

## 1. ADIVASIS

*Adivasis* have become the fourteenth item in the constructive programme.<sup>1</sup> 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:<sup>2</sup>

Balasaheb has made a modest beginning. He has started with a hostel for *Adivasi* boys. His work is all unassuming and solid. If 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

<sup>1</sup> Vide “*Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*” 13-12-1941. In the revised edition it became the sixteenth item.

<sup>2</sup> The pamphlet, not reproduced here, described the miserable plight of the *Adivasis* and their exploitation by zamindars and forest contractors.

## 2. 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-cooperation 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

### 3. *PASSING OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE A.I.V.I.A*<sup>1</sup>

One would have thought that I had enough on my hands without taking the additional burden of the presidency of the A. I. V. I. A. I have been its guide ever since its inception<sup>2</sup>, 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

### 4. *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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> In 1934

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, 24-1-1942

Though the foregoing<sup>1</sup> 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

## 5. 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

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

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

## 6. 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

## 7. 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

## 8. '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 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

### 9. SETH JAMNALAL BAJAJ <sup>1</sup>

In Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, death has taken a mighty man.<sup>2</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> Jamnalal Bajaj had died of cerebral haemorrhage in the afternoon. For an account by Mahadev Desai, *vide* Appendix "Mahadev Desai's Letter to C. Rajagopalachari", 14-2-1942.

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

### 10. 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 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.<sup>1</sup>

*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

<sup>1</sup> However, Gandhiji met the addressee on February 18, 1942.



## 11. 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<sup>1</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1029. Courtesy: Manjula M. Mehta

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

<sup>1</sup> Vinoba Bhave's metrical Marathi rendering of the Gita. Chapters IX and XII deal with devotion.

recite an *abhanga*.<sup>1</sup> 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. 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

<sup>1</sup> Devotional verse

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.<sup>1</sup> 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 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 the *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

<sup>1</sup> The following three sentences are from the Hindi.

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.”<sup>1</sup> 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*.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is in English.

<sup>2</sup> The following paragraph is from the Hindi.

### 13. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
February 11, 19[42]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Why should I not write to you too in the national language after my Kashi speech<sup>2</sup>? 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<sup>3</sup>. Pass them on if you approve of them. I shall send a telegram<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> 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<sup>6</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> The source has "1941", which is a slip, as is evident from the reference to Jamnalal Bajaj's death.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Benares Hindu University", 21-1-1942.

<sup>3</sup> One of which is not available; for the other, *vide* "Letter to Chiang Kai-shek", 11-2-1942

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Chiang Kai-Shek", 13-2-1942.

<sup>5</sup> Of the Garhwal Regiment who in 1930 had refused to fire upon the Khudai Khidmatgars and had undergone a long sentence

<sup>6</sup> Mridula Sarabhai

## 14. 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<sup>1</sup>Gandhiji said:

You have heard all that I have just spoken to Kamalnayan and

<sup>1</sup> Kamala Nevatia, Madalasa and Umadevi Agrawal

Ramakrishna and the others. Remember you too have to 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 conditions 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*

### 15. TELEGRAM TO CHIANG KAI-SHEK

WARDHAGANJ,  
*February 13,<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>This was sent on February 12, 1942, to Jawaharlal Nehru who passed it on to the addressee the next day.

16. 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.

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

17. 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<sup>1</sup> affairs. He is growing on me. I can't think of anything outside him. The meeting of friends comes of on 19th.<sup>2</sup> The invitation goes as from me.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> Jamnalal Bajaj

<sup>2</sup> The meeting, however, took place on the 20th and 21st; *vide* "Talk with Friend", 20-2-1942 and "Talk with Friends—II", 21-2-1942.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "A Letter", 14-2-1942.



## 18. 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.

You may come whenever you wish.<sup>1</sup>

Come when you wish.

Love.

BAPU

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

## 19. A LETTER<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> What follows is in English.

<sup>2</sup> This was addressed to about 190 friends of Jamnalal Bajaj. Copies in Urdu script were also sent.

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 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

## 20. LETTER TO SHAMLAL

February 14, 1942

BHAI SHAMLAL,

Consider this letter to be for you, for Bapa<sup>1</sup> and for Viyogiji<sup>2</sup>. 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

## 21. 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 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

## 22. LIMBDI EXODUS ANNIVERSARY<sup>3</sup>

The Limbdi exodus has entered upon its fourth year.<sup>4</sup> The *hijratis*<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Amritlal V. Thakkar

<sup>2</sup> Viyogi Hari

<sup>3</sup> This appeared under "Notes". The Gujarati original appeared in Harijanbandhu, 22-2-1942.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Lawless Limbdi", 20-2-1939 and "Limbdi", 31-8-1939.

<sup>5</sup> Evacuees

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

### 23. 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 from it.<sup>2</sup> 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

### 24. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

*February 15, 1942*

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter, together 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter", 14-2-1942.

<sup>2</sup> 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", 17-2-1942.

to the country. If you fail to treat with 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

## 25. 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

## 26. OASIS IN A DESERT<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

. . . 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 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

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

<sup>2</sup> Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

## 27. 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.

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 Ghanshyamdass'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 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

## 28. *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 Jannalal 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 Jannalalji surrendered himself and his without reservation. There is hardly any activity of mine in which I did not receive his full-hearted cooperation 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<sup>1</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> In April 1928; *vide* "My Best Comrade Gone", 26-4-1928.

## 29. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

## 30. 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.<sup>2</sup>

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4416

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is in Gujarati.

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to the question: "What is the reason for people's apathy to social service activities?"

### 31. 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

### 32. 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 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 copy-book 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. 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

### 33. EYES TO THE BLIND<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes" The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 22-2-1942.

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.

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

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

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.<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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".

<sup>2</sup> *Harijan* here has "workers".

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

### 35. LETTER TO MUNSHI AHMED<sup>1</sup>

*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.<sup>2</sup>

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

### 36. LETTER TO MILDRED

*February 17, 1942*

MY DEAR MILDRED<sup>3</sup>,

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

<sup>1</sup> Of Meerut

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Hindi + Urdu = Hindustani", 2-2-1942.

<sup>3</sup> A Canadian lady who had met Gandhiji in Kingsley Hall, London

### 37. LETTER TO ALFRED BARKER

*February 17, 1942*

DEAR PROF. BARKER<sup>1</sup>,

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

### 38. LETTER TO SAM HIGGINBOTTOM

*February 17, 1942*

I thank you for your letter of sympathy. I know that the Sangh<sup>2</sup> 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

### 39. 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

<sup>1</sup> Of the University of Melbourne. He had once come to the Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> Goseva Sangh



40. *LETTER TO DR. BARETO*

ON THE TRAIN,  
*February 17, 1942*

MY DEAR BARETO,

As you left the amount of the bill<sup>1</sup> 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

41. *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

42. *LETTER TO BHAGWANDAS*

*February 17, 1942*

SWAMI BHAGWANDASJI,

Bhai Malkani writes that you are regularly helping him in his

<sup>1</sup> For the dental treatment of Amtussalaam

work of service. My thanks to you for the same.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 945

### 43. 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 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<sup>1</sup>. 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

### 44. 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*<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> To appear for her examination

<sup>2</sup> Breathing exercise

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

#### 45. *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

#### 46. *LETTER TO MAYADEVI BHANDARI*<sup>1</sup>

*February 17, 1942*

My blessings to Chi. Mohini<sup>2</sup> and her groom<sup>3</sup>. May they both live long.

[From Hindi]

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

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Colonel Bhandari

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

<sup>3</sup> Captain Bhagat

## 47. 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<sup>1</sup> to attend to your requirements.

*Yours,*

BAPU

(M. K. GANDHI)

SHRIR. ACHUTHAN

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RAJAHMUNDRY, ANDHRA

From a photostat: G.N. 10852

## 48. DISCUSSION WITH CHIANG KAI-SHEK AND WIFE<sup>2</sup>

CALCUTTA,

*February 18, 1942*<sup>3</sup>

“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 . . . .

<sup>1</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> From Amrita Bazar Patrika

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 :

That means that you are a faithless wife.

“Surely,” retorted the Madame, “he did not marry an interpreter, he married a woman.”<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.”

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.<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji said :

You shall have it. I shall send it on to you from the station.<sup>2</sup>

*Harijan*, 1-3-1942

#### 49. A LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCE

A Bengali correspondent writes :<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> By mistake the dhanush takli offered to the Madame had been taken to the station along with Gandhiji’s luggage.

<sup>2</sup> Approached by correspondents regarding the nature of the talks, Gandhiji said: “Take it from Jawaharlal, I won’t give you anything.”

<sup>3</sup> Only excerpts from the letter are reproduced here.

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. 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

### 50. CRIMINAL ASSAULTS<sup>1</sup>

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 rhymsters. They were seers.<sup>2</sup> What they depicted is happening before our very eyes today. Ravana's are warring with each other. They are showing matchless strength. They throw their deadly weapons from the air.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Soldiers drunk with the pride of physical strength 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.<sup>5</sup> 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?

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 1-3-1942, under the date-line "Sevagram, 23-2-1942".

<sup>2</sup> 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."

<sup>3</sup> 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."

<sup>4</sup> The Gujarati here adds: "Thus we see that the brute in man has cast off his sense of shame."

<sup>5</sup> The Gujarati here adds: "It has almost assumed the garb of civilization."



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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 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

<sup>1</sup> 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."

<sup>2</sup> 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."

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.<sup>1</sup> 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 us stoop to anything. Therefore only he who loses his life shall save it; तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः। 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

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati here adds: "Knowledge of a single case is enough to frighten a woman who is already a victim of fear."

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.<sup>1</sup>

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, February 19, 1942

*Harijan*, 1-3-1942

<sup>1</sup> 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."

## 51. QUESTION BOX<sup>1</sup>

### 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<sup>2</sup> invites you to contribute your full quota to the fourteen fold 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 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.

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi original of this appeared in Harijan Sevak, 15-3-1942.

<sup>2</sup> For the instructions recommended by the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli and passed by the A.I.C.C. at Wardha, vide Appendix "Congress Working Committee's Instructions", 25-1-1942.

## TEST OF HONESTY

Q.What you have said about Congressmen in the Muslim majority provinces is true enough.<sup>1</sup> 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

## 52. 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<sup>2</sup> 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 :

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Communal Unity”, 20-1-1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Of The Bombay Chronicle*

Four hours were not enough for our conversation. We discussed many things and also politics but in the broader sense of the term. We wanted to discuss many other things but time did not permit. . . .<sup>1</sup>

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

### 53. TALK WITH FRIENDS—I<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> What follows is from *The Hindu*.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

present task. If I were so inclined I could have called 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 bloodpressure. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 2½ 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

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is from *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.

trustees of your earnings.<sup>1</sup>

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. 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<sup>2</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Talk with Bajaj Family", 12-2-1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "A Letter", 14-2-1942.



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 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 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."<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, IV. 34

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<sup>1</sup>. 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 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 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

<sup>1</sup> On February 18

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. Jammnalalji 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 Jammnalalji 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 Jammnalalji 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. Jammnalalji was dedicated to Hindu-Muslim unity. He was wholly free from communal hatred. You should imbibe this quality from Jammnalalji's life.<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is from *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.

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 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 is done for appearances it will hurt me and it will hurt the spirit of Jamnalalji.<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> At this point a number of proposals were put forward which Gandhiji did not like.

The other pledge was to be taken in the form prepared by the Goseva Sangh.<sup>1</sup> At one time this was regarded as a difficult task but Gandhiji explained that by his example Jammalaji 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

#### 54. LETTER TO KULSUM SAYANI

*February 21, 1942*

DEAR KULSUM<sup>2</sup>,

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

#### 55. 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*

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at All-India Goseva Sangh Conference", 1-2-1942.

<sup>2</sup> The superscription is in English.

## 56. 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

## 57. 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 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

## 58. 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.<sup>1</sup>

You ought to have begged for me. 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. Yudhishtira 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 any army's. We shall all have to cultivate such discipline.

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

<sup>1</sup> Someone from the audience then said that the books were not available.



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*<sup>1</sup>. We shall first have to traverse through *rajoguna*<sup>2</sup> and then we shall arrive at *sattva*<sup>3</sup>.’ 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 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 !<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

[From Hindi]

*Harijan Sevak*, 15-3-1942

<sup>1</sup> Quality of blindness and lethargy

<sup>2</sup> Quality of restlessness and selfishness

<sup>3</sup> Quality of purity and selflessness

<sup>4</sup> What follows is from *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

## 59. KHADI STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>

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 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

## 60. "HARIJAN" IN MARATHI<sup>2</sup>

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,

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes". The Hindi original appeared in *Khadi Jagat*, February 1942.

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

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

### 61. LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA<sup>1</sup>

*February 23, 1942*

MY DEAR RAM MANOHAR,

I have received your letter.<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup> differ, please come and convince me. What shall I understand if you do not come?

*Quit India Movement*, p. 372

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi original, of which this is a translation, is not available.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had sought Gandhiji's support for launching an agitation to have the big towns like Calcutta, Bombay, etc., declared “open cities”

<sup>3</sup> The source here has “I”.

## 62. 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.*

## 63. 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

## 64. 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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

The burden of translating from English into Gujarati will now fall chiefly on Chandrashankar<sup>3</sup>. Let him take care of his health.

There will of course be no increase in Kashinath's<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> "A Peep into British History" by Mahadev Desai which appeared in *Harijan*, 8-3-1942.

<sup>2</sup> What follows is from G.N. 9953.

<sup>3</sup> Chandrashankar Pranshankar Shukla

<sup>4</sup> Kashinath Trivedi

65. *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<sup>1</sup>? Pattabhi writes that he can publish the paper from Masulipatnam. His letter is enclosed. Dr. Menon is here. Balwantrao 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

66. *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

<sup>1</sup> *States' People*

## 67. QUESTION BOX<sup>1</sup>

### RICHES V. POVERTY

Q. How is it possible to earn lakhs in a righteous way?<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 1-3-1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "A Deplorable Incident", 25-1-1942; also "Talk with Bajaj Family", 12-2-1942.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Not Necessarily Impure", 8-2-1942.

and who believe in and desire economic equality may not be jealous of the rich but should<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

#### 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<sup>3</sup> 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 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.

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi here adds: "be content if the latter put their wealth to noble use, and".

<sup>2</sup> The Hindi here adds: "We should therefore show through our own lives that poverty adopted as a matter of dharma is the true wealth."

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Individual or Collective?", 8-2-1942.



## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

### 68. 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."

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.

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi begins with the following: "The question sounds rather puzzling. But in fact it is not as puzzling as it appears to be."

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<sup>1</sup> 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*

## 69. 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<sup>2</sup> 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*.

Bapu was pained learn that Omkarnathji could not meet his mother. . . .<sup>3</sup>

*Yours,*

AMRIT KAUR

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

<sup>1</sup> Indulal Yajnik

<sup>2</sup> Kailash Nath Katju

<sup>3</sup> The rest of the letter, not being connected with Gandhiji's message, is not reproduced here.

## 70. 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

## 71. 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

## 72. LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

February 26, 1942

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

Very many thanks for your kind letter<sup>1</sup> and all the trouble you took over the matter about the A. I. S. A. referred to you by me.<sup>2</sup> 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*

## 73. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

February 26, 1942

DEAR MOTI BABU,

I have a complaint from Barisal that the P. Sangh<sup>3</sup> is to open an uncertified khadi shop and that propaganda is being carried on 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Letter from Lord Linlithgow", 20-2-1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow," 8-2-1942.

<sup>3</sup> The Pravartak Sangh of Calcutta

74. *LETTER TO KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAYA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C.P.,

*February 26, 1942*

DEAR KAMALADEVI,

I received your letter of 12th only today. You had no business to have the accident. I hope, however, you are out of the wood now.

Of course, you will come when you like.

Yes, Jamnalalji's death<sup>1</sup> is a personal loss to many of us.

Love.

*Yours,*

BAPU

From the original: Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

75. *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 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

<sup>1</sup> Jamnalal Bajaj had died of cerebral haemorrhage on February 11, 1942.

## 76. 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.

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

## 77. 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

## 78. 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.

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*<sup>1</sup>, 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

<sup>1</sup> Meaning "Advice to a Mother"

79. 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*

80. 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?<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

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

<sup>1</sup> The paragraphs which follow have been separated in the source by two dashes.



## 81. 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.

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

## 82. PLEA FOR MORE FRUITS

Dr. Menkel, who is also a dietetist, comments<sup>1</sup> as follows in *The Oriental Watchman* on my note on 'Real War Effort'<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> This is not reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Real War Effort", 19-2-1942.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

### 83. 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

### 84. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

*[February 28, 1942]*<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> The source has "used".

<sup>2</sup> The letter is written below the one to Narandas Gandhi of this date.

## 85. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

February 28, 1942

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter. Did I seem to have written to you to criticize you?<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup>.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2149

## 86. 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.<sup>3</sup> Kishorelalabhai 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<sup>4</sup> 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 to point out to you your dharma. I

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee dated February 15, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> This appears to be a slip for "Brijkrishna".

<sup>3</sup> Nanabhai I. Mashruwala, Sushila Gandhi's father, had passed away.

<sup>4</sup> Widow of Nanabhai I. Mashruwala

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 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

### 87. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,

*February 28, 1942*

CHI. KANTI,

We got a letter about Saraswati's<sup>1</sup> 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

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

## 88. TALK TO MEMBERS OF MAHILA ASHRAM<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,

[Before March 1, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

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 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.

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Amrit Kaur's article "Jamnalalji and Women", dated March

<sup>1</sup> 1940. The members of the Mahila Ashram joined the evening prayers and presented their sacrificial yarn, spun in memory of Jamnalal Bajaj.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

Jamnalaji 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

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

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 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

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

*90. 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

*91. 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

## 92. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
March 1, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I replied to your letter regarding food the moment I got it.<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> 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*

## 93. 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.

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 25-2-1942.

<sup>2</sup> Maganlal Mehta



## 94. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

## 95. NOTES

### 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

<sup>1</sup> Indira Nehru was engaged to Feroz Gandhi on February 26.

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 :

विद्वद्भिः सेवितः सद्भिर्नित्यमद्वेषशक्तिभिः ।

हृदयेनाभ्यनुज्ञानो 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]<sup>1</sup> 1942

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## URDU MADE EASY

Charity begins at home. As I was speaking to Jamnalalji's friends<sup>1</sup> 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

## 96. 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.

### WOMEN

Q. While you have advised women in cities to go into the villages in order to escape from the danger of assaults,<sup>2</sup> 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-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Talk with Friends", 20-2-1942 and 21-2-1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Criminal Assaults", 19-2-1942.

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

### 97. 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 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

### 98. 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

99. *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

100. *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<sup>1</sup>

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9299. Also C.W. 10270

<sup>1</sup> The address is in English.

## 101. THE MARRIED ESTATE <sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> I have tried to rid her mind of this delusion.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>. 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, healthy and well-brought up children to the

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes". The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 8-3-1942.

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

<sup>3</sup> 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"

<sup>4</sup> The Hindi here adds: "thus giving rise to harmful results".

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

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

SEVAGRAM, March 4, 1942

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 8-3-1942

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. In it A. V. Thakkar had given an account of his Rajputana tour.



### 103. 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*<sup>1</sup>, 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. Jammalalji 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Indira Nehru's Engagement", 2-3-1942.

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

Bhagirathi has come. It is rather difficult to keep Chandra Singh. He is very much given to indulgence; and she is very weak.<sup>1</sup> 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

#### *104. LETTER TO DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA*

SEVAGRAM,  
*March 4, 1942*

BHAI GOPICHAND,

I have gone through all your articles. They are good. I shall not suggest any emendations. Do you wish to get them published? If so, you must give them a close scrutiny. Would they be in the three Punjabi scripts and not in Hindustani?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *A Bunch of Old Letters* however has: "He is very much given to indulgence and has little intelligence".

105. 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 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

## 106. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS<sup>1</sup>

[March 5, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

(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 its impact what is good is bound to hold one's interest.

(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 communities unite?

<sup>1</sup> Submitted in writing from time to time by Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

<sup>2</sup> The last answer was written on this date.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

(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

<sup>1</sup> Morarji R. Desai

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*<sup>1</sup>? According to this conception Truth takes the concrete form of certain reality whereas God is beyond conception.

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

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to question (18).



National leaders should never have a hand in such communal institutions as are anti-national.

(27) I have met Dr. Deshmukh at Bombay in connection with Amina's<sup>1</sup> 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*.<sup>2</sup>

(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<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Qualifications of a Peace Brigade", 18-6-1938.

<sup>3</sup> Daughter of Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

107. 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 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

## 108. LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM

SEVAGRAM,  
March 6, 1942

MY DEAR JAIRAMDAS,

Your long letter is not long enough for the news you have packed into it. It is all illuminating. I shall keep you to the 1st July.

Devibehn should religiously practise writing Hindi every day even if it is 10 minutes by the watch. She will find a vast improvement.

You know the Persian characters because Sindhi is written in it with slight changes. Why do you not write in Urdu then? In the Ashram here a splendid Urdu atmosphere has been created. Pyarelal has become the Maulvi. As you know he is original in many things he does and so he is in teaching Urdu. The way he imparts Urdu instruction has created special interest among the inmates and almost all, including little children, attend the class. Therefore, if you write in Urdu there will be no difficulty in deciphering your letters. I can but I take time. Pyarelal and Amtul Salaam are to the manner born.

Nevertheless I do not want to put an undue strain upon your loyalty. Therefore do not exert yourself to write in Urdu unless you feel the impulse from within.

What you say about the Hurs and Pagaro is most instructive as also very painful.<sup>1</sup> How are we to make a nation out of this material?

The problem becomes tremendous from the non-violent standpoint.

What you are doing in the way of constructive work is good. I am sure your search will result in giving you a village after your liking.

Chandwani<sup>2</sup> is expected here any day between 9th and 15th instant.

<sup>1</sup> For several months preceding, the Hurs, under the instigation of the Pir of Pagaro, had been on a rampage, killing, burning and plundering on wholesale scale. On April 1 Martial Law had to be proclaimed in the areas most affected; *vide* also "Lawlessness in Sindh", 19-5-1942.

<sup>2</sup> P. B. Chandwani

Maulana<sup>1</sup> wires to say he is calling a W. C. Meeting on the 17th.

Wardha heat has already commenced. It will be a sorrowful meeting of the W. C. without Jamnalalji.

Your notes about the questions addressed to you and your answers, I return. I think your answers are all correct. I cannot improve upon them.

If you can stand the strain of a journey I would certainly like you to attend the meeting of the A.I.V.I.A.

I hope Premi will pass her exam with distinction.

Mahadev is all right.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 11055. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

### 109. 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<sup>2</sup>, 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".<sup>3</sup> Does not dharma-consciousness make a man timid? My feelings would always be in favour of inviting you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Indian National Congress

<sup>2</sup> The reference is not ascertainable. *Vide*, however, "Letter to Jayaprakash Narayan", 17-2-1942.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Prabhavati", 25-2-1942.

[PS.]

Khursedbehn and Lohia<sup>1</sup> have arrived for talks. The Working Committee may perhaps meet here on the 17th.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3572

*110. 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

*111. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL*

*March 7, 1942*

CHI. AMALA,

To help you, I better write in English. Khursedbehn 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

<sup>1</sup> Ram Manohar Lohia

[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

### *112. LETTER TO M. K. SYED AHMED*

[*March 7, 1942*]<sup>1</sup>

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

### *113. 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?

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

There was a letter from Maulana saying that he would start in a day or two and come here. Aunt<sup>1</sup> 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

### 114. 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

### 115. TRIBUTE TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ<sup>2</sup>

*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

<sup>1</sup> Sarojini Naidu

<sup>2</sup> This was sent for the *Jamnalal Smriti Anka*.

Sasta Sahitya Mandal<sup>1</sup>. His life was a living literature.

[From Hindi]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 262

### 116. 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 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

<sup>1</sup> Publishers of Hindi books.



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.

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",<sup>1</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup>Vide "To Every Briton", 2-7-1940.

## 117. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

[Before *March 9, 1942*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. That Jamna got well was good news.

I believe that 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

## 118. 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<sup>2</sup> which declared the abolition of untouchability. The opening lines<sup>3</sup> demonstrate the spirit in which the problem is approached by the Maharaja. They are :

<sup>1</sup> According to the C.W. source the letter was received on March 9, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> In November 1936; *vide* "An Example for Hindu Princes and their Advisers", before 16-11-1936.

<sup>3</sup> Of which only excerpts are reproduced here

. . . 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 :<sup>1</sup>

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

#### STUD-BULLS

At the meeting of friends of the late Jamnalalji which recently met in Wardha<sup>3</sup>, 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

<sup>1</sup> Only an excerpt is reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> Committees

<sup>3</sup> On February 20 and 21

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

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

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 :<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 15-3-1942.

<sup>2</sup> Of which only excerpts are reproduced here

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

### *120. SCARCITY OF WATER*<sup>1</sup>

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 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

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

only if the Princes fully co-operate with one another as well as with their subjects.

SEVAGRAM, March 9, 1942

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 15-3-1942

### *121. 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

### *122. LETTER TO SHASHI R. MEHTA*

*March 9, 1942*

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

I tried but could not reply to your letter immediately. Come soon after you have passed the examination. Tell Prabhaskarbhai<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Ratilal P. Mehta

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's maternal grandfather

### 123. 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

### 124. DESIRABILITY OF EXODUS

A correspondent asks for my detailed views on the exodus that I have advised<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Plea for Calmness", 17-2-1942.



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 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 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

*125. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA*

*March 10, 1942*

CHI. 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, 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

*126. 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<sup>1</sup> will get many companions.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Chhaganlal Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad

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

## 127. 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 Rashtra-bhasha 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 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

## 128. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

[After *March 10, 1942*]<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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* "Letter to Kanti Gandhi", 28-2-1942 and 10-3-1942.

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

### *129. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI*

*March 11, 1942*

BHAISHRI JIVANJI,

You should keep here a stock of English copies of *Constructive Programme*<sup>1</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place", 13-12-1941.

### 130. 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

### 131. TALK TO STUDENTS OF KHADI VIDYALAYA<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

preordained path. But we puny creatures cannot follow even the little vows that we take.

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 school 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

### 132. 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 become 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

### 133. 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

*134. 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

*135. 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

*136. 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 vegetable 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

### *137. 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.

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* milk, which removed the phlegm, and she felt some relief.

I will write about the policy regarding. . .<sup>2</sup>.

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 Bhaji 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

### *138. '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.

<sup>1</sup> *Ceiotropis Gigantica*

<sup>2</sup> One word is illegible.

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 of 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 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

### 139. A HARIJAN COLONY IN BIHAR <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 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*, 22-2-1942

### 140. QUESTION BOX <sup>3</sup>

#### HOW TO WARD OFF STARVATION?

Q. Is it not far more important today to find some solution for the shortage and high price 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

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

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Untouchability and Indore", "Notes", 9-3-1942.

<sup>3</sup> The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 22-3-1942.

times of stress.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Real War Effort", 19-1-1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Desirability of Exodus", 10-3-1942.

### *141. DEFENDING THE INDEFENSIBLE<sup>1</sup>*

I have read Quaid-e-Azam's answer to my appeal<sup>2</sup>. 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

### *142. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK*

SEVAGRAM,

*March 17, 1942*

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. And the dhotis<sup>3</sup>, 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

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

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "An Appeal to Quaid-e-Azam", 2-3-1942.

<sup>3</sup> Woven from yarn spun by the addressee who had sent them through Shankarrao Deo and wanted him to see Gandhiji wearing them.

### 143. A CORRECTION<sup>1</sup>

In *Harijan* of February 22nd 1942<sup>2</sup>, 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

### 144. 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 their mother’s for their mental development.

*The Medium of Instruction*

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under “Notes”.

<sup>2</sup> In the article “Passing of the First Stage of the A.I.V.I.A.”

*145. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
*March 18, 1942*

CHI. MRIDU,

I have your letter. I have not received the scheme. There is no hurry at all. I understand about Mirabehn. I had a long letter from her. Look after your health.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11223. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

*146. 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

*147. 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 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 this him into putting the questions he has.

Sevagram, March 20, 1942

*Harijan*, 29-3-1942



*148. 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

*149. 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 admission 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

*150. 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

*151. 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

## 152. A LETTER

SEVAGRAM,  
March 22, 1942

DEAR FRIEND<sup>1</sup>,

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

## 153. 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<sup>2</sup> is improving very rapidly. He even went out for a walk today. His digestion is improving.

It is getting hotter.

Mahadev and Vanu<sup>3</sup> 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*

<sup>1</sup> An Englishman

<sup>2</sup> Acharya Narendra Dev

<sup>3</sup> Vanamala, daughter of Narahari D. Parikh

## 154. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

March 22, 1942

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. I wear Deo's gift<sup>1</sup> every day. The dhoti<sup>2</sup> is very light. It is beautiful.

Write to Sucheta<sup>3</sup> thus<sup>4</sup>: 'I have been asked to take up this work. Please let me know

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

## 155. COW'S MILK FOR LEPERS

Dr. Santra is an authority on leprosy. What he says should carry weight.<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had two shawl lengths woven out of yarn spun by Shankarrao Deo and had them presented to Gandhiji.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Prema Kantak", 17-3-1942.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> The rest of the paragraph is in Hindi.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Santra's views are not reproduced here.

## 156. INHUMAN IF TRUE

The Honorary Secretary of the Social Service Department of the Marwari Relief Society writes:<sup>1</sup>

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.

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

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 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, may-be even repeated failures.

What violent conduct should be surely needs no examination.

SEVAGRAM, March 23, 1942

*Harijan*, 29-3-1942

## 157. 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Indira Nehru's Engagement" sub-title of "Notes", 2-3-1942



## 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?

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

## 158. 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 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.

And let me not forget the 24 hours' fast on the 6th and the 13th April.<sup>1</sup> 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 Harijan. 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 institution 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 off hand ask A.I.S.A. workers to boycott the artisans that

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to the Press on Satyagraha Movement", 23-3-1919

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

*159. 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<sup>1</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9951. Also C.W. 6926. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

*160. LETTER TO VIJAY M. PANCHOLI*

*March 23, 1942*

CHI. VIJAY,

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

<sup>1</sup> 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."

## 161. 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 not form a part of swaraj?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4419

## 162. LETTER TO HAMID QURESHI

March 24, 1942

CHI. HAMID,

Today I have a letter from Father<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Ghulam Rasul Qureshi

### 163. LITERARY v. CRAFT WORK<sup>1</sup>

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 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Book-learning damages the eyes and cramps thought and originality.<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes". The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 5-4-1942.

<sup>2</sup> The Gujarati here has: "Reading and understanding books on different subjects is also included in literary training."

<sup>3</sup> 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'."

<sup>4</sup> The Gujarati here adds: "They are lured by books and then both suffer. Mere reading does not develop the intellect."

<sup>5</sup> 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."

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.<sup>1</sup> This obvious truth should be recognized at least in national schools.

SEVAGRAM, March 25, 1942

*Harijan*, 5-4-1942

164. TELEGRAM TO STAFFORD CRIPPS<sup>2</sup>

[March 25, 1942]<sup>3</sup>

THANKS FOR YOUR WIRE. I WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE.<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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."

<sup>2</sup> 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 "British War Cabinet's Proposals", after 20-2-1942 and "Interview with Sir Stafford Cripps", 27-3-1942.

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

<sup>4</sup> Which met at Wardha on March 17 and 18

*165. 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

*166. 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 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

*167. 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

*168. 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 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

SHRIJIVANJI  
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



*169. 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*<sup>1</sup>, 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

*170. 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

<sup>1</sup> Postures of yogic exercises

## 171. 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.<sup>1</sup> 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:<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Question Box", 2-3-1942.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 172. A YOUNG CANADIAN'S QUESTION

From my American post I pick up the following typical letter from Vancouver:<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> 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."

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

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 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

### 173. 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 villages 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*<sup>1</sup>.

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.

<sup>1</sup> Civil defence corps

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 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. Student who take the 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

## 174. FROM UNOFFICIAL NOTES

I extract the following useful information from the unofficial notes<sup>1</sup> 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

## 175. 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

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. They deal with reports of researches in indigenous medicinal plants, fish-liver oils, manuring of paddy and registration of cattle.

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

## 176. DEPLORABLE

A student writes from Poona :<sup>1</sup>

I am a student of the Law College in Poona. After reading your article "*Sacho Yuddhaprayaina*"<sup>2</sup> 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. Babu, this is not the whole truth.

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

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts from the letter are translated here.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Real War Effort", 19-1-1942.



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

### 177. 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 your? You must be *wise*. Cheer up and do your work there.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

The enclosed<sup>1</sup> is for A[mtul] S[alaam].

From the original: C.W. 4118. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7427

<sup>1</sup> This is not available.

*178. 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

*179. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Padampat Singhanian", 10-3-1942.

*180. TELEGRAM TO HIRALAL SHASTRI*

NEW DELHI,  
*March 27, 1942*

HIRALAL SHASTRI

JAIPUR

HERE TILL SUNDAY.

From the original: Hiralal Shastri Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*181. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

[After *March 27, 1942*]<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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'<sup>3</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 "Interview with Sir Stanfford Cripps", 27-3-1942.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji started writing this letter during massage. It appears from a dash in the source that the following paragraph was written some time later.

<sup>3</sup> The British War Cabinet's proposals. *Vide* Appendix "British War Cabinet's Proposals", before 27-3-1942.

## 182. INTERVIEW TO EVE CURIE <sup>1</sup>

[Before *March 29, 1942*]<sup>2</sup>

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.

“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,

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Mahadev Desai's report entitled “With Foreign Correspondents”. Eve Curie represented *New York Herald, Tribune* and allied news-papers in London.

<sup>2</sup> The interview took place before the Congress Working Committee session began on March 29.

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

### 183. CAVEESHAR <sup>1</sup>

Lala Dunichand of Ambala writes :<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> though I have felt keenly about it. There was no question of his ill-treatment. Sardar Sardul Singh's is a different case,

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

<sup>2</sup> Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

<sup>3</sup> Sarat Chandra Bose was arrested in December 1941.

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

*184. TELEGRAM TO PRABHAVATIDEVI BOSE*<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

GANDHI

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 30-3-1942

*185. 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.

<sup>1</sup> Mother of Subhas Chandra Bose

<sup>2</sup> For the contradiction of this, *vide* "Telegram to Prabhavatidevi Bose", 30-3-1942.

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

*186. 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

*187. SCORCHED EARTH*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> :

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.

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

<sup>2</sup> From which only an excerpt is reproduced here

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.<sup>1</sup> Time will show how true this remark is.

NEW DELHI, March 30, 1942

*Harijan*, 5-4-1942

*188. TELEGRAM TO PRABHAVATIDEVI BOSE*<sup>2</sup>

NEW DELHI,

*March 30, 1942*

THANK GOD WHAT PURPORTED AUTHENTIC HAS PROVED WRONG. WE CONGRATULATE YOU AND NATION.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 31-3-1942

*189. 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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Scorched Earth", 16-3-1942.

<sup>2</sup> This was sent by Gandhiji and Abul Kalam Azad.



*190. 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

*191. 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

192. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

DELHI,  
March 31, 194[2]<sup>1</sup>

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.

193. NOTE TO SAVITRI BAJAJ <sup>1</sup>

[*March-April 1942*]<sup>3</sup>

It does not seem to me advisable to give such drugs to children.

They recover naturally. But I do not want to interfere. The letter seems to show it is dysentery for which a little castor-oil is enough.

Call the doctor, I shall talk to him and then we shall see what to give. There is no need to worry. She will be all right.

From a copy of the Hindi: G. N. 3061; also *Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, pp. 297-8

<sup>1</sup> The source has "1941"; the postmark, however, bears the date 1-4-1942.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Kamalnayan Bajaj

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

*194. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR*

NEW DELHI,  
*April 1, 1942*

RAJKUMARI  
SEVAGRAM  
WARDHA

SORRY. DETAINED PROBABLY THREE MORE DAYS. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4121. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7430

*195. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

*April 1, 1942*

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

I have your letter. You must either get well there or come over.

Do not lose patience and courage. Make up your mind that the ear trouble has to be cured.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5789. Also C.W. 3012. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

*196. LETTER TO RAMNARAYAN CHOUDHARI*

DELHI,  
*April 1, 1942*

CHI. RAMNARAYAN,

I have brought with me your letter dated March 12, 1942. I have gone through the rules and the curriculum. The letter is good. So are the rules.

What you are doing to improve hygiene and to popularize Hindi

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Narahari Parikh. She later married Mahendra V. Desai.

is satisfactory. Spread as much fragrance as you can.

Mahadev is well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapu: Maine Kya Dekha Kya Samjha?*, p. 132

### 197. TALK WITH AN AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST<sup>1</sup>

[Before April 3, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

What I cannot understand is man hating brother man and thirsting for his blood. I can see no justification for the war that is going on and fast enveloping the earth. It is based on hate and vengeance and will leave a crop of hate and vengeance behind. The waste of human life and material that might be useful otherwise for the world is appalling and sickening. Why should your country and mine have to be involved in this war? You are a fine resourceful people. Rather than that you should build up your country and make it useful to the rest of the world. Why should you be asked to sacrifice your manhood? And what is more painful is that it is all to no purpose. I do not know why all this fighting is going on, for whose benefit, with what great end in view.

JOURNALIST: I doubt if anyone knows.

GANDHIJI: There is this thing. Perhaps God wills peace to come as a lesson of this carnage.

J. Could you possibly say something about what is going on at present.

G. For that, you must go to the men in office. I can say nothing.

J. But, Sir, you are with them.

G. And, yet, it will surprise you when I tell you that those things do not interest me. I relinquished my membership of the Congress

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Two Australian Visitors". The source does not mention the name of the journalist, who was a war correspondent. Gandhiji talked to him while out on a stroll.

<sup>2</sup> Mahadev Desai has referred to the visit of this journalist in an article "How to Be Worthy of Our Heritage", dated April 3 and published in *Harijan*, 12-4-1942 .

eight years ago.<sup>1</sup> I go to the Congress, attend meetings of the Working Committee, even advise in a detached way when my advice is sought.

You will be surprised to hear that I have never listened to a radio, nor have I ever been to a cinema.

J. Do you think these things are bad?

G. I will not say so. I may say that cinema films are often bad.

About the radio I do not know. I can certainly say this that I do not care to have news from all quarters of the globe within the space of half an hour. It leaves one little time to think. And why must one have news from all quarters of the globe every half an hour or so? I should be content to react to my nearest surroundings and happenings therein.

J. But the youth whispered some question about the Working Committee.

G. I do not mind telling you that there are differences between me and the Working Committee. The whole nation is not with me on the non-violence question. If the nation as a whole was absolutely peaceful, I am sure we should not be in the war, I am sure we should not have this foreign domination here. The alien rulers should not be dictating to us. We should have people here from foreign lands on terms of friendship, and we should gladly make use of their talents at our will. But I am not worrying over the nation not being with me.

When I have failed to convert my nearest associates, the members of the Working Committee, I have no business to be impatient with my people. It must be my fault. It means that there is not sufficient non-violence in me to enable me to carry everyone with me. But my faith in non-violence is undimmed and unshaken. In fact it is growing every day.

*Harijan*, 3-5-1942

<sup>1</sup>Vide "Statement to the Press", 17-9-1934, 15-10-1934, "Speech at Subjects Committee Meeting", A.I.C.C.", 23-10-1934 and 26-10-1934.

## 198. INTERVIEW TO BERTRAM STEVENS<sup>1</sup>

DELHI,

[On or before *April 4*, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

BERTRAM STEVENS: I have heard a lot about you from Mr. Birla. You have been to England, to Europe, and you stayed long in South Africa. But you have never been to Australia.

GANDHIJI: No, thanks to you.

B. S. You have made a very good reply, Mr. Gandhi.

G. Haven't I? You have vast living spaces, you can absorb millions and millions of human beings. But I know what you are doing. I have followed the history of your country for over 35 years. White Australia is your policy, and as a result you are without the wonderful accession of strength that would have been yours if you had followed a policy of brothering all.

B. S. I agree. But our country is only 150 years old. Prejudices die hard, but they are dying.

G. You might very well have absorbed our people. Wherever they have gone they have been able to show that they are business-like, able, and quite competent to take care of themselves. Your country with its infinite resources would have been a different country with these Indian settlers.

B. S. Yes, Australia is half as big again as India. But it is not quite so fertile as India. But I agree with what you say. There is nothing like developing vital contacts between the peoples of different countries. During my sojourn in India I have met many people. I have found them quite capable and industrious, and the more our business people could know and come together with your business people the better for both Australia and India. And, Sir, we must not forget that the old world is already passing, old ideas are fast changing, and we are getting ready for the coming of a new world.

G. I am sure.

*Harijan*, 3-5- 1942

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Two Australian Visitors". Bertram Stevens was a member of the Eastern Group Conference and sometime Prime Minister of the Province of New South Wales in Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji left Delhi on April 4.

## 199. *NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE*

Japan is knocking at our gates. What are we to do in a non-violent way? If we were a free country, things could be done non-violently to prevent the Japanese from entering the country. As it is, non-violent resistance could commence the moment they effected a landing. Thus non-violent resisters would refuse them any help, even water. For it is no part of their duty to help anyone to steal their country. But if a Japanese had missed his way and was dying of thirst and sought help as a human being, a non-violent resister, who may not regard anyone as his enemy, would give water to the thirsty one.

Suppose the Japanese compel resisters to give them water, the resisters must die in the act of resistance. It is conceivable that they will exterminate all resisters. The underlying belief in such non-violent resistance is that the aggressor will, in time, be mentally and even physically tired of killing non-violent resisters. He will begin to search what this new (for him) force is which refuses co-operation without seeking to hurt, and will probably desist from further slaughter. But the resisters may find that the Japanese are utterly heartless and that they do not care how many they kill. The non-violent resisters will have won the day in as much as they will have preferred extermination to submission.

But things will not happen quite so simply as I have put them.

There are at least four parties in the country. First the British and the army they have brought into being. The Japanese declare that they have no designs upon India. Their quarrel is only with the British. In this they are assisted by some Indians who are in Japan. It is difficult to guess how many, but there must be a fairly large number who believe in the declaration of the Japanese and think that they will deliver the country from the British yoke and retire. Even if the worst happens, their fatigue of the British yoke is so great that they would even welcome the Japanese yoke for a change. This is the second party. The third are the neutrals, who though not non-violent will help neither the British nor the Japanese.

The fourth and last are non-violent resisters. If they are only a few, their resistance will be ineffective except as an example for the future. Such resisters will calmly die wherever they are but will

not bend the knee before the aggressor. They will not be deceived by promises. They do not seek deliverance from the British yoke through the help of a third party. They believe implicitly in their own way of fighting and no other. Their fight is on behalf of the dumb millions who do not perhaps know that there is such a thing as deliverance. They have neither hatred for the British nor love for the Japanese. They wish well to both as to all others. They would like both to do what is right. They believe that non-violence alone will lead men to do right under all circumstances. Therefore, if for want of enough companions non-violent resisters cannot reach the goal, they will not give up their way but pursue it to death.

The task before the votaries of non-violence is very difficult.

But no difficulty can baffle men who have faith in their mission.

This is going to be a long drawn out agony. Let non-violent resisters not make impossible attempts. Their powers are limited. A resister in Kerala is not physically responsible for the defence of Assam which is just now in imminent danger. If Assam is non-violently inclined, it is well able to take care of itself. If it is not, no party of non-violent resisters from Kerala can help it or any other province. Kerala can help Assam, etc., by demonstrating its non-violence in Kerala itself. The Japanese army, if it gets a foothold in India, will not stop at Assam. In order to defeat the British, it has to overrun the whole country. The British will fight every inch of the ground. Loss of India will probably be admission of complete defeat for them. But whether it is so or not, it is quite clear that Japan will not rest till India is wholly in her hands. Hence non-violent resisters must remain at their posts wherever they are.

One thing has to be made clear. Where the British army is actually engaging the 'enemy', it would be perhaps improper for direct resistance to function. It will not be non-violent resistance when it is mixed with, or allies itself to, violence.

Let me therefore reiterate what I have said so often. The best preparation for, and even the expression of, non-violence lies in the determined pursuit of the constructive programme. Anyone who believes that without the backing of the constructive programme he will show non-violent strength when the testing time comes will fail



miserably. It will be, like the attempt of a starving unarmed man to match his physical strength against a fully fed and panoplied soldier, foredoomed to failure. He who has no belief in the constructive programme has, in my opinion, no concrete feeling for the starved millions. He who is devoid of that feeling cannot fight non-violently. In actual practice the expansion of my non-violence has kept exact pace with that of my identification with starved humanity. I am still far from the non-violence of my conception, for am I not still far away from the identification of my conception with dumb humanity?

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, April 5, 1942

*Harijan*, 12-4-1942

### 200. *CURIOUS NON-VIOLENCE*<sup>1</sup>

A friend sends the following extract from A. Vambery's<sup>2</sup> translation of *Travels and Adventures* by Sidi Ali Reis (16th Century):

Amongst the learned of this land of Banians (Gujarat), there is a tribe which they call the Bats (Bhats), whose business it is to escort merchants or travellers from one land into another, and, for a very small remuneration, they guarantee their perfect safety. Should the Rajputs, i.e., the mounted troops of the land, attack the caravan, the Bats (Bhats) point their daggers at their own breasts, and threaten to kill themselves, if they should presume to do the slightest harm to the travellers entrusted to their care. And out of respect for the Bats (Bhats), the Rajputs generally desist from their evil purpose, and the travellers proceed on their way unmolested. Occasionally, however, the Bats (Bhats) carry out their threat, otherwise it would have no force. But if such a thing does happen, if a caravan is attacked and the suicide of the Bats (Bhats) becomes necessary, this is considered a terrible calamity, and the superstition of the people demands that the offenders be put to death, and not only the offenders themselves but the chief of the Rajputs deems it necessary to kill their sons and daughters also, in fact to exterminate the whole of their race. The Mohammedans of Ahmedabad had given us two such Bats (Bhats) as an

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

<sup>2</sup> (1832-1913), Hungarian traveller and writer.

escort, and so, about the middle of *Safar* of the said year, we started on our overland journey to Turkey.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, April 5, 1942

*Harijan*, 12-4- 1942

### 201. CREED v. POLICY OF NON-VIOLENCE<sup>1</sup>

More than a month ago Dr. Katju sent to Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala what may be called a short thesis on non-violence. The latter was to decide what to make of it and, if he liked, show it to me. Shri Mashruwala gave it to me some time ago. But I could get time to read it only during the journey. I read it carefully. It was too long for publication in *Harijan*; and yet I felt that it should be placed before the readers of *Harijan* in some form. The following is the result. I have spent considerable time in reducing the original without leaving out the essential argument. I wholly agree with Dr. Katju that non-violence cannot make further headway without the Congress making it a creed. He suggests that there should be a plan to show how it can be worked under given circumstances. He suggested a book or a series for the guidance of the votaries. Much literature has sprung up on the subject. Richard Gregg has spent years of labour in research. He has written text-books for the guidance of the votaries of the West. His books are very readable. Let Dr. Katju set apart time for producing a book which would be a guide for us in India at this critical hour.

ON THE TRAIN TO WARDHA, April 5, 1942

*Harijan*, 26-4-1942

<sup>1</sup> Kailash Nath Katju's article under this heading is not reproduced here.

## 202. LETTER TO JAGANNATH

ON THE TRAIN,  
*April 5, 1942*

MY DEAR JAGANNATH,

I had your letter in mind all the time I was in Delhi. You want no separate answer now.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours,*  
BAPU

LALA JAGANNATH  
LAJPATRAI BHAVAN  
LAHORE, PUNJAB

From a photostat: C.W. 988. Courtesy: Lala Jagannath

## 203. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

ON THE TRAIN,  
*April 5, 1942*

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your letter last evening in Delhi. I read the whole of it in the train today. I was sorry to read about Jayaprakash. There was no cause for him to fall ill. It is very difficult to say anything without examining him. You ask how long he will have to live on fruit. That also is difficult to say. If improvement had continued, I could have guided him by letters. But you will understand from the copy of the letter<sup>2</sup> that I am sending you. About the women, do as you think proper. Do not take up more work than you can manage. What you are doing is more than enough. Consult Rajendra Babu. You did not write anything about Father. I think Rajkumari will be going in May

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had cautioned Gandhiji in regard to negotiations with Stafford Cripps.

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

Khurshedbehn<sup>1</sup> is with me. Mahadev has stayed back in Delhi. He will go to Bombay with Sardar on Monday or Tuesday. He will take some treatment there and then come to Sevagram.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3574

## 204 . QUESTION BOX

### THE THEORY OF TRUSTEESHIP<sup>2</sup>

Q. From your writings one gathers the notion that your 'trustee' is not anything more than a very benevolent philanthropist and donor, such as the first Parsi Baronet, the Tatas, the Wadias, the Birlas, Shri Bajaj and the like. Is that so?

Will you please explain whom you regard as the primary or rightful beneficiaries of the possessions of a rich man? Is there to be a limit to the amount or part of the income and capital which he can spend upon himself, his kith and kin and for non-public purposes? Can one who exceeds such limit be prevented from doing so? If he is incompetent or otherwise fails to discharge his obligations as a trustee, can he be removed and called upon to render accounts by a beneficiary or the State? Do the same principles apply to Princes and zamindars, or is their trusteeship of a different nature?

A. If the trusteeship idea catches, philanthropy, as we know it, will disappear. Of those you have named only Jamnalalji came near, but only near it. A trustee has no heir but the public. In a State built on the basis of non-violence, the commission of trustees will be regulated. Princes and zamindars will be on a par with the other men of wealth.

SEVAGRAM, April 6, 1942

*Harijan*, 12-4-1942

<sup>1</sup> Grand-daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also Appendix "Talk with Pyarelal", 13-12-1942.

## 205. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

*April 6, 1942*

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

Here is Saraswati's<sup>2</sup> letter. I returned last night at 11-30 p.m.

The train was late. And then today I got the accompanying note.

I told her that she could leave this place if she found it impossible to stay in. It seems she will not stay. In fact the heat has not even started yet. But where one is not at home even a cold place feels hot. Ba had again fallen ill. She is better now. She will go on like that.

Devdas<sup>3</sup> and Lakshmi<sup>4</sup> were all right.

There was nothing in Delhi. Consider all these days as wasted.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I saw Harilal. He had a fracture in the hand. I sent him to a hospital and got the fracture set. He started talking about coming back to me, but that was only a ruse for getting money out of me. He has no sense of truth and falsehood. He is always drunk. You need not worry.

From Gujarati: C.W. 7365. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

## 206. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

*April 6, 1942*

CHI. VANUDI,

I got your slip. After you get well you will be coming here for a few days to appear in the examination, won't you? If Mahadevbhai has arrived, tell him that I have not sent his two short articles. I will explain the reasons when he comes here, if he wants me to do so and if I still remember the matter. Today everybody is well. What it would

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji's grandson and Harilal Gandhi's son.

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

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji's youngest son.

<sup>4</sup> Devdas Gandhi's wife.

be like tomorrow, God alone knows. The weather is curious. It rains, too, occasionally.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5790. Also C.W. 3013. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

### 207. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

SEVAGRAM,

April 6, 1942

CHI. PREMI,

I received your letter in Delhi. Even though there are a few mistakes in your Hindi, I find it sweeter than your English. You will certainly pass because you have worked hard. Do not worry. My blessings to Devibehn also.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C. W. 11047. Courtesy: Arjun Jairamdas

### 208. QUESTION BOX

#### EXPEDIENCE

Q. Several years ago I once had the temerity to ask whether the fact that you had allowed non-violence to come into the Congress as an expedient rather than as a creed would not be conducive to its breakdown at the critical time: You said you did not think so. But do you still feel the same? Would you not today have had an organized band of believers in non-violence whom you could have sent in groups all over the country? It almost seems as if we had lost time and are found unprepared, as it were, to shoulder responsibility?

A. Yes, I adhere to my opinion that I did well to present to the Congress non-violence as an expedient. I could not have done otherwise if I was to introduce it into politics. In South Africa too I introduced it as an expedient. It was successful there because resisters were a small number in a compact area and therefore easily controlled. Here we had numberless persons scattered over a huge

country. The result was that they could not be easily controlled or trained. And yet it is a marvel the way they have responded. They might have responded much better and shown far better results. But I have no sense of disappointment in me over the results obtained. If I had started with men who accepted non-violence as a creed, I might have ended with myself. Imperfect as I am, I started with imperfect men and women and sailed on an uncharted ocean. Thank God that, though the boat has not reached its haven, it has proved fairly storm-proof.

#### THE ROMAN SCRIPT

Q. You are prejudiced against the Roman script because you are prejudiced against the English. Otherwise you would unhesitatingly advocate it in the place of Devanagari and Persian.

A. You are wrong. I am prejudiced against neither. But I am against anything or anybody usurping a place not belonging to it or him. The Roman script has come to stay in India. But it cannot take the place of the Indian scripts. If I had my way, there would be only the Devanagari script, for all the provincial languages, and Devanagari and Persian for the all-India speech. The Arabic script, from which the Persian is derived, is a necessity for Muslims as Sanskrit is for Hindus.

Roman has been suggested as a compromise and not for its merits. It has none except that it is almost universal in the West. But it must not displace either Devanagari, which is the parent of most provincial languages and is the most perfect of all the known scripts, or Persian, because it is written by millions of Hindus and Muslims in the North. So far as the scripts are keeping them apart, Hindus and Muslims will not come together by adopting a neutral and imperfect script. But they will, if both take the trouble, for the love of one another, to learn both scripts. The Roman script has its own great and unique place. It need not aspire after greater.

SEVAGRAM, April 7, 1942

*Harijan*, 12-4-1942

## 209. SCORCHED EARTH

Thus writes a correspondent on my article “Scorched Earth”<sup>1</sup> in *Harijan*.

In your article headed ‘Scorched Earth’ appearing in *Harijan* of the 22nd March you say as follows:

“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.”

Firstly, although I do not approve of the violence which characterized Russia’s resistance, I am of the view that there is great bravery and sacrifice in the scorched earth policy which they are adopting to resist the invader. I cannot, therefore, understand your saying that there is neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying property for defence. Secondly, although you ask people to resist the invader, you would prefer them to leave their crops and homestead for the invader to use, not out of fear but out of a humanitarian motive. I cannot understand how this can be reconciled with your teaching of resistance to evil. I think that non-violent resistance to the invader demands it of me that I should prevent anything which will be of use to him, such as crops or homestead, etc., from falling into his hands even if this means sacrificing my life. May I request you to clarify this subject because it is of vital importance that people should know how they should offer non-violent resistance to the invader?

Surely the meaning is plain. There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water. Let us assume that I am fighting him in the orthodox manner. Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me, and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, presupposes purity. Such destruction may be likened to cutting one’s nose to spite one’s face.

Warriors of old had wholesome laws of war. Among the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Scorched Earth”, 16-3-1942.



excluded things were poisoning wells and destroying food crops. But I do claim that there are bravery and sacrifice in my leaving my wells, crops and homestead intact, bravery in that I deliberately run the risk of the enemy feeding himself at my expense and pursuing me, and sacrifice in that the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles me. My questioner has missed the conditional expression “if I must”. I have imagined a state of things in which I am not prepared just now to die and therefore I want to retreat in an orderly manner in the hope of resisting under other and better auspices. The thing to consider here is not resistance but non-destruction of food crops and the like. Resistance, violent or non-violent, has to be well thought out. Thoughtless resistance will be regarded as bravado in military parlance, and violence or folly in the language of non-violence. Retreat itself is often a plan of resistance and may be a precursor of great bravery and sacrifice. Every retreat is not cowardice which implies fear to die. Of course a brave man would more often die in violently or non-violently resisting the aggressor in the latter’s attempt to oust him from his property, but he will be no less brave if wisdom dictates present retreat.

SEVAGRAM, April 7, 1942  
*Harijan*, 12-4-1942

### 210. *THE LATE HIRJI JERAM—A SILENT WORKER*

Bhai Nagardas of Pandya Khadi Karyalaya, Charala writes:<sup>1</sup>

I did not know at all that Bhai Hirji had died. I remember his face very well. All the work Bhai Hirji undertook he did silently. He felt self-conscious even when he gave away his land near Thana. His services were devoid of all ostentation. He was a man of humble means and had had only a little education but all the services he rendered were solid. He never aspired for fame. Service alone was his reward and his testimonial. Such a soul is immortal.

SEVAGRAM, April 7, 1942

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 12-4-1942

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had informed Gandhiji of the death of Hirjibhai Jeram Mistri who, besides being a good Khadi worker, had rendered considerable financial assistance to the khadi and Harijan activities.

## 211. LETTER TO MULCHAND PAREKH

SEVAGRAM,  
April 7, 1942

BHAI MULCHAND,

Bhai Khushal seems to know you. He has come here unnecessarily. I have told him to go back. Do what you think proper.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 68

## 212. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

April 8, 1942

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Vidya must be sent away. It is not dharma to put up with misbehaviour. About Babu and Saryu also we must think.<sup>1</sup> However, I am continuing my efforts. I will try again after I return from Bombay. I am not very hopeful. Babu Mahatma seems to have cast a powerful spell. As a last resort, we can adopt the remedy I have suggested. If they don't listen to us, we should boycott them.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10607

## 213. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

April 8, 1942

BAPA,

I have read your note. About Bhai Jagannath, it is somewhat complicated. I shall see. I have done nothing much about your fever.

The old must protect themselves against fever. Take complete rest.

<sup>1</sup> Vidya, Babu and Saryu were relations of the addressee. The three young people had come under the influence of an impostor, Babu Mahatma of Ahmedabad, and attempts were being made to save them from him.

I hope Balkrishna has started Gadodiyaji's treatment. I have had no news about him.

BAPU

SHRIBAPA  
HARIJAN NIVAS  
KINGSWAY  
DELHI 7

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1191

*214. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C. P.,  
*April 8, 1942*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have replied to your telegram. Your essay<sup>1</sup> is good but it has become very controversial, and it is full of politics. I expected from your pen something of a more permanent value. Jamnalal's politics were not his strong point. You might have seen that at the meeting of Mill-owners' Association I did not even touch upon his political work.

Even his politics could have been presented in moral terms. The criticism of the British should find no place in your essay. I am surprised that Kaka did not notice it. We shall talk in greater detail when we meet.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I hope you are well and you have found out what quantity of butter you need.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8056. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> On Jamnalal Bajaj, *vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", 15-4-1942.

*215. LETTER TO PARACHUTE SHASTRI*

*April 8, 1942*

SHASTRIJI,

One does not see you any more. But I hope you are well and also doing some work of service.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10667

*216. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA*

*April 9, 1942*

DEAR KU.,

This is Shri Thanu Pillay, President of the Travancore State Congress. He is on his way back to T. Please show him what can be shown during the little time he has at his disposal.

*Yours,*  
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10164

*217. LETTER TO NIMBKAR*

*April 9, 1942*

MY DEAR NIMBKAR,

I was glad to have your letter and to find that you were keeping well. I like your dignified reply to the Government and hope that you will soon be free.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

218. LETTER TO GOVINDDAS

April 9, 1942

BHAI GOVINDDAS,

May the marriage of Chi. Jagmohan and Chi. Vidyavati go through without hitch and may they both be happy.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SETH GOVINDDAS  
RAJA GOKULDAS PALACE  
JABALPUR, C. P.

From Hindi: C.W. 10269

219. TELEGRAM TO HASRAT MOHANI <sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,  
April 10, 1942

MAULANA HASRAT MOHANI

CONGRATULATIONS FOR WHAT? I KNOWN NOTHING. NEVERTHELESS  
YOU ARE WELCOME.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's telegram dated April 9, 1942, which read: "Congratulations. Extremes meet. I also insist retirement policy meaning neither obstruction nor encouragement official war effort. Permit interview."

220. LETTER TO MANU S. MASHRUWALA

April 10, 1942

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

You must not expect a separate letter from me. I am too busy.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI MANORAMABEHN MASHRUWALA

BALKIRAN

SOUTH AVENUE

SANTACRUZ

BOMBAY

From Gujarati: C.W. 2681. Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

221. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAMDAS TANDON

SEVAGRAM,

April 10, 1942

BHAI TANDONJI,

I have your letter<sup>2</sup>. I could not have expected them to be more generous.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Harilal Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had conveyed to Gandhiji the resolution of the standing committee of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, for the text of which, *vide* "Hindustani Prachar Sabha", 22-4-1942.

222. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

SEGAON,  
*April 11, 1942*

CHI. MIRA,

I wrote to you yesterday. You will, I know, do the best you can for the camp<sup>1</sup>. As to other work I have nothing in view just now and may not have any at any time. But no one knows what will happen the next moment.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: C. W. 6495. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9890

223. *LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

SEGAON, *via* WARDHA, (C. P.),  
*April 11, 1942*

MY DEAR C. R.,

On the off chance that you will be on today's G.T., Khurshedbehn is going to fetch you. You must come and finish the national week here and give us a report of your doings.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10910. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

<sup>1</sup> A women's camp which she was helping in running  
VOL. 82: 9 FEBRUARY, 1942 - 6 JUNE, 1942

## 224. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

*April 11, 1942*

CHI. KANTI,

I have your letter. You alone can train Saraswati. There the interests of all the three of you are suffering. Shanti<sup>1</sup> is a very simple child. I am prepared to welcome Saraswati again and again.<sup>2</sup>

About Harilal I have talked to Devdas and asked him to tell Harilal that if he is ready I will get him admitted to some jail or asylum for some time. But he is not likely to accept any reasonable suggestion. What you suggest about yourself becomes you. But such sacrifice is not necessary, at present at any rate. It is also futile to put such a proposal to him. He is devoid of human feelings.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7366. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

## 225. SPEECH ON OPENING OF SWARJYA BHANDAR

WARDHA,

*April 11, 1942*

Fifteen leaders sitting in Delhi cannot achieve much unless they are backed by the constructive programme. For many days I have been contemplating why we cannot introduce yarn currency like Government currency. Vinoba Bhave, with my consent, had introduced yarn currency from one pice to five-rupee notes with which one could purchase corn, leather goods, charkhas and other articles stocked in Gramseva Mandal shops in Wardha.

I warn the people against counterfeiting such notes. Our currency will encourage yarn produce and khadi and increase its value. I bless this Bhandar and its activities. We have named this Swarajya Bhandar, which is significant, as by carrying on constructive

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

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to Kantilal Gandhi", 6-4-1942.



activities we can win swaraj. We must approach villagers by mixing with them and organize and strengthen ourselves. I wish that transactions should be in yarn.

I cannot say whether our leaders in Delhi have succeeded or not, but I can assert that their hands will be strengthened if we follow the constructive programme.

*The Hindu*, 12-4-1942

## 226. NOTES

### LINGUISTIC BASIS

My reply<sup>1</sup> to the Maharajkumar of Vizianagram on the Andhra Province has brought me lengthy correspondence about Hindi and Marathi-speaking provinces. The argument is that all Hindi-speaking areas should be regarded as one province, as also should Marathi-speaking areas. So far as I am concerned I am quite in sympathy with the suggestion. I believe that the linguistic basis is the correct basis for demarcating provinces. I should not mind two provinces speaking the same language, if they are not contiguous. If Kerala and Kashmir were speaking the same language, I would treat them as two distinct provinces. The writers suggest, however, that I should lead the agitation for the redistribution, or in this case amalgamation, of the Marathi-speaking and Hindi-speaking areas.

This is an impracticable proposition. The demand for amalgamation has to be made by Congressmen living in the respective areas. If it is unanimous, the Congress cannot resist it. The thing is entirely in their own hands. Let my correspondents and others not mix up the Andhra agitation with their proposals. Andhra is already a separate province for the Congress. But, whilst the Congress ministry was in office, the Andhras agitated for legal recognition. My correspondents ask for Congress recognition of their proposals. Whilst on merits I endorse the proposal, I would discountenance any such agitation and diversion from the main then before the country—the duty of every Indian in face of the impending invasion of India by Japan.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Andhras", 20-3-1942.

Redistribution of provinces, etc., important matters though they are in themselves, pale in insignificance before the question which overshadows every other. Those things may easily await the termination of the war. We hope to see a new vision and a new order at the end of the present catastrophe.

#### HISSAR FAMINE AND SPINNING

Dr. Gopichand has been discussing with me famine in Hissar. It seems to have become almost chronic. The A.I.S.A. has been working for many years in that district and giving relief to the poor people through spinning. Dr. Gopichand thinks that, if more capital can be made available, much aid can be given. It is perhaps not possible to make a successful appeal outside Hissar. There is so much distress everywhere, and with the terrible spectre of war much more is to be expected. Therefore everywhere local charity has to be depended upon. As often happens even in poor areas there are to be found monied men. Bhiwani is a big trade centre in Hissar, and it has several monied men. Let me hope that they and those others in Hissar who can will come to the rescue and do what they can for the much-needed relief.

SEVAGRAM, April 12, 1942

*Harijhan*, 19-4-1942

227. *LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE*

SEGAON WARDHA,  
*April 12, 1942*

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

I hope you are doing well. I would like to send Abha<sup>1</sup> to Rajkot. Vina<sup>2</sup> is doing extraordinarily well. Abha too would do better there than here. But she perhaps should not go to Rajkot till she is finally engaged to Kanu<sup>3</sup>. Please consult your wife and let me know. I am convinced that Abha's happiness depends on her being tied to Kanu.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10337. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

228. *LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI*

*April 12, 1942*

CHI. VALJI,

I got your article. I have passed it. I have been forgetting to inform you that you will not get anything more, that is at the [higher] rate of Rs. 25. The trustees did not pass the increase. There was no point in insisting on it. I will, therefore find the additional sum from some other source. Do you need it urgently? Ba is well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

PROF. V. G. DESAI  
DEVAGIRI  
POONA 4

From Gujarati: C.W. 7497. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

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

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Son of Narandas, Gandhiji's nephew

## 229. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

April 12, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

You have to take the responsibility for Ch. No one will interfere.  
Love can be tested only when love operates in freedom.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4421; also S.N. 24477

## 230. UNITY IS VITAL IN INDIA<sup>1</sup>

[After April 12, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

The proposals that Sir Stafford Cripps advanced for settling the Political deadlock in India contemplated splitting the country into three parts, each part to have a different system of government.<sup>3</sup> These proposals, it would seem, would be to the liking of many of India's Muslim leaders, since they have for long advocated dividing the country between Hindus and Muslims. Yet Sir Stafford's plan differed in many respects from the Muslim League's plan, and so it received no more enthusiastic a reception from them than it received from the Indian National Congress.<sup>4</sup> The Muslim League represents Muslims; the Indian National Congress purports to represent Hindus and Muslims alike. Can the Congress claim be supported? It can. From its beginning it has been national, representing all beliefs, not one alone.

Its originator was an Englishman, strange though that may seem

<sup>1</sup> The article had originally been published in the November 1942 issue of *Picture World*, an American magazine.

<sup>2</sup> This was obviously written after Sir Stafford Cripps left India on April 12, 1942

<sup>3</sup> Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1942 for resolving the 'Indian deadlock'. For his proposals, *vide* Appendix "British War Cabinet's Proposals", before 27-3-1942.

<sup>4</sup> Both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League rejected the Cripps formula; the Congress because it did not concede independence immediately, left the control of defence of India with the British Government and indirectly envisaged partition of India by giving rights to the provinces to secede if they wished. The Muslim League opposed it because the fundamental proposals were not open to any modifications.

to some. It has always had one or two Muslim secretaries. It has had Muslim, English, Christian and Parsi Presidents. Through its whole history, now running into the second half of a century, the Congress has ever striven to represent the whole of India, in a manner no other organization has done. Every victory scored by the Congress has benefited all communities, Muslims and Hindus alike.

I believe that the Congress embodies the hopes and aspirations of all India. Its traditions unfit it to represent Hindus as against Muslims or *vice versa*. It is fit only to represent the common interest of all sons of Hindustan. Yet, differences between Hindus and Muslims remain, and it is said that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines that cannot live peacefully together, and that therefore they must be separated into two different nations.

I myself could never subscribe to the partitioning of the country. I would fight it with every means at my disposal and yet I must declare that national independence is an impossibility until Indians have solved this communal problem. There are two ways of solving it. One is the way of non-violence, the other the way of violence. Unfortunately, at the present moment, those Hindus who do not know the use of violence, of deadly weapons, would fain learn the trick, so as to be able to match what they describe as Muslim violence.

If peace is ever to come in that manner, through both parties being equally matched in violent weapons, I know that it will not come in my lifetime, and if it came, I should not care to be a witness of it.

For it will be an armed peace, to be broken at any moment.

Whether those who believe in the two-nation theory can live as friends with those who believe in one nation, I do not know. If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with the Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. If they want partition of India on that basis, they must have partition, unless the Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see, preparation for such a fight is going on now on behalf of both parties.

I dread to see it. That way lies national suicide. One party or the other will call in outside help. In that case, good-bye to independence.

The only true and just way is the way of unity and non-violence of regarding one another not as members of hostile cultures but as sons of the same great motherland. Hindus and Muslims have worked and do work together in peace; they lived together in peace in the past; they can live together in peace in the future. Our task is to assure each son of the motherland that whatever his beliefs, his rights and religious and cultural interests will be protected by the laws of the land, formulated by a national assembly democratically elected.

Now, with the aggressor at the gates, more than ever unity is vital in India. I desire above all things to see a joint struggle against him and to achieve independence. In the very process of doing this, it is highly likely that we shall have forgotten our quarrels in the same common goal. But if we find that we have not forgotten them, then will be the time to quarrel among ourselves, if quarrel we must. Not now. Now India herself stands in the balance.

*The Bombay Chronicle, 25-4-1942*

### 231. NOTES

ACHARYA ANANDSHANKAR DHRUVA<sup>1</sup>

The death of Acharya Anandshankar Dhruva<sup>2</sup> is an irreparable loss not only to Gujarat but also to the U.P., for he had rendered invaluable services to the Benares Hindu University for a number of years.<sup>3</sup> It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to replace him.

He was an active educationist to the end. Many students have lost a true friend in him. He was Malaviyaji's right hand. Malaviyaji's grief can be better imagined than described. But Anandshankar Dhruva was no mere educationist. His interests were many and varied.

He was a keen student of politics, a worshipper at the shrine of swaraj, and a social reformer. His relations with the orthodox were cordial, for he was an observer of many of their ceremonials. But his instinct and heart were always with the reformer, and he expressed his

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 19-4.1942. This English translation is reproduced from *Harijan*.

<sup>2</sup> He died in Ahmedabad on April 7, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> He was Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University from 1920 to 1937.

views fearlessly. He was widely respected for his outstanding knowledge of Sanskrit and the Hindu scriptures, and was a fine representative of the Hindu religion. As for me I had invariably received his help. He was friends equally with labour and capital and, having gained the confidence of both, was able to render great services to both in Ahmedabad. The bereaved family's sorrow will be shared by, and they will have the sympathy of, all who had the privilege of knowing the late Acharya.

#### LALA SHANKERLAL

I have two letters about the treatment accorded to Lala Shankerlal of Delhi in jail. They say he is no better off than Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar. I have nothing to do with Lala Shankerlal's politics or views, but the same remarks apply to his case as to Caveeshar's. He is as much entitled to decent and humane treatment as Caveeshar. This is what his nephew writes:

I went to the place in the company of my aunt, the wife of Lala Shankerlal, for an interview at 3-30 p.m. on the 23rd inst. When face to face, I at once detected signs of great weakness and reduction in the energy of Lalaji. He was reduced physically, his complexion was pale, and his face drawn. To my great horror and dismay I found that he is confined day and night to a dark, damp and unhealthy dungeon which could hardly be a befitting place for confinement even for a criminal, much less a gentleman of Lalaji's status.

If this statement is true, the matter calls for immediate attention and redress.

#### ECONOMY IN TRAVELLING

B.B. & C.I. Railway management are discountenancing travelling as far as possible. It is a timely warning. People should travel as little as possible. Only urgent necessity can warrant railway travelling. One fine morning we may find that all civil booking is stopped. Movement of troops may render this precaution absolutely necessary. It is a good thing to accustom ourselves to the practice well in advance of the necessity.

SEVAGRAM, April 13, 1942

*Harijan*, 19-4-1942

## 232. QUESTION BOX

### WHY NOT IN UNIVERSITIES?

Q. You have expressed yourself against communalism in cricket. Are not communal universities also to be deplored? In colleges and hostels that are open to all, deep friendships spring up and religious tolerance becomes a natural thing, Would not well-endowed chairs in common centres of learning serve the purpose of advancing different cultures?

A. You are right. If we can do without communal institutions, it would be good. But I am unable to say that there should be no Muslim or Hindu Universities as I am able to say positively that there should be no communal cricket. The communal universities, if their origin is not tainted, may conceivably serve a national purpose. Thus the Hindu University and the Muslim University may, as they ought to, be seats of communal concord. But communal sports seem to be a contradiction in terms. I wholly agree with you that there should be, as there are, non-communal colleges and hostels. Unfortunately the virus has entered even these. Let us hope that it is a passing phase.

### WHEN LEADERS DIFFER

Q. You say people in the cities should evacuate under certain circumstances.<sup>1</sup> Panditji and Rajaji say they should not on any account. What are we to do?

A. I appreciate your difficulty. I can only advise you to use your judgment and choose that advice which appeals to your reason. We are living in hard times such as we have never experienced before.

I am quite sure of my ground. People who are not wanted should evacuate from cities which are within the danger zone. There is no cowardice in orderly withdrawal. Women and children and aged people and all those who are not wanted should evacuate so as to enable the defenders the better to regulate defence of cities under their control. The evacuees will show real courage if they will settle down in villages and tackle problems that face villagers. Differences of opinion between leaders ought not to worry people. Honest differences are often a healthy sign of progress. And the differences you refer to are honest.

SEVAGRAM, April 13, 1942

*Harijan*, 19-4-1942

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Desirability of Exodus", 10-3-1942.



### 233. *THAT ILL-FATED PROPOSAL*

It is a thousand pities that the British Government should have sent a proposal<sup>1</sup> for dissolving the political deadlock, which, on the face of it, was too ridiculous to find acceptance anywhere. And it was a misfortune that the bearer should have been Sir Stafford Cripps, acclaimed as a radical among radicals and a friend of India. I have no doubt about his goodwill. He believed that no one could have brought anything better for India. But he should have known that at least the Congress would not look at Dominion Status even though it carried the right of secession the very moment it was taken. He knew too that the proposal contemplated the splitting up of India into three parts each having different ideas of governance. It contemplated Pakistan, and yet not the Pakistan of the Muslim League's conception. And last of all it gave no real control over defence to responsible ministers.

The fact is that Sir Stafford Cripps, having become part of the Imperial machinery, unconsciously partook of its quality. Such is its strength. It is the almost invariable experience in India that those Indians who are drawn into it lose their originality and become like their companions in the service and often outdo the latter in their loyalty to the Moloch of Imperialism. Had Sir Stafford remained detached, he would have conferred with his radical friends in India and secured their approbation before undertaking his very difficult mission. If it be said in answer that he could not very well do so, that is exactly what I mean when I say that, having become part of the machinery, he was bound to fall under its spell and could not do the obvious thing. But it is no use brooding over the past or British mistakes. It is more profitable to look within. The British will take care of themselves, if we will take care of ourselves. Our mistakes or rather defects are many. Why blame the British for our own limitations? Attainment of Independence is an impossibility till we have solved the communal tangle. We may not blind ourselves to the naked fact. How to tackle the problem is another question. We will never tackle it so long as either or both parties think that independence will or can come without any solution of the tangle.

There are two ways of solving what has almost become

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "British War Cabinet's Proposals", before 27-3-1942.

insoluble. The one is the royal way of non-violence, and the other of violence. In the first way the formal consent or co-operation of the other party is unnecessary. If there is a dispute between two boys over the ownership of an apple, the non-violent way is to leave the apple for the other party to take, the latter well knowing that it would mean non-co-operation on the surrendering party's part. The second way is the usual way of violence. There the parties fight with each other till one is for the time being worsted. All interested in freedom have to make the choice. I suppose the choice has already been made by the chief actors. But the rank and file do not know their own minds. It is necessary for them, if they can, to think independently and take to non-violent action in terms of unity. It consists in Hindus and Muslims on the wayside fraternizing with one another, if they believe that joint life is a perfect possibility, nay, a necessity. Whether those who believe in the two-nation theory and communal partition of India can live as friends co-operating with one another I do not know. If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see such a preparation is silently going on behalf of both the parties. That way lies suicide.

Each party will probably want British or foreign aid. In that case, good-bye to independence. The fight will then range round not independence but the imaginary apple after the manner of the imaginary boys. I dare not contemplate the actuality. I should not like to be its living witness. I would love to see a joint fight for independence. In the very process of securing independence it is highly likely that we shall have forgotten our quarrels. But if we have not, it will be then only time to quarrel, if we must.

SEVAGRAM, April 13, 1942

*Harijan*, 19-4-1942

### 234. LETTER TO ANNAPURNA

*April 13, 1942*

CHI. ANNAPURNA,

You were punished as you deserved. Do not make such a mistake again. You can do a lot of service even while resting. What is necessary is the urge to serve. That you certainly have.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI ANNAPURNA  
SWARAJYA ASHRAM  
BARDOLI  
TAPTI V. RLY.  
B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9436

### 235. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON,

*April 13, 1942*

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I read your letter addressed to Kishorelal. You must both stop grieving over the dead.<sup>1</sup> Keep yourselves immersed in your work there. Keep away from quarrels. Let those who indulge in backbiting do so. Settle the disputes, if you can. Otherwise keep away from them.

I can well realize even at this distance that your task is difficult.

Carve your way through it. God is our Protector in all misfortunes. He cannot be seen, but is always with us. If you cultivate this faith, you will never feel helpless.

Ba is much better. The others also are quite well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4928

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the death of Sushila's father, Nanabhai I. Mashruwala.

236. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
April 13, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I got a letter from you after many days. I went on writing and dictating letters to Mahadev. But you were stuck in the capital. Never mind. You did well.

I am not surprised to learn that the intestines are not coming round. They do need long rest.

Jawaharlal now seems to have completely abandoned ahimsa.

You should go on doing what you can. Restrain the people if you can.

His speech<sup>1</sup> reported today seems terrible. I intend to write to him.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI  
68 MARINE DRIVE  
BOMBAY  
CHI. MANI,

I got your note, too. Tell Vanu<sup>2</sup> that I got her letter.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 272*

<sup>1</sup> Nehru had advised the people in the event of a Japanese invasion to resort to the scorched-earth policy and guerilla warfare.

<sup>2</sup> Vanamala N. Parikh.

237. *LETTER TO MITHUBEHN PETIT*

*April 13, 1942*

CHI. MITHUBEHN,

I have your letter. If Ba is willing, I will send her. But it seems to me she will not go at such a time. I will talk to her, though I can have no objection to sending her to you. I hope you are quite well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI MITHUBEHN

KASTURBA ASHRAM

P.O. MAROLI BAZAAR, *via* NAVSARI

B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2720

238. *LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH*

*April 13, 1942*

CHI. CHIMANLAL ,

I do not at all feel enthusiastic about offering a plot to Prabhashankar<sup>1</sup>. But if he is prepared to spend money, we may build a house for him without conceding to him any rights over it. It would be convenient to get the alterations asked for by Champa<sup>2</sup> carried out at her expense. It has become my duty and that of the Ashram too, to accommodate Champa and her children. We will not, therefore, make this case a precedent for a general rule. The general rule should be not to give accommodation to anyone.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10608

<sup>1</sup> Prabhashankar Mehta, father-in-law of Ratilal Mehta

<sup>2</sup> Ratilal Mehta's wife

239. NOTE TO BALVANTSINHA

April 13, 1942

One may dedicate oneself only to God, never to a man. So you cannot dedicate yourself to me nor may I accept such dedication. I am not perfect, nor am I a *jivanmukta*. I have not had the realization. It is still an aspiration. When I have the realization the world will know.

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, p. 303

240. LETTER TO VIDYAVATI

April 13, 1942

CHI. VIDYA,

I have your letter. My blessings and Ba's to the newly-wed couple.<sup>1</sup> May Jogendra<sup>2</sup> be well soon.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

RANI VIDYAVATI  
T. R. N. SANYAL BUILDING  
11 BLOCK, JOGENDRA PATHAK ROAD  
LUCKNOW

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's son and his bride

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

## 241. DISTRESS IN BENGAL<sup>1</sup>

Bengal has suffered from communal riots, it is suffering from famine, and now it threatens to be the target of Japan. Military preparations are inevitable. This means eviction of villagers. Satis Babu sends me a graphic account of an eviction near Chittapore.

Thirty-three villages have been evacuated under very short notice. The notices were dated 1st April, served on the 2nd, and the villagers had to leave on the 4th. The troops entered on the 4th. In one village the villagers got the notice on the same day that the troops entered. The evacuees were paid removal cost at the rate of Rs. 10 to 100 according to the Union rates they were paying. Compensation is to be determined and paid hereafter. The rules framed for evacuation are elaborate and read reasonable. But however reasonable they may be, the hardship of sudden evacuation is inevitable, and the enforcement of the rules having unavoidably to be left in the hands of many and petty officials, fairness cannot be ensured. Under the circumstances the utmost that workers like Satis Babu can do is to cheer up the people. Their solid contribution must be to teach the villagers to face the inevitable hardships calmly and bravely and derive comfort from within. Unless they are depressed by their so-called comforters, they respond to the best in them and cheerfully face the worst. This is not to say that the authorities should be callous to the sufferings of the poor. In the present case I do not see what they could have done if the troops had to be located where they have been all of a sudden. Laymen cannot judge whether the military officers should not have anticipated events and made arrangements in good time.

SEVAGRAM, April 14, 1942

*Harijan*, 19-4-1942

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

## 242. LETTER TO MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

SEVAGRAM,  
April 14, 1942

CHI. MAGANBHAI,

I have gone through the whole correspondence between Nanavati and you. It has been decided that so long as the new arrangement does not come to stay I myself should continue to write to you. I hope you remember my detailed letter. Will you be able to take care of so many *pracharakas*? Are you yourself interested in this new task or have you agreed to shoulder the burden only because I want you to do it? It is an important task and I can foresee great results from it.

Enclosed is a draft of the new scheme<sup>1</sup>. You may suggest any changes in it.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I have drafted today a pamphlet for Nanavati. I will also send you a copy of it.

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

## 243. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

April 14, 1942

CHI, PURUSHOTTAM<sup>2</sup>,

I have your letter. You have lived a third of your life. Complete the remaining two-thirds in a worthy manner. May you go on rendering more and more service. You have done well in including the reading of the *Ramayana* in the prayer. Recite the *chhandas*, *chopais*, etc., in the correct style and understand the meaning properly. The *Ramayana* has always had a special place in the Gandhi family.

<sup>1</sup> Of yarn currency, *vide* "Meaning of Yarn Currency", 17-4-1942.

<sup>2</sup> Son of Narandas Gandhi, Gandhiji's nephew



Paramanand Gandhi<sup>1</sup> had a very sweet voice. He had almost the whole of the *Ramayana* by heart. He knew its deeper meaning. I have not heard another such voice. Be like him.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

*244. LETTER TO HARI-ICHCHHA KAMDAR*

*April 14, 1942*

CHI. HARI-ICHCHHA,

I have your letter. For the time being let him remain where you have put him.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N.7474. Also C.W. 4920. Courtesy: Hari-ichchha Kamdar

*245. LETTER TO SURENDRARAI B. MEDH*

*April 14, 1942*

CHI. SURENDRA MEDH<sup>2</sup>,

I have your letter. This time you gave me no news about happenings there. They do not allow *Indian Opinion* into India. We hardly get any letters. If Bhai Hamid comes to me, I will do what I can. I do not have much say in such matters. Still I will try. At present there is a scarcity of khadi and woollen material here. We cannot get enough to send to anybody outside.

Ba is quite well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4929

<sup>1</sup> Cousin of Gandhiji

<sup>2</sup> A co-worker of Gandhiji in South Africa

## 246. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
April 14, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Again there has been no letter from you. The Professor<sup>1</sup> has given me a detailed account<sup>2</sup>. If you are not well do not go to Allahabad.<sup>3</sup> But you must let them know your views. If the Congress adopts the policy of violence, I think you should resign. This is not the time for anybody to suppress his views and keep quiet. Things are going the wrong way in most matters. It does not seem proper for one to remain a silent spectator of them. It is immaterial whether one is praised or blamed.

I should like you to read carefully what I have been writing in *Harijan*. In Orissa while on the one hand the Communists are said to be preparing for a guerrilla war, on the other hand members of the Forward Bloc are said to be preparing to help Japan. Both these are rumours. Nothing is known for certain. But both things are possible.

An attack on Orissa seems quite likely. The Government has massed a large number of troops there. How is your health? What does that sadhu say? How is Vanu? She does not seem to be improving at all.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

There is a proposal to take up Patil<sup>4</sup> in the [Village] Industries Association. Will he have to be paid? And how much? He will have to assume responsibility for Maharashtra.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 273-4*

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Kripalani

<sup>2</sup> Of discussions with Cripps

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

<sup>4</sup> L.M. Patil

## 247. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

SEGAON,  
April 14, 1942

CHI. MRIDU,

I have received your letter. I am a little afraid that Jawaharlal and I are beginning to follow different paths. You will have noticed it.

In such a situation, I shall not have you swing between two viewpoints. I advise you to follow Jawaharlal. My days are now numbered. My views appear in *Harijan*. Balance them against other views, but where your own mind does not work, follow Jawaharlal.

If you do not find your field in Gujarat and are upset, then go where Jawaharlal puts you. Wherever you go, it will all be well with you. Whenever you go, be patient. Do not neglect your health.

I have preserved your old letter. Some day I shall definitely reply to it.

I had a letter from Mirabehn. I do not wish to settle her anywhere else for the present.

It is a good sign that even the mill-owners of Gujarat have started taking interest in the Congress work.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11224. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

## 248. KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRY <sup>1</sup>

[Before April 15, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

Q. You have often said that khadi and village industry are supplementary to each other. But you have created separate organizations for them with the result that a khadi worker, when he goes to a village, is unable to spare time from his own particular work for either village industries or uplift. Recently you have asked for khadi and village industry *bhandars* to be run jointly. Times are such that transport of goods is becoming increasingly difficult. Should not khadi and village industry centres, therefore, be converted into one? Would it not be a good thing if khadi

<sup>1</sup> This appeared in *Harijan* under "Notes", and was originally published in *Sarvodaya* and *Khadi Jagat* under the date 15-4-1942.

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

workers gave up all ideas of sending locally produced khadi to distant places and concentrated on both khadi and village industry production for local use? Khadi workers are asked to penetrate into the houses of artisans with charkha and train them, to rouse a love of village products in them, improve their ways of living, health, sanitation, etc. But if they have no time to spare, how can they do all that is expected of them?

A. I admit that, if a khadi worker's entire time is employed in khadi work, he cannot possibly attend to either village uplift or industry. Three persons would be required for the three tasks. My idea is that in a well-organized village one person should suffice. For example, one worker may devote two hours to taking in yarn, distributing slivers and spinning tools, and sales of khadi; village industry work might take even less, and the remainder of the time he could give to village uplift and general education. This has not till now been possible because the khadi workers' time has been devoted to teaching people how to spin, etc. But now the time has come when khadi and village products, locally produced, must also be locally absorbed. In that case one person will be able to do all the work.

Today it suffices to say that all this work is complementary—and must become one as far as possible. The amalgamation cannot be imposed; it must be a natural growth. I do not, I cannot, apportion any blame to anyone for the existing position. Our plans have progressed as far as our intelligence and experience could have taken them. The creation of khadi *vidyalayas* is meant to expand and improve the technique of work. We shall learn from them how all departments of village work can be amalgamated.

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

## 249. LETTER TO CHUNILAL

*April 15, 1942*

BHAI CHUNILAL,

My blessings to Chi. Pushpa and Chi. Kanchan on their marriages. May the married lives of both couples be ideal.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 10093

## 250. LETTER TO A. S. PATWARDHAN

SEVAGRAM,  
April 15, 1942

BHAI PATWARDHAN,

I am definitely of the opinion that Bhayya<sup>1</sup> should form a trust for the money<sup>2</sup> as early as possible and an arbitrator should be appointed to advise on its utilization.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 251. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April 15, 1942

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter. You are right. Such severe criticism of the British is not appropriate in a biography of Jamnalalji.<sup>3</sup> This criticism has a place but not in a book of this kind. Jamnalal would never have entered politics if he had not been impelled by moral principles. I feel that ill-will against the British had little part in his life. Be that as it may, criticism of the British appears improper in this article of yours and will obstruct your future work.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8058. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

## 252. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEAGRAM, WARDHA,  
April 15, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

The Professor is here. He has told me everything. I also heard about your Press interview. Whereas we have always had differences of opinion it appears to me that now we also differ in practice. What can

<sup>1</sup> Annasaheb Sahasrabuddhe

<sup>2</sup> Belonging to the Tilak Vidyalaya

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", 8-4-1942,

Vallabhbhai and others do in such a situation? If your policy is accepted the Committee should not retain its present shape. The more

I think of it the more I feel that you are making a mistake. I see no good in American troops entering India and in our resorting to guerrilla warfare.

It is my duty to caution you.

I hope Indu and Feroze are well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I heard yesterday that the Forward Bloc people in Utkal are armed and that the Communists are ready for guerrilla warfare. I do not know how much truth there is in it.

From the Hindi original: Gandhi-Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 253. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

WARDHA,

*April 15, 1942*

I asked Gandhiji if he could express his views on the Delhi talks. He said:

I have nothing to say. I left the Working Committee in the middle<sup>1</sup> and in any case I am an all-war resister. But did I have to be with them?

When I pointed out that the reason he gave for leaving the Working Committee during its session was not held by many to be convincing, Gandhiji said:

It may not be convincing to those who do not want to believe.

But it is cent per cent true and it was more for Acharya Narendra Deo's<sup>2</sup> sake than for my wife's, for I had heard on the phone that she was all right. But the news about Acharya Narendra Deo was disconcerting and Maulana Azad disengaged me very reluctantly.

*The Hindu*, 16-4-1942

<sup>1</sup> The Working Committee met in Delhi from March 29 to April 11, 1942. Gandhiji withdrew from the proceedings and left Delhi for Wardha on April 5.

<sup>2</sup> Socialist leader; then a teacher at Kashi Vidyapith

## 254. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SEVAGRAM,  
April 16, 1942

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter.

Everybody envies me Shankarrao's shawl<sup>1</sup>. Any arrangement that you propose will be accepted.<sup>2</sup>

There is no possibility of Shankarrao being arrested<sup>3</sup>. I give in my articles as much as I can. Read them carefully and ask me if you do not understand anything in them. You must have read my reply to the doubt raised by Shankarrao. Ultimately everybody will have to act on their own as I have suggested. I have no doubt at all that we shall bring credit to the movement only to the extent that we spread out in villages. Read and understand my scheme for using yarn as currency.

It is to appear in *Khadi Jagat*.<sup>4</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 6864. Also G.N. 10425. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

## 255. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SEVAGRAM,  
April 16, 1942

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

Bhai Shantikumar, Rai Bahadur Virji Sheth and Bhai Dadajan also have come. There are about 8 lakh people in Burma. They are all suffering. To bring them over is our duty. These friends wish that we

<sup>1</sup> Made from the yarn spun by Shankarrao Deo, presented by the addressee to Gandhiji

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had told Gandhiji that she would give him two shawls made from yarn spun by Shankarrao Deo every year along with two dhotis made from her yarn which she gave to Gandhiji regularly.

<sup>3</sup> For offering civil disobedience

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Meaning of Yarn Currency", 17-4-1942.

should form a special committee and that you too should be on it. Do what you can.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8057. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

### 256. *MEANING OF YARN CURRENCY*<sup>1</sup>

I find that I have not been able fully to explain to my co-workers my idea of yarn currency. I attempt to do so here. Metal coins or paper notes are not a true standard because their value is arbitrarily determined. The value of the paper of a five-rupee note is even less than one pice. It has a value because of the government stamp on it. However, this or any such standard is very necessary for carrying on business transactions on a very large scale. But the idea behind khadi and other village industries is quite different. We do not want business on a large scale. We want to restrict our attention to only one of the seven lakhs of villages. We want the same independence for that village as we want for any other of the seven lakh villages and the world at large. So our villages should at least become self-reliant as far as food and clothing are concerned.

In such villages there cannot be any need for metal or any other imposed currency for mutual transactions. Our standard should be a rural product, which everyone can make, which can be stored and the price of which does not fluctuate daily. What can this be? It can neither be soap, nor oil, nor vegetables. Thus after enumerating and eliminating all the things only yarn remains. Everyone can produce it. There is always a demand for it. It can be stored well. If we can introduce yarn currency in the villages, they will make great progress and become self-reliant very soon. This is not an attempt to enumerate all the advantages of yarn currency. I want to tell you only what it means and how it will function.

For this a shop is needed where items of daily use for villagers can be available. All the villagers could buy anything from this shop by giving only yarn—there should not be any exception to this. As a

<sup>1</sup> This was originally published in the April issue of *Khadi Jagat*.



result all the villagers will have to spin to buy things from the above mentioned shops. In these shops yarn of given strength and in given quantity will be accepted and therefore the yarn spun by the villagers will be properly tied. A villager will not let even a single strand of it be wasted because so many things could be bought with it. The importance of yarn will increase. The commodities secured in exchange of yarn will be of good quality and will not be expensive. Even a child will be able to buy from there without fear of being cheated. As the shops cannot accept any kind of yarn, there will be need for a yarn examiner whose function will be to test the yarn currency. To prevent the yarn from getting dirty it will have to be wrapped in paper or some such thing. The shopkeeper will blindly accept the yarn which is well wrapped by the examiner.

As the examiner and the shopkeepers are connected with an institution such as the Charkha Sangh, the yarn will be daily sent to the Sangh office and from there to the weavers.

There is no room for loss in such shops. There is no possibility of much fluctuation in the prices of things sold there. Generally only those things which are available in the villages will be kept. The number of such things will increase gradually.

In such a scheme every house can become a mint and can make as much money (yarn) as it wants. It is clear that in such shops intoxicants, imported things and harmful products will not be sold.

And therefore the yarn nexus will remain more or less pure.

SEVAGRAM, April 17, 1942

[From Hindi]

*Harijan Sevak*, 3-5-1942

257. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

April 17, 1942

MY DEAR C. R.,

So you could not give me a day ! ! ! Supposing you had to give one more day to Delhi. But you know best what to do at a given moment. I hope you will find at least a day for Sevagram on your way to Allahabad.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 2085

258. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI

April 17, 1942

DEAR SATYAMURTI,

Your letter.

I am doing all I can in the way of showing the non-violent approach to the pending menace. But I am helpless if the Congress policy changes from moment to moment.

I do not know how Hindu-Muslim understanding can be brought about. Our meeting can be easily brought about. I have only to walk to his place. Having gone there, what am I to do or say? If I knew that, I would go. There seems to me to be no meeting ground.

Ba is quite well. Thanks.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: S. Satyamurti Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also G.W. 10371

259. *LETTER TO KRISHNADAS SHAH*

*April 17, 1942*

BHAI KRISHNADAS,

I have your letter. I do have faith in Ayurveda but what can I do if the vaidyas lack competence? All the same I keep in touch with them and take what I can out of them. It is precious little, however.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. KRISHNADAS SHAH  
BHARATIYA UDYOG PRACHAR  
14 BHASKAR LANES 3RD FLOOR  
BHULESHWAR, BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 11536

260. *LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

*April 18, 1942*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Even now I am clear about rice. But if the women insist on it, they should be given it. What about the men? They should be consulted. In such things there is much room for judiciousness and generosity.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4422

## 261. TEN QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE<sup>1</sup>

Q. 1. The Persian script did not originate in India. It came during the Mogul period just as the Roman script has with the advent of the British. But you do not advocate the Roman script for the national language. Why then the Persian?

A. If the Roman script had made a home for itself in India in the same way as the Persian, I would agree with you. But the knowledge of the former is confined to a mere handful of English-knowing persons, while crores of Hindus and Muslims are conversant with the latter. You should try to find out the exact number of persons knowing the Roman and Persian scripts respectively.

Q. 2. If you advocate the learning of Urdu for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity, then please remember that a large number of Mussalmans in India do not know Urdu. They are conversant only with their own provincial languages. These people would far more easily understand a national language comprising words familiar to their provincial languages. The North Indian languages are all derived from Sanskrit and therefore resemble each other a good deal. Sanskrit words have even crept to a large extent into the Southern languages. Then why advocate for these people the learning of an unfamiliar Urdu tongue full of Arabic and Persian words?

A. There is force in your argument. But I would like you to delve a little deeper into the question. I admit that in asking people to learn the Persian script I have at the back of my mind a contribution to Hindu-Muslim unity. There has been a long-standing conflict between the Hindi and Urdu tongues as between the two scripts.

Today it has assumed a virulent form. In 1935 in Indore the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, while defining Hindi, gave a definite place to the Persian script.<sup>2</sup> In 1925 the Congress gave the national language the name of Hindustani.<sup>3</sup> Both scripts were made permissible. Thus Hindi plus Urdu was recognized as the national language. The question of Hindu-Muslim unity was definitely in the forefront in all

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 26-4-1942. This English translation is reproduced from *Harijan*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Indore", 20-4-1935.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "The Annual Demonstration", 7-1-1926

these decisions. I have not raised this issue today. I have only given it a concrete form. It is a logical outcome of events. If we want to develop the national language to the fullest extent, it behoves us to give the two scripts an equal status. In the end whichever is appreciated more by the people will be the more widespread.

The provincial languages are closely allied to Sanskrit, and it is true that lacs of Muslims are conversant only with their provincial languages, and that Hindi and the Devanagari script will, therefore, be easier for them to learn than Urdu and the Persian characters. My scheme will not interfere with this. In fact the people will benefit more than ever by learning the Persian script. Your trouble arises because you look upon this as a burden. Whether it is a gain or a burden depends on the outlook of the learner. He who is filled with a love of country will never consider such learning a burden. There will be no compulsion by my scheme. Only those who consider it a gain will learn the Persian script or the Devanagari as the case may be.

Q. 3. A very large proportion of persons in India know the Devanagari script. Surely Punjabis, Sindhis and the Frontier folk can easily learn it too.

A. The reply to this is really embodied in the preceding answer. Frontier people and others will have to learn the Devanagari script.

Q. 4. A national language is really more for speech than literary purposes. Its script is, therefore, not so essential or is, at any rate, of secondary importance. Moreover is it not easier to learn the national language through the script of the mother tongue? And where would be the harm in so doing?

A. You are right. It is easier to learn the national language through the script of the mother tongue. As far as I know this is being done in Southern India though perhaps not systematically. Unlike you I do not look upon the learning of two scripts as a burden. It is not so hard as you fear. I can never be opposed to the learning of the national language through the script of the mother tongue. Given the keenness to learn it, all systems will be employed.

Q. 5. If it is not possible to make real contacts with the non-Hindi-knowing provinces until some of us have learnt the national language, why not limit the acquiring of this knowledge to workers only? Why make it obligatory for the whole of India?

A. The question of everyone learning Hindustani does not arise. Indeed everyone will never do so. The necessity is for those who have to travel and those who want to serve. The latter's ability for service will be greatly increased by a knowledge of both languages and scripts. If you agree, your opposition and suspicion should subside.

Q. 6. Today the national language is written in both scripts. Whoever wants to learn can choose the one he prefers. Why the insistence on both?

A. In spite of my so-called insistence, only those will learn it who find real gain in so doing. In my eyes he who knows only one of the languages and one script will be half-equipped. If he desires a full certificate from me, he must be conversant with both. I am sure you will have no objection to the desirability of there being many such persons in the country. And unless this number goes on increasing there will never be a proper blending of Hindi and Urdu. The Congress ideal of Hindustani will never be fulfilled. That Hindus and Mussalmans in the Hindi-knowing provinces should have a common speech is a consummation devoutly to be wished. Many of us cling to this hope, and some day it will certainly come to pass.

Q. 7. Will it not be a terrible burden and a futile endeavour for people of the non-Hindi-speaking provinces to learn the national language through both scripts at the same time? To learn first one and then the other would surely be simple.

A. The answer to this will best come from experience. He who does not know either script will not learn both at the same time. He will master one before commencing on the other. So far as the vocabulary is concerned the words used in the text books in the early stages will more or less be the same. I look upon my scheme as a most important and useful experiment. If it is properly worked, it will be found to have energized the nation and made a big contribution towards giving practical shape to the Congress resolution. I hope lacs of patriotic men and women will take to it.

Q. 8. Certain changes must inevitably take place in any language, as for example, the ingress of foreign words which become part of the language and cannot be evicted. But Devanagari has been the traditional script all through the ages. During the period of the Mogul dynasty the Persian script came in. But Gujarati, Marathi, etc., while assimilating Persian, Arabic and English words, have not abandoned the script. Why should the Devanagari script then not be maintained?

A. There is no question of giving up anything that is ours by tradition. It is a question of adding to or improving what already exists. If I know Sanskrit, what harm if I learn Arabic too, or *vice versa*? The result will probably be an enrichment of my knowledge of either language. And my contacts with the Arabs or Hindus, as the case may be, will increase. Surely there can be no opposition to the acquiring or right knowledge in any sphere.

Q. 9. From the point of view of easy mastery over the pronunciation of the national language, is not the Devanagari script the best? The Persian script is surely defective for the purpose.

A. You are right, but your opposition to the Persian script has no place here. Devanagari is not to be displaced. It is a question of adding to the existing knowledge.

Q. 10. Where is the need for a national language? Will not the mother tongue and an international language suffice? And then why not the Roman script for both?

A. Your question surprises me. English no doubt is the international language. But can it ever be our national language? The latter must be the common property of millions of our people. How can they sustain the burden of learning the English tongue?

Hindustani is the natural national language, for it is already understood by 21 crores. The remainder of the population can also easily understand it. But English may be said to be the mother tongue of a mere handful—say, a lac at the most. If India is a nation, it must have a national language. English will appropriately remain the international language with the Roman script. But the latter can never be the script of the national language.

SEVAGRAM, April 19, 1942

*Harijan*, 26-4-1942

## 262. FOREIGN SOLDIERS IN INDIA

Among the multitude of questions contained in my correspondence is the one referring to the advent of foreign soldiers in India. We have foreign prisoners enough. Now we have promise of a never-ending stream of soldiers from America and possibly China. I must confess that I do not look upon this event with equanimity. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British. It is a tremendous price to pay for the possible success of Allied arms. I see no Indian freedom peeping through all this preparation for the so-called defence of India. It is a preparation pure and simple for the defence of the British Empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. If the British left India to her fate as they had to leave Singapore, non-violent India would not lose anything. Probably the Japanese would leave India alone. Perhaps India, if the main parties composed their differences as they probably would, would be able effectively to help China in the way of peace and in the long run may even play a decisive part in the promotion of world peace. But all these happy things may not happen if the British will leave India only when they must. How much more creditable, how much braver it would be for Britain to offer battle in the West and leave the East to adjust her own position! There is no guarantee that she will be able to protect, during this war, all her vast possessions. They have become a dead weight round her. If she wisely loosens herself from this weight, and the Nazis, the Fascists or the Japanese instead of leaving India alone choose to subjugate her, they will find that they have to hold more than they can in their iron hoop. They will find it much more difficult than Britain has. Their very rigidity will strangle them. The British system had an elasticity which served so long as it had no powerful rivals. British elasticity is of no help today. I have said more than once in these columns that the Nazi power had risen as a nemesis to punish Britain for her sins of exploitation and enslavement of the Asiatic and African races.



Whatever the consequences, therefore, to India, her real safety and Britain's too lie in orderly and timely British withdrawal from India. All talk of treaties with the Princes and obligations towards minorities are a British creation designed for the preservation of British rule and British interests. It must melt before the stern reality that faces all of us. Princes, in so far as they rely upon their armed strength, are more than able to defend themselves against unarmed India. The fiction of majority and minority will vanish like the mist before the morning sun of liberty. Truth to tell there will be neither majority nor minority in the absence of the paralysing British arms. The millions of India would then be an undefined but one mass of humanity. I have no doubt that at that time the national leaders will have wisdom enough to evolve an honourable solution of their difficulties. This presupposes Japan and other powers leaving India alone. If they do not, I should hope even then for wisdom to guide the principal parties to devise a scheme whereby they can act with one mind to face the new menace.

Holding the views I do, it is clear why I look upon the introduction of foreign soldiers as positive danger thoroughly to be deplored and distrusted. The present state of things and the attempt to uphold it are a distinct sign of corroding consumption of the body politic in India.

SEVAGRAM, April 19, 1942  
*Harijan*, 26-4-1942

### 263. *QUESTION BOX*

#### IF THEY REALLY MEAN?

Q. If the Japanese really mean what they say and are willing to help to free India from the British yoke, why should we not willingly accept their help?

A. It is folly to suppose that aggressors can ever be benefactors. The Japanese may free India from the British yoke, but only to put in their own instead. I have always maintained that we should not seek any other Power's help to free India from the British yoke. That would not be a non-violent approach. We should have to pay a heavy price if we ever consented to take foreign aid against the British. By

our non-violent action we were within an ace of reaching our goal. I cling to my faith in non-violence. I have no enmity against the Japanese, but I cannot contemplate with equanimity their designs upon India. Why do they not realize that we as free men have no quarrel with them? Let them leave India alone. And if they are well-intentioned, what has China done to deserve the devastation they have wrought there?

#### GUERRILLA WAR

Q. You declared the other day at Wardha that Jawaharlal Nehru was your 'legal heir'<sup>1</sup>. How do you like the idea of your legal heir advocating guerrilla warfare against the Japanese? What will happen to your ahimsa when Jawaharlal openly advocates violence and Rajaji wants arms and military training for the whole nation?

A. As you have put it the situation does appear awful. But it really is not so awful as it appears to you. In the first instance 'legal heir' is not my phrase. I had spoken in Hindi. I had said that he was not my 'legal heir' but that he was virtually my heir. That means that he will take my place when I am gone. He has never accepted my method in its entirety. He has frankly criticized it, and yet he has faithfully carried out the Congress policy largely influenced, when it was not solely directed, by me. Those like Sardar Vallabhbhai who have followed me without question cannot be called heirs. And everybody admits that Jawaharlal has the drive that no one else has in the same measure. And have I not said also that when I am gone he will shed the differences he often declares he has with me? I am sorry he has developed a fancy for guerrilla warfare. But I have no doubt that it will be a nine days' wonder. It will take no effect. It is foreign to the Indian soil. Twenty-two years' incessant preaching and practice of non-violence, however imperfect it has been, could not be suddenly obliterated by the mere wish of Jawaharlal and Rajaji, powerful though their influence is. I am, therefore, not perturbed by the 'apostasy' either of Jawaharlal or Rajaji. They will return to non-violence with renewed zest, strengthened by the failure of their effort. Neither goes to violence for his belief in it. They do so because they think probably that India must have a course of violence before coming to non-violence. No one can say beyond doubt how events will shape

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Speech at A.I.C.C. Meeting", 15-1-1942.

themselves. It may be that their instinct is correct and mine, backed though it is by experience, is not. I know this, however, that my line is cut out for me. Even though I may be alone in my faith, I must follow it unflinching, believing that the masses will never take to the violent method. They will either remain inert or take to non-violent action. Guerrilla warfare can take us nowhere. If it is practised on any large scale, it must lead to disastrous consequences. Non-violent non-co-operation is the most effective substitute for every kind of violent warfare. If the whole nation takes to non-violent action, it can be wholly successful. It could not be quite so against the British because their roots have gone deep into the soil. The Japanese have not even got a foothold. I hope that the forthcoming A.I.C.C will revert to the non-violent method and give the clearest possible instructions about non-violent non-co-operation. To aid the British effort in the violent way without any official connection and after the failure of the recent negotiations appears to me to court national disgrace.

SEVAGRAM, April 19, 1942

*Harijan*, 26-4-1942

#### 264. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 19, 1942*

CHI. PREMA,

I got all your letters, and have replied to them all. The replies were quite long. You tell me, what am I to do when the Postal Department is irregular? Read *Harijan* and do what you think proper.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10426. Also C.W. 6865. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

## 265. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, *via* WARDHA,  
April 19, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

A letter from the Maulana arrived today. He writes that I have to go to Allahabad. How can I go? I had said even when I was there that I was not any more fit for travel. And what shall I do by going there? I have the same one thing to offer and I have called three meetings here. One of them has been planned for a long time. I cannot miss any of them. You must therefore excuse me. Write to Maulana to spare me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Janakibehn wrote to you yesterday to hold both the meetings at Wardha. I withheld the letter. Meetings should be held at Wardha when my presence is considered essential.

From the Hindi original: Gandhi-Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 266. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

April 19, 1942

MAULANA SAHEB,

I have your letter. I will write to you only in Urdu. This time you will forgive me. I had already told you in Delhi that now my health does not permit me to move around. Moreover I do not have any work there and I have convened three meetings here which I must attend. People from faraway places have been invited. You will understand my position and excuse me for my absence.

*Yours*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Urdu: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 267. DEENBANDHU ANDREWS MEMORIAL

Deenbandhu Andrews Memorial and Gurudev Memorial are convertible terms. Gurudev had initiated the Deenbandhu Memorial, but before it had fully materialized Gurudev followed Deenbandhu.<sup>1</sup> Therefore Deenbandhu Memorial has become also Gurudev Memorial. The purpose is worthy of the two great souls—the improvement and upkeep of Santiniketan, Visvabharati and Sriniketan. These are all in reality one. It is a matter of great shame and sorrow that the paltry sum of five lacs of rupees has still not come whether from the rich or the students or the labour world. Everybody admit that Gurudev and his institution have brought a name and prestige to India which no one and nothing else have done. It was Santiniketan which stirred Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kaishek who gave very handsome contributions. For the work done at Santiniketan, the expense is ridiculously small. The reason is the comparatively low salaries paid where the work done is not purely honorary. The donations so far collected amount to nearly one lac. I hope that the balance will be forthcoming without delay and absolve me from having to venture out on a collection tour. I am in honour bound to finish the collection. When Gurudev was dying the last letter I wrote to him was that, if it was God's will, I would finish the Deenbandhu collection. It was also a trust handed by Andrews in that Santiniketan's financial condition was his daily concern. It is a call from these two servants of India and humanity which I dare not neglect. Let those who revere their memory and who value Gurudev's living creation help me to discharge the self-imposed trust.

SEVAGRAM, April 20, 1942

*Harijan*, 26-4-1942

## 268. EVACUEES FROM BURMA<sup>2</sup>

Much has been written about the hardships of evacuees from Burma. Making allowance for all possible exaggerations, the remainder itself is a horrible tale of woes. Some of them must be

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore died on August 7, 1941.

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

inevitable in the circumstances that face us. What has to be dealt with is the avoidable hardships and blatant discrimination said to be in vogue in the treatment of Britishers and Indians. I understand that there are over eight lacs of Indians in Burma yet to be evacuated. Life for them in Burma is impossible. The question is too big to be tackled by any existing organization. It requires a special temporary committee of experienced men whose sole work would be to attend to the orderly and quick evacuation of the eight to nine lacs of men and their disposal after they are on Indian soil. Let us hope that there are enough public-spirited men who will make it their business to form themselves into a committee and see this very humanitarian work through.

SEVAGRAM, April 20, 1942

*Harijan*, 26-4-1942

### 269. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

[April 20, 1942]<sup>1</sup>

IF YOU FEEL LIKE THAT COME AT ONCE.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 334

### 270. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEVAGRAM,

April 20, 1942

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. I must let you come here and see what can be done. You are undertaking a job which leaves you no other

<sup>1</sup> The addressee says: "Just at this time Bapu was writing his leader for *Harijan* entitled 'Foreign Soldiers'. It must have been at practically the same hour when I wrote Bapu a long letter expressing almost exactly the same sentiments, to which I had added that, if Bapu would agree, I should like to go to the A.I.C.C. meeting shortly to be held at Allahabad and plead behind the scenes with leaders for organizing nation-wide non-violent resistance to the Japanese." *Vide* also the following letter.

consideration. I have sent you a wire. I do not know whether it will reach you. Everything has become so uncertain nowadays.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6496. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9891

### *271. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI*

*April 20, 1942*

BHAI JIVANJI,

I have your letter. I did think of sending a wire, but the temptation to save money was stronger. It will be all right if the article appears even this time. Today also a lot of matter is going. From out of it mine has got to be included. The translations of my articles should also appear. Besides that there are Mahadev's articles and one by Kumarappa. See if you can manage by reserving more pages for English. I understand about Urdu. Do I have to send urgently anything more from here? How did you run short of English matter?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9952. Also C.W. 6927. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

### *272. LETTER TO MADHAVDAS G. KAPADIA*

*April 20, 1942*

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

Why this panic? Illness comes and goes. Men die as they are born; some die early, some die late. What need for him to fear who has faith in God? And why should one who has no fear become panicky? Have courage. Keep me informed. Treat this letter as from

<sup>1</sup> Kasturba's brother

Ba also. Krishna<sup>1</sup> should keep calm.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI MADHAVDAS GOPALDAS

NAVI KHADAKI

PORBANDAR, KATHIAWAR

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

### 273. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

*April 21, 1942*

C HI. KANTI,

I have corrected in the letter itself what you could not read and am returning the letter. Do you understand now? Ordinarily I would not like to keep a frivolous girl like Saraswati with me, but I showed my willingness to keep her because I understand your difficulty. You alone can manage her. She will stay here only if you are firm and persuade her to do so. Mascarene is a woman without brains. I feel nothing but pity for her. And then she got Mathew's support. All types of persons have gathered in the Ashram, and they indulge in slander and back-biting. I am glad that you could make her see reason. She does write sweet letters to me. Her case is pathetic. Now that Ramachandran and Thanu Pillay have gone to jail, she has become all the more helpless. Both the propositions you have cited may be said to be valid. One can say that the validity of a principle does not depend on its practice, and also that it does. The second statement would be more befitting in the case of a moral principle.

What is the use of a principle that nobody puts into practice?

What is the test of its validity? What would be the value of ahimsa if nobody observed it?

If Harilal could be legally put in jail, I would have got it done long ago. But there is no such law and he also knows it. That can be done only if one day he himself yields. I do cherish the hope that he will. But the stratagem that he attempted this time has weakened my

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



hope. Devdas continues to do his best.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7367. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

*274. LETTER TO MADHAVDAS G. KAPADIA*

*April 21, 1942*

CHI. MADHAVDAS,

You must have got the letter<sup>1</sup> I wrote to you yesterday. Today I got your second letter. You have lost a companion, but Krishna is released from suffering. Rest assured she has attained peace. Have patience. Keep calm. Try to pay off the debts if you owe any, and spend your days in devotion to God. Ba wishes the same.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

*275. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA*

SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA,

*April 21, 1942*

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

I have your letter. It is heart-rending. I am publishing Satis Babu's letter<sup>2</sup> in *Harijan*. Send your scheme about *goseva*. The meeting will be on the 29th. Come if you want to.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1715

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Madhavdas G. Kapadia", 20-4-1942.

<sup>2</sup> This was published under the title "Simple Treatment for Cholera" in *Harijan*, 26-4-1942.

## 276. LETTER TO PADAMPAT SINGHANIA

SEVAGRAM,  
April 21, 1942

BHAI PADAMPATJI,

I deliberately withheld the reply to your letter. Even now I have not met the trustees. I have however sent you the constitution of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. It would facilitate my arriving at a decision if you could let me have your opinion on it. But if you would rather not, I will not insist.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 277. HINDUSTANI PRACHAR SABHA

The Hindustani Prachar Sabha to which I referred in *Harijan Sevak* is about to be formed now. A draft constitution has been prepared. It has been sent to some friends. In a few days the scheme of the Sabha will be put before the public. Many people are under the impression that the Sabha will be a rival of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. How can I knowingly oppose the Sammelan with which I have been associated since 1918? There has to be a solid reason for my doing so. But there is none. Yes, it is true that as far as Urdu is concerned I go a little further than the other members. They think I am going back. Only time will decide who is right.

To make it clear that I am not opposed to the Sammelan, I entered into correspondence with Shri Purushottamdas Tandon, as a result of which the standing committee of the Sammelan passed the following resolution.

The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan has from its very inception regarded Hindi as the national language and it continues to do so. Urdu is a literary style deriving from Hindi and having an admixture of Arabic and Persian words. The Sammelan propagates Hindi but is not opposed to Urdu.

In the opinion of this Committee, members of Mahatma Gandhi's proposed Hindustani Prachar Sabha can become members of the Hindi Sahitya

Sammelan and its sub-committees, but from the practical point of view it will be better that the office-bearers of the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti should not become office-bearers of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha.

I could not have expected more generosity than this. I was and still am of opinion that there could have been no question of conflict if the office-bearers could be the same. There is a possibility of conflict in the present arrangement but if both the parties behave with gentlemanliness this can be avoided. If the Hindustani Prachar Sabha succeeds, national language will no longer remain a political issue. In fact it should never have been associated with politics.

SEVAGRAM, April 22, 1942

[From Hindi]

*Harijan Sevak*, 26-4-1942

### 278. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

*10 a.m., April 22, 1942*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

BALLYGUNJ, CALCUTTA

WROTE SUNDAY REGRETTING INABILITY ACCOUNT WEAKNESS  
AND HAVING PREVIOUSLY FIXED MEETINGS<sup>1</sup> SAME TIME.

GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> Of the A.I.C.C.; *vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 24-4-1942.

279. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KAKAM AZAD

2 p.m., April 22, 1942

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

BALLYGUNJ, GALUTTA

TOO MUCH PHYSICAL FATIGUE. SENDING MY PROPOSALS<sup>1</sup>  
FOR CONSIDERATION. PLEASE EXCUSE.

GANDHI

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

280. LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA (C.P.),  
April 22, 1942

MY DEAR HORACE,

I have been wanting to write to you and Agatha all this time but my preoccupations have come in the way. But more than that, the reluctance to send you a cheerless letter has been the cause. It is still there greater than ever. Nevertheless I must write what I feel. I hope you had my wire about Olive<sup>2</sup>. How well I remember her radiant face in spite of her permanent disability. God gave and He has taken her away. I know it is well with her, for she walked in His light. Sir Stafford has come and gone. How nice it would have been if he had not come with that dismal mission. He of all people should never have without having at least ascertained Jawaharlal's wishes. How could the British Government, at this critical hour, have behaved as they did?

Why should they have sent proposals without discussing them with the principal parties? Not one single party was satisfied. In trying to please all the proposals pleased none.

I talked to him frankly but as a friend, if for nothing else, for Andrews's sake. I told him that I was speaking to him with Andrews's

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

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

spirit as my witness. I made suggestions but all to no avail. As usual they were not practical. I had not wanted to go. I had nothing to say being anti-all-wars. I went because he was anxious to see me. All this I mention in order to give you the background. I was not present throughout the negotiations with the W.C. I had come away. You know the result. It was inevitable. The whole thing has left a bad taste in the mouth.

My firm opinion is that the British should leave India now in an orderly manner and not run the risk that they did in Singapore and Malaya and Burma. That act would mean courage of a high order, confession of human limitations and right-doing by India. Britain cannot defend India, much less herself on Indian soil with any strength. The best thing she can do is to leave India to her fate. I feel somehow that India will not do badly then. I must not argue this point if it is not obvious to you.

I am sending a copy of this to Agatha. Of course you are at liberty to share this with anybody else.

Love.

*Yours,*

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1434

## 281. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

*April 22, 1942*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have your letter. Maulana's wire would seem to leave you no choice but to go, though it does not seem to me advisable for you to do so. Be firm. If they do not adopt an unambiguous resolution of non-violent non-co-operation, your duty will be to resign. You must also oppose the scorched-earth policy and any suggestion to invite foreign troops. They are pressing me to attend but I have categorically refused. I have already fixed three or four meetings here at about the same time. The main meeting was fixed long ago. It cannot be shifted now. Drop in here on your way back from Prayag even if it be only for a day or two. It is a hundred times better here

than in Prayag. Bring along Rajendra Babu, too, and Deo<sup>1</sup> also. You have given me no reply to my question regarding Patil.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vllabhbhaine, p. 274*

## 282. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 23, 1942*

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

Your letter<sup>3</sup>.

I do not like your answer about Abha. It was with your hearty consent I took Abha. I told you too that I might want to send her to Rajkot. I want to do all for her good. But now I won't send her. Nor will I cross your wife's wishes. Things will take their own course. I have put a ban on their meeting in private but not on Kanu teaching her. That would be unnatural. Abha won't marry without her mother's blessing but she would marry no other person in any case.

That is her condition and also Kanu's. You will now instruct me what you would like me to do about Abha. About your wanting messages, please spare me. You should go on in your own way and on your own responsibility. I can have no notion of the work there.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10338. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

<sup>1</sup> Shankarrao Deo

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 14-4-1942.

<sup>3</sup> Of April 17, in which the addressee had said that his wife was opposed to Abha being married to Kanu Gandhi

### 283. DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR A.I.C.C.<sup>1</sup>

[Before April 24, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions: The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India. The A.I.C.C. is, therefore, of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India. The question of majority and minority is a creation of

<sup>1</sup> The A.I.C.C. at its meeting on April 27, took up consideration of the resolution, which Mirabehn carried with her from Wardha to Allahabad since Gandhiji did not attend the meeting, and continued discussion on it till May 1 along with certain amendments proposed by Rajendra Prasad. The text of this revised version is to be found in *The Transfer of Power*, pp. 66-70. Finally on May 1 an alternative resolution proposed by Nehru was passed, for the text of which *vide* Appendix "Resolution passed by A.I.C.C.", 1-5-1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 24-4-1942.

the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal. For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore, the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-co-operation. It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of non-violent non-co-operation:

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.

2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.

3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.

4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-co-operation will be fruitless and unnecessary. At present our non-co-operation with the British Government is limited.

Were we to offer them complete non-co-operation when they are actually fighting, it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-co-operation with the Japanese. Neither may

232



we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept.<sup>1</sup> It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched-earth policy. If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, etc. if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Whilst non-co-operation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of swaraj consists in the millions of India whole-heartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence.

#### FOREIGN SOLDIERS

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It therefore appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth stop further introduction. It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible manpower and is a proof of the immorality that British Imperialism is.

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1942-44*, pp. 283-5, also *The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, Vol. II, pp. 66-70

<sup>1</sup> In the version reproduced in *The Transfer of Power* the words "a position we can never accept" form part only of the revised draft.

## 284. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
April 24, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Mirabehn agrees that I must take some step and that she will have to make a sacrifice. She wanted to go to Allahabad<sup>1</sup> even if I did not go. I have therefore called her here. I am sending through her my views in the form of a resolution<sup>2</sup>. Maulana Saheb has been urging me to go to Allahabad. I have told him I am helpless. I find travelling difficult these days. What is more, I have called three meetings for the same period. I have therefore asked Maulana Saheb to excuse me and told him that I shall be sending my views in the form of a resolution. I do not think it necessary to give arguments in support of the resolution. If you do not like my resolution I really cannot insist. The time has come when each of us must choose his own course.

The behaviour of the Government in Feni and other places is simply intolerable. What will such a Government do even if it survives? And today it is only trying to save itself. I am now certain that if this Government goes we shall be well able to deal with Japan. It is another matter that after the Government is removed we may fight among ourselves. Even if that should be so, do we want to save ourselves from internal quarrels through the good offices of this Government?

Acharya Narendra Dev has seen the resolution and liked it.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Gandhi-Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* footnote to "Telegram to Mirabehn", 20-4-1942.

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

285. *LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU*

SEAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 24, 1942*

DEAR SISTER,

Bapa wrote about Father's injury. I can understand your grief. It does not matter if you cannot come. Your resolutions will be taken up. But I hope Raja Saheb will recover.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8003. Also C.W. 3101. Courtesy: Rameshwari Nehru

286. *LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 25, 1942*

CHI. MRIDU,

I have your letter. I have no time today to write a long letter. Come away from there and tell me what you want. Whatever the course you adopt, you have no reason to worry. I have conveyed my views to Jawaharlal in the form of a proposal.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11225. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

## 287. FOREWORD TO “DEAD ANIMALS TO TANNED LEATHER”

This very useful pamphlet is in answer to an imperative demand by Sheth Jamnalalji, just a few days before his death. He wanted a booklet of instructions for those who would learn more to treat dead animals, so as to make the best use of the remains. May it serve the purpose for which it is intended.

SEVAGRAM, April 26, 1942

*Dead Animals to Tanned Leather*

## 288. QUESTION BOX

### ARE YOU NOT INVITING JAPANESE?

Q. It is all very well for you to invite bravery, but are you not inviting the Japanese to attack India by asking the British rulers to withdraw?

A. I am not. I feel convinced that the British presence is the incentive for the Japanese attack. If the British wisely decided to withdraw and leave India to manage her own affairs in the best way she could, the Japanese would be bound to reconsider their plans. The very novelty of the British stroke will confound the Japanese, dissolve the subdued hatred against the British, and the atmosphere will be set up for the ending of an unnatural state of things that has dominated and choked Indian life. As far as I can see the Japanese seem to have made their plans independently of Indian opinion. They are not to be affected by any writing of mine. But they will be confounded by the action I have advised the British to take.

### EVACUATION

Q. You have advised evacuation from the cities of those who are not wanted for service or other reasons.<sup>1</sup> But what are those poor people to do who have no homes to go to and who would be unwelcome wherever they go?

A. This is a real difficulty. They must be provided for by the people of the provinces to which they belong. If we are one nation, we

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Question Box”, sub-title, “When Leaders Differ”, 13-4-1942.

should have no difficulty in providing for every contingency that may arise. If we are to establish a new order of society, we can act from now. I can only speak from the non-violent angle and no other. If the national mind is working in that direction, consciously or unconsciously individuals and institutions will, without fuss, be absorbing all such persons as you mention. I know that the process is going on, but not on a scale large enough to be impressive. No able-bodied person should be put on charity; he should be given work enough to feed him properly. This shifting of the population, if it is wisely done, must result in a silent re-organization of villages.

SEVAGRAM, April 26, 1942

*Harijan*, 3-5-1942

### 289. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*April 26, 1942*

CHI. VANAMALA,

I do not mind your running away, but you will have to come again. Sushila will come after some time. Her examination has been postponed. Come when she does. Go on doing your exercises, and have faith that your ears will be cured.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5791. Also C.W. 3014. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

## 290. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

April 26, 1942

BHAI VIYOGI HARI,

We can understand Ramakrishnaji's grief. I had sent a telegram.

Tell him that Brijkrishna should be released shortly. Mahadev has been promised. If nothing is done, then there is no harm in filing an appeal.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hind; G.N 1101

## 291. QUESTION BOX

### NO NARROW PROVINCIALISM

Q. There are, in certain places, some people who have come from other provinces but who have practically settled in those places. There is already a feeling in certain provinces that when time were good these people came from outside, earned, and enjoyed themselves, but that when danger is drawing near and when their help and assistance would be needed by the residents of the province, they are thinking of fleeing to their 'homes' Should you not advise such people to stay where they are and not to give vent any narrow provincialism?

A. This question has come to me in various forms. It comes from Bengal and Assam. Merchants from other provinces have settled there for generations. Though they went to the respective provinces for their own sakes, they supplied a want, often useful. There is no doubt that their sudden withdrawal must hit hard those who have been hitherto used to make their daily purchases from these merchants.

They cannot be easily and suddenly replaced, especially at a critical time like this. There for these merchants to wind up their businesses would certainly amount to desertion of duty, if they do not before leaving, ensure the continuance of shops by proper substitute.

It would be a different thing if the customers themselves evacuated and the merchants had to follow. The situation that faces

the country is so novel that no opinion or solution can claim infallibility, nor can judgment be pronounced without carefully weighing all the facts. But it seems to me to be the duty of mercantile organizations to examine the situation and give guidance to the merchants affected.

#### NOT AN INCITEMENT

Q. You have written: "If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation . . . no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see such a preparation is silently going on behalf of both parties."<sup>1</sup>

As far as the Muslims are concerned I can say with better knowledge than you that there is no such preparation. It would be foolish in the midst of the present Armageddon. But since you are apparently aware of the preparation to fight on the part of Hindus, is it not criminal for you not to prevent your co-religionists from this suicidal activity? Your article is both cowardly and mischievous; indeed it is an incitement to the Hindus.

A. This is the mildest indictment I have picked up from many I have received. Even from this much poison has been removed. It is perhaps wise to notice some of the criticism to which I am exposed. I must not mind it. It has been my lot throughout my public career. I suppose it is that of every public servant. But when the criticism is ignorant, as this is, it harms the critic and the cause he espouses. I take notice of it in the hope that sober men will use their influence to restrain ignorant criticism. I have no special knowledge of the preparation on behalf of the Hindus. All the knowledge I have is derived from the speeches of the leaders of both the parties and from the cuttings I receive from correspondents. They are proof positive of the preparations to which I have referred. But if what you say is right, in spite of the writings in the Muslim Press, no preparation on one side alone can possibly provoke strife. It takes two to make a quarrel. You would be right, if I did not do so, in saying that it would be criminal on my part not to prevent my "co-religionists from this suicidal activity". You write about my co-religionists. I recognize none in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "That Ill-fated Proposal", 13-4-1942.

such matters. Nor do they recognize me. For I claim Indians of all religions as my equal brothers, whether they believe me or not. I would, therefore, love to prevent everyone from quarrelling. All I write in these columns is designed to make reason rather than the sword the arbiter between rival parties. Hence the sentence you quote from my writing. I invite you to help me in my mission of peace. You can begin by understanding me and my writings.

SEVAGRAM, April 27, 1942

*Harijan*, 3-5-1942

### 292. SCORCHED-EARTH POLICY AGAIN

Thus writes a correspondent:

The controversy on the scorched-earth policy has had reference to what the people have to do when their fields are touched by the 'enemy'. That may or may not happen. But what about the destruction that is going on of crops, wells, tanks, houses, boats, cycles, etc., in the name of preparation for war? The people are summarily driven out of their villages and houses in cities. If you will suffer this destruction, then how can you oppose destruction to prevent destruction?

This is a very difficult question. The destruction that is going on is certain. The destruction that the enemy may work or which the receding portion of the population affected may have to do is problematical. And, in any case, such destruction would be nothing, even if it overtook us, compared to the crores already drained from the country for warding off a threatened danger. Money taken through taxation has not been felt so keenly as is the direct deprivation of thousands of homesteads as in Feni. No promise of compensation can be any comfort for the dispossession of the present tenements. To the poor people it is like taking away their bodies. The dispossession of the country boats is almost like that of the tenements.

To deprive the people in East Bengal of their boats is like cutting off a vital limb. I wrote almost in defence of the procedure adopted by the authorities in Feni. I have polite but angry protests against my endorsement. The correspondents tell me that I know nothing of the conditions of life in East Bengal. I cannot plead guilty



to the charge. Only I felt that people must be asked to resign themselves to the inevitable. Later information from Feni compels a revision of the attitude I had adopted. I had assumed considerate action by the authorities in the face of the impending danger. But I must defer final judgement. The authorities are reported to be carrying on an investigation. I hope it will be comprehensive.

Certain risks have to be taken even when danger overtakes us. Thus people cannot be asked or advised to starve or die of thirst for fear of the Japanese helping themselves to the people's provisions or water. They may fight them to prevent their use, but they must risk their loss and not die before their death in order to prevent their use by the Japanese forces.

It is time I came to the last and the most vital part of the question. As an out-and-out war-resister, is it my duty to ask the affected people to resist, non-violently of course, the deprivation of their holdings including boats? But my very non-violence has deterred me from offering opposition to the point of embarrassment. Whether embarrassment through opposition in Feni would have been avoidable or not is a question of fact on which I cannot yet pronounce opinion. I would hesitate up to the last moment. I can only hope that the authorities will find a way whereby they can avoid distress such as has been caused in Feni.

SEVAGRAM, April 27, 1942

*Harijan*, 3-5-1942

### 293. TO SEVAGRAM WORKERS

*April 27, 1942*

In the Ashram, let no one from among us eat to please the palate, let us eat to live. Life itself is not for living but for service. Let us not therefore imitate one another. For example, if rice is cooked because someone needs it, let others not demand it. Generally, no one should eat both rice and wheat, but if someone needs both, he or she should be given both. The rule remains the same, no pandering to the palate.

A natural corollary flows from this: Those to whom God has given money, should not tickle the palate as a matter of right. They will miss all the benefit of staying in the Ashram if they purchase anything to pander the palate.

It would be advisable for all to gargle with red water twice a day.

Dr. Das will explain how red the water may be. The common standard is that water should take the shade of a rose flower.

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen*, pp. 387-8

#### 294. LETTER TO N. S. VARADACHARI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C.P.,  
*April 27, 1942*

MY DEAR VARADACHARI,

I was glad to have your letter. There is no doubt about Rajaji's intense earnestness. But I cannot help thinking that he is wholly wrong even if the Congress adopted violence. You are right but I go much further than you go. You will see what I mean from the current number of *Harijan*.<sup>1</sup> If you have doubts even then, you will write to me.

Love.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10941. Courtesy: N. S. Varadachari

#### 295. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

SEVAGRAM,  
*April 27, 1942*

GHI. KAKA,

Though I had no time I went through your note. Send the accompanying letter and your note as it is or get it rewritten by

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Question Box", sub-title, "Guerrilla War", 9-4-1942.

Nanavati and send it. Keep copies. Send one to me also.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10956

### 296. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

*April 27, 1942*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your long letter. It makes only one point. I have already given you my firm opinion that there has been no organization anywhere in the world in which in each section one person does not exercise supreme authority. Even in a small kitchen one person's instructions are followed. Who this person should be is a separate question. Only one person looks after a well and only one person supervises the construction of a building. A managing committee does not supervise everything. It also has one person to do that on its behalf and appoints heads for the different sections. No work can be done in any other manner. All this is in reply to your letter. Do what you yourself wish. one day you will see your error, or will be able to convince me of mine.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8473. Also C.W. 7170. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 297. *"HARIJAN" IN URDU*

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava is bringing out *Harijan* weekly in Urdu from Lahore. Articles from *Harijan* have for long been published in *Hindustan* of Lucknow. Arrangements are being made to publish an authentic edition at the Navajivan Press. The latter will be possible only when I can get an Urdu scholar who can throw in his lot with me. The two have their own individuality. And if the Navajivan Press succeeds in the venture, there will be a third with its own individuality. With the impetus that is being given to Urdu learning

through the proposed Hindustani Prachar Sabha such a venture has become a possibility.

SEVAGRAM, April 28, 1942

*Harijan*, 3-5-1942

### 298. TRAVANCORE

In spite of the high percentage of education among men and women in Travancore, there is no such thing as real liberty in that unhappy land. Shri Thanu Pillai, the President of the State Congress, and Shri Ramachandran, a member of the Executive of the Travancore State Congress, have been sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment for defying the ban on meetings of the Congress. If bans are imposed on public meetings because they are held under the auspices of certain organizations which ask for responsible government, they have to be defied. The leaders of such movements cannot stultify themselves by entirely gagging themselves.

It is too great a price to pay for nominal liberty. Shri T. Pillai and Shri Ramachandran will serve the cause better through their imprisonment than they will by submitting to gagging orders. Here is Shri Ramachandran's statement before the Magistrate:

There was first of all a communiqué issued by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Travancore, in which he had said that the celebration of the All-India States' Peoples' Day would not be permitted. This was followed by an order of the District Magistrate, Trivandrum, served on some of us prohibiting the celebration of the States' Peoples' Day. My offence relates to this order of the District Magistrate. In that order it was made out that, if such a meeting was held and speeches made, there was the likelihood of a breach of the peace in Trivandrum. It further stated that, if the meeting was held and speeches made, there would come about an estrangement between the people and the Government. Immediately on receipt of this prohibitory order Shri Pattom Thanu Pillai and myself wrote a letter to the District Magistrate, in which we made it clear that this meeting was to be held not for the purpose of initiating an agitation but that it was just in response to an all-India observance. The meeting was to be held not in a public place but inside the Congress House premises. We made it clear also that the apprehension of a breach of the peace was absolutely unfounded. We had said that, if in spite of

this clarification the meeting was prohibited, we would be violating the order. This explanatory letter did not elicit any reply from the District Magistrate. So the meeting was held. After Shri Thanu Pillai's arrest I took charge of the meeting and spoke for an hour. I must observe here that I had never seen a quieter meeting in my life. The position we took, therefore, viz., that there would be absolutely no breach of the peace, was confirmed by the meeting itself. The second point in the District Magistrate's order was that the meeting would bring about estrangement between the Government and the people. In my view this certainly was not one of the results of the meeting. It was, therefore, proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the District Magistrate's apprehensions were absolutely unfounded. Therefore, though I am technically guilty—because I certainly did violate the District Magistrate's order—the District Magistrate and not I was in the wrong. I am entitled, therefore, to an honourable acquittal. This technical guilt I had to take upon myself for the simple reason that I was not going to be persuaded not to do a thing which I considered wholly right and which my self-respect dictated that I should do.

SEVAGRAM, April 28, 1942

*Harijan*, 3-5-1942

### 299. AHIMSAK VYAYAM SANGH

As the readers are aware, an Ahimsak Vyayam Sangh was inaugurated at Malad a few days ago. Sardar Prithvi Singh is the soul of the Association. Shriyuts Rameshwardas Birla, Purshottam Kanji and Keshavadev Nevatia are its Trustees. Prithvi Singh is imparting training to young men and women selected by himself. But the Association will fulfil its real mission when Provincial Congress Committees send their selected workers for training. The programme of the Association is unique. Sardar Prithvi Singh is himself experimenting with the practicability of non-violence along with the building of a strong and vigorous body. He has devoted the first half of his life to the belief that India could be liberated through violence alone; and now he himself has become a convert to non-violence. I am convinced that his is an honest experiment. It is a difficult undertaking. To believe in a theory is one thing; to translate it into action is another. And then, the attempt is to be made through means with which one is habitually acquainted and which are today associated

with diametrically opposite ends. Those who are assigned to Sardar Prithvi Singh for training should have at least a working faith in non-violence.

SEVAGRAM, April 28, 1942

[From Marathi]

*Marathi Harijan*, 3-5-1942

### 300. A NOTE

*April 28, 1942*

This means “No”. That is why I had asked you to consult Balvantinha and Parnerkar and said that if they agreed, I would have no objection. They have not have not understood your point. Talk to them.

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen* p. 303

### 301. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

*April 29, 1942*

BHAI HARIBHAU,

Please convey my blessings to Chi. Brihaspati and Chi. Ramkunwar. I do hope they will both render service to the country.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

P.O. RAJKOT *via* VADNAGAR

MARWAR

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

302. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

May 1, 1942

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. It is good that you left. It is also good that the tumour has disappeared. I am sure Anand<sup>1</sup> will not get cough. It is good news for me that you have regained your health. It will be desirable to go to Hajira for a week at least. The heat has gone up here.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of Gujarati: C.W. 10043. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

303. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

May 1, 1942

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I had got your letter. You can eat only *paraval* and cucumber.

You must not harm your health. Do not worry about Father. Ba is quite well.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3375

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

### 304. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

May 1, 1942

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have read through your article. I feel pained. It is ignorance to invoke the name of God here. Your article shows egotism. What had I to settle by sending for you? If the Goseva Sangh takes up all our work we should feel happy. None of them are selfish, yet you smell selfishness in them. Where was the question of offering you threats?

Poor. . .<sup>1</sup> had been sent by me. She had gone to plead with you.

I had also said she should plead with you. Do what seems proper to you. I wouldll say that you should do what the Sangh says. That will become you. If there is anything you want to explain to me, explain it. They themselves will be doing anything they want to do only after consulting me. They are also workers like you. They worship the same God as you worship. The only difference is that although you invoke God's name you want to do as you please.

There is so much egotism in you that you cannot work with anyone. Come down a little and try to understand.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen*, pp. 306-7

<sup>1</sup> The name is omitted in the source.



305. *LETTER TO HIRALAL SHASTRI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 2, 1942

BHAI HIRALAL SHASTRI,

I have your letter. It will not be hypocritical if the parents, knowing that the couple will not be wearing khadi after marriage, still dress them for the wedding only in khadi.

Herewith Dugarji's letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Hiralal Shastri Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

306. *LETTER TO SOHANLAL DUGAR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 2, 1942

BHAI SOHANLAL,

My blessings to the couple on the occasion of your son's wedding. I hope they will both render true service.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Hiralal Shastri Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

307. *STATEMENT ON HINDUSTANI*<sup>1</sup>

May 2, 1942

The work for the propagation of the national language among the people has brought the realization that what the Congress calls 'Hindustani' is a simplified blend of Urdu and Hindi. This is the

<sup>1</sup> This was signed by Gandhiji, Rajendra Prasad and others.

language that is spoken and understood in North India and is understood and used in a large measure in other parts of India too. Hindi and Urdu, which are the literary forms of this language, are drifting apart more and more. The need is for these two forms to be brought closer to each other and to propagate Hindustani as the national language in those parts of the country where other languages are spoken. We therefore propose to establish an association which will simultaneously propagate both simple Hindi and simple Urdu and every member of which shall know both these forms as well as both the scripts of Hindustani and be able to employ either whenever the need arises. This will lead, first, to an easy and clear language coming into use all over the country and, secondly, to a literature being developed in the same simple language, capable of giving expression to sophisticated thoughts and sentiments. In pursuance of this objective we are this day, the 2nd May, 1942, convening an association to be called the Hindustani Prachar Sabha.<sup>1</sup>

[From Hindi]

*Rashtrabhasha Hindustani*, Part I, pp. 151-2

### 308. . *HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH*

The Harijan Sevak Sangh met in Wardha on 28th and 29th April. Sheth G.D. Birla was considerate and took very little of my time. I have developed a dislike for making speeches, but I consented to answer some of the questions the members had brought with them to Sevagram on the 29th morning. The answers to these will be of use to all Harijan workers. Most were in Hindustani, some in English, and one in Gujarati. I suggested that in future all questions should be in Hindustani. Those who do not know either Hindi or Urdu should make it a point to learn the national language, and until such time as they are unable to write in Hindustani themselves, they must get someone to do so for them.

Q. The Harijan Sevak Sangh is looked upon as a part of the Congress. But very

<sup>1</sup> For the aims and objects of Hindustani Prachar Sabha, *vide* Appendix "Section in the Constitution of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha defining its Aims and Functions", before 1-6-1942

few Congressmen are Harijan workers. Why?

A. The Sangh is not a part of the Congress. It was the outcome of the fast I undertook in 1932 when I was in jail.<sup>1</sup> The meeting of Hindus drawn from every class, which was held under the presidentship of Pandit Malaviyaji and which gave birth to the Sangh, deliberately decided to keep the organization separate from the Congress and non-political. It was this quality of the Sangh that enabled Sheth G.D. Birla to become its President and Shri Thakkar Bapa its Secretary. Nevertheless there are and ought to be many Congressmen in the Sangh, because practically all reformers are drawn into the Congress fold. But it is true that there are plenty of non-Congress persons in the Sangh. It is also true that those Congressmen who are only interested in politics do not come into it. It is, therefore, sometimes wrongly thought that Congressmen do not take an interest in the Sangh. It is the duty of every Congressman to remove untouchability, root and branch, from his life.

Q. Harijan service has really developed into mere Harijan uplift. Practically no work is done among caste Hindus for the removal of untouchability. What is the remedy for this?

A. Experience shows that propaganda among caste Hindus can only be successfully carried out by influential persons whose word carried weight with the general public. Such persons are hard to find.

But it is within the capacity of every Harijan worker to carry on mute propaganda. Our caste-Hindu workers are often satisfied with mere uplift work among the Harijans, which is not sufficient. Many workers, while they do not observe untouchability themselves, are unable even to convert their own families. How then can they influence the outside world? Moreover it is my confirmed opinion that every Harijan worker has to make it a point to beg for even one pice for Harijans from those caste Hindus with whom he comes in contact. If all devoted themselves, heart and soul, to this task, very good results would ensue.

Q. Should not the Sangh take upon itself the service of those Harijans who have been converted to Christianity or Islam and are yet treated as untouchables? Are

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Interview to the Press", 20-9-1932.

we not out to remove untouchability root and branch and therefore help all who come under its sway?

A. This question has already been answered in the columns of *Harijan* but must bear repetition so long as it is raised. The moment untouchability is utterly banished from Hindu society it will, *ipso facto*, disappear from elsewhere too. Whatever the merits or demerits of the case, it is clear that our interference with converts will be the cause of strife with Muslims and Christians. Such converts have either broken off all contacts with, or they have been in their turn boycotted by, Hindus. They have thrown in their lot with other sects whose leaders will not allow them to maintain their old contacts. Hence the H.S.S. quite rightly decided from its inception to confine its area of work to Harijans who had not left the Hindu fold. A convert, having left his original fold, is no longer guided or controlled by it.

Q. What should be the attitude of the Sangh if Harijan boys wish to enlist in the army?

A. They should be allowed to do so. They may not be controlled by the Congress policy or ahimsa. They must be given absolute freedom of choice.

Q. Harijans are of opinion that caste Hindus who are sympathetic to their cause should not use those temples where they are not allowed entry.

A. They are right. It is the bounden duty of Harijan workers not to go where Harijans are not allowed and likewise to dissuade caste Hindus.

Q. Harijans are legally entitled to send their children to many educational institutions as also to draw water from public wells. But public sentiment still militates against this being put into practice. Should Harijans resort to the law courts for justice in these matters or wait patiently until the caste Hindus are converted?

A. Where there is no danger of violence being done to them, the Harijans should exercise their legal right and where necessary resort to law courts. Harijan workers must continue agitation among caste Hindus and not rest content with mere legal rights.

Q. Is it not essential to reform the insanitary methods employed by sweepers for cleaning latrines and scavenging?

A. It is most necessary. What is more, until this is done the

condition of sweepers will remain pitiable. To this end it is the duty of Harijan workers and caste Hindus to do sweepers' work themselves. No caste Hindu will employ the methods used by sweepers. He will do the work scientifically. For example, he will never remove excreta in a basket or carry it on his head; he will cover excreta with dry earth and remove it in a metal vessel. He will avoid touching dirt with his hands as far as possible; he will clean the vessels with water and a rod; he will bathe immediately after doing the work; he will wear special clothes when scavenging. These reforms do not cost much. They require intelligence, hard work and love of an ideal. We may not relegate sweepers' work to one particular class. Therefore all should learn it in the same way as cooking. Each person should be his own Sweeper. If this ideal were to be put into practice in society, the miserable condition of sweepers would at once be rectified.

SEVAGRAM, May 3, 1942

*Harijan*, 10-5-1942

### 309. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

May 3, 1942

CHI. KAKA,

You did not seem sufficiently interested yesterday. I do forget small details. I suggested your name but kept quiet when you declined. You yourself should have suggested someone for Vice President<sup>1</sup>. All that, however, can be rectified. All that we wanted was to put the ship to sea. We shall do something for the Sammelan Committee. But only when Shriman comes. Won't he? Carry on the correspondence. Ask Amritlal to send yesterday's report.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10957

<sup>1</sup> Of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha

### 310. LETTER TO INDUMATI N. GUNAJI

SEVAGRAM, via WARDHA,  
May 3, 1942

CHI. INDU,

I have your letter. Bharatanandji's<sup>1</sup> plan is only an idea. Nothing has yet materialized. It will be all right if you take something from what I have written in *Harijan*.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 10945. Courtesy: Indumati Tendulkar

### 311. NOTES

#### STATES AND THEIR PEOPLE

I have suggested in these columns that the people of the States should remain calm and so far as possible not precipitate a clash,<sup>2</sup> as events are shaping themselves in spite of us. But there is a limit to every such proposal. In Travancore, Mysore and Jodhpur things seem to have gone beyond endurance.

I have already referred to Travancore where two of its best workers<sup>3</sup> have been cast into prison for the simple reason that they are too public-spirited to submit to autocracy.

The same thing is happening in Mysore though in a slightly different manner. The cause is identical. The Mysore State Congress must not be tolerated. I know how the members have tried to placate authority. They have refrained from raising large issues save that they must keep the goal of liberty before the Mysoreans.

And now comes serious news from Jodhpur. There, as in the other States, the local Parishad people have tried to work in co-

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Frydman, a Polish engineer, who became a follower of Gandhiji

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Question Box", 2-3-1942.

<sup>3</sup> Pattom Thanu Pillai, President of the State Congress and G. Rama- Member of the Executive Committee; *vide* "Travancore", 28-4-1942.

operation with authority. They have raised no awkward questions. But the Rajputana States, like many others, have many jagirdars who are co-sharers with the Princes and derive authority from them. They may be termed States within States. These have no law governing them. The British Power has no direct control over them! The Princes are ever afraid of them. They dare not interfere with the exercise of the jagirdars' authority over the people within their jurisdiction. The result is that the people within these *jagirdaris* are the worst off in the Indian hierarchy. There was a clash, as far as my information goes, between the people and one of the jagirdars. This incident promises to lead to a major issue. Associations favoured by authority as in British India are, it is said, being set up against the popular Parishad. If a deliberate attempt is being made to suppress the local associations, the latter must accept the challenge and risk the worst in the full faith that liberty and truth cannot be suppressed for ever. But I would fain hope that the Princes and their advisers will, for their own sakes and for the good of India, curb the tendency in many States which cannot be described by any other adjective than lawless.

#### OPIUM ADDICTS

A correspondent writes as follows:

I do not know whether you are aware that in Rajputana (Marwar) the inhabitants are terrible opium addicts. A wedding or death or any ceremonial occasion necessitates the offering of opium to the visitors. It may even mean the pawning of goods or mortgaging of property, but the opium has to be offered. It is quite an ordinary matter for a person to take 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> or 2 *tolas* of opium per day and sometimes even more. I know of some who can swallow as much as five. When my father died I went home. A Brahmin friend came to condole. The first thing was to offer him opium which is generally kept in a special box. There were three *tolas* in it. The Brahmin said he would help himself. To my astonishment he emptied the entire contents on the palm of his hand and swallowed them. Having done so he said he was not satisfied. When I asked him how much was sufficient he replied 'four *tolas*'! And of course, if opium-eaters do not get their dope at the proper time, they are no better than useless lumps of flesh. This drug habit is eating as a canker into our society.

Deenbandhu Andrews and Pearson<sup>1</sup> laboured on behalf of these addicts. We have not cared for them half as much as we have for the drink addicts. The effects of opium are not so patent as of drink so far as society is concerned. But both the vices have nothing between them to choose. Slaves of opium have their reasons atrophied. They become living automata, having no interest in anything but their opium. How to deal with them is a tremendous question. Not until we have an unlimited band of workers, well trained and seasoned, will it be possible to produce an effect on these helpless members of society.

The medical profession can render valuable assistance by carrying on researches and discovering remedies for dealing with this social disease.

SEVAGRAM, May 4, 1942

*Harijan*, 10-5-1942

### 312. ONE THING NEEDFUL

To those of us who love India and Indians and have tried to serve her people faithfully, the fact that in our hour of distress the hatred against us is growing is a matter of infinite sorrow. I admit we have not played and are still not playing fair by India; but can two wrongs make a right? When even the 'enemy' is in dire distress should he not be given some quarter? In asking us to withdraw are you not inviting your own people to bend the knee to Japan, knowing full well that you have not the non-violent strength as a country to resist any foreign aggression or domination? If you had had it, we could never have kept our hold on you. Will you not forgive past sins and rely on the goodwill of the new generation of Englishmen and women who can no longer think in terms of empire? Barring you, among the Congress leaders, is there anyone who believes whole-heartedly in non-violence? Yours is the only logical position, and you alone are a real friend of Britain.

This is an epitome of a pathetic English letter. I can but repeat what I felt and said in my letter<sup>2</sup> to Lord Linlithgow recording my

<sup>1</sup> W.W. Pearson, a British Missionary, who worked in Bengal was for sometime a teacher in Santiniketan.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the article, "The Simla Visit", 5-9-1939, which Gandhiji had sent to the Viceroy; *vide* "Statement to the Press", 5-9-1939.



impressions of the first interview with him after the declaration of war. I have nothing to withdraw, nothing to repent of. I remain the same friend today of the British that I was then. I have not a trace of hatred in me towards them. But I have never been blind to their limitations as I have not been to their great virtues.

I do not deny the existence of hatred among the people at large, nor its increase with the march of events. But I claim that my national prescription has kept it under subjection and even sterilized it to an extent.

I am convinced, therefore, that the time has come during the war, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world. I see with the naked eye that the estrangement is growing. Every act of the British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest and for its own safety. There is no such thing as joint common interest. To take the extreme case, a British victory over the Japanese will not mean a victory for India. But that is not a near event. Meanwhile the introduction of foreign soldiers, the admitted inequalities of treatment of Indian and European evacuees, and the manifestly overbearing behaviour of the troops are adding to the distrust of British intentions and declarations. I feel that they cannot all of a sudden change their traditional nature. Racial superiority is treated not as a vice but as a virtue. This is true not only in India; it is equally true in Africa, it is true in Burma and Ceylon. These countries could not be held otherwise than by assertion of race superiority.

This is a drastic disease requiring a drastic remedy. I have pointed the remedy—complete and immediate orderly withdrawal of the British from India at least, in reality and properly from all non-European possessions. It will be the bravest and the cleanest act of the British people. It will at once put the Allied cause on a completely moral basis and may even lead to a most honourable peace between the warring nations. And the clean end of imperialism is likely to be the end of Fascism and Nazism. The suggested action will certainly blunt the edge of Fascism and Nazism which are an offshoot of imperialism.

British distress cannot be relieved by nationalist India's aid in the manner suggested by the writer. It is ill-equipped for the purpose, even if it can be made enthusiastic about it. And what is there to enthuse nationalistic India? Just as a person cannot feel the glow of the sun's heat in its absence, even so India cannot feel the glow of freedom without the actual experience of it. Many of us simply cannot contemplate an utterly free India with calmness and equanimity. The first experience is likely to be a shock before the glow comes. That shock is a necessity. India is a mighty nation. No one can tell how she will act and with what effect when the shock is delivered.

I feel, therefore, that I must devote the whole of my energy to the realization of the supreme act. The writer of the letter admits the wrong done to India by the British. I suggest to the writer that the first condition of British success is the present undoing of the wrong. It should precede, not follow, victory. The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait. Assume, however, that it does not; free India will be better able to cope with the invasion. Unadulterated non-co-operation will then have full sway.

SEVAGRAM, May 4, 1942

*Harijan*, 10-5-1942

### 313. QUESTION BOX

#### BARREN COWS

Q. Why may not work such as ploughing or grinding corn be taken from barren cows? Would that not be one way of preventing their going to the slaughter-house?

A. This question used to be much discussed at one time owing to the enthusiasm of a Punjabi who used to advocate the use even of milch cows for draft purposes. He used to claim that they would yield more and richer milk for the exercise given to them. Anyway my devotion to the cow does not preclude me from taking such labour as she can perform without the slightest detriment to her body. The fact is that our treatment of draft animals leaves much to be desired. I would welcome the use of barren cows for gentle labour, if only it

258

would make people more considerate than they are towards the other animals.

#### FROM THE FRYING-PAN?

Q. You advise evacuation<sup>1</sup> of cities likely to be bombed and migration to the villages. Do you imagine the villages to be safe? As a matter of fact the villagers are more panic-stricken than the city-dwellers. There is inadequate police protection, and villagers live in hourly terror of dacoits and robbers. Is it not a matter of jumping from the frying-pan into the fire?

A. I have not suggested migration to the villages for the soft life they will provide. Fright was no ingredient of my plan. It was and still is good even from a military point of view as has now been made abundantly clear. All the danger you present is undoubtedly bound up with the migration to the villages. But that to my mind is an additional reason for it. Who will put heart into the villagers and dispel panic, if it is not the right type of experienced city people? They will cover not only the aged and the infirm who may migrate to the villages, but they will also help and serve the villagers in the many ways I have pointed out in these columns. Courage is indispensable in these times for every true act.

#### ROTATORY GOVERNMENT

Q. In order to solve the communal tangle, why not divide India into two sections as far as population goes, e.g., Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis in one, and Hindus, Sikhs and Depressed Classes in the other. Let the first section rule for a period of five years by means of elected representatives and the second section come in similarly later. Would this not allay the present mistrust? As for Princes' India, could a Committee of elected Princes be entrusted with the work of governing all the States?

A. Your question reads well on paper; but your suggestion, if acted upon, must break down in practice. The act of government is not the simple thing you seem to imagine. What you suggest may work as a toy when the strings are pulled by armed authority. It won't be our government. The puller of the strings will govern. That is the oldway.

I have presented the better way—the non-violent method. In

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Question Box", 13-4-1942 and 26-4-1942.

either case the first condition is that every trace of foreign authority should be removed from the land. Then and then only shall we know our real selves—our strength as well as our weaknesses. When we are untrammelled by foreign or other authority and free, we shall know how to deal with the day-to-day problems. We won't then be governed in the neat way mentioned by you. The arbiter then will be either the sword or reason.

SEVAGRAM, May 4, 1942

*Harijan, 10-5-1942*

### 314. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

SEVAGRAM,

*May 5, 1942*

MAULANA SAHEB,

I sent yesterday a brief reply to your letter. After that I had a long talk with Rajendra Babu, Profulla Babu and Dev. They gave news about Allahabad. In my opinion it is better that Sardar, etc. are allowed to leave the Committee. As it is the working of the present Committee hinders our work. It is not proper to insist on staying together. It is good that we remain together as far as possible but once a major difference of opinion emerges it is better that we part company amicably. Sardar and others also share this view.

I had expressed this opinion to you even earlier. Experience has now confirmed it all the more. In my opinion you should accept the resignations of Sardar and five or six other members and form a new Committee. When it is clear that there are two factions within the Committee why should we pretend that there is only one?

There is a vast difference between the resolution passed and the resolution I had sent. What I intended to tell the world through my resolution is missing here. Sardar tells me that the public opinion is in favour of my resolution.

I do not think it necessary to convene a meeting of the Working Committee to clear the matter. In my opinion first we both should

meet and it will be better still if Jawaharlal can join us. After that if you think proper you may convene a meeting of the Working Committee.

Hope you are well.

*Yours*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Urdu: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### *315. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 6, 1942*

CHI. MRIDU,

I read your letter and immediately destroyed it.

You have no reason at all to worry. I had sent Mirabehn merely to give you the letter and to gain some experience. She was free to discuss non-violence with anyone she chose. Had the Sardar left on that very day, I would have sent the letter through him. More when we meet.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11226. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

### *316. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA*

*May 7, 1942*

CHI. MAGAN,

I did not like your letter. It is not right for you to find your own brother a burden to you. But in this respect, I cannot put pressure on you. I am sure that Ratilal<sup>1</sup> will improve if he can be bathed in love.

That love he cannot have from anybody but you. I cannot

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

arrange for his separate stay. I have no doubt that he will be ruined if he leaves this place. How can Champa<sup>1</sup> live with him? You may therefore do what you think best.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 1028. Courtesy: Manjula M. Mehta

### *317. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

*May 7, 1942*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have told Mathuranath that he can work in the goshala only if you permit him. Even if he works there how can he live in the Ashram? I also believe that those who do not contribute to the work in the Ashram should not live in the Ashram. This is the correct policy.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Do ask me whatever you want to. Nothing is settled about my going.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4423

### *318. TELEGRAM TO CHUNILAL SEN<sup>2</sup>*

[On or after *May 7, 1942*]<sup>3</sup>

THUMB IMPRESSION MUST BE GIVEN.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's telegram of May 4, 1942 saying: "Satin Sen convicted six months. Authorities insist thumb impression under Defence of India Rules. Wire instructions."

<sup>3</sup> The addressee's telegram was received at Wardha on May 7.

319. LETTER TO PARACHURE SHASTRI

SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA,  
May 8, 1942

SHASTRIJI,

I had your letter. Manharji has told me everything. Janakibehn will send the money. I am doing all the rest.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10670

320. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 9, 1942

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

I have been awaiting your letter every day. It has arrived today.

You do need a little rest. Many people have given me reports of Indu's work. She will become perfectly fit if she always maintains good health. They tell me also that Feroze too is doing good work. Everything possible is being done for Chandra Singh. Madhavi has got whooping cough. I visit her every day. Chandra Singh and Bhagirathi appear happy. They do not complain much about the heat now. The problem of Chandra Singh's education is difficult. I am going to Bombay for eight days in connection with the Deenbandhu Memorial. I shall do whatever I can on my return. You should not worry.

Maulana's letters come regularly. He too is unwell. He writes to say that he will be coming to Wardha towards the end of this month. Perhaps you too will be coming along with him?

Ba is well.

*Blessings to both from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Gandhi-Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 321. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

May 9, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

About Dhiren and Pratap, whatever is proper should be done. Chandra Singh's case is different. Go slow with him. Such an exception will have to be made. The true remedy is to take people who are compatible, otherwise the Ashram will lose its homeliness.

Do not worry about non-indulgence of the palate. Let each one go as far as he can. Only go on reminding. Consider that the Ashram is not an Ashram, but we are going to try and become Ashramites a little bit. Here understanding alone can help. About milk and ghee we can do nothing. We should be satisfied with what little we can get.

Tooth-picks should not be used everywhere.

Do whatever you can about water. Let me know on my return. No more today. I hope to leave on the 18th.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4425; also S.N. 24479

### 322. MYSORE

Reference has already been made in these columns about the Mysore Government's repressive measures against the State Congress.<sup>1</sup> Now comes the news of a worse tragedy in the shape of a police charge at Bhadravati resulting in three deaths including a child three years old, from firing by the police on an unarmed crowd. I do not wish to enter into the details. According to the Congress version the whole tragedy arose out of a peaceful labour demonstration. There is a suggestion on the Government side that the firing had to be resorted to because the crowd had attacked the police station in Bhadravati. The President of the Congress denies the charge and demands an inquiry. It will be worthless unless it is admittedly impartial. If the crowd had attacked the police station, what was the cause? If the crowd was non-violent, was the firing a mere wanton

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", sub-title, "States and Their People", 4-5-1942.



awe-inspiring process? In either case the people must learn the art of being killed, and if they are non-violent, without any reason therefore save for their love of liberty. It is a duty then to face death as cheerfully as we face imprisonment. Indeed, I do not know that such a swift ending is not more welcome than the prolonged agony that jail life sometimes becomes. As the struggle becomes wider and more earnest and more real, imprisonment is bound to be, as past experience teaches, increasingly hard to bear. Death for a brave and strong-willed man will then be a welcome relief.

ON THE WAY TO BOMBAY, May 10, 1942

*Harijan*, 17-5-1942

### 323. QUESTION BOX

#### CONGRESS AND LEAGUE

Q. Maulana Saheb has made what I consider a very wise and patriotic suggestion that the Congress Working Committee will nominate five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League when the latter so desire to do. I trust it will commend itself to you. If it does, I should like you publicly to support it. It will go a long way to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together.

A. I have no hesitation in endorsing Maulana Saheb's suggestion. No one would be more glad than I if, with or without my endorsement, the two can come together. I have always felt that there is something radically wrong with both that the most obvious thing, viz., the coming together of the wise men of both with a will to find a solution of the deadlock, has not happened.

#### INGENIOUS METHOD

Q. Your advocacy of the learning of Urdu as part of the national language which you have called Hindustani is all very well. What do you say to the propaganda that is being carried on in the Nizam's Dominions on behalf of Urdu? Here is the first question in a Telugu examination paper:

"If for the purposes of Federation a common language for India is indispensable and the case of Hindustani is strong enough, then it seems to me that as far as this University is concerned it should immediately make Urdu its medium of instruction especially when it happens to be the mother tongue of

this province. Those who would wait till it grows richer are sadly mistaken and argue in a circle. It will remain poor as long as the universities make no use of it in teaching all branches of knowledge.”

Remember that Telugu and not Urdu is the mother tongue of the majority of the people in this part of the country. What do you say to the ingenious method adopted of carrying on pro-Urdu propaganda through examination papers?

A. I admit that the method adopted is both ingenious and strange. An examination paper is hardly a vehicle for propaganda on a question on which sharp division of opinion prevails. I agree that Urdu is not the mother tongue of the people of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions. What proportion of the population knows Telugu I do not know. My notion of an all-India speech does not involve the displacement of the great provincial languages, but its knowledge is meant to be an addition to that of the provincial speech. Nor do I expect that the millions will ever learn the all-India speech. It will be learnt by the politically and those who have inter-provincial connections. Indeed a correspondent suggests that in the place of an all-India speech I should advocate the learning of the languages of neighbouring provinces. Thus he says:

It is far more useful for the Assamese to know Bengali than Hindi or Urdu and now according to you Hindi and Urdu.

If we had not the intolerable burden of learning English not merely as a second language but as a language through which all higher instruction is imparted to us, we should find it child's play to learn our neighbours' speech and certainly learn the all-India speech for all-India contacts. In my opinion a boy or girl lacks culture and accomplishment, if he or she does not know half a dozen languages of India. It is a sure sign of brain fag on the part of English-knowing Indians when they tremble at the very thought of learning a language other than English, not excluding even their mother's speech. For the majority of objectors are English-knowing Indians. I have found no difficulty about the Ashram inmates learning Urdu in addition to Hindi. And I know that in South Africa the Tamil labourers could speak Telugu and *vice versa*, and they had a working knowledge of Hindi. No one had told them that they should learn Hindi. Somehow or other they knew intuitively that they should know Hindi. Of course

they were no scholars, but for mutual intercourse they picked up what was necessary. They picked up also the speech of their neighbours, the Zulus. They could not carry on their business, if they did not. Thus most Indians knew besides their mother tongues two more Indian languages, Zulu, and a smattering of even English. Needless to say many of them wrote no language, and most could write only ungrammatically their own mother tongues. The moral of this is obvious.

If you dispense with the script, you pick up your neighbour's language without effort and without difficulty, and if you are fresh and the brain is not wearied, you can learn as many scripts as you wish without any difficulty. The study is any day interesting and stimulating. The study of languages is an art and valuable at that.

ON THE WAY TO BOMBAY, May 10, 1942

*Harijan*, 17-5-1942

### 324. QUESTION BOX

#### INTELLECTUAL CONVICTION

Q. Intellectually I am convinced that non-violence is the only solution of quarrels between man and man. But by nature I cannot but react violently to acts of hostility to my country or myself. So I am unable to be content with non-violent resistance only against the Japanese. I feel that, in addition to whatever I may be able to do by way of non-violent resistance, I should also do my utmost to help the war effort against them. They have no right to invade my country even though it is in British hands and not ours. But when I think of helping the war effort, my intellectual conviction of non-violence does not allow me to do so with peace of mind.

A. Your difficulty is a common difficulty. But if you have real intellectual *conviction*, it will overcome your nature which is nothing but habit. Your conviction should tell you that non-violence is a force infinitely superior to violence. Hence you do not need to rely upon violent assistance. Moreover you are labouring under a fallacy. Why do you say that the Japanese have no right to invade your country although it is in foreigners' hands? In the first place, the country is not yours while it is in others' hands. You cannot do what you like with it. The foreigners can and do. Secondly, if the Japanese have

enmity against your master, they have every right to attack what your master possesses. We are not examining here the correctness of Japan's conduct in going to war against Great Britain. I am simply pointing out what seems to me to be your mental confusion. The proper course for you is to ask the wrongful possessor to vacate your country. When he has done it you will have the choice between violence and non-violence against the Japanese attack, if it comes. But the thing is not so simple as I have put it. Your difficulty is real. You feel that you cannot defend your country. You have lost it. The English can, if you help them. If the English vacate the country, the Japanese are much more likely to attack undefended India if only for strategic purposes, and you will be utterly helpless against the invading host. Therefore, seeing that the English are in India and they can defend, why not make common cause with them and answer the impending attack? After victory, have they not said, they would go away if they are not wanted? This, I expect, is your argument. In my opinion it is only plausible. The British do not want your help on your terms, as witness the failure of the Cripps mission. They want it on their terms. If, therefore, victory is achieved, the British hold will be ever so much stronger than before. If they will not trust you now, there is no warrant for supposing that they will after victory. They will then ask you with greater force than now to produce the unity which cannot be produced whilst they are here. You get out of all this tangle, if you adopt my method. If you have intellectual conviction, you can approach the problem with the utmost confidence. You are friend to all. You say to the British with the greatest goodwill that, if they leave India, she will take care of herself and will probably escape Japanese attention, and if she cannot, she will answer it with non-violence. Then by that simple act of justice they gain your eternal friendship. It may stand them in good stead even during the present war. For India will then of her own free will help China, Russia and others. If India sets her own house in order, as I have no doubt she will, India can work wonders.

BOMBAY, May 10, 1942

*Harijan*, 17-5-1942

325. *LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

BOMBAY,  
*May 10, 1942*

I had a letter from Jawaharlal only yesterday. He writes that he will be reaching Allahabad on the 22nd and will then decide about coming to Wardha. The Maulana writes that he too will be coming around the same time. I do not know about his coming to Bombay.

He also writes that his health is bad.

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11227. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

326. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

BOMBAY,  
*May 10, 1942*

CMI. AMRIT,

Yesterday the train arrived after ten. Got seats comfortably.

Rangaswami had much to do with our getting the seats. We arrived safe here at 1 p.m. Now I am writing this after beginning my silence. It is 2.35 p.m. I hope it will not be necessary to stay here for more than 8 days. Ba and other patients I hope, are well and Balvantsinha is quiet.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4270. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7902

### 327. QUESTION BOX

#### IF "HARIJAN" IS PROHIBITED

Q. You are going strong. You should know that if the people follow you it must hinder the present war effort. The Government cannot allow it. If they do, you will admit that only the British Government can show such generosity. And what will you do if they suppress it?

A. No Government can afford to be generous. A man is generous when he does something at his own expense. Governments can do nothing at their own expense. But they always succeed in making people believe that they are generous even when they are barely or less than just. Justice is like a debt which has to be discharged. Therefore, if the Government permit *Harijan* to continue its even course, they will do so because it is proper from their point of view. They will not hesitate to suppress it when they think it is improper not to do so. I stated at the time of the resumption of publication that it was no part of my plan to persist in publication in spite of prohibition. I will, therefore, again suspend publication when the Government desire it. If they do, it will be a loss to the public. For, apart from the three weeklies, its articles appear by special permission in Urdu *Hindustan*—Lucknow, *Urdu Harijan*—Lahore, *Marathi Harijan*—Wardha. It is also published in Telugu and Oriya. Articles are sent to them in advance. Numerous other newspapers copy or translate articles from it week by week. There is no generosity in tolerating the publication of such a popular weekly. And my writings will not hinder war effort, if it is voluntary. If they influence the people, surely there is something wrong somewhere. It is not *Harijan* that should be stopped, but the wrong it exposes should be undone. I look upon my writings as a solid contribution to war effort, for he serves a cause best who exposes its weaknesses or those of its representatives. You ask what I would do if they suppress *Harijan*. I must frankly confess I do not know. I have cultivated the habit of not anticipating evil. I am able to know the remedy instinctively when I am face to face with an evil. That is how a godfearing man acts. The fear of God disposes of every other fear. But I can give you this

assurance that suppression of *Harijan* can never mean suppression of me.

BOMBAY, May 11 , 1942

*Harijan*, 17-5-1942

### 328. TO EVERY BRITON

When I had just begun my public career in South Africa I wrote "An Open Letter to Every Briton in South Africa"<sup>1</sup>. It had its effect. I feel that I should repeat the example at this critical juncture in the history of the world. This time my appeal must be to every Briton in the world. He may be nobody in the counsels of his nation. But in the empire of non-violence every true thought counts, every true voice has its full value. *Vox populi vox dei* is not a copy-book maxim. It is an expression of the solid experience of mankind. But it has one qualification. Its truth is confined to the field of non-violence. Violence can for the moment completely frustrate a people's voice. But since I work on the field of non-violence only, every true thought expressed or unexpressed counts for me.

I ask every Briton to support me in my appeal to the British at this very hour to retire from every Asiatic and African possession and at least from India. . That step is essential for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism and Fascism. In this I include Japan's 'ism' also. It is a good copy of the two. Acceptance of my appeal will confound all the military plans of all the Axis Powers and even of the military advisers of Great Britain.

If my appeal goes home, I am sure the cost of British interests in India and Africa would be nothing compared to the present ever-growing cost of the war to Britain. And when one puts morals in the scales, there is nothing but gain to Britain, India and the world.

Though I ask for their withdrawal from Asia and Africa, let me confine myself for the moment to India. British statesmen talk glibly of India's participation in the war. Now India was never even formally consulted on the declaration of war. Why should it be? India does not belong to Indians. It belongs to the British. It has been even called a

<sup>1</sup> The title in fact was "Open Letter", *Vide* "Open Letter", before 19-12-1894.

British possession. The British practically do with it as they like. They make me—an all-war resister—pay a war tax in a variety of ways. Thus I pay two pice as war tax on every letter I post, one pice on every postcard, and two annas on every wire I send. This is the lightest side of the dismal picture. But it shows British ingenuity. If I was a student of economics, I could produce startling figures as to what India has been made to pay towards the war apart from what are miscalled voluntary contributions. No contribution made to a conqueror can be truly described as voluntary. What a conqueror the Briton makes ! He is well saddled in his seat. I do not exaggerate when I say that a whisper of his wish is promptly answered in India. Britain may, therefore, be said to be at perpetual war with India which she holds by right of conquest and through an army of occupation. How does India profit by this enforced participation in Britain's war? The bravery of Indian soldiers profits India nothing.

Before the Japanese menace overtakes India, India's homesteads are being occupied by British troops—Indian and non-Indian. The dwellers are summarily ejected and expected to shift for themselves. They are paid a paltry vacating expense which carries them nowhere. Their occupation is gone. They have to build their cottages and search for their livelihood. These people do not vacate out of a spirit of patriotism. When this incident was referred to me a few days ago, I wrote<sup>1</sup> in these columns that the dispossessed people should be asked to bear their lot with resignation. But my co-workers protested and invited me to go to the evacuees and console them myself or send someone to perform the impossible task. They were right. These poor people should never have been treated as they were. They should have been lodged suitably at the same time that they were asked to vacate.

People in East Bengal may almost be regarded as amphibious. They live partly on land and partly on the waters of the rivers. They have light canoes which enable them to go from place to place. For fear of the Japanese using the canoes the people have been called upon to surrender them. For a Bengali to part with his canoe is almost like parting with his life. So those who take away his canoe he regards as his enemy.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Scorched-earth Policy Again", 27-4-1942.



Great Britain has to win the war. Need she do so at India's expense? Should she do so?

But I have something more to add to this sad chapter. The falsity that envelopes Indian life is suffocating. Almost every Indian you meet is discontented. But he will not own it publicly. The Government employees, high and low, are no exception. I am not giving hearsay evidence. Many British officials know this. But they have evolved the art of taking work from such elements. This all-pervading distrust and falsity make life worthless unless one resists it with one's whole soul.

You may refuse to believe all I say. Of course I shall be contradicted. I shall survive the contradictions.

I have stated what I believe to be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

My people may or may not approve of this loud thinking. I have consulted nobody. This appeal is being written during my silence day. I am just now concerned with Britain's action. When slavery was abolished in America many slaves protested, some even wept. But protests and tears notwithstanding, slavery was abolished in law. But the abolition was the result of a bloody war between the South and the North; and so though the Negro's lot is considerably better than before, he still remains the outcaste of high society. I am asking for something much higher. I ask for a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era, even though there may be protests and wailings from some of us.

BOMBAY, May 11 , 1942

*Harijan*, 17-5-1942

### 329. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

BOMBAY,

May 11, 1942

BA,

I am well. Here it cannot be as hot as it is there. But it is certainly sultry. The night was sufficiently cool. Everyone remembers you. But I do feel that you are better there. You would soon fall ill here, and once you fell ill you would be compelled to stay back, to say nothing of other people having to serve you.

Take plenty of rest. Varma has not yet met me. Today is silence day. Look after Ratilal. You may take it that I will return on the 18th. For the rest, God alone knows.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 330. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

BOMBAY,

May 11, 1942

CHI. NARANDAS,

I had just taken up the pen to write a letter to Jamna<sup>1</sup> when I saw your article. I do not see any point in publishing it. So I am not doing so. Write to me.

Kanaiyo<sup>2</sup> is quite well.

Since I have no time, I stop here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

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

[PS.]

We are returning on Sunday.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8604. Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

*331. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE*

BOMBAY,  
*May 11, 1942*

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I have got your loving gift which I am crediting to the Deenbandhu Memorial Fund. May you live long and fill the purses of many deserving beggars. Why do you write in Gujarati to me alone and to Mahadev in English? The practice of writing in Gujarati will improve both your handwriting and language. When you are in great hurry, you can dictate to a Gujarati amanuensis. You should make a determined effort to overcome your deficiency.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarat :C.W. 4738. Courtesy: Shantikumar  
N. Morarjee

*332. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*<sup>1</sup>

BOMBAY,  
*May 11, 1942*

It was a pity I could not see you, though I passed through Nasik<sup>2</sup>. But such is my condition. I am now arranging to send someone there. I read your letter. I had thought that you had already crossed the Sahara, but it seems you have not.<sup>3</sup> Who knows how many

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji's nephew

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji had passed through Nasik on his way to Bombay for collecting funds for the Andrews Memorial.

<sup>3</sup> The addressee was suffering from tuberculosis and his condition at this time was very bad.

deserts you will still have to cross. Do not lose heart. Many others like you have risen from the sickbed. Am I also not one such? I am not, therefore, giving up hope. The only thing which makes me unhappy is that I cannot keep you with me at this time. But why should I be unhappy even for that reason? You have given a great deal, and if God wills, you will give more.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuni Prasadi*, p. 182

### 333. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

BOMBAY,  
*May 11, 1942*

CHI. AMRIT,

I wrote to you yesterday.<sup>1</sup> I hope you got the letter. Today I am writing during the silence. The silence will end at 2.35 p.m. I finished *Harijan* matter at 12 o'clock. Wrote a lot.

I hope all the patients are well. Manjula will have gone to Maganwadi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4263. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7895

### 334. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*May 11, 1942*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Bari Khan often rings me up to say I should let you come. He says you have been asking him to obtain my permission for you to come. This does not seem right. You have been staying there because it is your duty to do so. How then do you say that you want my permission to come? Mother is going to Patiala. If you want to see her you can do so at a wayside station. I have suggested that she should

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 10-5-1942.

go via Wardha and stay there for a few days.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 473

*335. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA*

*May 11, 1942*

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I hope you have calmed down. What happened is really to be laughed over; not lamented. There was no question of any insult.

Aren't you laughing?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1943

*336. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA*

BOMBAY,

*May 12, 1942*

CHI. BABUDI,

There is no other medicine for Anand but patience. Children suffering from a cough like his do improve. You alone should not sacrifice sleep. The less Anand eats the better. He should take more of hot water with either honey or glucose. He should drink milk, only in small quantities. If you give him mango juice it should be wholly sweet. Put soda bicarb in it. I shall leave for Wardha on Sunday.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 10044. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

### 337. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

BOMBAY,  
[May 12, 1942]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. AMRIT,

Ashadevi has arrived, also the post. It is difficult to write today. I am collecting money. Everything is going on well. Arrange about Balkrishna in Delhi. You must leave on the 28th.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4262. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7894

### 338. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

BOMBAY ,  
May 14, 1942

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. Your complaint about my letters is not justified. What can I do if the letters are lost in transit?

As for Sucheta's<sup>2</sup> suggestion, you may accept it<sup>3</sup> if you think you can shoulder the burden. But first ascertain in detail what work you have to do. You should also consider what will be its place in my preparations. Shankarrao alone should mostly guide you in this respect, for it is he who will have to carry the burden of activities there. I cannot say right now what I shall do. But whatever I decideto do will have to be done immediately.

It is too much to say that I am eager to assume the leadership myself.

<sup>1</sup>The source has April, which is obviously a slip as the postal stamp bears the date 12-5-1942.

<sup>2</sup> Sucheta Kripalani. She was in charge of the Women's Department of All-India Congress Committee.

<sup>3</sup> Charge of the Women's Department of Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee

I expect to leave this place on Saturday. My health can be said to be good.

I do not even know that Sushila is here, then how could she have come to see me?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Mahadev, Pyarelal and Kanaiyo are with me. Pyarelal has gone to Nasik to see Mathuradas.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10427. Also C.W. 6866. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

### 339. INTERVIEW TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"

BOMBAY,

*May 14, 1942*

Q. You have recently asked the British to withdraw from India. Do you think it possible in the present circumstances for them to withdraw all at once? To whom are they to entrust the administration?

A. It has cost me much to come to the conclusion that the British should withdraw from India, and it is costing me still more to work out that conclusion. It is like asking loved ones to part, but it has become a paramount duty. And the beauty [of] and the necessity for withdrawal lie in its being immediate. They and we are both in the midst of fire. If they go, there is a likelihood of both of us being safe. If they do not, Heaven only knows what will happen. I have said in the plainest terms that in my proposal there is no question of entrusting the administration to any person or party. That would be a necessary consideration if the withdrawal was part of a settlement. Under my proposal, they have to leave India in God's hands, but in modern parlance to anarchy, and that anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities. From these a true India will rise in the place of the false one we see.

Q. How is your policy of non-embarrassment reconcilable with this advice?

A. My policy of non-embarrassment remains intact in terms in which I have described it. If the British withdraw, surely there is no embarrassment; not only so, they become eased of a tremendous burden, if they would calmly consider the meaning of the enslavement of a whole people. But if they persist, well knowing that they are surrounded by hatred, they invite embarrassment. I do not produce it by stating the truth, however unpalatable it may appear for the moment.

Q. Already there are signs of civil insecurity, and would not life be even more insecure, were the present administration suddenly to withdraw?

A. Of course, there is civil insecurity, and I have already confessed that insecurity is likely to increase very much only to give place to real security. The present insecurity is chronic and therefore not so much felt. But a disease that is not felt is worse than one that is felt.

Q. Were the Japanese to invade India, what would your advice be to the Indian people?

A. I have already said in my articles that it is just likely that the Japanese will not want to invade India, their prey having gone. But it is equally likely that they will want to invade India in order to use her ports for strategic purposes. Then, I would advise the people to do the same thing that I have advised them to do now, *viz.*, offer stubborn non-violent non-co-operation, and I make bold to say that, if the British withdraw and people here follow my advice, then non-co-operation will be infinitely more effective than it can be today, when it cannot be appreciated for the violent British action going on side by side.

*Harijan, 24-5-1942*



*340. INTERVIEW TO BOMBAY SUBURBAN AND GUJARAT  
CONGRESSMEN<sup>1</sup>*

*May 15, 1942*

Q. It is said that you are going to advise the British to leave India. Is this true? And if they do not listen to your advice, do you intend to non-co-operate with them?

GANDHIJI: Usually an advice is given with the idea that it will be followed. But it may also not be heeded. The advice has, therefore, to be prepared for both contingencies. I do advise the British to leave India. I tell them to go away. And why do I say so? Because they will have to go anyway. They have been suffering defeats right from Singapore, through Burma and now even at the gates of India. Their continuation will therefore mean suffering for India. Yes, I ask them to go. And if they will not? Then I shall have to see. If my advice is not heeded by them, I shall have to force them to go, by non-co-operation or by civil disobedience. Or it may be by both. Of course, you may ask that in the beginning of the war I was for non-embarrassing the British and you may say: What is that policy now? Is this consistent with it? Let me tell you here that I think this is perfectly consistent with it. For the British need my advice. There will be no embarrassment for them; on the contrary. For I say that at present the war is far from their shores. On the Indian front they lack material. At home they have plenty. Let them therefore go back home. That will enable them to fight the Japs better. So, my policy is consistent. Of course, if they do not listen, I must cause them embarrassment. I am helpless. And I do not think it can be individual satyagraha this time. No, it will be mass satyagraha—an all-out satyagraha against the British demanding their withdrawal forthwith. Mind, I am not pro-Japanese. Indeed, Japan is too much of an aggressor for me to be that. But I emphatically differ from Rajaji. For,

<sup>1</sup> According to the source those present at the interview which lasted for about 85 minutes, were Vallabhbhai Patel, Bhulabhai Desai, B.G. Kher, Morarji Desai and other prominent Congressmen. The report of the interview, sent by Sharaf Athar Ali, a Communist worker, to P. C. Joshi, was intercepted. It is not possible to vouch for its authenticity, but the Government placed a high degree of reliance in it and the Viceroy cabled a summary of it to Amery on May 27.

with what can I fight the Japs? The British are the immediate aggressors. Indeed I believe that the entire danger to India would be less if the British withdraw from here. I do not think Japan will invade India then. She wants to fight Britain. She has no concern whatsoever with India. What has India done to incur her wrath? It is Britain who has fought Japan and crossed her path. Therefore Japan wants to fight it. And therefore it is possible that when the British withdraw we shall be able to come to terms with Japan. And if even then she does not listen, then I have the same weapon against Japan that I have against Britain. Japan will not get a drop of water in India. We shall see to that. But resistance to the Japanese by whom? By a free India, not by an India who is not asked whether she would enter the war or not. Here I may point out that I disagree with Rajaji. Rajaji is an old colleague of mine, and my love for him remains as strong as ever. But I do not feel like Rajaji that of the two Britain is better and can be dealt with later—now, Japan. For me an exploiter of other nations is an exploiter, whether he be imperialist or a totalitarian. Names do not matter. Besides, who says the British are better? I do not want to say for a moment that Rajaji will accept National Government outside the Congress, i.e., without its sanction. But have the British offered it? Rajaji is prepared to help them in every way against the Japanese. Then why the hitch? Simply because they do not want us to get the power.

They will not give it. They are what they are and nothing will change them. Yes, Cripps has gone back. But why do not they negotiate again? Through Sapru or Jayakar or even Rajaji? Because, as I said, they do not want to. Their time to go has come. Rajaji concedes Pakistan. But has Jinnah even moved an inch to discuss matters with him? No. For Jinnah's game is to bring Government pressure on the Congress, and Congress pressure on the Government, or both. Rajaji says, let India be split up. But I cannot agree. I cannot swallow the splitting of India. I alone know what pain the thought has caused me. Rajaji is an old friend and an astute politician. And only I know what I suffered to let him go. But he is strong-willed. He believes that he will achieve Hindu-Muslim unity. But what, after all, is Pakistan? What does it mean? Besides, when Cripps came Rajaji was for acceptance. Jawaharlal tried his utmost to get the demand conceded. You know what Jawahar is: a straightforward man. But

nothing doing. And that is what I had said all along with terrible suffering of mind. And that is what people—millions of India—told me at the station. No settlement. Don't settle! Even in Calcutta, some Muslims—good fellows you know—said: “You haven't accepted, have you?” That is what Indians felt. And how can the Government deny it? They go as far as to say: not a single Burman helped the Japs (laughter). But Rajaji still hopes to achieve that which the British have determined will not be achieved: Hindu-Muslim unity. What really is Pakistan? Jinnah has never really explained. Can you tell me? Yes, yes, who denies that?<sup>1</sup> But what is the demand? The masses are duped. Good Mussalmans have failed to explain it to me. Indeed, when I am asked to solve the deadlock, I admit I can't do anything about it. The British make us fight, although I don't hide for a moment that we too want to fight. Else, we would never fight. But the only way to achieve unity is by getting India to ourselves and achieving it. Rajaji talks of the Lahore Resolution<sup>2</sup>. But the resolution is out of consideration. For where is Independence? Anarchy is the only way. Someone asked me if there would be anarchy if the British go. Yes, it will be there. But I tell the British: give us chaos. I say, in other words, leave India to God. But that is putting it in my language, in a language that the masses will not understand. Therefore, I say, leave India to anarchy. We shall have to face it. Better face it than the present state. The Congress mind is neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian nor Parsi. It is this Congress mind—a live reality—that will have to take charge of the anarchy and fashion it into Hindustan. I therefore ask the British to give us the gift of anarchy. If the British withdraw it will be given automatically. If not, then we will create anarchy, by launching satyagraha. I know the general confusion. You find Maulana says one thing. Jawahar another, Rajaji a third and now I a fourth thing. What are we to do? My advice to you is to weigh all the four and decide which to accept for yourself. I have not yet met Jawahar nor Maulana. But as you know well, although Jawahar and myself have differed quite often, he has always been with me as far as action goes. And I hope to win him to me. As for Maulana, we have always stood together since years. So I hope to

<sup>1</sup> Someone had said it was the demand of the Muslim masses.

<sup>2</sup> Passed by the 44th session of the Indian National Congress on December 31, 1929 declaring that the aim of the Congress was complete independence for India

reduce the four different notes to two. Then there will be only my voice and the voice of Rajaji and you can decide which of the two to follow. I cannot say. But I can only say that in this decision do not be influenced by a Bhulabhai here or a Khersaheb there. Decide for yourself. But decide with your reason, for if you just come my way then you will become an obstacle to me. And as for yourself, you will find yourself no more.

B. G. KHER: But will such a mass civil disobedience not mean direct help to the Japanese?

A. Oh, no! We are driving the British. We do not invite the Japanese. No, I disagree with those who think them liberators. Chinese history points that out. In fact I advised Chiang Kaishek when he came here to fight the Japs my way. In fact I believe that Subhas Bose will have to be resisted by us. I have no proof, but I have an idea that the Forward Bloc has a tremendous organization in India. Well, Subhas has risked much for us; but if he means to set up a Government in India, under the Japanese, he will be resisted by us.

And I fear the Forward Bloc people will try their utmost to do so. And again, as I said, we launch our movement only against the British. The Japs can expect us to sign a neutrality pact with them. And why not? Why should they invade us? But if they do we shall resist.

Q. I am in charge of a public trust building. Soldiers want it. They say I should sign a paper saying I gave the building willingly and give it or they will take it by force. Have I to resist them?

A. Not at all, unless of course you want to start satyagraha on your own. For the fight has not begun yet. It will take two months yet for me to launch it. And that is why I wish this talk with all of you today to be kept secret. Please see it does not get into the Press. This language is too high for the Press to grasp. As far as possible, do not let even your friends know.

Q. I want to ask just this: A man is strangling me. Meanwhile another man comes to strangle him. Should I not help the other fellow to strangle my strangler?

A. I am a non-violent person, and I say by all means struggle for your freedom but then stop. My self-esteem will not allow me to help in strangling my strangler. No, I cannot help the Japanese. Having

earned my freedom I remain neutral. But that is a non-violent man like me. The ethics of the violent, as many of you are, are different. Indeed, Russia, erstwhile hater of Britain, can take her aid, and Britain, similar hater, give it to her because both have violence-favouring mind. So to those of you to whom non-violence is not a belief but only a weapon, I say you needn't desist from helping Japan. Nay, to be true to yourselves, you should help it by every means, by even violent means, if possible.

G. P. HUTHEESING: But Babu . . .

GANDHIJI: Sorry, I didn't know you were here (loud laughter).

G. P. HUTHEESING: But Babu, some people say that one's outlook should be wider. That India should not think of her own freedom, but should stand by the international forces of freedom. For example, the Communists: they say that this is a people's war and India should fight Japan as China does. Needless to say, I don't agree with them. But what is your opinion?

A. None could be greater fools (loud laughter). But where is India? India as India does not exist. It is in Britain's pocket How can such India help? And why? The British give us nothing while they demand everything. And after all what help are we not giving? I do not devour the newspapers like you but I have got the information that 1,50,000 recruits are recruited monthly out of which 50,000 are selected. That's not a small matter. Besides Britain gets financial help. Who is going to resist its taxes? The postcard has risen from six pies. But even if it rises to a rupee, am I going to stop writing letters? Then why this clamour for our help? Besides, it is different with China. Her manpower is immense and her armies, unlike ours, are not mercenaries. And most of all her people are military-minded. And what is all this talk of a new mode of life and of international freedom? Can we depend upon Britain and America, both whose hands are stained with blood? India's name can be found nowhere on the Atlantic Charter. Even before the Communists ever said it, I have been thinking of a new mode of life. But it is impossible unless Britain withdraws to let the Indians and the Negroes be free. Then talk to me of a new mode of life. For I believe that such an India will then really serve as an ideal nation in the world and render it service.

*The Transfer of Power, 1942-7, Vol. II, pp. 128-32*

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

BOMBAY,  
May 16, 1942<sup>2</sup>

Q. Would you review the situation created by the Allahabad A.I.C.C. meeting? What would you say regarding Rajaji's quoting your words regarding Pakistan in support of his latest move?

A. I would leave the Allahabad resolutions to themselves. C. R. has quoted me correctly, and I repeat that, if Muslims want anything—no matter what it is—no power on earth can prevent them from having it. For the condition of refusal will be to fight. Supposing Muslims ask for something which non-Muslims do not want to give or could not give, it means a fight. This applies to both the communities. If the Hindus want a thing and if they are all united in the demand, no non-Hindus can resist them, unless they want to fight. But my hope is that some day or other all parties will come to their senses and not insist on their demands being accepted, and consent to go to arbitration. It is an age-long method and a civilized method, and I hope it will be accepted.

But it is from the frustration of every effort made to bring about unity by me, among many others, that has arisen the, for me, logical step that not until British power is wholly withdrawn from India can there be any real unity, because all parties will be looking to the foreign power. For the time being it is British but it may be French, Russian, Chinese, even then it would be the same thing. I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that real heart-unity, genuine unity, is almost an impossibility unless and until British power is withdrawn and no other power takes its place, that is to say, when India not only feels but is actually independent without a master in any shape or form. Nevertheless I shall try and welcome every effort for peace, well knowing that it is likely to be fruitless.

Q. There is a report about some new scheme that you want to propound in one

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "The Bombay Interview". According to *The Hindu*, 18-5-1942, the interview lasted for an hour and some sixty Press representatives were present.

<sup>2</sup> From *The Hindu*

of your *Harijan* articles about non-violent non-co-operation if any invader came to India. Could you give us an idea?

A. It is wrong. I have no plan in mind. If I had, I should give it to you. But I think nothing more need be added when I have said that there should be unadulterated non-violent non-co-operation, and if the whole of India responded and unanimously offered it, I should show that without shedding a single drop of blood Japanese arms—or any combination of arms—can be sterilized. That involves the determination of India not to give quarter on any point whatsoever and to be ready to risk loss of several million lives. But I would consider that cost very cheap and victory won at that cost glorious. That India may not be ready to pay that price may be true. I hope it is not true, but some such price must be paid by any country that wants to retain its independence. After all, the sacrifice made by the Russians and the Chinese is enormous, and they are ready to risk all. The same could be said of the other countries also, whether aggressors or defenders. The cost is enormous. Therefore, in the non-violent technique I am asking India to risk no more than other countries are risking and which India would have to risk even if she offered armed resistance.

Q. But, unadulterated non-violent non-co-operation has not been successful against Great Britain. How will it succeed against a new aggressor?

A. I combat the statement altogether. Nobody has yet told me that non-violent non-co-operation, unadulterated, has not succeeded. It has not been offered, it is true. Therefore, you can say that what has not been offered hitherto is not likely to be offered suddenly when India faces the Japanese arms. I can only hope that, in the face of danger, India would be readier to offer non-violent non-co-operation. Perhaps India is accustomed to British rule for so many years that the Indian mind or India's masses do not feel the pinch so much as the advent of a new power would be felt. But your question is well put. It is possible that India may not be able to offer non-violent non-co-operation. But a similar question may be put regarding armed resistance. Several attempts have been made and they have not succeeded. Therefore, it will not succeed against the Japanese. That leads us to the absurd conclusion that India will never be ready for

gaining independence, and seeing that I cannot subscribe to any such proposition, I must try again and again till India is ready to respond to the call of non-violent non-co-operation. But if India does not respond to that call, then India must respond to the call of some leader or some organization wedded to violence. For instance, the Hindu Mahasabha is trying to rouse the Hindu mind for an armed conflict. It remains to be seen whether that attempt succeeds. I for one do not believe it will succeed.

Q. Would you advise non-violent non-co-operation against scorched-earth policy? Would you resist the attempt to destroy sources of food and water?

A. Yes. A time may come when I would certainly advise it, for I think it is ruinous, suicidal, and unnecessary—whether India believes in non-violent non-co-operation or in violence. And the Russian and Chinese examples make no appeal to me. If some other country resorts to methods which I consider to be inhuman, I may not follow them. If the enemy comes and helps himself to crops, I may be obliged to leave, because I cannot or care not to defend them. I must resign myself to it. And there is a good example for us. A passage was quoted to me from the Islamic literature. The Caliph issued definite instructions to the armies of Islam that they should not destroy the utility services, they should not harass the aged and women and children; and I do not know that the arms of Islam suffered any disaster because the armies obeyed those instructions.

Q. But what about factories—especially factories for the manufacture of munitions?

A. Suppose there are factories for grinding wheat or pressing oil-seeds. I should not destroy them. But munitions factories, yes; for I would not tolerate munitions factories in a free India if I had my way. Textile factories I would not destroy and I would resist all such destruction. However, it is a question of prudence. I have not suggested immediate enforcement of the whole programme in pursuance of the demand for British withdrawal. It is there of course. But I am trying, if I am allowed to continue to cultivate and educate public opinion, to show that behind this demand of mine there is no ill-will, no malice. It is the most logical thing that I have suggested. It is in the interests of all, and since it is an entirely friendly act, I am



moving cautiously, watching myself at every step. I will do nothing in haste, but there is the fixed determination behind every act of mine that the British must withdraw.

I have mentioned anarchy. I am convinced that we are living today in a state of ordered anarchy. It is a misnomer to call such rule as is established in India a rule which promotes the welfare of India. Therefore, this ordered disciplined anarchy should go, and if there is complete lawlessness in India, as a result, I would risk it, though I believe, and should like to believe, that 22 years of continuous effort at educating India along the lines of non-violence will not have gone in vain, and people will evolve real popular order out of chaos. Therefore, if I find that all the best effort fails, I would certainly invite people to resist destruction of their property.

Q. Can India give her moral sympathy or support to either of the parties to the war?

A. My own personal view is well known. And if I can convert India to my view, there would be no aid to either side; but my sympathies are undoubtedly in favour of China and Russia.

Q. But what about Britain?

A. I used to say that my moral support was entirely with Britain.

I am very sorry to have to confess that today my mind refuses to give that moral support. British behaviour towards India has filled me with great pain. I was not quite prepared for Mr. Amery's performances or Sir Stafford Cripps's Mission. These have, in my estimation, put Britain morally in the wrong. And, therefore, though I do not wish any humiliation to Britain—and therefore no defeat—my mind refuses to give her any moral support.

Q. What about America?

A. I expressed my opinion some time ago that it was a wrong thing for America and unfortunate for the world peace that America, instead of working, as she could have worked, for world peace, identified herself with war.

Q. But was there any alternative for her?

A. I am sure she would have, if she had intended, brought about peace. But it is my firm opinion that she did not use her opportunity.

I know that I have no right to criticize such a big nation. I do not know all the facts that determined America to throw herself into the cauldron. But somehow or other, opinion has forced itself upon me that America could have remained out, and even now it can do so if she divests herself of the intoxication that her immense wealth has produced. And I would like to repeat what I have said about the withdrawal of British power from India. Both America and Britain lack the moral basis for engaging in this war, unless they put their own houses in order, while making a fixed determination to withdraw their influence and power both from Africa and Asia, and remove the colour-bar. They have no right to talk about protecting democracies and protecting civilization and human freedom until the canker of white superiority is destroyed in its entirety.

Q. Would you advocate arbitration for the Indo-British problem? And if so, of what sort?

A. Any day. I suggested long ago that this question could be decided by arbitration. How to bring that arbitration about, I do not know. But if the British rulers will accept the principle, it should not be impossible to find impartial arbitrators though I admit it is a tremendously difficult problem to find impartial arbitrators in this case.

Q. But you may say the same thing about finding arbitrators on the domestic question too?

A. No. It is a comparatively simpler thing. Where British power is concerned it has such great influence and power—and rightly so—it would be difficult to get hold of arbitrators who would not be biased in favour of Great Britain and deliver a fearless and just award.

Q. Cannot there be any arbitration on the question of independence?

A. No, not on the question of independence. It is possible only on questions on which sides may be taken. The outstanding question of independence should be treated as common cause. It is only then that I can conceive possibility of arbitration on the Indo-British question. But, as I have said, it is a most difficult question. If ever there is a real adjustment, it will come only when Britain feels that it is wrong to rule over another nation. But when that conviction goes home, they won't need arbitration—we in India

won't. But if there is to be any arbitration—and I cannot logically say there should not, for if I did, it would be an arrogation of complete justice on my side —it can be done only if India's independence is recognized.

Q. Why did you not go to America in 1931, even though you were pressingly invited by Bishop Fisher?

A. Because I had no faith in myself. The invitation was very pressing indeed, and the offer was sincere, and I could easily have spared a fortnight, but I had no faith that I would be able to do any good to India. It would have been a nine days' wonder. I would be lionized and torn to pieces. The American people would listen to you, lionize you, but would go their own way. Gurudev had been there, Vivekanand had been there, and his followers are still there. But the soul of America is untouched because of her worship of 'the golden calf'. As a people they are, after all is said and done, worshippers of Mammon.

Q. Does not America send her troops to India for a personal and selfish motive?

A. I suggest a better way of putting the question: "Is it not disastrous for foreign armies to come to India when India has sufficient man-power?" If you put the question like that, my answer is: "Decidedly so."

BOMBAY, May 18, 1942

*Harijan*, 24-5-1942

### 342. TALK TO DONORS<sup>1</sup>

BOMBAY,

[Before May 17, 1942]<sup>2</sup>

I am not exaggerating when I say that Santiniketan is worthy of greater support than the Bangalore Research Institute for which Tata gave Rs. 30 lakhs. I wonder if the Research Institute is known anywhere outside India. But Santiniketan is known wherever the Poet's name is known, and known as an institution that inspired the Poet's great poetry. The Poet used to call it his toy or plaything, but his poesy would have been barren without the plaything. Santiniketan, whose school of art and culture attracts students from far and near, has produced painters and poets and scholars. There are among those who humbly serve it a scholar like Kshiti Babu and an artist like Nanda Babu, who are both unrivalled in their respective domains. And no institution of this type in India is managed with so little finance.

Our devotion to the Poet will remain as long as we live. But how can we have the same devotion for Santiniketan? How long will it last?

The institution which inspired the Poet received in its turn inspiration from the Poet, and you may be sure that there are people there who will devote their lifetime to its service. Santiniketan is a romance. It grew out of the Poet's father's idea to found a home of peace and culture. It is a tragedy that monied men, who have gained so much from Santiniketan, do not appreciate its full worth. The Poet is an asset for India and for the world for all time, and it is the duty of monied men to put his institution on a sound basis....

You can never give too much to Santiniketan.

Q. But we are in the midst of turmoil. These are not times for money collection. Can't we wait until we have won our freedom?

A. Rabindranath could not wait to come to the world until freedom was won.

*Harijan, 24-5-1942*

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report "Bombay Responds Generously"

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji left Bombay for Sevagram on May 17, 1942

### 343. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

[May 17, 1942]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. AMRIT,

All well. Off to the station. Collections finished.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4122. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7431

### 344. NOTES

#### DEENBANDHU MEMORIAL

I am glad to be able to inform the readers of *Harijan* that the efforts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Sheth Ghanshyamdas Birla, who had asked me to go to Bombay for eight days for the purpose of finishing the Deenbandhu Memorial collections, have been crowned with full success. Only over Rs. 60,000 were collected in response to the appeal through the papers. The whole of the balance of five lacs was collected during the eight days' strenuous labour. Bombay has never disappointed me whenever I have gone there for collections. I am most grateful to the donors for their generosity. They have taken a great load off my mind. I am quite clear that they have never given to a better cause. The memorial to Deenbandhu started by and at the wish of Gurudev became on his death memorial to Gurudev, in which the former merged. The object of both could only be identical. Subscriptions were required partly for the discharge of monies due by Santiniketan and largely for the building, etc., mentioned in the original appeal. I may mention that while the donations received included large sums from wealthy men they included also small sums from unknown persons from all over India. They were received from all communities, Parsis, Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus. I repeat the thanks on behalf of the fellow signatories and myself to the donors for their generous donations as also to the friends who

<sup>1</sup>From the postmark

organized the collection and laboured to make it a success.

#### HARIJAN COLLECTIONS

If the collections I make at railway stations and at evening prayer when I am out of Sevagram are any index to the progress of the removal of untouchability it must be very substantial, for I notice that the response is more liberal than before. Hardly a bystander at stations or a visitor to the prayer meeting refrains from giving his mite. Much need not be made of the response. But there can be no doubt that if the cause did not make any appeal, the response would be meagre, if any. Whereas it was hearty and willing. It gave me great joy as I studied the smiling faces of those who gave. The Bombay collection for the seven meetings was Rs. 4,000. Each day's collection showed a substantial rise on the previous day. Thus the first day's collection was Rs. 205-5-6 and the last Rs. 1342-10-9.

ON THE WAY TO WARDHA, May 18, 1942

*Harijan*, 24-5-1942

#### 345. NOTES

##### CONFUSION

There is evidently confusion in some minds about my invitation to the British to withdraw. For a Britisher writes to say that he likes India and her people and would not like willingly to leave India. He likes too my method of non-violence. Evidently the writer has confused the individual as such with the individual as the holder of power. India has no quarrel with the British people. I have hundreds of British friends. Andrews's friendship was enough to tie me to the British people. But both he and I were fixed in our determination that British rule in India in any shape or form must end. Hitherto the rulers have said, "We would gladly retire if we know to whom we should hand over the reins." My answer now is, "Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy." I invite every Britisher who loves Britain, India and the world to join me in the appeal to the British Power, and if it is rejected, to adopt such non-violent measures as would compel the Power to comply with the appeal.

## WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE?

Some Pressmen asked me in Bombay what Sir Stafford could have done in the absence of an agreement between the Congress and the League. I gave the answer. I do not know whether it has appeared anywhere.<sup>1</sup> Anyway it is better for the public to know what answer I gave to the question. Sir Stafford could have asked either the Congress or the League to form the cabinet. If he had done so, probably the party they entrusted with responsibility would have succeeded in having the co-operation of the other party. In any event the Government would then have dealt with the real representatives of their party rather than having their own nominees. I do not know that they made any such offer either to the Congress or the League. So far as the public know the negotiations did not break over the want of agreement between the two organizations but over differences with Sir Stafford as to what powers the British Government wanted to part with during the war.

Sevagram, May 18, 1942

*Harijan*, 24-5-1942

## 346. QUESTION BOX

### THE DIFFERENCE

Q. You have repeated in your interview to the Press in Bombay what you have said often that nothing can prevent the Muslims from having what they want unless the objecters would fight over the issue.<sup>2</sup> What is the difference between you and Shri Rajagopalachari's attitude?

A. Though he has quoted me in his support I see the same difference between him and me that there is between chalk and cheese. He yields the right of secession now to buy unity in the hope of keeping away the Japanese. I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin. My statement amounts to the enunciation of the proposition that

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Interview to the Press", 16-5-1942. This particular question and answer did not, however, appear in the report of the interview as published.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

I cannot prevent my neighbour from committing a sin. Shri Rajagopalachari would be party in the sin, if the neighbour chooses to commit it. I cannot be party. What is more, I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements will look to it for support and will get it. Their interest is greater than the independence of their country. No one need throw my other statement in my face, viz., that there is no independence without unity. I do not withdraw a word of it. It is an obvious truth. From its contemplation I have discovered the formula of inviting the British power to withdraw. Their withdrawal does not by itself bring independence. It may induce unity or it may lead to chaos. There is also the risk of another power filling in the vacancy if it is there. If, however, the withdrawal is orderly and voluntary the British not only gain a moral height but secure the ungrudging friendship of a great nation. I wish all conflicting elements and interests will make a combined effort to rid India of foreign domination. If they do not, any understanding with them will be like a house built on sand. Fear of the Japanese occupation of India has blinded C. R. to the obvious truth. Independence sheds all fear—fear of the Japanese, of anarchy, and of the wrath of the British lion.

SEVAGRAM, May 18, 1942

*Harijan*, 24-5-1942



347. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 18, 1942

CHI. MIRA,

Your first letter was received in Bombay. You will keep me posted. Things moving well. Love.

BAPU

SHRI MIRABEHN

CONGRESS HOUSE

CUTTACK

ORISSA

From the original: C.W .6497. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9892

348. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

May 18, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

It is the *Harijan* day today. Where is the time for writing letters? It is warm no doubt but I do not feel it much. Everyone is well. Mathew is ill. I brought along Jaisukhlal's little daughter<sup>1</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4264. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7806

<sup>1</sup> Manu Gandhi

### 349. LAWLESSNESS IN SINDH

Prof. Ghanshyam, assisted by Shri Assandas, a worker in Thar Parkar, has recently visited the area affected by the Hurs' rebellion.<sup>1</sup> He has prepared an elaborate report of which he has sent me a copy. The following is a condensed summary of the report in the Professor's own language:

Not many people in Sindh realize the grave situation that has arisen owing to the activities of the Hurs. Hurs are followers of the Pir of Pagaro who has been arrested by Government and is said to be under detention in Nagpur. All his followers are not Hurs. His following is said to run in lacs. The Hurs are mostly concentrated in Sanghar, Sinjhoru and Shahdadpur Talukas. They are considered to be a criminal tribe and several of them were kept in criminal settlements. These were abolished some years ago. But they were still under orders to report themselves regularly to the police. The Hurs believe that their Pir has been arrested on the false reports of the police against him. They nurse the grievance that none of them is allowed to interview him. They are said to complain of policeoppression in having to report themselves daily at police stations.

After the arrest of the Pir of Pagaro, search of his house near Sanghar and destruction by fire of the huts attached to the bungalow where the Pir's followers used to gather, have so enraged the Hurs that they have started on a fierce campaign, as a challenge to Government, of murders, dacoities, attacks on railway stations, destruction of property in P.W.D. bungalows, cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, making breaches in canals, etc. There is not a day when reports of these criminal activities are not received. They were in the beginning mostly confined to Sanghar, Sinjhoru and Shahdadpur Talukas, but have now spread to other parts of Sindh also, specially the Khipro Taluka which adjoins Sanghar Taluka. The Hurs may be said to have risen in rebellion against the Government with a view to get the Pir of Pagaro released. They

<sup>1</sup> On April 1, 1942, Martial Law had been proclaimed in the area. An official communique said, "Over a period covering more than six months the Hurs have by wholesale murder, sabotage and dacoity terrorized whole district . ." On May 13, 1941, the Government of Sindh had issued orders under the Arms Act and under the Defence of India Rules, suspending all gun, rifle and revolver licenses held by individual non-officials. (The *Indian Annual Register*, 1942, Vol. I, pp. 65 and 83-4)

have such an intense faith in him that they are prepared to sacrifice their all and even their lives for his sake. It is now more than six months since the Pir of Pagaro was arrested. In the beginning of this period the frequency of the criminal activities of the Hurs was not as great as now. With the passage of time their activities have assumed not only greater frequency but have extended to other talukas than the original three. The Hurs have started their own Government. Not only have they appointed a leader whom they call their King but have appointed commanders, captains, etc. They are said to have divided themselves into groups, and assigned separate jurisdiction to each group. Their activities were in the beginning directed against Government and those whom they considered as enemies of the Pir of Pagaro or who in any way aided Government against them. But it appears they have changed their tactics and are now attacking all and sundry. No one seems to be free from their attacks, whether he be a zamindar or a *sethia*, Hindu or Muslim, a high-paid official or a petty *kotar* or *beldar*, rich or poor, innocent or guilty. Even women are not spared. There is a tradition that Hurs do not attack women or innocent persons. But it is said latterly young and mischievous elements among them have thrown the old traditions to the winds and spare no one. With a view to make their activities more effective, they have started a deliberate move for collecting rifles, guns, ammunitions, clothes, and money. Latterly their attacks in many cases have been directed against those who are in possession of these things. In this way they are said to have collected many guns and a large amount of money—cash or ornaments. They organize their attacks in military fashion and are on occasions dressed in khaki shirts and shorts. When the Khipro-Sanghar bus was attacked on the 16th April, the commander of the groups was not only dressed in khaki but wore a hat also. Those who attacked ex-military zamindar Beantsing near Shahpur Chakar were also clad in military dress. This put Khalsa Beantsing off guard. He approached to greet them thinking they were some military soldiers. They attack and shoot under orders. They are also said to be levying taxes from zamindars and merchants. Threats are given to them that their 'Kharas' of wheat would be burnt or they would be dealt with in some other way if they did not pay taxes to them, as they declare themselves to be the Government in those areas. It is said that many people do yield to their threats as otherwise not only their property but even their lives are at stake. There is a general belief in the affected areas that Government are powerless to protect those who render aid to the authorities or who refuse to submit to the dictates of the Hurs. Several

persons who have acted thus have been murdered or been targets of other attacks. People are in a state of sheer helplessness. It must not be supposed that Hurs are responsible for all the crimes that are now being committed in Sindh or even in the above talukas. Taking advantage of the situation created by the Hurs several unsocial and criminal elements, of which there is an abundance in Sindh, have let themselves loose, thinking either that the suspicion of their crimes would fall on the Hurs or the police would not take effective steps against them being preoccupied with the Hur menace. The two main streams of criminal activities: one of the Hurs and the other of non-Hur criminals, have combined into a mighty current which has now flooded the whole of Sindh in general and the above talukas in particular. The enormity of the situation can be realized from the fact that normal functioning of the Government machinery in this area has ceased. In the Sanghar Taluka all the police posts are said to have been abolished and only one police station has been retained in the Taluka Headquarters, for fear of their being attacked and overpowered by the Hurs and their rifles being taken away. The police parties that go out for investigation of crimes return to the headquarters before sunset. Being afraid of attack at night, they do not venture to do their normal work after sunset. The withdrawals of police posts and the return of police parties to Taluka Headquarters before sunset have so emboldened the Hurs and other elements that they think the British Government has ceased to exist for them. Like the police, the normal functioning of the Revenue Department has also to some extent ceased. The *tapadars*, I was informed, find it very hazardous to move out in 'Tapas' and so they are working in Taluka Headquarters. All revenue collection is done at the Taluka Headquarters and not at the *tapadar's deras*, as is normally done. One *tapadar* was robbed of his revenue collection; two *kotars* were killed. It was said that one Mukhtiarkar had to go under police escort for remission work and had to change his dress for that of an ordinary rustic to escape detection as an official. Officials and subordinates are so terror-stricken that they do not function as they would normally do. Even the District Magistrate has to guard himself very strongly during his movements. It was said that trees have been cut off from near his bungalow lest dacoits under cover of these make an attack on him. Even when he goes to play tennis in the club near his bungalow, he has to go heavily protected. Armed police men are stationed near the tennis-court and round about the club. Camel-men who carried the kit of Deputy Collector were threatened with dire consequences. They reported the matter and were given strong armed escort.

Similar is the fate of the Public Works Department in the affected area. P.W.D. bungalows have been attacked. There is no safety even for zamindars who keep themselves protected with arms as they are being now selected for attacks with a view to rob them of their guns and ammunition.

The Government have taken some measures to bring the situation under control. Special police has been stationed in hundreds in the affected areas. A special District Magistrate and a special District Superintendent of Police have been put on duty to suppress the Hur menace, with jurisdiction over both the Thar Parkar and Nawabshah Districts, as the area affected forms part of both these districts. Military has been sent to aid the police. The Sindh Assembly passed a special Hur Menace Act in secret session to meet the situation, setting aside ordinary procedure of criminal law in the matter of security proceedings and trials for scheduled offences against Hurs and those who aid them. All these measures have so far proved ineffective in bringing the situation under control. The things are going from bad to worse. The police is concentrated in Taluka Headquarters and a large portion of it is used in guarding Government offices and officers. It was complained that it was not sufficient for the task before it. The offences are so many that it is not possible for it to trace each one. The military simply gives patrol rounds at times. These have ceased to create any awe among the Hurs and so have become ineffective in suppressing their rising. The public will be surprised to learn that up to this time, most of the arrests in connection with specific offences in the affected area are those of '*non-murids*', that is those who do not follow the Pir of Pagaro. I have stated above that some unsocial and criminal elements other than Hurs have, taking advantage of the situation, started indulging in crime. Some of these elements have been arrested, but so far as the Hurs are concerned, who are directly connected with any specific offence, there has been almost no arrest, compared to the long list of the offences committed. It is true a large number of Hurs, which is estimated to be overfifteen hundred, have been roped in, but they have been arrested not as a result of pursuit in specific offences but were rounded up with a set plan of which they were not aware, on the occasion of their reporting their presence to police as most of them are required to do.

None, or almost none, of those who are absconding and who are said to be responsible for murders, dacoities, robberies, etc., have been arrested.

The Government machinery has evidently broken down. The

real remedy is for Congress members to withdraw from the Assembly and Khan Bahadur Allabux and his fellow-ministers to resign. These should form a peace brigade and fearlessly settle down among the Hurs and risk their lives in persuading these erring countrymen to desist from the crimes. A deputation known to Pir Pagaro should visit him and induce him to issue unequivocal instructions to his followers to stop their murderous activities. This should not be on condition of release. If he is aggrieved he is entitled to an inquiry. The Government should take the public into their confidence. All this can be done without the resignation of Congressmen and the ministers, it may be urged. My answer would be that the resignations are necessary as proof of the earnestness of the members and the Khan Bahadur and his co-ministers. If they remain in the Assembly they cannot give undivided attention to their task. The decisive reason, however, for my recommendation is that there should be an admission of their helplessness to do anything effective through the Assembly to put a stop to these rebellious activities. That should be an earnest of their desire to make room for those who think they can deal with the grave situation with better effect. The resignations must produce a healthy effect among the people. The selflessness and courage of resigners is likely to prove infectious and induce others to join them. The murder of Sheth Sitaldas, a member of the Assembly, regrettable though it is in every respect, pales into insignificance in face of Prof.

Ghanshyam's gruesome report. Let the murder serve as a spur to the other members to go among the Hurs and court murder in the act of weaning them from their unlawful and inhuman activities.

ON THE WAY TO WARDHA, May 18, 1942

[PS.]

Since writing the above, I have heard about the terrible railway accident resulting in several deaths including that of Sir Gulam Hussain Hidayatulla's son. The shooting by the Hurs thereafter shows the state of desperation they have reached. This emphasizes the recommendation I have made. Nothing short of such heroic action will bring the Hurs to their senses. Frightfulness will only make matters worse. I hope that all parties will join in the attempt to rid Sindh of the spreading rebellion.

SEVAGRAM, May 19, 1942

*Harijan*, 24-5-1942

350. LETTER TO TAYYABULLA

May 19, 1942

DEAR TAYYABULLA,

I am helpless. You should approach the President.

Yours,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 63

351. WHAT SHOULD BE THE MAXIMUM DEDUCTIONS  
FROM THE SPINNERS' WAGES<sup>1</sup>

Q. There are many opinions on what should be the percentage to be deducted from the spinners' wages, for providing khadi to them.... I request you to guide the khadi workers by explaining through *Khadi Jagat* what the policy is and how the percentage of deduction should be determined.

A. In fact in raising the wages of the spinners the Charkha Sangh was guided by only one consideration: namely, that it was its duty as a philanthropic organization to give adequate wages to those who had never got them. The Charkha Sangh came into existence neither for those who wear khadi nor for those who want to be self-sufficient in clothes but for those who produce khadi by their labour, particularly the spinners. The idea behind it is that spinning is a source of livelihood for crores of people and if they get sufficient work, starvation can be mitigated to some extent.

Now if we want to raise the wages of the spinners we can do so only if all the people wear khadi, otherwise all the spinners cannot get enough work. There is no need for an organization like the Charkha Sangh for helping only a few persons. If it is obligatory for all the persons to wear khadi, then certainly the spinners must also wear it. It will be as good as giving them a dole if the spinners do not wear khadi and we go on giving them higher wages than they demand. To give such a dole was never the aim of the Charkha Sangh.

<sup>1</sup>This was originally published in *Khadi Jagat*.

So on the one hand it was our duty to give more wages to the spinners, on the other it was our duty to make them and their families wear khadi. For the observance of the latter dharma we can certainly tell the spinners to utilize the extra wages they are getting in meeting the expenses on khadi.

But we would not have succeeded in doing that and so we adopted the middle path. We made whatever progress we could. We had no means of forcing others, have none and shall have none. The Charkha Sangh is a symbol of ahimsa and at the same time a great experiment in it. It is based purely on a sense of justice. It endeavours to do justice to those who have long been denied it. All of our decisions should therefore be guided purely by a sense of justice.

It must be remembered that our aim is to give to all the spinners an anna for an hour. But we have fallen short of it. We do not have the means to reach that rate. Our tools are not such that they would enable the spinners to earn an anna for an hour's work.

It is our duty to give higher wages to the spinners if we can in these days of rising prices. Only the experts on charkha and those experienced in this field can decide about it.

One has to use one's discretion while arriving at a decision. If common sense suggests that from the increased wages of the spinners we should not make a deduction in order to make them khadi-wearers, then we should under no circumstances make any deduction. We should never make deductions by which the spinners are compelled to buy more than their family requirements. In other words we have to regard the spinners as members of our family and collect money from them accordingly. We should never take undue advantage of their ignorance. We should realize their requirements and take the necessary steps.

SEVAGRAM, May 20, 1942

[From Hindi]

*Harijan Sevak*, 31-5-1942



352. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C. P.,  
May 20, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

I had all your letters. No difficulty in deciphering your Hindi. As easy as your English. This I write in English for your pleasure. It is being written with the cent per cent swadeshi pen. It is giving good work.

I note the questions you have raised. I must try to answer them next week.

Ba is keeping well.

The weather is not too trying. The nights are quite pleasant. On my return I found I was reduced to 98\_. I was bound to lose that much. The work was strenuous. There is no cause for worry for I am otherwise quite well.

Here is a letter received today as also one from Badshah Khan. I should not wonder if some Hindu girls are kidnapped or Hindus murdered. I do not know how much truth there is in the charge against the official world. However, we must wait, watch and pray.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: 3687. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6496

353. *LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE*

May 20, 1942

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

I have your answer at last.

I won't argue with you about Abha. You had consented to her betrothal. It was I who because of her fault had suggested the suspension. At the time of the betrothal you were sure of securing your wife's consent. I do not know what has happened now. But that is your concern. It is news to me that in Bengal people are averse to

their girls going out of Bengal or out of so-called caste. I know many Bengali girls who are married out of Bengal and are perfectly happy. You have yourself contemplated Veena's marriage anywhere. You want her to make her own choice. And she is likely to do so, if she lights upon a young man to her liking.

In any case I propose to send Abha to Rajkot. People here won't believe that Abha's marriage with Kanu is an uncertainty. Naturally neither Abha nor Kanu like such talk. Abha will have Veena's company and Narandas's personal attention.

So far as *Harijan* articles are concerned, you may take any you like so long as the translation is accurate and you do not mention my name. I should not be understood to have in any way identified myself with your activity. But of course you have my blessing in the performance of any worthy service.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10340. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

### 354. LETTER TO LAKSHMI GANDHI

May 20, 1942

CHI. LAKSHMI,

You have passed in the first division. I am glad. Keep up the progress.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1994

355. *LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 21, 1942

MY DEAR MALKANI,

I have your letter. From my writings my opinion must be clear to you. For yourself I can say quite clearly, if your heart tells you that you should take the sword you will not hesitate to do so. In these times everyone must be left to himself to do what impels him to [*sic*]. If the Congress discipline comes in the way you should resign even as I advised Munshi<sup>1</sup> to do. The country should get your full service.

Dr. Gopichand saw me after his return from Sindh.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 949

356. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

May 21, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

I got your two letters together. I simply can't write letters.

Mahadev explains everything. I will not be hasty. You will have to go to Delhi.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4265. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7897

<sup>1</sup> K. M. Munshi

357. *LETTER TO HIRALAL SHASTRI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 21, 1942

BHAI HIRALAL SHASTRI,

Your lamenting is needless. Let us be vigilant. Everyone makes mistakes. Sohanlalji is well, I expect,

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Hiralal Shastri Papers. Courtesy Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

358. *LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

SEVAGRAM,  
May 21, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I seem to recollect that I had answered your previous letter. The present one is easy to answer. Your wishes should prevail in the work that has been entrusted to you. But in a non-violent constitution law as law vanishes and we never feel its stress. So when someone violates a law we are charitable towards him. Have you understood this?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4426; also S.N. 24480

### 359. QUESTION BOX

The six<sup>1</sup> questions that follow are from workers who endorse my plan for the withdrawal of the British Power. The answers have to be read in the light of the plan. The workers should know that no plan, however wise it may be, can produce the intended effect if it does not commend itself to those for whose benefit it is presented, or if they are too weak to follow it out. Now for my answers:

#### NOT RIGHT

Q. Are we right in believing that you wish the Congress and the people to become capable as soon as possible of taking over the administration and to do so on the first opportunity?

A. You are not right. I cannot speak for the Congress. But I want no organization or individual to become capable of taking over the administration. In non-violent technique, it is unthinkable. You do not take over power. It may descend to you being given by the people. In an anarchical state, all turbulent elements will make a bid for power. Those who will serve the people and will evolve order out of chaos will spend themselves in removing chaos. If they survive, the popular will may put them in as administrators. This is wholly different from what you have imagined. People who make a bid for power generally fail to achieve it.

Q. In resisting unjust military or civil orders, is the primary motive (a) protest against the Government action, (b) alleviation of the peoples' sufferings, or (c) a preliminary step towards the capture of power?

A. The central point of my conception is non-violence. In trying to educate the people to be without the British or any power, the chief thing is to resist all injustice, no matter how or by whom it is perpetrated. Here resistance is not by way of protest, certainly not a preliminary step towards gaining power. I want thousands of people to resist injustice. If they all were to do so to seize power, they will never succeed. It is surely enough for them to resist the injustice they feel. It

<sup>1</sup> The answer to the sixth question was written on May 23, 1942, and hence appears under that date under the heading "Question Box".

is in itself a duty.

Q. Do you expect individual Congressmen to offer resistance in cases where the villagers or general public are not prepared to come forward?

A. If I can speak for Congressmen I would say most emphatically "yes". People who are terror-struck have no gumption. Those who have, have to intercede even at the cost of their lives.

#### SELF-PROTECTION

Q. Shall we go to reason with the officials who refuse to allow the organization of self-protective units? And if they do not listen, shall we still go on?

A. People have to protect themselves against officials, against dacoits and possibly Japanese. If they do not, they are doomed.

Therefore they may not brook any interference with their preparation. But they may not bear arms without licence. What I have in mind is gymnastics, drill, lathi play and the like. The authorities are not likely to interfere with these practices. But if they do, the people affected may disregard prohibition and take the consequences.

#### SALT

Q. Villagers here are much troubled for want of salt which they used to get largely from Calcutta. If they defy the Salt Laws they can easily make sufficient stocks for the needs of the Province. Cattle in these parts are given no salt. If salt became free this serious defect could also be removed. May we advise the people to make all the salt they need for the Province? After the rains begin they will not be able to make salt.

A. Manufacture of salt for home consumption is covered by the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. The ten-mile radius at present is unworkable. I do think that in these hard times the restriction should be relaxed and as far as possible the people should be left to help themselves. The main revenue from salt is not likely to be affected by the laxity of administration in favour of the poor people. I would advise local adjustment with the authorities.

The idea underlying my plan, however visionary or even mischievous it may appear to be, is that if the setting given is non-violent and the workers understand and carry it out, the withdrawal of British authority can take place without much disturbance and certainly without the Japanese replacing that authority

unless, as has been suggested, the popular mind is in favour of the Japanese.

While I was preparing this note, I received a letter from Rajen Babu who writes as follows about salt:

During my tour I have made it a point to meet representatives of merchants and traders at every place I visit, with a view to ascertaining the position of stock of food-stuffs, kerosine oil and salt and other necessary articles of daily consumption. At every place it has been impressed on me, both by merchants and members of public, that a most serious situation is developing with regard to supply of salt. A big shortage in salt is apprehended at almost every place that I have visited and unless immediate steps are taken it may cause great hardships and sufferings to the people, particularly to the poor who very often have to depend only on salt to enable them to gulp the coarse food they can somehow manage to get. The steps to control the price of salt are ineffective. It is worse than useless to control the price of an article of vital necessity, without ensuring a regular supply of it. The price fixed remains only on paper and cannot be enforced unless there is arrangement to ensure a supply of the commodity. Despite the price fixed by the Government, salt sells at higher prices at many places particularly in mofussil. But what is feared is much more serious than mere high prices, viz., more or less total disappearance of salt from the market and grocers' shops. I am told that orders placed by the merchants are not executed by the people at the centres like Khewra and Shambhar. There is nothing like price control there and a lot more than the apparent price has to be paid by the merchants if they want to get a supply. It is said that this extra cost comes to something like Rs. 300 to Rs. 400 or even more per waggon in addition to the standard price of Rs. 1,075 for 550 maunds. At Calcutta although the price control has fixed Rs. 170 for 100 maunds the actual price paid by the buyers is Rs. 270. This is the state of price control. The difficulty in securing a waggon is not the least of the difficulties that has to be encountered. With increasing difficulty in supply of waggons the prospect is dismal. The Government should take immediate steps to ensure a regular supply of salt: (a) by securing a regular supply of waggons, (b) by ensuring a just and fair distribution of the available stock among dealers, (c) by opening new sources of supply of salt, and (d) by removing all restrictions on the manufacture of salt from sea-water at seacoast and from earth in the interior. It must be realized that dislocation of transport may make

it impossible for salt to be carried from long distances and efforts should be made to make it available within manageable distances so that ordinary means of country transport like bullock-carts, boats, pack bullocks, horses and mules may be employed for transporting it. With the monsoon already in sight it is already very late and any further delay in taking effective steps may mean untold sufferings.

I wish the authorities will listen to Rajen Babu and relax the restrictions before it is too late and people suffer before actual war overtakes the land.

#### IN CASE OF REQUISITION

Q. Land is being requisitioned for military aerodromes and villagers are being ordered to vacate. If no reasonable arrangements are being made for the villagers should the orders be resisted? Or should we resist in any case as we do not want the aerodromes which are in themselves a danger, not a protection, and no arrangements can ever adequately compensate a peasant for his house and fields?

A. No resistance on the ground of all war resistance is contemplated in the present plan. Resistance is permissible only if villagers do not get equal facilities elsewhere in the shape of land and cottages. No monetary compensation can give evacuated people the land they will need. High-handedness should be resisted.

SEVAGRAM, May 22, 1942

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

### 360. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 22, 1942

CHI. MIRA,

You must have received my p.c.s or letters, I forget which. If you get *Harijan*, it is more than my weekly letter.

I have fully discussed your questions with Gope Bapu. Nevertheless I am answering all your important questions in *Harijan*. Herewith is an advance copy. The answers should not be published before they appear in *Harijan*.



I have shared your letter with Asha, Mahadev and Kishorelal. Your power of description is of a high order. It makes your letters delightful reading.

From my answers you will see that I want to hasten slowly. I do not want to precipitate matters. Our steps must be firm but gradual so that people may understand them so far as it is possible. A time must come when the thing may become beyond control. We may not purposely let it go out of control. Is this clear?

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6498. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9893

### *361. LETTER TO KRISHNA VARMA*

*May 22, 1942*

BHAI KRISHNA VARMA,

Kakasaheb has been suffering from an itch for the past one year. Please examine him and if you can diagnose the disease, treat him. Kakasaheb is addicted to work and, therefore, will not be able to spare much time to stay there. See what you can do. Please write to me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10992

### *362. WHY THE DIFFERENCE?<sup>1</sup>*

A professor writes:

You have advised the British to withdraw. About the Princes you say, "But I would fain hope that the Princes and their advisers will, for their own sakes and for the good of India, curb the tendency in many States which cannot be described by any other adjective than lawless." Why not ask the Princes whose tyranny is older and perhaps more deep-rooted than that of the British

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

to abdicate immediately?

I am surprised that the professor has failed to see the distinction between the Princes and the Paramount Power. The Princes (present) are a creation of the Paramount Power. They derive their authority from it. Their abdication will not end the Princely rule. Another will immediately take the vacant place and in the absence of one the State will be under British administration. Thus, whichever way you look, you will find the British power by its very nature blocking the way to Truth.

SEVAGRAM, May 23, 1942

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

### 363. *FRIENDLY ADVICE*

Thus reasons a friend:

Most people will agree with you that Britain's inability to play fair by India deprives them of the right to expect even our moral support. Ideologically also most people will agree with you that their only honourable course would be to withdraw from India. But inevitably the withdrawal will confront us with immense difficulties which you yourself have admitted. You say you are willing to take all risks. Every brave man is. At the same time is it not your duty to prepare the ground up to a point so as to minimize the risks as far as possible? The people must, for instance, be made to shed cowardice and feel that it is possible for us to stand on our own legs. They must not desire, as so many do, Japanese help or even submit to Japanese domination as they would have to if that help were taken. They must be weaned, as far as possible, from hatred of the British. And then every effort must be made to secure Muslim support. This is your last and supreme effort to bring freedom to India. Let no step be taken in haste or without due preparation. The time is too critical to bear failure.

As these columns show, with the overwhelming sense of the truth as it appears to me, I am taking every care humanly possible to prepare the ground. I know that the novelty of the idea, and that too at this juncture, has caused a shock to many people. But I could not help myself. Even at the risk of being called mad, I had to tell the truth if I was to be true to myself. I regard it as my solid contribution to the

War and to India's deliverance from the peril that is and the peril that is threatening. It is too my real contribution to communal unity. No one can visualize what it will be like. Only it will not be the sham we have had up to now. It has touched only the few politically minded people. The masses have remained unaffected by it.

Whilst therefore I will take every imaginable care consistent with the urgency, I cannot guarantee freedom from cowardice before taking any forward step. The cowardice will probably not be shed without much travail. Nor is waiting possible, till hatred abates. Withdrawal of the hated power is the only way to rid the land of the debasing hatred. The cause gone, hatred must cease.

Of course the people must not, on any account, lean on the Japanese to get rid of the British power. That were a remedy worse than the disease. But as I have already said, in this struggle every risk has to be run in order to cure ourselves of the biggest disease—a disease which has sapped our manhood and almost made us feel as if we must for ever be slaves. It is an insufferable thing. The cost of the cure, I know, will be heavy. No price is too heavy to pay for the deliverance.

SEVAGRAM, May 23, 1942

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

### 364. QUESTION BOX

#### OUT OF TOUCH

Q. Do you know, being confined in Sevagram, how much you are out of touch with the public? If you were not you would not talk of resisting the Japanese as you do. For the dislike of the British is so great that the man in the street is ready to welcome the Japanese.

A. I cannot endorse your proposition that I am out of touch with the public. Though I am confined in Sevagram I see all sorts of people and receive correspondence from every nook and corner of India. Probably, therefore, I am more in touch with the people than you can be though living in a big town. You have not the opportunity that I have of gauging the public mind. But let us grant that what you say is right—I believe you are partially right,—my suppressing the

true remedy will not alter the public mind. On the contrary, I am showing the futility of hatred. I am showing that hatred injures the hater never the hated. An Imperial power cannot act otherwise than it has been doing. If we are strong the British becomes powerless. I am therefore trying to wean the people from their hatred by asking them to develop the strength of mind to invite the British to withdraw and at the same time to resist the Japanese. With the British withdrawal the incentive to welcome the Japanese goes and the strength felt in securing British withdrawal will be used for stemming the Japanese inroad. I endorse C.R.'s proposition that the millions of India can resist the Japanese even without the possession of arms, modern and ancient, if they are properly organized. I differ from him when he says that this can be done even when the British arms are operating without co-ordination when you force yourself on the British power. Experience teaches us that hearty co-ordination and co-operation is impossible where mutual trust and respect are wanting. British presence invites the Japanese, it promotes communal disunion and other discords, and what is perhaps the worst of all, deepens the hatred born of impotence. Orderly British withdrawal will turn the hatred into affection and will automatically remove communal distemper. So far as I can see the two communities are unable to think or see things in their proper perspective as long as they are under the influence of the third power.

SEVAGRAM, May 23, 1942

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

### 365. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 23, 1942

MY DEAR C.R.,

So Laxmi has passed first class!<sup>1</sup> This is mere introduction.

Though we differ as poles asunder, my heart goes out to you in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lakshmi Gandhi", 20-5-1942.

your stand against hooliganism at your meetings.

I found in Bombay it was no use my making any attempt to see Q. A.<sup>1</sup> Moreover he was not there. You know you are to come here almost monthly to rest here and be free from the care of attending meetings.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Kamalnayan asks me whether the house you are in may be transferred to you or any of the family.

From a photostat: G.N. 2086

### *366. LETTER TO RATHINDRANATH TAGORE*

*May 23, 1942*

DEAR RATHI<sup>2</sup>,

I finished the collection last Sunday. It was a sight to see the subscribers coming in. There were some complaints which I must discuss with you when I have a bit of time.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI RATHINDRA NATH TAGORE

SANTINIKETAN

EAST BENGAL

From C.W. 10352. Courtesy: Visvabharati, Santiniketan

### *367. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

SEVAGRAM,

*May 23, 1942*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Since Prithvi Singh has lost faith in me,<sup>3</sup> our relations have come

<sup>1</sup> Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah

<sup>2</sup> Rabindranath Tagore's son

<sup>3</sup> Prithvi Singh was of the opinion that India should co-operate with the British in the war against Japan

to an end. Gopalrao<sup>1</sup> will leave that work. I think Nathji<sup>2</sup> and Kishorelal<sup>3</sup> will end their connection with the Sangh. What Prithvi Singh does we shall know by and by.

Give me news from there. Something must happen soon.

I have suggested to Prithvi Singh that he will himself have to announce his loss of faith in me. If he does nothing, I shall have to say something ultimately. You may tell our people about the break in our relationship. I suppose it would be best to keep silent about Limdi for the present.<sup>4</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

68 MARINE DRIVE

BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine*, p. 275

### 368. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*May 23, 1942*

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your letter. You are right. You have been writing every day. Continue writing in the same way.

I was to reach Sevagram on the 18th. Quaid-e-Azam was not in Bombay. I also learnt that it would be no use seeing him. There is no occasion to go to Bombay again.

You should take rest, lots of rest and improve your health.

I have a letter from Balkrishna saying he has arrived at

<sup>1</sup> Gopalrao Kulkarni, an instructor in the Ahimsak Vyayam Sangh which was started by Prithvi Singh

<sup>2</sup> Kedarnath, Vice-President of the Ahimsak Vyayam Sangh

<sup>3</sup> Kishorelal Mashruwala

<sup>4</sup> A large number of people had left the State because of harassment by the State Government. *Vide* "Lawless Limbdi", 20-2-1939 and "Limbdi", 31-8-1939.

Dalhousie. Lala Hansraj should not be troubled. I am sending Balkrishna's letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4266. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7898

### *369. FOR RAJAJI*

There is no doubt that Rajaji is handling a cause which has isolated him from his colleagues. But his worst enemy will not accuse him of any selfish motive behind the extraordinary energy with which he has thrown himself into the controversy of which he is the author. It reflects the greatest credit on him. He is entitled to a respectful hearing. His motive is lofty. It is a noble thing to strive for Hindu-Muslim unity, equally noble to strive to ward off the Japanese intrusion. In his opinion the two are intertwined.

Hooliganism is no answer to his argument. The disturbances at his meetings are a sign of great intolerance. Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents or having listened make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst with the limits that nature has put upon our understanding we must act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be everready to find that what we believed to be truth was, after all, untruth. This openness of mind strengthens the truth in us and removes the dross from it, if there is any. I plead therefore with all who are disturbing Rajaji's meetings not to do so but to give him a patient and respectful hearing to which he is entitled.

The reader knows that I hold Rajaji to be in the wrong. He is creating a false atmosphere. He does not believe in Pakistan nor do the nationalist Muslims and others who concede the right of separation or secession. They and Rajaji say that that is the way to wean the Muslim League from the demand for separation. I am surprised that many Muslims rejoice over a concession of doubtful value. I see nothing but seeds of further quarrel in it. It should be

enough to state the proposition that nothing can prevent the Muslim League from having it if the Muslims really want it. They will take it by the vote or the sword unless they will submit to arbitration. But all this can only happen when the British Power is entirely withdrawn and the Japanese menace has abated. Till then there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan or any other 'stan'. It is today Englishtan and may be tomorrow Japanistan, if we do not take care. If all who consider India to be their home now and for ever will pull their full weight to deliver it from the present and the impending peril, and when both the perils are finally removed, it will be time to talk of Pakistan and other 'stan's and to come to an amicable decision or fight. No third party will or should decide our fate. It should be reason or the sword. Rajaji's method leads us to the blind alley unless his admirable and patriotic persistence opens a way unknown to him or any of us. Whatever the fate of different opinions, my plea is for mutual toleration and respect.

SEVAGRAM, May 24, 1942

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

*370. LETTER TO TOFAIL AHMAD<sup>1</sup>*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 24, 1942*

MY DEAR TOFAIL AHMAD,

Though your argument is good I am afraid no good will come out of publishing it at the present juncture.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 11395

<sup>1</sup>This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated May 19, 1942, enclosing an article on joint electorates for publication in *Harijan*.



371. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

May 24, 1942

MY DEAR KU,

Strange I was counting the days to see when you were coming. Since you promise to labour you will be deemed worthy of your hire.

I am glad B.<sup>1</sup> has returned. It is good Sita has not returned. June is the month when the hot winds stop. She is too frail to take kindly to this heat.

It will be time before I can deal with your speech. I need much peace for developing my theme.

Love,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 10165

372. LETTER TO PRATAPRAI M. MODI

May 24, 1942

BHAI PRATAPRAI,

I have received your book<sup>2</sup>. I would like to read it, but I cannot spare a single moment to read such books. You will please, therefore, excuse me.

*Vandemataram from*  
M. K. GANDHI

PROF. PRATAPRAI MODI  
'PARIMAL'  
TAKHTESHWAR PLOT  
BHAVNAGAR (KATHIAWAR)

From Gujarati: C.W. 1637. Courtesy: Prataprai M. Modi

<sup>1</sup> Bharatan Kumarappa

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu Dharmana Mul Tatvo*

373. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

May 24, 1942

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I feel that it would be desirable to give some formal position to Krishnachandra. We may call him Assistant Manager and define his field of work. If you approve, you may, if you like, put the suggestion before the Executive Committee. You are the best judge of what would be the proper thing to do. I do not remember the rules.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10609

374. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

May 24, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

We have so arranged it here that anyone who needs anything should ask for it. The designation may be Assistant Manager and the sphere of work may be defined. My suggestion did not mean that you were to make the announcement. That will be done by Chimanlal or me. I merely suggested the remedy.

The next step can be taken after I have received your suggestion. I shall see about it now.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4428

375. A NOTE<sup>1</sup>

May 24, 1942

The solution is simple. Everyone should be told what each one's field of work is.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4427

376. LETTER TO PARACHURE SHASTRI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 24, 1942

SHASTRIJI,

I have your letter. Yes, what you write about mother cow is right. Janakibehn lives here. She is happy. I am in good health. We shall meet some day.

Get well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10669

<sup>1</sup>This was written on a letter received from Krishnachandra.

### 377. *TERRIBLE IF TRUE*<sup>1</sup>

A terrible tale of ordered anarchy comes from Khurja. A correspondent writes to say that, for no cause he can understand, practically all normal activities have been stopped.<sup>2</sup> Even the sale of bamboos and mats for biers was prohibited. Even building activities have been stopped causing the greatest inconvenience and damage. Money is taken from the people on the slightest pretext and a reign of terror prevails. I have given here the barest outline of the doings in Khurja in the hope that there will be full investigation and if the facts are true further damage will be prevented.

SEVAGRAM, May 25, 1942

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

### 378. *INDIAN SOLDIERS RUN AMUCK?*

I take the following from the report of the Secretary, B.P.C.C., on the shooting alleged to have taken place by soldiers of Indian Signal Corps on 17th and 18th instant at Nivodhai near Duttaparkar in Barasat sub-division, Bengal:

A batch of Indian troops about 7 or 8, while engaged in sinking telephone posts entered the garden of Rabindranath Bose at about 1 p.m. on the 17th May, plucked fruits and wilfully damaged green mangoes and jack-fruits, etc., whereupon Rabindra and Shashindra protested against their conduct. The soldiers thereupon assaulted them and kicked Shashindra when he fell down. Shashindra was attended by Dr. Tulsidas Sarkar, a local medical man. The soldiers also raided the house of Hari Charan Das and Sashanka Das and damaged the cooking and other utensils and threatened the local people with dire consequences.

.. Pachu Gopal Mookherjee, President, Union Board, Suresh Chandra Dey (Honorary Magistrate) and Dr. Tulsidas Sarkar lodged the first information at Barasat Thana at about 5-30 p.m. and reported the matter to the S.D.O., Barasat and sought his protection. The S.D.O., thereupon, directed the Thana

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

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to H. L. Sharma", 25-5-1942.

officer to post four constables at Nivodhai village in the morning of the 18th and 19th May. The complainants carried written instructions from the S.D.O. to the Thana officer, but unfortunately no police constable was found in the village on the 18th morning, when that unfortunate firing took place.... Next day on the 18th May, the soldiers numbering about 25 came to the scene of occurrence with arms at about 7 a.m. Out of these men about 12 or 13 entered the Nivodhai village at 8.30 a.m. and started patrolling the streets using abusive language to the villagers and womenfolk and threatened them with their rifles and bullets. They, then entered the tailoring shop of Ratan Das and assaulted him. After assaulting Ratan Das they again entered the garden of Robin Bose, knocked at the door and threatened to assault the female members of the house. The panic-stricken inmates having raised a hue and cry, a large number of villagers (40 to 50) assembled there to rescue them. Thereupon, the troops gave a signal to the other members of the corps who were waiting in the neighbourhood, when they also ran to the place of occurrence.

Four or five local young men, namely, Sushil Kanjilal, Bejoy Kumar Mukherjee, Sambhu Nath Dutta and Santosh Nath approached the soldiers and requested them not to intimidate the innocent people and asked them to leave the place, whereupon they got enraged and assaulted Sushil Kanjilal on the head with the butt end of a gun (he has since been removed to Calcutta Medical School Hospital for treatment). At this the villagers got frightened and tried to run away when Bejoy Mukherjee was pushed down by the soldiers and a tussle ensued between them, then he fell into the adjacent tank and the soldiers got hold of him and ducked him in water. The villagers, thereupon, being exasperated ran to his rescue and some of them pelted stones at the soldiers. They then left Bejoy in the tank and opened six rounds of shot as a result of which Bejoy was wounded and fell down. Santosh Nath and Sambhu Dutta also received gun-shot wounds and have subsequently been removed to Calcutta Medical School for treatment. The condition of Santosh Nath is reported to be very serious. Immediately after firing the signallers left the place dragging the body of Bejoy towards the place where the military lorry was standing. After the soldiers had gone away, villagers began to search for the victim when Sudarshan Mukherji, Sripada Mukherji, Bojomohon Bose and others found Bejoy in a dying condition with intestines ripped open and groaning under the bush, near the Railway Home Signal in a ditch close to Rabindra's garden. He was carried to the nearest Kalibari where he died saying that he was dragged in and trampled upon by the booted-soldiers on his chest and other parts of the body and was also bayoneted. He could say no more and he succumbed

immediately.

It was a deliberate and cold-blooded murder. The whole village seems to be exceedingly panic-stricken. The police did not arrive on the 18th morning although the S.D.O., Barasat, apprehending some trouble directed them to post constables at Nivodhai from the 18th morning. If the police authorities had been a bit more vigilant the catastrophe could have been averted.

Santosh Nath who had since been lying in a precarious condition died on the 20th morning at Calcutta Medical School Hospital.

No comment is necessary on this wantonness on the part of the so-called defenders of India, assuming the truth of the statement.

SEVAGRAM, May 25, 1942

*Harijan*, 31-5-1942

### 379. LETTER TO GOPARAJU SATYANARAYANA MURTI

*May 25, 1942*

DEAR MURTI,

If you and your wife can put up with the hard life here, live separately and your wife can undergo the Ashram discipline, you can come.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6089

### 380. LETTER TO PURATAN J. BUCH

*May 25, 1942*

CHI. PURATAN,

I have your letter. You should tell him what you have told me. If you wish me to tell him on your behalf, I can do so. Constructive work should not produce such effect. All our activities have swaraj as their aim. We may give them up whenever it becomes necessary to do so. It would be better for you to discuss your views with Naraharibhai.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9185

381. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

May 25, 1942

CHI. NARAHARI,

There is a report in the newspapers that burglars broke into the Ashram and made away with some things. How far is it true? I would not be surprised if something like this had really happened. Do you remember the remedy I had suggested? I hope you do. We have not been able to employ it fully. No time would be inopportune for making a start.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9127

382. LETTER TO MULJIBHAI T. SHARMA

May 25, 1942

BHAI MULJIBHAI,

You are unduly sensitive. We should not resent harmless popular sayings. Why should a Baniya take the saying, 'I see you are after all a Baniya', to be a reflection on himself? What if cowardice is attributed to a Baniya? Or if a Brahmin is believed to get wise after the event? As for me, I look upon the barber's occupation as an honourable one, for barbers have some knowledge of home remedies too.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

BHAI MULJIBHAI TULSIDAS SHARMA

NAYEE HIND SABHA

DANDIA BAZAAR

BARODA, B.B.& C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of Gujarati: G.N. 3966; also C.W. 1

### 383. LETTER TO ABDUL HUQ

SEVAGRAM,  
May 25, 1942

BHAI SAHEB,

You had promised to send me your scheme concerning Hindustani. It is yet to come. Do please send it.

An Association has already been formed at Wardha. I enclose a copy of its rules. May I hope you will be a member? A number of posts on the executive have been left vacant with a view to accommodating persons like you.

Dr. Tara Chand has agreed to join the Association provided Abid Saheb also joins it. It would be good if you could join it.

From Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 384. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

SEVAGRAM,  
May 25, 1942

CHI. SHARMA,

I received your two letters. They are distressing. I am sending a small note<sup>1</sup> for *Harijan*. Let us see what happens. Your duty on such occasions is to fight to the death. I cannot tell you from here how. Bamboo should be made available for biers to carry corpses and building activities should go on. You have however stopped building the house. If the order is still in force, you can resume construction after giving notice. You should not depend on my advice for everything. Do you read what I write in *Harijan* these days?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

From a facsimile: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, between pp. 310 and 311

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Terrible If True", 25-5-1942.



### 385. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

SEVAGRAM,

May 25, 1942

MAULANA SAHEB,

I had received your letter. Since there was nothing particular to write I did not reply. However, the Sind affair is worrying me.

Dr. Choithram<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Ghanshyam<sup>2</sup> and others have written to me. I have written to them that as long as they are in the Congress, they will have to do as you say. But for how long can they be held back?

There are other issues too about which I am writing in *Harijan*. I hope you do read *Harijan*.

I hope you will come here after you have recovered. Jawahar is coming tomorrow.

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

### 386. LETTER TO DR. A. U. KAZI

May 25, 1942

BHAI KAZI,

I have your letter. I remember you quite well. I can certainly take work from you but, I suppose, your requirements would be considerable.<sup>3</sup> Please let me know what they are. Can you stay in Ahmedabad or would you like to be with me at Sevagram?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Urdu original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Choithram Gidwani, President of the Sind Provincial Congress Committee

<sup>2</sup> Prof. K. T. Ghanshyam

<sup>3</sup> The addressee had expressed a wish to work for the *Urdu Harijan*.

### 387. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 26, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

You have given me a graphic account of the interview.<sup>1</sup> It was a good thing you wrote and you got an appointment. Of course, he was sweet and friendly and will always remain so. But that makes no difference to the plan. It will mature slowly. You therefore need not be in a hurry to come away. The weather is much too hot for you.

Love.

BAPU

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

MANORVILLE

SIMLA W.

From the original: C.W. 4123. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7432

### 388. LETTER TO VITHALDAS V. JERAJANI

May 26, 1942

BHAI VITHALDAS,

I am thinking over your letter of the 12th. Who can predict what will happen if there is a conflagration? But, without worrying about it, we have to think of what we can do. We will discuss that at the forthcoming meeting.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of Gujarati: S.N. 9803

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had met the Viceroy on May 23 and, according to the report sent by the latter to Amery, pleaded "that first the Americans and then the British should vacate India bag and baggage". *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. II p. 134

### 389. LETTER TO HANUMANTHA RAO

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 26, 1942

BHAI HANUMANTHA RAO,

I have only now been able to reach your letter of May 2. I feel you ought to have written with greater frankness. If your heart is fully cleansed, I think you should clearly say something like "For a lapse in the performance of public duty I have decided to . . ." <sup>1</sup> I think it is your duty to make some such statement. You can still make amends even by issuing a simple statement.

I hope you will be able to read my handwriting.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 390. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 26, 1942

BHAI MOTI BABU,

I hope you can read Devanagari. I am glad you like my articles.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 11057

<sup>1</sup>The words within quotes are in English.  
VOL. 82: 9 FEBRUARY, 1942 - 6 JUNE, 1942

391. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*May 27, 1942*

CHI. AMRIT,

J. L.<sup>1</sup> has passed the whole day here. We have had a heart to heart talk. It is all to the good. We shall meet again. He has got to go for the Lucknow meeting.

Your letter. I told J. L. about your anxiety to meet him, but Shummy's boil prevented you. He thought it was your visit to the V.<sup>2</sup> I hope he is better for the lancet cut.

The heat is on the increase. It increases but to decrease. I don't want you to witness the process.

Ba is flourishing. Did I tell you I had gone up to 101 lb.? I think I have.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

MANORVILLE

SIMLA W.

From the original: C.W. 4124. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7433

<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>2</sup> Viceroy

### 392. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

May 27, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I had talks with Jawaharlal all day long. They were cordial and we understood each other perfectly. Choithram<sup>1</sup> leaves things to you. You should be firm. If you go by my opinion, you should write a letter. I asked Jawaharlal. He says that the Congress member should quit and so should Allabuksh. This is the position. If, however, you yourself think differently, I have nothing to say.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

It is surprising that there is no improvement in your health. The cold must go. Do you clean the nose by taking in soda and salt through it? If there is no improvement you should come and stay here.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 276*

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Choithram Gidwani, President of the Sindh Provincial Congress Committee

<sup>2</sup>*Vide* also "Lawlessness in Sindh", 19-5-1942.

393. CONVERSATION WITH MEMBER'S OF  
THE RASHTRIYA YUVAK SANGH<sup>1</sup>

May 28, 1942

Commenting on the poor physique of the members Gandhiji said:

These days our bodies are completely devoid of muscles. The bodies of the boys sitting opposite me, just like my body, are without muscles. What message should I give them? I can tell them only one thing: have good bodies and be healthy....

Instead of repeating what I have said so often it would be better that you should ask me questions and I should answer them.

Q. How can we drive away the British from here?

GANDHIJI (humorously): You do learn how to wield the lathi. Drive them away with its help.

Q. We can do that provided we have lathis.

G. In that case you belong to my creed. I have given up the lathi. You too have given it up. You people learn how to wield the lathi. I too keep this with me. But I do not strike anyone with it. It is only meant for giving me support. You should put the lathi to similar use. Your lathis are not meant for striking others.

Two questions are implied in your question. 'Do we want to drive away the British or do we want to put an end to their domination?'

Members with one voice: We want to end their domination.

G. That is the correct attitude. I have many friends among Englishmen. But I cannot say that about all Englishmen, though I would like to be friends with all of them. There should not be a single Englishman who is not my friend. I want to be friendly with all the peoples of the world, not only Englishmen. But I want to be friendly

<sup>1</sup> About a hundred members of the Rashtriya Yuvak Sangh, C. P., called on Gandhiji at Sevagram after their annual training camp at Wardha was over. They spent half an hour with Gandhiji during his morning walk. A brief report of the interview was also published in *Harijan*, 7-6-1942, under the heading "To Resist the Slave Drivers".

particularly with Englishmen because I have been associated with them for the last many years. It is immaterial what kind of association it was—let it be that they were masters and I was a slave—but we were associated. That is the reason I want to be friendly with the British particularly. But it is British domination and British imperialism which I want to banish from this land. I am telling the British rulers to withdraw quietly. It is the British domination that we want to end altogether because it is a poison which corrupts everything it touches. This rule is an obstacle to all progress.

There are two ways of getting rid of imperialism: either we wipe out the Empire or we quit it. I have suggested a method of quitting it. For that we do not require lathis; the two things required are the knowledge that the domination is a greater evil than any other evil and that we have to get rid of it no matter what it may cost. We have to be masters of our own mind. Take me for an example. I do not feel that I am a slave of anyone. Even if the whole world tries to make me a slave, it will fail. It cannot make me a slave, that is to say, it cannot become the master of my mind. It can do whatever it may like with my body. Suppose someone asks me to pick this stick and keep it there. No doubt I have the strength to lift the stick but I do not want to submit to his bidding. He would instruct the police to beat me to death. I will submit to his beating but not to his bidding. I am the master of my mind. A man is not a slave as long as he does not submit to others. I would have done my work if I was beaten to death. That would be my complete victory because he would not have made me do what he wanted. He could very well have my dead body. Whoever came to know about my death would at least say that here was a brave man who did not submit to anyone's bidding even though he was beaten to death.

Similarly we have to withdraw ourselves from the British Empire. It is better if they leave. I am trying to persuade them to do so. I am trying to persuade the world also. How can we dislodge them if they refuse to listen to us? We can remove their domination if not them, that is to say, we have to withdraw ourselves from their Empire. We can refuse to submit to their orders. I have explained this thing to you by giving a trivial example about removing a stick. We have to

make up our minds to throw off our yoke. We have to intensify our determination about not submitting to the rulers' bidding. Is that very difficult? How can one compel others to become one's slaves?

The authority of the Empire is exercised on us in a very subtle way—it is so subtle that we hardly know that the Empire exists. What proof do the Sevagram peasants have about the existence of the Government except the presence of the local Patel. There won't be any proof if there was no Patel armed with administrative authority. Peasants are afraid of the Patel. To them the Empire is an invisible power. The means of exercising this power are very subtle. We cannot get out of it with the help of the lathi. We can be victorious if we do not submit to the lathis of others.

Two forces of the same type are ranged against each other at present. Violence is being practised between England, America, China and Russia on one side and Germany, Italy and Japan on the other side. All these nations are intelligent, powerful and prosperous. A dangerous war is being fought between them. No one knows who will win. At the present moment there is mutual destruction of life and property. The worst of it is that it is not only the combatants who are being killed but innocent children, old men and women too. I am not interested in such war. It is the grace of God that we do not have such strength. I do not even want such favour from Him. I do not want to become either a Hitler or a Churchill. I for my part would like to become an independent peasant of India but I have not succeeded so far. I need milk while he cannot get milk. My body cannot subsist without milk. I wish I could compete with him. I envy him.

But the peasant of India is a peasant by force of circumstances. He for his part would like to become a king. But by force of circumstances he has remained a peasant. I wish to become a peasant and a labourer by choice. The only difference between him and me would be that I would be satisfied with my lot while he is not. I do not wish to become a dissatisfied beggar like him. I would be master of myself. I would be happy with that life. That is my ideal.

On the day I am able to teach him to become a peasant and a labourer by choice I would have taught him to throw off the shackles that now keep him bound and that compel him to do the masters'



bidding.

I have just pointed the way. You will get guidance from that. Try to follow my ideals as far as you can. For that we should have a good physique. We have to build up our muscles by regular exercise. But that should not be done to indulge in violence. We will not be fit for agriculture and labour if we develop our physique for indulging in violence. To become a Sandow is not our ideal. If he were asked to carry a load from here to Wardha in the sun, he would break down. On the other hand a labourer will carry that much load on his head in the hot sun for the sake of only five or six paise. Our ideal is to become such tough labourers and our exercises should be towards that end. We should be impervious to day and night, heat and cold. To us heat or cold should not make any difference.

We should learn to hop and jump not for beating others but to save them. Suppose a man has become unconscious on the other side of a ditch or a wall and in order to rescue him, we have to jump across. We should have all these abilities. That is what non-violent exercises teach. However, we do not want to be strong only in body. We have to cultivate resistance. And for that we have to develop our intellect and will-power. If you have imbibed this kind of strength then there is no doubt that you will become very good workers.

Q. When are you going to start a new movement?

G. On the one hand I am in a hurry to start it but on the other I am not. I am creating the necessary atmosphere for it. I know my limitations as well as those of others. It is necessary to explain to the people. As long as I can write I will go on explaining. I know that neither the people nor the government realizes the full implications of my plan and therefore whatever I do, I shall do keeping in mind these limitations.

Q. Would it be violence if instead of killing a tyrant we were to tie him up tightly with a rope?

G. It is not violence if you tie up a mad person. But it is certainly violence if you tie up others. We cannot make progress in non-violence by asking such a question. Non-violence teaches us to love a tyrant. A non-violent person is not afraid of a tyrant but is kind

to him. The law of compassion tells us that we cannot be kind to those of whom we are afraid. Forgiveness is the virtue of the brave.

We are not non-violent when we ask such questions. We want to curb the violence of the tyrant, and therefore the question of tying him up arises. Under such circumstances I will advise you to oppose him in whatever way you can, because the only other alternative would be to run away. I can never think of running away. He who is non-violent has love and kindness for others. He is not afraid of anyone. God gives him strength.

Q. But our efforts to end the British rule would result in anarchy. All the people are not non-violent and therefore there will be clashes, violence and oppression. Won't this anarchy be worse than the existing ordered anarchy? Won't the remedy be worse? How can we deal with it? Or is there no need to take any steps in advance?

G. Your question is very apt and important. That is the consideration that has weighed with me all these twenty-two or twenty-three years. I always thought that I would have to wait till the country was ready for a non-violent struggle. But my attitude has undergone a change. I feel that if I continue to wait I might have to wait till doomsday. For the preparation that I have prayed and worked for may never come, and in the mean time I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames of violence that are spreading all around. I have noticed this shortcoming in my ahimsa. However, in spite of that the results of the experiments I have conducted have always been good. I do not feel sorry for these.

But today we have to go a step further. We have to take the risk of violence to shake off the great calamity of slavery. But even for resort to violence one requires the unflinching faith of a non-violent man. There cannot be any trace of violence either in my plans or in my thoughts. A non-violent person has complete faith in God. My ahimsa was always imperfect and therefore it was ineffective to that extent. But I have faith in God. In this context I say: "Rama is the strength of the weak." There is no trace of violence in my consciousness or in the remotest corner of my being. My very being is full of consciousness. How can a man who has consciously pursued ahimsa for the last fifty years change all of a sudden? So it is not that I have become violent.

The people do not have my ahimsa. And therefore I have to take a risk, if I cannot curb their violence. I cannot remain inactive. I will certainly launch a non-violent movement. But if people do not understand it and there is violence, how can I stop it? I will prefer anarchy to the present system of administration because this ordered anarchy is worse than real anarchy. I am sure that the anarchy created by our efforts to mitigate this dangerous anarchy will be less dangerous. The violence exerted then would be just a trifle compared to the existing violence. Violence which is due to the weakness of human nature, is bound to be there. Crores of people in the country have no weapons. Even if they indulge in violence among themselves how long can they do it? Ultimately they will have to listen to me even if some of them die in mutual violence. We have to take the risk of anarchy if God wills it. However, we shall try our best to prevent violence. If in spite of that there is violence then it is His wish. I am not responsible for that. But if I enjoy my milk and remain inactive and unconcerned about the terrible violence that is going on in the name of resisting a possible foreign aggression and about the prevalent, dangerous, orderly anarchy in the name of administration, I will be proved guilty. My ahimsa will not be effective at all then. For me such a situation will be intolerable. I will be ashamed of such ahimsa. Ahimsa is not such a useless thing. I hope that pure ahimsa will arise out of such anarchy.

Your question is very pertinent and thought-provoking. It arises from my writings. I have dealt with it in my writings also. But it is not easy to understand. Language is but a poor and an imperfect vehicle for one's thoughts. I could write less than what I have in mind—that is the limitation of language. But if you ponder over what I have written you will be able to understand me. Read it in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati. If you read in English you will not be able to understand it. Think over it. I am putting before the country a great idea in my imperfect language. I am also sure that those who cannot or will not understand me will do so in the light of experience—if they survive the present catastrophe

[From Hindi]

*Sarvodaya*, June 1942

### 394. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
May 28, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

I hope you have been having my letters regularly. They are posted all right.

Maulana Saheb is definitely leaving tomorrow and reaching here the day after. Khurshed is coming with him. Mira is still in Orissa.

I am really keeping very well. What I am eating is enough.

I hope Shummy is better and that you are putting on weight.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Here is a letter from Sarup<sup>1</sup>. You should attend after you descend.

From the original: C.W. 4125. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7434

### 395. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA

May 28, 1942

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

I was thinking of writing to you at the Rishikesh Naka, but in the mean time I got your letter. I wanted to tell you that there should be some limit even to one's roaming about. Identifying of plants for its own sake is no part of dharma. Therefore render what service you can through such knowledge as you already possess and acquire proficiency in the course of service. You should show, if you can, that indigenous medicine is simple, inexpensive and capable of giving relief to 99 patients out of a hundred. If you feel that this cannot be done, then you should give up the profession.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2918. Courtesy: Vallabhram Vaidya

<sup>1</sup> Vijayalakshmi Pandit

### 396. INTERVIEW TO “ THE HINDU ”

May 28, 1942<sup>1</sup>

Answering the question of a Press correspondent whether his present policy as revealed by his writings did not vitiate his own declaration that he was a friend of China, Gandhiji said:

My answer is an emphatic ‘no’. I remain the passionate friend of China that I have always claimed to be. I know what loss of freedom means. Therefore, I could not but be in sympathy with China which is my next-door neighbour in distress. And, if I believed in violence and if I could influence India, I would put in motion every force at my command on behalf of China to save her liberty. In making, therefore, the suggestion which I have made about withdrawal of British power, I have not lost sight of China. But because I have China in mind, I feel that the only effective way for India to help China is to persuade Great Britain to free India and let a free India make her full contribution to the war effort. Instead of being sullen and discontented, India free will be a mighty force for the good of mankind in general. It is true that the solution I have presented is a heroic solution beyond the ken of Englishmen. But being a true friend of Britain and China and Russia, I must not suppress the solution which I believe to be eminently practical and probably the only one in order to save the situation and in order to convert the war into a power for good instead of being what it is, a peril to humanity.

Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that he heard people in Lahore and Delhi saying that I have turned pro-Japanese. I could only laugh at the suggestion, for, if I am sincere in my passion for freedom, I could not consciously or unconsciously take a step which will involve India in the position of merely changing masters. If, in spite of my resistance to the Japanese menace with my whole soul the mishap occurs, of which I have never denied the possibility, then the blame would rest wholly on British shoulders. I have no shadow of doubt about it. I have made no suggestion which, even from the military

<sup>1</sup> The date is from *The Hindu*.

standpoint, is fraught with the slightest danger to British power or to Chinese. It is obvious that India is not allowed to pull her weight in favour of China. If British power is withdrawn from India in an orderly manner, Britain will be relieved of the burden of keeping the peace in India and at the same time gain in a free India an ally not in the cause of Empire—because she would have renounced *in toto* all her imperial designs, but in a defence, not pretended but wholly real, of human freedom. That I assert and that only is the burden of my recent writings and I shall continue to do so long as I am allowed by the British power.

Q. Now what about your plan—you are reported to have matured plans for launching some big offensive?

Well, I have never believed in secrecy nor do I do so now. There are certainly many plans floating in my brain. But just now I merely allow them to float in my brain. My first task is to educate the public mind in India and world opinion, in so far as I am allowed to do so. And when I have finished that process to my satisfaction, I may have to do something. That something may be very big, if the Congress is with me and the people are with me. But British authority will have a full knowledge of anything I may wish to do before I enforce it. Remember I have yet to see the Maulana Saheb. My talks with Pandit Nehru are yet unfinished. I may say that they were wholly of a friendly nature and we have come nearer to each other even with the unfinished talk of yesterday. Naturally I want to carry the whole of the Congress with me if I can, as I want to carry the whole of India with me. For my conception of freedom is no narrow conception. It is co-extensive with the freedom of man in all his majesty. I shall, therefore, take no step without the fullest deliberation.

Asked about the situation in Sind and the Hur menace Gandhiji said:

I have a telegram from Hyderabad pressing me either to go to Sind or to see Pir Pagaro. I am afraid I can't go to Sind. I have pointed out the way which, if adopted, must succeed. So far as seeing Pir Pagaro is concerned, I would gladly see him, if I received proper authority enabling me to do so.

Harijan, 7-6-1942, and  
*The Hindu*, 30-5-1942

397. CABLE TO "THE SUNDAY DESPATCH"<sup>1</sup>

[On or before *May 29, 1942*]

CABLE JUST RECEIVED. EVIDENTLY YOU HAVE NOT MY FULL STATEMENT. PART RELATING TO AMERICA RUNS THUS: 'I KNOW THAT I HAVE NO RIGHT TO CRITICIZE SUCH A BIG NATION. I DON'T KNOW ALL THE FACTS WHICH HAVE DETERMINED AMERICA TO THROW HERSELF INTO THE CAULDRON. BUT SOMEHOW OR OTHER OPINION HAS FORCED ITSELF ON ME THAT AMERICA COULD HAVE REMAINED OUT AND EVEN NOW SHE CAN DO SO IF SHE DIVESTS HERSELF OF INTOXICATION THAT HER IMMENSE WEALTH HAS PRODUCED. AND THERE I WOULD LIKE TO REPEAT WHAT I HAVE SAID ABOUT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE BRITISH POWER FROM INDIA. BOTH AMERICA AND BRITAIN LACK THE MORAL BASIS FOR ENGAGING IN THIS WAR UNLESS THEY PUT THEIR OWN HOUSES IN ORDER BY MAKING IT THEIR FIXED DETERMINATION TO WITHDRAW THEIR INFLUENCE AND POWER BOTH FROM AFRICA AND ASIA AND REMOVED THE COLOUR BAR. THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO TALK OF PROTECTING DEMOCRACY AND PROTECTING CIVILIZATION AND HUMAN FREEDOM UNTIL THE CANKER OF WHITE SUPERIORITY IS DESTROYED IN ITS ENTIRETY.'<sup>2</sup> I ADHERE TO THAT STATEMENT. HOW AMERICA COULD HAVE AVOIDED WAR I CANNOT ANSWER EXCEPT BY RECOMMENDING NON-VIOLENT METHOD. MY AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP HAD LED ME TO BUILD HIGH HOPE ON AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE. AMERICA IS TOO BIG, FINANCIALLY, INTELLECTUALLY, AND IN SCIENTIFIC SKILL, TO BE SUBDUED BY ANY NATION OR EVEN COMBINATION. HENCE MY TEARS OVER HER THROWING HERSELF IN CAULDRON.

*Harijan, 7-6-1942*

<sup>1</sup>Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "Unfair to America?", 29-5-1942. This was in reply to a cable from *The Sunday Despatch* which read: "You are reported as saying that America could have kept out of the war if she had wished. How can you justify such a statement in view of the fact that while at peace America was attacked by the Japanese who simultaneously declared war on her?"

<sup>2</sup>*Vide* "Interview to the Press", 16-5-1942.

### 398. SARDAR PRITHVI SINGH<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry that after association with me since his discovering himself and allowing himself to be arrested, Sardar Prithvi Singh has parted company with me, having lost all faith in me all of a sudden and as a result of a single talk with me.<sup>2</sup> This naturally led him to tender his resignation from the Ahimsak Vyayam Sangh. As a natural corollary to this step, the trustees of the Sangh have decided to wind up the Sangh and close the Vyayam Shala, which was established by the Sangh, purely to let him make an experiment and find out, under guidance, the scope and quality of non-violent Vyayam.<sup>3</sup> I am hoping that, though he has lost faith in me, he has not lost it in ahimsa to which he was led after close and careful self-examination during years of secrecy.

SEVAGRAM, May 29, 1942

*Harijan*, 7-6-1942

### 399. DIFFERENCES VERY REAL

Your latest advice to the British to withdraw from all Asiatic possessions or at least India<sup>4</sup> is in accord with a general but undefined wish of a good section of the Indian public. Rightly or wrongly that wish is based upon the feeling that but for the Britisher making India the arsenal of his fight against the Axis, Japan may not have good cause for attacking India and will not do so. Even supposing Britain were to accede to this position, you do not suppose that Japan will on no account attack us. Very probably they may, and I am sure they will if only to get control of the vast material resources we have and use the same against their enemy. In which event you have advised non-violent resistance by us, but the Britisher will still carry the war against his enemy into our country (as is now done over the air in Burma, Siam, Indo-China, and occupied Europe) dictated, so they will say, solely by military considerations. None of these troubles may arise if the belligerents accept

<sup>1</sup> This had appeared under the heading "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 23-5-1942.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Ahimsak Vyayam Sangh", 28-4-1942.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "To Every Briton", 11-5-1942.



your method of settling disputes. But I see no near prospect of it nor do you. Meanwhile we may still have war in our midst each side saying that it is absolutely necessary to prevent the other from getting support for his operations. The resultant suffering will be ours and even if we hold on non-violently against the invader, it will not prevent the erstwhile possessor, from showering death and destruction on account of the enemy but all in our land and exactly over our heads. Perhaps Rajaji's attempt to organize a nation-wide resistance to the invader even at the cost of co-operating with the British arms is aimed at avoiding this futility of suffering. Even his method involves suffering, but is it not likely to be accepted more readily and with enthusiasm as being connected with the sole desire of preserving freedom and independence from aggression? It may also be that he feels that during and by that actual operation of mutual co-operation there may arise on our side a greater strength to achieve our independence and on their side a real appreciation of that strength and induce a feeling that it would serve no purpose to refuse the Indian demand any longer.... I should entreat you to let me know if I am correct in the above analysis and if so it does not reveal a fundamental difference between you and Rajaji in this critical hour of our history. In which event, you alone can show us the good and real way out, without futile suffering.

This is a very cogent letter from a friend who is most anxious to bridge the political gulf between Rajaji and me. But it cannot be by any make-believe. On the contrary any make-believe will mislead the country and serve neither his immediate purpose nor mine. We love the country with an equal passion. But our modes of service for the time being are diametrically opposite. He believes in resisting the threatened Japanese attack with the British aid. I regard this as impossible in the long end. India is not the home of the British people. If they are overwhelmed they will retire from India every man and woman and child, if they have facilities enough to carry them, even as they retired from Singapore, Malaya and Rangoon. This is no reflection on them or their bravery. Every army would have done likewise. But most probably from India they will not take with them the Indian army. They will perhaps expect them to carry on the battle by themselves. No doubt they would try to harass the Japanese army if they can from outside. So there would be no difference in the position

imagined by my correspondent and what I have adumbrated. Only under my plan what is contemplated is an orderly withdrawal by the British as if it was a premeditated military movement which will, let us assume, please millions of Indians. Then the hated British will become esteemed friends and allies. They will operate in concert with their allies. The Indians even as they would, say, with the Chinese. The whole thing becomes natural and a mighty force is voluntarily available to the British and to us. Add to this the moral height which Britain will occupy.

As for communal unity, the third party being removed unity will follow as day follows night. Unity will not precede but will succeed freedom. Today we do not even know that the goal of the Congress and the League is one. And you cannot bribe the League to co-operate for independence. Either the League believes that India is as much the home of Muslims as of non-Muslims, or it does not. If it does, it must first free the home from bondage before partitioning it. Today there is nothing to partition. After ridding the home of the foreign occupant, it can demand partition if it wishes and get it by negotiation or force. However, if it does not believe in India being the home of the Muslims, there is no question of negotiations for freeing India from bondage.

Rajaji's plan is, in my opinion, wholly unnatural. He wants to thrust himself on the British power which does not want him, for as the possessor by right of conquest it gets all it wants. In order to thrust himself on the British he gives the League the right of self-determination which every single individual has whether the others recognize it or not. Rajaji does not like partition and hugs the belief that his superfluous recognition of the inherent right will enable him to avoid partition.

I advise my correspondent not to worry over our differences. We know and love each other enough to let time correct the error, whether it lies on my side or his. Meanwhile a frank and bold admission of differences and their exact nature makes for healthy education of public opinion. What is needed is avoidance of anger and intolerance, the twin enemies of correct understanding.

SEVAGRAM, May 29, 1942

*Harijan*, 7-6-1942

#### 400. JODHPUR <sup>1</sup>

From Jodhpur comes the news that Shri Jainarayan Vyas has been arrested for daring to seek an interview with the Maharaja and for proposing to carry on the movement for responsible government in Jodhpur.<sup>2</sup>

Evidently Shri Jainarayan Vyas had no other choice. I wish to Jodhpur workers all success. But I hope they have realized that they have to plough the lonely furrow. They will have abundant sympathy from all over India, but dry sympathy will give them no help. Help must come from their own resolute will and unflinching courage.

SEVAGRAM, May 30, 1942

*Harijan*, 7-6-1942

#### 401. QUESTION BOX

Q. Is it a fact that your present attitude towards England and Japan is influenced by the belief that you think the British and the allies are going to be defeated in this War? It is necessary that you clear the position in this respect. A very important leader in the Congress thinks like that and he says that he is sure because he had this knowledge from his personal talks with you.

A. I wish you could have given the name of the leader. Whoever he is, I have no hesitation in saying that it is not true. On the contrary I said only the other day in *Harijan* that the Britisher was hard to beat. He has not known what it is to be defeated. Of the Americans in this very issue you will see my answer to *The Sunday Despatch*.<sup>3</sup> It contradicts the "leader's" statements. He has therefore either misunderstood me or you have misunderstood him. But I have said in my talk for the past twelve months and more that this war is not likely to end in a decisive victory for any party. There will be peace when the exhaustion point is reached. This is mere speculation. Britain may

<sup>1</sup> This had appeared under the heading "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 4-5-1942.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Cable to *The Sunday Despatch*", 6-7-1942.

be favoured by nature. She has nothing to lose by waiting. And with America as her ally she has inexhaustible material resources and scientific skill. This advantage is not available to any of the Axis powers. Thus I have no decisive opinion about the result of the War. But what is decisive with me is that I am made by nature to side with weak parties. My policy of non-embarrassment is based upon that nature and it persists. My proposal for British withdrawal is as much in Britain's interest as India's. Your difficulty arises from your disinclination to believe that Britain can ever do justice voluntarily. My belief in the capacity of non-violence rejects the theory of permanent inelasticity of human nature.

SEVAGRAM, May 30, 1942

*Harijan*, 7-6-1942

#### 402. *ALCHEMY OF PRODUCING FOOD*

Below will be found an extract from a letter of the Hon. Secretary of Marwari Relief Society's Social Service Department:

We are on the threshold of an acute food shortage crisis today. A good deal is being heard of the "grow more food" campaign, and it is no doubt a move in the right direction. But in my humble opinion, our leaders have not given due consideration to one considerable potential source of food supply in our country, which if successfully tapped, would feed at least 50 lakhs of our starving fellowmen. I refer to the tremendous waste of food that every one of us in this country indulges in, when taking our meals morning and evening and also the disgraceful waste that is usually seen on festive occasions. The aggregate amount thus thrown into the dust-bins could easily keep 5 millions of our countrymen from a perpetual state of semi-starvation. While passing along the streets of Calcutta, I have been shocked to find my own brothers and sisters picking up rotten food from the dustbins and eating it. The thought of such a ghastly scene which can be described as nothing short of a national disgrace has haunted me day and night and I have felt ashamed to take my food at home.

The Secretary further asks me to suggest ways and means of organizing a campaign popularizing the plan suggested in the letter. The plan I can heartily recommend. All the belligerent countries have

been forced to cut food supplies all round. There is naturally therefore not much scope for wastage in these countries. In our country seemingly we are not reduced to the straits to which the belligerent countries are reduced. In reality, however, the wastage which is truly enormous is confined to the few within the cities. The millions are living in a state of perpetual semi-starvation. For them it is like living in a chronic state of war. Day in and day out they know not what a square meal is. For them who have no margin the pressure of the present war can better be imagined than described.

What the Secretary suggests is worthy of consideration. A campaign against waste can be easily organized in all the cities. No householder should be without the knowledge of how he or she can avoid waste. There is here no question of denial. The question is only one of consideration for the poor. All saving thus made will be equal to so much food production without effort. There will have to be literature on the subject. It should not be elaborate. Leaflets should suffice. They must not be argumentative. By facts and figures they should tell the citizens how much waste they are responsible for and how they can avoid it. The horrible superstition that the dishes of the rich should always be over-full so as to leave an ample margin for leavings should be banished forthwith. It should be considered a sign of bad breeding to leave one's plate with a heap of uneaten things, whether at home or in a hotel. One should regulate the helpings with strict regard to wants. If all who are given to the evil habit of having plates piled up and merely sampling the courses served out were to follow the healthy rule here recommended much food can be saved for distribution among those who are in daily want. I think the Marwari Relief Society which has had rich and varied experience in social service is perhaps the fittest body to take the initiative in organizing the work. Though the problem will be much the same in all the cities, with every city there will be variations according to people's habits. I suggest, therefore, that the work is begun in Calcutta. The experience gained there could be utilized in extending the scope of service. It ought not to take more than a week to organize the work in Calcutta. Naturally great concentration of energy and a large body of willing workers will be required for this essential and urgent service.

SEVAGRAM, May 30, 1942

*Harijan*, 7-6-1942

403. *LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI*

May 30, 1942

CHI. SUSHILA AND MANILAL,

You two seem to have been left alone there. That is good. It is enough if you are happy in that state. Frequently the joy we find in following a lonely path is not to be found in travelling in the company of many, because in the latter case there is the danger of one's being dragged in a certain direction against one's wishes. I shall be content if all of you keep good health and are happy.

All are well here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4930

404. *LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI*

May 30, 1942

CHI. VIJAYA,

I am not at all responsible for your not getting my letters. You should either fight with the Postal Department or put up with it. I did write several letters to you. I see no harm at all in eating mangoes. You can take fresh milk of a healthy cow or sweet (in the natural way) curd. You should eat butter in moderate quantities. During pregnancy a woman must drink milk and eat butter, vegetables, fruit, etc. She should eat mangoes when they are in season. It does not matter if they are a little sour. Take 20 grains of soda bicarb in some way or other. Running about is not advisable. Walking is essential.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI VIJAYABEHN  
GRAM DAKSHINAMURTI  
AMBALA, *via* SONGARH  
KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7147. Also C.W. 4639. Courtesy:  
Vijaya M. Pancholi

## 405. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM,  
May 30, 1942

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Why such impatience? I am so burdened with work! Your letters confuse me. The root of your unhappiness and agitation is your lack of respect for Chi. It is not going to be cured by anything I may write. The remedy for it is entirely in your own hands. If Chi. is a fool—and in your opinion he is—then you will tolerate anything he does. What is one to do in such a case? Tell me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4429

## 406. A TRIPLE TRAGEDY<sup>1</sup>

The *National Herald* is an institution. It has a directorate which has no personal or financial interest in it. It is founded by Jawaharlal Nehru. It is only in India that the security of such a paper can be forfeited. In fact why any security<sup>2</sup> at all from it? And they need the greatest assistance possible from him in the war effort. They have exploited his stray sayings torn from their context. In any case, what do the Government expect from their repressive policy? Consider this forfeiture of security in conjunction with the arrest and detention of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, ex-Minister, the organizer of the Congress in U. P. and a Director of *The National Herald*. Put these two acts side by side with the wanton and almost indecent search of the A. I. C. C. Office, and the tragedy is complete. This triple act is in my opinion a great hindrance to national war effort. It is so mad as to amount to an invitation to the Japanese to walk into India. It is a justification for my friendly invitation to the foreign Government to abdicate in favour of

<sup>1</sup> This had appeared under the heading “Notes”.

<sup>2</sup> The Printer and Publisher of *The National Herald* was asked to furnish a cash security of Rs. 6,000 by the District Magistrate of Lucknow.

the nation whatever it may be. It is bold, it is hazardous The British are capable of taking risks such as very few are. Let them take the risk I have suggested and it will be their greatest war effort. It alone can save the situation, if anything can, so far as India is concerned. As a first step let them revoke the forfeiture order, discharge Rafi Saheb, and return the papers seized from the A. I. C. C.

SEVAGRAM, May 31, 1942

*Harijan*, 7-6-1942

#### 407. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA, C. P.,

May 31, 1942

CHI. MIRA,

I have your very complete illuminating letter. The report of the interview<sup>1</sup> is perfect, your answers were straight, unequivocal and courageous. I have no criticism to make. I can only say, 'Go on as you are doing.' I can quite clearly see that you have gone to the right place at the right time. I therefore need do nothing more than come straight to your questions which are all good and relevant.

(1) I think we must tell the people what they should do. They will act according to their capacity. If we begin to judge their capacity and give directions accordingly, our directions will be halting and even compromising which they should never be. You will therefore read my instructions in that light. Remember that our attitude is that of complete non-co-operation with Japanese army, therefore we may not help them in any way, nor may we profit by any dealings with them. Therefore we cannot sell anything to them. If people are not

<sup>1</sup> In *Bapu's Letters to Mira* the addressee, who was then in Orissa, says: "I had had an interview with two English officials of the then Advisory regime. Since we were in possession of the fact that the Government officials were to retire to the hills, forty or fifty miles inland, the moment there was news of the Japanese coming and such files as they could not take in their motor-cars were to be burnt and all bridges were to be blown up, my object at the interview was to request them to retire in an orderly fashion, leaving the administrative machinery in our hands. I specially pleaded with them to hand us over the keys of the jails and also not to take away the doctors and medical supplies of the civil hospitals."



able to face the Japanese army, they will do as armed soldiers do, i.e., retire when they are overwhelmed. And if they do so the question of having any dealings with Japanese does not and should not arise. If, however, the people have not the courage to resist Japanese unto death and not the courage and capacity to evacuate the portion invaded by the Japanese, they will do the best they can in the light of instructions. One thing they should never do—to yield willing submission to the Japanese. That will be a cowardly act, and unworthy of freedom-loving people. They must not escape from one fire only to fall into another and probably more terrible. Their attitude therefore must always be of resistance to the Japanese. No question, therefore, arises of accepting British currency notes or Japanese coins. They will handle nothing from Japanese hands. So far as dealings with our own people are concerned they will either resort to barter or make use of such British currency that they have, in the hope that the National Government that may take the place of British Government will take up from the people all the British currency in accordance with its capacity.

(2) Question about co-operation in bridge-building is covered by the above. There can be no question of this co-operation.

(3) If Indian soldiers come in contact with our people, we must fraternize with them if they are well disposed, and invite them, if they can, to join the nation. Probably they have been brought under promise that they will deliver the country from foreign yoke. There will be no foreign yoke and they will be expected to befriend people and obey National Government that might have been set up in place of British Government. If the British have retired in an orderly manner leaving things in Indian hands, the whole thing can work splendidly and it might even be made difficult for Japanese to settle down in India or any part of it in peace, because they will have to deal with a population which will be sullen and resistant. It is difficult to say what can happen. It is enough if people are trained to cultivate the power of resistance, no matter which power is operating—the Japanese or the British.

(4)<sup>1</sup> Covered by (1) above.

(5)<sup>2</sup> The occasion may not come, but if it does, co-operation will be permissible and even necessary.

(6) Your answer about the arms found on the wayside is most tempting and perfectly logical.<sup>3</sup> It may be followed but I would not rule out the idea of worthy people finding them and storing them in a safe place if they can. If it is impossible to store them and keep them from mischievous people yours is an ideal plan.

Love.

BAPU

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, pp. 341-2; also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1942-44*, pp. 250-1

#### 408. NOTE TO PERIN CAPTAIN<sup>4</sup>

May, 1942

I cannot come soon. If notwithstanding my continuing to work for Hindustani they will still have me and if their policy is not anti-Hindustani I shall stay on. I have been contending for years, that is, ever since the Indore convention, that Hindi is incomplete without Urdu. At my instance a resolution to this effect was also passed<sup>5</sup> but I believe their policy has since undergone a change. Now I want to work simultaneously for both if possible. If not I propose to opt out in order to do it. If Urdu is only a style of Hindi it does not deserve to be rejected.

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: Kulsum Sayani Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> The question was what should be done about currency after the British retreated.

<sup>2</sup> The question was whether it would be permissible to co-operate with the Japanese in attending to the dead and wounded after a battle.

<sup>3</sup> The addressee had said her instinct was to take them out to sea and drown them.

<sup>4</sup> This appeared in a pamphlet issued on 1-8-1949 in the name of the addressee, who was then Hon. Secretary of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha.

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* "Letter to the Press", 31-3-1918.

#### 409. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

[May-June 1942]<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR C. R.,

Love of you and J[inna]h woke me up at 2.00 a.m. Your brief, neat and well-argued speech [did not] appeal to me. That way lies destruction of all that is noble. But do thoroughly what you want to do. You must convince your colleagues.

You should know J[inna]h's mind. You must put me out of mind and sight. My way lies in a direction quite opposite of yours.

What is the use of my presenting my side before the W. C. today? You should let me go. You should give the whole of your time to convincing and converting the others.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: C.W. 10931. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

#### 410. WATER FOR HARIJANS IN GUJARAT<sup>2</sup>

The ghastly form of untouchability which we find in Gujarat is not found anywhere else. How frightening can be the cruelty where Harijans are deprived of water! Bhai Parikshitlal has sent me a brief report of whatever little the Harijan Sevak Sangh is doing to soften the cruelty, which I give below.<sup>3</sup>

In fact this work should not be limited to a handful of Harijan workers. It is humanitarian work. The rich people can dip their hands into their pockets and get wells sunk at various places and thus bring

<sup>1</sup> From the contents it appears that the letter was written during this period; *vide* "For Rajaji", 24-5-1942; "Differences Very Real", 29-5-1942; "Letter to C. Rajagopalachari", 2-6-1942, 3-6-1942, 6/7-6-1942, 7-6-1942 and "Rajaji", 7-6-1942.

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

<sup>3</sup> Not translated here. The correspondent had written that till the end of 1941 the Harijan Sevak Sangh had spent about Rs. 1,70,000 on sinking new wells and repairing old ones. But that had not solved the problem of the Harijans.

solace to the poor people. I know that the pace of dharma is slow but in this case it seems slower than usual.

How can I tell you how slow it is!

SEVAGRAM, June 1, 1942

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 7-6-1942

#### 411. KHADI PRODUCTION AND EDUCATION IN KARADI

For the last many years Bhai Dilkhush Diwanji has been silently doing khadi work in Karadi and imparting education through it. He has sent me an interesting account of his work which I give below.<sup>1</sup>

The description does not require any criticism or appreciation. Readers should study it and emulate the example.

SEVAGRAM, June 1, 1942

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 7-6-1942

#### 412. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C. P.,

*June 1, 1942*

MY DEAR AMRITLAL,

Your letter is clear. I am now sending Abha to Rajkot. If they are constant to each other they will marry when Abha is of age. I think she will be happier in Rajkot than here. Anyhow I shall be free from care. And Veena will have Bengali company.

I hope you are giving a good account of yourself in these stirring times.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10341. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here. The report mentioned the contribution of the students in the successful working of the Karadi Khadi Production Centre. Many students met their education expenses from the spinning wages they received, and those belonging to poorer families helped their parents to augment their family income.

413. LETTER TO VITHALDAS V. JERAJANI

June 1, 1942

BHAI VITHALDAS,

May your new enterprise bear fruit and may you live long to carry it through.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9802

414. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

June 1, 1942

CHI. PRABHA,

I am not in a position these days to write to you or to anyone who does not write to me. I am hard pressed for time.

I get letters from Jayaprakash regularly. I learn from his last letter that he is improving. I have not made any new suggestion and hence I did not write to you. Narendra Dev is still here. He is very calm. He takes regular treatment. He has shown some improvement, too. He is weak, but is gradually gaining strength. He goes out for a walk twice daily. He gets sound sleep. He will not be in a hurry to leave.

You should take care of your health. You should now find no difficulty in getting the money from there. You may come when you can do so without inconvenience. You can certainly come to improve your health. You should come. You should not worry at all.

Is it not time now for the weather there to become cooler? It is still hot here. Hot winds are blowing.

Rajkumari is in Simla. She will stay there for the time being. Amtussalaam is here. She is all right. Ba is fine. Vasumati is here.

Sushila's examination is over. Most probably she will get through. She is expected here in a few days.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3575

#### 415. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

June 1, 1942

CHI. PRABHA,

Here is a letter from an unhappy woman. I have advised her to see you. If she comes to you, please guide her. Ask for the letter which I have given to her. Mridula<sup>1</sup> is coming tomorrow. Khurshedbehn is here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3576

#### 416. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

June 2, 1942

CHI. AMRIT,

Today seems to be *dies non* for you. No letter for the first time.

This is to tell you that Sushila has passed her examination. Thank God! She deserved to pass.

Mridula and Dhebarbhai<sup>2</sup> are here. So.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: c.w. 4126. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7435

<sup>1</sup> Mridula Sarabhai

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Dhebar, Congress leader of Saurashtra

*417. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C. P.,

*June 2, 1942*

MY DEAR C. R.,

Yours. Nothing will delight me more than to come near to you [rather] than you to me. It seems to me that the time has come for you to come here and convert me before you go on further with your propaganda. It is ugly to find ourselves talking at each other. I suggest that we talk to each other. It would be a great tragedy if you cannot convert your best friend whose love you do not doubt.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10915. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

*418. LETTER TO NAGJIBHAI*

SEVAGRAM,

*June 2, 1942*

BHAI NAGJI,

You have made a handsome gift. The Sangh was in need of such a building. But I want a much greater contribution from you. My appetite, therefore, is not likely to be satisfied with this building. I hope your business is flourishing.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6252

## 419. QUESTION BOX

### IF THEY COME

Q. (1) If the Japs come, how are we to resist them non-violently?

(2) What are we to do if we fall into their hands?

A. (1) These questions come from Andhradesh where the people rightly or wrongly feel that the attack is imminent. My answer has already been given in these columns. Neither food nor shelter is to be given nor are any dealings to be established with them. They should be made to feel that they are not wanted. But of course things are not going to happen quite so smoothly as the question implies. It is a superstition to think that they will come as friends. No attacking party has ever done so. It spreads fire and brimstone among the populace. It forces things from people. If the people cannot resist fierce attack and are afraid of death, they should evacuate the infested place in order to deny compulsory service to the enemy.

(2) If unfortunately some people are captured or fall into the enemy's hands, they are likely to be shot if they do not obey orders, e.g., render forced labour. If the captives face death cheerfully, their task is done. They have saved their own and their country's honour. They could have done nothing more if they had offered violent resistance, save perhaps taking a few Japanese lives and inviting terrible reprisals.

The thing becomes complicated when you are captured alive and subjected to unthinkable tortures to compel submission. You will neither submit to torture nor to the orders of the enemy. In the act of resistance you will probably die and escape humiliation. But it is said that death is prevented to let the victim go through the agony of tortures and to serve as an example to others. I however think that a person who would die rather than go through inhuman tortures would find honourable means of dying.

SEVAGRAM, June 3, 1942

*Harijan*, 14-6-1942



## 420. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 3, 1942*

CHI. AMRIT,

Your two letters today.

I do take note of things that go on. Of course many things will happen. A big system will not die without much effort.

It is still terribly hot here. There is no sign of the wind changing. I am not likely to call you before the end of this month. There is no need for you to worry about anything at this end.

Abha is going to Rajkot, Laxmi to her husband and Vasumati to Ahmedabad.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4127. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7436

## 421. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C. P.,

*June 3, 1942*

MY DEAR C. R.,

I see you have answered me by quoting me against me.<sup>1</sup> I hope you got my letter of yesterday. If you are yielding nothing more than I have, why was not my statement acclaimed? But if we have both meant cheese, why don't you get a statement from the League? Why don't you now go to Q. A. and discuss the whole thing with him? And think over my proposal of yesterday. Anyway, no more wordy warfare with you by me in the Press.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 2087

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had said at Coimbatore in a speech that the Cripps proposal failed not because of defence but because of the other points. The speech was presumably in reply to Gandhiji's article "For Rajaji", 24-5-1942.

422. LETTER TO AMBALAL SARABHAI

June 3, 1942

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I have accordingly written to Rameshwardasji to accept your cheque. There really never was any misunderstanding between us. Whatever little had arisen was from our employing English. The first part of your letter of May 22, 1942 is quite all right. The Tagore Memorial should be what the Andrews Memorial is. Later on you state that it should be different from the Andrews Memorial, that it should be worthy of Tagore and that I should see about it. How can the entire Memorial be got ready with just Rs.5,000? How can I do it? The Andrews Memorial means improvements and innovations in Santiniketan. And that will be a memorial to Tagore. This is one thing and what you ask for is another. It is possible that what you had in mind was the same thing that I said. In that case it has not come out in English. If the portion that I have referred to from your English letter should mean—and it does mean—what I understand it to mean, then it is wholly inconsistent with the talk we had.

It was necessary to write all this to have things clarified.

Rathi Babu writes to say that he has already made some changes and he is willing to make more if they are found to be necessary. He keeps regular accounts of course.

*Blessings from*

M. K.GANDHI

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

### 423. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,  
June 3, 1942

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have had a long talk with Dhebarbhai. I think the Limdi State had never accepted the settlement. But Bhagwandas<sup>1</sup> did believe that it had. When the emigrants returned, they found no sign of the settlement.<sup>2</sup> Your statement, therefore, should be revised accordingly.

But before it is published, there remains something to be done. Dhebarbhai has come to understand that Fatehsinhji<sup>3</sup> seems desirous of meeting you. If that is true and if he wishes to arrive at a settlement, you should show readiness to meet him. You should think about your statement only after that.

The existing situation is satisfactory.

Emigrants who are outside may well stay outside. The boycott of cotton continues and it should. There seems, therefore, no immediate necessity for your issuing the statement. If you think I should write something, please send me a wire and I will do it. There will be time for the next week's issue of *Harijan*.

Observe one point very strictly regarding your health. You should spend the minimum time on the commode and should not strain in the least. Observe it as an inviolable rule.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL  
68 MARINE DRIVE  
BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 276-7*

<sup>1</sup> A worker of the Praja Mandal

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 23-5-1942 and "Letter to Bhagwandas Harakhchand", 30-6-1942.

<sup>3</sup> Member of the Regency Council and son of the Limdi ruler  
VOL. 82: 9 FEBRUARY, 1942 - 6 JUNE, 1942

## 424. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

SEVAGRAM,  
June 3, 1942

BHAI MALKANI,

Jajuji has sent me your letter about money. He says:

In my opinion this expenditure was not necessary. I had advised against it. Even so it has been incurred.

His advising against it has hurt me a little. What is all this and how did it happen?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 942

## 425. QUESTION BOX

### THE PRINCES' DETERMINATION

Q. The Princes seem to be determined to maintain their privileges even after the departure of the British. Therefore there is need for a plain declaration that they would have no place in a free India. My feeling is that you have so far shown them more consideration than they deserve.

A. If you are right in your judgment, the privileges themselves will destroy the Princes. Privileges that service of the people bestows will always persist. But most of the paraphernalia that 'pomp and circumstance' account for will most certainly go.

But I cannot make the declaration you will have me to make. It is contrary to the spirit of non-violence which seeks not to destroy but to purify. That which is beyond purification dies without any outside effort even as a body which has become wholly diseased dies.

If after the total withdrawal of the British power, there is found to be no awakening among the masses India will be split up into so many feudal strongholds each striving to swallow the small fry and some bidding for overlordship. What I am hoping and striving for is an irresistible mass urge on the part of the people and an intelligent response on the part of all privileged classes to the popular demand.

But because I know that this picture is for the time being imaginary, I am quite prepared for the worst. Hence my statement that I would end the present state of things even at the risk of anarchy reigning supreme in the land.<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM, June 5, 1942

*Harijan*, 14-6-1942

#### 426. *YARN CURRENCY*<sup>2</sup>

The above note<sup>3</sup> has been sent by Shri Kanubhai Joshi. It is a very good beginning. I on my part would like that in every home men and women should spin and send the yarn to the bhandars not for the sake of money but to reduce the scarcity of cloth. But I must warn the spinners that it is a bad habit to use ready-made slivers. That will ultimately be injurious to khadi. Now with the development of hand-carding it has become very easy to make slivers. Everyone should learn how to do it.

SEVAGRAM, June 5, 1942

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 14-6-1942

#### 427. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 5, 1942*

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your English letter.

J.'s letter was received today. He says he is ready to come when Maulana comes. There is nothing from Maulana.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Interview to *The News Chronicle*", 14-5-1942.

<sup>2</sup> This was published under the heading "Notes".

<sup>3</sup> Not translated here. It stated that in Bombay yarn was being used as currency and that the local sales depot of the All-India Charkha Sangh gave khadi or money in exchange for yarn.

I have told Rajaji<sup>1</sup> I am not going to engage in a public controversy with him.

Hot wind is blowing. I had expected the weather to cool down by this time. Having had the expectation, it is disconcerting to find the expectation unfulfilled. "Blessed are they that expect nothing."

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 4128. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7437

### *428. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 5, 1942*

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

I received your letter.

There is nothing from Maulana. In one letter he had said that he would be accompanying you here.

Fischer<sup>2</sup> has arrived. I do manage to give him an hour every day. He is staying at the Ashram. Hot winds are blowing here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to C.: Rajagopalachari", 3-6-1942.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Fischer. For an account of his talks with Gandhiji, *vide* Appendix "Interview with Louis Fischer", 4-6-1942.

## 429. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

[June 6, 1942]<sup>1</sup>

A friend<sup>2</sup> was discussing with I me the implications of the new proposal. As the discussion was naturally desultory, I asked him to frame his questions which I would answer through *Harijan*. He agreed and gave me the following:

Q. You ask the British Government to withdraw immediately from India. Would Indians thereupon form a national government, and what groups or parties would participate in such an Indian Government?

A. My proposal is one-sided, i.e., for the British Government to act upon, wholly irrespective of what Indians would do or would not do. I have even assumed temporary chaos on their withdrawal. But if the withdrawal takes place in an orderly manner, it is likely that on their withdrawal a provisional government will be set up by and from among the present leaders. But another thing may also happen. All those who have no thought of the nation but only of themselves may make a bid for power and get together the turbulent forces with which they would seek to gain control somewhere and somehow. I should hope that with the complete, final and honest withdrawal of the British power, the wise leaders will realize their responsibility, forget their differences for the moment and set up a provisional government out of the material left by the British power. As there would be no power regulating the admission or rejection of parties or persons to or from the council board, restraint alone will be the guide. If that happens probably the Congress, the League and the States' representatives will be allowed to function and they will come to a loose understanding on the formation of a provisional national Government. All this is necessarily guesswork and nothing more.

Q. Would that Indian national government permit the United Nations to use Indian territory as a base of military operations against Japan and other Axis powers?

A. Assuming that the national government is formed and if it

<sup>1</sup> From *A Week with Gandhi*

<sup>2</sup> Louis Fischer

answers my expectations, its first act would be to enter into a treaty with the United Nations for defensive operations against aggressive powers, it being common cause that India will have nothing to do with any of the Fascist powers and India would be morally bound to help the United Nations.

Q. What further assistance would this Indian national government be ready to render the United Nations in the course of the present war against the Fascist aggressors?

A. If I have any hand in guiding the imagined national Government, there would be no further assistance save the toleration of the United Nations on the Indian soil under well-defined conditions. Naturally there will be no prohibition against any Indian giving his own personal help by way of being a recruit or and of giving financial aid. It should be understood that the Indian army has been disbanded with the withdrawal of British power. Again if I have any say in the councils of the national government, all its power, prestige and resources would be used towards bringing about world peace. But of course after the formation of the national government my voice may be a voice in the wilderness and nationalist India may go war-mad.

Q. Do you believe this collaboration between India and the Allied powers might or should be formulated in a treaty of alliance or an agreement for mutual aid?

A. I think the question is altogether premature and in any case it will not much matter whether the relations are regulated by treaty or agreement. I do not even see any difference.

Let me sum up my attitude. One thing and only one thing for me is solid and certain. This unnatural prostration of a great nation—it is neither ‘nations’ nor ‘peoples’—must cease if the victory of the Allies is to be ensured. They lack the moral basis. I see no difference between the Fascist or Nazi powers and the Allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count as dust before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic. They and they alone have the power to undo the wrong. They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution. That necessary wash will be



their surest insurance of success, for they will have the good wishes—unexpressed but no less certain—of millions of dumb Asiatics and Africans. Then, but not till then, will they be fighting for a new order. This is the reality. All else is speculation. I have allowed myself, however, to indulge in it as a test of my *bona fides* and for the sake of explaining in a concrete manner what I mean by my proposal.

*Harijan*, 14-6-1942

### 430. DR. TARACHAND AND HINDUSTANI

The following was sent for the question box by Shri Murlidhar Srivastava, M.A.:

When prejudices come in, one is led to distort history. Dr. Tarachand is an ardent advocate of Hindustani as you are. He has every right to hold his view as you or I have to hold my own, but in his zeal he has grossly misrepresented the history of Brajbhasha by declaring that no writing in Braj is known to have appeared before the 16th century, in an attempt to prove that Hindustani ('Khari Boli') has older literature than Brajbhasha.<sup>1</sup> According to him Surdas was the first poet to write in Braj in the 16th century. As the learned Doctor has been quoted by you in the *Harijan*, dated 29-3-42, which commands wide publicity and authority, the mistake must be pointed out. For literature prior to Surdas, you have only to read the poems of Kabir, not to speak of Amir Khusru, some of whose verses are also in Brajbhasha. Several small pieces of poems are attributed to several *santas* and *bhaktas* prior to Surdas and they can be looked into any standard history of Hindi literature.

I have removed the portion that had no bearing on the question at issue. I sent the letter to Kakasaheb Kalelkar who made it over to Dr. Tarachand who has now sent the following reply<sup>2</sup> which speaks for itself:

My view that the literature of Brajbhasha is not older than the sixteenth century is based on the following considerations:

1. Brajbhasha is a modern language which belongs to the group named tertiary Prakrits or New Indo-Aryan. This group developed from the secondary

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Hindustani", 9-3-1942.

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

Prakrits or Middle Indo-Aryan.... But most scholars are agreed that secondary Prakrit stage lasted from 600 B.C. to 1000 A.D.

2. The secondary Prakrits which were spoken dialects received the impetus towards literary development from the religious movements inaugurated by Mahavira and Buddha. Of these Prakrits, Pali became the most important....

3. By the sixth century A.D. the Prakrits had become fixed and dead languages.... In that century the languages of common speech, from which literary Prakrits had diverged, began to be used for literary purposes. This phase of literary growths of the Prakrits is given the name Apabhramsha. It lasted from 600 to 1,000 A.D. Among the Apabhramshas one acquired a position of eminence, namely, Nagara. The varieties of Nagara were used as vehicles of literary expression in the greater part of northern India. But besides Nagara and its varieties, there had developed Apabhramshas of the other Prakrits, like Saurseni, also.

4. The modern Indian languages or the tertiary Prakrits developed from these Apabhramshas. Nagara became the parent of Rajasthani and Gujarati languages, through a variety to which Tessitori gave the name old Western Rajasthani.

Saurseni Apabhramsha is represented in the Prakrit grammar of Hemchandra (d. 1172 A.D.). But it is difficult to determine the relationship of Saurseni Apabhramsha with Nagara. It seems that the Saurseni Apabhramsha underwent a further change, which has been variously called old Western Hindi, Avahattha, Kavyabhasha.

5. With the arrival upon the scene of this language the stage of secondary Prakrits comes to an end, and the stage of new Indo-Aryan speech begins. The old Western Hindi which is the earliest form of the new midland speech appears to have become established in the eleventh century. From the old Western Hindi branched out Hindustani ('Khari') of the North midland, Braj of the middle region and Bundeli of the southern parts. In the twelfth century they were all spoken dialects. In the course of the following centuries they assumed literary form.

6. From a study of the development of these languages I have arrived at the conclusion that Hindustani ('Khari') was the first to develop into a literary language. We have a continuous history of Hindustani (Deccani Urdu) from the last quarter of the 14th century onwards. On the other hand the history of Braj literature before the 16th century is very doubtful.

SEVAGRAM, June 6, 1942

*Harijan*, 14-6-1942

*431. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 6, 1942*

CHI. AMRIT,

It seems that there is no more now of the other pads.

One rupee was paid to Nanavati before your letter came.

There is nothing wrong with Mahadev's spectacles. The terrific heat is responsible for all the mischief. It will go some day and the cool air will be all the more appreciated.

You will have to prove your proposition about the balances.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

I think I have told you about Sushila having passed.

From the original: C.W. 4129. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 7438

*432. LETTER TO BAQER ALI MIRZA*

*June 6, 1942*

BHAI BAQERALI MIRZA SAHEB,

I have your letter and also your book. I have glanced through it. I could hardly have done more.

I think no one could have offered to the country a loftier goal (i.e., Urdu) than I have.

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

433. *LETTER TO JAGANNATH*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C. P.,

*June 6, 1942*

BHAI JAGANNATH,

I have your letter. I can understand your condition. May God give you such strength that the sentiments you have cherished these twenty years do not disappear.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 996. Courtesy: Jagannath

434. *LETTER TO PARACHURE SHASTRI*

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,

*June 6, 1942*

SHASTRIJI,

I have your letter. I had to bear your expense. But I had hoped that you would keep a check on the expenses and would spend only what was necessary.

It is enough if you are careful. If the occasion should arise I can sacrifice you too.

We are all in the hands of God.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10671

435. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SEVAGRAM,  
*June 6, 1942*

BHAI SATIS BABU,

How can I go to Bengal? I have clearly expressed my view. Those who are asked to move in this manner should flatly refuse and should not budge from their places even if they have to be shot unless and until they have been provided with alternative accommodation and all the amenities. There is no other course open. If in offering resistance thus some of us have to die, it can't be helped. They ought to give prior notice.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

436. INTERVIEW TO AMERICAN JOURNALISTS<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,  
[*June 6, 1942*]<sup>2</sup>

GANDHIJI: You came in an air-conditioned coach?

THE JOURNALISTS: No, but we had armed ourselves with some ice.

G. One American<sup>3</sup> has been vivisecting me. I am now at your disposal.

Q. Why non-violent non-co-operation rather than honest straight forward resistance against the Japanese? Far from preventing the Japanese, non-violent non-co-operation might prove an invitation to them, and would not that be flying from the frying pan into the fire?

A. Supposing England retires from India for strategic purposes,

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "An Important Interview". The journalists were Chaplin of the International News Service and Belldon of *Life* and *Time*.

<sup>2</sup> The date is from *Gandhi—1915-1948*.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Fischer

and apart from my proposal—as they had to do in Burma —what would happen? What would India do?

Q. That is exactly what we have come to learn from you. We would certainly like to know that.

A. Well, therein comes my non-violence. For we have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the united American and British Armies has decided that India is no good as a base and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the Allied forces there. We can't help it. We have then to depend on what strength we have. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either, worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing we can fall back upon. Now in theory I can prove to you that our non-violent resistance can be wholly successful. We need not kill a single Japanese, we simply give them no quarter.

Q. But that non-violence can't prevent an invasion?

A. In non-violent technique, of course, there can be nothing like preventing an invasion. They will land, but they will land on an inhospitable shore. They may be ruthless and wipe out all the 400 millions. That would be complete victory. I know you will laugh at it, saying all this is superhuman, if not absurd. I would say you are right; we may not be able to stand that terror and we may have to go through a course of subjection worse than our present state. But we are discussing the theory.

Q. But if the British don't withdraw?

A. I do not want them to withdraw under Indian pressure, nor driven by force of circumstances. I want them to withdraw in their own interest, for their own good name.

Q. But what happens to your movement, if you are arrested, as we heard you might be? Or if Mr. Nehru is arrested? Would not the movement go to pieces?

A. No, not if we have worked among the people. Our arrests would work up the movement, they would stir everyone in India to do his little bit.

Q. Supposing Britain decides to fight to the last man in India, would not your non-violent non-co-operation help the Japanese?

A. If you mean non-co-operation with the British, you would be

right. We have not come to that stage. I do not want to help the Japanese—not even for freeing India. India during the past fifty or more years of her struggle for freedom has learnt the lesson of patriotism and of not bowing to *any* foreign power. But when the British are offering violent battle, our non-violent battle—our non-violent activity—would be neutralized. Those who believe in armed resistance and in helping the British militarily are and will be helping them. Mr. Amery says he is getting all the men and money they need, and he is right. For the Congress—a poor organization representing the millions of the poor of India—has not been able to collect in years what they have collected in a day by way of what I would say ‘so-called’ voluntary subscription. This Congress can only render non-violent assistance. But let me tell you, if you do not know it, that the British do not want it, they don’t set any store by it. But whether they do it or not, violent and non-violent resistance cannot go together. So India’s non-violence can at best take the form of silence—not obstructing the British forces, certainly not helping the Japanese.

Q. But not helping the British?

A. Don’t you see non-violence cannot give any other aid?

Q. But the railways, I hope, won’t stop; the services, too, will be, I hope, allowed to function.

A. They will be allowed to function, as they are being allowed today.

Q. Aren’t you then helping the British by leaving the services and the railways alone?

A. We are indeed. That is our non-embarrassment policy.

Q. But what about the presence of American troops here? Every American feels that we should help India to win her freedom.

A. It’s a bad job.

Q. Because it is said we are here really to help Britain and not India?

A. I say it is a bad job, because it is an imposition on India. It is not at India’s request or with India’s consent that they are here. It is enough irritation that we were not consulted before being dragged

into this war—I am not sure that the Viceroy even consulted his Executive Council. That is our original complaint. To have brought the American forces in, in my opinion, to have made the stranglehold on us all the tighter. You do not know what is happening in India—it is naturally not your business to go into those things. But let me give you some facts. Thousands of villagers are being summarily asked to vacate their homes and go elsewhere, for the site of their homesteads is needed by the military. Now I ask, where are they to go? Thousands of poor labourers in a certain place, I have heard today, have been asked to evacuate. Paltry compensations are offered them, and they are not even given sufficient notice. This kind of thing will not happen in an independent country. The Sappers and Miners there would first build homes for these people, transport would be provided for them, they would be given at least six months' maintenance allowance before they would be uprooted from their surroundings. Are these things to happen, even before the Japanese have come here? There is no other way, but saying to them, 'you must go', and if British rule ends, that moral act will save America and Britain. If they choose to remain here, they should remain as friends, not as proprietors of India. The American and British soldiers may remain here, if at all, by virtue of a compact with free India.

Q. Don't you think Indian people and leaders have some duty to help accelerate the process?

A. You mean by dotting India with rebellions everywhere? No, my invitation to the British to withdraw is not an idle one. It has to be made good by the sacrifice of the inviters. Public opinion has got to act, and it can act only non-violently.

Q. Is the possibility of strikes precluded?

A. No, strikes can be and have been non-violent. If railways are worked only to strengthen the British hold on India, they need not be assisted. But before I decide to take any energetic measures I must endeavour to show the reasonableness of my demand. The moment it is complied with, India instead of being sullen becomes an ally. Remember I am more interested than the British in keeping the Japanese out. For Britain's defeat in Indian waters may mean *only the loss of India*, but if Japan wins India loses *everything*.



Q. If you regard the American troops as an imposition, would you regard the American Technical Mission also in the same light?

A. A tree is judged by its fruit. I have met Dr. Grady<sup>1</sup>, we have had cordial talks. I have no prejudice against Americans. I have hundreds, if not thousands of friends, in America. The Technical Mission may have nothing but goodwill for India. But my point is that all the things that are happening are not happening at the invitation or wish of India. Therefore they are all suspect. We cannot look upon them with philosophic calmness, for the simple reason that we cannot close our eyes, as I have said, to the things that are daily happening in front of our eyes. Areas are being vacated and turned into military camps, people being thrown on their own resources. Hundreds, if not thousands, on their way from Burma perished without food and drink, and the wretched discrimination stared even these miserable people in the face. One route for the whites, another for the blacks! Provision of food and shelter for the whites, none for the blacks! And discrimination even on their arrival in India! India is being ground down to dust and humiliated, even before the Japanese advent, not for India's defence —and no one knows for whose defence. And so one fine morning I came to the decision to make this honest demand: 'For Heaven's sake leave India alone. Let us breathe the air of freedom. It may choke us, suffocate us, as it did the slaves on their emancipation.

But I want the present sham to end.'

Q. But it is the British troops you have in mind, not the American?

A. It does not make for me the slightest difference, the whole policy is one and indivisible.

Q. Is there any hope of Britain listening?

A. I will not die without that hope. And if there is a long lease of life for me, I may even see it fulfilled. For there is nothing unpractical in the proposal, no insuperable difficulties about it. Let me add that if Britain is not willing to do so whole-heartedly Britain does not deserve to win.

Q. Would a free India declare war against Japan?

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Henry Grady, head of the American Technical Mission then in India  
VOL. 82: 9 FEBRUARY, 1942 - 6 JUNE, 1942

A. Free India need not do so. It simply becomes the ally of the Allied Powers, simply out of gratefulness for the payment of a debt, however overdue. Human nature thanks the debtor when he discharges the debt.

Q. How then would this alliance fit in with India's non-violence?

A. It is a good question. The *whole* of India is not nonviolent. If the whole of India had been non-violent, there would have been no need for my appeal to Britain, nor would there be any fear of a Japanese invasion. But my non-violence is represented possibly by a hopeless minority, or perhaps by India's dumb millions who are temperamentally non-violent. But there too the question may be asked: 'What have they done?' They have done nothing, I agree; but they may act when the supreme test comes, and they may not. I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have has been discounted by the British as non-violence of the weak. And so all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice, so that it might find an echo in the British heart. It is made from a moral plane, and even as they do not hesitate to act desperately in the physical field and take grave risks, let them for once act desperately on the moral field and declare that India is independent today, irrespective of India's demand.

Q. But what does a free India mean, if, as Mr. Jinnah said, Muslims will not accept Hindu rule?

A. I have not asked the British to hand over India to the Congress or to the Hindus. Let them entrust India to God or in modern parlance to anarchy. Then all the parties will fight one another like dogs, or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement. I shall expect non-violence to arise out of that chaos.

Q. But to *whom* are the British to say—'India is free'?

A. To the world. Automatically the Indian army is disbanded from that moment, and they decide to pack up as soon as they can. Or they may declare they would pack up only after the war is over, but that they would expect no help from India, impose no taxes, raise no recruits—beyond what help India chooses to give voluntarily. British rule will cease from that moment, no matter what happens to India

afterwards. Today it is all a hypocrisy, unreality. I want that to end.

The new order will come only when that falsity ends. It is an unwarranted claim Britain and America are making, the claim of saving democracy and freedom. It is a wrong thing to make that claim when there is this terrible tragedy of holding a whole nation in bondage.

Q. What can America do to have your demand implemented?

A. If my demand is admitted to be just beyond cavil, America can insist on the implementing of the Indian demand as a condition of her financing Britain and supplying her with her matchless skill in making war machines. He who pays the piper has the right to call the tune. Since America has become the predominant partner in the

Allied cause she is partner also in Britain's guilt. The Allies have no right to call their cause to be morally superior to the Nazi cause so long as they hold in custody the fairest part and one of the most ancient nations of the earth.

*Harijan*, 14-6-1942

#### 437. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA, C.P.,  
*June 6/7, 1942*

MY DEAR C.R.,

Here is a typical letter<sup>1</sup> from Satyamurti—you will know what weight to give to it.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

*June 7<sup>2</sup>, 1942*

This was overlooked yesterday. Meanwhile I have your two letters. You will come when you can. Your argument makes no appeal to any of us. Surely they are not all blinded by my reactions. Anyway you have to reason with them. I am glad the depression is leaving you.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 10917. Courtesy: C. R. Narasimhan

<sup>1</sup> This is not traceable.

<sup>2</sup> The source, however, has "6".

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### MAHADEV DESAI'S LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,

February 14, 1942

MY DEAR RAJAJI,

You are right. Babu 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 Babu—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 Babu 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. 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. Babu 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.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Seth Jamnalal Bajaj", 11-2-1942.

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 II

### *LETTER FROM LORD LINLITHGOW*<sup>1</sup>

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.

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 office 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 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.

As the law stands my Government are themselves powerless to grant an

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Linlithgow", 26-2-1942.

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 III

#### *BRITISH WAR CABINET'S PROPOSALS<sup>1</sup>*

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,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Stafford Cripps", 25-3-1942 and "Letter to Jwaharlal Nehru", after 27-3-1942.

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.

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 with 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 IV

##### *INTERVIEW WITH SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS<sup>1</sup>*

*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

<sup>1</sup> As reported by Sir Stafford Cripps. *Vide* "Telegram to Stafford Cripps", 25-3-1942 and "Letter to Jwaharlal Nehru", after 27-3-1942.



suggested that the document envisaged the continuance in perpetuity of a such 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 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<sup>1</sup> 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

## APPENDIX V

### TALK WITH PYARELAL<sup>2</sup>

[*December 13, 1942*]<sup>3</sup>

During the last detention at Poona in 1942, I had the opportunity to discuss at length with Gandhiji various aspects of his ideal of trusteeship... In the course of our talk one day he remarked: "The only democratic way of achieving it today is by cultivating opinion in its favour."

I put it to him that perhaps the reason why he had presented trusteeship basis to the owning class was that while non-violence would command many sacrifices from the people, it was not reasonable to expect anyone to present his own head in a charger. "So instead of asking the owning class to do the impossible, you presented them with a reasonable and practicable alternative."

GANDHIJI: I refuse to admit that non-violence knows any limit to the sacrifice that it can demand or command. The doctrine of trusteeship stands on its own merits.

PYARELAL: Surely, you do not mean that the change would depend upon the sufferance of the owning class and we shall have to wait till their conversion is complete? If social transformation is effected by a slow, gradual process, it will kill the revolutionary fervour which an abrupt break with the past creates. That is why our Marxist friends say that a true social revolution can come only through a proletarian dictatorship. . .

<sup>1</sup> March 29, 1942

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Question Box", 6-4-1942

<sup>3</sup> The date is from *Harijan*, 25-10-1952.

G. Perhaps you have the example of Russia in mind. Wholesale expropriation of the owning class and distribution of its assets among the people there did create a tremendous amount of revolutionary fervour. But I claim that ours will be an even bigger revolution. We must not underrate the business talent and know-how which the owning class have acquired through generations of experience and specialization. Free use of it would accrue to the people under my plan. So long as we have no power, conversion is our weapon by necessity, but after we get power, conversion will be our weapon of choice. Conversion must precede legislation. Legislation in the absence of conversion remains a dead letter. As an illustration, we have today the power to enforce rules of sanitation but we can do nothing with it because the public is not ready.

P. You say conversion must precede reform. Whose conversion? If you mean the conversion of the people, they are ready even today. If, on the other hand, you mean that of the owning class, we may as well wait till the Greek Calends.

G. I mean the conversion of both. You see, if the owning class does not accept the trusteeship basis voluntarily, its conversion must come under the pressure of public opinion. For that public opinion is not yet sufficiently organized.

P. What do you mean by power?

G. By power I mean voting power for the people so broad-based that the will of the majority can be given effect to.

P. Can the masses at all come into power by parliamentary activity?

G. Not by parliamentary activity *alone*. My reliance ultimately is on the power of non-violent non-co-operation, which I have been trying to build up for the last twenty-two years.

P. Is the capture of power possible through non-violence? Our Socialist friends say . . . they do not see how it can enable to seize power. You also have said the same thing.

G. In a way they are right. By its very nature, non-violence cannot 'seize' power, nor can that be its goal. But non-violence can do more; it can effectively control and guide power without capturing the machinery of Government. That is its beauty. There is an exception of course. If the non-violent non-co-operation of the people is so complete that the administration ceases to function or if the administration crumbles under the impact of a foreign invasion and a vacuum results, the people's representatives will then step in and fill it. Theoretically that is possible.

Moreover, I do not agree that Government cannot be carried on except by the use of violence.

P. Does not the very concept of the State imply the use of power?

G. Yes. But the use of power need not necessarily be violent.

A father wields power over his children; he may even punish but not by inflicting violence. The most effective exercise of power is that which irks least.

Power rightly exercised must sit light as a flower; no one should feel the weight of it. The people accepted the authority of the Congress willingly. I was on more than one occasion invested with the absolute power of dictatorship. But everybody knew that my power rested on their willing acceptance. They could set me aside at any time and I would have stepped aside without a murmur. In the Khilafat days my authority, or the authority of the Congress, did not irk anybody. The Ali Brothers used to call me *Sarkar*. Yet they knew they had me in their pocket. What was true about me or the Congress then can be true about the Government also.

I conceded that a non-violent State or even a non-violent minority dictatorship—a dictatorship resting on the moral authority of a few—was possible in theory. But it called for a terrible self-discipline, self-denial and penance....”

“Personally I agree”, I concluded, “that such a person alone is fit to be a dictator under non-violence. . . .”

Gandhiji confirmed that under non-violence people have to be prepared for heavier sacrifices if only because the goal aimed at is higher. “There is no short-cut to salvation,” he said.

“That would mean,” interpolated my sister, “that only a Jesus, a Muhammad or a Buddha can be the head of a non-violent State.”

G. That is not correct. Prophets and supermen are born only once in an age.

But if even a single individual realizes the ideal of ahimsa in its fullness, he covers and redeems the whole society. Once Jesus had blazed the trail, his twelve disciples could carry on his mission without his presence. It needed the perseverance and genius of so many generations of scientists to discover the laws of electricity but today everybody, even children, use electric power in their daily life. Similarly, it will not always need a perfect being to administer an ideal State, once it has come into being. What is needed is a thorough social awakening to begin with. The rest will follow. To take an instance nearer home, I have presented to the working class the truth that true capital is not silver or gold but the labour of their hands and feet and their intelligence. Once labour develops that awareness, it would not need my

presence to enable it to make use of the power that it will release.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 630-3

## APPENDIX VI

### *BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS*<sup>1</sup>

11, DOWNING STREET, S.W.I.,

*March 2, 1942*

On the 25th February the Prime Minister asked me to preside over a Cabinet Committee to consider the present position in India, and to make recommendations.

I now submit, on behalf of the Committee, for the consideration of the War Cabinet, the draft of a Declaration by His Majesty's Government, regarding the future government of India.

#### DRAFT DECLARATION

His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of the 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, equal in every respect to the United Kingdom and the other Dominions of the Crown, and free to remain in or to separate itself from the equal partnership of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

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 for the time being its present constitutional position, provision being made for subsequent accession.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "That Ill-fated Proposal", 13-4-1942.

With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution following the lines laid down above.

(ii) the signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body covering all necessary matters relating to the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate revised 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 the 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 of the total population as the average for British India, and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

(e) While during the critical period which now faces India, and until the new Constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably the full responsibility for India's defence, they 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, to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task so vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

*The Transfer of Power*, Vol. I, pp. 291-3

## APPENDIX VII

### *RESOLUTION PASSED BY A.I.C.C.*<sup>1</sup>

*May 1, 1942*

In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All-India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of non-co-operation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognize the independence of India or to part with any real power. India's participation in the war was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and Fascism as to imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organized on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her.

The present Indian Army is in fact an offshoot of the British Army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilized for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to her interest and dangerous to the cause of her freedom to introduce foreign armies in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped while India develops

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Draft Resolution for A.I.C.C.", before 24-4-1942.



into a battle-ground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority. The All-India Congress Committee is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, makes it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations. The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-co-operation as the British Government has prevented the organization of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. In places wherein the British and the invading forces are fighting our non-co-operation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-co-operation with the invader. Judging from their attitude the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference.

The success of such a policy of non-co-operation and non-violent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1942, Vol. II, pp. 205-6; also The Transfer of Power, Vol. II, pp. 66-70*

## APPENDIX VIII

### *SECTION IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HINDUSTANI PRACHAR SABHA DEFINING ITS AIMS AND FUNCTIONS<sup>1</sup>*

3. AIMS: To propagate Hindustani, the national language so that it can meet the social, political, administrative and other requirements of the country as a whole and become the medium of communication and intercourse between the different linguistic regions.

NOTE: Hindustani is that language which in the towns and villages of North India Hindus, Muslims and all other people speak, understand and employ for mutual intercourse, which is written in both the Devanagari and the Persian scripts and the literary styles of which are today known by the names of Hindi and Urdu.

4. FUNCTIONS OF THE SABHA: the Sabha shall conduct the following activities to achieve its aims.

(1) To prepare a dictionary of Hindustani which all can rely upon. To evolve a grammar of Hindustani and prepare similar other reference works for the different provinces.

(2) To prepare Hindustani text-books for use in schools.

(3) To bring out easy-to-understand books in Hindustani.

(4) To conduct examinations in various places in order to propagate Hindustani and to extend help and recognition to associations that conduct such examinations.

(5) To prepare a glossary of technical terms in Hindustani.

(6) To endeavour to have Hindustani accepted as a compulsory subject by provincial governments, municipal and district boards and national educational institutions.

(7) To set up branches of the Sabha, appoint committees, collect contributions, offer aid to publishers of Hindustani books, run schools, libraries, reading-rooms, training schools, night-schools and other institutions of a similar nature with a view to achieving the above mentioned aims and encouraging activities.

(8) To associate with or affiliate to the Sabha such institutions as are capable of co-operating in these activities.

(9) To make all such efforts as will help fulfil the objects of the Sabha.

NOTE: no member of the Sabha shall, in his capacity as a member, derive any

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement of Hindustani", 2-5-1942.

personal gain from the Sabha's assets.

*Rashtrabhasha Hindustani*, pp. 152-3

## APPENDIX IX

### *INTERVIEW WITH LOUIS FISCHER*<sup>1</sup>

*June 4, 1942*

GANDHIJI: Now I am fully at your disposal.

LOUIS FISCHER: I feel that the Cripps mission was a turning point in Indian history. The country is probably now beginning to grasp the significance of Cripps's failure, and from that understanding big things might flow.

G. When Cripps arrived, he sent me a telegram asking me to come and see him in New Delhi. I did not wish to go, but I went because I thought it would do some good. I had heard rumours about the contents of the British Government's offer he brought to India, but I had not seen the offer. He gave it to me, and after a brief study, I said to him, "Why did you come if this is what you have to offer? If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the next plane home." Cripps replied, "I will consider that."

L.F. What is your criticism of the Cripps offer? Didn't it promise you dominion status with the right to secede from the British Commonwealth?

G. C. F. Andrews always used to assert that dominion status is not for India.

We have not the same relation to Britain as the dominions which are white and settled, for the most part, by emigrants from Britain or their descendants. We do not wish any status conferred on us. If a status is conferred on us, it means we are not free.

As to secession, there are big flaws. One of the chief flaws is the provision in the Cripps proposal regarding the Princes. The British maintain that they must protect the Princes under treaties which they forced on the Princes for Britain's advantage. The Maharaja of Bikaner, and I take him as any X,Y,Z, reigned before the British came and had more power then than now. The second flaw is the recognition of Pakistan. The differences between Hindus and Muslims have been accentuated by British rule. Now they have been given their maximum scope by the Cripps offer.

Lord Minto started this when he was Viceroy [1909]<sup>2</sup> by establishing separate electorates for the two religious communities, and since then the British have sought

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Important Questions", 6-6-1942. Only extracts from Louis Fischer's book have been reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> Square brackets are as in the source.

to divide us still further. Lord Curzon was a great administrator. I never met him as I have met Chelmsford, Irwin [Halifax]<sup>1</sup>, and Linlithgow. But he said one thing to one man, another to a second man, and still a third thing to a third man. With Sir Samuel Hoare, I know whom I am talking to. I know where he stands. But not with Curzon.

The division of Bengal, as carried out by Curzon, was a necessary reform. It was a good measure. But it had the effect of dividing the province according to religion. Cripps introduced this same principle in his offer; that is the second big flaw. There can be no unity in India, therefore, as long as the British are here. L.F.

Well, you did not like the outlines of the post-war settlement proposed by Cripps. But was there nothing desirable in the interim or immediate provisions? Did you not think that, irrespective of the plan for the future, there might be some value in the immediate arrangements which would give your people experience in government and earn you the right to demand freedom after the war?

G. Roughly, this was the spirit in which I approached it. But when I saw the text of the Cripps offer, I was certain that there was no room for co-operation. The main issue was defence. In war time, defence is the chief task of government. I have no desire to interfere with the actual conduct of the war. I am incompetent to do so.

But Roosevelt has no special training in strategy or, if he has it is partial. Or, let me take Churchill. L.F. No, you needn't hesitate to take Roosevelt as an example. I understand the point.

G. The point is that in war time there must be civilian control of the military, even though the civilians are not as well trained in strategy as the military. If the British in Burma wish to destroy the golden pagoda because it is a beacon to Japanese airplanes, then I say you cannot destroy it, because when you destroy it, you destroy something in the Burmese soul. When the British come and say, we must remove these peasants to build an aerodrome here, and the peasants must go today, I say, 'Why did you not think of that yesterday and give the poor people time to go, and why don't you find places for them to go to?'

L.F. If these are the matters which you wish Indians to control, I am sure General Wavell would have regarded them as interference in the prosecution of the war.

G. The British offered us war-time tasks like the running of canteens and the printing of stationery, which are of minor significance. Though I am no strategist, there are things we could have done which would have been more conducive to success in the war. The British have fared so badly in the Far East that they could do with help

<sup>1</sup> Square brackets are as in the source.

from us.

L.F. Apparently, then, you placed chief stress on defence. He agreed.

Did Nehru and other Congress leaders take the same view?

G. I hope so, I hope Nehru takes the same view, and that the Maulana Sahib takes the same view.

L.F.. In other words, you found nothing good in the Cripps proposals?

G. I am glad you put this direct and definite question to me. No I found nothing good at all in them.

L.F. Did you tell that to Cripps?

G. Yes, I said to Cripps, 'You performed a miracle in Russia.'

L.F.. Why did you say that? It wasn't Sir Stafford Cripps who brought Russia into the war, but a gentleman named Adolf Hitler.

G. But I and thousands of Indians, believed that it was Cripps who performed the miracle.

L.F. Didn't Cripps protest when you said that?

G. No, he took the compliment. We thought Stalin had asked for British aid before the invasion of Russia.

L.F. No, that is not correct. After the invasion, Russia got help and is now obtaining increasing help from America and Britain. But before the attack, Stalin, fearing Hitler, could show no friendship for Britain or for Cripps.

G. In any case, I asked Cripps to perform a miracle here too, but it was not in his power.

L.F. I think there is a vast popular ferment going on in England. I flew to England last summer and stayed nine weeks. The mass of the people are resolved not to be ruled after the war by the sort of people who ruled them before the war and brought on this war. Cripps could become the expression and embodiment of this popular protest. His rise to office is therefore an encouraging phenomenon.

G. Yes, and a discouraging one too, for I wonder whether Cripps has the qualities of a great statesman. It is very discouraging to us that the man who was a friend of Jawaharlal's and had been interested in India should have made himself the bearer of this mission.

Lord Sankey once told me to take care of myself, and I said him, 'Do you think I would have reached this green old age if I hadn't taken care of myself?' This is one of my faults.

L.F. I thought you were perfect.

G. No, I am very imperfect. Before you are gone you will have discovered a hundred of my faults, and if you don't I will help you to see them. Now, I have given you an hour.

L.F. You helped recruit soldiers for the British Army in the first World War. When this war started, you said you wished to do nothing to embarrass the British Government. Now, obviously, your attitude has changed. What has happened?

G. In the first World War I had just returned from South Africa. I hadn't yet found my feet. I wasn't sure of my ground. This did not imply any lack of faith in non-violence. But it had to develop according to circumstances, and I was not sufficiently sure of my ground. There were many experiences between the two wars. Nevertheless, I announced after some talks with the Viceroy in September 1939, that the Congress movement would not obstruct this war. I am not the Congress. In fact, I am not in the Congress. I am neither a member nor an officer of the Party. Congress is more anti-British and anti-war than I am, and I have had to curb its desires to interfere with the war effort. Now I have reached certain conclusions. I do not wish to humiliate the British. But the British must go. I do not say that the British are worse than the Japanese.

L.F. Quite the contrary.

G. I would not say quite the contrary. But I do not wish to exchange one master for another. England will benefit morally if she withdraws voluntarily and in good order.

*June 5, 1942*

Gandhi came in, greeted me and lay down on his bed.

G. I will take your blows lying down.

The Muslim woman gave him a wet mud-pack for his abdomen. He said:

This puts me in touch with my future. I see you missed that one.

L.F. I hadn't missed it but thought he was too young to think about returning to the dust.

G. Why, you and I and all of us, some in a hundred and twenty years, but all sooner or later, will do it.

L.F. When I hear a suggestion about some arrangement for the future I try to imagine how it would look if it were actually adopted. I am sure you have done the same in connection with your proposal that the British withdraw. Then how do you

see that withdrawal, step by step?

G. First, there are the Princes who have their own armies. They might make trouble. I am not sure that there will be order when the British go. There could be chaos. I have said, 'Let the British go in an orderly fashion and leave India to God.' You may not like such unrealistic language. Then call it anarchy. That is the worst that can happen. But we will seek to prevent it. There may not be anarchy.

L.F. Could not the Indians immediately organize a government?

G. Yes, There are three elements in the political situation here: the Princes, the Muslims and Congress. They could all form a provisional government.

L.F. In what proportion would power and the posts be divided?

G. I do not know. Congress being the most powerful unit might claim the largest share. But that could be determined amicably.

L.F. It seems to me that the British cannot possibly withdraw altogether. That would mean making a present of India to Japan and England would never consent to that, nor would the United States approve. If you demand that the British pack up and go bag and baggage, you are simply asking the impossible; you are barking up a tree.

You do not mean, do you, that they must also withdraw their armies? G. You are right. No, Britain and America, and other countries too, can keep their armies here and use Indian territory as a base for military operations. I do not wish Japan to win the war. I do not want the Axis to win. But I am sure that Britain cannot win unless the Indian people become free. Britain is weaker and Britain is morally indefensible while she rules India. I do not wish to humiliate England.

L.F. But if India is to be used as a military base by the United Nations, many other things are involved. Armies do not exist in a vacuum. For instance, the United Nations would need good organization on the railroads.

G. Oh, they could operate the railroads. They would also need order in the ports where they received their supplies. They could to have riots in Bombay and Calcutta. These matters would require co-operation and common effort.

L.F. Could the terms of this collaboration be set forth in a treaty of alliance?

G. Yes, we could have a written agreement with England.

L.F. Or with Britain, America and the others? Why have you never said this? I must confess that when I heard of your proposed civil disobedience movement I was prejudiced against it. I believed that it would impede the prosecution of the war. I think the war has to be fought and won. I see complete darkness for the world if the Axis win. I think we have a chance for a better world if we win.

G. There I cannot quite agree. Britain often cloaks herself in a cloth of hypocrisy, promising what she later doesn't deliver. But I accept the proposition that there is a better chance if the democracies win.

L.F. It depends on the kind of peace we make.

G. It depends on what you do during the war.

L.F. I would like to tell you that American statement have great sympathy for the cause of Indian freedom. The United State Government tried to dissuade Churchill from making the speech in which he declared that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India. Important men in Washington are working on the idea of a Pacific Charter, but they tell me that they have not got very far because the first principle of such a charter would be the end of imperialism, and how can we announce that while Britain holds India?

G. I am not interested in future promises. I am not interested in independence after the war. I want independence now. That will help England win the war.

L.F. Why have you not communicated your plan to the Viceroy? He should be told that you have no objection now to the use of India as a base for Allied military operations.

G. No one has asked me. I have written about my proposed civil disobedience movement in order to prepare the public for it. If you put me some direct questions in writing about this matter, I will answer them in *Harijan*. Only make the questions brief.

L.F. If you knew anything about my writing you would know that I always try to be brief, direct, and squeeze out the water.

G. Jawaharlal told me about you before you came. He said you were honest and had no axe to grind. You don't have several irons in the fire. He said you were a solid man. I can see that by looking at you.

L.F. Yes, solid, at least physically.

G. I have talked freely and frankly to you. I think you are a *sahib loke*.

L.F. Did you say 'sahib bloke'? Is that the English word bloke?

G. No, *loke*. Miss Katherine Mayo came here and I was good to her and then she wrote only filth. You know what I have called her?

L.F. No.

G. Drain inspector.

L.F. I come from a very poor family. I know what it means to be hungry. I have



always sympathized with the downtrodden and the poor. Many Americans feel the greatest friendship for India. I think it very unfortunate, therefore, that you have recently uttered some unfriendly words at the expense of America.

G. It was necessary. I wanted to shock. I think many Americans have a soft corner in their hearts for me, and I wished to tell them that if they continue to worship Mammon they will not make a better world. There is a danger that the democracies will defeat the Axis and become just as bad as Japan and Germany.

L.F. Of course there is a danger. But many people said that England would go Fascist if it went to war. Yet in fact England is more democratic now than she was before the war.

G. No. We see in India that this is not so.

L.F. At least in England.

G. It cannot be true in England and not in the Empire. I cannot depend on your future goodness. I have laboured for many decades for Indian national freedom. We cannot wait any longer. But I believe that there is goodwill for us.

England is sitting on an unexploded mine in India and it may explode any day. The hatred and resentment against Britain are so strong here that Britain can get no help for her war effort. Indians enlist in the British Army because they want to eat, but they have no feeling in their hearts which would make them wish to help England.

L.F. If you permit me to summarize the suggestions you have made today about a settlement in India, you have reversed the Cripps offer. Cripps offered you something and kept the rest for England. You are offering England something and keep the rest for India.

G. That is very true. I have turned Cripps around.

I saw from his watch that the end of the hour was approaching. I said I would not dare ask him to read my book, *Men and Politics*, which Dev had, but I hoped he would page through it. A secretary asked what "paging through" meant.

G. It means looking first at the last page, then at the first page, then at a page in the middle.

L.F. And then throwing the book away and saying it is excellent. Now I have kept you the agreed hour.

G. Yes, you have. Go and sit in the tub.

*June 6, 1942*

I asked him what was the theory behind his weekly day of silence.

G. What do you mean by theory?

L.F. I mean the principle, the motivation.

G. It happened when I was being torn to pieces. I was working very hard, travelling in hot trains incessantly, speaking at many meetings, and being approached in trains and elsewhere by thousands of people who asked questions, made pleas, and wished to pray with me. I wanted to rest for one day a week. So I instituted the day of silence. Later of course I clothed it with all kinds of virtues and gave it a spiritual cloak. But the motivation was really nothing more than that I wanted to have a day off.

Silence is very relaxing. It is not relaxing in itself. But when you can talk and don't, it gives you great relief—and there is time for thought.

I asked Gandhi about Rajaji's programme.

G. I don't know what his proposals are. I think it unfortunate that he should argue against me and that I should argue with him, so I have given order that, as far as we are concerned, the discussion should be suspended. But the fact is that I do not know what Rajaji proposes.

L.F. Isn't the essence of his scheme that the Hindus and Muslims collaborate and in common work perhaps discover the technique of peaceful co-operation?

G. Yes. But that is impossible. As long as the third power, England, is here, our communal differences will continue to plague us. Far back, Lord Minto, then Viceroy, declared that the British had to keep Muslims and Hindus apart in order to facilitate the domination of India.

I told Gandhi I had seen the Minto quotation.

G. This has been the principle of British rule ever since.

L.F. I have been told that when Congress ministries were in office in the province, during 1937, 1938 and 1939, they discriminated against Muslims.

G. The British governors of those provinces have officially testified that is not so.

L.F. But isn't it a fact that in the United Provinces, Congress and the Muslims entered into an electoral pact because Congress was not sure of winning, that, then, Congress won a sweeping victory and refused to form a coalition with the Muslims?

G. No. There were four Muslim ministers in the United Provinces Government formed by Congress. There were no representatives of the Muslim League, but there were Muslims. No. We have always tried to collaborate with Muslims. It is said that

the Maulana is a puppet in our hands. Actually, he is the dictator of Congress. He is its president. But the Cripps proposals have divided Hindus from Muslims more than ever. Thanks to the British Government, the divergence between the two communities has been widened.

L.F. It was sad that Congress leaders and Muslim Leaguers came to New Delhi to talk to Cripps, and talked to Cripps but did not talk to one another.

G. It was not only sad, it was disgraceful. But it was the fault of the Muslim League. Shortly after this war broke out, we were summoned to meet the Viceroy at New Delhi. Rajendra Prasad and I went to speak for Congress, and Mr. Jinnah for the Muslim League. I asked Jinnah to confer with us in advance and face the British Government unitedly. We agreed to meet in New Delhi, but when I suggested that we both demand independence for India he said, 'I do not want independence.' We could not agree. I urged that we at least make the appearance of unity by going to the Viceroy together; I said he could go in my car or I would go in his. He consented to have me go in his car. But we spoke to the Viceroy in different tones and expressed different views.

In actual life, it is impossible to separate us into two nations. We are not two nations. Every Muslim will have a Hindu name if he goes back far enough in his family history. Every Muslim is merely a Hindu who has accepted Islam. That does not create nationality. If some influential Christian divine converted us all to Christianity, we should not become one nation if we really were two nations, and in the same manner the two religions of India do not make two nationalities. Europe is Christian, but Germany and England, so much alike in culture and language, are grimly at one another's throats. We in India have a common culture. In the north, Hindi and Urdu are understood by both Hindus and Muslims. In Madras, Hindus and Muslims speak Tamil, and in Bengal they both speak Bengali and neither Hindi nor Urdu. When communal riots take place, they are always provoked by incidents over cows and by religious processions. That means that it is our superstitions that create the trouble and not our separate nationalities.

L.F. Caroe<sup>1</sup> and Jenkins<sup>2</sup> told me that there were no communal differences in the villages, and I heard from others too that the relations between the tworeligious communities are peaceful in the villages. If that is so, that is very important because India is ninety per cent village.

<sup>1</sup> Olaf Kirkpatrick Caroe, Secretary, External Affairs Department, who worked for many years as a British official in the Punjab

<sup>2</sup> Sir Evan Jenkins, Secretary, Department of Supplies

G. It is so, and that of course proves that the people are not divided. It proves that the politicians divide us.

L.F. The Muslim bartender in my hotel in New Delhi said to me— although he is a member of the Muslim League and an advocate of Pakistan that the communal troubles always started where Muslims were a minority and never where the Hindus were a minority.

G. Fischer, you have been here only for a short time. You cannot study everything. But if you make any investigations and find that we are wrong or guilty, please say so in a loud voice.

These are my patients. She is one of my best patients.

L.F. Wouldn't it be better to leave her to the doctor?

G. No, there is much quackery in all this. She is not my patient, she is my relaxation. This baby's father was a sergeant in the British Army [*sic*] stationed at the North-West Frontier. He was ordered to shoot at Indians. He refused and was sentenced to sixteen years' imprisonment. He served six years, but there were so many petitions for his liberation that he was released two years ago. Now he lives here with us.

Fischer, give me your bowl and I will give you some vegetables. You don't like vegetables?

L.F. I don't like the taste of these vegetables.

G. Ah, you must add plenty of salt and lemon.

L.F. You want me to kill the taste.

G. No, enrich the taste.

L.F. You are so non-violent. You wouldn't even kill a taste.

G. If that were the only thing men killed, I wouldn't mind.

I perspired and said: Next time I am in India . . . You either ought to have air-conditioning in Sevagram, or live in the Viceroy's palace.

G. All right.

I began my interview with Gandhi this afternoon by reading this passage<sup>1</sup> to him. I said it confirmed his statement to me this morning that the Muslim people are much less interested in separatism than their leaders.

<sup>1</sup> From the Indian Statutory Commission Report, Vol. I, which read: There is among the Hindu minority in Sind a feeling that the independence of the British Commissioner is too great, while on the Muhammadan side there is a well-known cry for separation from Bombay. This demand has gathered strength not so much in the homes of the people or among the Muhammadan cultivators of Sind, as among the leaders of Muhammadan thought all over India to whom the idea of a new Muslim province, contiguous to the predominantly Muslim areas of Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province, and the Punjab, naturally appeals as offering a stronghold against the fear of Hindu domination.

G. Of course.

L.F. But how real are the fears of the Muslim leaders? Perhaps they understand better than the Muslim masses that the Hindus desire to dominate. Can you say quite objectively that the Hindus have not tried to gain the upper hand?

G. Here and there, individuals may entertain regrettable ideas. But I can say that the Congress movement and the Hindus in general have no desire to control. The provinces must enjoy broad autonomy. I myself am opposed to violence or domination and do not believe in powerful governments which oppress their citizens or other States. So how could I wish for domination? This charge is a cry originated by leaders to obtain a better hold on their people.

L.F. Very highly placed Britishers had told me that Congress was in the hands of big business and that Gandhi was supported by the Bombay mill-owners who gave him as much money as he wanted. What truth is there in these assertions?

G. Unfortunately, they are true. Congress hasn't enough money to conduct its work. We thought in the beginning to collect four annas from each member per year and operate on that. But it hasn't worked.

L.F. What proportion of the Congress budget is covered by rich Indians?

G. Practically all of it. In this ashram, for instance, we could live much more poorly than we do and spend less money. But we do not, and the money comes from our rich friends.

L.F. Doesn't the fact that Congress gets its money from the moneyed interests affect Congress politics? Doesn't it create a kind of moral obligation?

G. It creates a silent debt. But actually we are very little influenced by the thinking of the rich. They are sometimes afraid of our demand for full independence.

L.F. The other day I noticed in *The Hindustan Times* an item to the effect that Mr. Birla had again raised wages in his textile mills to meet the higher cost of living and, the paper continued to say, no other mill-owner had done so much. *The Hindustan Times* is a Congress paper.

G. No, it is completely owned by Birla. I know, because my youngest son is the editor. The facts are true, but it has nothing to do with Congress. You are right, however, that the dependence of Congress on rich sponsors is unfortunate. I use the word 'unfortunate'. It does not pervert our policy.

L.F. Isn't one of the results that there is a concentration on nationalism almost to the exclusion of social and economic problems?

G. No. Congress has from time to time, especially under the influence of

Pandit Nehru, adopted advanced social programmes and schemes for economic planning. I will have those collected for you.

L.F. But is it not a fact that all these social changes are projected to a time when independence will have been achieved?

G. No. When Congress was in office in the provinces (1937-39) the Congress ministries introduced many reforms which have since been cancelled by the British administration. We introduced reforms in the villages, in the schools, and in other fields.

L.F. I have been told, and I read in the Simon report that one of the great curses of India is the village money-lender to whom the peasant is often in debt from birth to death. In European countries, private philanthropy and governments have in similar circumstances created land banks to oust the usurious money-lender. Why could not some of your rich friends start a land bank on a purely business basis except that, instead of getting forty to seventy per cent interest per year, they would get two or three per cent? Their money would be secure, they would earn a small profit, and they would be helping their country.

G. Impossible. It could not be done without Government legislation.

L.F. Why?

G. Because the peasants wouldn't repay the loans.

L.F. But surely the peasant would realize that it was better to repay money which he borrowed at three per cent than to mortgage his life away to the money-lender?

G. Money lending is an ancient institutions and it is deeply rooted in the village. What you advocate cannot be done before we are free.

L.F. What would happen in a free India? What is your programme for the improvement of the lot of the peasantry?

G. The peasants would take the land. We would not have to tell them to take it. They would take it.

L.F. Would the landlords be compensated?

G. No. That would be fiscally impossible. You see, our gratitude to our millionaire friends does not prevent us from saying such things. The village would become a self-governing unit living its own life.

L.F. But there would of course be a national government.

G. No.

L.F. But surely you need a national administration to direct the railroads, the telegraphs, and so on.

G. I would not shed a tear if there were no railroads in India.

L.F. But that would bring suffering to the peasant. He needs city goods, and he must sell his produce in other parts of the country and abroad. The village needs electricity and irrigation. No single village could build a hydro-electric power station or an irrigation system like the Sukkur barrage in Sind.

G. And that has been a big disappointment. It has put the whole Province in debt.

L.F. I know, but it has brought much new land under cultivation, and it is a boon to the people.

G. I realize that despite my views there will be a central government administration. However, I do not believe in the accepted Western form of democracy with its universal voting for parliamentary representatives.

L.F. What would you have India do?

G. There are seven hundred thousand villages in India. Each would be organized according to the will of its citizens, all of them voting. Then there would be seven hundred thousand votes and not four hundred million. Each village, in other words, would have one vote. The villages would elect their district administrations, and the district administrations would elect the provincial administrations, and these in turn would elect a president who would be the national chief executive.

L.F. That is very much like the Soviet system.

G. I did not know that. I don't mind.

L.F. Now, Mr. Gandhi, I would like to ask you a second question about Congress. Congress has been accused of being an authoritarian organization. There is a new book out by two British authors, Shuster and Wint, called *India and Democracy*, which makes the charge that when the Congress provincial ministries resigned in 1939 they did so not of their own volition but on the orders of the district [*sic*] dictators of Congress.

G. This is nonsense. Do you think all questions are decided in the House of Commons or are decisions taken in party caucuses and in the clubs of London? Congress officers are elected by the members of Congress, and ministers who are members of Congress abide by the principles of Congress. Sir Samuel Hoare has told me a few things about the workings of democracy in Britain.

L.F. He seems to be your favourite British statesman.

This provided much laughter.

G. At least, I always know where he stands. Parliamentary democracy is not immune to corruption, as you who remember Tammany Hall and the Mayor of Chicago should know. I do not think a free India will function like the other countries of the world. We have our own forms to contribute.

I said, I would like to talk to him for a few moments about Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian leader who had escaped to Axis territory. I told Gandhi that I was rather shocked when I heard that he had sent a telegram of condolence to Bose's mother on the receipt of the report, since proved false, that Bose had died in an airplane accident.

G. Do you mean because I had responded to news that proved to be false?

L.F. No, but that you regretted the passing of a man who went to Fascist Germany and identified himself with it.

G. I did it because I regard Bose as a patriot of patriots. He may be misguided. I think he is misguided. I have often opposed Bose. Twice I kept him from becoming president of Congress. Finally he did become president, although my views often differed from his. But suppose he had gone to Russia or to America to ask aid for India. Would that have made it better?

L.F. Yes, of course. It does make a difference to whom you go.

G. I do not want help from anybody to make India free. I want India to save herself.

L.F. Throughout history, nations and individuals have helped foreign countries. Lafayette went from France to assist America in winning independence from Britain. Thousands of Americans and other foreigners died in Spain to save the Spanish Republic.

G. Individuals, yes. But America is the ally of England which enslaves us. And I am not yet certain that the democracies will make a better world when they defeat the Fascists. They may become very much like the Fascists themselves.

L.F. This is where, as I told you the other day, we must agree to differ. I find the concentration of Indians on problems of their freedom to the exclusion of social problems a disappointment and a shortcoming. Bose is a young man with a propensity for dramatic action, and were he to succumb in Germany to the lure of Fascism and return to India and make India free but Fascist, I think you would be worse off than under British rule.

G. There are powerful elements of Fascism in British rule, and in India these are



the elements which we see and feel every day. If the British wish to document their right to win the war and make the world better, they must purify themselves by surrendering power in India. Your President talks about the Four Freedoms. Do they include the freedom to be free? We are asked to fight for democracy in Germany, Italy and Japan. How can we when we haven't got it ourselves?

*June 7, 1942*

Gandhi asked me how I had slept. I told him I had slept very well and asked how he had slept. He said he usually sleeps from 9.30 to 4.30.

"Without interruption?", I asked.

G. No, with two or three very brief interruptions. But I have no trouble falling asleep again. And then I have half an hour's sleep every afternoon.

I told him that Churchill did the same.

G. I hear that this is becoming more and more customary in Europe. Especially in old age it is very important.

I told him that it had been reported that Roosevelt falls asleep the moment he gets into bed. Gandhi inquired about Roosevelt's health and then asked me to describe Mrs. Roosevelt to him.

G. Then she has an influence on American politics?

I tried to explain the progress in social legislation, trade union organization, and social thinking which had taken place under the New Deal. I also stressed the fact that the American Government is financing foreign governments and financing domestic war industries. I compared that with the private financing of foreign governments and to American industry during the first World War.

G. What about the Negroes?

I talked about the Negro situation in the North and South. I said I did not, of course, wish to defend the treatment meted out to Negroes, but it seemed to me that it was not so cruel as untouchability in India.

G. As you know, I have fought untouchability for many years. We have many untouchables here in the ashram. Most of the work in the ashram is done by the untouchables, and any Hindu who comes to Sevagram must accept food from untouchables and remain in their proximity.

I asked whether the discrimination against untouchables had been somewhat alleviated.

G. Oh, yes, but it is still very bad.

L.F. Very thoughtful and otherwise progressive people, for instance Varadachariar<sup>1</sup>, have tried to justify it in conversation with me; it seems to arise from the belief in the transmigration of the soul which apparently is part of the Hindu religion. Do you believe in the transmigration of the soul?

G. Of course. I cannot admit that the soul dies with the body. When a man's house is blown away, he builds himself another. When his body is taken away, his soul finds another. Nor do I accept the view that when the body is laid in the ground the soul remains suspended somewhere waiting for judgment day when it will be brought to the bar and confronted with its crimes. No, it immediately finds itself a new home.

L.F. This is obviously another form of man's eternal striving for immortality. Does it not all arise from the weak mortal's fear of death? Tolstoy was irreligious until his old age, when he started dreading the end.

G. I have no fear of death. I would regard it with relief and satisfaction. But it is impossible for me to think that that is the end. I have no proof. People have tried to demonstrate that the soul of a dead man finds a new home. I do not think this is capable of proof. But I believe it.

L.F. I think we all seek immortality, only some believe they live in their children or their works and some believe they live in transmuted form in animals, or otherwise. Some men live longer because their works last longer, but I believe that faith in one's immortality, if it is distinct from one's acts, is really fear of death and an attempt to find comfort in an illusion.

Gandhi thereupon reiterated his view with much passion and in fineflowing English prose; he always spoke a rich, fluent English with a British university accent.

I said students had told me that the new generation in India was less inclined to make a distinction between high-caste Hindus and untouchables, or between Hindus and Muslims, and that they were not much interested in religion.

G. The first is correct. But Hinduism is not a religion. The students do not perform religious ceremonies. But Hinduism is life. It is a way of life. Many who do not practise formal religion are nearer to this way of life than some who do.

He added that untouchability pained him deeply and he hoped that India's freedom would hasten the solution of the problem of untouchability. This brought him back to his favourite subject. He spoke of "the challenge, for it is a challenge,

<sup>1</sup> A member of the Supreme Court of India who was a high-caste Brahmin

which I have flung to the British to go. They will be purified if they go and better equipped for the task of making a new world. Otherwise all their professions are a cloak of hypocrisy.”

L.F. Don't you think that in view of the diversities of India you will need here a federation which will satisfy the Princes and the Muslims?

G. I am in no position to say which system would suit us better. First, the British must go. It is a matter of pure speculation what we will do later. The moment the British withdraw, the question of religious minorities disappears. If the British withdraw and there is chaos, I cannot say what form will ultimately rise out of the chaos. If I were asked what I would prefer, I would say federation and not centralization. There is bound to be a federal system of some sort. But you must be satisfied with my answer that I am not disturbed by the problem of whether we are to have a federation or not. Perhaps your cast-iron mind mocks at this. Perhaps you think that with millions unarmed and accustomed to foreign rule for centuries, we will not succeed in the civil disobedience movement which I have decided to launch.

L.F. No. I do not think that. I believe that history is moving fast and that before long you will be an independent country like China. The struggle you began years ago cannot end in any other way.

G. I do not want to be independent like China. China is helpless even now and in spite of Chiang Kai-shek. Notwithstanding China's heroism and her readiness to risk all in this war, China is not yet completely free. China should be able to say to America and England, 'We will fight our battle of independence single-handed, without your aid.' That I would call independence.

I asked him how he got on in his long interview with Chiang.

G. Very well.

L.F. Only you did not understand him, and he did not understand you. G. I found him inscrutable. Maybe it was the matter of language. We spoke through Madame Chiang. But I do not think it was only that.

L.F. Of course China is not completely free, but freedom does not come in a day. Through this war, if we win it, China will become free. We may be approaching the Asiatic century. India and China may shape a great deal of history in the coming decades. I see no sign, however, that the British realize this. They will not go as you ask. If they could not save themselves by their arms in Singapore and Malaya, they will not save themselves by their brains in India.

G. I would like you to understand that I am not criticizing China. Only I wanted

to emphasize that I do not wish to imitate China. I do not want India to be in the same predicament as China. That is why I am saying I do not want British and American soldiers here. I do not want Japanese or German soldiers here. The Japanese broadcast every day that they do not intend to keep India—they only propose to help us win our freedom. I do not welcome their sympathy or help. I know they are not philanthropists I want for India a respite from all foreign domination. I have become impatient. I cannot wait any longer. Our condition is worse than China's or Persia's.

I may not be able to convince Congress. Men who have held office in Congress may not rise to the occasion. I will go ahead nevertheless and address myself directly to the people. But whatever happens, we are unbendable. We may be able to evolve a new order which will astonish the whole world. I would ask you to cast off your prejudices and enter into this new idea of mine of a civil disobedience campaign and try to find flaws in it if there are any. You will then be able to help our cause and, to put it on a higher plane, you will be able to do justice to yourself as a writer. The literature that is being produced on India is piffling and of no consequence. There is nothing original in most of it. It is all Cast-iron. I ask you to struggle out of that groove. I would like you to penetrate through my language to what I am attempting to express. That is difficult, I know; you came here with all the glamour, brilliance, culture and armed strength of American and British civilization. I would understand your refusing to grasp anything that does not fit into your groove or that is not desirable for that groove. But if your mind cannot rise above that beaten track, then your days in Sevagram will have been wasted.

L.F. Yes, but will you help me to see the new order you speak of? I am not so sure of my own new order as to reject yours out of hand. I think India has much to contribute, but how do you see future developments?

G. You see the centre of power now is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India. That will mean that there is no power. In other words, I want the seven hundred thousand dollars now invested in the Imperial Bank of England withdrawn and distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages. Then each village will have its one dollar which cannot be lost.

The seven hundred thousand dollars invested in the Imperial Bank of India could be swept away by a bomb from a Japanese plane, whereas if they were distributed among the seven hundred thousand shareholders, nobody could deprive them of their assets. There will then be voluntary co-operation between these seven hundred thousand units, voluntary co-operation—not co-operation induced by Nazi

methods. Voluntary co-operation will produce real freedom and a new order vastly superior to the new order in Soviet Russia. Some say there is ruthlessness in Russia but that it is exercised for the lowest and the poorest and is good for that reason. For me it has very little good in it. Some day this ruthlessness will create an anarchy worse than we have ever seen. I am sure we will escape that anarchy here. I admit that the future society of India is largely beyond my grasp. But a system like the one I have outlined to you did exist though it undoubtedly had its weakness, else it would not have succumbed before the Moguls and the British. I would like to think that parts of it have survived, and that the roots have survived despite the ravages of British rule. Those roots and the stock are waiting to sprout if a few drops of rain fall in the form of a transfer of British power to Indians. What the plant will be like I do not know. But it will be infinitely superior to anything we have now. Unfortunately, the requisite mood of non-violence does not now exist here, but I refuse to believe that all the strenuous work of the last twenty-five years to evolve a new order has been in vain. The Congress Party will have an effective influence in shaping the new order, and the Muslim League will also have an effective influence.

L.F. I would like you to pursue this idea of the symbolic seven hundred thousand dollars. What will the villages do with the dollar that has come back to them from the Imperial Bank of England?

G. One thing will happen. Today the shareholders get no return. Intermediaries take it away. If the peasants are masters of their dollars they will use them as they think best.

L.F. A peasant buries his money in the ground.

G. They will not bury their dollars in the ground because they will have to live. They will go back to the bank, their own bank and utilize it under their direction for purposes they think best. They may then build windmills or produce electricity or whatever they like. A central government will evolve, but it will act according to the wishes of the people and will be broadbased on their will.

L.F. The State, I imagine, will then build more industries and develop the country industrially.

G. You must visualize a central government without the British Army. If it holds together without that army, this will be the new order. That is a goal worth working for. It is not an unearthly goal. It is practicable.

L.F. I agree. Ten years ago I might not have agreed, but after my experiences in Russia and elsewhere I feel that the greatest danger the world faces is the emergence of the all-powerful State which makes individual freedom impossible. Apparently,  
VOL. 82 : 9 FEBRUARY, 1942 - 6 JUNE, 1942

capitalist economics have made it necessary for the State to intervene more and more in economic affairs. That gives the State more power. The next generation's real problem will be to devise checks and balances on such a State. One question is: Can we safeguard personal liberty in a country where the government is all powerful? Another question is: Will nations co-operate inside an international organization, or will we reject internationalism and have some more wars?

G. My question would be: how to prevent the rise of these gigantic States. That is why I do not want the Allied powers to assume the roles of Fascist States. It is therefore that I ask them to declare that what India says is good. Let them take this jump and give India her freedom, and, if necessary, remain in India on India's terms for the duration. Let us see if we can get a free co-operation among peoples.

L.F. I am absolutely certain that you ought to have your independence. I think it would be good for you and good for all of us. Certainly the British have not shown any startling ability to defend their empire or to win its sympathy.

G. You must say that to America.

L.F. I will say it, but not in those terms. We are now financing all of Britain's purchases of munitions. We are making sixty thousand planes this year, but a hundred and forty thousand in 1943. As far as America's role in India is concerned, the crisis here has matured a bit too early. If we were making one hundred and forty thousand planes per year now and had two million men at the front, our views on India would receive more attention in London. The British do not understand today what is happening in India. With American help they may understand tomorrow.

G. Therefore it is that I come to brass tacks and say that the British will understand not while we are reasoning with them and showing them the great justice and feasibility of our proposal, but when we begin to act. That is British history. They are impressed by action, and it is action that we must take now. For the moment, however, I must popularize the idea of an Indian national government now and demonstrate that there is nothing chimerical or visionary about it. It is based on non-violence although I do not need the idea of non-violence to prove the validity or justice of my aim. The same aim might have evolved even if I were violently inclined. Even if I were violently inclined I might have said, 'Go and do not use India as your military base.' But today I say, 'If you must use India as a base lest someone else appropriate it, use it, and stay here on honourable terms and do no harm.' I would go further and add that if the central government which India evolves is military-minded the British may have its help.

L.F. If the British, under pressure, were to accept your offer, how would you

launch your republic of seven hundred thousand villages?

G. I cannot give you a concrete plan. I cannot work it out today. It is all theoretical. It has to come out as a plan drafted by a body of representatives and not out of the brain of one whom many label a dreamer.

L.F. Well, I am not so completely cast-iron as not to understand homespun cotton.

G. But you do not understand vegetables.

L.F. I do not like the same vegetables every day for lunch and dinner.

*June 8, 1942*

I started by saying that we had not even mentioned India's biggest problem, the problem most difficult of solution.

G. What's that?

L.F. India's population is increasing by five million each year. British official statistics show that the population of India increased from three hundred and thirty-eight million in 1931 to three hundred and eighty-eight million in 1941. Fifty million more mouths to feed and bodies to clothe and shelter. Fifty million more in ten years. How are you going to deal with that?

G. One of the answers might be birth control. But I am opposed to birth control.

L.F. I am not, but in a backward country like India birth control could not be very effective anyway.

G. Then perhaps we need some good epidemics.

L.F. Or a good civil war. But, Soviet Russia had famines, epidemics, and a civil war and yet her population grew very rapidly, and the Bolsheviks, in 1928, took certain economic measures.

G. You want to force me into an admission that we would need rapid industrialization. I will not be forced into such an admission. Our first problem is to get rid of British rule. Then we will be free, without restraints from the outside, to do what India requires. The British have seen fit to allow us to have some factories and also to prohibit other factories. No! For me the paramount problem is the ending of British domination.

L.F. Well, how do you actually see your impending civil disobedience movement? What shape will it take?

G. In the villages, the peasants will stop paying taxes. They will make salt

despite official prohibition. This seems a small matter; the salt tax yields only a paltry sum to the British Government. But refusal to pay it will give the peasants the courage to think that they are capable of independent action. Their next step will be to seize the land.

L.F. With violence?

G. There may be violence, but then again the landlords may co-operate.

L.F. You are an optimist.

G. They might co-operate by fleeing.

Nehru, who had been sitting by my side, said, "They might vote for confiscation with their legs just as you say in your *Men and Politics* that, as Lenin put it, the Russian soldier voted for peace with his legs in 1917--he ran away from the trenches. So also the Indian landowners might vote for the confiscation of their land by running away from the village."

L.F. Or, they might organize violent resistance.

G. There may be fifteen days of chaos, but I think we could soon bring that under control.

L.F. You feel then that it must be confiscation without compensation?

G. Of course. It would be financially impossible for anybody to compensate the landlords.

L.F. That accounts for the villages. But that is not all of India.

G. No. Workingmen in the cities would leave their factories. The railroads would stop running.

L.F. General strike. I know that you have in the past had a large following among the peasants, but your city working-class support is not so big.

G. No, not so big. But this time the workingmen will act too, because, as I sense the mood of the country, everybody wants freedom, Hindus, Muslims, untouchables, Sikhs, workers, peasants, industrialists, Indian Civil Servants and even the Princes. The Princes know that a new wind is blowing. Things cannot go on as they have been. We cannot support a war which may perpetuate British domination. How can we fight for democracy in Japan, Germany and Italy when India is not democratic? I want to save China. I want no harm to come to China. But to collaborate we must be free. Slaves do not fight for freedom.

L.F. Do you think that the Muslims will follow you in your civil disobedience movement?



G. Not perhaps in the beginning. But they will come in when they see that the movement is succeeding.

L.F. Might not the Muslims be used to interfere with or stop the movement?

G. Undoubtedly, their leaders might try or the Government might try, but the Muslim millions do not oppose independence and they could not, therefore, oppose our measures to bring about that independence. The Muslim masses sympathize with the one overall goal of Congress: freedom for India. That is the solid rock on which Hindu-Muslim unity can be built.

*June 9, 1942*

L.F. I have found you so objective about your work and the world that I want to ask you to be objective about yourself. This isn't a personal question but a political question: how do you account for your influence over so many people?

G. I can see the spirit in which you ask this. I think my influence is due to the fact that I pursue the truth. That is my goal.

L.F. I do not underestimate the power of truth. But this explanation seems to me inadequate. Leaders like Hitler have achieved power by telling lies. That doesn't mean that you cannot become influential by telling the truth. But truth in itself has not always availed others in this country or elsewhere. Why is it that you, without any of the paraphernalia of power, without a government or police behind you, without ceremonies or even tightly-knit organization—for I understand that Congress is in no sense a disciplined, tightly-co-ordinated body—how is it that you have been able to sway so many millions and get them to sacrifice their comforts and time and even their lives?

G. Truth is not merely a matter of words. It is really a matter of living the truth.

It is true, I have not much equipment. My education is not great. I do not read much.

L.F. Isn't it that when you advocate independence you strike a chord in many Indians? A musician does something to the members of his audience. You play a note which Indians are waiting to hear. I have noticed that people applaud most the arias they have heard often and liked. A lecture audience applauds views it agrees with. Is it that you say and do what your people want you to say and do?

G. Yes, maybe that is it. I was a loyalist in respect to the British, and then I became a rebel. I was a loyalist until 1896.

L.F. Weren't you also a loyalist between 1914 and 1918?

G. Yes, in a way, but not really. By 1918, I had already said that British rule in

India is an alien rule and must end.

I will tell you how it happened that I decided to urge the departure of the British. It was in 1916. I was in Lucknow working for Congress. A peasant came up to me looking like any other peasant of India, poor and emaciated. He said, 'My name is Rajkumar Shukla. I am from Champaran, and I want you to come to my district.' He described the misery of his fellow agriculturists and prayed me to let him take me to Champaran, which was hundreds of miles from Lucknow. He begged so insistently and persuasively that I promised. But he wanted me to fix the date. I could not do that. For weeks and weeks Rajkumar Shukla followed me wherever I went over the face of India. He stayed wherever I stayed. At length, early in 1917, I had to be in Calcutta.

Rajkumar followed me and ultimately persuaded me to take the train with him from Calcutta to Champaran. Champaran is a district where indigo is planted. I decided that I would talk to thousands of peasants but, in order to get the other side of the question, I would also interview the British Commissioner of the area. When I called on the Commissioner he bullied me and advised me to leave immediately, I did not accept his advice and proceeded on the back of an elephant to one of the villages. A police messenger overtook us and served notice on me to leave Champaran. I allowed the police to escort me back to the house where I was staying and then I decided to offer civil resistance. I would not leave district. Huge crowds gathered around the house. I co-operated with the police in regulating the crowds. A kind of friendly relationship sprang up between me and the police. That day in Champaran became a red-letter day in my life. I was put on trial. The Government attorney pleaded with the magistrate to postpone the case but I asked him to go on with it. I wanted to announce publicly that I had disobeyed the order to leave Champaran. I told him that I had come to collect information about local conditions and that I therefore had to disobey the British law because I was acting in obedience with a higher law, with the voice of my conscience. This was my first act of civil disobedience against the British. My desire was to establish the principle that no Englishman had the right to tell me to leave any part of my country where I had gone for a peaceful pursuit. The Government begged me repeatedly to drop my plea of guilty. Finally the magistrate closed the case. Civil disobedience had won. It became the method by which India could be made free.

L.F. This is perhaps another clue to your position in India.

G. What I did was a very ordinary thing. I declared that the British could not order me around in my own country.

L.F. It was ordinary, but you were the first to do it. It's like the story of

Columbus and the egg.

G. What's that?

L.F. Have you never heard the story of Columbus and the egg?

G. No, tell me.

I told him. He laughed.

G. That's right, it was an ordinary thing to say that I had the right to go peacefully anywhere in my own country. But no one had said it before.<sup>1</sup>

G. Now fire.

L.F. That would be violence,

G. And have you any objection to violence?

L.F. But you have never heard a word from me as to whether I am for or against violence.

G. You don't have to tell me. I look at you and know.

L.F. In case your impending civil disobedience movement develops a violent phase, as it has sometimes in past years, would you call it off? You have done that before.

G. In my present mood it would be incorrect to say that no circumstances might arise in which I would call off the movement. In the past, however, I have been too cautious. That was necessary for my own training and for the training of my collaborators. But I would not behave as I have in the past.

L.F. Since I am going away soon from your village, I want to be quite sure that I understand your ideas correctly. Would there be any chance of a compromise between what you want and what the British authorities are ready to offer? Might some kind of a modified Cripps proposal be acceptable to you?

G. No. Nothing along the lines of the Cripps offer. I want their complete and irrevocable withdrawal. I am essentially a man of compromise because I am never sure that I am right. But now it is the unbending future [*sic*] in me that is uppermost. There is no halfway house between withdrawal and non-withdrawal. It is, of course, no complete physical withdrawal that I ask. I shall insist, however, on the transfer of political power from the British to the Indian people.

L.F. What about the time factor? When you launch your civil disobedience movement, and if the British yield, will it be a matter of the immediate transfer of

<sup>1</sup> By this time the party had returned to Gandhiji's dwelling. At 3 o'clock Fischer came for his regular interview.

political power?

G. The British would not have to do that in two days or in two weeks. But it must be irrevocable and complete political withdrawal.

L.F. Suppose the British say they will withdraw completely after the war?

G. No. In that case my proposal loses much of its value. I want them to go now so I can help China and Russia. Today I am unable to pull my full weight in favour of them. It is my philanthropy that has made me present this proposal. For the time being, India disappears from my gaze. I never wanted independence for India's sake alone. I never wished to play the role of frog-in-the-well.

L.F. You have not felt this way before, Mr. Gandhi.

G. The whole idea keeps blossoming out within me. The original idea of asking the British to go burst upon me suddenly. It was the Cripps fiasco that inspired the idea. Hardly had he gone when it seized hold of me.

L.F. Exactly when did the idea occur to you?

G. Soon after Cripps's departure. I wrote a letter to Horace Alexander in reply to his letter to me. Thereafter the idea possessed me. Then began the propaganda.

Later I framed a resolution. My first feeling was, we need an answer to Cripps's failure. What a diabolical thing if the Cripps mission were without any redeeming feature. Suppose I ask them to go. This idea arose from the crushed hope that had been pretty high in our minds. We had heard good things about Cripps from Jawaharlal and others. Yet the whole mission fell flat. How, I asked myself, am I to remedy this situation? The presence of the British blocks our way. It was during my Monday day of silence that the idea was born in me. From that silence arose so many thoughts that the silence possessed me and the thoughts possessed me too and I knew I had to act for Russia and China and India. My heart goes out to China. I cannot forget my five hours with Chiang Kai-shek and his attractive partner. Even for China's sake alone I must do this. I am burdening my thoughts with the world's sorrow.

L.F. Why will it not wait until after the war?

G. Because I want to act now and be useful while the war is here.

L.F. Have you any organization with which to carry on this struggle?

G. The organization is the Congress Party. But if it fails me, I have my own organization, myself. I am a man possessed by an idea. If such a man cannot get an organization, he becomes an organization.

L.F. Have you sufficient confidence in the present mood of the country? Will it follow you? This civil disobedience movement may involve heavy sacrifices for the

people. Has anybody opposed your idea?

G. I had a letter today from Rajagopalachari. He is the only one opposed. I know his views. But how does he expect the Muslim League to work with him when he wishes to work with the Muslim League in order to destroy Pakistan?

L.F. Do you think Jinnah is set on Pakistan? Perhaps it is a bargaining counter with him which he will give up if Hindu-Muslim co-operation can be achieved.

G. As I have told you before, he will only give it up when the British are gone and when there is therefore nobody with whom to bargain.

L.F. So you intend to tell the British in advance when you will launch your movement?

G. Yes.

L.F. You had better not tell them too far in advance.

G. Is that a tip from you?

L.F. No.

G. They will know in good time.

L.F. If you look at this in its historic perspective, you are doing a novel and remarkable thing—you are ordaining the end of an empire.

G. Even a child can do that. I will appeal to the people's instincts. I may arouse them.

L.F. Let us try to see the possible reaction throughout the world. Your very friends, China and Russia, may appeal to you not to launch this civil disobedience movement.

G. Let them appeal to me. I may be dissuaded. But if I can get appeals to them in time, I may convert them. If you have access to men in authority here, tell them this. You are a fine listener. No humbug about you. Discuss this with them and let them show me if there are any flaws in my proposal.

L.F. Have I your authority to say this to the Viceroy?

G. Yes, you have my permission. Let him talk to me; I may be converted. I am a reasonable man. I would not like to take any step that would harm China.

L.F. Or America?

G. If America were hurt, it would hurt everybody.

L.F. Would you wish President Roosevelt to be informed about your attitude?

G. Yes. I do not wish to appeal to anybody. But I would want Mr. Roosevelt to

know my plans, my views, and my readiness to compromise. Tell your President I wish to be dissuaded.

L.F. Do you expect drastic action when you launch the movement?

G. Yes. I expect it any day. I am ready. I know I may be arrested. I am ready.

*A Week with Gandhi*, pp. 14-20, 24-5, 30-7, 42-59, 67-71, 76-85, 89-93 and 96-106