the larger ones or into the Indian Union. After a very lengthy argument on this subject, he seemed inclined rather to moderate his view as to the difficulties raised by the document in this relation, though he did not withdraw it.

As regards the second point, he started by asserting that the document was an invitation to the Moslems to create a Pakistan. He acknowledged the great influence of Jinnah and that the movement for Pakistan had grown tremendously in volume during the last two years, though he was inclined to agree, when I expressed a doubt as to whether, when it came to the question of practical application, there would be as much support for the Pakistan idea as there was at the present time. I went through the document with him, pointing out that it was primarily based upon the conception of a united India and that it was only in the case of Congress being unable to come to an agreement with the Moslems in the Constitution-making body that any question of non-accession would arise. I told him that I had always understood the attitude of Congress was that, once the British Government were out of the way, as they would be in the Constitution-making body, it would be possible for the Congress and Moslems to come to an agreement. I also stressed my belief that agreement was more likely if we did not force the Moslems in but gave them the option of not coming in if they so desired when negotiations had been tried over the Constitution-making period. Again, after very lengthy discussion, he seemed to be rather less certain of the antagonism of Congress on this point.

I then asked him frankly as a friend and not as a member of the Congress Working Committee or as the direct adviser of Congress to tell me what he thought was the best method of proceeding. He said he thought it would have been better if I had not come to India with a cut and dried scheme to impose upon the Indians, but when I reminded him that the first time I had met him he had told me that once it was made absolutely clear that India would achieve self-government on some ascertained date, what happened in the intervening period was of comparatively small importance, he seemed inclined to accept the view that this document was merely a finalizing of the date and of the method which might be adopted pending the agreement of the parties upon any other or better one. He accepted, I think, this

approach to the document and then said that he thought it was extremely inadvisable to have the document published in any way whatsoever unless first agreement had been obtained from both the major communities. I told him that the intention was that it should be published on Monday and he asked me many times to see that it was not so published. He asked me what Jinnah's views were as to publication. I told him that he had suggested that, in view of the danger of leakage, it would be wise to publish it before too long; and he interpreted this as being an indication that Jinnah would accept the scheme. I rather formed the view myself that the desire he expressed that it should not be published was because he was afraid of the pressure of public opinion upon Congress to accept the scheme against, perhaps, their wishes, and as to some extent depriving them of an opportunity of bargaining for a better position.

I then asked him how, supposing Jinnah were to accept the scheme and Congress were not to, he would himself advise me to proceed. He said that in these circumstances the proper course would be for me to throw the responsibility upon Jinnah and tell him that he must now try to get Congress in either by negotiating direct with them or by meeting them in association with myself. He thought that if it was pointed out to Jinnah what a very great position this would give him in India if he succeeded, that he might take on the job and that he might succeed. Similarly, if Congress accepted and Jinnah refused, he thought the onus should be thrown upon Congress to get in Jinnah. I told him quite definitely that I should have to make up my mind as regards acceptance or not within the next few days and that, if this scheme was not accepted, there would be no question of any other scheme, anyway before the end of the war, and that those people who had taken the Congress point of view in the past, like myself, would not be in a position to exercise further influence in England as regards the solution of the Indian problem, as it would generally be thought that this offer was one which Congress should have accepted and that it was no good making any further offer until the Moslems and Hindus agreed. He expressed, I think quite sincerely, his hopes that I should succeed in spite of what he had said, but more I think, as a personal matter than as an indication that he wanted the scheme to go through.

He stated that he would be remaining in Delhi until Sunday night[1] as the Working Committee was meeting tomorrow, and that he would be most willing to come and see me again at any time I liked if I thought it would be of any assistance. I thanked him and indicated that I would either come and see him or ask him to come and see me some time on Sunday.

The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, pp. 498-500

[1] March 29, 1942

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CHRONOLOGY

(*October 11, 1941—March 31, 1942*)

October 11: Gandhiji was at Sevagram. Met Hancock and S. Satyamurti.

October 12: Received yarn and money collected by Nagpur, Berar and Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committees and addressed them.

October 15: Met Asaf Ali and Rajendra Prasad.

October 21: Gave statement to Press on Government communique regarding Jayaprakash Narayan's alleged attempt to smuggle some papers from Deoli Camp.

October 22: After prayer spoke on ideal village community.

October 23: Met Khan Bahadur Alla Bux.

October 28: In statement to Press reviewed satyagraha movement and issued instructions for guidance of satyagrahis.

October 30: Issued statement to Press on hunger-strike by detenus in Deoli Camp and Government communique thereon.

November 11: Issued statement on Indo-Ceylonese Pact.

November 12: Sent telegram to Jayaprakash Narayan advising discontinuance of hunger-strike.
In statement to Press discountenanced move to press Government to release satyagrahi prisoners.

November 14: Through Press urged Government to grant demands of Deoli detenus.

November 15: Granted permission to S. Satyamurti to publish whole correspondence.

November 19: Telegraphed to Home Member seeking permission for Mahadev Desai to meet Deoli detenus.

Before *November 20:* Sent message to Frontier people.

November 27: In statement to Press expressed relief at discontinuance of hunger-strike by Deoli detenus and appealed to Government to give better treatment to detenus and political prisoners.

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Sent message to Majoor Mahajan, Ahmedabad, on its 25th anniversary.

November 28: Gave interview to *The Daily Herald* on L. S. Amery's speech.

December 4: Gave interview to Press on Government communique regarding release of political prisoners.

December 7: Through Press announced that civil disobedience would continue until Bombay Resolution was reversed by Congress.

December 9: Gave statement to Press on Khudai Khidmatgars' camp held in N.W.F.P.
Left Sevagram.

December 10: Reached Bardoli.

On or before *December 13:* Completed *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place.*

December 17: Addressed A.I.S.A. meeting.

December 18 and *19:* Attended A.I.S.A. meeting.

Through Press appealed to people not to be scared in face of approaching war but act bravely.

December 20: Sent message to Bhagini Samaj, Bombay, on its Silver Jubilee. Gave statement to Press on America's entry in war.

December 23 to *26:* Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

December 27: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting. Through Press appealed to Bihar Government to lift ban on Hindu Mahasabha.

December 28: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

Before *December 29:* Sent message to All-India Women's Conference.

December 29: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

December 30: Wrote to Congress President to relieve him of responsibility laid upon him by Bombay Resolution. C.W.C. passed a resolution relieving Gandhiji. C.W.C. passed another resolution reiterating its demand and restated the Congress position and attitude in regard to war.
Gandhiji gave statement to *The Hindu* on Congress resolution.

1942

January 4: Addressed Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee meeting.

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January 7: Through Press stated his intention to restart three weeklies and suggested constructive programme as "best preparation to face danger".

January 8: Opened Gujarat Khadi Vidyalaya.
Had discussion with Harijan workers.
Sir Akbar Hydari died.

On or before *January 9:* Gandhiji addressed khadi workers.
Left Bardoli.

January 10: Reached Sevagram.

January 14: In *Harijan* paid tribute to Sir Akbar Hydari.

January 15: At A.I.C.C. meeting spoke on Bardoli Resolution.

January 16: Attended C.W.C. and A.I.C.C. meetings.
A.I.C.C. session concluded.

January 17: Gandhiji attended C.W.C. meeting.
Addressed members of Provincial Congress Committees and C.W.C.

January 18: *Harijan*, *Harijanbandhu* and *Harijan Sevak* resumed publication.

January 19: Gandhiji left for Benares.

January 20: Reached Benares.

January 21: Spoke at Silver Jubilee Convocation of Benares Hindu University.

January 22: Addressed Congress workers of U.P.

January 24: *En route* to Wardha halted at Nagpur. Spoke at Chokhamela Boarding House. Visited *Hitavada* office and Servants of India Society.
Reached Sevagram.

January 29: Addressed students of Khadi Vidyalaya.

February 1: Inaugurated All-India Goseva Sangh Conference.

February 3: Spoke at All-India Goseva Sangh Conference.

Before *February 8:* Had discussion with Dr. John.

February 8: Wrote to Lord Linlithgow requesting that A.I.S.A. may be exempted from liability to pay income-tax.

February 9: Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek arrived in New Delhi.

February 11: Jamnalal Bajaj died.
Gandhiji attended funeral.

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After prayer paid tribute to Jamnalal Bajaj.

February 12: Had talk with members of Bajaj family.

February 14: Sent letters inviting Jamnalal Bajaj's friends to a meeting on February 20.

February 17: Left for Calcutta.
At Gondia, gave statement to Press on Hare Krushna Mahtab's arrest.

February 18: Reached Calcutta.
Met Chiang Kai-shek and wife.
Left for Wardha.

February 19: *En route* at Nagpur gave interview to Press.

February 20: At Wardha addressed Jamnalal Bajaj's friends.

February 21: Spoke to Jamnalal Bajaj's friends.

February 26: Wrote message for *Marathi Harijan.*

Before *March 1:* After prayer addressed members of Mahila Ashram.

March 1: *Marathi Harijan* started.

March 11: Gandhiji addressed students of Khadi Vidyalaya on the occasion of Jamnalal Bajaj's *masika shraddha.*

March 16 and *17:* Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

March 18: Wrote foreword to *The Medium of Instruction.*

March 23: Stafford Cripps arrived in India.

March 25: In reply to Stafford Cripps's invitation for meeting in New Delhi, Gandhiji telegraphed his consent.

March 26: Left for Delhi.

March 27: Arrived in Delhi. Met Stafford Cripps.

Before *March 29:* Gave interview to Eve Curie.

March 29: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Telegraphed condolence to Prabhavati Devi Bose on reported death of Subhas Chandra Bose.

March 30: Sent telegram to Prabhavati Devi Bose expressing relief at contradiction of the news.
British War Cabinet's proposals released to Press.
Congress Working Committee meeting continued.

March 31: Congress Working Committee meeting continued.

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129	*Footnote	brother	sister
131	*Footnote 1, line 5	cause	course
200	*Last line	pret	fret

* Due correction made.

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