

**BAPU**  
**A Unique Association**



# BAPU

## A UNIQUE ASSOCIATION

Volume III

GHANSHYAM DAS BIRIA

REFERENCE



RETROCONVERTED  
B C. S. C. L.



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समर्पण

वायु की यह नम प्रकृति वायु को समर्पण

वायु ने हमें 2 50 गुंमों जो पत्र लिखें  
मैंने जो उन्हें लिखा उन सब का यह संग्रह  
है। महोदय आई इत्यादि ने भी जो मुझे लिखा  
था मैंने उन्हें लिखा, उन सब का भी समावेश इसमें  
इतलिये है कि वे सब पत्र-व्यवहार वायु की उाहा,  
मैला या क मति करी हुआ है। मैंने भी जो  
उन जो जो लिखा वह सब वायु के लिखे ही था।  
उन सब को वायु के ही पत्र व्यवहार मानकर  
इस प्रकारानें मैं इतलिये त्याग दे दिया गया  
कि यदि मेरे पत्रों को निबाल दिया जाय  
तो कारी खुलना टट जाती है।

वायु के उच्चिकन पत्र हिंदी में ही हैं।  
1 यदि कभी पत्रों में मुझे अंग्रेजी में लिखा 2

उनकी क्रूर से महादेव माई इत्यादिने उंगोली में  
प्रमे लिखा, तो उन सब पत्रों का हिंदी में अनुवाद  
करके इनमें समावेश हुआ है। जब उंगोली का  
प्रकाशन होगा तो उसी तरह सब हिंदी पत्रों का भी  
उंगोली में अनुवाद करके समावेश होगा।

इस प्रकाशन में वायू के मानस को उच्च  
पल करने का जन समाज को एक अनुपम अव-  
सर मिल जाएगा। शिक्षा भी मिलती है, क्योंकि  
वायू के पत्रों में सब तरह का समाचार है। सब  
से पहले की बात यह समझनी है कि इन सब  
में व्यक्तिगत आदेश, राजनैतिक, धार्मिक  
आदेश जो भी हैं सब-एक महा चाहेगा ही। यह  
एक सामुद्रिक है। एक मुल्क के उद्धार है,  
जो उन जन समाज के जीवन में आयेगी। शिक्षा  
उर है। (अने जीवन में उपलब्ध करने योग्य  
है।)

इसके उपाने का अर्थ में मेरा कोई संकल्प नहीं था।

यदि मेरी पुत्रवधु बनना का आग्रह था। यह आग्रह  
मुझे उच्छ्वसना हुआ। मैंने उसको मान लिया।

इसी कारण यह प्रकाश नहीं। उपाने का उद्योग  
है। उद्योग दुर्गा प्रकाश में उलझा जा रहा। पंडित  
विद्याजी रचितेजी की उद्योगी प्रभाव दिखे।

पुत्रीनकारके मूल मूल गुणधर्मों का धीरा

श्री गुरुदेवों का एक मेरे प्राचीन मित्र है। उन्होंने

एक हीरे का व्यवहार को प्रकृत (बुद्धिमान) का धर्म-

गणने उन्हें निश्चय देने का पराभव दिया। उनके  
उद्योग बुद्धिमान इस प्रकाश में उलझा जा रहे हैं।

एक हीरे की मेरी मैत्री प्रकृत तत्त्व निरंतर

चली आ रही है। वे वर प्रकृत हैं। हमनी माता  
मैत्री प्रकृत परकी वाता में प्रकृत के गरी

चिन्ती।

हमने उद्योग प्रकृत में काका का नाम  
बदली का है। माताजी के कुछ अंगों में काका

नो जो सिद्ध है उगमें दादा का जन्म (दादा एव विरोध  
 है। दादा एव हाथ पुत्र है। उगमें  
 हतंगरी की प्रतिक्रिया (वर्ष) पुत्र उगमें वृत्ताभा  
 क्रिया ।

उपानेदा रेतु तो पर है कि लोको को वायु  
 के प्रत्यक्ष (दृश्य) - पराच्छादानशी - समझने में  
 हताशता मिले। पर परमा रेतु है कि लोको  
 को वयो के बाद पर संवत्स ३ गुण पर हता  
 वनता है, को कि वायु का उतली गतती  
 लोको लोको सामवे वदरी अंगरोग। पर  
 मरी समझें। हतलिये भी पर हता उग-  
 २ प्रक है ।

मेरे जीवन में ईश्वर की पर दया रती है  
 कि मैं वायु का प्रेम भागतो हारी - पर लपक उर  
 सामन परदा - उगमें लपकते मैं वृत्त कृषी (वा उ)।  
 उगमें दादा हता (परे लोको कि गमी मने  
 पाये। मतावात का पर उगमें उगमें उगता हता है

इह वाच्यं की लिखिते गुणे उच्यते तं नो भवेत्.

कौं वि -

"यम-तनाकी विनाम युज्यते  
उच्यते इति नो भवेत्

यस्यो ह्ये उच्यते तं नो भवेत्  
देह एतन्नाम तं नो भवेत्

यम-तनाकी





## Dedication

This Gift of Love from Bapuji (*Bapu ki Prem Prasadi*) is dedicated to Bapu.

This is a collection of letters which Bapu wrote to me from time to time and also those which I wrote to him. The letters which Mahadevbhai and others wrote to me as well as those I wrote to them have also been included in this collection for the reason that they were written under Gandhiji's instructions, inspiration or with his consent. In fact, even the letters which I wrote to them were all meant for Bapu only. Therefore, considering all these as correspondence between Bapu and myself, I have included them in this publication since, if I were to exclude those letters, the entire connecting link would be broken.

Most of Bapu letters are in Hindi. Whatever letters he wrote to me in English or on his behalf Mahadevbhai and others wrote in English, have been translated into Hindi and included in the Hindi edition of this collection. Similarly, now in English edition of this collection, the letters in Hindi have been rendered into English and included in this collection.

This bunch of letters provides an incomparable opportunity to the people to study the mind of Bapu. They get education as well, for Bapu's correspondence covers an assortment of many absorbing topics. What is of supreme importance is to understand this fact that whatever exhortations or directions that one finds here, be they individual, political or ethico-religious, are not just those of a great man or Mahatma but of a saintly man and the outpourings of a friendly soul. As such they are useful in the life of the common man, edifying and worthy of emulation by all in their daily life.

At first, I had no intention of bringing out these in print; but

my daughter-in-law Sarala was very insistent. Her insistence appealed to me and so I acceded to it. This publication is the outcome of that. It is Durga Prasad Mandelia's enthusiasm and labour that saw the book through the press. Pandit Vijoyi Hari also gave several useful suggestions.

The late Shri Sudhir Ranjan Das, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, was a very old friend of mine. He read the entire correspondence and suggested that some letters which were of a personal nature might be excluded. Accordingly, certain letters have not been included in this publication. My friendship with Justice Das extended over an unbroken period of 55 years : Such longstanding friendship is not something which comes by easily in life, even if one assiduously seeks it.

Above all, I am extremely indebted to Kaka Saheb Kalelkar. He occupies a special place among the few surviving chosen co-workers of Gandhiji. He has laid me in a deep debt of gratitude by writing the Foreword to this collection.

The purpose of printing this collection is to help people in understanding Bapu's heart — not the heart of a Mahatma but that of a human being. There is an added reason. Maybe, some hundred or two hundred years from now, this collection may become an invaluable treasure because the unfoldment of Bapu's real life will begin only after a century or two. This is my view.

It is indeed God's infinite mercy on me that I could become the recipient of Bapu's love in an abundant measure, that this relationship lasted 32 years, that I could learn a great deal from my association with him and that through him I could gain the friendship of great souls like Sardar Patel. Such is the bountiful grace of the Lord on me. I derive great contentment from the successful culmination of this venture because—

The spotless standard of Yama's troops  
Comes before my eyes be-dimmed by age  
And fighting a losing battle with diseases  
This mortal frame doth droop day by day.

## Preface

Gandhiji was very regular in his correspondence. It was by this means alone that he was able to maintain a hearty relation with innumerable people and was able to influence them to maintain high ideals in their lives. To enter with his heart into the individual life of the person with whom a relation was established and to help him in his development, having understood the individual's ability, his special nature and its depth, were the peculiar features of his correspondence. Hence Gandhiji's correspondence is as important as his writings and speeches. To understand the personality of Gandhiji, his correspondence is very useful. I have observed that his style of writing letters is also a typical one. Few world leaders have left behind them such a volume of correspondence as has Gandhiji.

I have always had the feeling while reading Gandhiji's correspondence that I was taking a dip in the sacred Ganges and sipping its waters. Always it was a purifying and pleasant experience for me to read his letters. The surrounding climate of its contents is purifying, life-sustaining and soothing.

Because of this I was very happy when Shri Ghanshyamdasji sent to me the entire bunch of his correspondence with Gandhiji. I began reading it with immense enthusiasm. As I went on reading, it became clear to me that this correspondence is not merely confined to the letters exchanged between Ghanshyamdasji and Gandhiji but also includes those exchanged between the late Mahadevbhai Desai, who was a close friend of Gandhiji, and Ghanshyamdasji. Apart from these, there is the correspondence with other friends of Gandhiji, many leaders and workers of the nation, Viceroys and politicians. There is also a description of their interviews. In short, a valuable history of the present times is to be found here.

Seeing this, I exclaimed, "Ah, if only this material had come into my hands five years ago!"

Today, I am 91. I am becoming increasingly forgetful. I go on forgetting so easily many a valuable fact. I have to record with sorrow today I am not able to dive so deep into this correspondence as I would have been able to, had this material reached my hands five years earlier. Yet I feel that the basic structure of my thinking on fundamental ideals has not changed in me. It is with its aid that I dare plunge into this ocean.

Before the year 1915, our people had experimented with several solutions for the attainment of Independence. We adopted the use of extremist methods. We also tried the path of petitions and prayers. We made efforts to make industrial progress. We started social reform movements for reforming society. We also fervently increased our faith in religion. We trod the path of swadeshi and boycott. Also we used bombs and pistols. We, Indians, tried with devotion, all those solutions that occurred to us or were suggested to us for the gaining of swaraj. Yet there was neither swaraj near at hand nor there was to be found a ray of hope. Some of our efforts, instead of removing the British Empire, only helped in strengthening it much more. The whole country was in utter despair when in 1915, Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa.

In South Africa where there was no Indian Government, nor Indian environment, Gandhiji with the help of uneducated, almost uncultured and hapless Indians, started a powerful satyagraha campaign and reaped success in it. We had heard and read about the activities of this leader of action, Gandhiji, and his new experiment. As soon as he returned to India, Gandhiji toured from the Himalayas to Rameshwaram, explaining to the people his vision of satyagraha. Those to whom swaraj was a cause were attracted towards him. Soon the heart beats of Gandhiji had their echo in the pulse of the people and both were tuned to the same wave length. The entire country, without the least hesitation, was ready to follow him. Gandhiji became a great representative of Indian culture and India's aspirations. He spoke the language of sacrifice, restraint and magnanimity which was also the confident language of the

Indian masses. The nation, seeing his uncommon humility and extra-ordinary self-confidence, became confident that he would surely achieve something.

Even as all rivers empty themselves into the ocean, becoming one with it, so too, all of us who dreamed of swaraj despite our different mental make-up, different backgrounds and different ways of life, went, and joined him. We gladly accepted his leadership and fully played our role in the activities directed by him.

Among the chosen few close workers who came in contact with Gandhiji at that time, the place of Shri Ghanshyamdasji is a special one.

This everybody knows that Shri Ghanshyamdasji is one of the few wealthy men of India. His primary field of work has always been in the industry. This too people know that he earned well and spent his wealth for good causes with open arms. Whenever there was need for money, Gandhiji without hesitation conveyed his desire to Shri Ghanshyamdasji who responded forthwith. Of the many sayings of Gandhiji, the following is very important: "The wealthy should not consider themselves to be masters of their wealth, but consider themselves as trustees and use it for the welfare of the society. Having the feeling that the wealth of the society is with him and that he is its trustee, the wealthy person should spend his wealth." Though, in principle, Shri Birlaji did not accept this teaching of Gandhiji, he had taken this to his heart. The educational institutions, charitable guest houses and hospitals that are to be found all over India in the name of the Birlas are standing testimony to this. Apart from his own institutions, there are many others in the country that are run mainly from the charities of the Birlas. Almost all the institutions of Gandhiji have been benefited from the wealth of Shri Ghanshyamdasji. Perhaps none, apart from late Jamnalalji Bajaj, had contributed so much to the institutions of Gandhiji as Shri Ghanshyamdasji. There is a famous story.

Gandhiji had come to Delhi. During the same period, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore also had reached Delhi to make collections for his Visva Bharati. Gurudev organised a programme of dance and music at different places and at the end of the programme asked for donations from the people. Gandhiji

felt unhappy on hearing this. That such a famous person as Tagore, in his old age, just to seek donations and that too a mere Rs. 60,000 was forced to go about organising programmes of dance and music was something which Gandhiji could not bear. He suddenly remembered Ghanshyamdasji. Gandhiji sent a message to him through Shri Mahadevbhai Desai that six of the rich men should each contribute Rs. 10,000 to Gurudev and save India from a sense of shame. It is needless to say that Shri Birlaji contributed the whole amount as a secret donation to Gurudev and made him carefree.

Not only did Gandhiji receive donations from Birlaji for his institutions but he made Birlaji contribute to others' causes as well. Who these persons were to whom Gandhiji made Birlaji give donations and to what extent Birlaji offered his wealth at the feet of Gandhiji will be known from this collection of his letters.

In a way, really this was a unique revelation of the relation between Gandhiji and Birla.

But one should not think that giving donations liberally was the only relation of Birlaji with the activities of Gandhiji.

There were two streams of work—both important—which Gandhiji had placed before the people, for getting swaraj. One was the constructive stream and the other political.

Gandhiji found that the high-low strata of society which was fundamental and the feeling of 'myself and himself' which was favoured by the cultural group were the two important factors on which the entire superstructure of Indian society rested. The result was that though peace, health and the principle of co-existence were to be found in our social life, yet we have been incapable of preserving national unity and independence. The entire history of India is a proof of this weakness of ours.

It was the chief aim of the constructive activities of Gandhiji to remove this our national weakness of the present and to create a new society full of life and all-round development in the future. Gandhiji placed before the nation 18 to 20 programmes such as Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, development of khadi and village industries and the propagation of the national language, for the achievement of the above two ideals. He used to say that the fulfilment of the above pro-

gramme would be indeed complete independence.

The programme chalked out was not one depending on servitude having its basis in charity and religion. It was a prophetic effort to unite India of the vast landscape consisting of many races, many faiths and many languages. Mental revolution leading to revolution of the life and from that to the total revolution in society was the programme chalked out. In this revolution Gandhiji gave a new meaning to old values.

Shri Ghanshyamdasji recognising the revolutionary possibilities of this programme accepted it with all his heart. Many letters in this collection reveal to us the deep faith of Birlaji in Hindu-Muslim unity and in the eradication of untouchability, and the efforts he made to bring them to success. If he had any difference of opinion with Gandhiji, it was perhaps to some extent about the economics of khaddar. In this he maintains his own individual opinion. Yet it attracts our attention that though having an independent opinion, he like a dedicated soldier, was spinning with the wheel. Not only this, he took the vow of khadi. Gandhiji was impressed with this nature of Birlaji, which loved discipline. To show his joy, Gandhiji presented Birlaji with a special type of spinning-wheel. He praised the thread spun by Birlaji and asked him not to abandon the sacred work which he had started.

Gandhiji had a speciality or distinction. He quickly recognised the good of men and made full use of them for the welfare of the nation. Gandhiji had more confidence in us than we had in ourselves. While moulding us, he made our weak faith strong. In the end, he was able to extract from us more work than was possible otherwise.

Though a rich man, Ghanshyamdasji was not affected by the illusion of wealth. Gandhiji had recognised this. He also had observed the skill of Birlaji in managing worldly affairs. To help him in the development of his personality, Gandhiji had shown him a path and in this we see the light thrown by a prophetic educationalist on many big and small aspects of the all-round human personality. This is a special characteristic of Gandhiji's letters.

More important than this is the fact that a picture of the modest, spotless life of Ghanshyamdasji can be seen in this collection.

It was no wonder that Ghanshyamdasji was attracted towards Gandhiji. Observing Gandhiji's dedication to religion, his forthright straight path and also the intensity of his search for truth, he became Gandhiji's best devotee. Birlaji considered it his duty to take on his shoulders the burden of any responsibility which Gandhiji had laid. And he fulfilled it with a full heart.

But he had dedicated himself enthusiastically and with a full heart to the political work of Gandhiji. In this collection of letters we are able to see the inside story of those events that happened behind the curtain between Gandhiji and the government at that time. The days of those times were such that something or the other was always happening in the camp of Gandhiji which created history. Ghanshyamdasji had a special and deep interest in this aspect of Gandhiji's activities. Having given his close attention to every small or big thing that occurred, by degrees he was considered to be one among the chosen few who knew well the political mind of Gandhiji. Soon he projected himself with confidence before the English statesmen as a reliable interpreter of the political mind of Gandhiji. He considered it his responsibility to convey to the English statesmen the way Gandhiji's mind worked and also he conveyed to Gandhiji the mind of the English statesmen. It was a self-imposed task which he accomplished with uncommon dexterity and success.

In this book the picture that presents itself to our mind of Ghanshyamdasji in a special way is that of a skilled statesman. This reminds us of Lord Krishna who went to the darbar hall of the Kauravas for a peaceful solution (of the demand of the Pandavas).

Having gone through this correspondence that went on for nearly 32 years, my first impulse was to advise Birlaji to divide it into three separate books. In the first one, only the correspondence between him and Gandhiji was to be included. How Gandhiji dived deeply into the many problems of his day, how he understood the subtle nature of each problem, how he showed the path to his personal followers and lastly how he showered his love on them, all these could be clearly seen by us from this part.

In the second book, only the correspondence of Birlaji with late Mahadevbhai Desai was to be included. This would have



enabled us to enjoy the fragrance of the personal and intimate conversation between two close friends.

In the third book, all the rest of the material could be included which may be important for history.

On reconsideration, I felt that this should not be done. Whatever material is here should be published together in the order in which it is found. Well, the size of the book may increase. If so, it may be bound in two volumes. This is not a book written for whiling away our leisure hour. This is an ocean which has a great historical value. When the future generations want to understand our times, then this source book would become very useful and interesting. Much material would be found packed in this book that would interest the students of history. This is a bunch of very valuable historical documents, whose full worth only the future generations will know.

To me, a Gandhi fan, this book has given transcendental joy.

The credit goes to my young friend, Shri Ravindra Kalelkar, due to whose labour I am able to write this preface at this age and in this state of health.

*Affectionately yours,*  
*Respectful Vande Mataram of*  
KAKA KALEIKAR

Om on ( d i s s e r t a n d



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**1937**



GROSVENOR HOUSE.  
 PARK LANE,  
 LONDON, W. 1,  
 July 7, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Reuters just now phoned me that at the instance of Bapu the Working Committee had decided to accept office in the six provinces and I was simply overwhelmed with joy to hear this news. I have no doubt in my mind that Bapu has taken the correct decision and no one but Bapu alone could have done this. Of course I feel that demands have partially been met, but an ordinary politician would not have the courage to make any advance under such circumstances. However our trial begins now, and here again I have no doubt that with Bapu's guidance, the Congress will not only be the most successful ministry but we shall advance towards our goal.

I know that Bapu by his instinct perhaps realised the necessity of giving this advice at this stage. But all the same my vanity tickles me to believe that perhaps my letters might have made some contribution in influencing Bapu's mind. In any case, if I failed here in getting Bapu's formula accepted, I can say to myself, even though it may not be true, that I succeeded with Bapu.

Now tomorrow I am going to meet Lord Halifax and Sir Findlater Stewart and in a day or two, I will again meet Lord Zetland and Lord Lothian. I am thinking of meeting a few other statesmen before leaving this country. I am going to impress upon them that if it was difficult to get the Congress in it would be still more difficult to retain them on and that if they did not play the game, the Congress would not stay in. I am going to impress upon them the necessity of a few of their statesmen visiting India while the Congress was in power.

Let me tell you, although Rajaji's letter shattered my hopes, that I was not quite unhopeful about the Congress accepting office. First your complete silence did kill my hopes. You know you have not written to me a single letter after my arrival here

## 2 BAPU—A Unique Association

and I said to myself that this could not be accidental but was deliberate under the instructions of Bapu. And this could mean only one thing that you did not want to say anything about Bapu's mind. Perhaps he wanted to wait until the Committee meeting at Wardha was over.

When I saw Agatha receiving a copy of Bapu's letter to Lothian and your own letter, of course, I put my own interpretation on their contents, but at the same time it made quite clear that the omission to write to me was deliberate, and it had its meaning. That sustained my hope and when Reuters today phoned me, I was very happy to know that Congress had decided to accept office, but I was not surprised.

Now you should write to me what I should tell the people here. You should keep me fully informed so that I can do what is possible to do. I may tell you, as I said in my last letter, that although I did not succeed here, I have 'impressed' and I feel that this personal touch is going to be of great use in future.

Also please tell Bapu that my health is splendid. In the beginning when I had not sufficient work to do, I tried to take a few lessons in fencing, but then gave them up as the work increased. But I am taking plenty of exercise. Fencing is not a new thing to me because in my childhood I was not bad in lathi playing and wrestling and I just wanted to revive my old practice. But I think it is all useless. I am writing all this because I know it will amuse you.

*Yours sincerely,*  
G. D. Birla

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
July 8, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I had a talk today with Lord Halifax and I impressed upon him the great necessity of the Governors and the Services playing the game. I told him that the Congress was not coming in just to work the Constitution, but to advance towards their goal. They could do it either through Constitution or through direct action. For the time being, they have dropped direct action and have resorted to constitutionalism. If the Governors and the Services played the game, then constitutionalism will prevail, otherwise the Congress would be compelled again to resort to direct action. Statesmanship demanded that Governors and the Services were made aware of the intentions of the Parliament that they had to play the game.

He assured me on this point and said, "I had told you this before also and wish to tell you again that on this score you need not at all fear. English character is such that it would adapt itself to the new conditions immediately. Perhaps Indians in services may take a little longer time, but not the Englishmen."

Perhaps you know that Bapu once told me at Teethal that after the acceptance of ministry, he would himself ask for an interview with Lord Linlithgow in connection with his proposed visit to the Frontier. When I mentioned this to Halifax, he was very pleased and said that he was sure that Lord Linlithgow too would be pleased to see Bapu and he hoped that there would be no difficulty about his plans.

I told him that the question of Frontier was not so important as the question that Lord Linlithgow should now take advantages of Bapu's interview with him and establish bonds of personal friendship.

I warned him that the Congress regime was not going to be a smooth sailing. There would be difficulties off and on and if Lord Linlithgow knew Bapu, he could always call on his advice which would be immensely helpful. He knew this and said that he had no doubt that Linlithgow would take the advantage of

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establishing personal friendship with Bapu. I think Bapu perhaps now make his plans ahead.

I was very much interested to note the contents of Bapu's letter to Lothian in which he invited him to go to India. I too had spoken to him a few days ago on the same matter and I understand, that he is giving serious attention to this. I mentioned this to Halifax and said that not only Lothian but others also should go so that they could come in greater touch. I suggested the names of Lansbury and Churchill. He liked the idea. He said that apart from establishing personal friendship, they could be a sort of interpreters and could explain the British intentions to the Congress and vice versa.

This afternoon I again saw Sir Findlater Stewart. I discussed the same points with him as I did with Lord Halifax and his replies to them were more or less the same as those of Lord Halifax. I will also meet Zetland and press on him the same things that I have been telling to others, and if I receive some new matter from you, I will put that also before friends here.

Before I leave, I may have the opportunity of seeing the Prime Minister also. I hope you will keep me well posted and if anything more has to be done before I leave, you should write to me.

Last night I was dining with Sir George and Lady Schuster and had a very interesting talk with Sir George regarding the Indian Finance.

I told him how we were likely to get difficulties in respect of finance for advancement of social work. I asked him whether he could make any useful suggestion and to my great surprise he said something on the lines of what Bapu once told me only in February last at Segaon.

Schuster said that the worst legacy that they had left to India was a high grade service. He said what had been done could not be undone but that we should now start something independently and whatever was being done today with 'money motive' should in future be based on 'service motive'. "Why," he said, "the teachers and doctors for social work be paid such salaries? Why not most of the work be done on co-operative basis? Why should you worry about capital when there are seven hundred million hands to toil? If things were done on a co-operative basis which in other words would be modified

socialism, money would not be needed, at least not in large quantity.”

He recommended that I should visit Scandinavian countries to study the conditions there. He also wanted me to see Daniel Hamilton's place. He said he could not do much in India because everything had to be done with 'money motive'. He said, "The Banking Enquiry Commission cost the Government of India 29 lakhs of rupees. Even in England it would not cost more than a few hundred pounds. But in England we have to play the 'money game' but in India while the 'money game' which is the practice of today, may not be allowed to expand, the 'service game' should be expanded, which when fully expanded automatically would obscure the 'money game'."

He of course wanted me not to talk in theoretical language, or else it would frighten the conservatives in India. But he fully believed that with the inspiration of Bapu, it should be possible to expand the 'service game' and thus what we wanted to achieve could be achieved without increasing our budget. In other words, he wants to dethrone the 'money standard' and enthrone the 'labour standard'.

Why should not now Bapu restart *New India*? I would not like *Harijan* being converted into a political paper and perhaps two papers also would not be the proper thing. *New India* has a tradition and a name which should not be allowed to be forgotten. Therefore it would be more appropriate, if *New India* was restarted and *Harijan* was stopped. The result would then be that you could write political as well as *Harijan* articles in the *New India* as Bapu used to do in old times.

I hope you will see in this article from the *Times*, the editor's effort to explain the difference between 'combating' and 'wrecking'. So now they have understood the difference.

I was lunching the other day with Mr. Butler. It appears as if in course of time he will go to India as a Governor. The general impression here has been of entire satisfaction and I have no doubt that everyone will be helpful and sympathetic towards the Congress. I am also meeting Churchill after some time. Lord Derby has invited me to lunch and Oliver Stanley, another minister who is now in the Board of Trade, is coming to lunch with me. Mr. Roger Lumley, the Governor of Bombay, also is coming to dine with me.

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During these personal contacts I am impressing upon them the point that the Congress has come in not merely to work the Constitution but to march ahead. They must be helpful and not obstructive and that obstruction in our march would mean compulsion on the Congress to resort again to direct action. But I find everyone here is sympathetic and they assure me that the British public opinion will fully support the Congress in advancing forward towards their goal, which of course they interpret to be the Dominion Status. Independence, if it meant severing connection with the Empire, then they are totally against it. But of course severing connection is only a suggestion of Jawaharlalji and not of Bapu. In Dominion Status we have the right to secede and that is quite enough.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADDEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

## 3

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
July 9, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have all your letters and on the top of them your telegram which came early morning yesterday. How news travels! You knew about the W.C. Resolution before millions in India knew about it. Your jubilation, let me tell you, is shared by numerous people here. We are a people essentially lacking in stamina and we cannot hold out long. If the whole country had been behind the W.C. Resolution I am quite sure we should have extorted even the assurance from Government. But Government know our weaknesses better than we know. Don't they know the frantic telegrams and letters that we were having from all parts of the country?

But all's well that ends well. I should have been happier if



they could have avoided the padding at the top of the resolution. But that is Jawaharlal through and through. A foreign critic has actually remarked : "One finds in Jawaharlal a person, personally, deeply, painfully, and dangerously hurt by humiliating conditions—his painful state is indicative of the attitude of Ireland. Alas, Gandhi would have not given the impression of being bowed down. He is humble and sometimes makes the questioner understand humiliating for his poor knowledge and that too through the latter's fault. But under all circumstances, he clearly gives expression of self-respect and Jignity."

The resolution is another personal triumph for Bapu. Jawahar and his friends of course behaved splendidly but without Bapu it would have been difficult. Rajaji is in perfect trim and he will make himself felt soon. The people wanted some respite from a long-drawn agony of suspense and wilderness and they will have some much-needed relief, I am sure. But I am not sure that the whole thing can last very long. Let us however not anticipate difficulties.

Bhulabhai gave Bapu Lord Halifax's message exactly as he had given it and Bapu was very grateful.

What is the programme? How long are you staying there?

I wonder if you have ever been to Lourdes in France. I have read authentic accounts by reputed doctors—and now by Dr. Carrel, the Nobel Prize Winner—of miraculous cures of cancers, stubborn tuberculosis, ulcers, and so on by bath and enchanted spring near Lourdes. Thousands of people go there every year and there is a regular Medical Mission there appointed to go into and maintain an accurate record of these cures. If I were with you, I should have insisted on your taking me to the place. It is worth a visit, and I should any day trust your testimony better than that of many whom I have never seen or known.

When you return, may I trouble you for two or three things? At Harrods' or Sefridges' Stores, they sell fine tool-boxes (carpenter's tools) and science-boxes (for boys to make chemistry experiment.). Could you get them for my boy? You know I train him at home. He is very fond of science; but how can I make experiments. These boxes are very helpful. If you

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have someone who can get these things for you, get them; otherwise please don't trouble yourself.

Kallenbach sailed on the 9th.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

### 4

GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
July 12, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

It appears that some of these so-called moderates have already started talking here in a manner as to give an idea that the Congress will not be in office for long. Perhaps this is the case of wish being the father of thought. They talk something like this: "What will happen, if Jawaharlal begins to preach sedition? Will he be arrested? If not, then the Governor must interfere." All this sort of rotten things are being conveyed to the politicians and statesmen here, but I don't think they cut much ice.

I challenged a moderate to tell me what he meant by Jawaharlal preaching sedition? He said he would preach independence. I retorted, "What is wrong about preaching independence? Has not every Dominion the right to secede? There are members of the South African Union who are preaching secession from the Empire."

I am writing all this just to tell you that the so-called moderates don't seem to be genuinely happy that the Congress has accepted office, because if the Congress rules, then their history becomes a closed chapter once for all. They are still dreaming that they will rule.

*Yours,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA,  
July 16, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I appreciate your surprise at my silence. It was as deliberate as it was inevitable. For there was nothing that I could communicate to you. I could see that the letters Bapu was receiving every day from various parts of the country were making him incline more and more towards office acceptance, but I must also say that Lord Zetland's second speech—I mean the one in which he repudiated the criticism that he had closed the doors against conciliation—left a favourable impression on Bapu and it is since that moment that he began to veer round towards acceptance. When Jawahar came to Wardha three days before the W.C. Bapu's mind had been made up and I must say to the credit of Jawahar that he did not prove difficult to persuade. Throughout the Committee meeting, I am told his attitude was worthy of his best instincts and that was why the whole meeting went off well.

Well that's a bit of history. I must tell you the spirit in which Bapu has approached the whole question. C.R. asked for Bapu's blessings to be wired to him and his colleagues when they were all sworn in as ministers. Bapu sent a wire but made it clear that it was not for publication. Here is the text: "Private. Deepest prayer has been the spring on which I have drawn for guiding the Committee. You know how my hope is centered in you. May God bless your effort. Don't publish this. I have no right to send message to members. For that you must ask Jawaharlal. Love."

In your talks with men like Lord Halifax, you may refer to this telegram and even show them the text of it. But more indicative of the spirit in which he wants our legislators to go to the Assemblies is Bapu's latest article in *Harijan* of which I send you a copy. I wanted to send a copy to Agatha also, but I have none now left with me, and perhaps she will get a copy from the *Harijan* office direct. I should like to know the reaction of the Britishers to this article. You can ascertain it by showing it to them, as they are not likely to read it otherwise. You may

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perhaps have copies made of it and send them to friends. I also enclose a cutting of C.R.'s speech two days before he was invited by the Governor.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

Encl. Bapu's article

### **Congress Ministers** (By M.K. Gandhi)

Since the Working Committee and other Congressmen have allowed themselves to be influenced by my opinion on the office issue, it is perhaps due to the public for me to explain my conception of office-acceptance and what is possible to do in terms of the Congress election manifesto. I need offer no apology for crossing the self-imposed limit in the conduct of *Harijan*. The reason is obvious. The Government of India Act is universally regarded as wholly unsatisfactory for achieving India's freedom. But it is possible to construe it as an attempt, however limited, and feeble, to replace the rule of the sword by the rule of majority. The creation of the big electorate of three crores of men and women and the placing of wide powers in their hands cannot be described by any other name. Underlying it is the hope that what has been imposed upon us we shall get to like, i.e., we shall really regard our exploitation as a blessing in the end. The hope may be frustrated if the representatives of the thirty million voters have a faith of their own and are intelligent enough to use the powers (including the holding of office) placed in their hands for the purpose of threatening the assumed intention of the framers of the Act. And this can be easily done by lawfully using the Act in a manner not expected by them and by refraining from using it in the way intended by them. Thus the ministries may enforce immediate prohibition by making education self-supporting instead of paying for it from the liquor revenue. This may appear a startling proposition but I hold it perfectly feasible and eminently reasonable. The jails may be turned into reformatories and workshops. They should be self-

supporting and educational instead of being spending and punitive departments. In accordance with the Irwin-Gandhi pact of which only the salt clause remains still alive, salt should be free for the poor man but it is not. It can be free in Congress provinces at least. All purchases of cloth should be in khadi. The attention should now be devoted more to villages and peasantry than to the cities. These are but illustrations taken at random. They are perfectly lawful and not one of them even has as yet been attempted.

Then the personal behaviour of ministers. How will Congress ministers discharge themselves? Their chief, the President of the Congress, travels 3rd class. Will they travel 1st? The president is satisfied with a coarse khadi dhoti, kurta and waist-coat; will the ministers require the western style and expenditure on the western scale? Congressmen have for the past seventeen years disciplined themselves in rigorous simplicity. The nation will expect the ministers to introduce that simplicity in the administration of their provinces, they will not be ashamed of it, they will be proud of it. We are the poorest nation on earth, many millions living in semi-starvation. Its representatives dare not live in a style and manner out of all correspondence with their electors. The Englishmen coming as conquerors and rulers set up in a standard of living which took no account whatsoever of the helpless conquered. If the ministers will simply refrain from copying the Governors and the secured civil service, they will have shown the marked contrast that exists between the Congress mentality and theirs. Truly there can be no partnership between them and us even as there can be none between a giant and a dwarf.

Lest Congressmen should think that they have a monopoly of simplicity and that they erred in 1920 in doing away with the trousers and the chairs, let me cite examples of Aboobaker and Omar. Rama and Krishna are prehistoric names. I may not use these names as examples. History tells us of Pratap and Sivaji living in uttermost simplicity. But opinion may be divided as to what they did when they had power. There is no division of opinion about the Prophet, Aboobaker, and Omar. They had riches of the world at their feet. It will be difficult to find a historical parallel to match their rigorous life. Omar would not brook the idea of his lieutenants in distant provinces using any-

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thing but coarse cloth and coarse flour. The Congress ministers, if they will retain the simplicity and economy they have inherited since 1920, they would save thousands of rupees, they will give hope to the poor and probably change the tone of the services. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that simplicity does not mean shoddiness. There is a beauty and an art in simplicity which he who runs may see. It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified. Pomp and pageantry are often synonymous with vulgarity. This unostentatious work must be the prelude to demonstrating the utter insufficiency of the Act to meet the wishes of the people and the determination to end it.

The English Press has been at pains to divide India into Hindus and Muslims. The Congress majority provinces have been dubbed Hindu and the other Muslim. That this is demonstrably false has not worried them. My great hope is that the ministers in the six provinces will so manage them as to disarm all suspicion. They will show their Muslim colleague that they know no distinction between Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Sikh or Parsi. Nor will they know any distinction between high-caste and low-caste Hindu. They will demonstrate in every action of theirs that all of them are the sons of the soil among whom there is no one low and no one high. Poverty and climate are common to all without distinction. The major problems are identical for all of them. And whilst so far as we can judge from actions, the goal of the English system is wholly different from ours, the men and women representing the two goals belong to the same human family. They will now be thrown together as they never have been before. If the human reading that I have given to the Act is correct, the two parties meet together each with its own history, background and goal, to convert each other. Corporations are wooden and soulless but not those who work them or use them. If the Englishmen or anglicised Indians can but see the Indian, which is the Congress, viewpoint, the battle won by the Congress and Complete Independence will come to us without shedding a drop of blood. This is what I call the non-violent approach. It may seem foolish, visionary, impractical, nevertheless it is the best course to work the constitution that Congressmen, other Indians and Englishmen should know. This office acceptance is not intended to work the Act anyhow. In the prosecution by the Congress of its goal of Complete Independ-

dence, it is a serious attempt on the one hand to avoid a bloody revolution and on the other to avoid mass civil disobedience on a scale not hitherto attempted. May God bless it.

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GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
July 17, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBIHAI,

I have nothing to write by this mail except that Bapu is the most popular person just now here. They talk of his common-sense, judgment and all other virtues, and his stocks have gone up very high. But what pleases me most is that everyone says that, if the Congress could manage the provinces for five years in good order, independence will come within one tenth of the time that we have estimated. A friend said, "By God, if you fellows can run your administration properly, the next Viceroy will have to go with Dominion Status in his pocket."

I am glad that this psychology has been created because even this has its value. While everybody is so cheerful about the Congress accepting office, I am feeling a bit nervous about our own position. I sincerely believe that our trial has just begun and if we don't come out successful, we will set back the hands of the clock. Uncorrupted administration and solidarity amongst ourselves is the main thing that is needed. I fear more communal troubles and embarrassment from our own men.

The other day I was lunching with Lord Derby at his house. It was a select party consisting of Lord Willingdon, Lord Hardinge, and two or three other lords. I was sitting beside Lord Willingdon. The topic that we discussed was India. You can imagine what we talked.

I had no letter from you even after the Working Committee

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met at Wardha. You seem to have gone to sleep like Rip can Winkle!

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

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SFGAON,  
July 18, 1937

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I read all your letters with great care. I did not find time to write to you nor I desired to write. And what could I have written? Every moment the situation was changing and mending. Under such circumstances to write was inappropriate. To write to others was necessary because I wanted to be influenced as much as those who wrote to me could. How far your letters influenced me, I cannot say. But of course I can say this much that the letters received from overseas influenced me less and what was happening in India influenced me more. You could say that my condition was like a woman who was to be confined soon. So many things happen inside the woman, who is to be confined. But the poor woman could not describe. Now we know what has happened. But will I say this? Whatever Jawahar did or said in the Working Committee was simply marvellous. In any case he was high in my esteem, but now he has reasoned much higher and the beauty is that we still disagree.

Our real trouble begins now. So much is good that our future depends on our strength, truthfulness, courage, determination, diligence and discipline. What you have been doing is good. Let the authorities realise that there is no padding in the resolution of the Working Committee. Every word has its meaning and they will be put into action. In the end, what has



been done is done in the name of God and with trust in God.  
Good you will be Good you remain.

*Blessings from  
Bapu*

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MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C. P.),  
Monday, July 19, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

You must have had Bapu's letter of yesterday. In my own note I said that I would clear up the matter. But it seems Bapu had neither misunderstood Dr. Choithram's telegram nor the news in the Press. In fact he said he would sooner vote for a consolidated salary of Rs. 100 to each of the Legislators than accept the present "extravagant" standard in case of the cabinet ministers and their secretaries. When I saw him last evening, I found him very much disturbed over this question. I asked him if he had not made this point clear during the recent Working Committee meeting at Wardha. He said he had done so but that Jawaharlal was inclined to think that any lower scale would not suit those who would necessarily have to live in cities "But", said Bapu, "whether the thing was fully discussed, or not, it should be clear to the meanest understanding that Rs. 500 is the maximum to be paid to the highest office-bearer in the state. If we start with the maximum, where shall we end?" After this he took his silence and in the morning he handed me an article of which I enclose a copy. Evidently he had been up since 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and had finished writing this before the prayer.

I am sending copies of this article to all the other chief ministers with a covering letter like the one accompanying this. This should be in your hands on the morning of Wednesday. I shall expect your reply—yes or no—or a detailed objection by Wednesday evening or Thursday morning. We go to the Press on Friday.

*Yours affectionately,  
Mahadev*

Encl. Bapu's article

**Ministerial Pay**

A well known educationist worker says in effect, "I hope you are not elated over the newspaper report that Congress ministers are going to pay themselves Rs. 500 each per month with allowances for house and travelling amounting to Rs. 300 extra. It is not enough that this scale is lower than the former. But that would be a wholly wrong way to look at the thing. The proper and the only way to look at the thing is what proportion does the scale bear to the average income of this the poorest country in the world. What is the difference between the secretary of the Congress and a minister? Your scale for the Vidyapith, for the A. I. S. A. and other institutions is Rs. 75 as the highest. Why should a Vidyapith Professor getting Rs. 75 get Rs. 500 per month on becoming a minister as he well might be? Then look at the Fergusson College. There too the Professors used to get no more than Rs. 75 per month. And why should there be any difference between the pay of a minister and his secretary? These are all self-appointed. Have they any right to make these distinctions? I must confess that I do not understand this business. I can only hope that the report is baseless and that the Congress ministers in all the six provinces will show that they are the real representatives of the starving millions in whose name and for whose sake they are taking office. And why should they need cars? Why may they not walk to their work or use tramcars or buses? I have been to Japan. The Japanese scale is much lower than the reported scale. And Japan is an independent country much richer than ours. If we make of ministerial offices comfortable jobs for ourselves, it will be very like wrecking the Constitution at its very threshold. Now that you have begun to deal with such things in the columns of *Harijan*, will you not give your opinion and arrest the course of the evil, assuming that there is truth in the report?"

This the gist as I can recollect it of a conversation. The speaker poured out his heart in sorrow and distress. I shared his sorrow. I share the hope that the newspaper report is not a correct forecast. It should be remembered that the Congress resolution fixes Rs. 500 as the maximum. So far as I am aware

it is inclusive of everything. A clear need for the maximum should be proved

M. K. Gandhi

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WARDHA,  
July 19, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I enclose letter from Bapu, [also copies of a letter I am addressing to C. R. and of a brief article that Bapu is writing for *Harijan*. You will follow the way in which Bapu's mind is working!

Please share this with Agatha I am writing this in great haste

*Yours,*  
Mahadev

Encl. Copies of two letters and Bapu's article

### **The Fundamental Difference**

It is necessary to contemplate for a moment the fundamental difference between the old and the new order. In order fully to realise it we must try to forget for the moment the crushing limitations of the Act. Seeing that the Congress has gone to the farthest limit and has accepted office, let every Congressman note the power it has taken. Whereas formerly the ministers were amenable to the control of the Governors, now they are under the control of the Congress. They are responsible to the Congress. They owe their status to the Congress. The Governors and the Civil Service though irremovable are yet answerable to the ministers. The ministers however have effective control over

them, up to a point. That point enables them to consolidate the power of the Congress, i.e., the people. The ministers have the whip hand so long as they act within the four corners of the Act, no matter how distasteful their actions may be to the Governors. It will be found upon examination, that so long as the people remain non-violent, the Congress ministers have enough freedom of action for national growth.

For effective use of this power, the people have to give hearty co-operation to the Congress and their ministers. If the latter do wrong or they neglect their duty it is open to any person to complain to the secretary of the A. I. C. C. and seek redress. But no one may take the law into his own hands.

Congressmen should also realise that there is no other political party in the field to question the authority of the Congress. For the other parties have never penetrated the villages. And that is not a work that can be done in a day. So far therefore as I can see vast opportunity is at the disposal of the ministers in terms of the Congress objective of Complete Independence if only they are honest, selfless, industrious, vigilant and solicitous for the true welfare of the starving millions. No doubt there is great validity in the argument that the Act has left the ministers no money to spend for the nation building departments. But this is largely an illusion. I believe with Sir Daniel Hamilton that labour and not metal, is real money. Labour backed by paper, is as good as, if not better than, paper backed by labour. Here are the sentiments of an English financier who has held high office in India. "The worst legacy we have left to India is a high-grade service." What has been done cannot be undone. I should now start something independent. Whatever is being done today with 'money motive' should in future be based on 'service motive'. Why should teachers and doctors be paid high salaries? Why cannot most of the work be done on a co-operative basis? Why should you worry about capital when there are seven hundred million hands to toil? If things are done on a co-operative basis, which in other words is modified socialism, money would not be needed, at least in large quantity. I find this verified in little Segaon. The four hundred adults of Segaon can easily put ten thousands rupees annually into their pockets if only they would work as I ask them. But they won't. They lack co-operation. They do not know the art

of intelligent labour, they refuse to learn anything new. Untouchability blocks their way. If someone presented them with one lac of rupees they would not turn it to account. They are responsible for this state of affairs. They, i.e., we the middle class people. What is true of Segaoon is true of other villages. They will respond by patient efforts as they are responding in Segaoon though ever so slowly. The State however can do much in this direction, without having to spend a single pie extra. The State officials can be utilised for serving the people instead of harassing them. The villagers may not be ordered into doing anything. They can be educated to do things which benefit them morally, mentally, physically and economically.

M K Gandhi

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GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W 1,  
July 20, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADARSHI,

At long last, I have your letter of the 9th. I did not feel quite happy after reading it because it gave me an impression as if you thought that the Congress decision was not the right one, but that it had to be taken because of the impatience of our own people. On reading your letter however to Agatha, I have changed my impression. I hope what has been done is not because, as you say, our people were lacking in stamina but because it was the right decision. Perhaps you are right that we might have got in the end the assurances that we wanted, but whether that could have been good, I have my doubts. Perhaps the history of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact would have repeated itself. On the other hand, as it is, I have no doubt that it has created a tremendous impression here, and if the experiment fails, I fear it will be due to our own difficulties, although I don't think it will at all fail. It is going to be a severe trial, but

with hard work, commonsense and under the guidance of Bapu, we will get through.

Please don't say that you are not sure that the whole thing can last very long. In fact not only it can last long, but it can bring us very much nearer to our goal. But it will very much depend on us rather than on the Governors. In this connection I would like to tell you that only today I was lunching with Mr. Roger Lumley, the Governor Designate of Bombay. We talked for nearly two hours. He tried to get as much as he could from me about our people. But he specially wanted to see Bapu and he is very eager that he should know him as soon as he goes to India. Could you tell me how this could be possible? Bapu of course rarely goes to Bombay, but perhaps he will go to see the Governor.

Another thing of importance which he inquired was whether the ministers would come to lunch and dine with him whenever invited. I said I could not say anything on this question. But I told him that as a matter of fact Bapu was against such entertainments, but whether the ministers would be allowed to lunch or dine when they were invited was more than what I could say and that the best person to talk to in this respect also would be Bapu.

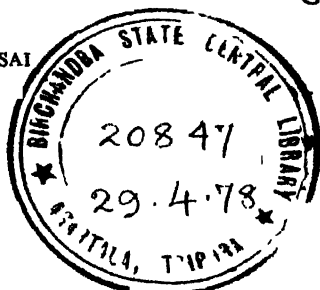
He reaches Bombay about the middle of September and I also will land about that time and will perhaps see him again before going to Wardha.

Now as regards your suggestion to go to Lourdes in France I may tell you that nothing interests me just now except going back to India as soon as possible. But I fear we will be detained here up to the middle of September.

Yes, I will bring your fine tool-boxes and science-boxes. Please write to me, if I can do anything further.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA



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GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
July 22, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEV BHAI,

I was lunching today with Churchill at his house and I again enjoyed his company for two hours. As usual, he was very cordial and charming, but very ill informed about India.

Immediately on seeing me, he said, "Well, a big experiment has begun" and when I said, "Yes, it has begun but it will require all your sympathy and good wishes," he assured me of it but all the same said, "It depends entirely on you. You know I have not spoken a word against the Act after the King's signature was put on it and if you can make this experiment a success, you will reach your goal automatically. You know how democracy is attacked all over the world. It is only Great Britain that has preserved democracy and if you can show by your actions that you can make democracy a success, you will have no difficulty in advancing further. Play fair and we will play fair."

"What do you mean by 'play fair'?", I asked. He replied, "Make the provinces contented, peaceful and prosperous. Don't allow violence and don't murder Englishmen." I said, "I am simply shocked at what you say. Do you seriously believe that we are going to murder Englishmen?" He was rather surprised at my own complacence but accepted the assurance that India did not believe in violence. I added, "Even the most extremist Congressman is not anti-British. He is certainly for independence, but this does not mean that one should become anti-British." He asked whether I could say this about Jawaharlal also. I replied, "I can. Although I am a capitalist and he is a socialist and we have got different views on social matters, but all the same in fairness to him, I must say that he is a great man, very sincere and not at all anti-British. You must go to India to see the things for yourself because then you would be able to be of great help to us." He said, "Yes, I would. Linlithgow has already invited me to go but if Mr. Gandhi also desires, I would go. Give your leader my greetings and tell him that I wish him all

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success. Don't feel shy of fighting socialism. Accumulation of wealth is a good thing because it creates initiative but of course capitalists have to be servants and not masters."

He was very sceptical about the future of the European political situation. For the next one year he did not expect any war, but he could not say about the far future. He said, "The Dictators are getting mad and they may do anything in order to preserve their power. Russia is getting less communistic and Germany is getting more soialistic. So they are finding common ground to some extent. England is the only country which has preserved democracy. I started agitation for rearming England because I believed that nations are ruled either by right or by force. Right is the better method of ruling, but you cannot establish right unless you have force. And now we have got force with the help of which we can establish right. Italy is dreaming of establishing an Empire "

He went on in this mood for a pretty long time. This time he himself suggested that I should keep him well informed about the situation in India and I have promised to do so

Will you not write to me Bapu's reactions on some of the news that I have been sending to you?

Here are some cuttings which will interest you. The *Morning Post* is simply poisoning the people here but it does not matter so long as we do the right thing.

Yours,  
Ghanshyamdas

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*True Copy*

VICEROY'S CAMP,  
INDIA,  
July 23, 1937

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

It would give me much pleasure if you could find it possible



to come and see me in New Delhi when I pass through on my way back to Simla. If this suggestion is agreeable to you, would 11.30 a.m. on Wednesday August 4th, at Viceroy's House be convenient?

I have no particular business of a public nature with which to trouble. But it will be a real pleasure to me to meet you, and I gratefully hope that you may find it possible to come.

Yours sincerely,  
Linlithgow

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WARDHA,  
July 23, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

That article of Bapu of which I enclosed advance copy last week, has been well received. *The Times of India* called it an illuminating article and *The Statesman* commented on it in detail. I enclose *The Statesman's* cutting. I also enclose copy of Bapu's note on the ministerial salaries, which is not going in, as it was subject to the approval of the chief ministers. All of them objected to its insertion. But that shows Bapu's feelings on the matter and though he has cancelled the note, he is not going to leave the matter at that. Just as he insisted on rural-mindedness informing our lives, as soon as he brought into being the All-India Village Industries Association, even so he now insists on the Indian-mass-mentality being adopted by the ministers. The poor ministers have already begun to squirm, and are crying for mercy. "I understand all that Bapu says", says C.R., "but let Bapu please bear with us. I would do all he wants but how can I make all my colleagues do it?" Mr. Munshi writes: "Do have mercy on us and accept what we can lay at your feet. Pray, don't expect anything beyond our capacity."

Meanwhile the new responsibility is giving sleepless night to conscientious people like C.R. who says he has nearly to kill himself if he must come anywhere near Babu's expectations. To add to their trouble those who had their eyes and minds nailed to offices and who are now disappointed are giving threatening expression to their grouse and talking of communal riots in Malabar and Orissa because some people have not been taken in. Harniman—that walking plague—is fanning day in and day out the flames of communal feeling by yelling from the columns that the Sardar has stabbed Nariman and with him all law and justice?

But all this will disappear in course of time, I hope, and we should be settled down to business. After the new ministers have begun to function, they will be silent.

Babu has been rather unwell these days. The W. C. meetings left him completely fagged out and he founded that he had been burning the candle at both ends. He is now taking rest, but he will again get into his old habit. Could not someone persuade him to go into silence every day after prayers? That would ensure a good night's rest at any rate. I want you to write to him. I am asking the Sardar and Jamnalalji to move in the matter.

You asked me whether it would not be worth while reviving *Young India*. It would be. But he thinks that before he actually does so he should wait a while and watch the working of the present ministries. Who knows the whole thing might break down like a house of records abruptly! So he will now content himself with developing *Harijun*—as he has already begun. I send you this week's article. Then after three or four months when he finds that the ministers are all properly in the saddle and they can work out the programme, we will have *Young India*. Even with this one, or now two articles the circulation has begun to go up.

Could you bring for me—or my office—*Statesman's Year Book* (New Edition) and a good large sized *Modern Atlas*? I shall now have to shed my rural habits and begin to get a little urban! Agatha will share this.

With love,

*Yours,*  
Mahadev

### **Not a Prize**

I have been receiving several letters from different provinces protesting against the exclusion of their or their friends' names from ministerships and asking me to intervene. I do not think there is a single province from which such complaints have not been received. In some such letters dire results including communal riots have been threatened, if the excluded person's claims are not considered.

In the first instance let me say that I have not intervened in any single case in the selection of ministers. I have no right, having completely withdrawn from the Congress, to intervene in such matters, even if I had the wish, which I have not. My participation in Congress affairs is confined to rendering service on the issues involved in office acceptance and on the policies to be pursued in the prosecution of our march to the goal of complete independence.

But it seems to me that my numerous correspondents who have been writing voluminously think that ministerships are prizes for past services and that certain Congressmen can demand their inclusion. I venture to suggest to them that ministerships are avenues to service which those who are called to it should render cheerfully and to the best of their ability. There can therefore never be a scramble for these offices. It would be decidedly wrong to create ministerships for the sake of conciliating interests. If I were a chief minister and I was pestered with such claims, I should tell my electors to choose another leader. These choices have not to be held lightly. They are or should be crown of thorns, never of renown. Offices have been taken to see if they enable us to quicken the pace at which we are moving towards our goal. It would be tragic if self-seekers or misguided zealots were allowed to impede the progress by imposing themselves as chief ministers. If it was necessary to have assurances from those who have ultimately to clothe ministers with authority, it is doubly necessary to have assurances of understanding of loyalty beyond suspicion and willing obedience to discipline. The grim fight in which the country is engaged cannot be won, if Congressmen do not show in their conduct a sufficient measure of selflessness, discipline and faith in the means enunciated by the Congress for the

attainment of the goal.

Thanks to the Karachi resolution, the ministerships under the Congress aegis have no pecuniary attraction. I must say in parenthesis that considering Rs. 500 as if it was the minimum instead of the maximum was a mistake. Rs. 500 was the last limit. Had we not got used to the excessive scale of salaries imposed upon the country, we would have regarded Rs. 500 to be excessive. The Congress scale generally has been for the past seventeen years at least Rs. 75 per month. In its three great constructive all-India departments, national education, khadi and village industries, the authorised scale has been Rs. 75. These departments contain men who are good enough, so far as ability is concerned, any day to be ministers. They have distinguished educationists, lawyers, chemists and merchants, who if they were so minded, could easily command over Rs. 500 per month. Why should the fact of becoming a minister make the great difference we see? But the die is perhaps cast. My remarks represent my personal opinion. I have too high regard for the chief ministers to question their judgment and wisdom. No doubt they thought that this was the best in the circumstances facing them. The point I wish to make, in answer to my correspondents is that these offices have not been taken in view of the emoluments they offer.

And then they have to be given to those only in the party who are best able to discharge the duty to which they are called.

And lastly the acid test is that the choice must commend itself to the members of the party to whom the ministers owe their nomination. No chief minister can for one moment impose a man or woman of his choice on the party. He is chief because he enjoys the full confidence of his party as to ability, knowledge of persons, and the other qualities that mark out one for leadership.

M. K. Gandhi

14

**The Implications**  
(By M.K. Gandhi)

I have not hesitated to express my opinion that the salaries that Congress ministers have voted for themselves are much too high for the standard that should govern us in this, the poorest country in the world. In the hurried note that Prof. K.T. Shah has sent me and which the reader will find elsewhere, India's annual income will be found to be £4 against £50 of Great Britain. Unfortunately for us we have to bear yet a while the burden of the British inheritance and in spite of the best effort, we fail to achieve the ideal standard. The salaries and the allowances are now a settled fact. The question now is, will the ministers, their secretaries and the members work so hard as to deserve the emoluments they receive. Will the members become whole-time workers for the nation, and give a faithful account of the services they may render? Let us not make the mistake of imagining that the things are what we wish them to be, or what they should be.

And it is not enough for the ministers to live simply and to work hard. They have to see to it that the Departments they control also respond. Thus justice should become cheap and expeditious. Today it is the luxury of the rich and the joy of the gambler. The Police should be friends of the people instead of being their dread. Education should be so revolutionised as to answer the wants of the poorest villager, instead of answering those of an imperial exploiter.

All those who were imprisoned for offences, even of a violent nature will shortly find themselves free, if the ministers can give them the freedom. This is a phenomenon not to be looked at lightly. Does it mean passport to violence? Certainly not, in terms of the Congress creed of non-violence. The Congress abhors individual violence in a far more real sense than the Government it replaces. It seeks to meet the violence of individuals not with the organised violence called punishment, but with non-violence in the shape of friendly approach to the erring individuals, and through the cultivation of sound public opinion against any form of violence. Its methods are

preventive, not punitive. In other words the Congress will not rule through the police backed by the military, but through its moral authority based upon the greatest goodwill of the people. It will rule, not in virtue of authority derived from a superior armed power, but in virtue of the service of the people whom it seems to represent in every one of its actions.

Ban on all prohibited literature is being removed. Now some of the books banned, will be found, I suppose, to inculcate violence and spread obscenity or hatred among different 'classes or sects. The Congress rule does not mean licence to violence or obscenity, or fomenting of hatred. Again, the Congress will reply upon the unstinted support of enlightened public opinion in dealing with objectionable literature. The ministers, who may find violence, hatred or obscenity spreading in their provinces will look to the Congress organisations and ultimately to the Working Committee for active and efficient help before they resort on the process of the criminal law and all it means. Indeed the triumph of the Congress will be measured by the success it achieves in rendering the police and the military practically idle. And it will fail utterly if it has to face crisis that render the use of the police and the military inevitable. The best and the only effective way to wreck the existing Constitution is for the Congress to prove conclusively that it can rule without the aid of the military and with the least possible assistance of the police who may well have some new friendly designation given to them as a correspondent suggests.

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WARDHA,  
July 27, 1937

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your kind letter.

I had for some time intended to ask for an appointment to

discuss the possibility of lifting the ban on Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan's entry into the Frontier Province and of my visiting that Province. Of course there is no bar against me but I had no intention of going there except with the approval of the authorities.

Your letter is therefore doubly welcome. I assume that there would be no objection to my discussing these two points at our meeting. I shall gladly report myself at Viceroy's house, New Delhi, on 4th August next at 11.30 a.m.

*I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi*

16

GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W.1,  
July 27, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I have just received your letter and also a copy of your article. I am glad that you sent me the copy because I had only today a talk with Lord Zetland and he said that he had not seen the article but from what appeared in the Press, he felt as if Mr. Gandhi had written it to appease the left wingers to some extent. I asked him which sentence he was referring to and he could not say anything concrete except giving me his vague impressions.

I pointed out specially to the two sentences. One in which Bapu had recognised the attempt of Great Britain to replace the rule of the sword by the rule of majority. The second in which he said that office acceptance was an attempt to avoid

bloody revolution on the one hand and mass civil disobedience on the other hand. He said he would like to see the whole article and I have promised to send him a copy of the same.

But one thing is quite clear. Just as we suffer from distrust, so do they; although I have no doubt that in course of time this will vanish. While discussing various other things, I got an impression that he was anxious that the Viceroy and Bapu should now come in' closer touch. I told him that when I had left India, Bapu had casually mentioned to me that perhaps he would see the Viceroy in connection with the Frontier question but I was not quite sure whether he still intended seeing him. But then I suggested, "Why should the Viceroy not write and invite Gandhiji just to make his acquaintance?" The Secretary of State approved of it and perhaps he would put it to the Viceroy. But at the same time he remarked that the difficulty was that Gandhiji had declared it so many times that he had no Congress status. By this perhaps the Secretary of State meant that Bapu may not see the Viceroy even if invited under the plea of his having no official status and he was not quite sure whether a meeting between the Viceroy and Jawaharlalji without a first meeting between Bapu and the Viceroy would be of any great help. Perhaps he would write to the Viceroy.

But is it possible for you to write to me what Bapu's latest views are in this connection? I had raised this point in my previous letters also to which I have received no reply so far from you. I hope in order to help me, perhaps you will keep me well informed. I am just now out of date so far as Segaoon is concerned and, if you think I should keep myself up to date, then please help.

I have sent a copy of Bapu's telegram to Rajaji, to Lord Halifax and I am sure he would like it. I have also sent copies of Bapu's article in the *Harijan* to Lord Halifax and Lothian and also Mr. Butler. You know Mr. Butler also is very eager to keep himself well informed about India.

Now as you might have already seen from my letters, I very strongly feel that we should have next winter some of the important Englishmen in India to establish contact with us. I am thinking of two years ahead when we may have to negotiate the next step and I am sure these personal contacts will be of immense help. And our important men also should pay a short



visit to this country in the next spring and meet people here. Now in the first place please tell me how this strikes Bapu and secondly as I have already written to you, Churchill told me that although Linlithgow had invited him to go to India but if Bapu also felt like that, he would perhaps go. If I know that Bapu approves of the idea, then I can press this point on the Earl Baldwin also, who although is no longer in active politics but yet wields great influence. Everyone to whom I talked here seems to like the idea, but until I know Bapu's mind, I don't wish to move further in this matter. I don't think any of these big men are likely to go, but if we put the idea before them, it may make them think and perhaps some of them may go.

Lord Halifax writes to me as follows, "I quite agree with you that in some ways the Congress may be at the beginning of its difficulties, but it can feel that it has plenty of goodwill behind it in taking up the business of administration."

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

*PS.* After a few days I am going to write a long letter to Bapu dealing with the subject of a trade pact. What I mean is that if I felt that an agreement was feasible, I should like to consult Bapu before committing myself, and to acquaint myself with his advice or the views of the other political leaders so as not to give an occasion for adverse criticism later. Bapu should send his categorical 'Yes' or 'No' on the matter; let him not try to evade the issue by saying that this matter did not fall within the scope of the activity. We are familiar with the psychology of our traders. Each one of them thinks only if his over benefit is qualified to take a comprehensive view of what was of benefit to the country as a whole. He may, if he thinks proper, consult Vallabhbai or Rajendra Babu on this matter. If we do not find scope for any such agreement, we ourselves will abstain from pursuing the matter and will certainly not bother Bapu about it. But if I felt that something worth having

was achievable, I should like to consult Bapu beforehand and to ask for his blessings.

Ghanshyamdas

17

GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
July 28, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Here is a portion of a brief speech of the Secretary of State delivered today at a luncheon in which he was invited by Sarma:

“He agreed with Sir R. S. Sarma that there was a great change for the brighter in the outlook of the political situation in India—change of very profound significance.” He said, “My reading of the situation is that India has reached a point in her advance to self-Government when the road forks in two directions and she had to decide which fork to take. One of the forks has a signpost reading ‘Revolution’ and the other signpost reads ‘Evolution’. I have always had faith in the ability of India to take the path of Evolution rather than that of Revolution and, so far, though nobody could be so rash as to predict the future of events—I believe that I have been justified in that optimism.

“What we have to do now is to help all we can to dispel that atmosphere of distrust and suspicion in the mind of the Congress. An indication of that suspicion is in the language in which the Congress decided to accept office. But the important thing is that they did decide to accept office. This atmosphere of suspicion and distrust exists on both sides and it is natural also considering the history of the past relations between the Congress and the Government. I believe, however, that as the

Congress gains experience of the administration that atmosphere will be dispelled.

“Meanwhile, the picture that we have always to keep before us is that of India and Great Britain marching along side by side, each helping the other, we giving as much to India as we could. And if we keep that picture in our minds, I think that you will find my faith in India will be justified.”

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI

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GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
July 29, 1937

PUJYA BAPU,

Your hand-written letter has arrived. I was not expecting it. And Mahadevbhai's letters do come once in a while. Lately, of course, they have been arriving regularly. But it is your letters that keep me in high spirits. At times I begin to wonder if I had done something wrong. but by and large it is God alone who shows me the path. The sole objective is the nation's or ours well being. I am in receipt of your article dealing with the subject of ministers' salary, also of a copy of your letter to C.R. If the ministers manage to live simply, it will have a profound affect all around them. It is true that people in Japan lead a simple life. I have heard that they do not have salaries exceeding the equivalent of Rs. 400 in our coin. But it is also true that billionaires there live quite as simply as the rest of the people. In our society the rich maintain a high standard of living—a very high standard, to be precise. The standard the rich in our country insist on maintaining will have an adverse

effect on the unostentatious mode of living expected of our ministers. On the other hand, their simplicity may serve as a model for the rich. You are quite correct in remarking that simple living is something of an art. This is an art of which we are quite ignorant. So are our employees. This had rendered our own mode of living inevitable to some extent. It is my belief that if we could manage with less, that would save us from much criticism and trouble we are likely to face in times to come. This, of course, remains the ideal. I myself do not favour that way of life, but there are difficulties. This conformity is like the other conformity—the conformity of communal life, but is in fact an infliction from the outside. On occasion, I have pondered over the desirability of having something like a tax on personal spending. This tax is even more desirable than Death Duty. I remember having had a talk over this matter with an economist. I recall his having told me that while expenses up to Rs. 500 should remain free of tax, any amount exceeding that figure must entail a tax double or even four times that expenditure. That would, he said, leave a lot of money for use in charities, good works or expansion of trade, rendering the idea of trusteeship a worthwhile objective to achieve. I personally should feel quite happy if that were to take place. In England they once had Widow Tax, the idea probably being to soak the rich.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

## 19

GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
July 30, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Lord Lothian came to see me last evening and I had a long talk with him about the future. I pointed out to him, "Although

the Congress has accepted office, it has not done so just to be satisfied with the present Constitution but to replace it by something which they like. And now that they have done what you wanted, how do you visualise by working this Constitution they would be able to replace it by something of their own choice?" He replied, "You should not challenge service or communalism for some time, but on other matters of social programme, you should brook no interference from the Governors. This will in course of time establish conventions and thus provincial autonomy will become complete. As regards the centre, when the Federation comes, I hope that the Congress would be able to have its own ministry."

I pointed out to him that out of 375 seats the Congress would hardly get 100 seats and thus it could not have a majority. To this he replied, "Even without a majority, the Congress being the largest party, it will be able to command a majority." I did not dispute this. Then he suggested how we should immediately challenge the army budget which will mean discussion with the Governor General and consequently some say and finally greater say in the question of army budget. I asked, "How will this give us control over the Army or Foreign Affairs? You have claimed that the Constitution contains within itself seeds of automatic growth and now you have to prove how we shall get what some of us call Dominion Status."

He had to admit that without a new Act it was not possible. Then I told him what I visualised. I agreed that by tact and persuasion we should establish convention which within the next two or three years would give us complete provincial autonomy. We should see that law and order was maintained and impartiality in communal matters was observed. Service perhaps would become real service. This was satisfactory so far as it went but I had my own doubts whether we could be able to achieve this position even in transferred subjects in the centre. I visualised that after working the Constitution for two or three years successfully, we should send a small delegation of our public men to England who would talk informally with the cabinet ministers here and would tell them that they had done their best to advance through constitutional lines but then they had come to a dead stop because no further progress was possible without a new Act. They should try to persuade the

Government here to give them something of their own liking and they should tell them clearly that India would not be satisfied with her present position. And unless there was a permanent agreement there was likelihood of direct action.

Then I asked Lord Lothian whether such a move would persuade the Government here to be reasonable and listen to us. And in order that the cabinet ministers and the people here gave us a friendly treatment at the proper time, I suggested that we should spend the next two or three years in making the Constitution a success from every point of view and establish personal contacts. Eminent persons from England should go to India and vice versa.

He said he liked the idea and he expected that this would have a tremendous impression on the British mind at the proper time, and that perhaps we would be able to get what we wanted through such a course. He said he had written to Bapu and that perhaps in the middle of November he would leave for India. Of course, he said this should be kept private. I asked him if he had made his programme. "No", he said, "I have no desire to make speeches." I replied, "I don't want you to make speeches. But what I want to know is this whether you will go to India as a guest of the British or as a guest of India." He said, "Certainly of India. I will see Gandhiji." But I said, "This is not all. You should see as many Congressmen as you can. You should not stay at Government House but you should stay with Indians."

I asked him whether he would care to stay with me in Delhi and Calcutta. He replied, "For a day perhaps I will have to stay at Government House but otherwise I would be delighted to stay with you." I told him that I had spoken similarly to Churchill but perhaps he would go, if Bapu invited him. He was very interested. He agreed with me that I should make Earl Baldwin a similar request.

I pointed out to him that in case there was no advance after two or three years, then India would be compelled to direct action again. But by direct action Lord Lothian understands nothing else but bloody revolution. He cannot conceive of a non-violent mass civil disobedience. He thinks that Jawaharlal is submitting to Bapu because he cannot help it but that at the proper time he will rise, and as he does not believe in non-

violent civil disobedience, he will lead India to revolution. Young men will follow him. The result will be that capitalists still organise on Fascist lines and the peasantry on Communistic lines.

I again and again tried to point out to him that he being a European, he knew of nothing else except Communism and Fascism but in India a third line had been adopted with some amount of success and that was a non-violent revolution. I told him that the Congress would not resort to direct action unless they were sure that they should be able to preserve the non-violent nature of their action. But he said human nature was what it was. He could not believe that such a thing could happen.

Then he said, "Mr. Gandhi is respected because he is a saintly man, but when it comes to fighting, they will all throw him to the winds. Jawaharlal will never submit to Gandhi rule." But in spite of all my arguments he could not be convinced on this point and said that at least to learn what I said, he would go to India.

By this mail, I have received Bapu's letter in his own handwriting and also yours. I liked Bapu's letter so much that I have sent copies of the same to Lords Halifax, Lothian and also to Churchill. I have also sent copies of his last article on ministerial salary to all the important men.

Please keep me well informed. Although I am going away to the Continent because in August they don't work here. We have to reassemble about the first week of September. It is most disgusting that we will be kept here cooling our heels. But it could not be helped.

We get some occasional Press telegrams about India in the *Times* and the *Daily Herald*. But in a way we are absolutely cut off and so I have asked Devdas to send me *The Hindustan Times* regularly.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADLVBHAI DLSAI  
WARDHA

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
August 1, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letters of the 20th and 22nd. So you have had my letter of the 9th. I have been writing to you regularly ever since the decision of the Working Committee. As my letters are exclusively meant for you I write down frankly and freely all that I feel. I was perfectly happy about the decision but I was not happy about the circumstances that forced it. There was quite a scramble for a favourable decision. I wish I could show you the heaps of impatient letters and telegrams that we had. The post Gandhi-Irwin Pact history was repeated. And I should have been untrue to you, if I had not described to you exactly the working of Bapu's mind leading up to the decision.

Of course I know that it created a tremendous impression there. But when I read out to Bapu one sentence in your letter, namely, that 'Bapu's stocks had gone up' he had a very hearty but incredulous laugh. Stocks in the political market as well as in the money market go up and down very suddenly, and it is only a speculator who would build much on them. I wish I could share your belief that the whole thing will last very long. As Bapu said to a minister very recently: "If this thing lasts beyond a year I shall either infer that the Britishers have become angels or that our ministers are completely cow-towing to them! However let us hope and pray that everything will go on well, human nature remaining what it is. On the very first day in Madras an interesting situation arose. Rajaji wanted to issue orders immediately for the release of Meher Ali. The Governor demurred, he had strong reasons, and I dare say Meher Ali had made most objectionable speeches, as he did make one since his release. But Rajaji would not yield. The Governor said, "Surely I am not going to break on this." And the man was released the next morning. I could tell you stories like that from other provinces, which go to show that both the Governors and the Ministers have begun well. Pantji in U.P. harangued to the Departmental Secretaries for an hour soon



after assuming office. I dare say they took it all in good part. Everywhere they started with *Bande Mataram*—every one of the members including Europeans and officials standing. In poor Orissa the officials thought it below their dignity to stand up. From the point of view of pure intellectual capacity the Orissa ministry is anything but strong. But they are a set of good people, tried and true and I do not think they will be borne down by superior intellectual strength, or betrayed into doing anything foolish. The Madras ministry is in every respect the strongest in India.

You say Sir Roger Lumley is very anxious to see Bapu, and ask how this was to be possible. Perhaps he knew the conditions better than you. For the ice has already been broken. And before this gets into your hands the newspapers will have flashed the news that Bapu has seen the Viceroy. Four days ago we were agreeably surprised to find a Magistrate of this place, at Segaoon, gone there specially to deliver personally to Bapu some important official document. It was a personal letter from Lord Linlithgow inviting Bapu to see him. Evidently he had sent it on to the Governor to be delivered personally. I shall tell you Bapu's instantaneous reaction, for this little thing shows how non-violent to the core is Bapu. He said, "I am sure somebody has told the Viceroy that I should never go to him without an invitation from him, and this poor man will be misinterpreted the moment the world knows that it was he who invited me and not I who sought the interview." The non-violence in Bapu's nature instinctively rebelled against a possible compromise of the dignity or prestige of the Viceroy. And then he wrote out in his own hand a reply. I enclosed copies of both. He would have given some expression of his feeling in his reply, but he refrained from doing so. As he said to me: "Doesn't he know his own business? Why should I presume to advise him?" The Viceroy is just now touring in Assam and Bihar and I do not know whether Bapu's letter will be in his hands before he is actually in Delhi. Bapu has raised the question of the North West Frontier, but we trust it will create no difficulty. If this interview was meant merely to break the ice how could the Viceroy say more than he has done? But evidently it cannot be all just for "the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gandhi". They can't separate after just saying,

“How do you do?” However it is not quite likely that the interview will not go on beyond an hour or so. But I must not anticipate. So you have to tell Sir Roger Lumley that he has but to summon Bapu and he will be only too glad to “report himself”.

What you said to Sir Roger about ministers accepting invitations to dinners and parties shows your instinctive knowledge of Bapu. Vallabhbai was here last week to discuss this and various other questions of procedure. You will be sorry to learn that they decided to have nothing to do with entertainments. Accepting an invitation from the Governor presupposes readiness on the part of the ministers to return the courtesy. How can our poor ministers indulge in social amenities of this kind? But it is not merely a question of poverty. Bapu feels that at least for some years in the best interests of the country it would be wisest to maintain strictly official relations.

What you say about Churchill is most interesting. When he uttered that sentence about violence and Indians murdering Englishmen why did you not remind him of his article in which he threatened us with dread consequences, if we refused to accept offices? The cruel word that he used about Bapu’s statement still smarts in my memory. Do you know the word? He described these statements as Gandhi’s “barbed-wire blandishments”. But it is Churchill all over. At the time of the Irish settlement it was he who invited Michael Collins to his place and laughed and joked with him and told him that whereas the British Government had set a price of £ 1,000 on his (Collins’) head the Boers had set only a price of £ 10 on his, i.e., Churchill’s head! But I am quite sure his greetings to Bapu are perfectly genuine. And you must convey Bapu’s thanks to him. In 1931 he declined to see Bapu, but now if he comes to India at Bapu’s instance I suppose he will ask for the interview himself. This letter has already become too long and I must close. I shall write to you again immediately on our return from Delhi.

I do understand your disinclination to visit Lourdes, and you have certainly not the time for it. But one day when we have no other preoccupations I should really love to visit it in company with you. I don’t suppose Jugal Kishoreji knows anything about the place. Otherwise with his strangely credulous

nature he would make a dash for it. I want you to see it because you are his extreme opposite in temperament.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

We will all miss you in Delhi You will show this to Agatha, Please!

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MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
August 3, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I do hope you have had all my letters and that you have not after all found me to be a Rip van Winkle as you called me in one of your letters.

Laxminivas tells me that you are going to take the chance of having your operation in Vienna, now that you have to be detained there for a month more. I am glad, and I do hope the operation will mean an end to the whole trouble.

Bapu is writing away every week in his old manner. I enclose the latest article. Please pass it on to Agatha. Rajagopalachari is working like a Trojan. Here is a sentence from his letter to me: "No minister who is intelligent and conscientious will be worth his salt until he puts in a solid work of 13 hours a day." And he does it literally. I do hope he will not kill himself with work. How I wish we had similar ministers in other provinces. I think it was a great mistake for the Sardar and Rajendrababu to have kept out.

You were good enough to ask me to write to you for anything else I may require. Our bee-keeping experiment is proving successful and is in charge of a man who has proved his worth. He is writing a series of very interesting and instructive articles

on bee-keeping and wants for the Village Industries Association Library a number of books, on the core of bee-keeping. I append a list. Could you please be so good as to procure as many of the books in the list as may be available?

And for me, Jennings' book on Cabinet Government. Do you get the *Harijan* there? Even if you do, you can't have a moment to look at them! We return from Delhi on the 6th. I shall write again on the 7th, if there is anything worth writing to you about the interview.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

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VICEREGAL LODGE,  
August 4, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

A strange place for me to write from. Isn't it? And you will see that I am not yet familiar with the name, for though I know that the Delhi Palace is called Viceroy's House, it is the Simla one that is called the Viceregal Lodge! Well, whilst Bapu is busy with the Viceroy, I am making myself useful writing a few letters that Bapu asked me to write on our way here. Your dear old chauffeur (I mean the young handsome chauffeur dressed in clothes more spotlessly white than I wear) drove us here and Bapu was closetted with H.E. at 11.30. The interview seemed to be more to break the ice, as I told you, than for any specific purpose, and Bapu himself was determined not to broach any subject of his own accord—excepting of course the Frontier question that he himself had mentioned in his reply to the Viceroy. But I have finished all my letters, it is close on one o'clock and still Bapu is not out—which means that matters of moment are being discussed.

It seems your latest letter to me is awaiting me at Wardha for Devdas had a copy yesterday and the original must have gone to Wardha also the same time. I suppose Lord Z. knew when he was talking to you that this thing was coming off!

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

*P.S.* This is after the interview. It was quite good, frank and cordial. It lasted for about an hour and a half. The Frontier door is open so far as Bapu is concerned, but not yet for the Khan Saheb, who said the Viceroy must make a representation to the Governor. Bapu told H.J. at length who the Khan Saheb was, and how he could not be expected to make the representation. But he was hopeful that the way will be clear. And now the Frontier ministry has resigned, so it may be expected that it will be quite all right.

H.E. raised no objection whatsoever about discussing the Frontier question, and made no difficulty about Bapu going there.

The other topics discussed were rural uplift, cows, hand-made paper and reed-pen and so on.

Mahadev

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MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
August 6, 1937

MY DLAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The enclosed summarises the interview. This is exclusively for you and in reply to your letters of the 26th and the 28th. Though the ice has been broken he does not apply any more importance to it than he would to a friendly interchange of

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views. The old imperialism still subsists and it may be very long before it yields. Bapu would caution you against setting much store by those "personal contacts" and he is not all inclined to extend the invitation he did to Lord Lothian, Churchill or Lord Baldwin or other friends. If they would come of their own accord, they are perfectly welcome but Bapu would not request them to come. Besides he does not want to assume the status of a Congress leader to extend that invitation to them. With Lord Lothian it was a different matter. He had played an important role as a bridge-builder and he had directly written to Bapu more than once. The suggestion, or if you please, the invitation, came therefore in the natural course of things, and out of an instinctive impulse. The Churchills and others may come to talk all kinds of imperialistic nonsense, and it would be like giving them a passport to visit India to say all those things. No, Bapu would have none of these personal contact business.

As regards your postscript in Hindi, Bapu promises to apply his mind to whatever you may send and will endeavour to give his opinion in so far as it may be possible for him.

As regards the Frontier question the Viceroy has promised to correspond with Bapu after he has had an opportunity of communicating with the Governor. It is likely that the ban may be raised.

I hope you are keeping well. Have you had all my letters? This is a God forsaken place and often enough letters posted in time do not catch the air mail. I have not missed a single air mail.

C.F.A. arrives tomorrow—on what errand—I have not yet been able to guess.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

Enclosure

August 6, 1937

I wrote you the other day from the Viceroy's House, and in my postscript gave you a hurried impression of the interview,

as I gathered it from the casual talk with Bapu, that I had in the car. It had to be casual talk because we did not drive straight back home, but went to your house to meet Jugalkishoreji. And then as Bapu had not much time to give him, he accompanied us to the Harijan Colony.

I shall now try to give you a full account. Before Mr. Leithwaite (I'm not sure of the spelling) took Bapu to the Viceroy he told him that H.E. had no time to reply to Bapu's letter, but that Bapu was at liberty to discuss the two questions he had mentioned in his letter.

The Viceroy also started with the same assurance, and asked Bapu to discuss whatever matters he liked. Bapu said he would content himself with only the two matters he had mentioned, unless H.E. wanted to discuss anything else. As regards Bapu's visit to the Frontier, H. E. had already been in communication with the Governor of the Province and he felt that there could be no objection to his going, only he would request Bapu not to insist on visiting the trans-border-regions. Bapu made it absolutely clear that it was not his intention to go beyond the border—at any rate until he had convinced the Government of his own ability to deal with the question of the tribes, as also of his own sincerity of purpose.

Regarding the ban against Khan Saheb, would not the Khan Saheb make a representation to the Frontier Governor? There were several charges against him, the two principle ones being, to inflame the frontier tribes and to make of the Khudai Khidmatgars a military organisation. Bapu said he had repudiated the charges in toto and it was a pity that he had not been given an opportunity to prove his bona fides. The Khan Saheb was a very much misunderstood man; in spite of his shortcoming he was essentially a man of God who would instinctively shrink from untruth and violence, and who was incapable of deceit. Bapu implored the Viceroy to make the Khan Saheb's acquaintance, and he was sure H.E. would not regret it. The Khan Saheb's making a representation to the Frontier Governor was out of the question. Had he made any representations to the Punjab Governor? Even as the Punjab doors had been open to him, the doors of his own home ought now to be opened. It was open, said Bapu to the Government to express a hope that on going back to the Frontier the Khan Saheb may not

say or do certain things, and Bapu was sure he would never belie their expectations, but the permission should be entirely unconditional.

The question of His Excellency meeting Jawaharlal was also mooted. H.E. wanted to know from Bapu what kind of man Jawaharlal was and you can imagine what Bapu must have said in reply. There was perhaps a shadow of suspicion in his mind that Jawaharlal may not accept the invitation to meet him. (I may tell you by the way that before Bapu went to see H.E. he had a note from Jawaharlal in which he said, "I am not quite happy about the way in which you are rushing up to Delhi, but I suppose it is inevitable." Bapu has now written to Jawaharlal to say that there was likelihood of his being invited by the Viceroy, and that he had told the Viceroy that if he was invited he would not refuse). Bapu assured H.E. that he need not entertain any such fear. He was a perfect gentleman and he would never refuse an invitation to meet him.

The personnel of the various ministries was casually discussed. Bapu said the Congress had tried to send the best available people. So far as the Mussalmans and Depressed Classes were concerned, their choice was obviously restricted and it was possible for them to find any better men than they had sent. H.E. said he knew Rajagopalachari very well and he was obviously happy about the way in which things were going on in Madras.

There was a general talk about it, rural uplift, village industries including hand-made paper and khadi. The Viceroy had not failed to notice that Bapu's letter to him was written on hand-made paper. Bapu told him that it was far from being a sample of the best we had made, and added that it was written with a reed-pen in hand-made village ink. H.E. said a reed-pen was any day better than steel nibs and fountain-pens inasmuch as it meant a much less strain on the hand.

Mahadev



HOTEL BAUR AU LAC,  
ZURICH,  
August 8, 1937

MY DEAR BAPU,

This is rough outline of the Ottawa Pact. We get preference under the Pact in the United Kingdom market on the following commodities against which is given our total exports to the United Kingdom.

	<i>Lakhs of rupees</i>
1. Tea	17.00
2. Hides & skins of all kinds	7.00
3. Groundnuts	1.50
4. Vegetable oils	1.50
5. Linseed	3.00
6. Jute manufactures	2.70
7. Oil seed cakes	1.50
8. Carpets and rugs	.65
9. Tobacco	.60
0. Cotton manufactures mostly handloom made	.20
1. Miscellaneous	1.50
	37.15

Against these we give preferences in our market to various commodities of the United Kingdom like electrical apparatuses, motor-cars, constructional hardware, the total trade of which amounts to about 22 crores. It is not necessary to give details of all these. Over and above this, the United Kingdom enjoys preferences in cloth and steel which trade amounted to about 13 crores at the conclusion of the Ottawa Pact. Now it has gone down. Thus the United Kingdom enjoys preference in a trade of approximately 35 crores in the Indian market.

We give on most of the United Kingdom items preferences varying from 7½% to 10%, but in cloth the United Kingdom enjoys preference of 30%. On the other hand in the United Kingdom market, we enjoy preference which generally amount to 10%, although in tea it is much higher. At first glance it looks

as if the pact was equitable because trades of both the sides that enjoy preference amount to equal value and the percentages of preferences also are very nearly equal. So it may be argued that the pact was based on reciprocity. But it was not so because while there may have been a reciprocity in quantity, in quality it was not so.

In the first place our articles that enjoy preference are mostly raw materials which the United Kingdom requires in her own interest and secondly in most of the items on which we enjoy preference we had as our competitors either the other empire countries which too enjoy a similar preference or we are supplying nearly 80% to 90% of the United Kingdom market and therefore in imposing tariff on foreign imports and allowing our imports free, the United Kingdom is not making any sacrifice.

For instance in tea, while we get a good preference, Ceylon also enjoys a similar preference and we two between ourselves supply 90% of the United Kingdom market. Thus in giving preference on tea, we get no advantage except a sort of "insurance value" nor the United Kingdom makes any sacrifice in giving us such preference. There are many other instances of similar nature. I admit however that even the "insurance value" has its value.

On the other hand, in giving preference to the United Kingdom in our market, we make real sacrifice and the United Kingdom gets definite benefit. And some of the commodities of the United Kingdom compete with our own production and thus the pact was inequitable on the ground that there was no reciprocity in quality.

Another factor which should not be ignored is that we are a debtor country and the United Kingdom being our creditor, in her own interest, she must buy mainly from us in order that we may not default. On the other hand, there is another point which has to be borne in mind. Out of the preference that we give to the United Kingdom, cloth and steel stand on different footing. At any rate in theory the United Kingdom gets preference on steel and cotton not because of Ottawa but because of our policy of discriminating protection. The Tariff Board recommended that India needed higher protection against Japan than against the United Kingdom and hence this discrimination

in favour of the United Kingdom.

If therefore the Ottawa Pact is terminated and it is not replaced by any other pact, then while we could continue to give preference to the United Kingdom on steel and cloth, we cease to get any preference as hitherto enjoyed by us in the United Kingdom market. This puts us in a rather disadvantageous position for which there seems to be no remedy at present. In negotiating for a new pact therefore we pressed on two things.

One that all the preferences hitherto enjoyed by us should continue and that India in return should give nothing to the United Kingdom except preferences which she already enjoys in cloth and steel. There are one or two other points which we are pressing. One is the question of raw cotton. Under the Ottawa Pact the United Kingdom gave us a moral promise that she would try to increase her consumption of Indian cotton and she did increase her imports from India from nearly two lakh bales to about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lakh bales. We now press that instead of vague promises, the United Kingdom should give us a definite undertaking to purchase ten lakh bales of Indian cotton every year.

Another point that we are pressing is in respect of export drawback on linseed. It is necessary to explain this export drawback at this stage. The United Kingdom imports linseed from India as also from Argentine. Indian linseed is free from duty whereas Argentine is subject to import duty. Now whatever goods are made out of Argentine linseed such as oil, varnish, etc., when they are exported, the Governor of the United Kingdom refunds the duty that it originally charged on that portion of linseed oil which is exported. This is called drawback.

This drawback system very nearly nullifies the preference enjoyed by Indian linseed. We press that this drawback should be abolished. The United Kingdom on the other hand refuses to withdraw the drawback system and is pressing first of all for greater preference on cloth—and wants another 9% reduction in duty—and secondly for restriction on Indian exports of jute manufactures, carpets and chrome tanned leather to the United Kingdom. She is also pressing that she would not be satisfied with preferences merely on cloth and steel which she maintains were given not for the benefit of the United Kingdom manufacturer but in the interest of the Indian consumer and

therefore she demands preferences on various other items which we have refused.

It is necessary to note at this stage that out of the preferences enjoyed by Indian commodities. Jute manufactures, chrome leather and carpets were the things that got the real benefit. These three commodities are hitting directly the British manufacturer who is very much alarmed and wants to restrict our trade in these three items.

Taking all these things into consideration, I have made a suggestion to some of my colleagues that in order to conclude a pact, we should go as far as this:

1. All the preferences enjoyed by India at present which comprise a trade of nearly 35 crores should continue.
2. The drawback system which we wanted to be abolished be allowed to remain.
3. There should be no restriction on our trade of jute manufactures, carpets and chrome leather.
4. That in exchange for this, we should give a further reduction of 5% on cloth to Lancashire but that we should not give any further preference on any other article to the United Kingdom unless those articles may be very insignificant and the total trade of all of which in aggregate does not exceed 1½ crores.
5. Over and above this, the United Kingdom should guarantee that she would take increasing quantity of Indian cotton until its purchases reach within three years to 10 lakh bales.

Now it may look as if such a pact strongly weighs in our favour to the disadvantage of the United Kingdom. But as I have already explained, most of the preferences enjoyed by us are only of "insurance value" and therefore its advantageous effect in comparison to the volume of trade is smaller. On the other hand, in giving further preference on cloth, we make an earnest effort to appease Lancashire although on account of reduced cost of production of the Indian mills even with a further 5% reduction in tariff, viz., from the existing 20% to a new level of 15%, she is not likely to be benefited. Her trade in

1935 amounted to 450 million yards. In 1936 it dropped to 340 million yards and in 1937 in spite of a reduction of 5% duty, it is running on the basis of 290 million yards.

Myself and Kasturbhai both think that a 5% further reduction to Lancashire will not make any difference to the Indian cotton mills and Lancashire is prepared to guarantee that in case her trade increases above 500 million yards—now it is about 300—then we should reduce the preference by  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  and if that is not effective, we may further reduce it by another  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  and continue like this until the trade comes down to 500 million yards. Similarly she demands that in case her trade goes below 250 million yards, we should give her a further reduction in duty.

This principle is not bad although I would like to fix the figures of maximum and minimum at 400 and 200 respectively. But I personally feel that the time is coming fast when perhaps the Indian mills would be able to compete Manchester in Indian market which means that we would hardly require any protection. Therefore I feel that in giving further reduction to Manchester, we would not be putting the Indian industry at an disadvantage. On the other hand, I see great potentialities in jute manufactures, carpet and chrome leather and if we get a free market in the United Kingdom, then in course of time I think we will be able to improve trade immensely in these three commodities.

The other items on which we enjoy preference are in my opinion not of such large value as at first sight may appear. The essential items of preference therefore in our favour would be.

Jute	270 lakhs
Carpets	60 ..
Chrome leather	30 ..
	<hr/>
	360 lakhs

Besides this, if the United Kingdom guarantees to take 10 lakhs of bales of Indian cotton, which would be worth about 10 crores, this—while not causing any sacrifice on the part of the United Kingdom—will be a great advantage to us. Over and above this, there would be preferences on various other items, some of little value and others of fair value, the total trade in

which there would be about 30 to 32 crores against which I suggest that we should give a further reduction of 5% to Lancashire in a trade which at present stands at a level of 7 crores and allow the present preference on steel which trade amounts to about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores and give preferences on other articles not exceeding an amount of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  crores.

This in my opinion will be fair to both sides and will not at all be injurious to Indian interests. Kasturbhai is going to sound Ahmedabad but in my opinion the Congress' opinion is the most important since even if such a pact be in the interest of India, the cotton industry would not take a wider view and perhaps may not agree to any reduction in favour of Lancashire.

My own fear is what the pact as envisaged by me may not be acceptable to the United Kingdom. Perhaps there may be a breakdown but what I feel is this that on our part we should be prepared to go to the extent I have suggested. If there will be a breakdown, then unfortunately we will have to continue to give preference to the United Kingdom in steel and cotton without any corresponding advantage to us. This cannot be helped. But perhaps the United Kingdom may realise that after all it is not in her best interest to break. Besides this, political value of a voluntary pact too cannot be minimised.

It may be argued why not more preference on other items and no more on cloth? The reply is that the United Kingdom attaches the greatest importance to cloth whereas I think in the present circumstances it is only the cloth where we may safely yield.

The result of a breakdown may be serious on the export of our raw cotton, and as raw cotton is consumed by Manchester, we must placate her of all. When I made this suggestion to Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, he liked the idea but was afraid to touch cloth which in India has assumed some political importance. I told him that we could not take any serious action without consulting you and if after weighing all pros and cons, you approve of my suggestion, then we desire to have your blessings. In case you do not approve, then we would have no fear of any criticism that being ourselves manufacturers we totally ignored the interest of the cotton grower and the other agriculturists. As the matter is very important, we cannot do without your consultation. In case you need any

further information, please inquire. But we must have your final opinion before the 7th of September, if possible.

With pranams,

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

PUJYA SHRI MAHATMA GANDHIJI  
WARDHA

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HOTEL BAUR AU LAC,  
ZURICH,  
August 8, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

As already written in one of my letters, I am now writing this to seek Bapu's advice, of course in confidence, with reference to the new Trade Pact. I would not take any final step without knowing the attitude of Bapu or in other words of the Congress. Perhaps Bapu may like to consult Vallabhbhai or someone else whom he chooses to do so. But please don't disappoint me by saying that this is something beyond the sphere of Bapu because then it will be very difficult for us to take any action even if we felt that it were in the best interest of the country. We do not want to put our signatures on a document which may be disowned by the country and therefore we want to consult Bapu before taking any conclusive action. I am sure when Bapu consults someone else, he will make it clear that this is all in strict confidence. Nothing should leak out.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

HOTEL BAUR AU LAC,  
ZURICH,  
August 9, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Your letters are very interesting and informative. It will be hard on you if I said that I would expect such letters from you every now and then, but whenever you can spare time, I hope you will keep me well informed.

I quite understand the difficulties of the ministers and their having to pass sleeping nights, but I think it will all settle down in course of time. I am glad that a meeting with the Viceroy came about because now Bapu would be able to solve a number of difficulties, although this will cause greater on his health.

Did you deliberately keep silent over some of the points raised in my previous letters, or are they still under reply?

Yes, I will bring your *Statesman's Year Book* and the *Modern Atlas*. I wonder how you needed atlas, but of course Mr. Laitlwaite must have some of these modest equipments for his Secretariat which is now assuming wider importance. It is only a pity that your Secretariat is too small.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

ZURICH,  
August 16, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

It was not at Vienna but at Zurich that I decided to have my nose operation done. Prof. Nagar is supposed to be an



international man. He has done the operation and today is the sixth day of it. I am out of the bed now, but I don't think I will be fit to travel before another seven or ten days. When I am better, I will go to London either or after visiting one or two places on business. This I am dictating from the hospital.

The operation was done under local anaesthetic. The Professor cut through my mouth into the antrum and took out the mucous membrane and then made another hole in the antrum by cutting the bone into the nose. I think the work was done very cleverly. It was not quite pleasant to be conscious and to know what was being done all the time in your mouth with hammer and chisel. Of course it was very interesting and in a way also funny, I hope that this will help me but as with every operation so with this, it is always taking a chance

Your two letters are lying unreplied. Far from being a Rip van Winkle, now you are giving me the fullest information and I am very grateful to you for this. The copies of *The Hindustan Times* are not reaching me and my connection with the *Harijan* is severed since I left London. So the only news that I get about India is either through private letters or through the British Press. The *Times* has been very kind to us so far and Mr. English always sends complimentary news. The *Morning Post* used to write in a hostile manner but since I took up the question with Churchill and Lord Halifax, it has become less unfriendly which again may be a coincidence.

I am not surprised at the news that I am getting just now. One day I read some students going on strike, if the Education Minister failed to do this or that. Then I read some match workers going on hunger strike, if the Industry Minister did not settle their demands satisfactorily. The big Cawnpore strike was settled eventually but I read that once the strikers refused to abide by the decision of Pant. And of course the Andaman strikes are still agitating the minds of the people.

It looks as if everybody wants to have his own way under the Congress regime. I have no doubt that Bapu is doing all that is necessary to educate the public opinion to keep discipline. I will not be surprised if some day I heard of marches led to the house of the minister with flags and slogans. Suppression of the popular feeling in the past is perhaps now having its reaction and it would not be bad if the steam was allowed to

blow out. But what is necessary for the people to know is that even under swaraj they have to be law abiding, reasonable and disciplined. I have no doubt that in course of time they will learn. But don't you think it is desirable that public education on these lines was undertaken without the least delay?

And look at these speeches of Jawaharlalji ! Whatever they may mean. I know it is not an attack on Bapu, but ignorant men would think as if he was abusing Bapu for seeing the Viceroy. It does not create a good impression anywhere. •

I did not quite understand why should Bapu have had incredulous laugh at my telling you that his stocks had gone up and come down but as a businessman let me tell you that they don't fluctuate so suddenly as you people think they do. In certain cases where the statistical position is sound, there is always a period of continued steadiness and so I was quite justified when I said that our administration could last very long. Of course it cannot last if we wanted to break, but as this is not our desire, I don't think there is going to be any serious trouble. Neither the Britishers will become angels nor our ministers will know-tow to them, if our ministries continued with stability. What is likely to happen is that both sides will make mutual adjustments and perhaps it will be realised that there was a lot of good on both sides which was not appreciated so far. Britishers are very shrewd men, and if they took a farsighted view, as I suppose they would, they would certainly help us to realise our goal. And there is nothing unusual with a shrewd man taking a far-sighted view. Have not the Englishmen taken up such an attitude in South Africa and Ireland? Why cannot the history be repeated in India also? I have no doubt that it will be. I am glad to hear from you however that in all the provinces the Governors and the ministers have begun well.

As regards Bapu's decision about the ministers not accepting social invitations from the Governors, I felt he would be thinking something like this and so I correctly represented his views to Sir Roger. But perhaps it would be better if the Prime Ministers were allowed to have social relations. Then there would be no misunderstanding, otherwise there is bound to be some. There is justification in making exception in case of the Prime Ministers.

I note your remarks about Churchill, but you don't reply to

my query whether Bapu would like to have him in India. Don't go by what he says. He is a politician, pure and simple, and I think perhaps his philosophy is to have one policy in public and the other in private. But I tell you that as a man he is full of warmth. There is no vanity about him and he has got child-like simplicity. He had the honesty to admit to me that when he stood up in favour of the ex-King, he did not know that the public opinion was so much against him. I also discussed with him the general position of monarchy in England and the fact why he was not in the Cabinet. I felt that he was one of the half a dozen persons who rule England and I was impressed with his frankness in private talks. He was very straight in telling me that I should not expect of him to write articles in favour of India. He reminded me what politics was.

Your letter from Delhi did not give me much news but perhaps you thought it better to be discreet. I note that you say the copy of my letter to you is with Devdas. I always post one copy to Devdas, one to Rajaji and one to my brother Rameshwarji who shows it to Sardar.

For the first time I learn from your letter that the Frontier ministry has resigned. So you are going to have seven ministries now.

I sent you the cable about Bapu's health because besides your own letter, I read in the Press that when he got down at Delhi, he looked very tried. I hope he is fully recovered from the fatigue now. I am not writing to Bapu anything about it because I know nobody can look after his health better than Bapu himself. The only thing is that sometimes he is compelled to overwork and I will talk to him about it on my return.

I entirely agree with you that it was a great mistake for the Sardar and Rajendrababu to have kept out. Perhaps it would be rectified after a year's steady work.

I will bring the books on bee-keeping and Cabinet Government. I do not find the list of books on bee-keeping which you say you enclosed with the letter, but I will try to get some good books on the subject.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

GOVERNOR'S CAMP,  
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE,  
ABBOTTABAD,  
August 17, 1937

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I have received a letter from His Excellency the Viceroy in which he has given me the gist of his talk with you on the 4th of August. His Excellency, I understood, told you that he believed there would be no objection to your paying a visit to the North-West Frontier Province, should you desire to do so. I have discussed this with my ministers, and with their authority I write to inform you that there will be no objection to your visiting the province. His Excellency, I know, told you that he felt it necessary to ask you to leave all affairs connected with the tribes severally alone during your visit; I understand that you accepted His Excellency's decision in this matter, and I know that you will scrupulously abide by this assurance.

Should there be an opportunity of our meeting, it will be a pleasure to me to renew the acquaintance we made when I was with Lord Halifax.

The question of Khan Abdal Ghaffar Khan, about which you also spoke to His Excellency, is still under consideration by the ministry; I anticipate that a decision will be reached within the next day or two.

*Yours sincerely,*  
G. Cunningham

M. K. GANDHI, ESQUIRE  
SEGAON  
WARDHA

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
August 18, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letters of the 30th July and of the 9th August from Zurich. Rameshwardasji also sent that important communication containing the proposed Trade Agreement which I lost no time in passing on to Bapu. I also got his reply to it immediately and sent it in to Rameshwardasji by messenger to be posted to you from there. I do not know how you will like the reply, but you cannot expect anything else from Bapu, constituted as he is. His approach and your approach are naturally quite different, and whilst you may judge the thing on its merits the final decision ought to rest with the Congress which represents the bulk of the people. And perhaps that is the surest position for you to take, viz., that no agreement is final unless it has received the imprimatur of the Congress. I enclose a copy of Bapu's letter along with this letter also. As you have not told me where I should address my letters, I am sending a copy to London and also one to Zurich.

I very much appreciate your letter of the 30th. What you have told Lord Lothian is quite all right. Not until we have made a serious attempt to work the Constitution and demonstrated the utter inadequacy of the present Act for the purpose of building up the nation, shall we tell the world that the Constitution must be scrapped and a new one, formulated by the nation take its place. I do not know whether the delegation you suggest would serve the purpose of something else. The bulk of the Congressmen will I am afraid not favour the idea of a delegation. But I suppose it is too early yet to count our chickens.

I explained to you Bapu's attitude to the proposed "personal contacts" in my past personal letter to you. He would not think of extending the invitation, even in his personal capacity to anyone else.

I am glad you explained to Lord Lothian, how as a Liberal, he was incapable of understanding our special brand of direct action, but ultimately it is action that convinces, not arguments. If Bapu lives in our midst for a few years, we might be able to

show what non-violent direct action is capable of.

The ministries are functioning fairly well. There is sufficient co-operation on behalf of the officials. I almost suspect they have orders from London to behave themselves and I grant that they are a much more disciplined lot than many of us. Fancy Garet, the Commissioner of Ahmedabad, who in 1930 threatened Morarji Desai with dire consequences, if he resigned, now going to the station to receive minister Morarji and travelling a fair distance with him 3rd class! You know the Bardoli and Kaira Auctioned Lands' Dispute; it looks as though Garet would make no difficulty now, in having the lands transferred back to the original owners. A sub-inspector of police who had been guilty of tyrannical abuse of power in the past committed suicide by shooting himself on the eve of Minister Morarji's arrival in Bardoli. But that is by the way. Rajaji is having the utmost co-operation from the civilians. There may be some difficulty in poor Orissa. But even that will be temporary.

Our difficulties I am afraid will be of our own creation. We are yet far from being a united house. There are our friends, who benefiting by the situation, would have strikes everywhere, and would delight in the ministries being condemned as incapable of handling the situation. Rajaji has released one and all of the political prisoners in his province, violent and non-violent. The last Mopla prisoner was released only the other day, but with what result. Meher Ali who had been sentenced to six month's imprisonment before Rajaji assumed office, was released by him on the very day he assumed office. There was some difficulty about his release, as I had told you in one of my previous letters. But Rajaji succeeded in getting him free on the very day when his appeal was dismissed. Within two days of his release, this man goes and makes a speech full of fire and brimstone, inciting people to violence. What is poor Rajaji to do? There are half a dozen or more similar prisoners still in Bombay. There is a difficult problem. The ministers insisted on their being released, but not with success. But can they break on this? If we were absolutely agreed on non-violence the question should not be difficult, but even as regards the implications of non-violence, there is a gulf of difference between Jawaharlal and Bapu. The last meeting of the Working Committee was an exceptionally difficult one in view of the problems I have men-

tioned. But everything ultimately ended well.

I wonder if you are getting your *Harijan* there, of course, I have sent you the most important articles, as I am sending along with this the one written for the next issue. Bapu is very keen on prohibition being made an accomplished fact within three years, and I am glad that he has carried the Working Committee with him. "The educational puzzle need not baffle us," says Bapu, "Education will take care of itself if only we will take care to see that prohibition will not be the sacrifice that we have to make for it. "We are passing through great times. I am afraid we have not the resourcefulness sufficient for the great task ahead. But God helps those who throw themselves on his mercy. This may not be the attitude of all. It is certainly Bapu's attitude.

On the other difficult questions too, I expect there will not ultimately remain much trouble. The difficulty with Jawaharlal, after all, is also not insurmountable. He frets and fumes, he storms, he is often in a rage, but after all he is a sport, and so quickly regains his balance, makes rapid amends and sees that there is no unpleasantness left behind.

This letter is getting long, and the business part still remains. You will remember that in February last you were good enough to arrange for free passage on one of your boats for two ladies who are working here for us in India. They are now in touch with your agents in London, and trying to find out if a free passage back to India in one of your cargo boats returning home, is possible. Added to the two is now a third lady, the wife-to-be of a German friend who is working here with us. It seems she was expelled from Germany evidently for her pacifism, and her passage in a Hansa Line boat may not be exactly tolerable or pleasant. Are there any other cargo boats—I mean not belonging to the Hansa Line—on which these three ladies might have a free passage, either from one of the English ports or the Italian ones?

You are silent about your health. Did you have an operation after all or you are just spending the recess in Zurich. Bapu is very anxious to know. I have written to Rameshwardasji also in this connection, in case you may have written to him in detail. I hope you got my cable about Bapu. There was not much of a rise in his blood-pressure to speak of, but he had

been feeling the strain of overwork. He distinctly saw that danger was ahead, if he did not take precautions be times. He did so at once, curtailed part of his routine work and began to take more rest. He automatically goes into silence after every evening prayer. That ensures perfect rest until 4 o'clock next morning. I assure you that there is nothing to be anxious about.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

30

SEGAON,  
August 18, 1937

BIHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I am in receipt of your letter which I have gone through very carefully. What I feel is that there is little that I or the Congress could say in this matter. This only means that you should not base your actions on my approval or its otherwise inasmuch as my angle of vision is not the same as yours. I cannot treat an agreement of this nature as something unrelated to the political issues. I made a frank admission of it while on a visit to Lancashire during the Round Table Conference. You and your colleagues are on Pact Committee, which fact forfeits your right to have a say in political matters. You will, therefore, do well to consider the merits and demerits of the proposed agreement quite independently of its relevance to the political issues. If you do that, I will certainly share your findings. It is also your duty to do that. You can usefully add that undue importance should not be attached to your judgment as to the shortcomings of the proposed agreement. Since the Congress alone is the sole representative of popular opinion,



only its imprimatur can make it a valid document. That will sufficiently demonstrate your wisdom as well as your sense of proportion. By you I mean your colleagues as well.

This I am writing after the morning prayer

I hope you have benefited from your stay in Zurich.

*Blessings from*  
Bapu

31

WARDHA,  
August 19, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The main news goes in the enclosed letter. Nothing has happened since the breaking of the ice at Simla. Only Bapu now feels free to write, and he has written a letter to the Viceroy asking him to send an expert engineer to overtake the terrible flood havoc in Orissa. Khan Saheb has left for Sind and the Punjab, in the expectation of the lifting of the bar on him to enter the Frontier, by the time he has finished his tour in both the provinces. I do expect something to come from the Viceroy, for he is a man of his word. His reply to Mohanlal Saxena, in reply to the latter's regarding the Andaman prisoners on hunger strike, is a fine document—carefully and patiently reasoned, fine in tone and conciliatory in spirit. How I wish our people—the extreme section—listened to Bapu. He would then have few difficulties with the Government. At the present moment it looks as though they are more capable of civility than we are. Maybe the civility is a portent of the heavy hand they would come down upon us the moment we ran amuck! But why should we judge? We must try to learn from them.

You make fun of the Segaon "Laithwaite". And well you may. Look at the poorly typed copy of the dictated letter. I have now a very willing and efficient sister to help me with my typing, but how am I to help the bad machine, bad stationery, and so on. You must one day help me in overhauling all these things. If you have not ordered the atlas, please cancel the order. I have one which serves my purpose. What I would need is a number of reference books. *Statesman's Year Book*, I have already mentioned. You may order other reference books as well. Your Secretary tells me he has placed an order with Sefridges for a Chemical instruments and Messano! Messano is a toy-box. What I had asked for is a carpenter's tool-box. So please let him ask for a carpenter's tool-box. Thus my little boy will get a toy-box extra in the bargain.

Yours,  
Mahadev

## 32

ZURICH,  
August 20, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

All the points raised in my previous letters have now been replied by you and I know Bapu's desire in respect of personal contact. I will act accordingly.

You know during the last four years Bapu has encouraged me to talk so much about personal contact that perhaps now it has become an obsession with me. But if it is an obsession, I am not unconscious about it and so it can do no harm. I am still intellectually concerned about its efficacy, but Bapu must have strong reasons to cry halt at this stage. Perhaps he is not ignoring the attitude of Jawaharlalji and maybe some of these difficulties have influenced his mind to make this modification in this views.

I left the hospital day-before-yesterday. But I don't think I will be fit to travel before another seven or eight days

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT MAHADFVBAI DTSAI  
WARDHA

33

SEGAON,  
WARDHA  
August 24, 1937

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 17th inst. Evidently, I did not quite understand what H. L. the Viceroy said to me about trans-Frontier. I understood him to mean that he could not think of permitting me to cross the border. And I accepted, what I understood to be the Viceroy's decision adding that I did not lose the hope that, when I had inspired sufficient confidence as to my integrity and ability I could safely be permitted to cross the Frontier. But that is irrelevant to this letter. I would like to know the implication of 'leaving all affairs connected with the tribes severely alone' during my visit. Not that I have the slightest desire to meddle in trans-Frontier affairs. My intention is, as it was, when I first broached the subject to Lord Irwin, as Lord Halifax then was, to know the Frontier Pathans in his own home to make the acquaintance of Khudai Khidmatgars, to ascertain for myself how far their claim to be utterly non-violent could be sustained and how far I could promote the general welfare of the Pathans which is dear to the heart of Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He puts implicit reliance upon my judgment as I put on his transparency and trustworthiness. But I suppose, it is inevitable that people will come to me to talk about trans-Frontier affairs. Can I not listen to their narratives and even give my opinion, if I were

asked to express it? Can I not form one on what they might tell me?

If I succeed in visiting the Frontier Province, I should certainly feel sorry, if I had to leave it without having the pleasure of renewing the acquaintance we made during the time you were at Delhi.

I await your further letter about the Khan Saheb's question.

*I am yours sincerely,*  
M.K. Gandhi

*PS.* I just read in the paper the ban has been lifted. I am grateful.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR  
N.W.F.P.

34

MAGANWADI,  
WARDIA (C.P.),  
August 26, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

There is really not very much to write this week. I had the news of your operation from Rameshwardasji and now I have it in much greater detail from you. I hope all the trouble that you have gone through will not be in vain. I am sorry I cannot give you a satisfactory report of Bapu's health. Though the manometer reading taken about a month ago apparently appeared to be reassuring I had a suspicion that everything was not all right. I could see that he easily got tired, often enough irritated over things which would not disturb him otherwise. And then some of the things that happened at the Working Committee were far from pleasant. Whereas he gets irritated with his own people and throws off this feeling of irritation by saying a few hard words, in a place like the Working Committee he is in a different predicament. Often enough things happen that

would normally irritate him and yet he controls himself. This suppression has, if anything, a worse effect than the expression of it when he is with us. There have been several other reasons too, of a sufficiently disturbing domestic character, but I will not take you into them. The net result is that he is very much worse than he was when I sent you that cable in reply to yours.

The ministries have naturally added, to his normal work. Many of the ministers have been here and have had long and taxing conversations. Two will be coming next week. I wish I could stop all this, but if I tried to do anything of the kind, it would irritate all the more. The blood-pressure is somewhere between (sys.) 180 and 200 plus (diast.) 120. If he had no other signs I should ignore this high reading, but as there are enough signs of a disturbing character I cannot say that I am free from anxiety. He is trying to give himself rest by cutting down the routine work, but even that is not fully possible. He was jockeyed into this ugly Nariman enquiry much against his will, and there seems to be no getting out of it.

For *Harijan* he feels he must write every week, though I would very much like to take it off his hands altogether for some weeks, as I did in 1935. But he feels that he must give the best of himself whilst yet it is in his power to do so. And so we have to be passive witnesses of a process that is not only disturbing but excruciating.

A change from his present surrounding might perhaps do some good. And with the letter from the Frontier Governor and the lifting of the ban against Khan Sahib, an avenue seems to have been opened. I shall report to you what happens. You will see in the mean while the copies of the correspondence between Sir G. Cunningham and Bapu.

He had a good letter from Lord Linlithgow regarding the flood situation in Orissa and I think even Cunningham's letter is good, apart of course from the Secretary's tone. How can the poor man forget that he was Secretary for the best of his life? What the Viceroy said in a much happier manner, he has put in the bluntest possible words. But I am sure nothing more is meant than the prohibition of entry to the trans-border region. I hope it will be all well and this visit to the Frontier, if it comes about, and the new acquaintance with a people whom he has longed to meet all these years, might act as a sort of

‘Pick-me up’.

The other news is also of a more or less cheering character. Dr. Gilder who is in charge of the Excise portfolio in Bombay was here the other day. I asked him how he found the officials in his department. He had a very good report to give. He reported a talk with his Excise Commissioner which will amuse you. “Now tell me if you are at all serious about this prohibition,” said Mr. Knight frankly. He had to ask this question as he knew that Government had never been serious so far. “Well, we are perfectly serious. Up to now you followed the policy of maximum of revenue and minimum of consumption and damned the revenue. You have to work this out. Will you do so?” He said he would. And I am quite sure that if we act on the square, he and all his subordinates also will do the likewise.

The trouble, as I have before indicated, is with our own people. You know the Kakori Dacoit prisoners who were convicted some years ago of the most violent and unpardonable crimes. Pantji has released them all. It is a feather both in his cap, and that of Haig, who might well have objected to their release. But the moment their release was announced, our idiotic Congress Committee makes an announcement of taking those people out in procession. Poor Pantji was absolutely at sea. He was persuaded to be firm. He made it clear that if they persisted it would not be possible for him to do any similar in future. Jawaharlal, too, did not give any encouragement to the Congress enthusiasts. And so everything ended well.

In Madras, Rajaji is handling the situation in his remarkably clever way. But even he is not quite free from anxiety. He has to burn the candle at both ends. And there are disturbing elements there too. The Mopla M.L.A. whose ambition was to be on the Cabinet, was not taken, and he now bombards him with letters saying that a Mopla rebellion is imminent! A superstition is rampant in those parts that every twenty years a burst-up has to come. It is ordained by God! The last burst-up was in 1921. The time is ripe or nearly ripe for a fresh one. Rajaji emphatically says, “I will not buy these fellows into silence.” It is likely that the threats are idle, but they continue to come.

Pantji had a most difficult time of it at Cawnpore, as you already know. The situation in other parts is not quite happy. Kher has wisely chosen as his Secretary Gulzarilal and he is a

tower of strength to him. He is here, there and everywhere. He has already settled two strikes in a strikingly quick and a satisfactory manner. But there is a limit to his capacity too.

I have done. I am not sending a copy of this to Zurich. I enclose an article for the next week's *Harijan*. It will show you how tremendously keen Bapu is on prohibition and how he wants a fierce agitation for it. When exactly are you leaving?

Yours affectionately,  
Mahadev

35

WARDHA,  
August 27, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The enclosure was dictated last evening. Bapu's health is causing anxiety. Please do write to him yourself, and please return early. I did post the list of books on bee-keeping, it might have been mislaid at your end.

This I am writing just to tell you that the boy who is carrying on his studies under my supervision is fond of reciting the following couplets from *Udbhat Sagar*

He is the Lord of the gods,  
His father-in-law is the lord of the mountains,  
The Lord of wealth is his personal friend,  
His own son is the Lord congregations;  
But he himself has remained a beggar,  
Because he is cursed with a burning mark on his forehead.

His emphasis is, of course, on Lord Shiva's personal friendship with Kuber, the Lord of wealth. The boy has a sense of humour indeed! He knows that you are bringing the tool-box and other things for him.

I have already written to you about the *Statesman's Year Book*. Please also bring the League of Nations' *Year Book*, if it

## 70 BAPU—A Unique Association

is available. The report appearing in *The Hindustan Times* about the resignation of the Frontier Province ministry was premature. All the same it is inevitable now that Khan Saheb is on the way.

Yours sincerely,  
Mahadev

### 36

WARDHA,  
August 30, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

A great thing has happened during the week. The enclosed copy of telegraphic correspondence between the Viceroy and the Andaman authorities on the one hand and Bapu on the other will explain everything. It is significant that even the terrorists have listened to the one man who they now see can get their release. The suspension of the strike, I take it, means that they are considering Bapu's offer. They should not have suspended it if they were not in a mood to consider it. I may also add that the copies enclosed do not include an earlier telegram from "Andamans" received yesterday to the effect that the strikers were considering Gandhiji's message and prayed for time (I could not enclose copy as the original is with Bapu). Then came the final telegram this morning.

Jawahar and his group were entirely against the idea of an undertaking—no public undertaking, of course, for Bapu wanted no such thing—but even an assurance by someone like Bapu to the effect that they had eschewed violence as a method for the redress of grievances. Evidently those who are primarily concerned are of a different opinion.

If their release comes, as a result of Bapu's intervention, it will be a glorious victory of non-violence and further milestone on our road to freedom.

Bapu is a little better, thanks to the rest he is taking. Complete rest is of course out of question. Ministers come with difficult problems, and they evidently cannot be turned away. Munshi came away with a formula from Bapu that surprised



him as much as it is bound to surprise the Government.

Let us offer our fervent prayers before God that his flame may burn brightly for a few more years.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

- P. S.* I have no time to get the copies. Will you share it along with the enclosure with Agatha? That will save me a little postage too. The autobiography will be sent this week by the ordinary ocean mail.

### **Copy of Telegram to the Viceroy**

August 27, 1937

IF HUNGER STRIKE ANDAMANS STILL ON COULD YOU PLEASE WIRE FOLLOWING TO STRIKERS: "I VENTURE ADD MY ADVICE TO GURUDEV TAGORE'S AND WORKING COMMITTEE'S TO ABANDON STRIKE. RELYING UPON US ALL TRYING BEST SECURE RELIEF FOR YOU. IT WOULD BE CAREFUL ON OUR PART YIELD TO NATIONWIDE REQUEST. YOU WILL HELP ME PERSONALLY IF I COULD GET ASSURANCE THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVED IN TERRORIST METHODS NO LONGER BELIEVE IN THEM AND THAT THEY HAVE COME TO BELIEVE IN NON-VIOLENCE AS THE BEST METHOD. I ASK THIS BECAUSE SOME LEADERS SAY DETENUS HAVE ABJURED TERRORISM BUT OPINION TO CONTRARY ALSO HAS BEEN EXPRESSED—GANDHI." I SHALL ESTEEM YOUR ASKING FOR REPLY TO BE WIRED.

GANDHI

### **Copy of Telegram from Andamans**

PORT BLAIR,  
August 29, 1937

M. K. GANDHI  
WARDHA

229/C CONTINUATION MY TELEGRAM 225/C AUGUST. HUNGER STRIKE SUSPENDED LATE LAST NIGHT BY OVLRWHELMING MAJORITY WHO BROKE THEIR FAST. ONLY SEVEN REMAINING ON HUNGER STRIKE.

ANDAMANS

SIMLA,  
September 2, 1937

M. K. GANDHI  
WARDHA

NO. F 5 JAILS.

THE SEVEN PRISONERS IN THE ANDAMANS WHO ARE CONTINUING HUNGER STRIKE SEND YOU FOLLOWING MESSAGE: "THANKS FOR YOUR TELEGRAM REGARDING TERRORISM. WE DECLARE IT WILL HARM RATHER THAN HELP THE CAUSE OF COUNTRY. WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY THROUGH YOU OUR APPEAL TO ALL SUFFERERS IN JAILS AND DETENTION CAMPS, AND TO ALL ORGANISATIONS IF THERE BE ANY WHO STILL BELIEVE TO ATTAIN INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA THROUGH TERRORISM, TO GIVE IT UP, ONCE FOR ALL. WE FURTHER REQUEST YOU TO CLARIFY WHAT YOU MEAN BY 'RELIEF'. WE THINK AFTER GOVERNMENT INAUGURATING PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY, RELIEF CAN ONLY MEAN RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS, DETENUS STATE PRISONERS, REMOVAL OF BAN ON EXILES AND REPEAL OF ALL REPRESSIVE LAWS. IF WE GET ASSURANCE FROM YOU ON THESE QUESTIONS, WE CAN SUSPEND HUNGER STRIKE." TELEGRAM THEREIN MENTIONED IS YOUR MESSAGE OF AUGUST 27TH, YOUR MESSAGE OF AUGUST 30TH, HAD NOT BY THEN BEEN DELIVERED.

HOME

WARDHA,  
September 3, 1937

HOME  
SIMLA

THANKS YOUR TELEGRAM WHICH DESPATCHED YESTERDAY TWO-THIRTY WAS RECEIVED AFTER SEVEN TODAY. PLEASE WIRE SEVEN

PRISONERS "DEEPLY APPRECIATE MESSAGE WHICH IS HELPING ME GREATLY ACHIEVE COMMON OBJECT. I PERSONALLY ACCEPT YOUR INTERPRETATION OF 'RELIEF', AND PROMISE TO WORK FOR FULL FRUITION WITH ACTIVE CO-OPERATION OF PRISONER FRIENDS. URGE YOU, THEREFORE, ABANDON FAST AND SEND ME HAPPY NEWS "

GANDHI

39

WARDHA  
August 30, 1937

ANDAMANS  
PORT BLAIR

THANKS TELEGRAM GLAD ALL BUT SEVEN BROKEN FAST DO SEVEN GIVE REASONS FOR CONTINUING FAST I WITH THEM NOT PERSIST ALLOWING COUNTRY CHANCE SEEK RELIEF WILL DETINUS NOT ANSWER MY QUESTION ABOUT NON-VIGILANCE?

GANDHI

40

PARIS,  
August 31, 1937

PUJYA BAPU,

My respectful greetings.

I am in receipt of your letter but what you have said in it hardly helps me The Legislative Assembly rejected the Ottawa Pact and required its replacement by a new agreement The Congress was a party to this command It was in compliance with that command that we formed a consultative committee The Government will, of course, identify itself with a new decision, but I hope that the decision will not be at variance with

our advice.

Should the Government decide to proceed on the lines suggested by us and acceptable to Great Britain, it will assume the character of an agreement. But that agreement is bound to go before the Legislative Assembly for its approval and whether it will live or die will depend on its verdict. And the Assembly means firstly the Congress Party, and, secondly, the Jinnah group. If I were to claim that the Congress imprimatur alone will render it a valid document, I should find myself in a minority of one. Those disputing such a claim on my part will have cold logic on their side. The Congress is without doubt a party enjoying mass support, but it is essentially a Hindu Party, not a Muslim Party. Even the Muslims who are co-operating with us in this task do not accept that the Congress reflects the representative character of both Muslims as well as Hindus. It would, therefore, be more logical on our part to ensure the approval of not only the Legislative Assembly but also of the provincial governments. By implication, this will mean the approval of both Hindus and Muslims. And it is my belief that the Central Government will then not be found reluctant to act accordingly.

Before the Congress Governments in the provinces and the Congress Party in the Central Legislature record their verdict, will it not be feasible to secure the reaction of its leaders as to the quality of the agreement? If we gave expression to our own view of it which failed to harmonize with the leaders' view of it, we should be exposed to public disgrace.

The attitude you took towards Lancashire on the occasion of the 2nd Round Table Conference was something unique in itself in that it envisaged concession to its expectations. In the present instance the issues involved are to be judged on their own merits and demerits. The Congress itself is committed in principle to some sort of an agreement that would prove beneficial to the country economically. It certainly is not the Congress stand that no agreement whatever should be arrived at. Since we are striving for the best in keeping with the Congress wishes, we should like to know at this stage whether we are proceeding on the right lines. The Congress, to be sure, will give its verdict after the agreement takes shape, but if it could let us have its opinion now, we should escape adverse criticism later.

This is our case in a nutshell. In case you feel inclined to change your mind you can safely write to Rameshwardas who will then put through a trunk call to apprise me of it. In case your original view stands, you can write to me direct. If that be the position I would feel rather insecure in my approach to the problem but would manage to get along in the light of my own capacity to judge things. May I remind you of a particular sentence of your letter which had said, in effect, that you would share of my findings? That assurance was not adequate to serve as a guide in our present undertaking. I am sure you are aware that one of the members of the Consultative Committee, Mr. Subbaroyan, is currently holding the Finance portfolio in the Madras ministry. Looking at things from this angle, the Congress does not strike one as being averse to an agreement in principle at least. Be that as it may. I propose to continue with my efforts relying on God's guidance as well as on my own sense of judgment. But I certainly look up to you as my path-finder. Please do help me out of my predicament.

Now about my nose. It is rather premature to say whether the hole made in it will bring relief. As it is, however, just now I am enjoying the best of health, both bodily as well as mentally. I feel inundated by a new surge of hopes about the future, but its feel can only be conveyed by word of mouth, not through the medium of the pen. This I will certainly do when I am again near you to receive your blessings which even now you are unstintingly showering on me.

I do hope you have fixed your programme for taking complete rest.

*Yours humbly,*  
Ghanshyamdas

*P.S.* I am planning to leave for London tomorrow.

G. D.

GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
September 4, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Your letters are something more than interesting. I am like a man in Sahara who is in need of water. Devdas, although I asked him, has not yet begun to send me copies of *The Hindustan Times* with the result that I am cut off from India in a way. My son sends me some Press cuttings and I keep contact with the *Harijan*. But all this would not tell me what you can tell and so when I get your letters, I drink them deep. And when Bapu writes to me, I find myself in the seventh heaven. Sometimes I send quotations from your letters to Lord Halifax and other friends, but recently I have stopped doing so because while India may be very important to me, it is perhaps not so important to them when bombs and bullets are raining in Shanghai and Franco is torpedoing British ships.

Bapu's action in getting the hunger strike off the Andaman prisoners was a master stroke and was very much appreciated here. I have no doubt that the authorities here and there must have heaved a sigh of relief when they found Bapu coming to their rescue. It appears that he is developing friendship fast with the Viceroy. But what is most important is that he is showing us the way towards co-operation. He has said it so many times in the past that he was dying to co-operate and that the non-co-operation was only a step towards co-operation and now he is proving it by his actions. I am sure if we can develop strength, there is no risk in co-operation. It is a pity that Jawaharlalji does not see it. Is he a pedantic?

Lakshminiwas has been sending me some cuttings of the Indian Press from which it appears that indiscipline is getting rampant. I very much disliked the peasants in Bihar marching to the Assembly House and occupying all the seats of the Assembly and refusing to vacate them in spite of the request of the Prime Minister. And then the Prime Minister addressed them and told them all sorts of sweet things without telling them that they were wrong in occupying the Assembly seats

and refusing to vacate them. Bapu has rightly written against the demonstration that was made against Raghavendrarao, but I fear that in course of time indiscipline will grow more and more unless strict measures are taken, I only hope that the Congress authorities are fully alive to the situation and they will take all necessary measures. The rank and file seems to be confusing freedom with indiscipline.

As regards the passages, I fear new difficulties are now cropping up. We have got influence only over the German steamers by which we ship most and I find that Hitler, or rather his Government has issued a fiat to the steamer companies not to book passages without any consideration. So the liners have begun to grumble. While they would like to oblige us, they cannot. Any how, they have offered us three passages for this year out of which one has already been given to Mr. Raghuvendran, brother of Mr. G. Ramachandran of Trivendrum and the remaining two are at our disposal which we can use as we like. This is the position.

I am glad to hear that Bapu is now taking more rest. This is good.

As regards your Secretariat, I am surprised when you tell me that some day I should help you in overhauling all these things. Am I not ready to help? But when have you asked for it? I have been quarelling with Bapu for the last seven years about your Secretariat, but in vain. Every bit of letter he must write himself; sometimes with his right hand, sometimes with the left. Your typists are a collection for a museum. I have argued with Bapu about efficiency. He agrees in principle but when he needed a good stenographer in London and I offered him one, he called Polak's sister to work! In any case, I am ready Mahadevbhai.

I have not yet ordered the atlas. As regards the reference books, I am already ordering *Statesman's Year Book*. Please write to me what other books do you need and I will order them. I am also sending a Carpenter's tools-box for your son.

Have you seen this book? I don't know this man except by

his name and I am awfully disgusted that he should write anything about Babu.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

## 42

### **My Meaning of Office Acceptance** (By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri Shankerrao Deo writes:

“In your note ‘Not Instrument of Instructions’ in the last *Harijan*, you say in the second paragraph, ‘For me office acceptance has a special meaning even in the terms of the Congress manifesto and resolutions. It would be wrong, if I did not put before the ministers and the public my meaning of office acceptance.’ As I have understood you, you are for office acceptance for serving the masses and consolidating the Congress position through constructive programme. But I think you should explain in greater detail your meaning of office acceptance.”

Rightly or wrongly, since 1920 the Congress-minded millions have firmly held the view that the British domination of India has been on the whole a curse. It has been as much sustained by British arms as it has been through the Legislature, distribution of titles, the law-courts, the educational institutions, the financial policy and the like. The Congress came to the conclusion that the guns should not be feared, but that the organised violence, of which the British guns were a naked emblem, should be met by the organised non-violence of the people, and the Legislature and the rest by non-co-operating with them. There was a strong and effective side to the foregoing plan of non-co-operation, which became known as the constructive programme. The nation succeeded to the exact extent of its success in the programme of action laid down in 1920.

Now this policy has never changed; not even the terms have been revoked by the Congress. In my opinion all the resolutions



since passed by the Congress are not a repudiation but a fulfilment of the original so long as the mentality behind all of them remains the same as in 1920.

The corner-stone of the policy of 1920 was organised national non-violence. The British system was wooden, even satanic; not so the men and women behind the system. Our non-violence, therefore, meant that we were out to convert the administrators of the system; not to destroy them; conversion may or may not be willing. If, notwithstanding their desire to the contrary, they saw that their guns and everything they had created for the consolidation of their authority were useless because of our non-use of them, they could not do otherwise than bow to the inevitable and either retire from the scene, or remain on our terms, i.e., as friends to co-operate with us, not as rulers to impose their will upon us.

If Congressmen have entered the Legislatures and have accepted office with that mentality, and if the British administrators tolerate Congress ministries indefinitely, the Congress will be on a fair way to wreck the Act and to achieve Complete Independence. For an indefinite prolongation of the ministries on the terms mentioned by me means an ever-increasing power of the Congress till it becomes irresistible and is able to have its way all along the line. The first indispensable condition of the attainment of such a consummation means willing exercise of non-violence by the whole mass of the people. That means perfect communal co-operation and friendship, the eradication of untouchability, willing restraint of the addicts to the drink and opium habits, the social enfranchisement of the women, the progressive amelioration of the toiling millions of the villages, free and compulsory primary education—not in name as it is today, but in reality, as I have ventured to adumbrate—the gradual eradication of superstition of proved harmfulness, through adult mass education, a complete over-hauling of the system of higher education so as to answer the wants of the millions instead of the few middle-class people, a radical change in the legal machinery so as to make justice pure and inexpensive, conversion of jails into reformatories in which detention would not be a course of punishment but a complete course of the education of those miscalled convicts but who are in fact temporarily deranged.

This is not conceived as a terribly long plan of action. Every one of the items suggested by me can be put into motion today, without let or hindrance, if we have the will.

I had not studied the Act when I advised office acceptance. I have since been studying *Provincial Autonomy* by Prof. K. T. Shah. It is an energetic but true indictment of the Act from the orthodox standpoint. But the three months' self-denial of the Congress has changed the atmosphere. I see nothing in the Act to prevent the Congress from undertaking the programme suggested by me. The special powers and safeguards come into play only when there is violence in the country, or a clash between minorities and the so-called majority community, which is another word for violence.

I detect in the Act a profound distrust of the nation's capacity to rule itself, running every section, and an inevitable desire to perpetuate British rule, but at the same time a bold experiment of wooing the masses to the British side, and, failing that a resignation to their will to reject British domination has gone in, to convert these missionaries. And I have not a shadow of doubt that if the Congress is true to the spirit of non-violence, non-co-operation and self-purification, it will succeed in its mission

*Harijan*, 4-9-1937

## 43

### **Appeal to Discharged Prisoners**

(By M. K. Gandhi)

My congratulations to the Congress ministries who are discharging prisoners who had been condemned for proved violence done from political motives, and also to the discharged prisoners. Personally I draw no distinction between violence done from a private motive or from a political motive. The effect on the sufferers does not vary with the motive of the authors of

violence. But as an out and out believer in non-violence, I do not believe in the system of punishment for crimes, whether private or public. Therefore, I should welcome an extension of the principle which guides the ministers in discharging prisoners; but I am aware that they do not share my extreme views on non-violence. Their reason, therefore, for discharging the prisoners condemned for violence is not the same as I would apply. They have been guided, naturally and rightly, by the purely political motive, viz., to establish contact with those who have hitherto believed in the efficacy of a species of violence for the attainment of India's freedom. They want to wean these men from violence and harness their energy for the Congress method of non-violence. If my reading of the Congress method is correct, the large public demonstration that took place on the discharge of Kakori prisoners, was, to say the least, a political mistake. Did the thousands of demonstrations approve of the acts said to have been committed by these prisoners, let me hope, in mistaken zeal? If they did they have evidently not understood the Congress method; what is more, they have embarrassed the ministry and made more difficult the difficult task of giving the fullest liberty to the people in their provinces. We ought to learn to take such ministerial acts as in a natural course and, therefore, with calmness. Kakori prisoners are no fools. They are able, intelligent men, with unyielding love for their country. They and all such prisoners will have the way for liberty of others, if they use their liberty to help Congress ministers by their exemplary conduct and by proving themselves true Congressmen, taking their full share in strengthening the Congress organisation by silent and selfless service. For they should know that Congress ministers seem to be having their own way in many matters because they have inspired the respective Governors with confidence in their ability to handle efficiently all the departments under their charge, especially that of law and order, without the intervention of the police and military. The moment they lose their credit in this respect and are obliged to fall back on these two so-called limbs of the law, the confidence will be weakened and their authority all but gone. Whilst power, superimposed, always needs the help of police and military, power generated from within should have little or no use for them.

From *Harijan*

MAGANWADI,  
September 6, 1937

MY DEAR GIIANSIIYAMDASJI,

There was absolutely no time on Thursday to write to you. I had gone to Seagon and as you know coming and going there in this weather means 4 hours. I enclose the whole telegraphic correspondence regarding the Andaman prisoners. And yet it is not the whole. Bapu wired to the Viceroy and the Bengal Prime Minister asking them to release the prisoners as they had unequivocally abjured belief in violence. The replies received today (of which I cannot send you a copy as they are with Bapu) are in the negative. The Bengal Premier's is couched in offensive language—"We refuse to take the optimistic view you take of the situation" and cannot see our way to release the prisoners in the present state of the province—but the Viceroy's own letter is good. It is a reasonable plea. It twice or thrice pays a tribute to Bapu's noble motive, but raises a deeper question, viz., "The prisoners have abjured belief in methods of terrorism but have they given up violence? Will they have nothing to do with any violence in the future?" About this the Viceroy has his doubts. I cannot predict the developments now. You will realise that it is a serious situation. I shall send you the text of the Viceroy's letter by the next airmail, i.e., on Thursday and you must do all you can to cultivate the opinion there. Bapu, you know, has given his word to the prisoners that he would do his utmost best to get their release, and he has also said to the Viceroy that his life is dedicated to perpetuating methods of peacefulness. How can Bapu take this refusal calmly? I have not yet had an opportunity of discussing the thing with him, as he is very weak and exhausted and in bed. But I dare say this matter is now an additional source of worry. What emphasis he lays on non-violence and what implications he reads in it will be apparent from the remarkable article in the *Harijan* I enclose herewith. Would not Agatha have this article copied in *M.G.* and other papers? You will also see that he has condemned the receptions given to Kakori prisoners—Jawahar will resent this, I am afraid. But that is nothing. He was entirely against the Andaman prisoners making any declaration of adjuration of

methods of violence. But they have made it and both Subhas and Sarat Bose have sent telegrams of grateful thanks to Bapu and entirely approved Bapu's method of approach to this problem.

The N W F Governor has written a non-committal letter, not placing any conditions on Bapu, but trusting that he will not disturb the peace of the Frontier by publicly meeting Tribal Firgees and making speeches. The way seems to be open.

But the most important question is now one of Bapu's health. I want you, Agatha and other friends there to send a cable to Bapu to take complete rest from all mental work and go on a month's holiday somewhere. That alone can save him, and nothing else can. I know you will do it in your best manner.

Disturbing domestic things have also happened—the most regrettable one being the suicide of a worker of iron will Chhotelal for whom I had asked you to bring a number of bee-keeping books. This worker next only to Mahatma Gandhi. He was an ascetic and a tireless worker ready to do any job at any time of the day or night. He had typhoid fever and one night he lost control of himself, eluded attention of a nurse sleeping near him and threw himself down the Manganwadi well. You can gauge the depth of Bapu's sorrow from his article in *Harijan Bandhu* of which I enclose copy. No more today. My stenographer is ill and has other work. Hence the handwritten infliction.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

PS Non Congress ministry in N W F has been cancelled & Dr. Khan Sahab has been asked to form the ministry.

M D

WARDIIA,  
September 7, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Just a hurried line today. It is not possible for me to send you anything more than copies of Bapu's replies to the Frontier Governor and to the Viceroy, both of which will speak for themselves, and which will show how great patience and long suffering has Bapu undergone. I cannot give you copies of the letters to Bapu, as he says it is not worth while. But I have already given you the gist there.

But the trouble is Bapu's health. The slightest mental exertion tells upon him. Within a few minutes' talk he begins to press his head and complains of exhaustion. He gets easily excited and irritated. But he himself says there is not much cause for anxiety. "If I cross the limit, there is sure to be a collapse? He agrees but where exactly is the limit?"

Yours,  
Mahadev

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**Not Impracticable**  
(By M.K. Gandhi)

Sardar Sir Jogendra Singh is a great social reformer, a man of letters and politician. Whatever, therefore, he writes commands attention. He has contributed an article on 'Total Prohibition' to the *Times of India*. Having read it with the care his writings demand from me I must confess that I left the article with a sigh. How could such a reformer accept defeat on grounds that do not bear examination? His only argument seems to be "There is bound to be illicit distillation and secret drinking, therefore, do not attempt prohibition. In the Punjab there was local option but nobody applied it." "Therefore", he

says, "my conclusion is that prohibition by compulsion will fail, and provinces will lose revenue which they need for rural reconstruction." By linking prohibition to revenue the Sardar has precipitately given up his case and contradicted himself. For in the fourth paragraph of his article he says, "I expressly declared the considerations of revenue would not weigh with me in carrying out a policy of controlling drink." Thank God Congress ministries have cut their way through the revenue share by debarring themselves from the use of liquor revenue. Once the loophole is left, the temptation to make use of this immoral gain will be too irresistible, for nobody denies the difficulty of making the drunkard sober in a moment. Old ministers with whom I used to plead for prohibition, did not put forth the plea of impracticability. But they pleaded inability to forego the rich revenue received from the traffic. They wanted it for education paid for by a questionable source of revenue worth having? Has it intrinsic merit? Has India got her money's worth from those who have received the education of the type that the schools and colleges of India provide?

Thieving will abide till Doomsday. Must it therefore be licensed? Is thieving of the mind less criminal than thieving of matter? Illicit distillation to an extent will no doubt go on. Its quantity will be the measure of the Government's efforts—assisted by a vigilant public in the shape of continuous and sympathetic treatment of the drinker and the opium eater. Moral elevation demands a price no less than material or physical elevation. But my submission is that this constructive effort is doomed to failure, if it is not preceded by total prohibition. So long as the State not only permits but provides facilities for the addict to satisfy his craving, the reformer has little chance of success. Gipsy Smith was a powerful temperance preacher. It was a feature of his huge gathering that several people took the vow of total abstinence under the spell of his song and precept. But I say from my experience of South Africa that the majority of the poor addicts could not resist the temptation to enter the palatial bars that faced them, no matter where they wandered in the principal thoroughfares of cities, or the wayside inns when they strayed away from cities. State prohibition is not the end of this great temperance reform, but it is the indispensable beginning of it.

Of local option, the less said the better. Was there ever opposition to the closing of these dens of vice? Option has a place where a whole population wants to drink.

God willing, prohibition has come to stay. Whatever contribution may or may not be made by the Congress, it will go down to history in letters of gold that the Congress pledged itself to prohibition in 1920, and redeemed the pledge at the very first opportunity without counting the cost. I doubt not that the other provinces will follow. I invite Sardar Jogendra Singh not to caution the Congress against the much needed reform, but to throw in his full weight in favour of it in his own province and among the stalwart Sikhs.

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GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W. 1,  
September 8, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Your letter of the 27th was rather disturbing as far as Bapu's health goes and so I sent you a cable inquiring about him, but as I have not received your reply so far, it has increased my anxiety. The only relieving factor is that there is no mention about his health in the Press and therefore I am taking it for granted that he is better now. In any case the question of his rest has to be settled and it was only in your last letter that you had written to me that he had realised the position and was taking more rest. I wonder why under the circumstances his health should have deteriorated.

In your letter you have written that I should come soon and I have cabled you saying that proves and I propose to sail on the 7th of October but in case you want me earlier, you have simply to cable and I will come leaving everything as it is.

Just now I am not making any use of your letter or articles because the country seems to be in a great ferment due to the political situation in the Mediterranean and the Far East.



Everybody seems to be very busy and I myself fear that in course of time it may develop into something serious. Great Britain swallowed all insults in 1935 when Italy attacked Abyssinia but now she is in a much stronger position and she will be stronger still after a year. On account of provocation in the Mediterranean and the Far East, she has now begun to take a stiffer attitude and after a year when she becomes very strong, perhaps she will not tolerate any provocation. On the other hand, it seems as if Japan is in a fighting mood and Hitler wants his colonies back and Italy also is rattling sword. I wonder whether they are all correctly estimating the strength of Great Britain. If they know that Great Britain will be in a much stronger position after a year, they may perhaps want to see a flare up now rather than a year henceforward. On the other hand, there is a definite break between Italy and Russia and how far it will spread, no one can say. So as you will see the political situation just now is most precarious and yet it is a fact that Great Britain is not at all eager to fight. Even if there is a fight, she would like to keep out as long as possible, but the feeling between the Fascist States and Bolshevik Russia on the one hand and Japan and Great Britain on the other are very bad.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYI. MAHADĀVBHAI DISAI  
WARDHA

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SIGAON,  
WARDHA,  
September 8, 1937

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your frank and exhaustive reply to my telegraphic solicitation. I will not try to combat the position taken

up by you which I understand.

The incompleteness you see in the prisoners' reply to my request had not escaped me, but I was very much struck by the frank and unequivocal manner in which they gave me satisfaction so far as terrorist methods are concerned. I shall not despair of enlisting your active co-operation in the pursuit of my mission of procuring a lasting and honourable understanding with the class of patriots whom the Andaman friends represent.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. Gandhi

HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE VICEROY

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SEGAON,  
WARDHA,  
September 8, 1937

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I understand what you expect of me. I hope not to disappoint you for the simple reason that I want to accumulate more credit than I possess with the powers that be, so that I can trade upon it with them for better terms.

At the present moment I am trying to rest under medical orders, and I have asked my friend, the Khan Saheb, not to hurry to call me to the Frontier.

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

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR  
N.W.F.P.

GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W 1,  
September 14, 1937

MY DEAR BHULABHAI,

I read in this morning's paper that at the time of the Viceroy's address to both the Houses, the Congress Party and also the Nationalist Party absented themselves. Such an attitude on the part of the Congress had justification in the past, but do you think, Bhulabhai, after a meeting between Gandhiji and the Viceroy and subsequent meetings between the Viceroy and the various leaders, and the impending meeting between the Viceroy and Jawaharlalji, this attitude on the part of the Congress could at all be justified?

Personally I feel that such an attitude on our part could be interpreted only in one way, viz, that we had no desire to establish mutual understanding even if that were possible. I can understand Jawaharlalji who under no circumstances is prepared to have anything to do with Great Britain. But I am sure this is not your attitude nor that is the attitude of Vallabhbhai. Gandhiji's attitude is certainly not this. Therefore I was a bit disappointed when I read that the Congress Party should have failed to reciprocate the advances made by the Viceroy. I do not think we gain anything by being discourteous.

I am not quite sure whether I should have written this to you at all because after all I have no status with the Congress, but perhaps as a friend I am entitled to write to you and so you would not mind this.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas Birla

SYT. BHULABHAI DESAI

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
September 16, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I enclose further correspondence about the Andaman prisoners. These seven would seem to be most obdurate, unless as it so often happens, there is something there to provoke them. Anyway for the moment Bapu's attempts to reason with them seem to have failed. I have a feeling that these friends are being forcibly fed, otherwise they could not hold on for such a length of time, and be in a condition to carry on negotiations. It is such a deep tragedy because Bapu wanted to follow up the assurance given by the two hundred and twenty-six, and get something more out of them in the light of the point raised by the Viceroy. You must have noticed from Bapu's letter to the Viceroy that he has recognised the force of the Viceroy's argument. But is it proper to insist on any of these people giving up violence as a creed and affirming their faith in non-violence? What is the position of the whole of the Socialist Party and the bulk of the exclusively politically minded Congressmen? With them non-violence is no creed, but a policy pure and simple.

But where is the use of arguing this in a letter to you? I know that even the Fellowship of Reconciliation stops at the demand for the abolition of the Andamans. When and if you have time, you should try to sound some of them, such as for instance, Carl Health, on this point. Is Bapu's request for their release after this emphatic declaration of abjuration of terrorist methods extraordinary? The Honour of the whole Congress and of those who are making the demand is at stake. In fact, Bapu's word is there, and he would give it as often as it was wanted, that he would guarantee their proper behaviour once he could secure their freedom, or at least the freedom to talk to them heart to heart. From this last point of view perhaps their repatriation, which is likely to take place soon, might be a good compromise, and then Bapu may ask for a free and unfettered interview with them.

I sent to you last week or perhaps the week before, a note of Bapu in *Harijan* regarding the reception to the released

Kakori prisoners. It was very much resented by some of the hot-heads in U.P. but I am happy to tell you that Jawaharlal fully appreciated it. In fact, he told Bapu, when he was here a few days ago, that he personally refrained from taking part in demonstrations and receptions, that the so called reception at his own house reported by the papers was no reception at all, that he had only asked some of them to see him for a talk, that some of the rowdies who accompanied them gave it the form of a reception, and that even then he, that is Pandit Jawaharlal, was not present there.

The labour situation in U.P. continues to be source of anxiety. Govind Ballabh Pant has summoned Rajendra Babu to preside over the Committee appointed to arbitrate in the dispute. They want either Shankerlal or Gulzarilal to be available to them. But these can't be here, there and everywhere. Gulzarilal is a tower of strength to Premier Kher.

Japan has already taken the aggressive attitude, and thousands of innocent non-combatants have been already killed. A German Jew who came from Shanghai was telling me that the war on both the Northern and the Shanghai front is entirely unprovoked. There is such a disgusting amount of unscrupulous lying on the part of Japan. It is in the same boat as Italy and Germany, perhaps with this difference, that the bulk of the people in Japan are kept deliberately ignorant of what is happening or are fed on refined lies. If reports are to be believed, the atmosphere is ripe for an internal revolution there.

There is one thing distinctly cheerful to report, and that is about Bapu's health. He has been taking plenty of rest, brushing aside most requests for interviews, and has thus brought down the blood-pressure to something near normal. But as you know with him it is always a matter of touch and go. Some things or happenings can raise his blood-pressure at once and very often during these days I have heard him say that, if he crossed the limit, he would collapse.

You are right in saying that you are disgusted with Syed Hossain being in any way associated with Bapu. I have not seen the book. I suppose he is in want of money and is trying to be-fool some of his admirers in that continent where any fraud or charlatan may confidently count upon a following, and yet this man is being described as "the leader for the Gandhi

Movement for non-violence in the United States and a personal friend of Mr. Gandhi." Heaven save us from our friends.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

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GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARK LANE,  
LONDON, W.1,  
September 22, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I saw Sir Findlater Stewart today and am going to see the Secretary of State shortly. Lord Lothian is not here. Lord Halifax is here but I would not trouble him unless I felt that I must encroach upon his time. I am sure he is keeping awfully busy with the international political situation.

As regards the detenus, I feel that Bapu's letter to the Viceroy is going to be most helpful. I showed his reply to the Viceroy and also to Cunningham to Sir Findlater Stewart. They realise his spirits and I have no doubt that it will be reciprocated.

During my discussion with Sir Findlater Stewart, I realised the two aspects of the questions, repatriation and release. Repatriation technically is in the hands of the Government of India and I find from the Press reports that it has already begun. Perhaps it would be desirable to concentrate on repatriation through the Viceroy. The second question is that of release. These technically it is the ministers who are responsible but de facto it is the Governor and not the Viceroy. I was thinking of writing to the Viceroy at one stage but after having talked to Sir Findlater Stewart, I have decided not to write to him. But it would be desirable for Bapu to discuss the matter personally at some stage with Sir John Anderson. He is an extremely capable man and he could take a bold line if he was convinced. But it should not be forgotten that the detenus are interned because of future, and those fears have to be allayed. The matter will

have to be solved not merely through correspondence but through personal discussion. This could be done only when Bapu is fit to travel to and fro. Maybe he will have to talk to the detenus themselves. I am from the talk that I had; I am not unhopeful, but of course everything needs patience and Bapu fully knows it.

But I am very much worried about his health. I had wired about his taking rest, but frankly speaking, I have no hope that it will have any effect, if all that you write is correct. I think he should go to some health resort and cut himself off entirely for a month or so. Perhaps that will mean less loss of time than a prolonged but unsystematic rest. I will therefore still request Bapu to go to some health resort and cut himself off entirely from the busy bodies for some time

Yours affectionately,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

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*Unrevised*

WARDHA,  
September 22, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Sir Daniel Hamilton also sent that cutting about Prohibition from the *Scotsman*.

Bapu, if the manometer reading is to be trusted and believed to be any sure index, is very much better, for the reading showed that blood-pressure had come down almost to normal. But Bapu himself is not so sure. He said this morning: "The lowering of the pressure is mechanical and temporary due to the effect of the medicine I am taking. It may soon go up, for I cannot go on taking the medicine indefinitely. I take of it more in the interests of other folks who may not be suffering

from similar complaint and whom I could confidently recommend this, having myself given it a trial. So far as I am concerned, rest is the only cure.”

From this point of view I cannot tell you how timely was your cable and the one from Agatha, Horace and Heath. I am sure it has done its work and will continue to do so. The anxious element this time is due to the fact that whilst Bapu used to ignore the b. p. reading before, this time he does not ignore it and feels that temporary relief is not a thing to be built much upon. However even the temporary relief is a relief so far as we are concerned.

The situation everywhere is satisfactory. The seven recalcitrant Andaman friends have relented and abandoned the strike—with this threat however that should relief not come soon after their repatriation they would go on hunger strike again. This is a thing confidentially conveyed by the Government of India to Bapu. If Bapu could meet these people, a lot could be done. But I am afraid there are difficulties ahead. The Government are picking and choosing in the matter of repatriation. Why should they do so?

I am only nursing a hope that Bapu may still carry on further telegraphic communication with the prisoners and bring them round. I am thankful to say that Government of India fully appreciate Bapu's intervention and are always ready to convey to Andamans whatever message Bapu may transmit for them. (By the by Bhulabhai who interviewed the Viceroy by invitation says that H.E. made anxious inquiries about Bapu's health, and added that he was making the inquiry not in a conventional way, but because he (i.e., H.E.) felt that Bapu was an asset because of his readiness to stake for truth.)

The interviews with Bhulabhai and Satyamurti were very frank and friendly, they say, and covered all topics including Democracy, Federation, Subvention from the Government of India for the Provinces and so on. Satyamurti stood up for the Viceroy meeting Bapu and convincing him before expecting to convince anyone else.

The Bombay difficulty over the Communists and violent prisoners has been satisfactorily solved—again thanks to Bapu's unerring guidance. Munshi came to consult Bapu very much puzzled and perplexed. But Bapu gave him a satyagrahi formula



which has worked wonders. Even Gogate made the declaration that he had abjured violence, and has now written to Bapu, on release, to say the same thing and asked for Bapu's blessings that the belief in non-violence may for ever endure. He also said that he would encourage or receive no receptions or demonstrations. He stayed in Poona as Munshi's own guest and has quietly and gratefully gone back home.

One or two Kakori prisoners now released—are coming to see Bapu next week in order to be guided by him in their future plans.

Jawahar made a public declaration in Ahmedabad that the receptions to and demonstrations for these prisoners did nobody any good and that he for one disapproved them entirely.

You will thus see that the whole tone of public life is improving, people are growing from strength to strength—Bardoli and Kaira people are getting back their lands—and some things of enduring value are happening. If on the top of this all comes prohibition, Bapu's life work would be achieved.

I must now close, as within a few minutes I have to catch a train to go to Dhulia on a not very pleasant errand.

Please tell Purohit that the name of your Secretary—that I am thankful to him for his letter, that he need not bother about the bee-keeping books as the man who would have made use of them committed suicide a fortnight ago. I do hope he will include Jennings' book on Cabinet Government recently published and Hutchinson's book—*India of the Nobobs*.

Yours affectionately,  
Mahadev

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GROSVENOR HOUSE,  
PARL LANE,  
LONDON, W 1,  
September 28, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADLVBHAI,

The most cheerful news that your letter brought by this mail was about Bapu's health. Now as regards detenus, from my

conversation with various people here, I am not very unhelpful. But it would be better to concentrate on repatriation first and then once the detenus are in India, it would be better for Bapu to establish personal touch with them. And the chief man to deal with would be the Governor of Bengal. All this could only be done when Bapu is better.

Carl Heath is coming to see me tomorrow. He informs me that he does not stop at the demand for the abolition of the Andamans. I am going to see the Secretary of State also shortly and will talk with him about the matter. The outcome could be successful but all this will need patience and time.

I have no doubt that Bapu can take full responsibility about the behaviour of the detenus for the future, but don't you think that Bapu should be more cautious in taking such a responsibility? His voice against the demonstration in favour of the Kakori prisoners had little effect if all that I read in Indian papers is correct. They are being welcomed and feted at every place. And Brajmohan writes to me a most depressing letter from India. He says that U. P. is simply rampant with indiscipline. He would not be surprised if anything untoward happened. Everyone seems to think as if he is the Government and Pant, I am told, is pestered every moment by the irresponsible crowd. He is always surrounded; some demand, dismissal of a certain official, others something else, the police seems to be very frightened and all kinds of processions are taken out with fiery slogans of 'Bhagatsingh Zindabad' and 'Long Live Revolution.' Brajmohan wonders how long this sort of Government could continue. He asks how Pantji is going to find time to think of more important schemes when every minute he has to attend to complaints most of which are exaggerated.

Bapu in one of his articles had pointed out that we could not meet terrorism with counter terrorism and that we would make it possible for the police and military to become superfluous. This undoubtedly is the most ideal state for a nation for which every country should aspire. To a certain extent it could be said that England in this respect is much nearer the goal than any other country. But what are we doing for the achievement of this goal and should the police and military be ignored until that goal is reached? If what Brajmohan writes is correct, then I fear the situation may become very serious one

of these days. Rajendrababu seems to be quite fed up and disgusted with atmosphere in Cawnpore. I don't know who is to be blamed for this, but I have no doubt that the first concern of our ministers should be to maintain proper discipline. I hope Jawaharlalji is doing something to help the U.P. ministers. If we can maintain better discipline, I have no doubt that we would be able to impress the Englishmen better, not only about our capacity to rule, but also about our capacity to control the behaviour of the detenus after they are released.

I am glad that Jawaharlalji did not like the demonstration in favour of Kakori prisoners, but I hope that steps would be taken to maintain proper discipline before the things deteriorate further and takes an ugly turn.

With reference to this fellow Karl, he had taken 100 rupees from my father with a letter purported to have been signed by Bapu. I told my father immediately when he showed me the letter that he had been cheated, but he asked me not to mention this to Bapu because it was a very small thing. Now when I read your article, I thought I should inform you.

I am sailing on the 7th and hope to reach Bombay on the 19th. I can come straight to Wardha in which case I would stay only for three or four days. On the other hand, I can first go to see my parents and then come to Wardha *via* Calcutta in which case I would be able to stay much longer. Please inform me to my Bombay address which programme Bapu would like.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

CALCUTTA,  
November 18, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

This is a specimen of Bengali journalism. The article, as you will see, is full of poison.

Immediately after Bapu left, I phoned Nalini and he told

me that he would show me the statement before it was issued by the Government. This morning he sent me a draft which I did not like, but immediately after sending the draft to me, he is discussing the matter in the Cabinet. After the Cabinet meeting is over, I will see the revised draft and only then will put forward my criticism to it, but I will also ask him to postpone its publication until it was approved by Bapu. For this purpose, I will seek the help of Nalini to get me a line clear telephone for Wardha so that you can talk to me.

This I am writing at 11.45 a.m. I will let you know about the subsequent developments.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

Encl. 1  
M. D. DESAI, ESQR.  
WARDHA

## 56

WRITERS' BUILDING,  
CALCUTTA,  
November 24, 1937

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thanks very much for your letter. I am sorry to learn about your indisposition. I hope you will soon completely recover your health.

In our opinion your statement is very fair and we thank you for it. The wording of the Government communique is not perhaps very happy as far as the four months period is concerned. It certainly brings out the Government's point of view, namely, that only after the end of four months the question of a large scale release of the remaining detenus will be considered whereas it misleads the public in giving the impression that you will take up the question at the end of four months. But there is nothing in the communique to prevent your coming and interviewing these people before the expiry of four months.

In your letter you have asked that Mr. Sarat Bose should be allowed to carry on the conversation with the detenus in your absence. I would like to make it quite clear that my objection to this suggestion is not based on personal grounds but on the question of principle. Government treat you differently from all other political leaders in India and therefore neither your purpose nor Government's object will be served by anyone else but your interviewing the detenus. After your visit to Hijli Government allowed Dr. B. C. Roy who went there more in the capacity of a physician than a political leader and we made an exception for Mrs. Sarojini Naidu but as far as I am concerned, I do not propose to allow any other political leader in future to interview the state prisoners.

I had presumed that personal touch between you and the individual detenus or state prisoners was necessary in order that you might be assured that the individual concerned had become a convinced adherent to the principles of non-violence, following upon a change of heart and as a matter of principle quite independently of personal or political advantage. It was necessary for you of course to explain the principles of non-violence and persuade the subject to their acceptance. But so far as the prisoner was concerned, it was a matter of simple statement whether he had reached that position or not. This point of view has a bearing on the question of the correspondence as well as that of interviews with the prisoners by persons other than yourself. We should not object to correspondence under sealed cover between you and any state prisoner or detenus provided that it is understood that such letters as you receive are shown to nobody else.

As long as I am Home Minister, you can rest assured that whatever may be the language of the communique everything that we agreed upon will—inshallah—be given effect to, provided nothing untoward happens in the mean time.

I agree with your explanation or amplification of the phrase 'subversive movement'. The only portion in the letter on which we differ is the reference to the convicted political prisoners. As you are aware we agreed to take certain steps in connection with the convicted political prisoners. I have issued instructions for action being taken on these lines but beyond this Government are not prepared to.

I agree with what you have stated in your PS.

Repatriation will take place according to plan mentioned to you.

*Yours sincerely,*  
K. Nazimuddin

M. K. GANDHI, ESQR.  
SEGAON  
WARDHA

57

RANJANI,  
237 LOWER CIRCULAR ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,  
November 27, 1937

*Copy*

MY DEAR MAHADDEVBHAI,

I have just received your kind letter of the 24th instant on my return to Calcutta from a short tour, and am extremely concerned to hear that Mahatmaji's health has been reduced to such low conditions. The latest newspaper reports say that he is slightly better and I pray that he may soon be restored to health. His Bengal visit and the thought and efforts he had put forth in the cause of the detenus must have seriously told on his health. But, at the same time, nobody realises more than I do, that what we have been able to achieve for the detenus would have been impossible without his efforts and magnetic personality. You have been kind enough to thank me for negotiating the settlement. In fact, in my own way, I have done, and shall still do, all that I can to bring relief to the detenus. Withal, all my efforts would have been as naught without Mahatmaji's intervention.

I fully appreciate what you have said in regard to my statement to the Press. I realise it would have been better, if I could avoid issuing it. But then you know what politics in Bengal is like. How Sarat Babu has made and is still making, frantic efforts—by means fair or foul—to discredit me in my public

life is known to everyone in Bengal. And I believe you also are aware of it. Further, I honestly believe that, if Sarat Babu had not tried to embarrass and discredit the present ministry at any cost largely because I happen to be a member of it, and had not thereby created such an atmosphere of bitterness as prevails in Bengal today, a fairly satisfactory solution for many of our problems could have been arrived at. I know that many public men in Bengal, including some Congressmen, share this belief with me. I frankly admit that I was greatly pained and even exasperated by the policy pursued by Sarat Babu, and when the Press reporters pressed me for a statement I said what I believed was true, though probably in an aggressive language. But as I have said, I agree with you it would have been better if I could have restrained my feelings, even under such serious provocation. I should however like to assure you that in future I shall try my best not to give vent to my feelings in this way.

I have also written to you rather frankly, as I do not like to hide anything from either Mahatmaji or yourself. I did not like to worry Mahatmaji during his recent stay here about my personal matters—how I am being persecuted by Sarat Babu and the *Ananda Bazar* Group—as he was then addressing himself whole-heartedly to the solution of a vexed problem. But when you will again return to Calcutta, and if time will permit, I shall place before Mahatmaji and yourself all relevant facts. The task of restoring peace in Bengal is, as you say, indeed Herculean. But I feel that in trying for any real peace, it will be necessary to acquaint oneself with both sides of the picture. I would, however, like to assure you again that not only shall I desist in future from saying anything aggressive, but shall also try in so far as I am concerned, to create an atmosphere here as will be conducive to restoration of peace.

I shall write to you soon in fuller details in regard to certain matters.

If Mahatmaji would desire me to do anything in any particular way, please let me know and I shall do my best.

I trust you are well and that Mahatmaji is better now.  
With kindest regards,

*I am,*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
Nalini Ranjan Sarkar

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
November 28, 1937

DEAR SIR NAZIMUDDIN,

I must thank you for your exhaustive and kind letter of the 24th inst.

I am still bed-ridden. But I must scribble down in pencil a reply which Mahadev Desai will copy for me.

Your confidence in me flatters me, but if it is not extended to those through whom alone I can hope to work with success, the work for which you and I are striving comes to a standstill. I have no power over the detenus or the Bengal public save through the accredited leaders. I can impose nothing on them. I have no other method but that of persuasion. I am in constant correspondence with Shri Sarat Bose in this matter. Without the assistance of the two brothers, I could have done nothing in Bengal. Of course you were right in permitting Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and Sarojini Devi to visit the Hijli friends. Their visit will help.

I may make one thing clear. Any recommendation I may make will be in so far as the Bengal Government are concerned, on my sole responsibility. I hope, therefore, that you will please reconsider your decision and allow Shri Sarat Bose on my behalf to visit the Hijli prisoners for the time being.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M.K. Gandhi

SIR NAZIMUDDIN  
HOME MINISTER  
WRITERS' BUILDING  
CALCUTTA



1 WOODBURN PARK,

CAUCUITA,

1 p m , November 28, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

In continuation of my letter to you of yesterday's date which I posted yesterday in the B N R Bombay Mail letter-box, I am enclosing herewith a cutting from the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* containing the statement made by Mr Fazlul Haque shortly after the Government communique. A perusal of that statement will, I believe, convince Bapu and you that the opinion I expressed in yesterday's letter is correct. On further consideration I feel that it is necessary to have both Mr Fazlul Haque and Sir Nazimuddin in addition to Nalini Babu at the proposed conference at Wardha. It is hardly necessary to remind you that when Sir Nazimuddin, Nalini Babu and Sir Bijoy Prasad came to Bapu with their draft on the 17th instant, Mr Fazlul Haque did not accompany them. If Mr Fazlul Haque had accompanied and had given his assent to their draft, I believe, the draft would have found place in the Government communique. If the proposed conference takes place at Wardha, it will not be possible for a minister to go and consult his colleagues and report again to Bapu the opinion of his colleagues. It is, absolutely necessary, therefore, to have all three of them together. If three of them jointly assent to something, one may fairly expect that they will be able to carry the whole Cabinet with them.

This morning a friend told me that a report had circulated from ministerial quarters that I had requested Bapu to write to Government to give me permission to interview High prisoners. As you know, the suggestion came from Bapu himself after he had interviewed the High prisoners. I need hardly say that I shall be only so too happy to do any work that Bapu may entrust to me and which may relieve him to some extent. But I really cannot understand why or with what object the contents of Bapu's confidential letter to Sir Nazimuddin are being circulated in this fashion by the ministers or by one or more of them. The same friend also told me that he had heard from the same source that permission will not be accorded to me.

I trust Bapu is improving steadily. Please convey my pronams to him. My love to you all.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Sarat Chandra Bose

PS. I enclose herewith copy of my letter to Sir Nazimuddin of the 26th inst. I have not had a reply yet.  
S.C. Bose

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December 4, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I met the Viceroy today and had a pretty long talk with him for nearly 40 minutes. He inquired about Bapu's health and I told him that although there was nothing alarming, he was not improving very rapidly. Three months' rest will undoubtedly put him again in his normal health, but I said I doubted whether he would be able to take up continuous hard work. He was sorry to hear all this. I gave him a short history of the causes in their chronological order that broke him down, and at the end, I said that we were all very anxious to save him as much as we could from the trouble of dealing with the prisoners. For this purpose it was thought desirable that Sarat should see the prisoners and do the preliminary work.

I related how Gandhiji wrote to the minister and what the latter replied. I also said how Bapu had written again and at the end I said that I myself was going to talk to Nazimuddin and also to Lord Brabourne but I thought I should acquaint him with all the facts in case he wanted to help. He took copious notes of all that I said and thanked me for acquainting him with all these things. He did not say that he would help but I have no doubt that he would. Silence is one of his many habits.

After that, we talked about Federation. There were serious objections advanced by the Leftists as well as the Rightists.

There was likelihood of another breakdown unless the situation was carefully and sympathetically handled. What was he going to do? He told me that he himself was not satisfied with the Federation. He appreciated the objections of the critics. But even if he wished, the law could not be changed. What he did not appreciate, however, in our criticism was that no constructive alternative had been suggested to him so far. I told him that at the proper time Bapu would. But the Viceroy should exercise his mind from this very moment as to what solution he could suggest. There were two things that were objectionable even from my point of view. Representatives of the princes would come without election. And secondly, it had yet to be proved by the authors of the Act that this act contains in itself the seeds of automatic growth, a claim made off and on by Englishmen. Without the Army and Foreign Affairs, under the control of the popular ministers, how were we going to reach the goal of Dominion Status? It was for the Viceroy to convince the public in India by some means that what was said by the authors of the Act was not a mere platitude. He replied that what was claimed about the Act was not a mere platitude. He did not want to treat his Cabinet as irresponsible for Army and Foreign Affairs. True legally they had no power over these matters. But by usage this power could be established. This of course was only his personal opinion. But he wanted me to leave the matter at that so that he may exercise his brain for the proper occasion. I pointed out to him the necessity of talking before the Federation became a reality and also added that if he could cultivate acquaintance with Jawaharlalji, he could very much relieve Gandhiji of his task. He asked me when Jawaharlal was coming to Calcutta and when I told him that he would perhaps come on the 8th, he remarked, "Oh, as early as that." Perhaps you are aware that the Viceroy will reach Calcutta on the 13th or the 14th.

During the course of conversation, he emphasized the need of maintenance of law and order and he said nothing would be more damaging to the provincial ministries than to prove it to the world that after all it were the Britishers alone who could maintain law and order. He is specially anxious about U.P. and asked me to convey it to the proper quarters that it would be very bad for the ministers, if the Governor had to use his own

responsibility for maintenance of law and order. He did not want that Pant should prosecute people right and left but he said things were getting very serious in U.P. and he should not allow anarchy to prevail. I told him that Pant was fully conscious of his own responsibility, that the Gandhi Seva Sangh had recently passed very important resolution against violence and that all the big leaders of the Gandhi Seva Sangh were strenuously working to fight out violence. He was very happy to hear this. This is the gist of my talk. I think he will seek an opportunity to meet Jawaharlalji.

It appears from the Press that the ferment is growing everywhere and perhaps for the next few months the most important task of the ministers would be to suppress all incitement to violence. Partly it will have to be done through prosecution and partly through redressing the grievances of people. The exaggerated expectations that have raised are just now at the root of all these troubles and unless the Congress tells the peasants clearly that their position could be improved ultimately through their own hard work alone and not by any stroke of wand, I don't think this discontent will subside. Today the position is that, if all the accumulated wealth is socialised and the zamindari system abolished, it will hardly add much to the existing income of the masses. In order to increase their income constructive works have to be undertaken. Production has to be increased, the quality of production has to be improved and this will require concentrated work spread over a long period. All this enthusiasm about the release of prisoners will begin to fade after some time. People will demand more bread and the bread is not going to come out of the confiscation of zamindaries. Our ministers will therefore have to decide from this very moment as to what they are going to do for ameliorating the condition of the people. If they think that the amelioration depends on the confiscation of the properties, then I think they are deceiving themselves. The question of discontent just now is linked up with economics and unless steps are taken to make the peasants realise what is possible and what is not, I fear the ferment will grow to such an extent that it will become impossible after a certain stage for the ministers to maintain discipline. And as Bapu has said so many times, inviting the help of the Military will be the death knell of the provincial governments. I fear the U.P. and Behar

have not yet fully realised the seriousness of the growing danger to non-violence.

*Yours affectionately,*  
G. D. Birla

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

61

December 5, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I have read both the letters, that is, from Nalini and Sarat Bapu with great pain. The contents only reflected the dirty atmosphere that is just now prevailing in Bengal and unless we remove the root cause, I fear it will continue. I have no doubt that Nalini is responsible for spreading the report that Bapu has asked the ministry to permit Sarat to meet the detenus and I have no doubt that many such false reports are being spread also by the other side about Nalini. So these charges and counter charges will continue as long as this atmosphere prevails.

I do not know to which interview of Jacques Sarat Bose has referred, but I will ask you to read these two cuttings and that will give you an idea as to what extent the atmosphere is surcharged with bitterness. If timely action is not taken, then some day we might have many untoward happenings, including communal riots.

The legislations referred to in one of the cuttings are of a very far reaching character and specially the bill to amend the Calcutta Municipal Act is of a very reactionary nature. I think Bengal could be saved only if the peaceful citizens combined and condemned all this mud-flinging tendency. I have been thinking that after Nalini and Sarat make up their differences, we should get a manifesto issued signed by the Poet and other leading members of the society strongly condemning this mud-flinging

tendency prevalent specially in the Press and also in certain political quarters.

Since I wrote to you, I heard from another official that the situation in U.P. was not at all satisfactory, that there was danger of an agrarian riot breaking out and after that I heard that Vallabhbhai has gone to Lucknow. I fear that just now our ministries are living entirely at the mercy of the service and the British element of the administration. The British element at present is not at all unsympathetic, but if law and order could not be maintained, prestige of the ministries would be very seriously damaged. And the leftist element in the Congress is very largely to be blamed for this.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

62

JUHU,  
December 13, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

This is just to give you the good news that Babu is really better. The b.p. came down this morning to 170/100 which is quite unusual and we can ascribe it to nothing but the fine equable weather here. I felt like sending you a telegram but then desisted. Perhaps we must wait for a day or two before we can shout with joy.

By the by Agakhan rang me up to find out—if he could come to inquire after Babu's health just for a few minutes. He is coming tomorrow at 4 p.m.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

December 13, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I met Sarat yesterday and had a pretty long talk with him. He was very frank and nice. I advanced to him all the arguments in favour of making up the past differences and asked him what his reaction was to the suggestion made by me and entertained by Bapu. He said that while he agreed with me that peace in Bengal was very essential, he did not think internal peace could be possible without the change of the present ministry. The present ministry, he said, was not only a non-Congress ministry but was an anti-Congress ministry, and this being so, the duty of the Congress members in the Assembly remained always to oppose the present ministry. This caused a lot of bitterness and also Press propaganda. How could his making up with Nalini solve this problem? I said that even for overthrowing the present ministry, until among the Congress-minded people and I counted even Nalini one of them—was essential. After all the Congress, as such, had only 55 votes. In order to overthrow the present ministry, they had to get much larger support in the Assembly and without Nalini's help that would be impossible. Sarat replied that the question was not merely of overthrowing the present ministry but of replacing it by not a non-Congress ministry but by a coalition ministry composed of Congressmen as well as non-Congressmen. I said if that was the intention, then unity became all the more essential.

I then suggested that it was not necessary to have an ambitious programme at this stage. Why should not they begin with a modest ambition? My suggestion was that Sarat and Nalini should work together at least for achieving the object that Gandhiji had in view, that is, the release of all the prisoners. In my opinion in this work they would come in touch with each other and this would help them in forgetting the past differences. After that the bigger picture might be visualised, if that was at all feasible. Sarat replied that Nalini was very clever. He (Nalini) would not accept any position unless he was sure that in the future ministry, he (Nalini) would find a place. I said, "Why should you close your mind against

Nalini being in the future ministry?" Sarat replied that it was not a question of closing his mind but that definite assurances would be asked by Nalini. He could not by any means trust Nalini. I reminded him how at one time they worked together. He admitted and said that they did work together but only with distrust. I pointed out to him that even in the ministries in other countries, there were people of opposite mentality and yet they worked together. Nalini had certain good points, but his worst point was that he was an ambitious man. Why should he not be tackled properly? And if Nalini had some support behind him why should he be ignored? But I said why begin with Nalini? Why not begin with Dr. Roy? Dr. Roy had no ambition politically and he was the man who could be trusted. Sarat agreed and said he would first talk to Dr. Roy. He is meeting him tomorrow at my house.

The interview has not inspired much hope in me about the results. But when I analyse the prevailing atmosphere in Bengal, I feel that unless there be a reasonable unity of purpose among the Hindus and some Muslims, a disaster is sure to come. Fazlul Haque seems to be running amock, and I am told, no one including the Europeans like him. But there is no ministry to replace the existing one.

After my interview with Sarat, Nalini at his own accord came to see me and we discussed the University Bill and the Calcutta Corporation Bill. He told me that a split in the Cabinet had already begun and it seemed inevitable. He was going to fight against all these reactionary bills. I asked him what was the remedy to prevent all these catastrophes? He said the only remedy was that the Hindu members and reasonable Muslims and Englishmen should combine to overthrow the present ministry. I asked him, "Suppose this is not possible and Haque persists in this attitude towards the new reactionary bills, will you resign? Or will you still stick to your post?" Nalini definitely told me that he would resign.

Then I took up the question of Sarat interviewing the prisoners. To this he was definitely against. The reason seems to be more personal although he did not say so. His reason was that it was not necessary. Sarat was not liked by the detenus. I reminded him how it was necessary to spare Gandhiji of the trouble of seeing so many detenus. Why should not



someone do the preliminary work? He said they did not want to give any trouble to Gandhiji. Gandhiji had simply to give the formula to the detenus and get their assurances, and at the end of the fourth month, all would be released. "But why not release as many as you can?" I asked. He said, "Yes, that is possible." I asked, "Could you release a number of them without Gandhiji interviewing them?", He replied that almost all of them could be released without Gandhiji having to intervene. I asked him to tell me definitely so after having seen his colleagues, and he is coming to see me again. His impression seems to be that they are holding up the release of these 400 because they wanted to show the public that they were all released through the instrumentality of Gandhiji. But if Gandhiji wanted that as many as possible should be released without his intervention, the ministers would be only too pleased to take up the work themselves. I was surprised at this impression and so I have definitely asked for an answer as to how many of them could be released without Gandhiji's intervention, and he would let me know in a day or two.

Then he casually mentioned how the existing atmosphere was running all constructive work. There was no leadership and there were no ideas. Sarat except in law was absolutely an innocent man. Nalini was prepared to forget the past, but Sarat was man of prejudices. And he went on like this for a long time.

This morning Bidhai saw me and I have asked him to come to my house and have a chat with Sarat. To my surprise I have found him also very sceptical. He said that Sarat was preaching for the last three years that Gandhiji should have no place in Bengal politics. Has he recanted now or is he deceiving Gandhiji? Sarat fought against the Congress on communal award and yet still it was in the high command of the Congress. Dr. Roy saw no honesty of purpose and therefore he could not see how unity was possible unless the fundamental differences were removed. If Sarat had changed his attitude regarding Gandhiji and the Communal Award, why should he not say so? I pointed out that by his action, Sarat had already made his position clear. But Dr. Roy does not believe that there is any honesty behind all these pretensions. But he is prepared to have a frank talk and he admits at the same time that unless

unity was restored, Bengal would go to pieces.

Such is Bengal politics. I am seeing the Governor day-after-tomorrow.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghamshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
BOMBAY

64

CALCUTTA,  
December 15, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

The good news that you send me was transmitted to me by Rameshwarji long before I received your letter. We talk every day on phone and Babu's health is one of the topics.

Yesterday Sarat and Bidhan met at my house. I don't think the meeting was very successful. The talk is still to continue and therefore I would not call it a failure. The beginning was quite unpleasant. Bidhan, it appears, was full of ire for which perhaps he had plenty of reasons. He began like this, "I don't care about the past. I have forgotten it. But if, I am to work again with you, I must know about your attitude in future. If I joined you without knowing whether there was common ground or not, I would simply be increasing the existing friction. I am just now devoted to my practice and am keeping myself in the background. But if I must come out of the oblivion, I should know how we stand. There were four points which made your political plank. One was the Communal Award. How do you stand today in respect of your old cry? If you intend to reform the existing ministry, you must have reasonable support of the Mohammedans. With your previous views no Mohammedan would agree. Do you now stand by the Congress, or do you still hold your old views? Two. Your slogan used to be 'Gandhism must be driven out of Bengal'. Have you changed your view? Three. You wanted nationalisa-

tion of industries and you were inciting the communists. Are you now changed? Four. You wanted elimination of Naliniranjan Sarkar out of public life. What are your views now? We separated on these four issues, and if you have changed your views, then I have no hesitation in joining hands with you for future. But if you have not changed, then what is the use of composing the past, when future too is full of disagreement?"

Sarat went all red. I tried to pour oil over troubled water, but Bidhan asked me not to explain away Sarat's position. It was for Sarat to explain. Sarat, I must say, did not lose his temper altogether and at the end both agreed that they should meet again.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
JHU

## 65

CAI CUTTA,  
December 16, 1937

MY DIAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I met the Governor yesterday evening. The talk lasted more than an hour. He enquired of Bapu's health. I told him that the blood-pressure of Bapu has come down to normal. He said, "We should not feel complacent about it. What is to be observed is that it should be normal when he takes up his normal duties. It is necessary for him to take rest constantly." I said, "that is why I have come to you. Gandhiji had to struggle hard here with the result that he had to be bed-ridden at Wardha. Even now the Bengal affairs do not let him remain in peace. He will not be at peace till he comes here to complete the job he had left in the middle. 1100 detenus have been released. This act of Bengal government has pleased Gandhiji much. Yet 400 detenus are yet to be released. Nothing has

been done in respect of the detenus of Andamans. All this work is to be done by him and his state of health is not good at all at the moment. Can his well-wishers not save him from this difficult task? Why should the work not be shared by others when it can easily be accomplished by them? He should be left with such an amount of work as can conveniently be done by him. Keeping this in view he has written about Sarat's meeting the detenus. Though the final responsibility rests with him, he thought it good to leave the preliminary work with Sarat Babu. Nazimuddin has refused to accede to this, but Gandhiji has again written to him. Would you be able to help in this matter any way?" He replied, "I am also of the view that Gandhiji should be provided ample opportunity to take complete rest. He should not be allowed to be busy in many things. What is the hurry, after all? When is Gandhiji coming?" I said, "After perhaps the Haripura Congress that is to take place some time toward end of February." He replied, "then what is the harm in waiting till that time?" The position that Gandhiji holds is different from that held by Sarat. Government is in need of Gandhiji's help. Through him it wants to ascertain detenus' views on violence. That purpose could not be served by Sarat. That is the function of Gandhiji alone." I pointed out that if Sarat met the prisoners before Gandhiji interviewed them, then it would very much lighten Gandhiji's work. Besides, if someone from Bengal was associated with Gandhiji, it would strengthen Gandhiji's hands in improving the atmosphere. After all, it would be the Bengalese who would have to carry on in Bengal. Therefore Sarat's association would be very useful in many ways. "But could the atmosphere be improved in this manner?", he asked. Press wrote most virulent articles. This might lead any day to a communal riot. Did I think Sarat could help Gandhiji in improving the atmosphere? I said, "Yes. And in asking permission for Sarat, perhaps Gandhiji had this object too in mind, I fear Sarat is not allowed to interview the detenus due to personal reasons. If there was someone else, the Government would not object." The Governor said, "Perhaps you are right. Sarat's visit introduces a new angle in Bengal politics. Sarat is not *the* leader of Bengal. He is one of the leaders. He is the greatest opponent of the existing ministry. How could the ministers then entertain any idea of bringing

sarat into prominence? (Before I saw the Governor, I had a talk with Nalini and he very frankly admitted that they were actuated by personal prejudices in not allowing Sarat to visit the prisoners. Nalini said, "It is personal. And why not? This man has abused us in and out of season. Why should we do anything to give him any credit?) Is it not reasonable?" I said I did not agree, but then I suggested another alternative. "Why should not", I said, "the Government of their own accord release as many prisoners as they could without Gandhiji's assistance? This would create a feeling of reassurance in the minds of all concerned. The prisoners would not get restive and those that are left in for some reasons could be handled in the end by Gandhiji." He asked me whether such an action would improve the situation at all? Would it not be a dangerous thing to release many men without improving the atmosphere? I said that "release" and a "better atmosphere" were mutually complementary. Releasing of the prisoners would improve the atmosphere and improvement in the atmosphere will help the release. But non-release might further spoil the atmosphere. He said, "Yes, there is something in what you say. But don't you think that if the release was through the instrumentality of Gandhiji, it would strengthen Gandhiji's hands in improving the atmosphere in Bengal? Why is Gandhiji coming to Bengal? Not simply for release but also for improving the atmosphere. Now if we released all before Gandhiji comes, will it help him at all in creating a better atmosphere? I am talking this as an individual and not as a Governmental, but I think it will very much strengthen Gandhiji's hands if releases were made after he came." I said, "I had heard such a proposal from Nalini also (The Governor remarked he had never collaborated with Nalini) but somehow or other I was never very much impressed with this argument. But I will put it to Gandhiji and if Gandhiji thought that releasing even without his intervention would strengthen rather than weaken his hands, I would vote with Gandhiji because I know no one is a greater student of human psychology than Gandhiji." "Oh yes, I know he is a first-class diplomat and therefore he cannot be unaware of the effect of certain actions on the public mind." I said I would leave the matter at that but that I would come to see him again on that very matter after I had heard from Gandhiji.

Perhaps Gandhiji himself would write to him. He said, "Come whenever you wish to.

Then, he discussed the prevalent poisonous atmosphere specially created by the Press. Could not I do something to help? I said, "My own feeling is that unless the differences amongst the various sections are composed, there is very little likelihood of the Press becoming sober." He said the *Hindustan Standard* and others were writing such poisonous articles, that there was likelihood of a communal trouble. I said that for the communal bitterness partly Haque himself was responsible. He agreed. But he said, "Haque has been sufficiently provoked by the Press." I said, "The Press has abused the Hindu ministers also." But I admitted that Haque had been sufficiently provoked by the Press of the type of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and the *Hindustan Standard*. The best solution would be that decent men should publicly denounce the existing tendency of the Press. He hoped that something of the kind would be done.

At the conclusion he repeated that it was not the opinion of the Government but his own personal opinion that if the release was affected through the pleadings of Gandhiji, it would very much strengthen his (Gandhiji's) hands in improving the prevailing atmosphere. But of course if Gandhiji disappeared from the Bengal picture altogether, then the Government's duty was quite clear. They had decided upon a policy of gradual release and there was no departing from that policy. That policy would continue, but we need not be in a hurry for a decision just now. Let Gandhiji's programme be known first.

He expressed doubt whether the difference between Nalini and Bose could be composed. It was a matter of personal differences and therefore they were all the more difficult to be healed. I differed and pointed out that after all in politics people made and settled their differences according to exigencies of the times.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADI VBHAI DESAI  
JANKI KUTIR  
JUHU, BOMBAY

December 17, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I hope I was able in my yesterday's letter to convey to you correctly the feeling in the Government circles with reference to the release of detenus. As you might have noticed from my letter, the Governor told me practically what I was already informed by Nalini. My efforts were directed to save Bapu of any undue strain in respect of the release. After talking, I have discovered that Bapu's presence in Calcutta is wanted by the authorities not so much for the purpose of release as for the purpose of improving the atmosphere. They seem to want to make the releases an occasion for improving the present atmosphere. In fact, they seem to have made up their mind that releases will have to be made and in making Bapu the cause for these releases, they are simply exacting a price from him which would be in the shape of improvement in the atmosphere. So, to put the whole thing in a nutshell, the strain that may be caused to Bapu would not be for the releases but for improving the atmosphere. And if we are to save him from all this trouble, we must work to improve the atmosphere in Bengal as much as possible and leave the final touches for Bapu. I hope I have been able to convey to you correctly what I feel.

The question of the Andaman prisoners, of course, stands on different grounds and as it is a question for the exercise of clemency, Bapu will have to take up this question with the Governor. I was a bit perturbed when I heard that the Andaman prisoners were intending to start another hunger strike, and as you will see from the enclosed cutting, I got Sarat to issue this statement. Sarat's information is that there is no likelihood of any hunger strike. Bapu therefore should take complete rest without any anxiety for the time being, and he should be assured that, so far as I could see, the chief work for him in Bengal would be not in connection with the release of prisoners but in connection with improving the political atmosphere.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
JUHU

JUHU,  
December 17, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Received your long letter. Babu has insisted on my writing this in Hindi. Your letter contained matter of such extraordinary importance that I thought it fit and proper to show it to Babu. He was greatly pleased at the manner you have proceeded in this matter as also by the detailed description of all that has taken place. However, Babu does not accept Dr. Bidhan's reasoning. He maintains that every action of Sarat's amply shows that there has been a change in his thinking process; that he has been deporting himself with marked loyalty towards him (i.e., Babu). If somebody has discarded his black coat and has put on a white one, he need not go about telling people that he has done so. The colour of the coat itself will be sufficient evidence of the change in his apparel. But in case Bidhan remains convinced that there has, in fact, been no change in Sarat's outlook, it is his religious duty to say so in your presence at your house without mincing words. Unity must be achieved through complete frankness.

What did you discuss with the Governor? Presumably a detailed description of your interview with him is already on the way.

Babu is certainly recovering, but the tempo is so slow. And now that he has begun to feel a shade better he has begun fretting about Segaon and writing to the people there that "We should be there by the end of this month." Jamnalalji has strongly protested. He insists on Babu prolonging his stay here by a couple of months. In the morning the blood-pressure hovered around 176/106, but last evening it shot up to 180/117. I can well understand the cause of it. The Andamans, the situation in U. P. and such like things work on his mind. Lately the federal scheme seems to have contributed to his mental restlessness. Only this morning he asked me to get him the connected material.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev



JANKI KUTIR,  
JUHU,  
December 18, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your brief letter asking me to insist on Bapu prolonging his stay here. I told you in my last that it was no use hallooing until we were out of the wood. The last two days have registered a setback in Bapu's health. There has been no apparent cause and the doctors are busy making all kinds of surmises. An English doctor, who is a member of the European delegation to the Indian Science Congress, was brought in here by a friend. He happens to be a blood-pressure specialist. He said that the blood-pressure was certainly high but that the heart action was good. He said that the digestive processes were not going on properly and that all that he needed was rest and adequate 'oxygenation' of his food. He has suggested a process of regularly oxygenating his milk and he is seeing Dr. Gilder in this connection before he leaves this evening for Calcutta.

Did Bapu speak to you about a loan from some Bank to the A.I.S.A. for khadi production? I wonder, if it can be arranged and if so, on what terms?

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

SYT. GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
8 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLACE  
CALCUTTA

*PS.* Since writing the above we have had a talk over the phone. There has been much bungling in dealing with the situation in U.P. At first they indulged in empty threats, then they did what can only be described as licking one's own spittles. The bureaucracy also has had a measure of our strength. Pandit Jawaharlal has not been able to give a clear-cut lead. Presumably he, too, had realized that an error has been committed. All the same he could not suggest a way out of the dilemma.

You might have seen his 'statement in the Press. He appears to have cooled down somewhat.

M. D.

69

December 19, 1937

DEAR LORD LOTHIAN,

I hope you have fixed up your programme for Calcutta. I have been thinking of inviting a few important men to meet you at lunch so that you can meet a number of Calcutta citizens at one place. If you approve of the idea, then I would request you to fix up a date for which I could issue invitations.

Besides the lunch, you will have to spare some time at your convenience when we can have a quiet chat. I will be obliged if you kindly send me a telegram addressed to 'Lucky' in reply to this, so that I can make the necessary arrangements.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas Birla

THE RT. HON. THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN  
C/O SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU, KT.  
ALLAHABAD

70

December 20, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

We had another meeting last evening, and it was in very good spirit. Bidhan was in an appealing mood and Sarat too wanted to accommodate.

With reference to the Communal Award, Sarat explained his position which is this. "I admit that I defied the Congress and

started the Nationalist Party) but at the same time it is I who am responsible for liquidating it. The Congress Working Committee accepted my suggestion and modified its previous attitude and this is now my attitude too. I stand by the Congress." Bidhan said, "This is good but since you will have the need of co-operation of reasonable Muslims, it is necessary that your attitude should be publicly explained. Not that you should go out of your way, but you should 'whenever you get an opportunity, explain your position so as to inspire confidence among your Muslim friends.'" Sarat agreed.

As regards hunting out Gandhism from Bengal, Sarat admitted that this was his view, but he never said so publicly. It was drawing room talk. He was very much offended in those days but now he was entirely changed. Here again Bidhan suggested that he should some time publicly explain his attitude because even today some of the rank and file Congressmen followed the old advice of Sarat. It was therefore necessary to clarify. Sarat agreed, although he did not think it necessary.

But the most formidable question was of Nalini. We both pointed out to him that we recognised his weak points. He was an ambitious man, but were there not many like him in Bengal who called themselves Congressmen? Sarat may not trust Nalini beyond a limit, but why should he launch boycott against him? Was it not possible to co-operate even with non-Congressmen? Was not Nalini a capable and more active person than many men? We did not believe that he was thoroughly unreliable. He could be trusted and could be made use of for the good of the country provided he was properly handled. I called him Congress minded. Sarat felt impressed but said he would not like to reply immediately. He asked as to what would be the price that he would have to pay for Nalini's co-operation? Was he to be promised a seat in the future Cabinet? I told him this was not a relevant question. What was needed was that Sarat should not shut his mind against Nalini's inclusion in the future Cabinet. Of course, Nalini would expect a place for himself in the Cabinet, and if he is worth the place, why should he be denied it? Sarat said he would like to consult Bapu first. I told him that as far as possible we should leave Bapu alone. It is not necessary that we should make up our own mind? But Sarat would not make up his mind until he had a talk with Bapu. But

all the same he wanted to have another talk with us before he left for Bombay. I told him about the setback in Bapu's health and he was rather upset. He is very much eager to be on the side of Bapu and therefore I have no doubt that he will do what Bapu wants him to do. This is a good sign. Meanwhile, perhaps he will consult Subhas also. I am therefore very hopeful about the situation.

I have just now received your letter of the 17th written in Hindi. The reply to this is already covered in the foregoing description of the conversation between myself and Sarat Bapu.

As regards my conversation with Lord Brabourne, you must have got the description by this time and I am expecting your comments.

Bidhan tells me that Bapu's setback perhaps may be due to excessive walks.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBIHAI DESAI  
JUHU

71

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
December 21, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your two very long letters, both of which I showed to Bapu. He sees what you say about the mentality of the Government of Bengal in releasing the prisoners on Bapu's assurance and advice, and he appreciates the mentality. In fact, he would, if it was humanly possible, go to Bengal and sit down there and devote all his energies to the problem in Bengal, to the exclusion of all others. But that is not possible today, unless of course he went in the teeth of all the doctors' advice. The fluctuations in the blood-pressure continued. As an effect of sarpagandha, it comes

down to 150/95 and even lower towards the evening but rises again in the morning when it is 195/110 ! Even the doctors are puzzled and they have the honesty to say that they are at sea. It is a tragedy that our doctors treat our Ayurved with contempt and will not study the therapeutic value of potent drugs like sarpagandha. There is one very satisfactory feature however about the present reaction of sarpagandha. It is this that as it is given in very small doses it does not produce the depression and lassitude it used to do in Wardha and it did in Calcutta. So he has decided to go on with it.

Now about the Bengal Government's policy, Bapu would frankly like them to release all the detenus and prisoners on their own initiative and responsibility—as he made it absolutely clear in his message to C.F.A. which was given him in writing and which he must have shown you. I have no copy by me as I am writing this, but I am sure C.F.A. would have shown it to you. Therein he has requested Government to exercise their clemency. He wants them to do so, if only because he does not know when exactly he can go to Bengal and he does not want the fate of those unfortunate folks to hang on the ups and downs in his health. I hope I have made Bapu's point of view clear.

Now about the U.P. I do not think anything could be done at that end. There is no doubt that the issue that was raised was not one on which there should have been a difference of opinion or break between the ministry and the Governor. The task of maintaining an atmosphere of non-violence is common to both and when the ministry agreed that the men in question had preached violence, there was not fun in saying that no action should be taken against them. The Governor said, "he had made up his mind on the point." Pantji said that the ministers had also made up their minds. And if he did say so there is no getting out of a resignation. But they have decided not to resign for reasons which it is difficult to understand. Pt. Jawaharlal's view is too subtle for me to grasp. He says the issue should be brought before the Assembly and after their vote the question of the Parliament vs the Crown can come before the country. However this may be, and it has nothing to do with what can or cannot be done there. Pantji has written to Vallabhbhai to the effect that the crisis has been tided over and

there is no anxiety.

I wonder if this will make you any the wiser. If does not, please blame my ignorance of the matter or knowledge of it second or third hand, or my poverty of expression! In a hurry,

Yours,  
Mahadev

72

December 21, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Immediately I heard from the Viceroy in Delhi that something was wrong in U.P., I wrote to Pantji and also sent Devdas to Lucknow. Vallabhbai also was there. Although Devdas has not yet written to me, but Pantji sent back a very reassuring letter saying that there was nothing to worry about agrarian trouble or Cawnpore and that he was keeping his fingers on the pulse. I conveyed this reassuring news to the Viceroy who was quite pleased. But all this time I was in the dark about any difference between the Governor and ministers. Immediately I saw something in the *National Call*, I began to suspect that there was something wrong and your hint on the phone made me more alert. Since then I have been hearing from various sources that there is some trouble, but I do not know the correct nature of it. Today during my conversation with Arthur Moore, he was telling me that if the Governor and the ministers in U.P. could tide over their differences, we would be relieved of a lot of anxiety and he asked me whether I know Haig, to which I said 'yes.' "Don't you think he is a good man?", he said to which I replied, "So is Pantji." And then this morning appeared the speech of the Viceroy. It is evident from the speech that there is some anxiety on his mind but I am utterly in dark as to what is the nature of this anxiety. I am writing this to ask you if you could enlighten me more on this point. The Viceroy is here and Moore could always help. If there is any contribution that could be made by me, Moore or men of his type, we should all like to make. But as I don't know the correct nature of this trouble, I

am not taking any action. If you think you could say something more, please say so and hand over the letter to my brother. Similarly, I am sending this letter through my office.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
BOMBAY  
Encl. 1 cutting

73

JUHU,  
BOMBAY,  
December 22, 1937

MY DEAR GHANSIIYAMDASJI,

The dispute over the question of the prosecution of one of the ex-Kakori men has superseded Cawnpore. This has remained a closely guarded secret. There Kakori people started to embarrass the ministry and Congress almost as soon as they were set free. Welcome functions and processions became a regular feature everywhere and in spite of Bapu's timely rebuke, Congressmen—leading men in their districts—associated themselves freely with these demonstrations. In several places prominent Congressmen presided over meetings at which the Kakori men made rabid speeches. When this became known to the ministry they circularised the District Magistrates—whether under pressure from the Governor, I do not know—asking them to depute reporters to all meetings addressed by the Kakori men. The speech by Parmanand in Dehradun drew the attention of the Governor. He at once took the matter up with the ministry and insisted that the offender be prosecuted under Sec. 124-A I.P.C. The ministry took the view and tried to impress it upon the Governor that since the man had been in jail for 20 years his speeches were bound to be bitter but that this need not be taken so tragically. They were therefore in favour of warning

the offender before taking more drastic action. But the Governor held out and the story goes that he acted under strict instructions from Delhi. Pant had more than one long discussion with the Governor. All this tussle took over 7 days during which the ministry apparently took no steps to consult Pt. Jawaharlal or anyone else. Then at a formal cabinet meeting the matter was again brought up and the Governor made it plain that if the ministry would not undertake the prosecution, then under his special power he would have to order it himself. The ministry replied adhering to its previous decision. The warrant was issued under the Governor's orders and served on Parmanand in Delhi where another case was pending against him. *At this stage*, it is stated that Pantji wired to Pt. Jawaharlal to return to U.P. immediately from Assam for consultation, but the latter suggested that Sardar Vallabhbhai should be called as he himself could not interrupt the tour. Sardar was thus called. In the opinion of the Sardar and Kripalani, the ministry ought not to have hesitated to sanction the prosecution because there are no two opinions as to the extremely violent nature of the speech. In fact the speech of Batliwala may be said to be almost loyalist in tone compared to Parmanand's (have seen the C.I.D. report of the speech and quite agree about the description). What Pantji, however, wanted to know was what to be done now. There, Vallabhbhai did not give clear advice but suggested that Pt. Jawaharlal (who was to be in Lucknow in a day or two) be consulted. But Vallabhbhai did say that having allowed the matter to go so far it was difficult to submit meekly to the Governor's action. Pantji, however felt that the matter would be smoothed over by asking the Governor to withdraw the prosecution *in the event of the Delhi case resulting in the conviction*. But even this, it was felt, the Governor would not perhaps agree to (Having got his chance now) without some conditions. That condition might very likely be that the ministry should identify itself with the original step. Sardar, however, appeared inclined to give no definite advice but left it to Pt. Jawaharlal to deal with the crisis in this province, more particularly because he (Pt. J.) would in any case have to be consulted.

Connected with this affair is a curious Cabinet episode. Some twenty days prior to this crisis the Cabinet had taken a decision to warn the Kakori men for their utterances. This deci-



sion, however, was not implemented and the version of Pantji is that the Chief Secretary ought to have implemented it but he did not. Vallabhbhai on the other hand felt that an important decision ought not to have been left in charge of the Chief Secretary!

This morning, rang up Pantji. Fortunately got him and he was good enough to talk about the situation. He said that the position was easier now and perhaps in two or three days the public may hear something about it (Interpret to mean withdrawal of the prosecution). Asked him definitely if he thought the crisis would be tided over to which he said, "Yes," a trifle haltingly, I thought. Did not wish to press him to say more, particularly since he said *that there had been some give and take*. Thought that much of talk with a Prime Minister ought to suffice and rang off after telling Pantji that I would see him at Aligarh on the 30th on the occasion of the Provincial Conference.

As regards Cawnpore it is true that the Governor took a lot of initiative in the matter of appropriate action to curb mischief-mongers and that too caused some unpleasantness but there have been no serious differences on that account and Cawnpore is quieter and more settled for the time being.

The only thing worth reporting about Bihar is that when we got there the situation had decidedly improved. Rajendrababu had almost succeeded in formulating tenancy proposals which met with the approval of the zamindars and also the sober section of Ryot representatives. He was quite hopeful. Anugrahbhai was full of self-confidence and the Premier told Vallabhbhai that if only the Working Committee will support them through thick and thin instead of censuring them at every step, they will manage Bihar all right.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

PS. The man involved in Delhi case has been sentenced today to six weeks.

December 23, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I have received your long letter of the 21st and have noted the contents. C.F.A. did show me the slip in your handwriting but it related only to the Andaman prisoners since the word 'clemency' was used. I have no doubt that it created the same impression on the Governor also. I am sure—whatever may have been the purpose—it meant only one thing and that is that it related to the convicted prisoners and not to the detenus. I don't think I need approach the Governor again at this stage unless Bapu desires me to do so. Perhaps the best course would be to watch Bapu's health for some time and then make another approach to the Governor.

I note all about U.P. I don't sympathise with Pantji in the least. I fully understand the position and therefore you need not be so modest as to blame either your ignorance or poverty of expression.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
JANKI KUTIR  
JUHU

December 25, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I have succeeded in getting this appeal issued by the Poet. As promised, you should now follow this up in the *Harijan*. If Jawaharlalji also could be persuaded to say something, I think it would have a tremendous effect. Could you make this request to him on my behalf when he is in Bombay? I suppose he knows what poisonous stuff is being put in the Press of Bengal

nowadays. Specially the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Hindustan Standard* and *Star of India* have no sense of decency. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is not too bad, but there is not one paper about which something good could be said. After Tagore's appeal, if the matter is followed up by you and Jawaharlalji, I think it would have a tremendous effect. Over and above this, if you could ask Sarat Babu also to say something, it will be very good. I myself spoke to him, but while he liked the idea, he was a little cautious.

I forgot to write to you about the loan to the A.I.S.A. I had a led Bapu to get all the papers and the total assets on which he wants the loan and the names of the guarantors. I can then talk to the Directors of the Imperial Bank. But Jammalalji is there and I think he can himself talk to the Directors of the Bank or to Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas. So far as I understand, Jammalalji and Bapu both want to be guarantors in which case I don't see any difficulty.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

76

December 28, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADIVBHAI,

I am sending you some cuttings. Two of them are from the *Statesman* and the *Hindustan Standard* and both of them comment on the Poet's appeal. From the comments of the *Hindustan Standard* you will be able to see that the cap fits on it very well. Haque's speech is rather disturbing. The Muslims are taught season in and season out that the Hindus are conspiring against Islam in Bengal. These speeches are likely to create a very alarming situation at some stage and I personally think that Jawaharlalji should undertake a tour in Bengal. I think this may improve the position to some extent. It is also necessary

that the *Harijan*, Jawaharlalji and others should take up this question of Press vilification in Bengal.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI

77

December 30, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

The appeal of the Poet has not improved matters in the least and any potential chance of improvement has been marred by the outbursts of Fazlul Haque. I had asked the Governor to influence Haque to keep a check on his tongue and the Private Secretary sent for me today and explained how concerned the Governor was over the mud-throwing on both sides. The Governor is very eager to say something publicly but he feels that if he says anything at this stage, it would be interpreted as applying only to his Prime Minister. Perhaps he would say something at a later stage. Meanwhile I am awaiting your own comments on the Poet's appeal and also your advice as to what should be done in future. I had a talk with Sarat before he left and he also liked the idea of issuing an appeal signed by half a dozen prominent persons in Calcutta. What is wanted is ceasing of the fire on both sides. Unfortunately those who are opposing the present Government and trying to replace it with a better one are resorting to communalism rather than criticising the actions of the Government. No distinction is made between principles and personalities. The result of all this is that Haque senses a conspiracy among the Hindus to overthrow his ministry and now he is appealing to the masses from the communal platform. In this intricate position a good deal of patient and thoughtful action is necessary. I am not unhopful but the difficulty is that everybody is looking at the question from his own point of view. If Sarat, Bidhan and others strongly condemned the mentality of the Hindu Press and asked ]

it to leave alone personalities, I think even Haque will have to cease talking nonsense. I will await your advice.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
BOMBAY

78

December 31, 1937

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Lathwaite came to see me yesterday and I had a long talk with him for nearly two hours. The detenus and the convicted prisoners and the question of Federation were the chief topics. He would convey the conversation to the Viceroy after which, if it was necessary, I would be asked to see the Viceroy. About the detenus and the convicted prisoners, I told him what Andrews and I had already said to the Governor. Now that I had your letter indicating Bapu's views, I read the same to Lathwaite and added that ev. before Bapu came to Bengal, releases must begin and continue. In the absence of this policy the public and the prisoners would begin to get restive and if the prisoners again resorted to hunger-strike, it would be very embarrassing to all concerned and would also have a very injurious effect on Bapu's health which was equally a matter of political importance. He agreed with me that Bapu's health was a matter of political importance and asked whether what I wanted was that trickles of release should begin immediately and continue so that the public would feel that the question was not being neglected. I affirmed. He pointed out to me that as far as the Andaman prisoners were concerned, they were being repatriated. He referred to Bapu's telegram to Viceroy which he received at the time of the reported hunger-strike and he said that Bapu was informed about repatriation which would be finished in four to six weeks' time when the question of release

would be considered. But I said that I was talking also about the detenus who could be released immediately and he is going to speak to the Viceroy, who, I think, will help. After I have talked to the Viceroy, I would see the Governor again.

As regards Federation, I said that it was very essential that immediately after Bapu recovered, the Viceroy should begin his talks with him. If Federation was imposed without agreement, it would have disastrous effects and I did not like delaying the matter. On the other hand, I am hopeful about Bapu being able to produce a solution. This will be conveyed to the Viceroy.

Then we had a talk about the U.P. affairs. I pointed out to him that when the Congress was doing its best to maintain peace and non-violence, it was not fair that the Governor should have interfered. Laithwaite's point of view was that the Governors have not been interfering anywhere but in this particular case, Parmanand was preaching violence and it was having a very bad effect on the soldiers at Dehradun. Pant was again and again pressed but somehow or other, he neglected the issue. Would it be advisable to give such a long rope to the ministers as would in the end deteriorate the position to an extent that maintenance of law and order would become impossible without the help of the military? He did not like Kidwai's speech in which he said that if the public did not maintain non-violent atmosphere, they would have to resign. If that was the attitude of the ministers, then the Governor would always be doubtful about the capacity of the ministers to maintain non-violence. Would it be fair to the Governor, if the ministers resigned after deteriorating the position? Would it not be the duty of the Governor under such circumstances to always watch and see that the situation did not unduly deteriorate? I gave a better interpretation of Kidwai's speech. The ministers derived their powers from the electorate and if the whole population wanted to revolt, the ministers would have but one alternative and that is to tell the people, "Since we do not carry your confidence, we resign, but not because of any grievance against the Governor but because of your unruly behaviour." Kidwai's speech in my opinion was the correct description of his own position and a wrong interpretation should not have been put on it. He saw my point and yet

argued that if the ministers because of the fear of the electorate neglected their duty towards maintenance of law and order, then at some stage the Governor must come in. Lathwaite although did not agree that the Governor of U P. had crossed the limit, he entirely agreed that the ministers should be allowed full freedom even to make mistakes. He was curious to find out how was it that out of all the Congress provinces, it was only U.P. where there was shilly-shallying with the violent elements. He was full of praises about all other Congress provinces

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT MAHADLVBHAI DESAI  
BOMBAY

## Letters without Date

79

M. K. GANDHI  
WARDHA

120—G. MANY THANKS FOR YOUR MESSAGE WHICH I AM HAVING REPEATED TO HUNGER STRIKERS WITH REQUEST THAT THEY SHOULD TELEGRAPHICALLY REPLY TO YOU.

VICEROY

80

### Exchange of Telegrams Concerning Detenus of Andamans

MAHADEV DESAI WROTE:

IT WILL BE REMEMBERED THAT WHEN GANDHIJI RECEIVED TELEGRAM FROM HOME SECRETARY DATED THIRTYFIRST AUGUST ANNOUNCING THAT HUNGER STRIKERS AT ANDAMANS HAD SUSPENDED THEIR HUNGER STRIKE THERE WAS NO REFERENCE IN IT TO SEVEN WHO ACCORDING TO TELEGRAM FROM ANDAMANS WERE CONTINUING THEIR HUNGER STRIKE. GANDHIJI FURTHER PURSUED MATTER. HE GOT REPLY FROM HOME DEPARTMENT CONVEYING SEVEN PRISONERS' MESSAGE TO GANDHIJI. SINCE THEN THERE HAS BEEN FURTHER TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH SEVEN FRIENDS WHO HAVE FINALLY DECLARED THEIR RESOLVE TO GO ON WITH HUNGER STRIKE THIS DECISION HAS PAINED GANDHIJI DEEPLY. IN GIVING PERMISSION TO RELEASE WHOLE OF THIS CORRESPONDENCE HE MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO PRESS: "I HELD BACK THESE TELEGRAMS IN HOPE OF BEING ABLE TO ANNOUNCE CHEERFUL NEWS THAT SEVEN PRISONERS HAD BROKEN FAST ON MY ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR MEANING OF WORD RELIEF. I AM SORRY



THAT I HAVE FAILED IN MY ATTEMPT. I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THOSE WHO MAY BE SPECIAL FRIENDS OF THESE PRISONERS WILL PERSUADE THEM TO BREAK FAST WHICH ALONE GIVE PUBLIC TIME TO CONSOLIDATE ITS EFFORT TO SECURE THE VERY RELIEF FOR WHICH THEY ARE GIVING UP THEIR PRECIOUS LIVES. I WOULD ALSO APPEAL TO AUTHORITIES WHOEVER THEY MAY BE TO RELENT AND DISCHARGE PRISONERS IF THEY WILL NOT GIVE UP THEIR FAST EVEN AS I WAS DISCHARGED AND LEFT TO MY OWN RESOURCES WHEN I WOULD NOT GIVE UP MY FAST IN 1933."

HERE IS TEXT OF TELEGRAPHIC CORRESPONDENCE—TELEGRAM FROM HOME SECRETARY SIMLA DATED SECOND SEPTEMBER TO GANDHIJI: "NO. 5 JAILS. THE SEVEN PRISONERS IN THE ANDAMANS WHO ARE "CONTINUING HUNGER STRIKE SEND YOU FOLLOWING MESSAGE: 'THANKS FOR YOUR TELEGRAM REGARDING TERRORISM. WE DECLARE IT WILL HARM RATHER THAN HELP THE CAUSE OF COUNTRY. WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY THROUGH YOU OUR APPEAL TO ALL SUFFERERS IN JAILS AND DETENTION CAMPS AND TO ALL ORGANISATIONS IF THERE BE ANY WHO STILL BELIEVE TO ATTAIN INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA THROUGH TERRORISM TO GIVE IT UP ONCE FOR ALL. WE FURTHER REQUEST YOU TO CLARIFY WHAT YOU MEAN BY RELIEF CAN ONLY MEAN RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS? DETENUS STATE PRISONERS INTERNEES REMOVAL OF BAN ON EXILES AND REPEAL OF ALL REPRESSIVE LAWS. IF WE GET ASSURANCE FROM YOU ON THESE QUESTIONS WE CAN SUSPEND HUNGER STRIKE.' TELEGRAM THEREIN MENTIONED IS YOUR MESSAGE OF AUGUST TWENTYSEVENTH. YOUR MESSAGE OF AUGUST THIRTIETH HAD BY THEN NOT BEEN DELIVERED—HON'BLE."

GANDHIJI'S TELEGRAM TO HOME SECRETARY SIMLA DATED THIRD SEPTEMBER: "THANKS YOUR TELEGRAM WHICH DISPATCHED YESTERDAY TWO THIRTY WAS RECEIVED ONLY AFTER SEVEN TODAY. PLEASE WIRE SEVEN PRISONERS: 'DEEPLY APPRECIATE MESSAGE WHICH IS HELPING ME GREATLY. ACHIEVE COMMON OBJECT I PERSONALLY ACCEPT YOUR INTERPRETATION OF RELIEF AND PROMISE TO WORK FOR FULL FRUITION WITH ACTIVE CO-OPERATION OF PRISONER FRIENDS. URGE YOU THEREFORE ABANDON FAST AND SEND ME HAPPY NEWS'—GANDHI."

GANDHIJI'S TELEGRAM TO ANDAMANS PORT BLAIR DATED SEPTEMBER EIGHTH: "REFERENCE MY MESSAGE ADDRESSED SEVEN PRISONERS AWAITING ANXIOUSLY THEIR REPLY. IS HUNGER STRIKE STILL CONTINUING? IF IT IS PLEASE TELL THEM MY ENDEAVOUR

BEING FRUSTRATED TILL THEY BREAK FAST—GANDHI.”

REPLY FROM ANDAMANS DATED TENTH SEPTEMBER: “6118. YOUR TELEGRAM DELIVERED YESTERDAY. HUNGER STRIKERS OF RELIEF DECLINE TO SUSPEND STRIKE—ANDAMANS.” TELEGRAM FROM GANDHIJI TO ANDAMANS PORT BLAIR DATED ELEVENTH SEPTEMBER: “THANKS WIRE. PLEASE TELL STRIKERS DEEPLY IIURT AT YOUR REFUSAL. SUSPEND STRIKE. YOUR TELEGRAM SLEMED ASSURE ME OF SUSPENSION IF I ACCEPTED YOUR INTERPRETATION OF TERM ‘RELIEF’. PLEASE LND NATIONAL ANXIETY BY SUSPENDING STRIKE AND GIVE WORKERS LIKE ME OPPORTUNITY OF SECURING RELIEF—GANDHI.”

REPLY FROM ANDAMANS DATED FOURTEENTH SEPTEMBER: “6214. YOUR TELEGRAM OF SEPTEMBER ELEVENTH RECLIVED ON TWELGTH AND DELIVERED ON THIRTEENTH TO HUNGER STRIKERS WHO I REGRET DECLINE ACCEPT YOUR ADVICF SESPLND STRIKE.—ANDAMANS.”

**1938**



## 1

January 3, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Talking about Federation, Jawaharlalji told Lothian that on this question, there would be a split in the Congress from top to bottom. He is all for Constituent Assembly and not prepared to make any compromise at present. This is just for Bapu's information.

Another important thing that I heard is that although under the Government of India Act, military is outside the scope of the minister some provision only through convention may be made under which the minister would get a kind of responsibility. The British public, it is expected, will agree to such a position because on account of the international complications and specially the Japanese aggression in China, it is felt that the British Commonwealth is facing a serious crisis and it would not be thought desirable, if the minister had no responsibility about the defence of India. I wonder whether Bapu is aware of the fact that the Instrument of Instructions with reference to Federation has not yet been passed by the Parliament and what is lacking in the Act perhaps may be made up through the Instrument of Instructions, if there was an agreement.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
BOMBAY

## 2

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C. P.),  
January 9, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I owe several letters to you but I didn't want to write to you without having had a full talk with Bapuji, which I could

do only this evening on our arrival here. The last two days in Juhu were very strenuous indeed, what with the talks with some of the members of the Working Committee, and with the continuous stream of visitors who simply would not be turned away, because we were leaving unexpectedly. I, therefore, preferred not to add to the strain in any way.

I shall take up first the question of purifying the atmosphere corrupted and poisoned by irresponsible newspapers. When I endorsed the Poet's appeal to the Press, the ministerial ravings were not before me, otherwise I should have written an article dealing with both the Press and the ministers. Bapu likes your suggestion of issuing a manifesto signed by several leaders, Hindus as well as Muslims; if you cannot get many Muslims, only the Maulana's signature should be quite enough. Perhaps a much better thing than the manifesto would be for you to ask the Maulana to see Fazlul Haque, and get him to withdraw all that he had said and to express regret for it. Perhaps Bidhan Babu might also be helpful in this direction.

Of course, Lord Brabourne cannot say anything publicly, but it should be easy for him, as it is possible for the Government to prosecute an offending newspaper, it is not possible to prosecute an offending minister. He should also tell him frankly that if a responsible minister behaves in such an irresponsible manner, he as Governor might ultimately be compelled to use his special powers, for he is under the Act responsible to prevent anyone from promoting class conflict and fomenting communal trouble.

There is another thing that the Governor may well do. He may not publicly criticise the Press as he cannot criticise the ministers, but he can certainly appeal to the leaders of public opinion to help in purifying the atmosphere, especially on the ground, that as Law and Order were entirely a concern of the ministers, he as Governor could not criticise the Press. He may not summon the editors, nor ask them personally to refrain from their campaign of vilification, but he can certainly ask public leaders like, for instance, Sarat Bose to help in purifying the atmosphere. In a general way perhaps he may talk publicly about the conditions essential for maintaining the growth of a healthy public opinion.

Bapu has had two fairly long and satisfactory talks with

Sarat Babu, and I dare say he has told you all about it. It is better, says Bapu, that you have the whole account from him, as well as his reaction to what Bapu has said, than that I write anything about it. Bapu was very favourably impressed with the talk with him, and he feels that Sarat Babu will whole-heartedly co-operate in bringing about peace. He would urge you very strongly to develop close contact with him, in order to secure full co-operation. Before he can think of calling Bidhan Roy or Nalini Babu, he suggests your coming here. The most suitable date would be between the 15th and 22nd. Lord Lothian is expected on the 15th and Bapu wants to have complete rest until then, in order to be able to have satisfactory talks with him. He is not likely to engage him for more than two days. Having had a couple of days' rest, after the talk with Lothian he would like to have you. Anything more definite than this, I cannot say.

The doctors were very keen on his continuing the rest at Juhu until the end of this month but he was getting very uneasy, and he said that he could not think of meeting Lord Lothian anywhere except his own natural environment. To this there was no answer—there could be none.

You were right in sticking up for Kailash in your talk with Earthaite. But while your interpretation of Kailash's speech was correct, what Earthaite said was also true. A responsible minister cannot run away from his responsibilities. He has certainly the right to resign, but he must make it absolutely clear that he resigns not because he has had any trouble with the Governor, but because the Electorate whom he is supposed to lead is trying to lead him. Under this condition it is not possible for him to serve them.

What you say about the instrument of instructions is very interesting, but Bapu fears that there is at the present moment no chance of an agreement though he has been spending most of his time in bed. His mind has been active and he knows what to say to Lord Lothian. I have never troubled him about this, and do not propose to do so until after Lothian has had his talks with Bapu.

Sarvagandha has been evidently doing much good, but Bapu's system has become so sensitive that the slightest strain makes itself felt, sarvagandha or no sarvagandha. The Working

Committee members spared him this time as much as possible. In fact, with the exception of the Maulana, who talked about the Hindu-Muslim unity, no one engaged him in serious conversation. One day they simply sat for about an hour, talking about nothing serious and joking and laughing. Bapu was not talking at all, and yet the strain of listening to these people was enough to send the pressure up to something like 30 points. Thinking however intense does not matter, it is only talking and listening that prove a great strain.

He stood the journey well. The pressure taken a little before we got out at Wardha was 186 and 106. In the afternoon, when I saw him after he had had some four hours sleep, it had come down to 150 and 90 which was good.

*Yours,*  
Mahadev

### 3

January 11, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

At last I received a letter from you, and I am glad that you wrote everything so clearly.

Things here are not at all hopeful. The Press is a bit quiet these days and the ministers too have not spoken, but of course the credit for the silence of the ministers is not due to their own self-restraint but because of pressure from above. What you wanted the Governor to talk to Fazlul Haque has already been done. My information is that the Viceroy and the Governor both have spoken to him and this has had its effect. This is not a mere gossip. But with regard to the Press I am not all hopeful. At one time, I told Bapu that through his personal intervention party faction as well as the poisonous writings of the Press could be stopped. But having gone into the things more deeply, I confess that the position is much worse than what I had thought it to be, Bapu may succeed and yet he may not. But none else could. When Bapu wrote to Sarat Babu



about the writings of the Press before the latter went to Bombay, I am told that the proprietors of the papers concerned when they heard of this they simply got furious with Bapu. And then came the appeal of the Poet, and it was talked in the circles concerned with great resentment that I should have persuaded the Poet for issuing that appeal. It was even alleged that I paid the Poet a good sum of getting that appeal issued. You can well imagine what is possible in such dirty atmosphere. You have written in your letter about the desirability of issuing an appeal signed by Hindus and Muslims alike. I do not know how far this will appeal to Sarat Babu. I had spoken to him before he left for Bombay but the idea did not appeal to him much.

He preferred to talk with the Press people and I understood that he is now inviting a small Press conference on the next Saturday. I do not know what will be the result, but let us hope for the best. No body wants to be in the bad book of the Press, and so the things are continuing as they are. Yet I am strongly in favour of such an appeal being issued and I will try to persuade Sarat Babu to agree to my views.

Sarat Babu is here for the last four or five days. I have been trying to get him but have failed so far. He will perhaps write to me when we could meet, and whenever he wants me I will put myself at his disposal. You do not mention what talk he had with Bapu but perhaps he would tell me all what took place at Juhu and then I will what further progress we can make.

About my coming to Wardha, I note what you say. Provisionally just now I am fixing to reach Wardha between the 23rd and the end of this month. Nalini would be in Delhi busy with the Finance Conference until the 22nd of this month. After that he too can come. My own suggestion is that we need not come separately, we can all come together and I have a talk first and then Dr. Roy and Nalini can join. But it would be wrong on my part if I do not confess at this stage that I have already begun to feel a little pessimistic about the position. I hear some people are strongly resenting my dabbling into these affairs which shows that the atmosphere is much more poisonous than what we had all estimated. In any case, I hope you approve of the dates on which I and others wish

to go. Please write to me if you wish me to change the programme.

In one of your paragraphs referring to the question of Federation you say that Bapu fears that there is at the present moment no change of an agreement.

I wonder why he says this. The international situation is changing so rapidly and is getting so complicated that if there was at any time a chance of an agreement, in my opinion, it is now. But the chief difficulty still seems to be the Hindu-Muslim question, which is getting worse and worse. Jinnah's reply to Jawaharlalji's interview was very bitter in my opinion. Perhaps the best course would be to keep quiet and do nothing. I wonder why it should not be possible to have two Federations, one of Muslims and another of Hindus. The Muslim Federation may be composed of all the provinces or portion of the provinces which contain more than two-thirds Muslim population and the Indian states like Kashmir which is composed of Mussalmans. Another Federation may be of Hindus and such states as are composed of Hindus. In this case at least we will have been spared a civil war, because I fear if anything is going to check our progress, it is the Hindu-Muslim question—not the Englishman, but our own internal quarrels.

I will write to you again after I have a talk with Sarat Babu.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Chanshyamdas

MAHADEVBHAI DESAI, ESQ.  
JUHU

4

CALCUTTA,  
January 12, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Sarat Babu saw me last evening. I had had a good talk but I do not think I could find out exactly what Bapu told him. He said to me that Bapu did not agree with him on the point of

imposing any condition on Nalini. All the same he thought he should be persuaded to come back to the Congress fold, and if he does not come, then he will put himself in the wrong. After talking this, he asked my advice whether he should begin a talk on these lines, to which I said the best course would be for Bapu himself to talk to Dr. Roy and Nalini when both of them went to see him. He also approved of this idea and therefore the matter now is left for Bapu's personal discussion

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHADEVBHAI DESAI, ESQ.  
C/O MAHATMA GANDHI  
JANKI KUTIR  
JUHU, BOMBAY

5

**For Lord Lothian and Responsible Statesmen Only**

SFGAON,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
January 20 1938

My ambition is to see the Congress recognised as the one and only party that can successfully resist the Government and deliver goods. It is the only party which, from its inception, has represented all minorities.

If the British Government recognise the unique position of the Congress they will not hesitate to postpone inauguration of the Federation till they have satisfied the Congress. It should not be difficult to do so if, before taking in the princes, elementary rights of the states people are guaranteed and their representation takes place through election. In my opinion a crisis of the first magnitude may be precipitated, if Federation is sought to be imposed.

The opposition, to the Act will still remain even if the present difficulty is got over in the manner suggested. Peace humanly speaking can only be assured when a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly supplants the present Act. Anyhow once the right status of the Congress is fully recognised the rest becomes easy.

This is my personal view which I have not discussed with any of my co-workers.

M.K. Gandhi

January 26, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

This is what the *Hindustan Standard* writes about the visit of Nalini to Wardha. I am meeting Subhas and Sarat this afternoon, and will write to you tomorrow again.

There is one thing with regard to the position of the Congress ministers to which I wish to draw the attention of Bapu. Although the ministers have not said so, but the Congressmen at various places in their speeches specially with reference to the release of political prisoners have said that the Congress ministers have not full power to make such releases. In fact Dr. Gopi Chand to whom when it was pointed out by the Punjab Premier that even the Congress ministers have not released all the political prisoners, replied that the Congress ministers had admitted that they had no power to do so but the Punjab Premier, as he had not made such an admission, should be in a position to release. Apart from the weakness of this argument it does not enhance our prestige to say that we are merely puppets of the Governors and as we have no power, we cannot do much. The question arises if we cannot do much, why are we in at all? Of course, nothing of the kind has so far been said by our ministers, but if we repeat again and again that we are puppets, then we simply establish a convention of puppetism. Nothing could be more damaging, in my mind than this. Rajaji was really dignified when he said in

Delhi that there was no interference by the Governor and that the service was giving him the best co-operation. It is only with such attitude that we can establish the convention that we desire to do.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHADEVBHAI DESAI, Esq.  
C/O MAHATMA GANDHI  
SEGAON  
WARDHA (C.P.)

7

CALCUTTA,  
January 28, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

We had a number of talks. The first talk was in a joint conference with Sarat Babu, Subhas Babu, Nalini, Dr. Roy and myself. Lot of heat was generated on both sides. "No co-operation was possible with Nalini. He had betrayed the Congress. I can give up the personal grudge but I cannot have any social relations with him until he resigns from the ministry." This was the gist of Subhas Babu's expression. Nalini too gave some thrusts. We adjourned the meeting, and it was arranged that first of all Bidhan should have a chat with Subhas, and then eventually Nalini should have a quiet chat with Subhas alone; in between I arranged some mutual friends to talk to Subhas Babu alone. The result was that the ice was broken and it began to melt, and this morning when I had my last talk with Subhas, I found that the situation had very much changed. "Since Nalini Babu wants to return to the Congress fold at some stage or other" said Subhas, "I am prepared to forget the past and give him a chance and I will try to cultivate good relations and will help him as far as I can with his ministerial work." I think you cannot expect more than this. Everyone will be writing to you about this question including Nalini, Roy and Subhas. Subhas of

course will simply send a wire. But it has been very satisfactory and it has caused a flutter in the dovecots of the mischief mongers. There is a party here which wants only internal quarrels, but I suppose they will not succeed and when Bapu comes here and once he gives the finishing touch, I think it would be possible to take up the next step, that is, a conciliation between the Hindus and Muslims and even there I am not at all unhopeful.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHADEVBHAI DESAI, ESQ.  
C/O MAHATMA GANDHI  
SEGAON  
WARDHA

8

February 7, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I hope the strain of the Working Committee did not in any way have any injurious effect on the health of Bapu.

I met the Viceroy this morning. Bapu's formula about the Federation was given to the Viceroy by Lord L'othian; but the Viceroy does not see under authority he can persuade the princes to accept democratic election to the Federation, although he fully sympathises with the object. The constitution provides nomination and nothing prevents a prince to adopt election. I pointed out to him the reported speech of Sir C.P. in which he lay the whole responsibility on the paramount power with which the Viceroy did not at all agree. The British authorities are not at all against the introduction of democracy in the states, but at the same time the paramount power cannot compel the States to take any progressive step. Already the Princes are reluctant to join the Federation. He did not so far discuss the matter personally with the Princes because it may be interpreted as bringing undue influence on them. But if he begins to talk of their representation through election the word will go round

to all of them that the Viceroy was using undue influence. He is, therefore, rather puzzled at Bapu's suggestion. He added that as it was the Federation was getting difficult of realisation, but if it was desired to have a federation of only democratic units then, he said, one may have to wait as twenty years. It is no use pinning your eyes on Travancore, Mysore and Cochin. There are number of backward states, and would they ever agree to the introduction of democracy? He feels as if the talk is something beyond him. This seems to be the reaction here

Yours sincerely  
Ghanshyamas

MAHADEVBHAI DLSAI, ESQ.  
SINGAON  
WARDHA

9

*Confidential*

February 20, 1938

MY DEAR BAPU,

When I met the Viceroy to discuss the question of Federation I had also discussed the question of the political prisoners. In fact, on my way to Delhi I had dropped at Lucknow and had discussed the question at length with Pantji and immediately on my arrival here I put forward the views of Pantji before the Viceroy. All the arguments that have been advanced by Pantji now in his statement were then put before the Viceroy. I told him that Pantji knew that the interference was coming from the Viceroy. He could argue out with the man on the spot but how could he convince the Viceroy who was sitting at a great distance from him. I added on my own behalf that he should help Pantji rather than interfere on the basis of exaggerated report that he got through his military C.I.D., about which Pantji has made reference in his private conversation with me. The Viceroy took copious notes of all that I had said although he discussed at length various other questions including the question

of the Federation and was very warm and cordial yet in respect of the political prisoners he only said: "You have given me Pant's message very clearly and faithfully. Write to Pant now to leave the matter to me." It was obvious that he did not want to discuss this question further and so I left the matter at that. Bapu I was not quite sure whether his reply was helpful or unhelpful. He was suffering from a bad chill that day. After that I left for Pilani. When I heard that the two Governments have resigned I immediately returned to Delhi and saw Laithwaite.

I found him in a very depressing mood. There was no doubt that a gloom was cast over the Viceroy's house. He assured me that there was no desire on the part of the Viceroy to create a crisis. There was no hostility. The Viceroy insisted on individual examination and he did not like the principle of indiscriminate release. Of course Pantji has already replied to this point in his statement, but this was the stand that the Viceroy took. I could see that it was fully realised that a blunder was made. I could also see that the crisis was neither intended nor anticipated by them. And then we discussed at length how a way could be found out of the existing impasse. The formula that found favour was this:

(1) Release to be made on their own merits after examining individual cases;

(2) there should be no vindictiveness; on the other hand every case should be analysed very sympathetically;

(3) past of the prisoners, however bad it may have been, should be considered only in relation to the future maintenance of law and order;

(4) there should be some arrangement under which the released prisoners would not create difficulties in another non-Congress province by preaching violence, etc. It was assumed that almost all the prisoners would be released under this formula. But I suggested in case there was a hitch the final decision should be left to Gandhiji as it was done in the case of Bengal detenus. Laithwaite liked this suggestion and he promised to convey the whole thing to the Viceroy. I sent wire to Mahadevbhai the same day with Laithwaite's consent that the Government was not at all anxious to force a crisis. I had asked for acknowledgment of



that telegram because I feared that it might fail to reach its destination in such a big crowd and as I have not yet received any acknowledgment, I do not know whether he got my telegram at all.

However, the conversation was to be resumed yesterday, but Laithwaite informed me on the phone that the Viceroy would like to see the Working Committee's resolution before we resumed the conversation. And so the conversation was resumed today after the Working Committee's resolution was out. Immediately on my entering his room he said that he was really very much relieved. The resolution of the Working Committee was extremely favourable and he said that the Viceroy in 2/3 days' time will make a statement. He will take his stand in that statement on the principle of individual examination. He would say that he had no desire to torpedo the Congress Governments. There was no animosity. In fact, he wanted to help. He would admit in that statement that law and order was the province of the ministers and he had not the slightest desire to interfere. He was against not releases as such, but against indiscriminate releases. And then he would make some kind of appeal. The ministers are yet Governors' ministers and the next step would be that the ministers and the Governors would talk over the matter between themselves and begin to release the prisoners. This is the expectation.

I pointed out to him that personally I did not mind by what process they were released, whether it was through a process of "indiscriminate release" or through individual examination, but not a single person should be left inside. He told me that he could say only this much that there would be no desire to keep them in. Then I added: "supposing there was a hitch over one or two men, Gandhiji's help should be enlisted just as it was done in the case of Bengal. He provisionally approved of this idea and would put the same to H. E. But the impression that he has left on my mind is distinctly this that through individual examination there would not be any further difficulties.

It was rather a painful experience to me, but all the same I must admit that the Viceroy made a blunder in this matter. The Viceroy according to my estimate is a very shrewd and capable man, but his one defect is that he lives in his own atmos-

phere, seeks the advice of very few people and takes his own decision. He did not realise until the mischief was done that a blunder was committed. His action was disapproved by Indians, Europeans and officials alike. The rumour in Delhi is that even the Secretary of State when he heard of this felt simply astounded and therefore there was a genuine unhappiness in the Viceroy's house which is today cast off on account of your statement and the Working Committee's resolution which is again your own draft. They are again cheerful.

I am leaving tomorrow for Pilani. When the Viceroy's statement is out, from what I have heard, I feel you would like it, but if there be anything that you do not approve I would suggest that you should take up the question directly with the Viceroy. I can assure you this much that not only there is no desire to force a crisis but there is a genuine desire to see the constitution works smoothly. Nobody has congratulated the Viceroy for this blunder and I very much sympathise with him for having put himself in this stupid position. If Pantji is there I suppose you would show this letter to him.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHATMA M. K. GANDHI

## 10

February 25, 1938

PUJYA BAPU,

When I received your telegram at Pilani instructing me to return to Delhi immediately I felt rather upset fearing that perhaps you had disapproved of some of my actions in connection with these negotiations.

Devdas missed the train and so he reached there yesterday evening instead of day before yesterday. All this time I was in dark about the contents of your message and so had to take such action as independently I thought to be the best under the circumstances and now I will relate them at some length.

On my way to Delhi I purchased a copy of *The Hindustan Times* and then for the first time learnt that the Viceroy's statement was out. I read it twice and I felt definitely disappointed about it. I had expected something much better. But knowing as I do the Viceroy, I realised that, if it was lacking in certain respects, it was not deliberate. I immediately wrote out my reactions on the statement and sent the same to the Viceroy. I am sending you a copy of it. This was done before I got your message or even before I saw your interview. From this you will be able to see that although I have put my views in my own way, the apprehension entertained by you about my views on individual examination was due to misunderstanding.

Then yesterday morning I received a telephone call from Pantji. He expressed his disappointment over the Viceroy's statement which I myself shared. But I told him that now the best course for him was to tackle his own Governor. The statement of the Viceroy whether good or bad had already been issued and what was lacking in it could be made up by the Governor. I also promised to get a helpful instruction sent to the Governor by the Viceroy. Pantji saw the Governor at about 12 o'clock yesterday and we had a further talk on the phone at 1.45 p.m. He told me that he did not anticipate any difficulty as regards the release of the prisoners. But the most vital principle was at stake. Who was to examine the individual cases? Was it the Governor or the minister? I advised him to take his stand on the Viceroy's previous statement and also the statement by the Secretary of State issued before the acceptance of office. He said he was thinking of writing a letter to the Governor putting forward his views and asking the Governor to reply to his letter categorically. I advised him that instead of writing letters abruptly the better course would be to have full discussion and then have exchange of letters on prearranged lines. He liked the idea and he said he would act upon it. Later I met Laithwaite, a resume of which I am sending herewith.

On returning to my house I phoned to Pantji and gave him the purport of my conversation with Laithwaite. Pantji asked me to send the purport of my talk with Laithwaite through a special messenger. He also told me that Shreekrishna Babu will not take any action until Pantji had settled the matter. I accordingly sent a detailed letter to Pantji about my work here

and this morning he phoned back to me. He had made certain changes in the draft which now reads as follows:

I had a full discussion with H.E. the Governor about the present situation and recent development. I am in a position to announce that we have been able to arrive at an agreed conclusion and we are accordingly resuming normal duties. The cases of certain prisoners classified as political have been individually examined and the Governor will be issuing orders on the advice tendered to him by his ministers to remit the unexpected portion of the sentence in each case under Section 401 of the Criminal Procedure Code and to order release of such prisoners. The cases of the remaining prisoners are being individually examined by the ministers concerned and appropriate orders will be passed by the Governor in a short time on the advice of his ministers.

I had a long discussion with the Governor on our mutual relations also that is the relations between responsible ministers and the Governor. We discussed the recent statement of His Excellency the Viceroy along with the views of Mahatma Gandhi on it and also the resolution passed at Haripura about the resignation of ministers and the previous statement made by His Excellency the Viceroy last summer. I am glad to say that I have no reason to fear any usurpation of the legitimate functions of the responsible ministers. In fact, we both desire to establish healthy conventions and we both hope that with the goodwill of both the sides we may succeed.

I transmitted this draft to Laithwaite this morning by phone. He approved of it and at my request transmitted the same to the Governor. He also informed me that the Governor would be quite sympathetic and that they had talked on phone the previous night, when the Governor was informed of my conversation with Laithwaite.

Pantji saw the Governor this morning at 11.30 and he returned at 12 o' clock and phoned me again. He said there was no difficulty about the prisoners or about the question as to who was going to examine the individual cases. But Pantji asked for an assurance that there would be no interference in

future. To this Haig replied that this will lead the question back to the pre-office acceptance days. Pantji wanted a definite assurance that special responsibilities would never be used. Pantji told me on the phone that he personally thought that so far as the practical issue was concerned there was no difficulty. But on constitutional matters, he said, he could not get any assurance and he sought my opinion. I told Pantji that I had not read Bapu's statement in the way that he was interpreting. The Congress accepted office knowing fully well that there were special responsibilities, but they were assured in certain manners by the Governor-General and the Secretary of State which made them conclude that there would be no interference in the day-to-day administration. In my opinion neither the Viceroy nor the Governor could go back on the statements already made and he should ask high point blank whether he wanted to go back on the previous statements. On the other hand I told Pantji that if he insisted that definite assurance should be given in respect of special responsibilities then it would not be possible for him to get such assurances and the blame for the crisis would fall on us. It would be said that the Congress did want a crisis—in fact in certain quarters it is already suggested that the whole crisis has been engineered by the new President—and that the question of prisoners was a mere pretext. I also pointed out that on the other hand if Pantji issued a statement on the lines of the draft that I had suggested with the full consent of the Governor and if that statement was followed by release it will very much strengthen the position of the Congress. The fact that there was a crisis on the question of release and that the crisis was healed up by the Governors' agreeing to accept the advice of their ministers—advice given after individual examination by the ministers themselves—will go a long way to establish a very strong convention in our favour. But of course we have always the constitutional right to resign if at any time we felt that again there was interference in the legitimate functions of ministers. The fact that a statement is being issued with the consent of the Governor would become a sort of agreement against undue interference. Pantji said that he himself agreed with what I said, but he was not quite sure how Bapu would like his action. I said that personally I did not see how Bapu could dislike it, but after all I said that he must satisfy his own

mind and if he felt satisfied then he must act accordingly. I also suggested that he may phone to Mahadevbhai at Wardha and have a talk with him if he felt any doubt. Pantji said this would prolong the matter and he was already getting tired of it. I therefore on my own responsibility advised Pantji to make my draft the basis of an agreement and issue the same with the Governor's consent. I thought that was quite sufficient and Devdas too agreed with me. After this I again met Laithwaite. He too had received the message of Haig. Haig was surprised that Pantji started discussing those very questions with him which were discussed before the acceptance of office and were disposed of. Laithwaite said that the draft that I had given to Pantji might be made the basis for discussion and that an agreed statement on behalf of the Governor and his ministers may be issued on these lines.

On coming back to my house I again phoned to Pantji and told him to put categorical questions to the Governor as to whether he would be prepared to make maximum effort to leave the minister free to act in his own sphere and then put the draft before him and so he promised to discuss the question with the Governor on these lines.

I understand after this Pantji talked to Vallabhbai who also approved of this plan. The result was that at about 4 p.m. I got a message from Pantji that he had finally settled the matter and was issuing a statement which you have already seen. I think all this will give you a correct idea as to how I have proceeded.

Now with reference to your letter, there are two points on which you have differed from me. One is about the examination of individual cases. Here I fear you have misunderstood me because as you will see from my note to the Viceroy and every subsequent step I have taken that my stand has been that it is the minister who will examine the cases. As regards the second point about leaving the matter on you if there was any hitch the question now is not of any importance since all the prisoners would be released. But when I made the suggestion I thought that I was creating a very good precedent. If the question of convicted prisoners in Bihar and U.P. could be left to you I thought the same could also be done in respect of Bengal and the Punjab prisoners. But now the question is no longer

relevant. I will write to Mahadevbhai from Pilani in reply to his letter.

I wish to draw your attention to the enclosed cutting. If Subhas Babu will not speak with greater restraint, I fear he will make your task in Bengal more difficult.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHATMA M.K. GANDHIJI  
WARDHA

11

WARDHA,  
March 14, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your long letter was duly received but as you said therein that you were writing in reply to my letter, I was waiting for that reply before writing to you. Yours was a good letter and explained your position clearly. But the previous letter did justify Bapu's impression and it was his duty to draw your attention at once. The telegram was not sent by us, it was your own messenger's trick. He asked me what to say to you. I said: "Say that you are going to Delhi with an important letter from Bapu." How he misunderstood this I cannot quite see. But you ought not to be disturbed over the seeming differences between yourself and Bapu because differences are bound to happen. (In fact the Viceroy's statement confirmed Bapu's impression about your attitude!) But all's well that ends well.

I do not know if Bapu wants you at Calcutta. If he does, I shall let you have a wire tomorrow, as I am not seeing Bapu today.

I was very much amused to read that telegram from Jamnalalji and your letter. I read it out to Bapu who had a hearty laugh over it. Well, marriage is a festive occasion and you must thank Jamnalalji for providing you with some delightful fun. Instead you come down upon the poor man and doubt his

worthiness; to be on the Congress cabinet! You may be sure that he will catch you napping next year when he becomes the Congress president and you might have to wait in deputation on him as president, if such an occasion arises!

Damodar (whom I know propose to call by the name of "bride") explains that Shethji asked him to send the telegram. The great Secretary delegated his duty to his assistant Secretary who certainly did not know the distinction between "bride" and "bridegroom". But I am going to keep the telegram and your letter and will show Jamnalalji both when I meet him at Delang. As it happened, Damodar was at Segaon with his wife when I showed your letter to Bapu. Bapu asked me to ascertain how the thing happened. I said: "Damodar is here with his bridegroom and we can ascertain it at once!"

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

*PS.* Your telegram about Vallabhbai who is not here. I am sending it therefore on to him to Ahmedabad.

## 12

March 17, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADLVBHAI,

The report in the Press that Bapu's blood-pressure went up on account of the train journey has upset me a bit, but I hope that it was only a temporary affair.

There was a lot that I wanted to write to you but then I decided that the matter required personal discussion. If you kindly let me know what Bapu's programme is, I will see how I could meet him. A lot of things have been discussed in the last annual meeting of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and Bapu's sanction has to be obtained on the decisions.

I hope Bapu's mission is progressing. I fear, however, that his visit this time may not be as successful as it was last time. The atmosphere is not quite good so far as I could see and I



fear our own men are to a great extent to be blamed for this kind of thing. Nothing has been done to improve the atmosphere in Bengal by the Congress leaders themselves

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI

13

CALCUTTA,  
April 20, 1938

PUJYA BAPU

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan saw me here today and perhaps he may come some time to see you also He seems to be very anxious about the Shahidganj affair He was also anxious about communal settlement but I don't think he is a man who could deliver the goods

He did not like Jinnah's speech My own opinion is that Jinnah has made the speech deliberately in order to create greater impression on his followers And as he knew that he was going to see you, he wanted to appear a bit high and mighty Personally I don't think your seeing him is going to help the situation at all Somehow or other, I don't like the fellow He is full of vanity and believes too much in diplomacy I also feel that his influence henceforward would be on the decline There is no strong combination among the Muslims and that is their as well as our misfortune Had there been a strong combination among the Muslims, then your talking would have some effect But now, in my opinion even Jinnah could not deliver the goods

I have written this because you are going to see him

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

POOJYA MAHATMAJI  
SFGAON

14

April 25, 1938

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I understand what you mean. You are right, too. Give whatever you feel like giving exclusively from the money point of view. What I had meant was that, if you were looking forward to the Congress' endorsement, you would be wasting your time. Ultimately there should be no conflict between the monetary and the political viewpoints. Neither can survive in isolation. Our rulers themselves have taught us this rich lesson.

I shall be needing Rs 5,000 for village education and a similar amount for the Industrial Home. Then there are the day-to-day expenses for keeping the Harijan Sevak Sangh in a running condition. A detailed discussion is needed for a decision on such matters.

I hope Brijmohan is doing well. I also hope that news about Krishna is good.

*Blessings from  
Bapu*

15

**Was Not Proper**

June 2, 1938

Since April 7 last, I have been feeling out of sorts. Last night I had a bad dream. I woke up before the dream was complete. For the rest of the night I could not sleep a wink and passed the remaining hours tossing in bed. I subjected to soul-searching and regained some peace of mind. In the process, I felt an urge to call Sushila and Prabhavati and ask them to sleep by my bed-side, but refrained from doing so. After the morning prayers I told them of my experience of the previous night but when they offered to nurse me I declined. This made Prabha morose. Nearly twelve hours later, I changed my mind

and allowed them to attend on me. This, however, did little to make me regain my mental balance.

Ever since the 12th I have been obsessed by a feeling of self-guilt and my anguish has become increasingly more poignant.

I am not myself, still I have got to meet Jinnah as per appointment. I tried to pen down all this, but couldn't because of a feeling of shame. My self-confidence is gone; my vow of celibacy lies around shattered into pieces.

I began the familiar process of self-examination and at last came to the conclusion that so long as my present unsettled state of mind persists, I would not allow any member of the opposite sex to look after my personal needs. I decided that I would not touch any woman ever so lightly and even out of sheer fun. This change in my mode of living is of great significance to me. It had been my life-long conviction that physical touch with member of the opposite sex had no delirious effect on one's self-procession so long as the motive was innocent after my vow of celibacy, and even before that, I touched women quite often in a light-hearted fashion and that had caused no injury to my psychological make-up.

After the incident of April 7 last, I began to be assailed by doubts, if I was really above the normal temptations of the flesh. And this after so many years of self-imposed rigour! During these years my inner being and my thinking process had been undergoing a course of cleansing. Can I now truthfully claim that I am as free from base passion in my own country as I was while in South Africa? Am I really impervious to the allurements that physical contact with members of the opposite sex exposes me to? Who will resolve these doubts? God alone can do that. If God does not come to my aid, there is only one route of escape left to me: so long as my self-questioner does not crystallize into a resolve, I would continue to avoid such physical contacts.

But there is one thing that has struck me with the impact of the sun's brilliance: is all these years' joint effort with co-workers going to end up in utter frustration? For this self-doubt I hold my self-doubt and my ego alone to blame. If this was going to be the end-result, my experience was so much illusory. On the other hand, if I regarded myself qualified enough to make this experiment worth the effort, I should not

have fallen prey to this momentary weakness. My own conception of celibacy is that it is different from its traditional definition. Whether my conception of it harmonises with the life led by Karna and Shukdev, time alone will tell.

Only a person who has deeply imbibed the philosophy of non-violence and has put it to practice in his own life should be considered qualified to hold forth on celibacy. I am the self-appointed commander-in-chief of the forces of non-violence. If my type of non-violence is found wanting in its essential attributes, of what use would it be? All the same, I have accepted celibacy even in its incomplete form to serve as the basis of my own conduct and so long as this remains my guiding principle I shall continue to experiment with non-violence without, however, letting it interrupt my normal activities. Where the future will take me is more than any mortal can predict. My own desires, howsoever ardent, are a mere thread in the hands of the Almighty who alone directs my course of action.

I considered it my sacred duty to tell this to my co-workers. Let someone from among them step forward to point out the weak spots in my psychological stance and I will readily accept his diagnosis.

Bapu

## 16

*Copy*

May 5, 1938

DLAR MAHAJMAJI,

When I opened Amrit's letter and saw inside your well known handwriting, you can imagine with what eagerness I began to read the contents—for it is some seven months since I have heard directly from you and I have missed sorely your little notes. You will realise then my dismay (and this is a mild term) when I read the contents. I had just seen from the *Times* you had gone to the Frontier; my latest batch of Indian papers gave vivid descriptions of your Bengal visit—and of your talk

with the Viceroy. Following your movements as I do closely, though at far range, I am able to glimpse something of the burden you carry. And then to think that in the midst of all this you had been troubled about my personal affairs. I am sick at heart.

I will attempt to answer your letter. Please bear with its length as I see I must write fully.

The uniqueness of my work has ever been a matter of great interest to my friends. Most of them are used to what is termed a "safe job". That is to say some contract in black and white; increase in salary as they get in order to save against a "rainy day"; some security for the future. Up to coming to India with the Royal Commission on Labour, I too was accustomed to such working conditions and thought. Then my path crossed that of C. F. Andrews, and later your when you came to London—and my sense of values changed. You will recall the talks we had prior to your leaving London when you said that someone was needed here to work on the "mutual understanding between our two countries". For over six years I have been doing this. I suppose it would be true to say that no man or woman has similar task, it fascinates and intrigues people when I tell them how simply it came about. From time to time I am asked questions like this: "To what organisation are you responsible?" I reply, "No organisation—I am responsible to Mr. Gandhi solely." Next comes: "But how is this work financed?" And I tell them that when you require pieces of work done you ask your friends to undergird it financially and that this had been done in my cases. "How do you know it will continue—supposing you do something with which India does not agree—what then?" Or—"You are not getting younger—the work is taking its toll of your health and strength—what about the future?", etc., etc.

Whenever these things are said to me over these years they have often been said—I put forward my philosophy that grows as the years pass. First of all, that though it *seems* an impossible situation in reality it has never *been* so in practice, as any one who works with you well knows. That your only directions to me were—"God will direct your steps" and though I work with many committees—I am free—accounted only to you. On finance, I tell them what I receive, and that it would never

occur to me to take from a country like India, most of whose people are starving, more than I require to meet living expenses and those connected directly with my work. That with regard to my future—I have no fear. If at any time you feel this work is not necessary, you would tell me at once and I should seek other avenues of service.

And I point out that my work leaves no time for thinking of things like this—and that they honestly do not trouble me.

You will see how fundamentally such an attitude differs from that of my questioners, I surmise, that my friends, finding I take this attitude, have felt they must have me from myself!! I fervently echo that prayer: "Oh Lord, save me from my friends." You say I must not "resent" their misguided action. Write frankly at this moment I do. Also that I must not "speculate" as to who it was that has written to you. Naturally I should like to pen this kind of thing down—but will respect what you say.

The whole thing is very distasteful and wrong—though it has been done out of love and concern. I have always had direct access to you. If I were in trouble, I should write quite frankly. I believe you know this.

\*                     \*                     \*

You ask me for a faithful account of my financial position. With the exception of about £20 a year (this sometimes falls to £17 or £18 depending on the rate of interest) that my mother left me when she died in 1931—I am entirely dependent on what I earn. In 1931, when you asked me what it would cost me to live—I said £6 a week. An excessive sum this probably seemed to you—but not perhaps if one has to live in London and above all in variety of circles of influence. This you said would be paid regularly into my bank and this has been done ever since.

When I talked with you then, I had not the faintest ideas how the work would develop—not what the expenses would be. After a year I saw fairly clearly, for I had to take out £100 to meet expenses. You know what happened in 1932, masses of material that came to no one else, came to me to be relayed on to people and organisations. Cables were necessary: the tele-

phone was active; postage was tremendous; expenses for getting to and from meeting and interviews were heavy; my weekly bill for newspapers too. I had to have a pied a terre, where I could file material and letters; a place where people could come to see me; I was sorely in need of secretarial help. I was particularly anxious *not* to build up any organisation; there is too much machinery in the world. I decided to work through existing organisations and to try to be a channel of information and contact; to try to keep myself as free as possible—to be available and vigilant. Instead of having a secretary, I felt the best plan would be to get my sister Ruth to join me. After my mother's death she was free and I knew she could do the work of, and run home, more economically than almost anyone I know—she would be interested in what I was doing and give me secretarial help. If she did this, it would mean she would take no other work.

You were in prison. About this time Henry Polak was coming to India, and as he knew the situation in which I was placed he said he would deal with it when he was there if I prepared a careful estimate of what I thought my expenses would be. I said £10 a month would suffice. Later I heard that this sum would be paid into my account each month, and that the £100 I had drawn out, was repaid to me. A scrupulous account of every penny expended is kept, and for my own satisfaction I ask Henry Polak to go through this account from time to time.

Roughly this is the way this expense money is used. £25 a year goes towards the rent of the room I have for my work. To my sister I pay £1 a week (if I had a secretary I should have to pay three times this amount). Literature, subscriptions to the many organisations through which I work, postage, travelling expenses, telephones, cables, etc. account for the rest. Often the expenses exceed the amount I have—but I manage. For example, last year a friend of mine in Australia who knows how I am placed, sent me some money to take a holiday. As her idea of holiday and mine differ widely as to cost—I turned in the balance for my work. In addition, I am always trying to get the work that I may initiate in the first instance to be carried on by one or other of the organisations who should in the first instance have realised their responsibility for the Indian situation. This goes on the whole time—there is no need

to get into details.

You know that I act as the Hon. Secretary of the Indian Conciliation Group. All the expenses of this work are carried of course by the Group. Every penny of postage; every telephone call, etc. that I incur on its behalf is kept in a separate account. The money for this work—any printing we do, etc. comes out of money that Alexander Wilson collects when we need funds from people who believe in the kind of work we do. This mostly comes from quakers. I therefore have the benefit of this body of men and women behind me. But also a great deal of what I have to do has to be as a *person*—not as secretary of the Group. From long experience I find it quite possible to act in this dual capacity.

Finally, the Servants of India Society, when they asked me to contribute a regular London Letter for *Hitavada* said they wanted to contribute £10 a year towards the expenses incurred over this. As this means going to all kinds of things that reflect the general situation here—I keep a separate account for this too.

This is the cent per cent faithful account you ask for Mahatmaji. In terms of money the amount may seem to you to be much. I can only say I hold what I get as a trust and expend it wisely. Only reference to a daily diary I keep—listening to talks I have—to telephone conversations—going through files of letters—would reveal what is done.

You ask me what my “expectations” are from you. As I am completely in the dark as to what has been said to you—I find myself at a loss to know how to answer this. From what I have stumblingly tried to say in this letter, you will know I have no such thing as “expectations”, *save that in the near future I want the chance to talk with you*. I have felt this need for some months now. When Mr. Birla was here last summer I told him I was very anxious to come to India this year and if I did would he be good enough to let me have a passage on one of his boats. He told me to let him know when I wanted to come. The situation has changed vastly in these months. I would like to review the whole thing with you; to know what you think about the continuance of the work; as to whether it should continue. With a changing India the freedom you have given me and trusted me with—might be challenged. Yet under no other



conditions do I see this work being carried.

Letters are poor things at best—I would like to talk with you. Talks tire you, but if I could come to Wardha and Jamnalalji would let me stay with him as I did before—I could come in and out to Segaon and get a few minutes here and there and so get from you what is on your mind. What I should like to do is to come out fairly soon and take my chance of some talks with you. Then go to a few other places to “see and listen” so that I can know at first hand the changes that are taking place. And I would like to attend the All-India Women’s Conference in December and return here after the Conference.

This is what is on my mind—*not* what you speak of in your letter that my friends have taken on themselves to raise. Have I made it clear? It only remains for me to repeat my deep seated feeling of concern that you, of all people, should have been troubled so unnecessarily like this.

I send you my love and shall look for an answer eagerly. In this you will let me know your views about my coming out for a short visit.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Agatha Harrison

17

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
June 4, 1938

MY DEAR GIANSHYAMDASJI,

I have not been able to write to you for some days now. I do not regret the breakdown of the blessed trade talks. It is only as an independent nation that we can ever negotiate these treaties on honourable terms. It seems Shivarao had a long interview with the Chairman of the Lancashire Delegation and suggested to him that such a Treaty could not be negotiated excepting through the mediation of one in Bapu’s position, and that he should be invited by the British Cabinet, I think he has

told about this to half a dozen people and that is at the root of the canard about Bapu's going to England, and poor Agatha wasted money on a cable asking if there was any likelihood of Bapu's visit to England in the near future!

Thank you very much for the cuttings that you have been sending to me regularly. As regards the MSS of Bapu the *Harijan* MSS are all kept in the *Harijan* office and I really don't want to part with them. Bapu nowadays rarely writes in ink, excepting of course his personal letters. I enclose, however, a telegram on the 2nd sheet of which Bapu has written the reply in his own handwriting in ink; which if you so desire you may pass on to your friend in London.

Bapu apparently looks well. He is in one of those rare and prolonged moods of self-introspection which amount to travail. Part of the ultimate upshot you will see in the enclosed pencil-written circular-letter that is being sent to various friends. It is quite likely that Devdas has already shown it to you. If not you will see it for yourself and let me have your reaction to it.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

## 18

June 10, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Father Elwin has written to me asking for financial help for his Ashram. I have a faint recollection that there was some misunderstanding between him and Bapu on some point. I do not know if Bapu still holds a good opinion about him as he held at one time or he has changed his views. I have not replied to Elwin and until I hear from you, I am not writing to him. Please let me know what is thought of him by Bapu these days.

I received your letter today in reply to a number of mine. You have still to write to me if Bapu had time to go through

the small article that I sent to the *Friend* Please don't bother about it, if you find Bapu extremely busy, I was asking his views for my own guidance and I thought it was an important matter since I have to express views on such matters. Although I do so in my own capacity Yet they carry some amount of weight

With reference to the Gujarati circular, I am writing a separate letter to Bapu in Hindi

With reference to the breakdown in the Indo-British Trade Pact Negotiations I wonder whether Bapu at this stage would like to say something as a warning to those who are busy negotiating a pact between the two countries

We did our best and in fact I persuaded my other colleagues to go to the farthest extent that we could ethically go and yet we did not get any response. In a way, I am relieved because had a pact been concluded, the onus of its justification would have fallen on me. The Lancashire Delegation did appreciate my candour and reasonableness and yet they could give no satisfactory reasons

I had many talks with Shivarao in Simla and I knew that he was talking about Bapu's being invited to London by many men. He wrote to Crozier also. I think his suggestion was not bad but I do not think it would be acceptable. Englishmen are a very conservative and slow-going people and so they cannot take up even a good suggestion

*Yours affectionately*  
Ghanshyamdas

SRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

19

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA,  
June 17, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your letter about the loan for Charkha Sangh. I am afraid the negotiations with the Imperial Bank have fallen through and

you will have to exert yourself to make some arrangements. The Imperial Bank insists on conditions which are obviously unacceptable. They will not allow more than 75 per cent drawings on the *mill* valuation of the actual khaddar stock. The Indian Bank on the other hand has accepted our condition of 50 per cent drawings on the actual cost price of the stock of khadi in our possession. I enclose herewith a full statement of the affairs of the A.I.S.A. in order to enable you to judge the situation and to negotiate with other banks. Our total requirements are 6 lakhs. We have received one lakh and a half from the Bank of India, and so we now need 4½ lakhs.

*Private*

I did not like your letter regarding Bapu's circular—unless of course you have misunderstood it. I do hope you realise that Bapu therein proposes—in fact the prohibition has actually begun—a ban on *all* touch of women, whether for purpose of nursing or for day-to-day routine. He once went to one extreme allowing women to be in the bathroom when he was on the commode or in the bath. The new arrangement goes to the other extreme. I wonder if you accept this other extreme, I have my strong objection to this and much stronger objection to Bapu writing in *Harijan* about these extraordinary experiences of his. There is a limit to declaring even truth from the house-tops. There is a very good French proverb: "Keep your hells to yourself." But perhaps it applies only to humble folks like us and not to extraordinary folks like Bapu.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

20

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA,  
June 24, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your kind letters—the one with the cuttings and the other the private one which I deeply appreciate.

About the President of the Bengal Harijan Sevak Sangh, Bapu is in communication with Satis Babu and as soon as he has a reply from him he will let you know.

You are right in pitying me. I suppose you know that my secretariat means myself. It was Louis XIV's boast that he was the state. Someone asked him what was the meaning of the state. "The state", he said, "I am the state." I can, neither with the same pride nor sense of power indeed without either, say, "I am my Secretariat." But to my usual burden of work is added the worry of a moral and emotional crisis through which I am passing. I may not bother you with the details. "Keep your hells to yourselves" is a very good rule, though I have not always been able to keep it.

I come now to your private letter. I agree in the main with what you say, i. e., so far as ordinary folks like myself are concerned. But I am afraid the emphasis on untouchability as between the sexes is altogether overdone. We seem to be none the better than the West for the almost morbid restrictions and the West none the worse for the lack of them. The wise thing I think is to strike a mean between the two extremes. I think even ordinary mortals like us ought not to fight shy of ordinary necessary contacts *in the open* with members of the opposite sex. I should taboo all clandestine contacts—there you would find me in entire agreement with you. But we must not hold the opposite sex to be something alien and untouchable. Do you know that in old Sparta Lycinus insisted on grown up youths of both sexes seeking one another naked on occasions, in order that the feeling of secrecy and unfamiliarity which morbidly draws people of opposite sexes, might not be encouraged. But after all is said and done, I agree with you that Bapu should be left to be the sole judge of what is necessary for realisation of his spiritual goal. I should not hesitate to plump for even his complete retirement and going into the jungles for that purpose. Though I should personally regret the decision and feel that such a decision would detract greatly from Bapu's own peculiar virtue and character as Mahatma. That he can preserve his peace and equanimity in the crowd and in the dust and tumult of modern life reveals his special quality and will for ever remain his contribution to the world. A decision of the kind I have visualised would considerably

detract from the value of that contribution. The same remarks would seem to apply to the present question. But perhaps here we shall have to agree to differ.

Bapu's b.p. is again soaring high and I have a lurking fear that he is not going to be with us for long. Let *His* will be done. The prisoners' question might drag him again to Bengal.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

21

2 CRANBOURNI COURT,  
ALBERT BRIDGL ROAD,  
S. W. 11,  
July 3, 1938

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

Your letter about your talk with Bhulabhai Desai dated 26th June has just come. (I will deal with what you say about this in a separate letter). I am concerned about the last sentence "I still await your reply to a personal letter I wrote you." *I received this on May 3rd and replied at once*—marking it "Personal" as you had yours to me—and have been wondering ever since why I had had no word from you as to its contents. Here is a copy of what I then said. Though nearly two months have elapsed since I wrote it—I do not want to alter anything I said then. I will register this to ensure that nothing untoward happens.

I dislike thinking—especially as news comes you are very far from well—that you will have to wade through such a long letter.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Agatha

PS. I am sending a copy at once to Lord Lothian—  
shall show it to Jawaharlal (who is with the Dean of  
Canterbury today) and to Earl Heath I will write  
again about all this at once Meanwhile I send this now  
Agatha

22

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHAN(C P),  
July 11, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your kind letter of 6th in that I am grateful to you  
for all that you have written and will do for Urmila Devi's son.  
About the others you will do just what is possible for people  
similarly situated and qualified.

As regards the date and-fruit diet a slight alteration has had  
to be made. Bapu was feeling weaker and he has steadily been  
losing weight. He has, therefore, added Mossambi.

That wretched experience is still obsessing him and he will  
not have peace until he has written about it in *Harjan*. All our  
arguments have helped only to stiffen his attitude and now I  
have given up talking about it. Today is the *Harjan* day and it  
is quite likely that he is writing on the subject whilst I am  
dictating this. I mentioned to him the matter of your coming  
here some time in August. Talks with you are not likely to be  
disturbing and you may certainly come whenever you feel  
like it.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

SYT. G. D. BIRLA  
8 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLACE  
CALCUTTA

23

WARDHA,  
July 14, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The enclosed letter from Agatha and Bapu's reply thereto will speak for themselves. Please assure her of a passage to and back. She is doing good work and obviously giving all her time to India.

Bapu is as well as he can be, looking to the mental strain that he is going through. The article for *Harijan* is ready and will go next Monday. He has taken silence for an indefinite period—until at any rate his doubts are resolved and he found a clue to the wretched experience he had on that dreadful 14th of April.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

24

CALCUTTA,  
July 20, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I have received Agatha's letter and Bapu's reply to the same. You have said in your letter that they will speak for themselves. I fear without the background they themselves cannot tell me the complete story. But you need not bother it because I can read between the lines. Any elucidation on your part will simply add to the burden of your Secretariat.

I am glad Bapu has taken silence for an indefinite period. This undoubtedly will do good to his health.

I hope to be in Wardha some time in August but have not yet fixed the date. I may have to go to Simla also during August after Zafrulla returns and once I know the dates of Simla, I will decide on the dates for Wardha.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA



MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
July 22, 1938

DEAR FRIEND,

Will you kindly give me your detailed reaction to the enclosed letter received by Bapu from a prominent Congressman?

*Yours sincerely,*  
Mahadev

*PS.* Your letter enquiring about Bapu's health is just to hand. Thanks to his silence he is already feeling better and it is intended to maintain it.

Mahadev

"I feel that if the question of the exchange ratio is brought up before the next meeting of the Working Committee, it should not commit itself to any definite opinion on the exact ratio or on the immediate need for changing it without further investigation. I have been discussing the matter with friends here. Their opinion is that, whatever the merits of the case were when the 18 d. ratio was actually introduced, a change over to the 16 d. ratio now will not increase our exports, especially in competitive goods, and further\*that other countries will most probably adopt similar devices. There is not much of our internal prices rising, especially for paddy or wheat or oil seeds. The price of our imported articles will rise, especially in industrial machinery which we are largely importing now, and prices of Indian manufactured goods, especially of piece-goods will correspondingly rise. This is no service to the poor, until *khadi* can supply all our sartorial needs. A few rich people will make large profits by the reduction of the ratio. But on the whole the economic condition of the country will not improve.

"This does not mean that the question does not need full investigation. Indeed I have put down an adjournment motion in the Assembly urging an enquiry into the matter. I therefore suggest that the Working Committee may either

call upon the Government to institute an impartial expert enquiry and publish the results thereof for public opinion to decide which ratio is the best for our country or itself appoint an Expert Committee to go into the question and report. The report may then be published for public criticism and the Working Committee, in the light of that criticism and of the report may decide its course of action."

## 26

CALCUTTA,  
July 24, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I take it that you have sent the "enclosed" letter about ratio for my opinion. I have already given my opinion to Vallabhbai and in a very exhaustive manner. I don't agree with the writer of the letter. In fact, he seems to be a bit biased, looking from the language that he has used. But all the same, I have told Vallabhbai not to take up a very aggressive attitude at present for the reason that I am not quite sure whether nature is going to help the depreciation.

I don't doubt for a moment that a lower ratio would be helpful but I feel that the Congress should not take any hasty step but should watch the conditions before it embarks on a definite policy. Besides, until Federation comes in, I don't see what definitely could the Congress do except agitating. Agitation at this stage may be exploited by interested parties. Taking all these things into consideration, while I would pass a resolution for a lower ratio in the interest of the country, I would not start any aggressive agitation at this stage.

I understand from the Imperial Bank that they have passed a resolution in favour of opening an account with the Charkha Sangh. But if anything further is needed, please write to me.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

27

CALCUTTA,  
July 28, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Khare's exit has not been well received in Bengal, if the leaders in *Patrika* and *Hindustan Standard* are any indication of public opinion. I feel they are since the public in Bengal does not think in a more sensible manner than the editors of these two papers.

Khare deserved the humiliation that he got and no one can say anything in his favour. But I wonder whether a Cabinet consisting of men like Misra is going to look after the country's interest in a better manner than the Cabinet of Khare. But perhaps there were other considerations too. Since, however, Babu took personal interest in the matter, I thought there would be a more stable ministry in C. P.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADI VBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

28

CALCUTTA,  
July 30, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

The decision of the Working Committee in respect of the C.P. ministry is not finding much support even among friends. On the other hand the hostile critics are emptying their vials of wrath on the High Command of the Congress which for all practical purposes, to everyone ignorant of the true position, means Vallabhbhai.

The decision may have been a little harsh but I cannot see how it could be called 'inspired by Fascist spirit' or undemo-

cratic, which seems to be the criticism of friends and foes. People know it that after all the question was left to be decided by the Parliament Committee and it was decided against Khare. But people would not forget that a lead was given by the Working Committee.

The Bengal Press and public opinion seem to be most hostile against Rajaji and Vallabhbhai. On the slightest pretext, without any justification, both of them are made targets of poisonous attacks. But among friends the criticism is inspired by lack of correct appreciation of the position. We are so accustomed to thinking in terms of British politics that we cannot even appreciate how anyone else except Parliamentary Parties in the assemblies could make or unmake ministries.

In respect of the C.P. tangle it appears that the whole decision was taken by Bapu himself but because people have not got the courage to attack Bapu, they pour their anger on Vallabhbhai. A strong impression is gaining ground that Vallabhbhai is not a democrat and Rajaji is scheming.

I feel Bapu alone, by his writing in the *Harijan* can remove such an impression. The enclosed article from the *Leader* is full of attacks against Bapu. But, of course, the *Leader* has developed a malice against Bapu and nothing in the world can remove it. I hope you will read this letter to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEV BHAI DIFSAI  
WARDHA

CALCUTTA,  
July 31, 1938

MY DEAR MIRABEN,

I had heard that you were going back to Segaoon Rajendra-babu told me that it was because of your health. It looks as if we both are sensible to altitude. I lost my appetite in Ranchi

within two hours of my arrival at the place. And I am not quite sure whether even after rains the place will suit you. But let us hope for the best. My zemindari is not far from Ranchi and I will tell you when you go there next time.

I do not agree with Bapu that the Viceroy is trying to put him off. Perhaps the Viceroy knows that he cannot do anything just now and there may be cogent reasons for that. I am not quite sure whether I am likely to meet him in the near future, but if I do so, I will find out the exact position. You might have heard that recently he met Dr. Syed Mohmud and I spoke very highly of Bapu. So, there is something else about which we do not know. I still think that he is a friend but will help in his own way.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SMR. MIRA BEN  
SIGAON

### 30

CALCUTTA,  
July 31, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADI BHAI,

Deliberate misrepresentations are made about the action of the Working Committee even after Bapu's interview. I fear such things will continue in future. Khare's reply to Bapu's interview is not straightforward. Unless much more is written about it by Bapu, this misrepresentation may continue and do great harm to the reputation of the Working Committee and specially of Sardar. On the other hand, I doubt if the Shukla ministry will be able to continue for long. I wonder why an altogether new ministry was not appointed. I don't think there is much to

choose between the two sets although the decision about Khare was the right decision.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

31

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
August 2, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter of the 20th ultimo. The bulk of our Indian Press has gone mad over Khare's affair, and one does not know whom to blame most. Bapu was wholly responsible for the resolution and in all conscience he feels that the resolution might well have been stronger. He is writing a long article in this week's *Harijan* and it will make the Press still angrier. Never before did I realise, as I do now, that we are so badly lacking in political sense. Our wiseacres are talking of Hitlerism and dictatorship, but they little realise that in Italy and Germany anyone would have been shot for the betrayal that Khare has been guilty of.

About the new ministry it is difficult to speak, but there is this thing to say in favour of it that they will be amenable to Bapu.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

INDIA HOUSE,  
ALDWYCH,  
LONDON,  
W.C. 2,  
August 3, 1938

DEAR MADAM,

With reference to your recent interview with me here and your telephone conversation of yesterday, I write to inform you that the Loan Fund Committee considered Mr. Ansari's application for a loan at its meeting yesterday afternoon and agreed to sanction in the first instance a loan of £ 6 to cover his maintenance expenses for a period of three weeks. A cheque for this amount has already been forwarded to Mr. Ansari and he has also been told that his case will be reconsidered by the Committee at its next meeting on Monday, 22nd instant, and he will then be informed what further assistance the Committee will be able to render him. I would, however, take this opportunity of stating that the resources at the disposal of the Loan Fund Committee are very limited, consisting mainly of a subvention of about £ 200 a year from India revenues, small donations from various subscribers amounting to about £ 60 and repayments made by previous recipients of loans which from year to year vary from about, say, £150 to £300. On the other hand, the Committee is required to assist about fifty to sixty students every year who find themselves in financial difficulties for various reasons. In these circumstances the Committee has no other alternative but to render assistance only to those students whose needs are most urgent and even in these cases loans for bare maintenance expenses are made for a very limited period, so as to give the applicant an opportunity of securing funds from his own people at home. I think you will therefore agree that if the Committee had substantial resources placed at its disposal a considerably larger number of needy students could be given assistance much more liberally than is now possible.

I trust I have made it clear that, in the present instance, whilst the Loan Fund Committee will be glad to help Mr. Ansari for a few weeks, he should try his level best to secure

from his relatives in India such funds as he might require for his maintenance and training in this country.

I should also add that, from the reports that have been received here, it would appear that Mr. Ansari has acquitted himself very creditably so far, and it would indeed be a great pity if, owing to lack of resources, he were deprived of the opportunity of concluding his studies and training in this country. Mr Ansari is, however, entitled, according to the regulations, to pursue his clinical training at a recognised Medical School in India and if he does so, and if he complies with the regulations in other respects he could then make an application to return to Cambridge to sit for the Medical Final Examination in due course.

I trust I have made myself sufficiently clear and if there is anything else, I should be glad if you would kindly write to me again

*Yours very truly,*  
Dutt

MISS AGATHA HARRISON  
2 CRANBOURNE COURT  
LONDON, S. W. 11

33

2 CRANBOURNE COURT,  
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD,  
S.W. 11,  
August 4, 1938

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I return the correspondence you sent me, together with a letter that has just come from Mr. Dutt. As soon as your letter came I consulted Henry Polak, and he spoke to Mr. Dutt, but asked me to deal with the matter as he had his mother ill and was going out of town.

First of all I went to talk with Mr. Dutt, and found him very helpful. By ocean mail I have sent two reports. One deal-



ing with the work of the Education Department, and the other with the Students' Loan Fund. This material will, I think, answer the questions you raise.

I explained young Ansari's case and asked whether financial aid could be given. But this fund only gives maintenance for a few weeks. Mr. Dutt at once gave me a form of application and said he was sure that his committee (an unofficial one) would help with a loan. And from his letter you will see that this was done at once.

The next day I went to Cambridge and saw the lad and his mother. Also Mrs. Murray, who has been a true friend to them both. Her husband was the late Master of Selwyn College where Harold has been studying. We talked very frankly. They fully understand the hard place in which Dr. Smith is, and so clearly his financial position. But they really *are in a fix*. Since March, no money has come in. So far all these months they have not known what to do. The stress and anxiety caused Harold to break down and it is a marvel how he managed to get through his examination.

Briefly this is how the matter stands. Unless there is a guarantee that the money for the three years' further training is assured, Harold will find it impossible to get taken into a hospital in October. The cost of this will be at the rate of £300 a year. This is the figure given by the adviser to India students. That means £900. In addition they are at this moment about £100 in debt. This includes a £50 loan secured by Mrs. Murray to help with expenses since March for last terms unpaid, rent rate, food bills, etc., doctor's bill and medicine.

In the last paragraph of his letter I see Mr. Dutt raises the point of Harold's returning to India to finish his studies. I thought you will see he and others do not advise this. You asked me to give you my advice. I want to say with all the conviction I can that this would not be a good plan. I believe it might add to, not solve the difficulty. I came to this conclusion on my own, but when I talked with Mrs. Murray later, I found her as emphatic in this belief as I was. And she has good judgment.

*If this is agreed on—then the next thing to know is whether the money for the three years can be guaranteed from India. You asked me if the loan could be raised here. It cannot be, I am afraid but I understand negotiations are going on for the*

sale of some property in India—will not this secure a large part of the money needed?

In addition to Harold's case, there is Mrs. Ansari to consider. I was impressed at the way she was facing all this with courage and faith. She is far from well herself and I feel she should be assured of some support each week. She lets one of her rooms in the small home they have, and this brings in £14. When Harold goes into hospital she will be able to let another room, and if she had, say, £1 a week, she would be able to manage. Her one desire is to see her son qualified so that he may be able to return and serve India.

So, all this entails a sum of £1,150 to cover their expenses for the three years.

There is an urgency. They are living on borrowed money at the moment. Mr. Dutt, as you will see, says that the case can be considered again on the 22nd. But the money is a loan and will have to be paid back. *The main thing is that no arrangements can be made for Harold's entry into hospital in October until it is known that the money for the three years is assured.*

I hope I have made it clear. I read over what I am saying to Henry Polak over the phone and he agrees with what I have said. I was asked when in Cambridge by Mrs. Murray, if the fact that they are both Christians would create difficulties. I told her that I knew with you it most certainly would not, and that I could not think it would do so among Dr. Ansari's friends. The lad is very like his father. Time and again as I sat with them I was reminded of that loved man and thought how grieved he would be, if he knew of their plight. Harold through the kind offices of Mrs. Murray is having a holiday with some friends of hers. This will set him up in health. And if an answer can come quickly, immediate application for entry into a hospital can be made and this long-drawn-out anxiety put an end to. I think it would be a good plan, if you called as time is factor. Both Harold and his mother are very touched and grateful for your interest in the matter.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Agatha Harrison

*PS.* When I come, I want to take up with you the work that India House does for students. I know there is

frequent comment—sometimes adverse—on its activities  
But there are ways in which this could be strengthened,  
if India would help This can wait till I come

Agatha

34

CAI CUTTA,  
August 5, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADLVBIHAI

I am glad that Bapu is writing in the *Harrison* This may make the Press a bit angrier but eventually, I am sure, it will have a good effect, if Bapu pursues the matter In a totalitarian state, the Press would not be allowed to talk nonsense And yet they say there is dictatorship in the Congress!

You never replied to my letter about the loan to Charkha Sangh I have been informed by the Imperial Bank that they have passed a resolution in favour of giving the loan and, I think this ends the matter

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADLVBIHAI DLSAI  
WARDHA (C P)

35

WARDHA,  
August 8, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Thank you for your kind note Yes, the Charkha Sangh has already begun operation with the imperial Bank and I am to convey the A.I.S A's thanks to you for having negotiated the credit.

Yes, the campaign of vilification of W.C. & Bapu is in full swing, but Bapu will have to bear the brunt. Never did I curse Bapu's stay in Maharashtra more than now. As a people they are a most vindictive and quarrelsome lot, and already one of the scurrilous Marathi paper has been asking youths to finish Bapu. Well, it was Poona which had the rare honour of throwing a bomb on Bapu and I should not be surprised if something nasty happened here too. There is no filthier Press in the world, I think, than Marathi, and they are having their full bout of swaraj to abuse and vilify.

Bapu is keeping well in spite of the strain, and of course he flourishes on abuse.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

36

SFGAON,  
WARDHA,  
August 12, 1938

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

Please go through the enclosure and let me know. I have no desire to utilize the monies you give me in activities of this nature and judging by the amounts I have been using up it may not even be possible for me to save enough for this purpose. Please let me have your uninhibited opinion as to how you feel about the whole thing. Doctor Shaukat has been left with little. Begum Ansari has a small village of her own, but Doctor Ansari's brothers are laying a claim to it. Nobody feels inclined to come to the aid of Harold—that is, nobody except Shaukat and Zohra, Dr. Ansari's daughter. So long as Dr. Ansari was living he invariably extended his helping hand to Harold. I do not know what would be the right thing to do morally. He has poured out his heart in his letter to me.

*Blessings from*  
Bapu

37

SEGAON,  
August 26, 1938

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

You are right. I only wanted to know how you would react to it. As for the boy, the needed amount will be secured from Bhopal. I was feeling a great weight on my mind. Now I feel relieved.

Just as you say, anarchical tendencies are striking roots in the Congress. I have been exerting my utmost to check this development and will, of course continue to do so. The result is in the lap of God alone. But, if our motives are pure whatever we do can only result in something wholesome.

I am very glad, indeed, to learn about Vidyoti Hiji.

The climate here is particularly bad at this time of the year. When it is a shade cooler, you can come down and stay at Segaoon J's cottage is there to accommodate you.

*Blessings from*  
Bapu

38

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
August 27, 1938

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

This taking off Harold Ansari's burden by the Bhopal Nawab is a great load off Bapu's mind. I asked him not to write to you when he wrote but he said, "Ghanshyam will surely write frankly about it, and I will understand his refusal."

His complete silence is helping him. But Mahatma with its most unscrupulous virulent propaganda of lies and hate and violence is trying to the utmost. I do not know what will be the upshot but I have a lurking fear that he might undertake one of those terrible fasts and this time it may exceed 21 days! I

have no basis for my fears but I am simply giving vent to it as it has been oppressing me for some time. Don't you be unnecessarily alarmed? My fear may be quite baseless, but how can I hide it from friends like you? Pyarelal's illness was most trying but he is quite out of the wood.

There is a fair likelihood of the A.I.C.C. being held in Delhi and not in Bombay as announced—in which case we shall have quite a number of days together.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

### 39

August 31, 1938

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

It looks from the papers that the A.I.C.C meeting may be held in Delhi in which case I hope Bapu also will come to Delhi. Will he stay at the Harijan colony or with me? I suppose Sardar and some other Congressmen would stay with me. But I will find it out from them. I am going tomorrow to Delhi and then will go back to Calcutta. But in case Bapu comes to Delhi, I will reach there again about the 21st or 22nd of September.

I hope Bapu has given his advice to Sardar about what he is to advise us in respect of the Indo-British trade pact. The final terms are such as not to infuse any enthusiasm for acceptance. But before saying a final 'no', we decided to consult the trades concerned. It appears the textile industry is rather nervous. It thinks that if it does not accept the terms, then the same may be imposed on it through other methods, that is, through recommendation of the Tariff Board.

We have kept an open mind and have decided to act according to the desire of the country. The trade has been consulted which leaves the matter entirely on us. And now the chief parties to be consulted are the growers and the Congress leaders. Bhulabhai was not definitely against acceptance but if Bapu definitely gives his idea and Sardar wires to us as he has promised to do, then we shall know what to do.

I note that Ansari's son has been helped by Bhopal. Perhaps Bapu wrote to him. Bapu writes to me in his letter that Bhopal's help has taken a great load off his mind. Please tell him that he need not keep any load on his mind concerning finance. So long as I can pay, he can always depend on me to do anything that he desires.

More when we meet.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

40

8 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLACE,  
CALCUTTA,  
October 19, 1938

MAHATMA GANDHIJI  
CARE PREMIER  
FRONTIER PROVINCE  
PESHAWAR

PLEASE WRITE YOUR APPROXIMATE PROGRAMME.

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA

41

CAMP, KOHAT,  
October 21, 1938

DEAR BIRLAJI,

As directed by Bapu I am enclosing a copy of our programme to you. I had given a full summary of the same to the

A.P. I wonder whether you saw it.

Things here as elsewhere are in a pretty mess so far as the political standpoint is concerned. Bapu is hardly taking any interest in it. For we can practically do nothing on this front. But we can successfully outflank it if the Khudai Khidmatgar can be made into what their name dignifies. They present infinite possibilities. The harvest is plentiful indeed but the harvesters are few and there lies the rub. Bapu has presented a programme of training in construction work to create a living nexus between them and the masses, whose natural protectors and champions he expects them to become. Incidentally, he there though fully hopes to be able to solve the question of the trans-border tribes too.

His health is excellent and just what it was at Delhi. He has gained four pounds.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

42

KOHAT,  
October 22, 1938

BIRI A  
ROYAL EXCHANGI PLACE  
CALCUTTA

KOHAT UP TO MONDAY. POSTING PROGRAMME. FINISH NINTH  
NOVEMBER.

BAPU



**Gandhiji's Tour Programme in the Frontier**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Miles</i>
21/10 Friday	8 a m —	Leave Utmanzai for Peshawar	20
	9 a m —	Reach Peshwar	
	1 p m —	Leave Peshawar for Kohat.	40
	5 30 p m. —	Reach Kohat	
22/10 Saturday	[	— 5 Tehsils of Kohat	
23/10 Sunday			
24/10 Monday	1 p m —	Leave Kohat for Bannu	80
	6 p m —	Reach Bannu	
25/10 Tuesday	[	— Program in the district	
26/10 Wednesday			
27/10 Thursday	1 p m —	Leave Bannu for Dera Ismail Khan	90
	6 p m —	Reach Dera Ismail Khan	
28/10 & 29/10		Friday & Saturday Stay at Dera Ismail Khan	
30/10 Sunday	[	Programme in Dera Ismail Khan (Tank & Kulachi)	
31/10 Monday			
1/11 Tuesday	1 p m —	Leave Dera Ismail Khan for Mire Khel	85
2/11 Wednesday	1 p m —	Leave Mire Khel for Peshawar	125
	6 p m —	Reach Peshawar	
3/11 Thursday		— Peshawar Khadi Exhibition at 4 p m	
4/11 & 5/11		Friday & Saturday Stay at Peshawar	
6/11 Sunday	2 p m —	Leave Peshawar for Haripur	90
	6 p m —	Reach Haripur.	
7/11 Monday	2 p.m —	Leave Haripur for Abbotabad	30

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Miles</i>
	4 p.m.	— Reach Abbotabad.	
8/11 Tuesday	1 p.m.	— Leave Abbotabad for Mansera.	20
	2 p.m.	— Reach Mansera.	
	6 p.m.	— Return from Mansera to Abbotabad.	20
	7 p.m.	— Reach Abbotabad.	
9/11 Wednesday	1 p.m.	— Leave Abbotabad for Peshawar.	120
	6 p.m.	— Reach Peshawar.	

## 43

BOMBAY,  
November 7, 1938

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I am asking Bhulabhai Desai to take this letter as he leaves for Delhi tonight. Mathuradasbhai met me and gave me your message about coming straight on. But as the boat was a day late and your wire came suggesting I come on instead to Wardha, I am doing this and leave here on Wednesday. It will be good to see you again. I bring with me all kinds of messages from your friends.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Agatha

*PS.* By a strange coincidence the steward who looked after you when you came to London was my steward. A man called d' Souza, who has given me many messages for you.

SELGAON,  
December 22, 1938

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Herewith I am enclosing you copy of the letter which Bapu sent through you to Subhas Babu

Subhas Babu has written a letter to Bapu saying that his note has "shocked" him Bapu has replied to him at length. But I may not go with the details here.

Bapu is spending like a prodigal the store of health which he had laid up in the N W F P and is now running into debit account, I am afraid And before him lies the grind of one month's programme in Gujarat Bapu admits that it will be a hard grind but he says, he is not going there for rest And then we shall have the Congress and then the Gandhi Seva Sangh meeting They will all exact a heavy toll

I really do wish that the Gujarat tour could be chucked out. I have written to Sarlatji accordingly. But I knew it is crying for the moon.

I frankly, I feel worried.

Yours sincerely,  
Pyarelal

Encl 1

*Strictly Confidential*

SELGAON,  
WARDHA,  
December 18, 1938

MY DEAR SUBHAS,

I must dictate this as I am wilfully blind. Whilst I am dictating this Maulana Saheb, Nalini Babu and Ghanshyamdasi are

listening. We had an exhaustive discussion over the Bengal ministry. I am more than ever convinced that we should not aim at ousting the ministry. We shall gain nothing by a reshuffle. And probably we shall loose much by including Congressmen in the ministry. I feel, therefore, that the best way of securing comparative purity of administration and continuity of a settled programme and policy would be to aim at having all the reforms that we desire carried out by the present ministry. Nalini Babu should come out, as he says, he would, on a real issue being raised and the decision being taken by the ministry against the interests of the country. His retirement from the ministry would then be dignified and wholly justified. I understand that so far as the amendment of the Municipal Law is concerned, separate electorate for the scheduled class is given up. There is still insistence on separate electorate for Mussalmans. I do not know whether opposition should be taken to the breaking point. If the Mussalman opinion is solid in favour of separation, I think, it would be wisdom to satisfy them. I would not like them to carry the point in the teeth of the Congress opposition. It would be then a point against the Congress.

If my opinion is acceptable to you, the release of the prisoners becomes a much simpler matter than it is today. And if this opinion commends itself to you there should be an open declaration about the new policy. This ought to result in easing the tension that prevails in Bengal and Bengal will be automatically free from the state of suspended animation. Maulana Saheb is in entire agreement with this opinion and so are Nalini Babu and Ghanshyamdas.

Love.

Bapu

December 25, 1938

MY DLAR PYRELAL,

Thanks for your letter and the enclosure. I am rather alarmed to read the contents of your letter because when I left Bapu, he was just like a picture of health.

I was not surprised to read what you say about Subhas's letter. I had heard from friends that he got very annoyed with me. He thought that I was responsible for Bapu's letter to him. Just imagine people thinking that anybody could influence Bapu so easily!

You might have seen so many unfounded things appearing recently in the Press about my visit to Wardha and then my going to Bombay. I feel Bapu should write now in the *Harijan* about the attitude that the Congress should adopt in provinces where it is not in a majority. This will dispel a lot of misunderstanding. I thought Bapu did say when I was in Wardha that he would write something in the *Harijan*.

Please inform Bapu that at the request of Nalini I gave him also a copy of Bapu's letter to Subhas. Of course, I told him to treat it as strictly confidential and he promised to do so. He told me that he might have to show that copy in confidence to Lord Brabourne since all sorts of rumours were up in the air and I left the matter to his discretion. But I am sure otherwise he will treat it as a sacred document.

Nalini was feeling extremely happy that he got the advice and guidance of Bapu and I am sure that he is gradually coming under Bapu's influence. You know Nalini's career in the past has not been very clean but under Bapu's influence he may reform himself. And if that happens, it will be a great gain.

I hope you will pass on the contents of this letter to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. PYARELAL  
SEGAON

SEGAON,  
December 30, 1938

DEAR GIANSHYAMDASJI,

I have both your letters.

I have handed to Bapu the cuttings which you have enclosed.

Subhas had a preliminary talk with Bapu. Then he fell ill and is at present confined to bed with inflammation of the sinusitis. He is being competently looked after. I think he will see the reasonableness of Bapu's standpoint.

The Sardar has again scored in his usual manner. The victory however is still too nebulous and unless it can be consolidated, it might slip through our hands. But the grass is not being allowed to grow under the feet. You must have seen the news about the monster petition signed by 40,000 persons demanding the exit of the White Dewan. If he goes and a proper person takes his place, all will be well.

We leave tomorrow for Bardoli. It is going to be a big party. Devdas has promised to join in for a few days on his way to Bombay in the second week.

We are having a party of 18, headed by Muriel Lester—the back wash of the Tambaram flood.

The R.C. Bishop of Nagpur has spread his ramifications in Segaoon. Bapu has set his foot down firmly upon it which has of course sent the worthy Bishop into a holy rage. Most probably the correspondence between him and Bapu will be released to the Press, in case the Bishop raised no objection. In any case I shall send you a copy.

The doings of the White Dewan of Rajkot who tried to brow beat and bully the Dewan makes a fascinating tale. Since they are recorded in correspondence they too will make a most revealing reading when they are published.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

## Letters without Date

47

### The Greatest Act

(By M.K. Gandhi)

Inasmuch as prohibition has been one of the chief planks of the Congress since the inauguration of the non-co-operation movement in 1920, and thousands of men and women have had to suffer imprisonment and physical injury in furtherance of this cause, the Working Committee is of opinion that it is incumbent upon the Congress ministries to work for this end. The Committee expects them to bring about a total prohibition in their respective provinces within three years. The Working Committee appeals to the ministries in other provinces, and to the Indian States also, to adopt this programme of moral and social uplift of the people.

I regard this resolution as the greatest act of the Working Committee at any time of its chequered career. The cry of prohibition has always been fashionable. In 1920 it became one of the chief constructive items of the Congress. The Congress, therefore, could not but go in for total prohibition immediately it came into power in any part of India. The ministers had to have the courage to sacrifice over eleven crores of revenue in the six provinces. The Working Committee has taken the risk for the sake of redeeming its pledge and conserving the moral and the material welfare of those who are addicted to intoxicants and narcotics. It is my fervent hope that the five provinces which have non-Congress majorities will not hesitate to follow the example of the six provinces. It is less difficult for them than for the six provinces to achieve prohibition. And is too much to expect the states to fall in with British India?

I know that many are sceptical about prohibition being achieved. They think that the financial lure will be too strong

for them to resist. They argue that the addicts will procure their drinks and drugs anyhow and that when the ministers discover that prohibition means more loss of revenue without any appreciable diminution in the consumption, though illicit, of drinks and drugs, they will resort to the tainted revenue and the then state will be worse than the present.

I do not share any such fear. I believe there is the requisite moral momentum in the nation to achieve the noble end. If prohibition is to be a reality, we shall begin to see the end not with the end of the three years, but inside of six months. And when the reality dawns upon India, those provinces or states that have lagged behind are bound to bow to the inevitable.

We have the right, therefore, to expect the sympathy and support not only of all the parties in India including the Europeans but the best mind of the whole world in this, perhaps the greatest moral movement of the century.

If then, prohibition is to mean a great moral awakening in India, the closing of liquor shops should merely mean the indispensable beginning of the movement ending in the complete weaning from drink and narcotics of those poor people and some rich people whom the habit has ruined, body and soul. Such a consumption cannot be brought about by mere state effort. At the risk of repetition of what is stated by Mahadev Desai in his weekly Notes let me summarise what should, in my opinion, be the comprehensive programme:

1. A drink drug map showing locality of liquor and opium shops in each province.
2. Closing them as liquor shops on the expiry of the licences.
3. Immediate earmarking of liquor revenue, whilst it is still being received, exclusively for the purpose of prohibition.
4. Conversion, wherever possible, of the liquor shops into refreshment and recreation rooms in the hope that the original visitors will continue to use them, liquor contractors being themselves persuaded to conduct them if they will.
5. Employment of the existing excise staff for detection of illicit distillation and drinking.



6. Appeal to the educational institutions to devote a part of the time of teachers and students to temperance work.

7. Appeal to the women to organise visits to the persons given to the drink and opium habits.

8. Negotiation with the neighbouring states to undertake simultaneous prohibition.

9. Engaging the voluntary or, if necessary, paid assistance of the medical profession for suggesting non-alcoholic drinks and other substitutes for intoxicants, and methods of weaning the addicts from their habit.

10. Revival of the activities of the temperance associations in support of the campaign against drink.

11. Requiring employers of labour to open and maintain under first-class management, refreshment, recreation and educational rooms for the use of their employees.

12. Today tappers to be used for drawing sweet today for sale, as such, or conversion into gur. I understand that the process of collecting sweet today for drinking, as such, or for making gur is different from the one for fermenting today.

So much for the campaign against drink and drugs.

Now as to how to make up for the loss of revenue in some provinces to the extent of one third? I have unhesitatingly suggested cutting out the educational budget for which purpose mainly the excise revenue is used. I will maintain that education can be made self-supporting. With this I must deal elsewhere. It cannot be made so in a day, even if the possibility of its being self-supporting is accepted. Existing obligations have to be met. Therefore fresh sources of revenue have to be tapped. Death duties, tax on tobacco including "bids", have already been given as some suggestions. If these are considered impossible of immediate accomplishment, short-term loans may be devised to tide over the deficit, and even if that fails the Central Government should be approached to curtail the military budget and give the provinces the proportionate grant. The demand would be irresistible, especially if it is demonstrated by the Provincial Governments that they do not need the military, at any rate, for their internal peace and tranquillity.

**48**

**Interview to Press Drafted by Gandhiji for Us**

We had a long and heart to heart discussion with him. He has made it clear that his fast is wholly against separate electorate in any shape or form. If and when it is withdrawn his fast will cease. As to substitute we discussed many formulæ but he says we shall discuss these with our colleagues. It is satisfactory for us to know clearly the condition of the fast. He has asked us to state emphatically that his fast must not be used to coerce anybody to change his opinion against his will. He told us that he had sent to the Government four days ago a full statement for publication expressing his views. On enquiring whether he had any communication from R.B. Raja he said he had not. But he was giving whilst we were talking a letter from Mr. Rajbhoj to which he said he would send a reply as early as possible.

**49**

**Co-operative Production of Coconut Oil as Rehabilitation and Relief Measure**

The experiment of organising production of coconut oil as a cottage occupation is being tried by us to provide relief to poor people in riot affected villages round about Bhatialpur centre. The enterprise is being carried out through what is intended to develop into a multipurpose co-operative society. Four rupees per seer is the price paid to members. Non-members will get Rs. 3 per seer only. One of the conditions of membership is that one should become self-sufficient in the matter of clothing for himself and his family; for we do not want to put money into leaky pockets to benefit black marketeer in cloth. To this end each member is required to learn spinning and the allied processes himself and make members of his family do the same and grow at least four plants of cotton for each delivery of by

the co-operative society, and distribute free to those who spin for themselves. Till an oil producer qualifies himself for membership by delivering the stipulated self-grown cotton, the additional one rupee per seer will remain with the society as his share capital deposit.

Cocoanut oil production will thus immediately put some money into the pocket of the needy who are willing to work. To give them their money's worth, it is proposed to provide such of them as will put in two hours' free labour for common good, one seer of rice at control price. Free service at present consists in helping to repair village communications, build new roads, bridges, etc., clear tanks and above all grow more food in their own and other people's badi, by planting Jalkachu and introducing *pani phal* (singoria) in tanks which are at present choked with weeds and good for nothing else.

The second part of the scheme would be to utilise by-products by manufacturing useful articles out of cocoanut shell, coir and preserving the choba and maska as a stand by in time of famine. Cocoanut shell can be turned into beautiful tea-cups, sugar-pots, etc., as experiments conducted by Kazir-khil camp have shown, coir can be turned into string which is at present selling at Rs. 2-8-0 per seer and is in universal demand in these parts as an indispensable hut-building material, cocoanut shell can further be manufactured into battons. Choba and maska preserved by the addition of sugar or gur or by salting and dehydration represents the entire nourishing content of cocoanut which is nature's complete food. The only thing that is reduced is oil content which is found in excess for the human requirement in the natural state. To put this part of the scheme into operation will be needed a few machines and the help of a technical expert to teach the various manufacturing processes to the people.

So far only the first part of the scheme and a very small part of the second has been put into operation. Cocoanut oil production was started on the 17th of April. Production for the first fortnight was only 4 seers and odd. It was suspended on 12th June, the production for the closing and the penultimate weeks respectively being 16 and 14 tins of 15 seers each, equivalent to Rs. 1,216 and Rs. 1,064. The total amount of oil produced so far is nearly 50 tins worth Rs. 3,800. It gave occupa-

tion in the closing stage to 130 families, 97 being Hindus and 33 Mussalmans and in fact was the only thing that stood between them and starvation. It enables a woman to earn about Rs. 2-2-0 per day, total amount put into the pockets of the poor during the one month and a half that it was in operation came to about 1,600 rupees, the amount of share capital deposit with the co-operative society being nearly Rs. 900. Some women have accumulated amounts up to Rs. 20-30 which they had never done in their life before—all this in one month.

Under self-help and self-sufficiency part of the scheme 6,581 jail cochus, 420 tan cochus, 650 cotton plants plus 320 cotton seedlings have been successfully grown so far and are estimated to yield 350 mds. of tubers for food and 1950 lbs of lint equivalent to 8700 yards of cloth.

Oil is delivered by the producers almost throughout the week but principally on the two market days, viz., Monday and Friday. Payment is made on the spot, to enable them to make their weekly purchases of household requirements and to procure a supply of cocoanuts for extracting oil. Coconut market subsequently went up from 8 and 10 cocoanuts for the rupee to 5 only thus making coconut oil production almost uneconomical. If production is to be resumed, we must not only have a sufficient cash advance in hand to cover the price of the oil delivered and received at our centre during the fortnight but also to enable us to stock a sufficient supply of cocoanuts to protect the producers from the fluctuations of the biweekly local market, and to give them the benefit of cheap coconut market in Lakshmipur or elsewhere whenever favourable opportunity may present itself. We must have cash advance to enable us to purchase a sufficient supply of tins or screw cap barrels and to engage a tinker for sealing them as soon as they are filled and to meet the expenses of transporting tins from Karaikhil to Comilla, Chandpur or elsewhere. The following is a rough estimate of the minimum cash advance required to work the scheme on the basis of a fortnightly delivery of oil against cash payment. A more frequent delivery would be uneconomical.

Price of oil to be paid to the producers at the rate of Rs. 4 per seer on a fortnightly estimate of 40 tins of nearly 19 seers each...	...	3,000-0-0
For stocking cocoanuts	...	500-0-0
For the purchase of tins, engaging the services of tinker	...	200-0-0
Other incidental charges, e.g., stocking fuel for the preservation of choba and maska during the rainy weather installing pans and ovens for those who are too poor to own the necessary implements themselves	...	300-0-0
	Total:	4,000-0-0

*NB.* All this will be non-recurring charge as the cost of tins, transport of oil, sealing of tins, etc. Is to be in addition to the Rs. 4 per seer that is to be paid against the delivery of oil at Commilla.

### Economics of Coconut Oil Production

Three Rupees will fetch from 18 to 34 cocoanut. Turned into hubbles in the crude state will fetch from Rs. 11 As. 2 to Rs. 4 As. 8. They will fetch much more, if further processed at home. Present selling price of coir string is Rs. 2-8-0 per seer. Eighteen cocoanuts will give one seer of coir string and will take two days for the manufacture.

Present market price of cocoanut oil is Rs. 3-8-0 per seer. Net income in three days from all the processes, is Rs. 3-2-0.

### Production in Percentage on Different Prices

Price per yard	Percentage
-/6/-	1
-/4/-	2
-/3/6	4
-/3/-	10
-/2/6	15
-/2/6	23
-/2/-	45
Average	100%

2.37 annas per yard excluding 5% commission.

**Note on Conversation with Nazimuddin**

(1) Message to Mahatma Gandhiji:

By end of March no man shall be in Jail, either released or home or village domiciled. But Gandhiji should not misunderstand that the work was finished before he came.

(2) Atmosphere: If Hindu Press controlled, he can guarantee Muslim Press. Lotus and Shree in University irritating.

(3) Discussion of Hindu-Muslim question. Separate Organisation necessary. If merged in Congress, position becomes weak. Will not logical result of aloofness be recrimination from both sides. He did not agree.

(4) What is the bone of contention? Award is settled. It is the mentality of Hindus, he says. Example, Dacca University because Executive composed half Hindu, half Mahomedan although among students, professors and everything Hindus dominate. Primary education opposed. Calcutta Corporation, Hindus did nothing. Congress ministry have not taken real Mussalmans, to which I asked whether Bengal ministry have taken real Hindus. His contention was that there was no spirit of concession.

(5) What could be the basis of agreement. He could not say in detail but education, service most important. Musalmans are backward, they must be brought forward. Hindus should develop conciliatory tendency. They should make concession liberally.

(6) I asked, "Would not position in Bengal be strong, if Hindu ministers were real representatives?" But he says coalition not possible unless there is understanding between the Musalmans and the Congress. "Why not begin an agreement in Bengal?", I said. He thought perhaps that would be the best way.

**1939**





January 1, 1939

PUJYA BAPU,

Jamnalalji returned from Sawai Madhopur to this place. Number of friends were also invited from Jaipur to review the position. After hearing everything, I thought it necessary to see Glancey. I did not know him before. But at my request he immediately granted me an interview although he was going on tour in a day or so. I explained the whole position to Glancey. He asked a number of questions about Jamnalalji, but to my great surprise I found that he had nothing to say against him, and yet he had got the ban imposed. In fact he asked me what was against Jamnalalji, and I told him that the funniest part of the whole business was this that while neither Jaipur nor Delhi had anything against Jamnalalji yet they have imposed this ban. I told him that Jamnalalji would not obey the order indefinitely. He has promised to reconsider the position. I cannot say what he will do because he did not give out his mind at all. He made a remark that Jamnalalji acted very wisely in obeying the order. This remark added with the fact that he had nothing against Jamnalalji may lead us to the inference that he will withdraw the ban. I have also again written to the Viceroy and let us hope for the best.

My advice was sought by Jamnalalji and I have given him the following advice:

As regards the ban he should address a letter to the Jaipur authorities and give them sufficient time to withdraw the ban. If they do not comply with his suggestion, then after a certain period he should definitely break it.

But I have suggested to him that his breaking the ban should not be the beginning of a mass satyagraha. I am not ignorant about the situation in Jaipur and while I know that hundreds are very eager to start satyagraha there, I do not think there are even half a dozen persons who have imbibed the spirit of satyagraha. They are very eager to break the law

just now because they think that the situation just now is most favourable for starting a campaign of 'no rent'. There is a widespread famine in Jaipur, and a great discontent prevails among the peasants. Even without anybody doing anything, there may be trouble. But if there was someone to incite them, trouble becomes a certainty. While they think this is a strong point, I think it to be a weak point. I therefore advised Jamnalalji that even if on a certain issue satyagraha had to be started, it should be confined to only few selected persons. But you know the technique of satyagraha better and therefore you have to decide what they have to do. The Jaipur authorities still seem to be eager to carry on negotiations with me. Young phoned to me from Jaipur serving notice on Jamnalalji and was practically apologising. It was at his suggestion that I sought an interview from Glancey although I have never met him before. I understand Beauchamp is leaving Jaipur very soon. He would be replaced by Lothian or some other Englishman. Young thinks the next man would be better man than Beauchamp. In my opinion Beauchamp is more a fool than a wicked man. I found Glancey also was hopelessly misinformed. Jaipur undoubtedly is a most backward state from the point of view of administration. The public opinion, I have no doubt, is wakening up. But it is not well organised and no one has done any constructive work in Jaipur worth the name. Hiralal Shastri is very sincere and brave man, but he is a bit rash and self-opinionated. You will meet all these friends and will give them such advice as you think fit. Jamnalalji asked me to write to you my views and so I have done. One thing more. I feel you might write something about Jaipur in the *Harjan*, would you touch the question of my College in case you decide to write about Jaipur? That too is a long standing injustice.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

2

Jaipur

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The Reader should know the distinction between the Jaipur struggle and the Rajkot one.

The Rajkot struggle is frankly for responsible Government within the State and is now for redeeming the Ruler's promise to his people. Every man and woman of Rajkot, if they have any stuff in them, will be reduced to dust in resisting the dishonourable conduct of the British Resident.

The Jaipur struggle is on a very small and narrow issue. The one political association of Jaipur has been virtually declared illegal for the offence of pleading for responsible Government and its president, himself a resident of Jaipur, has been put under a ban. The civil disobedience struggle will cease the moment the bans are lifted and the right of free association, holding public meeting, etc. is conceded. But here again the British lion has opened out his big claws. The British Prime Minister of Jaipur had a chat with Barrister Chudgar, legal adviser of Rao Rana of Sikar. He reported to Seth Jannalalji the following purport of the talk:

I understand it my duty to inform you that during my interview with Sir Beauchamp St. John, Prime Minister of Jaipur, in connection with Sikar Affairs on the 9th inst., at about 11 a.m. at his bangalow Natanika Bagh. I had some discussion with him regarding the Jaipur situation. The following is the substance of the discussion.

I told Sir Beauchamp that the ban against your entry into Jaipur State territories came as a painful surprise to millions of people all over India, particularly because you are well known to be a man of peace and your mission was to supervise and direct famine relief activities in the famine-stricken parts of Jaipur state. To this Sir Beauchamp replied that he agreed that you are a man of peace but you and your men's visit, he thought, would bring you and your men in contact with masses in the famine stricken areas and this he did not like for obvious political reasons. I told him

that you cannot be expected to submit to the order for an indefinite period and that it would be better in the interests of the state and the people, in view of the statement you have published in the Press after you had been served with the order, if the order were recalled so that unnecessary trouble may be avoided. He was adamant and he said that he was prepared to meet any situation that might arise if you disobeyed the order. He said the Congressmen are out for a revolution by means of a non-violent struggle. But non-violence he said was a force as powerful or perhaps more powerful than violence. He further said Indians were playing upon the humane instincts in the English race but if there was Japan or Herr Hitler instead of the English in India we could not have succeeded so well with our non-violence.

He then said that it was his considered opinion that non-violence however strict must be met by violence and his reply to the non-violent movement in Jaipur would be the 'machinegun'. I pointed out to him that all Englishmen were not of his way of thinking and even the English race as such would not agree with him. He said, "that may or may not be so" but personally he was of the opinion that there was no difference between non-violence and violence and that there would be nothing wrong in using violence against non-violence.

If you or Mahatmaji desire to make use of this statement I have no objection.

I considered it to be so startling that I referred it to the Prime Minister in the following letter.

### 3

BARDOLI,  
January 18, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

My first thought was to publish the accompanying letter purporting to describe your attitude with regard to the ban on

Seth Jammalalji's entry into Jaipur State. But on second thoughts I felt that my purpose would be better served by sending you a copy of Shri Chudgar's letter and inviting your opinion on it. My purpose is to promote harmony between the princes and the people who are obliged in one way or the other to come in contact with them to secure justice wherever possible by friendly negotiation. And now that I have felt the necessity of writing to you, whatever may be your opinion on Shri Chudgar's letter, I would like to suggest to you that the bans upon Seth Jammalalji and his organisation might be removed without endangering the peace of Jaipur state. Indeed I feel that peace is certainly endangered by the bans

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. Gandhi

SIR BEAUCHAMP ST. JOHN  
PRIME MINISTER  
JAIPUR STATE

4

JAIPUR,  
January 20, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I write to acknowledge your kind letter of the 18th instant, enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr. Chudgar to ~~Seth~~ Jammalal Bajaj. Your hesitation in publishing it before you had ascertained of its contents was a wise step, which I personally much appreciate, as I am now able to inform you that its description of my views is completely erroneous. I am unable to understand how Mr. Chudgar so misunderstood me, and I may say that this incident confirms me in my hesitation to grant any such interview in future.

Now that you are aware of the facts, I am sure your reluctance to publish such a letter will be confirmed. Should however,

you decide otherwise, I shall be glad if you can inform me as soon as practicable so that I can take suitable action.

With renewed thanks for your consideration,

*Yours sincerely,*  
Beauchamp St. John

5

BARDOLI,  
January 22, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of the 18th instant. I had expected your version of the interview, if you repudiated Shri Chudgar's version. The matter is too important to be dropped by me. I shall gladly publish your version together with Shri Chudgar's, if you so wish.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M.K. Gandhi

SIR BEAUCHAMP ST. JOHN  
PRIME MINISTER  
JAIPUR STATE

6

JAIPUR,  
January 25, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your letter of the 22nd instant. I am sure you will sympathise with me in natural hesitation to make a record of an interview which was understood to be private and personal when the other party to the interview has already threatened to publish an erroneous version. Such a procedure can, as I am sure you will agree, only lead to acrimony, and so

far as I can see, serve no useful purpose.

Should, however, Mr. Ghudgar see fit to publish his erroneous version, I am sure you will give me due warning so that, as I have already said I may take suitable action.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Beauchamp St. John

7

BARDOLI,  
January 27, 1939

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for yours of the 25th inst.

I am afraid I cannot sympathise with you in your hesitation. The report Shri Chudgar has sent is too valuable not to be published. My concern was to see that I did not give currency to a report whose accuracy could be successfully challenged.

I am in correspondence with Shri Chudgar and if he adheres to the report he has given to Seth Jamnalalji. I may feel compelled to publish it in the interest of the cause of the people of Jaipur.

I have not understood the meaning of "suitable action" to be taken by you in the event of publication of Shri Chudgar's version.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M.K. Gandhi

SIR BEAUCHAMP ST. JOHN  
PRIME MINISTER  
JAIPUR STATE

8

BARDOLI,  
January 28, 1939

MY DEAR JAMNALALJI,

I have read the correspondence between Mahatmaji and Sir W. Beauchamp St. John ending with Mahatmaji's letter to him dated the 27th instant. I have carefully read my letter to you dated the 15th inst. again and I say that what I have stated in that letter is a substantially correct reproduction of the conversation between me and Sir Beauchamp.

*Yours sincerely,*  
P.L. Chudgar

The Prime Minister's letter have made strange reading. I had asked for bread, he has sent me stone. He will pardon me, if I believe Shri Chudgar's version unless he can give his own version. His mere denial accompanied by a threat carries no weight.

The Congress cannot wait and watch whilst it has the power, and allow the people of Jaipur to die of mental and moral starvation especially when this denial is backed by the British might. If the Prime Minister has no authority to do what he is doing let him at least be recalled.

• M.K. Gandhi

BARDOLI,  
30-1-1939

9

January 21, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Sir Daniel Hamilton writes to me that middle of February would suit him better. I am also thinking of seeing the Viceroy about the Jaipur affairs, if it is possible, after he returns here.



Thus, middle of February will suit myself and Sir Daniel both. He says he will not be at Gosaba<sup>1</sup> at the end of January.

You remember how Bapu told you that I may not be able to go to Gosaba at the end of January and that perhaps I may have to see the Viceroy. How the prophesy is turning out to be correct! I wonder whether it was intuition.

I dreamed last night that I was with Bapu when he suddenly fainted for a minute. Then he asked me to bring you immediately and you were brought. He was all right after that. I did not like the dream but I do not believe in dream superstitions. I hope Bapu is perfect.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYR. MAHADEVBHAI DLSAI

<sup>1</sup>Gosaba is a place in Sundarban where Sir Daniel was working.—  
G.D.B.

## 10

BARDOLI,  
January 24, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your kind letter of the 21st. I am glad you have mentioned Sir Daniel Hamilton's correspondence with you. I have had a rarely unpleasant correspondence with him regarding what I thought would be interpreted as proselytising tendencies in his estate, e.g., the prescribing of the Lord's Prayer in Hindu schools, a religious manual made up of extract from the Bible, decorating of school walls with Bible pictures and Bible texts and so on. He is perfectly honest man, but he has idiosyncrasies that he can not easily outgrow. In fact he is too old to do so. I have a wholesome fear that much of the good work that he has done and is still doing will be ruined by missionaries as soon as he is no more. But I shall send you copies of the correspondence as soon as I can do so. In view of the correspondence I

do not think I need accompany you, but it would be well for you—so Babu thinks—to go.

What a dream you had! When we have unpleasant dreams, we should put on them a contrary interpretation! Babu is really well and getting through more work than you or I could expect him to do. I was present with Devdas when he talked to you on the phone last evening. So you have practically all the news about the happenings here. The question of the Indian states is absorbing the bulk of Babu's and Sardar's time. He has given today a very important interview to the *Times of India* man, which I expect will be shared by *The Hindustan Times*. In that case you will see it ere this is in your hands. If it is not shared, Devdas and I propose to conduct a similar interview for *H.T.* out of the same material.

How long are you staying there? I propose, as soon as possible, undertake a dietetic experiment consisting exclusively of cow's milk, cow's ghee, honey and *anulus*. I am wondering if I could do it at your place in New Delhi? Of course your presence is not essential, but could I stay there and have all my needs supplied in your absence? It is a 40 day's experiment.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

## 11

NEW DELHI,  
January 25, 1939

MY DEAR ~~Mrs.~~ RADHIBHAI,

Will you kindly remind Babu about the date that he has to fix for opening the Shri Lakshminarayan Temple here. He had promised to come immediately after the Congress and now the definite date has to be fixed up.

I have again seen the Secretary of the Political Department regarding Jaipur. He had nothing to say against Jamnalalji. He had therefore no argument except that the matter was one about which final decision had to be taken by the Durbar alone. I told him that it was useless to put blame on the Durbar since

the Durbar was a mere nominal head. He in the end promised to write to the Durbar which may mean anything. But I feel that the way in which Bapu has taken up this question is bound to have its effect. I am now waiting here only to see the Viceroy.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
BARDOLI

12

January 26, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>, Secretary of the Muslim League, is a friend of mine. I have got very high opinion about him. So far as I know, he is a straightforward man of Progressive ideas. Whenever we meet, we talk about the communal question. He told me in Simla and repeated it again during my recent meeting with him that he strongly felt that the communal question could very easily be solved at this stage because so far as he could see, the only issue was that the Muslim ministers should be such as commanded confidence of the Muslims and the Muslim League. Although the Muslim League does not officially say so, but he says from his inner knowledge that if there would have been a negotiation, the only important point that would have been discussed would be the question of a coalition ministry wherever the Congress is in power. I told him that I was not quite sure whether it was such a simple thing and that personally I did not believe that it was ever possible to have a complete rapprochement. But I suggested at the same time that it might be helpful if he met Bapu quietly and informally. He liked the idea subject to this that the thing would not go to the Press. That, of course, is possible. He said

<sup>1</sup>Liaquat Ali was later P.M. of Pakistan.—G.D.B.

he would even acquaint Jinnah that he was going to see Bapu during his stay in Delhi.

Please let me know if it would be possible for Bapu to see him. I am sure Bapu would like the man and if he decides to spare time for him, he should give him at least an hour for a full talk.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADIVBHAI DESAI  
BARDOLI

### 13

January 26, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I enclose this most nauseating letter published in the *Spectator* of December 30. The writer is, I believe, the same man who was exposed by Vallabhbhai a few months back. Isn't he the same man? I feel as if I should reply to this letter.

With reference to the men that died in Wardha, Paranjpye must have known that you had replied to the charges in *The Hindustan Times*. But I don't know what are these recently published letters to an unmarried young woman devotee. I feel that this should not go unreplied. I wonder what you have to say about it.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADIVBHAI DESAI  
BARDOLI

January 26, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Why do you want to embark on a dietetic experiment which seems to be so irrational? I can understand your remaining on cow's milk and honey and even a few *anwlas*, but for God's sake, don't think of ghee when you are not on solid diet. Even honey has got some fat and I very much fear the consequence of such an experiment. I am sure you are going to consult Bapu, if you have not already done so.

If you do finally decide in spite of my advice to the contrary, certainly all your needs would be supplied in my absence and you are welcome to make this experiment at the Birla House, New Delhi. Please let me know when you are likely to start this and I will make necessary arrangements. But reconsider my suggestion. The best experiment for the sake of health could only be fruit and milk. And if you live only on *anwlas* and milk, there may be nothing wrong about it. But adding ghee and honey, I don't like.

I am staying here till the 31st. Jammalalji is likely to come on that day and so I am waiting partly for him too. I would have gone earlier but before leaving I wanted to have a talk with the Viceroy, if possible. The Indian states problem is taking, in my opinion, a very ugly turn. So far as I know, the policy is not of the Viceroy. He is reported to have said that his "instruments were not acting true" which means that the officials are not carrying out his policy. In any case, I will know more in a few days and I am going to have a very frank talk. I have no doubt in my own mind that the Viceroy is an honest man. But what he told me to Bapu does not tally with the actions of the various officials of the political Department.

About my visit to Daniel Hamilton's place, you have chilled my enthusiasm. I have no desire to make an independent enquiry if you have come back disappointed.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

15

SWARAJ ASHRAM,  
BARDOLI,  
January 27, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your note of the 25th. It is difficult to give you the date today—especially because everything is in the dark about Tripuri. It all depends on who becomes the President! If Subhas succeeds Bapu may not even go to Tripuri. If Pattabhi succeeds he will go. So I can give you the date only after the result of the election on the 29th. If you like I will send you a wire. My brother is all right. Bapu leaves here on the 1st, but may have to return to finish the uncompleted programme.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

16

BARDOI I,  
January 28, 1939

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I am herewith enclosing you a letter from Shrimati Chandobibi enclosing a copy of a letter she addressed to you. Bapu would like you to send him a line, if you feel like saying anything.

Bapu is being made to burn his candle at both ends. The h.p. daily goes up to 186/108, comes down to 166/100 at noon and in the evening again attains the morning level. There has been a slight permanent rise in the dyastolic pressure as you will note. And according to Dr. Jivaraj Mehta a distinct hypertrophy of the heart is noticeable. But these things are inevitable in the long end and one has to accept them philosophically.

With regards,

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

BARDOLI,  
January 29, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Haribhau left yesterday evening with all the papers. Bapu's own comment on summary of the telephone talk I gave him, was this: "If they think that the problem is so urgent and that the atmosphere should be kept calm, and yet remain so abysmally ignorant of affairs, should they not seek an early opportunity of contact with me? Ghanshyamdas should make this abundantly clear to them." I wanted to convey this to you by phone, but you could not be got on the phone last night.

You are unnecessarily alarmed about my dietetic experiment. It is sufficiently scientific to have received Bapu's heartiest approval, and out of the four places where it could have been gone through—Sabarmati, Nasik (Walchand's zamindari), Segaoon and your place—and Bapu has plumped for your house. For several reasons:

- (1) cold climate which is necessary for the experiment;
- (2) good cow's milk and ghee;
- (3) work which could be got through, through my stay there. The last consideration was uppermost in his mind, but he was doubtful about good cows. I said to him that you had good cows and that I specially liked your milk. Then, he said, there should be no difficulty. I leave here on the 1st expecting to be there on the 2nd. I hope this will meet with your approval. My wife and boy will be with me. Will you kindly send me a telegram of approval?

Yours,  
Mahadev

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C.P.),  
January 30, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSIYAMDASJI,

Things are moving fast and Bapu cannot be expected to remain silent. Look at the enclosed copy of Bapu's latest article on Jaipur. It is being posted to *Harijan* today. You would perhaps like to show it to Laithwaite.

Regarding Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Bapu says he will gladly see him when he comes to Delhi.

The Congress President election is a most disagreeable surprise. At first though Bapu, as I wrote to you, did say that he would not go to the Congress, but on second thoughts he thinks it would be churlish not to go. The Schism has got to be faced and if the Gandhians have to retire they should do so with proper ceremony. The temple opening therefore may be fixed for the 16th or 17th whichever date suits you and your *shastris*. Tripuri cannot keep him beyond the 15th.

Yes, that Jenkins is that scamp of Poona. He has no reputation to lose. Everyone in India knows him. It is a great pity that the *Spectator* should publish a letter from this disreputable scamp. The Sardar and Jawahar exposed him well enough and Bapu says it would be no use demeaning oneself by replying to him.

When is Devdas returning to Delhi?

If I begin the milk experiment under your roof, as I hope to do, I will have to say until the 7th or 10th of March. My wife and my boy will accompany me.

Yours affectionately,  
Mahadev



19

NRW DIIHI,  
January 30, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I met Lathwaite last Saturday and after that I asked you to send me all the papers relating to Jaipur, Rajkot and Bapu's correspondence with the Viceroy I met Lathwaite again today and had a pretty long talk

On Saturday, when I met him, he had kept a note, perhaps dictated by the Viceroy himself, for being read to me. It was meant for Bapu as well as for me. He had received Bapu's last letter to which he had not replied and the reply in a way was meant to be sent through me. The note said something like this

I have received a very friendly letter from Mahatma and find myself in agreement with a lot of what he says. But I fear he has failed to realise my own difficulties. I have spoken to Birla in the past frankly expressing my views about the position of the Indian States and also my sympathy with the idea of democratisation. In fact, a lot has been done during the last twelve months of which no account is being taken. I am collecting materials to show what advances have been made generally in the Indian States during this period.

Responsible government and personal rule are two opposite things. Gandhiji knows how long it took the Indian provinces to get responsible government. In the States the personal rule still continues. It could not be changed in a day. The time factor is of great importance. Gandhiji should therefore realise the delicate task which I have to perform. And while my sympathies are which the ultimate object, I fear I have serious complaints to make against Gandhiji that he is not helping my task. In a way my hands are being forced.

There are two aspects of the question of the Indian States. There is the administrative sphere and there is the constitutional sphere. So far as the administrative sphere is concerned, the paramount power is entitled to interfere for good government or for better judiciary and for such

other sort of things. And I am ready to interfere for such things.

As regards constitutiona' advances it is not possible for the paramount power to do anything. This is a matter which entirely rests with the ruler himself. The princes too are frightened. Even those princes who are supposed to be advanced in democracy are not free from troubles. The cases of Mysore, Travancore and Baroda could be cited as examples.

As regards the specific cases of Jaipur and Rajkot, I am not well versed with the facts. I know only what I have seen in the Press. But it is my feeling about Rajkot that what is sought to be done, there is being done not purely in the interest of the state people but to establish supreme control of the Congress over the state.

As regards Jaipur, I feel that what little has been done by way of proclamation for establishing some Advisory Board should have been given a fair trial.

This was the sum and substance of the aide memoire which was read to me by Laithwaite.

I pointed out to him that as regards Jaipur I was well acquainted with the facts and therefore could at once say that His Excellency was thoroughly misinformed. I related to him the whole history and the part that I played to get a settlement. Thereafter, to avert a crisis, I made the following suggestion on my own behalf which I said I would put to Jamnalalji if it were acceptable to the Durbar.

There were three points which threatened a crisis: (1) ban on Jamnalalji, (2) recognition of the Praja Mandal and (3) release of Sikar prisoners.

The first thing was to remove the ban immediately. Laithwaite said the time was very short and the matter too advanced to retrace the steps. On this I made a suggestion that Jamnalalji after being arrested may be left out of Jaipur territory. I would try to persuade him not to go again soon on the condition that the ban was removed thereafter and the question of recognition of the Praja Mandal and the release of the Sikar prisoners were taken up for negotiation with me. He said he would consult His Excellency about it but he agreed that Jaipur was

simpler problem. I told him that once Jaipur was out of the picture, we might then concentrate on Rajkot.

Last evening I received all the papers from you which I read very carefully and this morning I again had a talk with Laithwaite for over an hour. He said he had discussed the question with His Excellency and put himself in touch with the Durbar and he found that the Durbar held very strong views about the whole situation. At the time when the thing had not come up in the Press, it would have been easier for him (Laithwaite) to help but now the matter had gone too far. But the Durbar could readily do one thing. They could arrest Jamna'alji very politely and leave him out of the border. And he added, "I can also inform you in confidence that a new Dewan is going in place of Beauchamp. I will not give you the name but I hope and feel that he would be a more sympathetic and tactful man. His Excellency also is going to Jaipur about the first week of March. If Jamnalalji could be persuaded to remain off Jaipur until the new man comes, I feel every hope could be entertained of the thing being made much more pleasant. I admit that the demand is not too big but there has been a lot of complication and I find more than this I cannot do."

I replied, "This will not satisfy Jamnalalji because the more important thing is freedom of speech and freedom of association. Unless that is guaranteed, the problem is not solved. The release of the Sikar prisoners could perhaps wait for some time more but not the question of freedom of speech and until that is assured, I do not see how I could persuade Jamnalalji to keep away from Jaipur."

He said, "But surely the Praja Mandal has not been declared illegal." I replied, "It has not been declared illegal but the implication of the Ordinance perhaps is this that it cannot function as a legal body. Can you assure me that until the new Dewan comes, the Praja Mandal would be allowed to function as a legal body although it may not be recognised? Because even then it would mean something."

He again asked me, "What are the evil consequences from which the Praja Mandal suffers just now for not being recognised?" I said, "If it is allowed to function as a legal body, even though it may not be recognised, then I don't think in practice it suffers. On the other hand, if the implication of the last

Ordinance is in force although it has not been declared illegal, still it cannot be allowed to function, then the evil consequences are obvious."

He said he could not say anything as to what would be the position of the Praja Mandal but that he would let me know tomorrow.

Then I opened the question of Rajkot. Laithwaite said, "About Rajkot, it is a more difficult problem. A settlement was arrived at between Sardar and the Thakur. We don't know anything about it. If we interpret the letter by the Thakur to Sardar literally, then it means only this that while Sardar was entitled to make recommendations, the nomination ultimately rested with Thakur. There may have been a different understanding but we don't know what took place between the two men and therefore we have to put a literal interpretation on the letter. The demand of the Muslim League does not seem to be unreasonable and since we had no hand in the settlement, how could we be expected to press the Thakur?"

I replied, "The charge is that it is Gibson who is responsible for this break." He said, "But we don't admit this charge." I told him the evidence was there which he said he had not seen. The note of conversation between the Thakur and Gibson could not be accepted as an authentic document.

About Orissa we had some discussion but nothing important emerged.

The net position of the Viceroy is covered in the note to which I have made reference above.

Laithwaite was also complaining that His Excellency felt sore the way in which Gandhiji had touched the Orissa problem in today's *Harijan*. He said Gandhiji was not helping the Viceroy at all in putting the things in such an unpleasant language.

He agreed with me that the best way to avoid a crisis would have been to clear the decks of some of the unpleasant issues like Rajkot and Jaipur. But he feels that they too are helping and their own helplessness is not taken into account fully.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas Birla

SYT. MAHADIVBHAI DISAI  
BARDOLI

20

January 31, 1939

MY DEAR PYAREEJI,

I have received your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> January but not the enclosure that you say you are sending. I am going today to Benares and on receiving the enclosure, I will let you know what I have got to say. My Benares address is Birla House, Lalghat.

Yours,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT PYAREEJI  
BARDOLI

21

Copi

BARDOLI,  
January 31, 1939

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

Shri K M Munshi, Sr Putsuottamdas and now Shri G D Birla tell me that my writings in *Harjan* about the States have been causing you embarrassment—more especially about Jaipur. I have therefore, suspended publication of the accompanying article which I had already sent to the Manager of *Harjan* at Poona.

I need hardly say that I have no desire whatever to do anything that would cause you embarrassment, if I could avoid it. My purpose is to secure justice for the people concerned.

How I wish it were possible for you to take effective action in the three cases mentioned by me in my previous letter!

May I expect a line as to what you would have me do about the article under suspension?

I am,

Yours sincerely,  
M K, Gandhi

February 1, 1939

MY DEAR PYARELAL,

I have read the article which has been sent to the *Harijan* about Chudgar's interview with Beauchamp. After reading it, I don't find anything seriously irritating. Recently, after reading Bapu's articles about the Indian States, I have felt as if they were written in a very irritated mood. Two sentences I distinctly disliked. One was where he said that 'military was making merry at the expense of innocent men and women'. The other was about 'organised goondaism'. There may be reasons for writing in such strong terms, but in the first case no concrete instance was given, and on the whole I felt that it was not the language that Bapu generally uses.

I was therefore rather frightened when Mahadevbhai told me that Bapu was going to publish Beauchamp's correspondence. But after reading it, I don't think it is in any way stronger than the previous articles.

It is very difficult to explain the position from here. But I don't agree with Bapu, if he thinks that Gibson and Beauchamp are acting directly under the instructions of the Viceroy. It is perfect truth when I say that Beauchamp has been reprimanded very strongly by the Viceroy for his indiscreet behaviour and I don't know if he has said anything to Gibson. But the Viceroy did not know the part that Gibson was playing until he saw everything in the Press.

The Viceroy is not unsympathetic about advancement in the states but he finds himself a victim of the circumstances. The princes are united and the Political Department officials have acted in a provocative manner whom the Viceroy can check only up to an extent and he discovered all these things when the mischief was done. And the Viceroy now finds, and complains for this, that Bapu is not helping him. I have strongly pressed on him the necessity of establishing contact with Bapu and he is thinking about it. Here again he fears what would the Princes say? He fears a strong resentment among the Princes in case he takes any action. And he was never reputed to be a man of imaginations though a man of honest habits and sympathetic and fair ideas. The value of all these complications must be cor-

rectly assessed to find out a solution I feel that if there was personal contact Bapu would be able to find out some solution

Mahadevbhai will reach here tomorrow evening and if I see any possibility of doing some constructive work, I will stay on further, otherwise I will leave day after tomorrow for Calcutta

But the chief thing that is frightening me most is Bapu's health I never took your letters very seriously and only a few days back Mahadevbhai wrote to me that Bapu was all right But it appears after all you were right and he was wrong This is rather a disturbing factor Please keep me well informed and press on Bapu the necessity of taking entire rest But would he do this when there is trouble in Rajkot and Jipur? About Jaipur, I am still hoping some good result The Dewan is going to be changed unless something unforeseen happens And the Viceroy himself is going there in the beginning of March

But about Rajkot I am more diligent The Political Department here takes up a very formal attitude What can we do? How could we interpret the agreement in one way or the other? And even if the agreement is broken how could we force the Thakur to restore it? Supposing Gibson did something stupid He might be reprimanded and asked not to repeat such mistakes in future But could we compel the Thakur to restore the pact?"

These things don't help and as we know, the political Department, when it wants to do something it can But they can always do something bad and when it comes to doing something good, the obstruction comes from the princes, from the minor officials of the Political Department and the Viceroy even though he may be sympathetic, and himself helpless because he can always be reprimanded from higher above, if he coerced the princes Thus, it is suggested, the position of the Viceroy is very precarious I am still hoping that Bapu would be able to manage the affairs successfully as he has done in the past

Yours,  
Ghanshyamdas

23

DELHI,  
February 1, 1939

PYARELAL  
CARE MAHATMA GANDHIJI  
BARDOLI & WARDHA

PITASHI WIRE DAILY BAPU'S HEALTH REPORT 'NTH FULLY RECOVERED HOPE WILL NOW TAKE COMPLETE REST AND SILENCE FEEL ALARMED AM HERE THIS THIRD

GHANSHYAMDAS

24

BARDOLI,  
February 1, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
ALBUQUERQUE ROAD  
NEW DELHI

JAIPUR ARTICLE WITHHELD ARRIVING TOMORROW THROUGH MAIL. BAPU WIFE JIVRAJ ADVISED COMPLETE REST IN BED FOR NIGHT LEFT THIS MORNING

MAHADIV

25

WARDHAGANJ,  
February 2, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
NEW DELHI

QUITE WELL TAKING NEEDED REST NO ANXIETY.

BAPU



WARDHA,  
February 3, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
BIRLA HOUSE  
AIBUQUERQUE ROAD  
NEW DELHI

SWELLING MUCH REDUCED. TAKING PRACTICALLY FULL REST.  
BLOOD PRESSURE 156/98 LAST NIGHT. JAMNALAJI MUST NOT WAIT  
WITHOUT WRITTEN REQUEST FROM AUTHORITIES. HAVE MADE STATE-  
MENT ABOUT JAIPUR GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE WHOLLY UNSATIS-  
FACTORY.

BAPU

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
February 3, 1939

MAHATMA GANDHI  
SILGAON  
WARDHA

JAIPUR AFFAIRS LIKELY TAKE SATISFACTORY TURN. AM SUGGESTING  
JAMNALAJI TO GIVE FURTHER ONE DAY NIGHT, BEFORE RETURNING  
JAIPUR. MEANWHILE WORKING HARD FOR LIFTING BAN PLEASE AD-  
VISE JAMNALAJI ACCORDINGLY. ALSO FILE A GOOD STATEMENT  
FROM YOU ABOUT JAIPUR THIS STAGE WOULD HELP

GHANSHYAMDAS

NEW DELHI,  
February 4, 1939

MAHATMA GANDHI  
CARE JAMNALAL BAJAJ  
WARDHA

INASMUCH AS POLICE OFFICER IN CHARGE JAMNALALJI VERBALLY  
REQUISITED HIM GIVE AUTHORITIES TIME RECONSIDER. MAY I ASK  
JAMNALALJI ADDRESS LETTER TO AUTHORITIES MENTIONING POLICE  
OFFICER'S REQUISIT ABSURDITY OF COMMUNIQUE AND GIVING THEM  
TIME UNTIL FIFTH. AM SENDING HIM DRAFT SUITABLE LETTER IF  
YOU AGREE ADVISE HIM SEND LETTER.

MAHATMA

SEGAON,  
WARDHA,  
February 4, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter of 1st inst., which I shared with Bapu. He would have liked to write to you himself but he was too pre-occupied. You are right in thinking that Bapu must have got ample reasons for using the language he did in *Harijan* and I shall show you why milder language should not be used.

The first reference, viz., "military was making merry at the expenses of innocent men and women", is to the happening in the Orissa States, Talcher and Dhenkanal. What are route marches of troops into the blight-stricken villages of Talcher but "merry making at the expense of the innocent men and women"? Because unfortunately British officer was killed, is the whole countryside to be put under terrorism? After all what had these poor villagers done to warrant the systematic sending out of troops to overawe them? The troops could and did go with a merry heart. They ran no danger. It was not a risky march like, say, in Waziristan.

As for 'organised goondanism', reports have been received from Rajkot of men being taken to distant places and stripped naked and beaten. Whipping Act has been promulgated. It was wholly unnecessary. There was no violence by the people. What is all this, if not organised goondaism? By the way, it is not a new phrase either, coined for the present occasion. If you refer to the files of *Young India* for the years 1919-22, you will know how it first came to be used.

To understand Bapu's present mood, it is necessary to see the nature of the challenge that has been thrown to him. It is the immorality of an agent of the British Government compelling an Indian ruler to break his plighted word to his people and the unblushing falsehood with which it has been sought to bolster up that action that has set him ablaze. You know how deeply his moral being is hurt and how adamant he becomes when a blatant inequity or falsehood is sought to be forced down his throat by an insolent power. The recognition given to the unholy 'Minorities' Pact by the British Government at the second Indian Round Table Conference is an instance in point. Bapu knows only one way of meeting such a challenge, viz., 'to resist it with his life'. And that is what he is out for in the present case too. Let there be no manner of doubt about it.

With regard to the Viceroy, his profession of sympathy would not carry us very far while the entire weight of his authority is being used to uphold the policy of Gibson, Beauchamp and Co. You have misjudged Bapu's position when you plead the Viceroy's incapacity to compel the Ruler to agree to anything. It is Gibson who has compelled the Thakur Sahab to break his word. The Viceroy can surely require Gibson to undo the wrong done by him. The Viceroy may not have directly inspired Gibson to any course of action. But how can he be absolved for the actions of his subordinate agent? Would Gibson have been tolerated for a single moment if he had done anything in opposition to the authority of the Imperial Government?

I share your anxiety with regard to Bapu's health. My sister will be daily sending you a bulletin of his progress till the normal condition is restored. I am today asking the Civil Surgeon to make a thorough ophthalmoscopic examination of the condition of his retinal blood vessels. I feel uneasy. I do

not see any prospect of his being able to have the degree of rest that is necessary for complete recovery. He has already written to Jawahar and Bose to exempt him from attendance at Tripuri mainly on grounds of health. I wonder whether it is realized how imperative that ground is. And yet if the situation deteriorates in Rajkot you are sure to find him settle somewhere within easy reach of Rajkot. I wonder whether the significance of driving him to that in his present condition is realized.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

SHRI GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
BIRLA HOUSE  
BALLYGUNJ  
CALCUTTA

30

SILGAON,  
February 6, 1939

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your letter. I can't exactly recall the enclosure referred to by you. Very likely it was subsequently found to be irrelevant and was not enclosed. You may, however, if you have still got it with you, send back the original letter to help my memory.

Yesterday I sent you an important letter in reply to your long one, to your Calcutta address. I posted a copy to Mahadevbhai too, in case you might still be at Delhi.

Herewith today's bulletin about Bapu. Yesterday's was posted to Delhi in the cover addressed to Mahadevbhai.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

*PS.* Would you kindly keep us posted with your programme in advance?

31

February 8, 1939

MY DEAR PYARELAL,

In your letter of the 6th you say that you have an important letter in reply to mine to my Calcutta address. I will perhaps read it tomorrow. I am going to Calcutta tomorrow and will be there for two or three weeks.

Again the enclosure to your letter of the 6th, which you say is a bulletin, has not been received by me.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. PYARELLAL  
SLGAON

32

BIRLA HOUSE,  
BENARAS,  
February 8, 1939

DIAR SUSHILABEN,

Your letter of the 4th was very helpful in making me understand clearly the position of Bapu's health. I am very much reassured to find that it was all due to overwork and that fundamentally there is no cause for alarm. What you say leads me to estimate a good prognosis and I hope Bapu will now strictly adhere to the doctors' advice so far as rest is concerned.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SUSHRI SUSHILABEN  
SLGAON

BIRLA HOUSE,  
LAL GHAI,  
BENARIS,  
February 8, 1939

MAHATMA GANDHI  
CARE JAMNALAJI BAJAJ  
WARDHA

JAMNALAJI TALKED PHONE HAVE ADVISED HIM THAT NOW GOING  
AND COMPELTING THEM TO EJECT HIM THROUGH USE OF FORCE  
WILL LOOK CHILDISH AND UNDIGNIFIED MAHADEVYBHAI ALSO  
TALKED ON PHONE WHO INDEPENDENTLY AGREES WITH ME I THINK  
JAMNALAJI SHOULD NOW AGAIN GIVE JAIPUR AUTHORITIES AMPLIFIED  
TIME IN WRITING GIVING THEM CHANCE TO RETRACT THEIR STEPS  
AND WARNING TO DO IT AGAIN IF THEY DON'T LIKE BAN BUT SUCH  
LETTER IN ORDER TO BE HELPFUL MUST BE KEPT PRIVATE TAKING  
WIDER VIEW INTO ACCOUNT AT THIS STAGE IMPROVEMENT ATMOSPHERE  
FROM YOUR SIDE WILL GO LONG WAY TO HELP RAJKOT AND  
JAIPUR PLEASE WRITE ME ALSO YOUR OPINION CARE LUCKY

GHANSHYAMDAS

PURSHOTAM MANSION,  
OPP OPERA HOUSE,  
BOMBAY 4,  
February 8, 1939

MR DARS MAHADEVY,

I got your letter along with a copy of the substance of your  
conversation with Mr. Laithwaite I am afraid I am not inclined  
to agree with you about your estimate as to their attitude. It  
is diplomatic but I am afraid, not honest. The *Statesman* has  
written the last article more frankly, but if we write or say  
anything about a Gibson or a Beauchamp they will attribute

motives to us. There is no racial question involved in this. It is a defensive attack on their protected citadel and they are angry. They pretend ignorance when they are convinced of their guilt. Anyway, I see a fierce struggle ahead. I have no doubt that Mr. Gibson has organised forces of goondas all over Kathiawar states. In India, we see that the first overtact of his policy of which you will feel sorry to hear. There has been three big dacoities in which several people in two villages have been looted and wounded. Armed dacoits have been let loose on innocent population in the villages in order to terrify the people who are resisting the tyranny of the state. For the last 23 days people have been sitting round the palace asking for an inquiry but there is no response from the state. Bar is having a bad time. All this happens not merely with the connivance of Gibson, *but it must be with his instigation.*

Yours sincerely,  
V. J. Labhbhai

SHRI MAHADIV DASAI  
BIRLA HOUSE  
NEW DELHI

35

BIRLA HOUSE,  
ALBION TERRACE ROAD,  
NEW DELHI,  
February 9, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

You must have seen Jawaharlal's statement on the states. It looks as though there is going to be no settlement and we are going to break on this issue. Look at the para I have marked in Rajkumari's letter to me (enclosed herewith). You can judge the temper of Wardha from this. And if Government go on supporting congenital idiots like Sir Beauchamp, I do not really see what else can happen. I have no telegram yet from Bapu, but

I am now beginning to fear that there will be no telegram and Bapu may take no step whatsoever. Look at Pyarelal's letter too.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Māhadev

36

WARDHAGANJ,  
February 9, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRIA  
LUCKY  
CALCUTTA

I THINK BISI HAVI JAMNALALJI DO ACCORDING HIS INSTINCT.  
I DO NOT APPRICIATE SENDING NOTICI. LET HIM SUFFER IF HE  
MUST.

BAPU

37

SIGAON,  
February 9, 1939

DIAR GHANDSHYAMDASJI,

Bapu's condition remains much the same. The swelling had almost disappeared 2 days ago. It is a little more obvious today. Col. Hokodinatrai saw him today. He thought the heart sounds were much weaker than when he saw him before going to Bardoli. He insisted that Bapu must take at least a fortnight's rest, and that he should not go to the Congress. Bapu said he



could not rest after having let the fire in so many places. He would rather die in harness than live in cotton wool. There is no hope of his getting mental rest under the present circumstances. God will look after him. We all try to give him as much rest as possible, and he too does try to be careful. But he is helpless. I will send you further news after Dr Jivraj and Gilder have been here.

Yours sincerely  
Sushila

PS Kindly keep us posted as to your movements

38

CAULITA,  
February 10, 1939

MY DEAR PYARIJI,

I found your letter of the 4th awaiting me here. I returned here on the last evening.

I got Bapu's telegram about Jamnalalji's third visit to Jaipur. I agree, let him do what he thinks to be the best although I do not like this cat and mouse policy. I again disagree with Bapu about the words 'organised goondaism' and 'barbarous' used about what Young did. In the first statement issued by Jamnalalji he admitted that the police was very polite to him. During his second visit to Jaipur, from all accounts received it is agreed that the police behaved politely with him and even when they removed him forcibly, when he refused to sit in the car, Damodar himself says publicly that Young had asked his men to lift Jamnalalji 'very carefully'. The action in itself may be wrong but the police officer who carries out the orders of the superior to leave Jamnalalji out of the boundary of the state and which was done with the utmost politeness, cannot be called either 'barbarous' or inciting "organised goondaism". I also wonder how this would change the "heart" of Young or his superiors.

I was rather alarmed today to hear from Bidhan that the report he had received about Bapu's health was not quite good. Let him take rest, and let God look after Rajkot and Jaipur. I am meeting Dr. Roy tonight. Meanwhile please keep me well informed about Bapu's health.

I do not see any task for myself just now, but will continue to keep myself in touch with the other side, and if there is anything which needs Bapu's attention, I will let you know. At the same time, please keep me well informed about Bapu's mind.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MR. PYARIJI  
SINGAON

### 39

DIIHI,  
February 10, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Yes, we should now concentrate all our effort on getting Moore<sup>1</sup> to understand Bapu thoroughly and to put up his best effort. I have faith in that man's honesty—though he is slightly stolid—and he can, if he is so minded, do a lot.

Look at the enclosed letter from Vallabhbhai. And see the line I have marked. It seems our party is hardly likely to go to Godavari (or Kashi)

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

<sup>1</sup>: thus Moore was the editor of the *Statesman*—G.D.B.

40

SFAGAON,  
WARDHA,  
February 10, 1939

DEAR BIRLAJI,

I have your letter

Yes, I know, the bulletin did not go with your letter after all I posted one copy to Mahadev and then was told that there were no more copies left. As it was time for the post to leave, nothing could be done then. Sushila had it appears given instructions to send some bulletins by bookpost to some other people. As I was going to write to you they did not send you anything by book post and at the same time exhausted the copies that had been made.

With regards to the missing enclosure in the previous letter too I have a faint recollection that when I told Bapu that I was intending to send you certain enclosures he depreciated the idea as it was not worth the while.

Bapu's blood-pressure for the last two days has shown marked improvement. Today it stood at 158/98 at 1 p m. No bulletin is being issued today. Dr. Gilder and Mehta are coming on Saturday. The present improvement might be due to less chilly weather and perhaps the CO<sub>2</sub> baths which S is giving.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

41

CAICUTTA,  
February 11, 1939

DEAR SRI PYARFLAJI,

Shri Ghanshyamdasji Birla would like to have a copy for his file of the letter addressed by Mahatmajji to the Viceroy recently. This was brought by Shri Mahadevbhai Desai to Delhi

and was handed over to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy by Birlaji personally. Please send me the copy to the above address.

Thanking you,

*Yours,*  
Secretary to  
Shri G. D. Birla

SHRI PYARI AJJI  
WARDHA

## 42

### Bulletin on Bapu's Health

SIGAON,

February 11, 1939

Bapu was examined by Dr. Gilder and Dr. Jivaraj Mehta today. An electrocardiogram was also taken. The latter showed a certain amount of weakness of the heart muscle.

The examination confirmed that there was both deficiency of the kidney and the heart functions. Advice given was the repetition of the old formula that he must take more rest. The exertion both physical and mental should be cut down to the minimum and travelling avoided as far as possible.

The swelling has again increased from yesterday. The examination of the urine shows congestion of the kidneys.

The weather has warmed and so the b.p. is tending to come down. Today the reading at 5 a.m. was 166/100 at 11 a.m. Dr. Gilder took his B. P. and it registered 170/102.

S. Nayar

43

CARE LUCKY,  
BIRLA BROS. LTD.,  
CALCUTTA,  
February 11, 1939

PYRICAL  
CARE MAHATMA GANDHIJI  
WARDHA

DOCTOR ROY EXAMINED REPORTS SENT BY SUSHI ABEN. NOT SATIS-  
FIED WITH CONDITION. I SUGGESTED ROY GO TO WARDHA. PLEASE  
WRITE BAPU'S CONSENT AND DATE

GHANSHYAMDAS

44

CALCUTTA,  
February 11, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I read the original letter from Pyrcal and as you rightly re-  
mark, it does not read very pleasant. Perhaps in the atmosphere  
of Delhi I could realise all that is happening in Rajkot. But how  
does the Rajkumari think that my ceasing to be conciliatory will  
at all help?

I am writing to Laithwaite again. But if I have known the  
habit of the Viceroy, whatever he desires to do, he will do at his  
own accord and even if he likes my suggestion, he will not give  
me any inkling of his mind. Let us hope for the best.

I distinctly don't like Bapu calling Gandhiji's tactics as "orga-  
nised goondaism". I have already written to him about it.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
NEW DELHI

45

**Bulletin on Bapu's Health**

SEGAON,  
WARDHA,

February 12, 1939

Bapu slept on the Verandah last night according to Dr. Gilder and Dr. Jivraj Mehta's advice. He did not like it so that he lay awake in bed till 11 p. m. and not get any sleep after prayers either.

For the rest there is no change in his general condition. Swelling remains the same. B.P. this morning was 170/100. After mid-day sleep, it is 162/100.

S. Nayar

46

**Bulletin on Bapu's Health**

SEGAON,  
WARDHA,

February 13, 1939

Bapu slept outside last night and so had good sleep. Yesterday and today have been busy days on account of Harijan work and visitors.

The diet continues to be low, but the weight is not going down. It is thought to be due to certain amount of fluid retention in the system.

Swelling has not gone down.

The b.p. today in the morning and after noon was 176/106.

S. Nayar

47

WARDHA,  
February 13, 1939

GHANSHYAMDASJI  
LUCKY  
CALCUTTA

GILDER JIVRAJ LAXMINID YESTERDAY BUT DR. ROY HAS RIGHT  
COMI WIEN HE I IKES

BAPU

48

CALCUTTA,  
February 13, 1939

MY DHAR PYAREI AL,

Doctor Roy will be leaving this place about the 22nd for Wardha. I hope before he reaches, Bapu's blood-pressure will have come down and he will be much better. Doctor Roy is rather upset about the weakness of his heart. He says once the weakness has begun it may disappear only to come again. He does not like also albumin in urine, but in any case he is coming. Please read this portion of the letter to your sister.

Arthur Moore had a long chat with me. They are all puzzled at Bapu's article. Not that anybody says that he should drop the fight, but what they do not understand is the use of strong language. He told me that his own information from the Government of India was that they think it is the Thakur who is taking shelter behind the Resident and is setting up the Congress and the paramount power against each other. I would not be surprised if it is true. Of course, I am not competent to say anything except this that I am fully convinced that the Viceroy tells me what he believes to be correct and if he is not found to be doing anything, it is because of his own difficulty. Gibson and Beauchamp were both invited to Delhi, but I do not know what is the result. I was given a distinct impression, however, during

the course of my conversation with Laithwaite that the repression that was continuing in Rajkot and about which he said he had no information would be stopped if it was found to be a fact. Moore thinks personal contact will be of great help, and he is going to Delhi to see the Viceroy. If necessary, he may go to Wardha. Please inform Bapu about this.

Please tell Subhila that I am thankful to her for sending me the bulletins. I hope she will continue to send these so long as Bapu's health is causing anxiety.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MR. PYARLI AL.  
SEGAON  
WARDHA

49

NEW DELHI,  
February 14, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS  
LUCKY  
CALCUTTA

PLEASE TALK TO ME TODAY URGENT.

MAHADAN

50

CALCUTTA,  
February 15, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADANBHAI,

Moore again came to see me this morning and he told me that he had written to the Viceroy about the necessity



of establishing personal contact. I, on further consideration, decided not to talk on phone but I have today sent a telegram saying that I hoped that the opportunity offered by the new communication from Wardha will be fully utilised.

Moore told me that he would press the necessity of the intervention of the paramount power at this stage. He said it was absurd to say that there should be no intervention. There were precedents for that. Nabha and Indore were instances to the point.

I will fix up my plans as soon as I hear of any further development.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBIHAI LIESAI  
NEW DITHI

## 51

CALCUTTA,  
February 18, 1939

MY DEAR PYARILAL,

It appears Bapu's health is gradually improving. You know he himself is generally very careful about it and at times he looks a little careless, it is because of the call of people on him. The way in which he is thinking of curtailing *pravritti* and depending more on *sankalp* shows how he is trying to conserve every ounce of his energy for the good of the world. I should like to suggest to him the necessity of curtailing interviews and correspondence drastically. I dare say he must himself be thinking about it and if he does, please tell me. How strongly I feel that he should take an immediate decision.

I am expecting to hear from you the outcome of Subhas's interview with Bapu. From what I have heard about it—and the source of information is reported to be Subhas Babu himself—it appears that Bapu has insisted on his choosing his own Cabinet and carrying out his own programme of giving six

months' ultimatum and then starting a fight. I am not quite sure what would be the consequence of all this. It is clear that he alone cannot carry on the fight. And I dare say Bapu cannot help him in such a fight so long as he remains unconvinced about the necessity of the same. But would it then mean leaving the field free to him. I am sure Bapu has a plan in his mind.

Arthur Moore saw me twice, and I understand from him that he has already written to the Viceroy about the necessity of establishing personal contact. I hope it will be done.

I am likely to leave Calcutta shortly. There was a time when I had decided to go to Delhi *via* Wardha. But in view of Bapu's health, I don't feel inclined to go to Wardha. Please let me know how would Bapu wish.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI PYARELAL  
SEGAON

52

WARDHA,  
February 18, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
LUCKY  
CALCUTTA

TILL BIDHAN BARDOLI CANCELLED. NO ANXIETY.

BAPU

53

SEGAON,  
WARDHA,  
February 18, 1939

DEAR BIRLAJI,

Bapuji received your letter today. You might have received his telegram in reply.

As requested, I am enclosing copy of the Viceroy's letter to Bapu and also of his own letter to him.

There has not been much change in the general condition of Bapu's health. The swelling of the feet has subsided. The urine is free from albumin. He has also not been experiencing spasms. The excretion of urea is also satisfactory. Even though the quantity of urine is not much, the kidneys are functioning normally. All this goes to show that there is an all round improvement. The defect in the urine was due to the congestion of the kidneys.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

54

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
February 19, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you very much for your letter of 12th February. I do not in the least misunderstand your decision to publish the article which you were kind enough to let me see. You will have seen that Sir Beauchamp St. John has now in terms stated his version of the interview which took place.

I greatly appreciate your kind suggestion, at a time when I am sorry to hear that you have been enjoined by your doctors to take things quietly, that you should come and have a talk with me about the position generally. You know I think, that I

am always very ready to see you and I am glad to think that we should have had the opportunity in the past to make personal contact with each other. I am very ready, if you wish me to do so, to consider our having a talk now. But I am inclined myself to think that we should do better to postpone our meeting for a little while. I will tell you quite frankly why I think so. On previous occasions when we have met we have been able to arrange the meeting as to avoid any special antecedent publicity over it, and we have met, too, at a time when the general atmosphere has been calm and when there has been an absence of strain and of urgent public issue on which public attention was immediately and prominently focussed. You and I may be sure that our own conversations would proceed in an atmosphere of calm and understanding. But as you know I and I realise you too have to give consideration to many other interests, and my general feeling is that, much as I always welcome seeing you, our meetings serve the most useful purpose when they can take place in the same circumstances as they have before, and that the present moment, when the reconciliation of various opposing views and interests presents a problem of some delicacy, is one at which the avoidance of misconception, or the raising of hopes which might not admit of fulfilment, in any quarter, is of great public importance. You know me, I think well enough to realise that in saying what I have it is, from no lack of appreciation of an offer which, particularly at this time, I value. But you and I, as public men, have to take account in our decisions of their reactions outside; and we have both of us to avoid raising hopes or disappointing expectations, for which we have no responsibility. If, however, having read what I have said above, you still think we might meet, it would be a great pleasure to me to see you again as there are now very few days before I leave here on the 24th for Izatnagar, I would frankly prefer that it should, if possible, be after I return from my Rajputana tour.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Laithwaite

SFGAON,  
WARDHA (C P),  
February 20, 1939

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

After such a long time I am today able to sit down to write to you at peace

You are right about Bapu. I am hoping that he will not fail to do needful in regard to his health which after all he looks after as a spiritual barrier. Only he does not believe in "health at any price" or for the matter of that on "life at all cost". I can never forget a line which a friend sent to him as a Christmas souvenir two years ago. It was "The candle in giving forth light consumeth itself. It is the fate of all God's messengers to consume themselves to fill dark world with His radiance."

Subhas was here, closetted with Bapu for three hours. The report that has appeared in the Press is substantially correct. As I wrote to you before, Bapu's outspoken advice fell absolutely flat upon him. He is out for a personal adventure. I wonder what the crew on whose shoulders he has mounted to this Presidential chair will land him. It is a dangerous crew. But Bapu hopes that if he can rightly put into operation the whole technique of non-violence, it will be well with the Congress and the country.

In the mean time an intriguing is likely to arise in the next A.I.C.C. meeting which it is learnt by majority likely to vote for sanity. Confabulations here are still proceeding. You will know everything in a day or two. Bapu will most likely issue a statement to the Press.

As in the case of Jaipur, in Rajkot too there are likely to be some interesting and unexpected entrants into the test, soon. But I must name no names. It will be for Ba to have more distinguished company.

Yours sincerely,  
Pyarelal

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SEGAON,  
WARDHA,  
February 21, 1939

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I am much obliged to you for your cordial and frank letter. In the circumstances I shall await the time that you may consider appropriate for our meeting.

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

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SEGAON,  
WARDHA,  
February 22, 1939

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I find that an assiduous attempt is being made in a certain section of the Press to create an impression that there was some sort of "understanding" or "compromise" arrived at between Bapu and Subhas Bose as to the future programme of the Congress. If this implies any manner of acquiescence or agreement on the part of Bapu as to the policies that Bose is professing to advocate, it is altogether erroneous and misleading. Bapu made it absolutely clear to Bose that he could not expect any kind of co-operation in his new policies from the members of the old cabinet. But Bapu may not issue a statement to counteract this propaganda at the present juncture, as it is likely to be misunderstood and exploited by interested parties.

In response to a wire from Bose and Dr. Sunil, Bapu has decided to postpone the final taking of a decision on the main issue in the present meeting of the W.C. Members may, however, address him a letter to say that they are ready with their

resignation as soon as he is ready to accept them. In the mean time Bapu's mind is more and more being exercised over the situation in Limbdi and Rajkot. In the latter place torture of satyagrahis under arrest has led to a big hunger strike on the part of a large number of satyagrahi prisoners, including several trusted old workers and colleagues. This is serious matter from Bapu's point of view—knowing as we do how such experience on the part of those whom he has tried through and in whose integrity and ahimsa he has perfect faith pains him. He has already wired to the first member to stay his hand and to tell him with what difficulty he is restraining himself from plunging in.

Today at noon, after his sleep, his b.p. unaccountably gave an abnormal reading 186/114-16. It suspects some latent cause for temporary excitement which we do not know.

I expect the disturbance to be temporary and for the present am not worried over it.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

P.S. With regard to your coming to Wardha, Bapu through an oversight failed to say anything. I shall ask him again on the first opportunity, but I may tell you this much straight away that, so far as Bapu's state of health is concerned, it need not deter you at all. If you do not come in hurry with the intention of returning in still greater hurry, your visit instead of adding to the tension may have a relaxing effect.

P.L.

WARDHA,  
February 24, 1939

PRIVATE SECRETARY  
TO H E THE VICEROY  
NEW DELHI

HAVE WROTE TO FIRST MEMBER RAJKOT AS FOLLOWS "IF ALL REPORTS RECEIVED APPLICATION IS SERIOUS FOR ME AND CO-WORKERS IF THERE IS SUBSTANCE IN THEM IT IS SERIOUS REFLECTION ON STATE AUTHORITIES MEANWHILE HUNGERSTRIKE CONTINUES MY ANXIETY UNBEARABLE THEREFORE I PROPOSE START OF RAJKOT TOMORROW NIGHT TAKING WITH ME MEDICAL ATTENDANT SECRETARY AND TYPIST I COME IN SEARCH OF TRUTH AND AS PEACEMAKER HAVE NO DESIRE COURT ARREST I WANT TO SET THINGS FOR MYSELF AND SHALL MAKE AMPLE AMENDS IF MY CO-WORKERS HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF FABRICATION I SHALL ALSO PLEAD WITH THAKORISAHIB TO REPAIR BREACH OF FAITH WITH HIS PEOPLE I SHALL ASK PEOPLE TO AVOID DEMONSTRATIONS AND AM ASKING SARDAR PENDING MY EFFORT IN RAJKOT TO SUSPEND SATYAGRAHA BY PERSONS IN RAJKOT OR FROM OUTSIDE IF BY ANY CHANCE THAKORISAHIB AND COUNCIL CAN RESTORE PACT INTACT SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT OF MEMBERS AND PRISONERS ARE IMMEDIATELY SET FREE AND FINES RESTORED I NATURALLY CANCEL MY PROPOSED DEPARTURE YOU CAN SEND OFFICIAL WITH FULL AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE ADJUSTMENT AS TO PERSONNEL MAJORITY OF SARDAR NOMINATIONS WILL BE A CONDITION MAY GOD GUIDE THAKORISAHIB AND HIS COUNCILLORS MAY I EXPECT EXPRESS WIRE"—GANDHI"

PLEASE PLACE THIS BEFORE HIS EXCELLENCY

GANDHI



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BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
March 7, 1939

MAHATMA GANDHI  
RAJKOT

IN SPIRIT WITH YOU GOD KEEP LONG TO LIGHT OUR PATH I OVI  
PRANAMS.

GIRANHSYAMDAS  
MAHADY  
DAS

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VILLEROY'S CAMP,  
INDIA,  
March 10, 1939

MY DEAR MR. DSAI

I have only just got this back from H I who asks me to thank you very much for your courtesy in sending it to him, and to say that he has read it with great interest. As you know, we now expect the Mahatma on Wednesday at 11, and with his permission I have just so informed the Press. I hope he is beginning to get over the results of his fast, though I see he is again hard at work.

I hope you too are feeling a little better and more rested. We may meet on Wednesday.

*Yours sincerely,*  
J.G. Laithwaite

MAHADY DSAI, ESQ.  
BIRLA HOUSE  
NEW DELHI

March 10, 1939

MY DEAR MR. LAITHWAITE,

I am grateful to you for your kind note of the 10th and more grateful than I can say for His Excellency's kind message that he found time to go through my article.

If I pursue the matter I do so only to leave no doubt, as far as it may be humanly, in His Excellency's mind on the very vital question that he put to me. My anxiety grows by reason of the fact that I hear that assiduous propaganda is still being carried on in Rajkot to make out that Gandhiji went to Rajkot with the intention of fasting and thereby stirring up a country-wide agitation.

How I wish I was composed enough, on the day I had the privilege of that interview with His Excellency, to explain to him at length the processes leading up to his various fasts. I would not think of seeking another opportunity to do so, but I would implore His Excellency to begin his heart to heart talk with Gandhiji by asking him to clear up the matter. Lord Irwin, I know, when he had those long talks with him which led to the "Irwin—Gandhi Truce", asked him many such questions of a personal nature, and this resulted in an intimate personal bond between them.

I pester you with this, with only one object, and no other. I am praying for an atmosphere of understanding and friendliness not only here but in Rajkot, and let no circumstance mar the possibility of great results to come.

An article I wrote for the Annual Number of *The Hindustan Times* on the 18th February when I did not know that Gandhiji had any intention of going to Rajkot provides a study in the workings of Gandhiji's mind. I enclose a copy for you, and perhaps even for His Excellency to while away a half an hour with—if indeed you have that time to spare. I flatter myself that it may provide a good diversion from the cares of office whilst, it may perhaps add to His Excellency's understanding of Gandhi the man.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Mahadev Desai

J.G. LAITHWAITE, ESQR.  
VICEROY'S HOUSE

**From Gandhiji to Linlithgow**

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
March 16, 1939<sup>o</sup>

I had hoped to send you this letter in the afternoon. But from the Viceroy's House I went directly to the prisoners in the Delhi Jail who were hungerstriking. Contrary to my expectations I had to be with them for full two hours. I am happy to be able to say that they listened to me and broke their fast in my persence. They were being forcibly fed. I am now writing to Sir Reginald Maxwell about their discharge.

I now reduce to writing what I tried to explain in the course of our conversations. As I read your telegram, the Chief Justice is to interpret the letter given to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the 26th December last by the Thakore Saheb. Assuming that it accords with our contention, the Committee has then to be set up with seven nominees of the Sardar and three officials nominated by the Thakore Saheb, the Thakore Saheb selecting the president of the Committee out of the ten.

The next thing contemplated in your telegram is that if there is a difference of opinion between the Sardar's nominees on the one hand and the officials on the other as to the meaning of the Notification of 26th December, the Chief Justice is to be the referee whose decision will be final. This as I read your telegram is its technical meaning, so far as the framing of the constitution is concerned, the majority decision should prevail.

This letter need not go further so far as my promise to write to you on the two points raised by me is concerned. But perhaps it is fair to you for me to draw attention to the fact that the advisers of the Thakore Saheb have committed him to certain nominations from which commitment it might be embarrassing even for the paramount power to recede. I refer to the nominations of two Mussalman members and one Bhayat. Perhaps you are aware of this difficulty and also of the several way-outs that I have suggested. If you are not, I shall be glad to explain them to you. As I reflect upon our conversation, it

seems to me that it was inconclusive in more ways than one. Consideration for your time was weighing heavily upon me, and as everything else, as I thought, appeared to you to be smooth sailing, I did not wish to take you any further. You will agree that there should be no misunderstanding about the several steps that have to be taken for implementing the conditions in terms of which I broke the fast. It would be terrible, if it becomes my duty to object to any step after it is announced. I therefore suggest that I should be made aware beforehand of the announcement or announcements that may have to be made in connection with the Rajkot affair.

And then there are, as I mentioned to you, several other matters brought out by me in what has been termed my ultimatum to the Thakore Saheb and about which assurance has been given to me in your two telegrams. Another conversation between us seems to me to be necessary for a proper and final elucidation of the various points arising out of the interchange of the telegrams between us. As I think over the hurried talk that you gave me about the states in general and the policy you contemplate to adopt in the immediate future, a feeling of disturbance creeps over me. I do not want to reduce to writing, unless you desire otherwise, the vague fear that is seizing hold of me on the assumption that I have understood you correctly. I would therefore like to have the interview for this purpose also.

Could you please send me a time?

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
March 16, 1939

DIAR SIR REGINALD,

Mahadev Desai has given me a list of his talk with you when he delivered my letter to you. I thank you for giving him the time you did. He told me of the suggestion you made. As I

wanted to take no step without knowing the prisoners' wishes I sent him to them. And I am able to say that I am satisfied that they have no belief in violence as a method for achieving India's freedom and they have no intention of joining any organisation whose activity is violent. I hope that on the strength of this letter, you will be good enough to announce the release of the prisoners unconditionally I hope now that the condition about movement from province to province will be entirely waived

*Yours sincerely,*  
M K Gandhi

THE HON. SIR REGINALD M. MAXWELL  
C.S.I., C.I.F.

HONORARY MEMBER  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

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NEW DELHI,  
March 16 1939

DEAR SIR REGINALD,

Owing to facilities kindly given to me I was able to see the three prisoners on hungerstrike in the Delhi Jail and I am glad to be able to say that they accepted my advice and gave it up perhaps it is more correct to say suspended it I tried to persuade them to give the assurance required by the Government But they said they did not want to purchase their freedom by giving any undertaking They were prisoners without any trial and so they should be discharged without any condition as so many others have been discharged I felt the force of their objection. But I told them that in order to enable me to work for their release, they should give me satisfaction that they believe in the Congress policy of non-violence and that they would work under the Congress This they readily

agreed to do, and they gave me too a letter reducing their assurance to writing. But they wanted to make it plain to me that I was not to use that letter for securing their freedom, nor to ask the Government to discharge them on the strength of that letter. I wish you could see your way to discharge these prisoners unconditionally. If you do so, it will strengthen my hands in the prosecution of my mission of non-violence on the political field.

I see in the letter that was sent to me by Mr. Puckle another condition that they should not enter this or that province. Surely it is a superfluous condition. If the Governments of the provinces concerned do not want them to remain within their jurisdiction they would issue orders of prohibition. Why should the Government of India attach those conditions?

I am sending this letter with Mahadev Desai so that he can give you, if you require it, a graphic description of the conversation that took place between the three prisoners and myself.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M.K. Gandhi

THE HON. SIR RIGINALD M. MAXWELL  
C S. I., ETC.

HOME MEMBER  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

From Gandhiji to Lord Linlithgow

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
March 17, 1939

I now return the draft reference to the Chief Justice of India which you kindly gave me yesterday. I showed it to Sardar Patel and neither he nor I wish to add anything to it. I have taken a copy of the document.

I tender my apology again for having taken so much of your time yesterday. I hope however that you think as I do that it was well spent, if only for avoiding, as far as it is humanly possible, any future misunderstanding on the Rajkot matter.

I thank you once more for introducing me to Lady Linlithgow.

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**To the Hon'ble Sir Maurice Gwyer, KCB, KCSI, Chief Justice  
of India**

I have the honour to enclose copies of the following documents:

(a) Rajkot Darbar Notification No. 50 dated December 26, 1938.

(b) Note sent by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot to Mr. Patel on the same date.

Doubts have arisen as to the meaning which should be attached to these documents, and I am to request the favour of your advice as to the way in which they should be interpreted.

The immediate point on which your advice is required relates to the manner in which the Committee which the Thakore has undertaken to set up should be composed. In regard to this point the Thakore contends that, while he invited Mr. Patel to submit his recommendations as to the names of the non-official members to be appointed to serve on the Committee, he retained full liberty to make the final appointments of these members himself, that is to say, that he left himself free to accept or reject the recommendations put forward. Mr. Patel on the other hand contends that the Thakore Saheb by his note of the 26th December 1938 bound himself to accept all the recommendations put forward by Mr. Patel.

The Thakore Saheb and Mr. Patel have been asked to submit in writing any representations which they may wish to make in support of their respective views. These representations will be forwarded to you when they have been received. Should you consider it necessary or desirable after receiving these written representations that the parties concerned should be given a hearing, arrangements will be made accordingly.

I am to request that you will be good enough to communicate your decision as to the way in which the Committee should be composed as soon as you are in a position to do so. The Committee will then be set up accordingly. Thereafter should any difference of opinion arise between the members of the Committee as to the meaning of any other portion of the documents mentioned above, a further reference will be made to you for favour of your advice as to the interpretation which should be attached thereto.

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BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
March 17, 1939

DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter of the 16th inst. and, as desired therein, am sending herewith the original note signed by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, dated the 26th December, 1938.

I also enclose a representation explaining my views regarding the interpretation of the note referred to above and the relevant portion of the State Notification of the same date.

*Yours truly,*  
Vallabhbhai Patel

Encl. My representation

THE HON'BLE THE RESIDENT  
FOR THE STATES OF WESTERN INDIA



### My Representation

1. It is submitted that the Thakore Saheb's note of even date with the Notification of 26th December last is an unambiguous document admitting of only one interpretation, and is supplementary to the said Notification. Extraneous evidence is therefore inadmissible for interpreting its meaning.

2. The contention put forth on behalf of the Thakore Saheb is against the letter and the spirit of the said Notification.

3. If however, the Hon. the Chief Justice requires an explanation on any point, I shall be prepared to give it.

4. I reserve the right to reply, if necessary, to any representation that may be made on behalf of the Thakore Saheb.

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March 20, 1939

MY DEAR LATHWALI,

I am deeply grateful to you for your note of this morning and for your assurance that you are already moving in the matter.

But I have another tale of woe to reveal to you. This morning as Sardar Vallabhbhai was casually showing to a friend a copy of his representation to the Hon. the Chief Justice, we discovered by accident that in the typed copy sent to the Chief Justice an inadvertent omission (not of vital importance) of three words had crept in. The Sardar thought it best to advise the Chief Justice about it and to request him, if he thought it appropriate, to restore the omission in the representation. He also requested the Chief Justice to let him know, if possible, how long he should stay on in Delhi, for he had expressly stayed in case his presence may be required. We were all amazed to be told by the Secretary to the Chief Justice that all that he had

received was the terms of reference, that the Sardar's Representation had not yet been received, but that the Chief Justice would soon get in touch with the Political Department, and that as regards the Sardar's stay he could not guide him until he had the papers before him.

You should know this, as I had mentioned the matter to you yesterday.

Why all this cruel and needless delay? Whose fault?

*Yours sincerely,*  
G.D. Birla

J.G. LAITHWAITE, ESQ.  
P.S.V.'S OFFICE  
NEW DELHI

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March 21, 1939

MY DEAR MR. LAITHWAITE,

Here is another telegram from Rajkot:

SALE OF LANDS OF ANOTHER CULTIVATOR ORDERED. SALE DATE TOMORROW. SURETY BOND TAKEN FROM SOME CULTIVATORS FOR FINE. DHEBAR

All this seems to be to fill the cup to the brim. Evidently in spite of instructions being sent from here the authorities at Rajkot are carrying on oblivious of these instructions, and even in the teeth of them. The sale of lands referred to in the telegram is in breach of promise given to Gandhiji by the First Member to the effect that notices for sale were not going to take effect. The surety bond for fine is in flagrant breach of His Excellency's instructions, presumably to the Political Department, given in my presence when I waited on His Excellency on the 7th inst. to the effect that instructions were to be issued immediately for release of all prisoners and remission of all fines.

When I read the wire to Gandhiji, he said, "This is the last straw." Is not this a case for prompt and decisive action?

*Yours sincerely,*  
Vallabhbhai Patel

J.G. LAITHWAITE, ESQ.  
P.S.V.'s HOUSE  
NEW DELHI

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**Notes of a Conversation with Mr. Guy Wint**

April 1, 1939

Mr. Wint had submitted in advance a list of questions on which he invited Gandhiji's views. The first referred to the danger that threatened the growth of a democratic system in India, e.g., the Hindu-Muslim tension, "the younger intelligentsia's revolt against liberalism", "the agrarian tendency to direct action, the labour unrest and the revival of sectionalism." Gandhiji's reply was: "It reminds me of the medical language describing the course of diseases leading to symptoms which might prove fatal but which rarely are. Therefore I do not attach to them the same weight that you in cold print seem to do. I am sure that the conditions in North India are worse than elsewhere, but they are far different from those in Palestine. The differences have not permeated the masses. As Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said in a statement issued this morning, the quarrel is more political and economic than religious. If the Congress were to work with the same aim and with a single mind, and satisfied the legitimate aspirations of Muslims, the quarrel would settle down, in spite of a few riots that we may have here and there. The essential thing is that we should stick to our sheet anchor—non-violence. Happily the differences loom large in towns rather than in villages, and India lives in her villages. That the political ferment in the towns is more visible is true. But that is due to the influence of the British rule. How-

ever, if the Congress satisfied their political aspirations, as I have said, there should be no quarrel."

"As for the allegations of atrocities by the Muslim League, the various provincial governments had carefully studied them, and shown that there was no substance behind the allegations."

Mr. Wint had mentioned the language controversy. "Let me tell you", said Gandhiji, "that there is no bottom to the complaint. The Congress has never, and for that matter no one has ever attacked Urdu. You may not know that I am the author of the idea that instead of English which was sought to be made the language of India for political purposes it should be Hindustani. I have not yet succeeded in the attempt but we are trying. It is only Hindustani that can be the language of all-India political commerce with a Hindi nor Urdu. And that Hindustani is the language spoken by Hindus and Muslims and written in Devanagiri or Persian script and free from highly difficult or technical Sanskrit and Persian or Arabic words. I am a fairly careful student of Urdu but I should not be able to understand Urdu philosophical works, as they are full of Persian and Arabic words with their plurals in Persian and Arabic. That Urdu has its definite and important place is not disputed. Indeed in the Punjab it is the language generally of both Hindus and Muslims. Nor is there the slightest interference with Muslim culture in so far as it may be different from the Hindu culture."

Mr. Wint asked to what extent the political demands of the Muslims could be met, for even those demands he felt were extravagant.

"In so far as they are real and reasonable the Congress is always willing", said Gandhiji. He described the circumstances under which the unholy Minorities Pact was signed in England and how in spite of what he had said about it the Congress had submitted to it. "I claim that so far as political demands are concerned, the Congress has met them all along the line. Shri Subhas Bose and Mr. Jinnah had long talks as I had but it centred round the language and the Flag and Bande Mataram. In all these the utmost has been done by the Congress. But you may ask, "What would you do with unreasonable demands?" Time is the best healer, and I can only say that if our policy of non-violence persists, it contains a remedy even for unreason-

nable demands

About the revolt of younger intelligentsia against liberalism, Gandhiji<sup>o</sup> said it was a passing phase, and confined to Collegiates, with whom it was nothing more than a temporary indigestion. They pass into domestic life and become earning machines when they leave colleges.

"The agrarian unrest", said Gandhiji, "is a much greater danger, but if the Congress retains non-violence it is bound to be disciplined. We who believe in non-violence are trying to cope with it, but we may fail. And yet we are not going the way of China. In China peasants can be soldiers at will, not here in India. In India we cannot make soldiers quite so easily. But I agree that you have spotted the real danger. However it will cease if the Congress can produce the real type of work for the villages. The villagers, as by nature pacific and they can be easily led stray in the right direction."

As regards the Labour unrest, Gandhiji said that he did not dread it much, for factory labourers were not more than 20 lakhs. Mr. Wint thought the importance was chiefly psychological. Gandhiji said, "Not very much, for labour lives only in artificial cities, and those bent on mischief cannot spread red ruin in the villages. I would like you to hook your mind to the villages, and not the towns."

The danger of revival of particularisms was there but not great. It cannot interfere with the growth of India as a nation. It has not got any real bottom. It is largely confined to Bengal and Maharashtra, and though linguistic divisions will last, there is that rooted desire even in Bengal and Maharashtra as among all others that India shall remain a political entity. I am prepared to confess that political unity is an offshoot, even a gift of the British Raj but not an intended gift. That unity will remain."

Speaking on Federation, Gandhiji said he was treading on dangerous ground, speaking only for himself. He had not discussed his view with his colleagues, and in the official world only with Lord Lothian and the Viceroy. With that reservation he would give his own views on the matter. He said, "If virtual control is guaranteed in the matter of defence, finance, and foreign relations, and the states are asked to send not the representatives of princes but of the princes and the people I for one would not worry to insist on a change in the Federal

structure, for we do not want a mere change. The real people's constitution will come as the natural result of the virtual control I have spoken of. I agree that the Act is the creation of the best British brains, and that there were honourable motives behind it. But all this was in so far as it was consistent with the satisfaction of British ambitions. Therein lies the poison. But as I have said if the conditions I have mentioned are satisfied, I 'would work it, with this additional condition on our side that the Congress retains potent non-violence, not the effete non-violence of today."

"What do you visualise by virtual control?", asked Mr. Wint.

Gandhiji said, "The Viceroy would not act as he acts today. Today he certifies the measures that the Assembly throws out, and the docile Assembly swallows it. The Indo-British Pact was thrown out by 10 votes and if you disregard the official and nominated 40 votes, there were not more than 9 votes for it. But it is reimposed. It is staggering. When the idea is to let India govern herself, why should the Secretary of State decide these things for us? The Viceroy is powerful and may say nothing even though he may hold a contrary view. There is the one man rule of the Secretary of State wanting to speak for the 350 millions of Indians. All this speaks volumes for British discipline, but it fills a man like me who wants a real friendship with Britain with awe. Where there is this defiance of public opinion, one feels that one must rise in rebellion against the India Act.

"Regarding defence, there is a terrible waste of money. I wish you studied the Frontier Province in my company. The Government have never consulted the men that count. There is for instance Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan who is true as steel and has no ill will towards the British, but he is suspected and the Government have no use for him."

"Would not an Assembly Military Committee on the lines of the one suggested by Mr. P. N. Saprú working in close consultation with the Executive answer your purpose?", wondered Mr. Wint.

"It would not satisfy me", said Gandhiji. "For me there are the acid tests. If there is the desire to transfer the whole power, there must be always growing trust, divesting of responsibility,

and allowing us to make mistakes and putting the advice of your experts at our disposal, if and when wanted. But this advice today is imposed. That is no way to bring about co-operation."

"But", said Mr. Wint, "Haven't we on our side given an earnest of our intention of granting greater and greater power? The suspicion about our intention is a little exaggerated. Would not Mr. Sapru's suggestion do in the transition stage? If there were reasons for transfer say in 10 years this transitional arrangement would be to India's advantage."

"The British connection has now lasted for so many years. If at the end of all these years you cannot part with power with confidence, it is a sad commentary on the connection. When you mention the transition stage I begin suspecting you. Why should there be a transition stage, I ask? If you really want to part with power, then the moral and virtual control should pass to us at once. The trust placed in our ministers has not been misplaced. And if you say the Governors never exercised special powers, we may also take the credit for it, for we never gave them cause for the exercise of special powers. I want the British Government to so act as if the whole Act were scrapped. The trust must be continual and full, not as it is today. There should be a real partnership at will. In technical matters your experts will be our teachers but never masters.

"You mention Hindu-Muslim tension. In spite of the tension Governors have not found the ministers guilty of advancing one interest at the expense of another. In eight provinces we have given a good account of ourselves. Let us therefore grow to like each other more and more. The trust has to come on your side."

Speaking on Indo-British relations Gandhiji again said he was speaking only for himself. "I would", he said, "put it as high as this. I want a free and equal partnership between British and India. British has exploited us, and yet I have a sneaking regard for Britishers. We cannot become an utterly independent nation—frogs in the well—and so I want the warmth of the friendship of the world. And so if we could become partners on equal terms I want the Indo-British partnership to be permanent. But it should be a living partnership. There must be the robust faith on the part of the British people

that we are not going to desert them, nor should there be any fear on our part that if danger faces us, you may not come to our aid. You must have faith in us 350 millions as human beings, not as helpless crawling creatures. Logically then the centre of influence will be transferred from London to Delhi. After this transfer we shall cease to be a drag on the British Commonwealth that we may be today, and we shall be powerful partners. It is a dream I have long cherished. It may not be realised in my lifetime or at all. But it will be, if India retains its faith in non-violence. If there is no question of partnership for a long while to come, we must then fight heaven knows with what consequences. If we win freedom through non-violence, we would have made a gift to British and humanity in general."

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NEW DELHI,  
April 2, 1939

MY DEAR SUBHAS,

I have yours of 31st as also the previous one. You are quite frank and I like your letters for the clear enunciation of your views.

The views you express seem to me to be so diametrically opposed to those of the others and my own, that I do not see any possibility of bridging them. I think that each school of thought should be able to put forth its views before the country without any mistrust. And if this is honestly done, I do not see why there should be any bitterness ending in civil war.

What is wrong is not the differences between us but loss of mutual respect and trust. This will be remedied by time which is the best healer. If there is real non-violence in us there can be no civil war, much less bitterness.

Taking all things into consideration, I am of opinion that you should at once form your own cabinet, formulate your programme definitely and put it before the forthcoming A. I. C. C. If the committee accepts the programme, all will be plain sailing



and you should be enabled to prosecute it unhampered by the minority. If on the other hand your programme is not accepted, you should resign and let the Committee choose its president. And you will be free to educate the country along your own lines. I tender this advice irrespective of Pundit Pant's resolution.

Now for your questions. When Pundit Pant's resolution was produced I was on my bed. Pyarelal used to send telephone messages about my health to Tripuri. One morning he brought me the message that there was to be a resolution expressing confidence in the old horses. I had not the text before me. I said it would be good so far as it went for I had been told at Segaon that your election was not so much confidence in you as ensure of the old horses especially the Sardar. After this I saw the actual text only in Allahabad when I went to see the Maulana Sahab.

My prestige does not count. It has no independent value of its own. When my motive is suspected or my policy or programme rejected by the country the prestige must go. India will rise or fall by the quality of the sum-total of the acts of her many millions. Individuals however high they may be are of no account except in so far as they represent the many millions. Therefore let us rule it out of consideration.

I wholly dissent from your view that the country has been never so non-violent as now. I smell violence in the air I breath. But the violence has put on a subtle form. Our mutual distrust is a bad form of violence. The widening gulf between Hindus and Mussalmans points to same thing. I can give further illustrations.

We seem to differ as to the amount of corruption in the Congress. My impression is that it is on the increase. I have been pleading for the past many months for a thorough scrutiny. In these circumstances I see no atmosphere for non-violent mass action. And ultimatum without an effective sanction is worse than useless.

But as I have told you, I am an old man perhaps growing timid and over-cautious and you have youth before you and reckless optimism born of youth. I hope you are right and I am wrong. I have the firm belief that the Congress as it is today cannot deliver the goods, cannot offer civil disobedience worth

the name. Therefore if your prognosis is right, I am a back number and played out as the generalissimo of satyagraha.

I am glad you have mentioned the little Rajkot affair. It brings into prominent relief the different angles from which we look at things. I have nothing to repent of in the steps I have taken in connection with it. I feel that it has great national importance. I have not stopped C. D. in the other states for the sake of Rajkot. But Rajkot opened my eyes, it showed me the way. I am not in Delhi for my health. I am reluctantly in Delhi awaiting the Chief Justice's decision. I hold it to be my duty to be in Delhi till the steps to be taken in due fulfilment of the Viceroy's declaration in his last wire to me are finally taken. I may not run any risk. If I invited the paramount power to do its duty, I was bound to be in Delhi to see that the duty was fully performed. I saw nothing wrong in the Chief Justice being appointed the interpreter of the document whose meaning was put in doubt by the Thakore Saheb. By the way Sir Maurice examines the document not in his capacity as Chief Justice but as a trained jurist trusted by the Viceroy. By accepting the Viceroy's nominee as judge I fancy I have shown both wisdom and grace and what is more important I have increased the Viceregal responsibility in the matter.

Though we have discussed sharp differences of opinion between us, I am quite sure that our private relations will not suffer in the least. If they are from the heart, as I believe they will bear the strain of the differences.

Love.

*Yours,*  
Bapu

*PS.* I do not think that after the clear expression of our views a meeting between us is necessary. But if you still think otherwise, please wire.

72

NEW DELHI,  
April 7, 1939

DEAR LORD J. INLITHGOW,

I must thank you for your letter just received and the full and unequivocal assurance contained therein. Armed with it, I leave tonight in the confidence that there will be no hitch in the due fulfilment of the terms of the Thakore Saheb's Notification of 26th December last.

My reply will be incomplete, if I did not express my regret that it was not possible for you to accept my suggestion that the question whether your wire to me of 6th March last cancelled that of the 5th, or whether it merely explained and amplified the latter, should be referred to the Chief Justice of India.

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

73

NEW DELHI,  
April 7, 1939

MY DEAR MR. LAITHWAITE,

I enclose Mr. Gandhi's note for H. E. He is leaving tonight for Rajkot. But I am staying on to pester you every now and then. You have been so good that I have never hesitated to bother you at all hours of the day and night. I was telling Mr. Gandhi one day how good you had been to me. He said your unfailing courtesy and readiness to help reminded him of Mr. Lane, the Secretary of General Smuts in South Africa in 1910-14 when Gandhiji gave General Smuts many a hard battle—which resulted ultimately in lifelong friendship between the two!

I wish you a very happy Easter.

Yours sincerely,  
Mahadev

ANANDKUNJ,  
RAJKOT,  
April 19, 1939

DEAR MR. GIBSON,

I am laying on my back with severe headache and slight temperature which has up to now been diagnosed as gastric flu which seems to be raging about in Rajkot and especially in the house in which I am accommodated.

I came here on the 9th instant. It is the 19th today. A matter which need not have taken more than a day has taken ten days. Unfortunately, we hold different views about the cause. I become confirmed in my opinion that Darbar Virawala is at the back of all this delay. I have proof enough which may not hold water in a court of law but it is enough for all practical purposes and certainly enough for me. I have no grudge against Darbar Virawala. I would love to convert him. It would be a triumph of non-violence, if I could do so. And I could, if I had your active co-operation. But I know you cannot give it so long as you hold the very opinion you do of his ability, efficiency and straight forwardness.

I sent you herewith copy of the latest letter from the Thakore Saheb. It speaks for itself. If the proposition laid down in the letter were to be acted upon, there would never be a Committee formed in terms of the Award of the Chief Justice of India. The whole plan laid out in Delhi bids fair to be completely frustrated if you, as the local representative of the paramount power, do not actively intervene. I invite your attention to the fact that in the Thakore Saheb's letter to the Sardar dated the 12th January. Four out of the seven names were accepted. In an appendix to the voluminous papers attached to the Thakore Saheb's case, signed by Darbar Virawalla as his political adviser, occurs the analysis of all the seven names recommended by the Sardar. Only two have been objected to because of their residential disqualification. How is it that now suddenly the qualifications of all but one have been challenged? And if I am to bear the burden that is sought to be placed upon me, there will be no end to the preliminaries and there will be no enquiry.

I do not like the idea of troubling you or seeking the inter-

vention of the paramount power. But I see there is no way out of the difficulty.

The Bhayats and Girassia's Association has also taken up what I consider to be a most unreasonable attitude. As soon as I read in the papers that they wanted my so-called promise to be submitted to impartial scrutiny, I wrote at once accepting the proposal. But as I sensed danger of interminable delay I said the proceedings ought not to interfere with the Committee's work and that if their contention was upheld, the Bhayat's nominee would immediately be accepted and one name withdrawn. The Association however would not listen to my proposal. They would hold up the formation of the Committee till the Judge was selected and his award was available. Acceptance of my proposal would not have resulted in the Committee functioning before the award but it would certainly have resulted in the case being decided expeditiously enough. I have given the opinion that the Chief Justice of India ought not to be troubled over the issue though I should have no objection to Sir Maurice adjudicating if the Government of India could be induced to invite him to do so and if he accepted the invitation. I have suggested instead a judge of the Bombay High Court. I have no doubt that you could manage this thing easily. I suppose the judge could fly here tomorrow or the day after. I have not much to submit to him nor can the Bhayats have much either. The Judge need not take long to give his judgment. What I fear and suspect is that there is no desire anywhere to play the game. You do not mind my thinking aloud before you. I would be less than just to you if I suppressed my innermost thoughts whilst I looked up to you as the local Crown Representative to see that the Committee was properly set up and its work proceeded with smoothly and without delay.

I must leave Rajkot on the 24th instant by the 1.10 afternoon train and hasten to Calcutta, thence to Brindaban. I would return here at the earliest possible moment which cannot be before the 7th proximo. Meanwhile Shri Dhebarbhai will be acting on my behalf. But I hope that during the five days that I am here much work will have been done.

May I remind you that my fast was only suspended and if all my efforts fail and no headway is made I must resume it? It won't be without serious reflection. I do not want to do so.

I. have not the physical energy for it. But a peremptory call of duty knows no mundane difficulty. The matter is so serious that I would like you to convey at least the substance of this letter to His Excellency. I am loath to interfere with his much needed rest. If you think that there is substance in my complaint and that you have the will and the powers to deal with it I would much rather that His Excellency were kept undisturbed.

Of course I am at your disposal, if you think that a personal talk is necessary, in that case you need not mind my fever. I will come. I have an appointment with Dr. Ambedkar for half past eleven.

For the moment I am not replying to the Thakore Saheb's letter.

*Yours,*  
M. K. Gandhi

75

NEW DELHI,  
April 20, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSIYAMDASJI,

The enclosed came in an *open* envelope, and so as your quondam secretary I read and of course appreciated the contents.

The news from Rajkot is very disquieting indeed. A letter has gone to Gibson in which Bapu has again delivered a kind of ultimatum. Bapu has invited his attention to the Thakore's dilatory tactics and to the systematic way in which obstacles are being placed to prevent the committee from coming into being, and he has asked him to intervene as a representative of the paramount power. Bapu has assumed that it is within his power to intervene, if he had the will to do so. If he refused to do so, he will resume the fast which he had not broken but only suspended. He has been asked to convey the substance of the letter to the Viceroy—in case he cannot intervene himself, otherwise "I would not like to disturb H.E.'s holiday." Bapu,

if he is well, will interview Gibson today at 3 o'clock and will have his reply from his lips. Much depends on this interview, and, if there is anything worth conveying to you on the phone, I shall give you a ring.

Sushila arrived this morning from Rajkot en route to Kunjah (Gujarat) where she is going to attend her brother's wedding. She said there was a rather remarkable altercation between Bapu and Vallabhbhai one day. He had written three letters surrendering everything to the Mussalmans and the Bhayats. Vallabhbhai was exasperated. Bapu said, "I know that you have to suffer the consequence of my many stupid acts." To this Vallabhbhai replied: "No. There has been no stupid act up to now, but these three letters that you propose to send *are* stupid!" Bapu laughed but later on seriously said: "Should I not then retire from all active leadership and live a life of contemplation?" I do not know how the talk went on further but the upshot was that the letters were torn up. Sushila also said that Bapu had discovered that Vallabhbhai had a better knowledge—and more instinctive knowledge—of the workings of vicious human nature than he himself had and he once exclaimed: 'The step would have been suicidal.' (The reference was to the step of going on fast, if the Massalmans did not keep their word). So our long telegram of that morning was more than justified.

But the whole business has set me furiously thinking. You will remember the long talk we had the other morning on the possibilities and implications of ahimsa and what I have heard from Sushila leaves me wondering whether ahimsa is any good for the vindication of *earthly* rights—a proposition which mooted by Mr. Arthur Moore in that famous controversy. When we next meet Bapu and can get a little time with him we should discuss this aspect of the matter threadbare with him. For the moment I do not know what the future has in store for us. We seem to be driven headlong to some indescribable, inscrutable Destiny.

And now about the cows. I have not yet gone to purchase them. I do not know if it is worthwhile having the cows without making proper provision of *gwalas* who can correctly handle them. It would be like my getting in possession of one of your mansion without the wherewithal to keep it in a proper trim. I am therefore inclined to think that it may be wise to wait until

October when we meet again. In the mean time I shall meet Sayer again and ask him if he can have our *gwala* or *gwalas* for training for two' or 'three months. Is that right? Please let me know. The house looks desolate without you. It was left *nearly* desolate by Bapu. And yet when I leave it on the 24th or 25th I will not do so. Without a pang that springs from having to leave a thing for which you have developed a certain amount of attachment.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

76

NIW DLLHI,  
April 21, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Bhat has arrived. He is fully acquainted with Sayer and had once worked under him. He will certainly do what is fit and proper. Today he has gone to renew his old acquaintance with him.

Herewith copy of Bapu's letter to Gibson.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Mahadev

77

BIRLA HOUSE,  
BENARAS,  
April 22, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I have received today your letter of the 20th. I will perhaps talk to you tonight or tomorrow morning again on phone to find out from you the latest position. Yesterday I felt very strongly that I should write to Laithwaite and tell him that it



was my personal opinion that the paramount power must intervene to fulfil the conditions of the Notification of the 26th December, that the constitution should be framed by them on the basis of that notification and that in not helping Gandhiji they were exposing themselves to greatest misunderstanding and criticism and that I should like to know what the objection could be to their taking over the question of constitution making in their own hands. But then I thought that I should wait until I had a little more information and besides you may be talking and also writing to one of these men and while duplication may not matter, it was better to be slow rather than over-hasty in such delicate negotiations. So perhaps I will decide tomorrow.

But frankly speaking I not only agree with you that ahimsa for securing worldly achievements is a doubtful proposition but I have also got my grave doubts whether what has happened at Rajkot from beginning to end could be called ahimsa at all! In fact, as I told you the other day and I am not convinced that this fasting business is not in itself an act of coercion. I don't see how you are going to change the heart of your adversary through these ultimatums. Sardar's position could be understood because he never pretended to represent any high philosophy and his fight in Rajkot was more or less an unarmed rebellion, but not necessarily non-violent. And as such we cannot complain if we countenanced resistance from Virawala and the Thakur in our own coin. I don't see how Gibson could help because we never spared Gibson. But, of course, the Viceroy's responsibility is there. But he may have his own difficulties which we do not know. We have been impatient which helps none. Testing the things on Bapu's philosophy, I do not feel that it could be said that we have been free from blame. I strongly feel that there should be no more of this fasting and I hope we would be able to prevail upon Bapu when we all meet him in Calcutta. If there is to be a quiet chat, I suggest that yourself, myself and Bapu should talk alone. In the presence of Sardar, I have not got the nerves to launch an attack.

I rather enjoyed what you wrote about the conversation between Bapu and Sardar. Sardar talks less and talks irrelevant but his instinct is sound. The only thing is that even he did not find himself a good match for Virawala!

Now about the cows. Bhat must have seen you and I dare

say you have decided what you thought to be the best under the circumstances.

I note that you are leaving on the 24th or the 25th. I will be leaving this place on the 25th. Go if you are still there, and I hope you will be there on the 25th, then before leaving, I will have a talk with you again.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
NEW DELHI

78

April 23, 1939

MAHATMA GANDHIJI  
RAJKOT

(1) BIDHAN WILL FEEL UNHAPPY OVER YOUR CHANGED DECISION HE HAD ALREADY ADVERTISED IN PRESS.

(2) REMIND YOU OF YOUR INTENTION TO MEET MALAVIYAJI ON WAY TO OR FROM CALCUTTA. THIS MAY BE THE LAST MEETING IN VIEW HIS DECLINING HEALTH.

GHANSHYAMDAS

79

RAJKOT,  
April 24, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
CARE LUCKY  
BENARES

DR. BIDHAN SUBHAS CONSENTED MY STAY SODEPUR. MOST ANXIOUS MEET MALAVIYAJI. IMPOSSIBLE BREAK JOURNEY GOING CALCUTTA. WILL BREAK ON RETURN.

BAPU

80

BOMBAY,  
April 25, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA  
LUCKY  
CALCUTTA

AFTER FULL DISCUSSION SARDAR AND I HAVE DECIDED THAT HE SHOULD NOT ATTEND CALCUTTA MEETING.

BAPU

81

ON WAY TO BIHAR,  
May 2, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I showed the two Rajkot telegrams to Bapu last night. He studied them carefully and said: "Virawala's telegram has, to my mind the stamp of sincerity and truth, and he means to do what he has promised." He was to have issued a statement on Rajkot, but he said "No statement now. Let him do as much as he has promised and we will wait for a few days." It is quite likely that he may send a persuasive telegram to Virawala today. However it is very good that his mind is easy about Rajkot.

The train is so wretched that I dare not inflict any more of this handwriting on you.

Bapu seems to be very happy over the Calcutta happenings also—particularly about Jawahar's staying out. He came to the station and again assured Bapu of fullest co-operation.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

BRINDABAN,  
Via BETTIAH (BIHAR),  
May 3, 1939

MY DLAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The enclosed from Virawala and Bapu's reply to it will interest you. You will remember how we said Virawala's telephone message to me indirectly suggested that Bapu should not go back to Rajkot, and then Bapu added the words in the telegram: "Probably reaching Rajkot 10th." This telegram has reference to that. You will also remember how the Viceroy was also averse to Bapu's second visit to Rajkot. Vallabhbhai had a long argument with Bapu regarding Rajkot and told him how he had sprung a disagreeable surprise on all by this statement. When Bapu saw that Vallabhbhai could not appreciate his viewpoint, he simply said: "Vallabhbhai, I am developing a new technique. You may not understand it now but you will some day. And the Rajkot folks have no reason to have a grouse against the statement for I had told them all that I had said in the statement. It was wrong of me to have tolerated all the abuse you and others poured on Virawala. We failed therefore to draw the best out of him. All my efforts are now addressed to this purpose. But all this does not matter. All I want to do now is to forget Rajkot and cast the whole burden of it on me." And when I offered Bapu's reply to Virawala to Vallabhbhai to see, Bapu said: "Mahadev, spare Vallabhbhai the trouble. Why should you worry him with this?"

It is very warm here, but the heat is more bearable than at Calcutta. The nights however were much cooler there than here. There are no breezes here from the bay of Bengal.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

DURBAR SHRI VIRAWALA  
RAJKOT

YOUR WIRE. MY WIRES MUST BE READ TOGETHER. AM MYSELF DEVELOPING NEW TECHNIQUE. MY DESIRE NOT INTERFERE DOES NOT MEAN MY REFUSAL GUIDE THOSE WHO SEEK GUIDANCE BUT I WANT DHEBARBHAI OTHER PARISHAD PEOPLE RELY ON THEIR OWN RESOURCES AND ACT INDEPENDENTLY OF ME OR SARDAR. IT WILL BE OUR TRIUMPH AND YOUR WHEN THEY DO SO BUT THEY WILL NOT DO SO IF YOU TREAT PARISHAD PEOPLE WITH CONTEMPT AND REGARD THEM AS LOAFERS. DHEBARBHAI MAY NOT BE STATE SUBJECT IN TERMS NOTIFICATION BUT IS NO OUTSIDER. MORLOVER HE REPRESENTS ME AND IS ONLY PERSON I KNOW WELL ENOUGH FOR PURPOSE I ASK YOU TRUST HIM. HE HAS ONE DEFECT. HE LEANS TOO MUCH ON SARDAR OR ME. SARDAR HAS TOLD HIM HE MUST REFER ONLY TO ME IF HE MUST. I AM TRYING MAKE HIM SELF-RELIANT. DON'T WANT COME TO RAJKOT BUT NOT COMING DEPENDS UPON YOUR BEING JUST AND GENEROUS AND CARRYING OUT YOUR PROMISE TO SEE THROUGH SETTLEMENT NOT BY SLIGHTING HONOURABLE PEOPLE BUT MY TREATING THEM AS SUCH.

GANDHI

MAHATMA GANDHI  
BRINDABAN (CHAMPARAN)

HIS HIGHNESS AND MYSELF GREATLY APPRECIATED YOUR RIGHT DECISION TO LEAVE SETTLEMENT TO HIS HIGHNESS AND HIS SUBJECTS DIRECT WITHOUT ANY OUTSIDE INTERVENTION INCLUDING YOUR OWN AND THAT OF VALLABHBHAI. THIS ATTITUDE OF YOUR HAD CREATED HOPES OF SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT. IT HAS BEEN A PAINFUL SURPRISE TO HIS HIGHNESS AND MYSELF TO READ THE PUBLICATION OF YOUR TELEGRAM TO DHEBAR STATING THAT HE

SHOULD RESOLUTELY FOLLOW OUT HIS OWN PLAN TILL YOUR RETURN. THIS TELEGRAM IS CONTRADICTORY TO YOUR PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIRECT SETTLEMENTS BETWEEN HIGHNESS AND HIS PEOPLE AND GIVS LIBERTY TO DEHBAR AN OUTSIDER TO FOLLOW HIS OWN PLAN WHICH IS TO PREVENT SUBJECTS OF HIS HIGHNESS REACHING DIRECT SETTLEMENT WITH HIGHNESS AND VIRTUALLY ANNOUNCE YOUR DEFINING DECISION TO RAJKOT TO INTERVINE IN THE MATTER AND THEREBY ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO DELAY REACHING A SETTLEMENT WITH HIS HIGHNESS. TO ACHIEVE YOUR ORIGINAL AMBITION OF SAID DIRECT SETTLEMENT HIS HIGHNESS AND MYSELF CONSIDER DESIRABLE THAT YOU SHOULD NOT RETURN HERE AND ANNOUNCE YOUR DECISION ACCORDINGLY AND ADVISE STATE PEOPLE TO REACH DIRECT SETTLEMENT WITH HIGHNESS AND ASK DEHBAR AND OUTSIDERS NOT TO INTERFERE.

VIRAWALA

## 85

CALCUTTA,  
May 4, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI.

As regards Talcher and Rajkot, the news in the Press is not quite satisfactory but I hope Bapu's patience would bring about desired result.

I hope you told Bapu that he made a mistake about the facts in his statement on Jaipur. I read in today's papers that 25 satyagrahis have been released. I think they have begun to take action and perhaps, before long all of them may be released.

I hope Bapu is issuing a statement on the Congress affairs. There seems to be genuine misunderstanding among the Bengalis that Bengal has been wronged. Bidhan was going to issue a statement which I did not like and so it has been given to Devdas for being revised. But what is needed is a statement from Bapu. Had Bapu been four years younger, I would ask him to undertake a tour of Bengal. But now?

Some interesting developments are likely to take place. It appears M.N. Roy is trying to contest Subhas for leadership of Bengal. Subhas held a meeting yesterday but his programme does not, at least in theory, differ from the Congress programme. His party will have all respect for Bapu but not necessarily full confidence in him. On the other hand, M.N. Roy has neither respect nor confidence in Bapu.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DISAI  
BRINDABAN

86

May 5, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Here is Bidhan's interview to the Press. You may find many hands in it but this has not made it incoherent. As a matter of fact Bidhan liked it and he has got congratulations from many people. We would have made it somewhat different but we had to accommodate ourselves to his views. The language is of Devdas and Parasnathji.

It looks as if Bengal is in a pitiable condition. You have heard of the two groups here, that is, Jugantar and Anusheelan. I understand the Anusheelan group has decided to keep itself aloof. The other group is divided between M.N. Roy and Subhas.

If one were a mere politician, he would welcome such a rift between one's opponents. But as Bapu's group is not a party of politicians, I am sure they will feel sorry for what is happening in Bengal. Bengal stands in need of help but I don't think anybody could give much help in the present circumstances.

The Makhan Sen group is going to help M.N. Roy. It is whispered that they deliberately supported Subhas to put him in

the wrong and then crush him for the benefit of M.N. Roy. One should not believe all that is being rumoured, but all the same it is a fact that Makhan Sen group supported Shyam-sunder Chakravarty against C.K. Das, then J.M. Sengupta against Subhas, and then Subhas against Bidhan and now perhaps they are going to support M.N. Roy against Subhas. How one wishes Bapu should undertake a tour of two months in Bengal.

I received the copies of telegrams exchanged between Virwala and Bapu. I did not appreciate one sentence in Bapu's telegram where he says that he is "developing a new technique." You remember the 67th Shloka of Adhyaya-18 in *Geeta*: "Utter this never to him who knows no austerity, has no devotion, nor any desire to listen, nor yet to him who scoffs at Me." To talk of 'new technique' to Virawala is like putting pearls before swine. But perhaps Bapu knows better.

Please acquaint Bapu with such contents of my letter as you think necessary.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
BRINDABAN (CHAMPARAN)

87

BIRLA BROS. LTD.,  
CALCUTTA,  
May 6, 1939

MAHADEVBHAI  
CARE MAHATMA GANDHIJI  
BRINDABAN (CHAMPARAN)

"CHRONICAL" REPORTS SARDAR NOT INCLUDED IN PARLIAMENTARY BOARD INSTAD JAWAHARLAL INCLUDED. COMMERCIAL FRIENDS IN BOMBAY FTLL PERTURBED. HAVE ASKED ME TO INQUIRE. I IN-



FORMED THEM I DID NOT BELIEVE REPORT. ADVISABLE CONTRADICT SAME, PLEASE WIRE. MALAVIYAJI WIRE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR WHOLE PARTY AT SEVAUPWAN. WIRE HIM TIME ARRIVAL.  
GHANSHYAMDAS

88

CALCUTTA,  
May 6, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Please send me a copy of the letter which Bapu may have written to the Viceroy in connection with Jaipur, Rajkot and Talcher.

Vallabhbhai today wires to me that Bapu expects me at Benares. I am sure he has cut a joke at my expense. I don't see why should Bapu want me at Benares while he is staying there only for a few hours. In case I am really wanted, please send me a wire. But perhaps what has happened is this that when I wired to him that I was expecting him at Calcutta, he has retorted by wiring that Bapu expects me at Benares.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
BRINDABAN (CHAMPARAN)

89

BRINDABAN,  
May 5, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have all your letters. My thanks for them.

That wire from Vallabhbhai was not in jest. In fact I drafted the wire for him. Bapu asked him to accompany him to Benares

and Bapu himself said that you would be there. Of course he told me that you wanted him there for medical examination. He might have some treatment on going to Bombay!

Virwala sent another telegram asking Bapu not to go to Rajkot. Bapu said in reply that he could not leave his workers in the lurch. He should give him an opportunity to try his new technique with the co-workers. I agree that much of Bapu's language is like pearls before swine for Virwala. But sometimes Bapu loves to confuse and confound his opponents.

What you say about Bengal is all very said. I should not be surprised, if no one outside Bengal took notice of it.

We arrive, for working in Rajkot on the 12th. I shall write to you from there.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

90

CALCUTTA,  
May 10, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I am wondering whether Bapu wanted me at Benares for anything special because then I would have come. I thought it might be his mere impression that I would be coming and therefore I did not come.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
RAJKOT

ANANDBHAVAN,  
RAJKOT,  
May 15, 1939

MY DEAR GHÄNSHYAMDASJI,

I enclose herewith copies of Bapu's letters to Lord Linlithgow and Arthur Moore.

Bapu's impatience exasperated some of us two months ago. His patience is likely to exasperate them now! He is prepared to wait indefinitely—to the extent of establishing an ashram and settling down here. He went the length of accepting the loyalists' proposals for reforms. These would seem to have been inspired by Virawala, and do not amount too much. More was offered by Cadell. But Bapu would accept even these provided they are given willingly and with good grace. Though they are 25% he would prefer them to 100% wrested out of unwilling hands. I had a long talk with Virawala yesterday. One moment he seems to be desperately anxious for a settlement. The next moment he behaves to the contrary, and there is no knowing how he will view this new move of Bapu's. If he accepts Bapu's offer and announces these wholly inadequate reforms, the trouble would end. If he does not, I do not know how long we shall have to wander here. If this settlement breaks down—we will have Virawala's reply tonight—then of course we have to go on with Gwyer's Award and all the excruciating delay it means. The reference regarding Bhayat Muslim trouble—it took me a whole day fixing up the terms—is being referred to Sir Maurice. He might give his decision before he leaves for England, but after that? For the moment, therefore, the settlement, however unsatisfactory, does hold out a ray of hope. But who knows even that may prove illusory. The world here is so full of suspicion and tortuousness and hidden moves and motives that one can never be sure of oneself.

Bapu is as well as he can be.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

CALCUTTA,  
May 18, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADIVBHAI,

I received your letter enclosing copies of Bapu's letters to Lord Linlithgow and Arthur Moore. How tantalizing it was to discover that the copy of the letter to the Viceroy contained only the first page and the remaining ones were missing. It was compensated by a duplicate of the letter to Moore, but that, of course, is no compensation. I have wired to you today to send me the remaining pages of the letter to the Viceroy.

I have read today Bapu's statement renouncing the Gwyer Award. I have no doubt that this was the right step. We never thought Bapu's fast to be non-violent. I think Bapu's present policy will have far better effect than his previous policy. I wonder if it was not a disappointment to Sardar, but in the long run I have no doubt that the present policy has much greater chances of success.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADIVBHAI DESAI  
RAJKOT

ANANDBHAVAN,  
RAJKOT,  
May 19, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your telegram. I am sorry that you should have had to send it. It was my secretary's mistake. (You know Narayanrao—my secretary). I enclose a full copy along with a copy of the reply received today. Bapu's comment on the reply was "It is quite nice, but as ineffective and useless as the

Gwyer Award." I wonder what you will say regarding the latest statement of Bapu. It is our great misfortune that Bapu often resents our reaction to his steps, but later comes to the same conclusion as we and then expresses it with a vehemence that embarrasses us all. Very often we remarked on his impatience. He said he was not impatient and if he was he had a right to be so. Now he says his impatience was a sign of himsa and his running to the paramount powers, his characterisation of the Thakore as a fraud and Virawala as "shifty" and a curse to the state was impatient and therefore violent. I had a long argument about the statement. I said, "Don't you think your approaching the P.P. and accepting their offer of the C.I.S. arbitration was better morally and technically than would have been your confining yourself only to the Thakore Saheb. For satyagraha against a slave—for that is what every ruler is and nothing more—is unjustifiable." To this he said: "You are talking from the result, and your statement that the Thakore is a slave of the P.P. is only half true. And even if he was no better than slave, my satyagraha if it was, of the highest quality would help him to throw off his slavery. Any way my decision to throw away the Award is the result of self-introspection, the anxiety to be rid of an oppression, an incubus that was pressing upon my breast all my waking hours."

Virawala is looking to me for advice and guidance almost to an embarrassing extent. I have to be with him for several hours each day. The only result accruing from his contact is that I am getting to know him more and more. The Hyde in him we knew or we thought we knew. I am getting to see the Dr. Jekyll in him, but it is quite likely that too is what I think I am getting to know. Often enough he defies analysis, and often enough he seems to repose a trust in me that I am not prepared for. When we meet some day we shall have lots and lots to talk about.

I had about 90 minutes with Mr. Gibson. He was very nice, quite frank, and even deferential. He has not yet forgotten the old sores—goondaism and the publication of what he maintains was an utterly inaccurate report of his talk, and so on. But I must say I liked him and I am glad I met him. About Agatha you know what he said? "She is a very good woman, but lacks the sense of humour." Our talks ranged over possible topics and I think I did get to know the man.

The more I meet these people the more I am convinced that the whole of our agitation was a picture of our impatience and much might have been achieved with a little more patience. However no lesson is learnt too late.

We should not be staying here beyond the 2nd of June, and some kind of announcement will be made today. I have had much to do with the drafting but in no other sense than this that I have allowed myself to be used as Virawala's Secretary (he calls me that half a dozen times during the day—what a doubtful compliment!) without our committing ourselves to anything in any way. The settlement so far as the Constitutional Reforms are concerned will be of little value; all the value it may have would be derived from its being an earnest of their good faith (if so it proves to be).

Yours affectionately,  
Mahadev

CALCUTTA,  
May 25, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

After Bapu's latest statement, I should like to suggest what I have been feeling all along about some of Bapu's articles in *Harijan*. One was the publication of "The Kick and Kisses Speech." It was never confirmed to be correct. Bapu can publish such document only if he is perfectly certain that the document was authentic. I doubt very much whether it was. In fact I believe that such a speech was delivered not by His Highness but by Col. Haksar. If that be true, then we have to make amends for the same.

Gibson will have justification to be still sore. My Gwalior Mill manager and secretary were always full of praises for him as a man. He was reported to be very frank and nice to everyone and specially to children. He would come and play with them in the mill. He could not have been very good in personal

behaviour and very bad in political behaviour, and he had received enough of abuses from Bapu. Does he deserve any revised opinion of Bapu? I of course believe that he was partly responsible for the breach. But he got much more than he deserved. My men would not admit that he could be a goonda.

Lothian\* writes as follows:

It looks as if the Mahatma is gradually swinging Congress round the policy he outlined to me when I went to stay with him at Segaon. I think however it will be necessary to limit the pace at which full government is developed in the states. The people have yet had no experience of representative institution, and if Congress pushes them too far it may push the Mohammedans out of India altogether. I am more convinced than ever that the basic principles of the Federation are the only ones upon which India can move forward and avoid calamity. If you see the Mahatma, please give my kindest regards.

Will you please place my letter before Bapu?

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHADEVBHAI DLSAI, ESQR.  
RAJKOT

RAJKOT,  
May 25, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd. Its perusal gave me much pleasure. I will certainly read it out to Bapuji and that will obviate the necessity of remembering you to him.

What you say about Virawala is quite correct but we are not Simon Pure ourselves. Before aspiring to effect a change of heart in others we should undergo similar metamorphosis a

hundred fold ourselves. Virawala was certainly playing a game of chess but we were by no means lagging behind. He succeeded in outwitting us, or at least Vallabhbai. Bapu, out of his attachment for Vallabhbai and weakness for Rajkot committed a blunder. But it is given to Bapu alone to retrace a false step promptly enough. We cannot manage to do that and some of our failings cling to us for the rest of our lives like a nose or the eyes. If we could learn the technique from Bapu we should feel sufficiently educated.

Please go through my article titled "A Momentous Decision" in *Harijan*. It was the result of much deep thinking.

Work in conjunction with Virawala is gaining pace quite satisfactorily. Poor man, he too is victim of his own psychosis. But can he reform himself in a day? But his mental attitude has been undergoing a subtle change and our relations with him are becoming increasingly cordial. Besides, I am now getting full measure of his powers. There is one thing, however, that stands crystal clear: Gibson leads him by the nose. He would not dream of doing anything, ever so small, without Gibson giving the green signal.

We are here till the 1st, reaching Bombay the following day. It has been decided to put up with Rajeshwarji.

I hope you are keeping quite fit.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

RAJKOT,  
May 29, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your letter of the 25th. Yes, Gibson is still sore, as he actually mentioned to me his grievances. Bapu has already written to Mr. Gibson apologising to him for the trouble he gave him during the fast, and I am carefully investigating the other grievances. On closer contact with Virawala I found that even he had a genuine grievance in certain matters. The whole



matter was mishandled—Heaven knows how and why. Perhaps the fates were against us.

That, the states do nothing without reference to the Resident I have found with my own eyes, and there is absolutely no doubt that Virawala was supported in all he did by Gibson. But the charge is not Mr. Gibson's grievance; it is that that interview—or rather an inaccurate account of it—was published in *Harijan* and words were put into his mouth that he never used. Also that Bapu used the word "goondaism" with reference to some of his acts here.

We are having another interview on the 1st and I hope everything will be cleared up and that he will have no more grievance to nurse. Virawala is a difficult proposition, but as I have told you, he confides in me and I have for the time being found him amenable. He has an inordinate love of power and he can brook nothing calculated to curtail it.

We leave here on the 1st arriving in Bombay on the 2nd and leaving for the Frontier on the 6th.

Yours affectionately,  
Mahadev

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ANANDBHAVAN,  
RAJKOT,  
May 30, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The enclosed will, I am sure, interest you. I am not publishing it in *Harijan* as I did not publish Wint's interview. Of course this man did not get as much out of Bapu as Wint did, but he struck me to be a very honest and influential man.

Mr. Gibson arrives tomorrow evening and both Bapu and I will have an interview with him. Perhaps you do not know how I started my interview with him when I saw him about a week ago. I told him that all I knew about him was what I had heard from the Gwalior Mill manager about his friendliness with children and readiness to come and play with them

occasionally. I think that was enough to touch the right cord in his heart and we talked merrily as you know for 90 minutes.

I have not yet passed on your message to Bapu regarding the speech attributed to Gwalior but I agree with you that some kind of amends has got to be made.

You do not tell me what you make of Lothian's letter. "Limiting the pace at which full Government is developed in the states" is one thing and crushing the people down as is being done in Limbi, Talcher and other places is a different thing altogether, but thank God the swing of the pendulum is at the present moment in the opposite direction and Bapu is cultivating the virtue of patience.

I shall write to you again from Bombay.

I forgot to tell you that Mr. Gibson has a delightful but dry sense of humour. I enclose copy of his latest letter to Bapu in reply to the one written by Bapu to him expressing his regret for having been a constant source of worry during the days of the fast which after all had to be infructuous.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

Encl. Gibosn's letter

THE RESIDENCY,  
RAJKOT,  
BALACHADI,  
May 27, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

It is very nice of you to have written as you have. Thank you very much. More work there was in those days which you recall, but I don't mind work if it is worth doing. So much that one has to do nowadays is not. The people who are really overworked I think, were the telegraph and telephone operators. Residents (if I may let you into a secret) are always overworked.

I expect to be back in Rajkot on the night of May 31st and I have written to Mr. Mahadev Desai and suggested having a talk on the following morning. And of course I should like to have another talk with you before you leave but I expect you

will be very busy that morning, so I don't suggest it; but if you can spare a few minutes, please come at whatever time suits you.

*Yours sincerely,*  
E.C. Gibson

98

CALCUTTA,  
June 1, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Thanks for your letter. I understand Radhakrishnan has already seen Bapu and you about Jaipur affairs. I too received from him a summary of the conversation that took place in various interviews between Jamnalalji and the state officials. It is difficult for me to make out why Todd should have been so nice in the beginning and curt in the end. I would not believe that there has been a sudden change in the policy; on the other hand, I would not be surprised if during the course of conversation they got some wrong impression and thus changed their attitude. May be like Rajkot there has been mishandling somewhere. I am writing this in order that we may not get impatient without knowing both the sides of the picture.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

MAHADEVBHAI DESAI, ESQ.  
RAJKOT

99

SEGAON,  
WARDHA,  
June 17, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

You will remember that report of Steel's interview with

Bapu that I sent you from Rajkot. Have you made any use of it? I hope not. The situation is this. Bapu was wondering if it should not be published in *Harijan*. When I sent it to you I had no doubt that it should not be published. Now Pyarelal who is in Bombay just now has sent some matter for *Harijan* in which he has included his account of this interview. (It is substantially the same), and Bapu asked me why it should not go. I said I did not think it could go, as it would raise plenty of dust and unnecessary controversy and conjecture. Instead I said I had a good mind to send a copy to Laithwaite who might show it to the Viceroy—especially as it contains a most complimentary reference to him. “Do you think,” Bapu asked, “it would be better than publishing it?” I said I had no doubt. Then I said : “But I have a fear that Birlaji may have done so already, though if he did it he would certainly tell us. Bapu said : “I hope he has not done it. For it would not be proper for him to send things like that to the Viceroy. It would compromise his position, and so on.” That is why I am asking you. I am almost sure that you could not have used it. Will you kindly let me have a telegram in reply? Bapu is fairly well, though weak. His vitality is very low—perhaps because of the heat which too is not much to speak of now. We meet in Bombay—don’t we?

*Yours,*  
Mahadev

## 100

SEGAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
June 18, 1939

MY DIAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

We leave here on the 20th.

Why don’t you write on hand made note-paper which you have now got in plenty? Are you coming to Bombay? If so, why not on the same train? But I forgot if you have left on the 19th, this would not reach you.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

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BIRLA BROS. LTD.,  
CALCUTTA,  
June 19, 1939

MAHADEV BHAI DLSAI  
MAGANWADI  
WARDHA (C.P.)

HAVE NOT MADE ANY USE STEEL'S INTERVIEW.

GHANSHYAMDAS

102

CALCUTTA,  
June 19, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEV BHAI,

Thanks for your letter.

I have not made any use of Steel's interview. But I don't quite follow Bapu when he says "it would not be proper for him to send things like that to the Viceroy. It would compromise his position." I hope you will kindly explain it to me a little more clearly. As a matter of fact, whenever I feel that acquainting the Viceroy with something would be helpful to the cause, I have always done so. In this case, when I read the interview, I found something new in it and I did ask myself whether it would not be of some use sending a few quotations from it to the Viceroy. It was the complimentary reference that prompted me to think like this. But then immediately I replied to myself that sending the complimentary quotation would look like flattery and therefore I restrained myself and dropped the idea. In fact, had it not contained any complimentary about the Viceroy, I might have used it and then I would have felt very unhappy on receiving your letter.

Please read this letter to Bapu and ask him to guide me

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for future. Please also keep me fully informed about his health. I am sorry I am not coming to Bombay. Partly it is work and partly laziness that are keeping me here.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DISAI  
BOMBAY

103

CALCUTTA,  
June 20, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

You remember I told you that I would like to have your opinion on the brochure of the Pilani College. And with some hesitation I asked Bapu also to read it. When I asked Bapu, I meant business because I want his advice and guidance for the work that I am doing. I have been receiving very embarrassing congratulations from friends but from you I want friendly criticism and also from Bapu.

I am sending you two copies of the brochure by separate post. On your way to the Frontier please see if you can find time to go through it. Bapu also perhaps will find time to read it in the "Library".

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DISAI  
BOMBAY

104

CALCUTTA,  
June 20, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

After reading your letter of the 18th I am feeling sorry that I did not go to Bombay. But as I wrote in my previous letter, partly it was work. I had been absent from Calcutta for such a long time that I do not want to leave the place in the midst of work. Lakshminivas is not here and I have to put up very hard work these days. I suppose Bapu will now go to the Frontier and I hope to see him on his return.

About using hand-made paper, I have already introduced it in Birla House, New Delhi. But about Birla Brothers, I will give your suggestion to Brajmohan who is himself manufacturing paper in a big factory.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DISAI  
BOMBAY

105

BIRLA HOUSE,  
MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD,  
BOMBAY,  
June 22, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Thank you for your three letters—two received today and one yesterday. I enclose copy of a very important letter Bapu has addressed to the Viceroy. Rameshwarji must have told you about it on the phone this morning.

The brochure has not yet been received. I shall go through it as soon as I can and so will be on my way to the Frontier or to Rajkot, God alone knows. The situation at Rajkot has

suddenly, for reasons that I do not know, deteriorated and Bapu had a sleepless night over it. At prayer time he said: "You will have to go to Rajkot. What we shall have to do on your return we shall consider."

The Frontier visit may not come off. It all depends on how keen is Khan Saheb on it. If he is not very keen, it will be dropped. But Bapu may, instead, go to Travancore, i.e., if C.P. raises no objection. He has actually wired to C.P. to this effect:

TRAVANCORE CONGRESS AGENT TO HAVE ME OPEN THEIR CONFERENCE. DO YOU FAVOUR MY VISIT?

I shall tell you what reply we get from him.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

*PS.* In great haste.

## 106

BIRLA HOUSE,  
MALABAR HILL,  
BOMBAY,  
June 22, 1939

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I thank you for your letter of 16th instant.

Though it is a pity that prisoner Prithvisingh cannot be discharged I have no difficulty in understanding your decision. I must await another opportunity.

The case of Jaipur is hanging fire. I wonder if a solution may be expected. As far as I know the Maharaja himself was quite willing to set free Sheth Jamnalji and the other prisoners, to recognise the people's association and to respect Full Civil Liberty so long as it did not cross the bounds of non-violence.

There is one other matter which I had better mention in



this letter. I understand there are princes who are desirous of seeing me but they have hesitation in doing so for fear of the disapproval of the political Department. As I had said during our talks in New Delhi, I am of opinion that they should be free to meet any person so long as they do so openly. It would be a good thing, if a declaration of your policy on this subject were made either openly or privately as may be thought advisable. I feel that it would not be enough if the permission is given in individual cases like mine. Seeing that the people of the states have intimate connection, political and social, with Congressmen and others all over India, is it not wise and proper to encourage the practice of princes establishing friendly relation with those who have influence over their people? To treat Congressmen and others as outsiders seems to be so unnatural that the barrier cannot last long. It would be a pity if it is broken after a clash and creation of bad blood. I wonder if you have noticed that some states have invited or welcomed visits of anti-Congress personalities, I do not complain of this but it is in striking contrast to the opposition fostered often by the Political Department to the visits of Congressmen?

*Yours sincerely,*  
M.K. Gandhi

H. E. THE VICEROY  
SIMLA

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VICERIGAL LODGE,  
SIMLA,  
July 1, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you very much for your letter of 22nd June. It raises one or two points on which I should like to touch in my reply.

2. As regards Jaipur, the Durbar have, I am quite sure, no desire to detain Seth Jamnalal Bajaj any longer than is neces-

sary. Indeed, as you will remember, they were at considerable pains to avoid detaining him in the first instance. Seth Jamnalal has been made fully aware of the conditions on which the Durbar are ready to take the desired action now in regard to him and the other prisoners, and to the best of my knowledge the position has not altered since the departure of H. H. the Maharaja.

3. I have read with close attention what you say in the last paragraph of your letter, and I am very grateful to you for letting me know your views. I think it is fair to say that the Political Department have given no more encouragement to "anti-Congress personalities", to use, if I may, your own phrase, than to pro-Congress personalities to establish contacts with Rulers and their subjects.

I hope you keep well.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Linlithgow

M. K. GANDHI  
BOMBAY

## 108

BIRLA HOUSE,  
MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD,  
BOMBAY,  
July 5, 1939

MY DIAR AGATHA,

I have written some four letters to you during the last five or six weeks, but there is no acknowledgment, and I am therefore getting worried as to whether you got them.

I wrote the last from Rajkot. We are now getting ready to go to the Frontier. In Rajkot Gibson and Virawala are fast consolidating their position and the general demoralisation of the people offers them a favourable field. Both of them I found frank, but in mood of malicious triumph. I asked Gibson

whether the "new technique" was having any effect on people in Rajkot. He said: "The only man who has truly imbibed the spirit is Dhebar. He has been in the past, such a nuisance to us, but I must say this frankly about him." I said: "I am so happy to hear this. But I meant to ask about Virawala and others." He said: "You assume that they believe in it?" I said: "On the contrary, I have heard that they pooh pooh it." He said, "Not so, but they may not believe in the philosophy." And that really is the truth.

Nor do the Government. You remember the talk Bapu had with the Viceroy about contact with the princes, and how he said that he was frankly against it. With the new technique the poor princes—some of them—felt that the conditions were changed, and as I wrote to you in my last, they approached Bapu with a request that he should request the Viceroy to make the way smooth for a free discussion with Congressmen (including Bapu). The enclosed correspondence will show how the wind blows. I do not think we have had a worse letter from the Viceroy than this. He seems now to close all doors against Bapu, and it almost looks as though in future he may not even reply to his letters. That at least is Bapu's view. He is terribly disappointed and is much exercised as to what to do. If possible I shall try to send along with this a copy of his article for the next *Harijan*. If I have no spare copy Chandīashankar will send you one from Poona in the natural course.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Mahadev

109

BIRLA HOUSE,  
MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD,  
BOMBAY,  
July 5, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Thank you for your long letter which has come today. After all I am not to go to Travancore. Ramachandran has wired to

say that the field for khadi is not yet ripe enough to make it worthwhile for Bapu to send me there. It has been a painful surprise for Bapu to see that they are so behind-hand with constructive work. But it is good to know the truth. You are right in thinking that Bapu had some diplomatic work in view for me as well. In fact he was going to write to C. F. about me as soon as he heard from Ramachandran. But now, of course, it is all off; for the present at any rate. Instead of Travancore Bapu is now going to send me to Bihar and I have written today to Rajendrababu. The climate in the North of Bihar would be very bad during the rains and much khadi work is developed there, so it is probable that I shall go to the south of the province. There is little doubt that Rajendra Babu will ask me to come, as he had himself suggested my coming to Bihar when he heard I was not to return to the Frontier.

As to the things I have left in Delhi, I had no idea where I should be sent or what work I should settle down to, so I did not like to cart them about with me. Many of the things are house-hold articles and the like that I should not need unless I settle down somewhere. In the Frontier I had to have all these things because I had to have all my arrangements separate and independent. So I think, if it is not inconvenient, I had better leave them in Delhi for the present, until I know how things are going to be in Bihar.

Bapu is leaving by the Frontier Mail tonight. The party is in a very uncertain condition. Mahadev has tooth-ache and has gone to the dentist to see if anything can be done in time to enable him to leave with Bapu. Pyarelal is suffering from a swollen gland in the throat and has not yet made up his mind whether to accompany Bapu or not. If he does not go, then Sushila will also, stay behind, and if Sushila does not go, then Ba will not be able to go, as there will be nobody to give her the medical attention she needs after her illness. So that brings it down to Bapu, Kanu and Mahadev's Narayan (if he will leave his father). At the same time I am hoping that they may all end in going.

Bapu is well. The sea air has certainly done him good. As he is to go straight to Hazra, and not to Peshawar. I hope he will have quite a good time in the mountains. Bapu does not mind the attitude, and I have asked the Doctors here and they

all say that up to 6,000 ft. will be perfectly all right for him. You and I evidently have the same difficulty. So I have found one person to sympathize with me in this matter.

I am to stay on here till I get Rajendra Babu's reply which should come in 4 or 5 days as we have asked him to wire. I will let you know where I finally settle down to work.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mira

PS. Have there been any feelers about that Frontier cotton machinery?

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BIRI A HOUSE,  
MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD,  
BOMBAY,  
July 5, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I am nursing a bad tooth which is so painful that I have not the patience to write to you a separate letter after having written the enclosed. But it will give you all the news and I need not repeat it.

We are booked to leave tonight for the Frontier, but much depends on the dentist who may hold me up. The unfortunate thing is that Pyarelal also has a bad tooth and might need an operation. If he also cannot go Bapu will be in the unique plight of having to go with Kanu and my boy. And he is determined to go.

*Yours,*  
Mahadev

CALCUTTA,  
July 7, 1939

MY DEAR MIRABEN,

It was a great disappointment to me to know that after all you did not go to Travancore. As usual, man proposes and God disposes. Let God propose next time and perhaps we will have greater success then.

Things look pretty dark just now. Bapu's new technique may be appreciated after his death. But those who want to judge things by the results find that the new technique has put Rajkot, Talcher and others in a most comfortable position. I wonder how the Viceroy's mind is working. I should like to see him, but it looks there is no chance of my meeting him before next winter. Has his new technique at all been appreciated by the authorities in Simla? I doubt very much. Moore is writing good articles occasionally, but perhaps the official world may be under the impression that Bapu is getting a spent force or that the old age is having effect on him, otherwise why should the man come out openly to confess his mistakes? But Bapu has been misunderstood throughout his life. However, God will help him.

I am glad that you are going to Bihar. If Bihar means also districts like Ranchi and Hazaribagh, then why not go to my zemindary and settle down there and work as much as you like. It is a picturesque place. I spent nearly eight lakhs on the zemindary and my income just now is zero. So, even if you start an anti-zemindary campaign, I would not be disturbed. The people are really poor and full of superstition. Yet, a lot of social work could be done among them. To my great shame, I must confess that I have not visited my zemindary at all after it was purchased. In fact, I never took much interest in it. But you will like the climate and also the people and perhaps you may be able to render them some service. But I suppose you will be under the command of Rajendrababu and he will perhaps decide where you are going to work.

We will preserve your possessions in Delhi very carefully. So, you can feel assured as if you had put something in the safe vaults of the Imperial Bank. It looks as if you will never

need them. But who knows, you might go to the Frontier again.

I have received a letter today from Mahadev in which he has enclosed a copy of his letter to Agatha. A copy of Viceroy's reply to Bapu is also there. It is all very depressing. And all this is happening when the international situations are so bad. Great Britain is wooing Russia for a treaty. Why not a treaty with India? But John Bull is a hopeless person. He moves very slowly and acts stupidly. Of course, he muddles through. But is that a virtue, I ask myself?

I hope you are quite well.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdass

SMT. MIRABEN  
BOMBAY

## 112

ABBOTTABAD,  
July 9, 1939

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

A copy of Kishorelalji's judgment in the matter of the dairy farm has already been posted to you. Please do what is required of you in the light of that judgment I have also written to Lakshminarayanji and Parmeshwari Das to the same effect.

What has been emerging from my pen just now is, in fact, the pen-portrait of my intensive heart-searching. But with the clouds of violence so thick as they are at present, can a puny effort to effect their dissolution have any chance of success? At times I feel so profoundly discouraged that all energies directed towards that end seem like so much wasted effort. Then the opposite pulls prove overpowering. I have poured out my heart's anguish to you.

Could Nalini Babu do anything to secure release of the detenus?

My tour of this area will keep me here for a nearly month, but certainly not more than that. It is quite possible I may go to Kashmir as well.

*Blessings from*  
Rapu

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2 CRANBOURNE COURT,  
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD,  
S. W. 11,  
July 14, 1939

*Personal*

MY DEAR GANDHIJI,

Mahadev rightly says I have let much time go by without writing. I have done so purposely, in order that I might get a sense of things here after my absence and so give you a considered opinion after meetings and interviews. You may have been surprised at my cable. I did understand, but wanted fuller interpretation and from *Harijan* I see that others wanted the same—even in India.

Briefly this is what has happened here. Immediately I arrived I wrote asking Lord Zetland to see me, for I wanted to say to him first the things I should say in public later. I have had four talks in all with the India Office as well as with other important people. And I want to say straight away that I have found a readiness to listen that I have not experienced before on returning from India. This is largely due to the fact that Carl Heath kept the S.O.S. closely informed through the regular letters I sent back and so the way was prepared. When you realise the situation here and how all attention is centred on "war" or "no-war"—what I say above is significant. For the tension has to be experienced to be believed. Frankly, I did not expect to get much hearing. I have concentrated on getting my information into strategic quarters and relaying the great concern I have brought back about the Indian situation. Little is known about



the states question; here I am placed in a good position by reason of all I saw and heard. Those weeks at Wardha gave me a valuable background as also the time in Delhi. To say nothing of the Orissa, and above all, the Rajkot experience. I first of all pooled my information with the members of the Conciliation Group; later a meeting chaired by Lothian was held at Chatham House. Each meeting produces another set of requests. After the one which Sankey chaired, in particular, I have been kept busy.

You will know the line we are pursuing—of the seriousness of the situation and the imperative need for consultation. I enclose a copy of an article I wrote for the F. O. India Bulletin that will serve to know some of the things I am stressing.

### The States

From India I wrote to Carl Heath of the need for the preparation of a pamphlet that would in as an objective way as possible, put some facts before people here. A copy is being sent to you under separate cover. Horace Alexandar and Mr. Pratt chiefly were responsible for its contents, and I was asked to write a preface in view of my experience. This is being circulated to a selected list of M.P.'s—probably with a covering letter from three of them who called a meeting in the House the other day to listen to Muriel and me. And it will go to the Press and individuals. In view of the expected reply of the Princes shortly, we hope this material will come at an opportune time.

And into all this have come Mahadev's letters with copies of the correspondence between you and the Viceroy. Directly I got Mahadev's first letter, I went to see Sir Findlater Stewart as Lord Zetland was away. And had a long talk with him. I had to be careful, in view of the fact you were in touch with the Viceroy, not to let it appear that I was trying to go over the head of the man on the spot. But I think I made this plain. I conveyed to him the concern we felt to hear that any stumbling block could be put in the way of Rulers seeking your, or others' aid, in reforming their states. Of course I found there was no established policy on this—but I was able to tell him what I heard while in India on this matter.

This second letter is disturbing with the Viceroy's reply.

Mahadev says you are "much exercised"—and I don't wonder. But on reading the V's reply several times; I am not so sure that it is so hopeless. Knowing the cautious man he is—could you not read more into his words "close attention"? Above all it seems to me that this is a clear case for your seeing the Viceroy as soon as possible. You are on the Frontier, would it not be possible for you to stop off en route? You have not seen him since your action in setting aside the Award. That you wrote, I know. But if your "new technique" has to be explained to people who are in close contact with you—can you imagine the great need for explaining it to this man, surrounded as he is with all and sundry? Carl Heath has written to Mahadev on reading these letters that have passed between you and the Viceroy. In this Carl Heath says that your "new technique" calls for a "great stride in spiritual vision and action" and that he is not at all surprised it has not met with immediate response. *I am convinced you should have an opportunity of talking again with the Viceroy*, particularly in view of all that transpired between you at Delhi. Must it always be a crisis that brings you together? Could you not call in to see him en route from the Frontier and take up the unanswered question in your letter. I should not be at all surprised if you found his state of mind to be puzzled. He sees you so infrequently; to follow what is in your mind required the closest and most persistent of contacts. But perhaps you have already thought of doing this.

### **With Regard to Federation**

I find that the idea still persists here that Federation will be accepted. This idea is based on what happened in regard to Provincial Autonomy; coupled to this is information reaching here from India that strengthens this attitude. Then many hold Lothian's view; he admits the defects—thinks these will be able to be altered after the scheme is in work that it will prove more flexible in practice than on paper—and that it is the only scheme thought out in detail that is available. Jawaharlal's attitude is known and also Subhas Bose's belief in the need for an ultimatum. And running through this thought I sense a belief that you, with certain modifications, will agree to the scheme.

In answer I repeat what you said to me, when in India, that you refused to believe the British Government would impose

this in face of the opposition to it, etc. etc. ; I quote your recent article to the American Press man. But all this does not have much effect on this entrenched idea.

You said in one of your letters that Federation had receded into the background. But with the reply of the Princes in a few days, this question will once again come to the foreground. Now I do not want to force your hand nor that of the Working Committee. But I would ask you to consider the situation at this end. *I think this harassed country should have before it more clearly what to envisage if the scheme is "proceeded with" no consultation.* I can hear you saying "Haven't they seen the statement of Rajendrababu; and my article in *Harijan* recently?" A few have; but only a very few. Last year, I recall, Carl Heath wrote to you after some of us had talked with Jawaharlal. In this, if I remembered rightly he, Carl Heath, urged that something should be addressed to the British people. In this perhaps not the time? Something that gathers up the statements made by the Premiers of the various governments, plus the Working Committee, with you and Jawaharlal added? I repeat, I do not want to force anything that is not timely; but in view of the confused state of thought and lack of direct knowledge of what is really the common denominator to which you will all agree, the situation goes by default.

Is there some way out of the impasse that could be suggested from your end? What a marvellous thing it would be if some approach could be made and a breath of fresh air let into our tired thinking and high state of tension. Your mind is working furiously, I can see; my fervent hope is that you will find a way out. For this, consultation is necessary. At this end as you know, we have pressed for this in season and out of season. But there seems to be a stalemate. Will you ponder over the idea of something being addressed to the British people.

\* \* \*

Thank Mahadev for his letters and ask him to keep me as fully informed as possible. I hear that Ba has been ill again—please give her my love and my hope that she is now better. If Miraben is with you, will you tell her I had tea with her Uncle Professor Carr-Saunders the other day. He was delighted to get

first-hand news of her and some picture of her in her Pathan dress.

Sir Maurice Gwyer is here and we are keeping in touch with him. In one letter I got from India, the remark was made that after your Rajkot decision, Sir Maurice was said to have been sarcastic. I just want you to know that this is not his attitude of mind, but what is in his mind is an anxiety to get to know you. When he gets back, I am sure you will help to facilitate a meeting between you in some moral way.

I send you my love.

Agatha Harrison

PS. I get no direct news of Talcher. What is happening to that tragic situation? Bhulabhai Desai is here though he leaves on Sunday. I have had some talks with him and told him fully of the situation here.

## 114

CALCUTTA,  
July 16, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I had a talk with Nalini Babu about the release of political prisoners. He told me just what I had anticipated that it was possible to ease the situation if the question was handled properly. So I suggested to Bidhan that he should put himself immediately in touch with the prisoners to persuade them to give up hunger-strike and then negotiate with the Government. Nalini has promised to help. Bidhan has already seen Nazimuddin and perhaps tomorrow he will see the prisoners. Let us see what happens.

Please inform Bapu.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
ABBOTTABAD

CONGRESS CAMP,  
RAMGARH,  
July 28, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I received your two letters in Ranchi and waited till I had something definite to tell you before answering.

As usual, I was of course perfectly comfortable in Birla House! When I got there Rajendrababu was not well, but he was much improved when I left, and I hope he is now able to stand the strain of so much travelling. You will be seeing him no doubt in Calcutta now, if you are there.

I have looked at 8 villages round here, accompanied by two A.I.S.A. workers. It has been difficult, owing to the heavy rains but we have got a good idea of local conditions. We have decided that it is not possible to start work properly till the rains are over. To start living in a village is out of the question, as no building is available in the rains and one cannot build for oneself. The climate also is very trying just now, and I cannot expect to keep my health under the present circumstances, so we have decided that I go away for the time being and return as soon as it is possible to begin work in real earnest. I am therefore leaving for Segaon tonight and expect to return by the end of September or beginning of October. Spring has completely died out here, but we believe it can be successfully revived. The women express willingness to learn and some of the older ones still remember the art. They wear and like thick clothes and some of the old men recall how their own home-spun clothes used to last them 5 to 8 years!! The Congress coming in December gives us very little time, but we must do our best. We are hoping to get the Congress to supply us with some fund, as it is difficult for the A.I.S.A. suddenly to finance a new centre. After all it is for the good name of the Congress that we propose starting work in this particular place. There may be many other more suitable places that might be found in Bihar otherwise.

Where exactly is your zemindary? I should be very interested to see it some day. Something seems to be "wrong in the states of Denmark". If after spending nearly 8 lakhs on it, your income

is zero, perhaps among other things, God was not pleased with your lack of personal contact? Let us go together some day and have a good look at the country and the people.'

I know things look a bit 'depressing—that answer of the Viceroy's to Bapu's letter about contact with the princes was *shocking!* I did not think H.E. was capable of such a production! When Bapu read it, he was in his Monday silence. I said to Bapu, "I suppose the Viceroy feels helpless." I was trying to make the best of it. But Bapu wrote down on a scrap of paper: "He is not helpless, he is tired of a man like me and he is trying to get rid of me." There was a rumour in the papers yesterday that Bapu is to have an interview with H.E., but I suppose that is all nonsense. Whether he is tired of Bapu or not, the Viceroy will have to face Bapu one of these days. After all this "new technique" makes the English people feel very uncomfortable, if they *don't* want to have direct contact. Our *stand off* attitude and exacting manner gave them very convenient excuses before.

In spite of all the outward excuses for depression—somehow, where Bapu is concerned, I *cannot* be depressed. Such a man is bound to be misunderstood in his own day. The marvel is rather that Bapu has been appreciated to the extent he has. God sends such a man in a *black age*, how then can they understand him! Don't you think that is the real position, and that the present developments are quite natural.

But I must stop, for it is time to pack, and this letter is already unduly long.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mira

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VICEROY'S CAMP,  
INDIA,  
July 28, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I had been meaning to suggest to you that we might have a short talk on my way back from Orissa next month, but I did

not do so as I gathered from the Press that you were proposing to visit Kashmir. But now that you are returning to Wardha, I write to say that it would give me very great pleasure to see you again, if it was by any chance convenient for you to be in Delhi on the Saturday the 5th August. I expect to arrive in Delhi on the evening of Friday and shall be spending the whole of the 6th away inspecting famine work, etc., at Hissar, but I shall be delighted to see you at 11 a.m., on Saturday if that would suit you.

2. There is no special subject which I want to raise with you but it is now some months since we have met and I would welcome an opportunity of seeing you again.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Linlithgow

M.K. GANDHI, ESQR.

## 117

### *India Bulletin*

#### **Some Impressions by Agatha Harrison**

July-August, 1939

I have recently come back from India—my fourth visit. Just before I left London, in October, someone remarked to me: “Thank goodness, there is one spot in the world that seems quiet—India.” What is meant by “quiet” I wonder, as I think over the impressions gained during my six months in this friendly hospitable land? Can the recent agitations going on intensively for the past year in the Indian states be called “quiet”? And can the hostility and resentment that the proposed Federal scheme arouses, produce “quiet”? The opposition differs, of course. The princes have their reasons for objection (the report of an informal conference held recently in Bombay serves to show what is in their minds); the Muslims do not favour the

scheme, and readers of this Bulletin are well aware how National India views the scheme.

I have come back profoundly concerned with what I saw and learnt. I went to India with no terms of reference save to attend, as a delegate from a group of British women's organisations here, the All-India Women's Conference in Delhi. This was a great experience, and I wish I had space to tell you about it. But I honestly believe that the Indian women would rather I told you something of the general situation into which their movements fit. Though my plans were fluid, I particularly wanted to see what I could of the provincial government at work; when I was in India in 1936-37, elections for these were taking place. I also wanted to go to the Frontier and to talk with people of all shades of opinion, both Indian and British. In fact to learn all I could. As I look back on this crowded experience, I am more and more convinced of the value of people going into the midst of conflict—going freely as persons with no axe to grind and no face to save, and in the firm belief that by consultation and negotiation, rather than by force, great issues must be solved.

My four visits to Delhi (the last being at the time when the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi had their talks after the Rajkot fast) stand out in my mind. I had the chance of talking with high officials and others connected with the difficult task of administering the Central Government of India. For here, in the spacious buildings of the Secretariat, you learn something of the ramifications and problems of administering a vast country. But to get a complete all-India picture, you must go elsewhere. There are others who have their finger on India's pulse—Indian leaders. For example, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose, who all live and work under very different circumstances. Unfortunately Mr. Bose was ill for the greater part of my stay in India, but I had several talks with him, the last being just after the A.I.C.C. meeting in Calcutta in May, when he explained to me the background of the formation of the "Forward Block". I think, too, of the six days spent in Jawaharlal Nehru's home in Allahabad. From early morning till late at night a surge of people could be seen on his verandah waiting to consult him. Hindu-Muslim tension in the U.P. was rife and leaders from both communities sought his help,



as also did industrial leaders who were dealing with industrial unrest.

I marvelled at the way he coped with it all. His daily mail is enormous; comes not only from all over India but the rest of the world; telegrams and cables and a telephone constantly ringing. On the top of all this Jawaharlal Nehru has a new task, for the State People's Conference, which I attended at Ludhiana, he was made President. I went to some of his meetings—the ones held in villages interested me enormously. From my vantage point of the platform, provided with a good interpreter, I watched the faces of thousands of men and women, some of whom had walked miles in the heat to meet this loved leader. He said very simple things to them about their pressing problems, but he never failed to link them to a world situation. The experiences Jawaharlal Nehru went through last year in Spain and Europe have left a deep scar on this man, and with amazement I would watch him pass on these experiences to simple villagers till they, too, felt part of a world's agony. They never took their eyes off his face—and sometimes he spoke for nearly two hours! ! !

How can I describe the visits to Wardha—four in all—in order to be able to go in and out to Segaon where Mr. Gandhi lives? If you sit there long enough you not only meet leaders from all parts of India, but a cross section of the world too. People came from China and Japan, Palestine, Germany, etc. to talk with him about the application of non-violence to their situations. In addition come letters from all parts of the world asking the same question.

The nearest telephone is some miles away—though a post office has been set up of miles away to facilitate work, and happily the C.P. Government has made a grant for a road to be made from Wardha to Segaon. Anyone who has walked the five miles to segaon along the bullock track, reading this news, will be relieved. There is also an air service to Nagpur—50 miles away of which Premiers and Ministers availed themselves seeking his aid on their prodigious tasks. A constant stream of men and women arrived daily. But the question most exercising Mr. Gandhi's mind, was the situation in the States. Rajkot in particular. People and reports came from states all over the country—all with the same dreary tale of oppression.

Though I had previously studied the state question at this end—now I was plunged into the heart of the turmoil for I was allowed to be present when talks took place, and to read the evidence these men had brought. So I went straight from Wardha to Delhi to learn what I could from the Political Department, and met responsible officials. The gulf that yawned between good men on both sides to be deplored, for this states question is complicated in the extreme, and only by the combined effort of all parties concerned can the condition of the states people be set right. Then I went to Orissa. Here again I met with all shades of opinion; the murder of the Political Agent Major Bazalgette had just occurred and tension was high. I visited the refugee camps in and around Angul, where thousands of men, women and children had come for sanctuary from the state of Talcher and Dhenkanal. I talked with some of the refugees, and what I heard filled me with dismay. From home, I was getting letters telling of the streams of refugees who had sought a haven in England and of what was being done to help. There in Orissa I was involved in a similar problem that seemed to me should have a prior—or at least equal—claim on people here.

Yet, I imagine that few even knew there was this situation. Let alone any details. Happily members of the Political Department and Congress leaders came into contact in an effort to find a solution. Up to the moment of writing some of the people are still in those camps. It is an intolerable situation.

We are abysmally ignorant here on the Indian states problem. We know something of the larger states; of rulers, some of whom years ago set their houses in order; we also know that others have recently followed suit—forced by an awakened people. But there are 562 of these some very small I know. Yet their peoples want the same thing that men and women the world over are striving for: civil liberty, the right of association and free speech, proper administration of justice and participation in democratic Government. As the “paramount power” we are responsible for seeing that such conditions maintain in each of the 562 states. But until we pay attention to this question and learn more about it, we can be of little use.

I have come back to London to find attention revetted on

every other part of the world save India. Are we going on in this estrich-like way, till a major crisis occur and then, with no background of events leading up to the crisis, to do the wrong things? A new approach is sorely needed. Instead of "proceeding with Federation" why not take into consultation the Indian people who are so opposed—not to Federation itself but to the present scheme? Knowing that wisdom and statesmanship exist, both in British and Indian circles, I refused to believe that some just and honourable way out could not be found if the parties concerned were called into for a new consideration of the present position. For this, every man and women here should press.

**118**

WARDHA,  
August 1, 1939

HIS EXCELLENCY VICEROY  
VICEROY'S CAMP

EXCUSE ME, I AM VERY SORRY. CANNOT REACH DELHI WITH INSTANT ESPECIALLY AS THERE IS NO PARTICULAR PURPOSE FOR MEETING. URGENT WORK DEMANDS EXHAUSTING JOURNEY FROM FRONTIER PROVINCE. ANY DATE AFTER TWENTY INSTANT WILL SUIT.

GANDHI

**119**

VICEROY'S CAMP,  
INDIA,  
(PURI),  
August 2, 1939

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your telegram which I have just received,

I quite realise your difficulty in getting away at this moment, and I had indeed been a little afraid that it might, as has happened, be impossible for you to do so. I should be most reluctant to impose the least strain on you, and I hope that you will never hesitate to let me know if you feel that any suggestion of mine for a meeting is likely to have that effect; and I shall not in the least misunderstand your doing so.

2. It is very kind of you to suggest that we might meet later this month. I have in fact, as I said, nothing very special to talk about, and my invitation to you to meet me at Delhi was merely in pursuance of my desire to keep in touch with you and maintain contact from time to time. Nor do I want to give you the trouble of the tiring journey to Simla. I think therefore that we might leave matters as they are for the moment, and I will look forward to seeing you a little later in the year when I am again back from the hills.

With all good wishes,

*Yours sincerely,*  
L inlithgow

M. K. GANDHI, ESQR.  
SEGAON

## 120

SEGAON,  
August 2, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I cannot, at the moment, lay my hands on Agatha's letter, but the enclosed is much more interesting. I think it is the result of Agatha's talks with the S. O. S. who may have suggested to the Viceroy to do something. It was not possible for Bapu to undertake the journey so soon after the return from the Frontier. The return journey even from Delhi to Wardha was exceedingly troublesome. When will our people learn the elements of politeness!!! And until they learn them, can't we provide Bapu with some extra comforts on the journey. Or cannot the Rly. Board provide a special train for Bapu?

No time for more today. Bapu, was deeply pained to hear my account of the talks with the prisoners. You must have seen his message to them. It will be a very hard pill for the brothers to swallow !

Yours,  
Mahadev

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CALCUTTA,  
August 4, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADI VBHAI,

I had feared that 5th would not suit Bapu. This means that if he meets the Viceroy after the 20th, he will have to go to Simla.

As I had predicted when you were here, the fast is broken. Or rather the milk diet is stopped and solid food is taken. And on what assurance? I don't think Snbhas is serious about starting any movement after two months. It is terrible how dishonestly is working in this province.

I am likely to go to Jaipur now as soon as I can. Devdas phoned to me yesterday and said that he should like to take strong attitude in *The Hindustan Times* about the Jaipur affairs. I told him to wait until Bapu had an interview with the Viceroy and also asked him to consult Bapu when he came to Delhi. But evidently this is not to be for some time to come.

I also want to meet Bapu but I am not sure whether I should go to Wardha first or should go to Jaipur before going to Wardha. Have you got any suggestion to make?

Yours affectionately,  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

SEGAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
August 4, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I enclose herewith Agatha's letter.

Someone from Nagpur has brought the news that the prisoners have been all released! Evidently Khwaja Nazimuddin had something up his sleeve, or the Brothers had, and they did not want to disclose it to Rajendrababu and me. Suren Ghose was saying that if the Congress members in the Assembly promised to support the ministry in all other matters the prisoners could be easily released. Either this thing has happened or something else of a similar nature—but the Brothers will now go about with feathers in their caps, and will swear at Bapu with greater vehemence.

When Bapu issued that statement about the prisoners, I asked him not to do it. It would, I said, incense both the prisoners and the Brothers. Instead a reply could be sent to the prisoners. But Bapu was very firm and has thus invited that angry statement from Subhas. We are in for troubles at times and it seems we will be seeing anarchy and chaos in our lifetime.

Sikandar Hayat sent a telegram of apology for the hostile demonstration at the Lahore Station by Muslims and Jinnah sent a telegram to inquire who were the demonstrators and what their motives were.

The Viceroy has sent no reply to Bapu's telegram asking for some date after the 20th.

Jamnalalji is in a bad state of health and Bapu has written a very angry article for *Harijan*.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

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SEGAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
August 5, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Here is the Viceroy's reply to Bapu's telegram. What is your reaction to it? I think Bapu did well in not giving on the 5th. I have seen Subhas's statement. You have proved a true prophet. These fellows did not want the credit to be given to Bapu and the Congress. I suppose everyone will see through the game. Subhas has given the prisoners no better assurance than we gave them.

However all well that ends well.  
No time today for more.

Yours,  
Mahadev

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CALCUTTA,  
August 7, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

The Viceroy's letter is quite good. That is my reaction. Not only he wrote to Bapu but Laithwaite also wrote to me immediately the Viceroy heard from Bapu that he could not come. Laithwaite also expressed regret that he could not fix up an interview for me because he thought Bapu might go to Delhi.

I don't think your conjecture is correct that the Viceroy's letter had anything to do with some hint that he might have received from the Secretary of State. Nor do I detect Agatha's hand in it. From every source I have been hearing that the Viceroy speaks very highly and I think it is a genuine desire on his part to maintain the contact.

But I do not accept what he says that there was nothing special to talk about. I think after some time he will begin to talk about Federation which, undoubtedly, is coming nearer and nearer. His apparent helplessness in the matter of the

princes may be due to his desire not to upset the princes until they have joined the Federation.

With reference to the break of hunger-strike by the prisoners, it was all a pre-arranged plan. My information goes that except for 20 or 30, all of them will be released within two months.

Bapu was perfectly right in issuing that statement and although it was criticised by Subhas, the Bengal Press generally took it in good spirit. It is high time that Bapu spoke out his mind as he has been doing of late.

I am not quite sure what would be the result of disciplinary action if the Working Committee so acts. I have been receiving contradictory opinion on this point but I personally believe that you cannot allow the things to continue as they are doing at present.

I have received Agatha's letter and I suppose I can keep it in my file because so far as I know you do not keep regular files and it is better that all important papers were preserved.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

125

CALCUTTA,  
August 9, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

My programme for Jaipur is for the time being cancelled because Press reports that Todd has suddenly left for England and that he is not likely to come back. I have written to the Viceroy very strongly urging the necessity of appointing an Indian as Prime Minister.

I will come to Wardha now but as I have to go to Bombay



also for the affairs of Scindia, I will fix up my programme immediately I hear from Bombay as to when I am needed.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SRI MAHADEVYBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

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SEGAON,  
August 10, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I was to have left this week with Dr. Bharucha to see Jamnalalji at Jaipur, and as we were arranging the programme Bapu said: "It is quite likely that you may not need to go. He may be released before you get there." And within two hours of this talk telegram of his release was released. So Jaipur is settled. Who knows, the Viceroy wanted to tell Bapu that this thing was going to be done? I like his letter but I do not like his repeating the old formula of "no special business". Rajkumari who came yesterday was telling me that they were going to discuss the Federation (she heard it from Glancey). She also said that Tod (is it Tod or Todd?) was about to leave or had left Jaipur, as the Maharajah and he did not hot it off with each other.

Now if Bapu goes to Delhi in October—as he will certainly have to go—you must get him to go to Pilani. And ask him to set apart a week. It will give him some rest too.

I have heard from Dr. Bidhan all kinds of stories about the sordid deal, about the hunger striking prisoners. Bidhan said Subhas was playing very high stakes. I should think he was digging his grave.

Every member of the W. C. wants disciplinary action against Subhas, but I think Jawahar will stand on the way. All that he might agree to issue a warning. But I do not know. The subject will be discussed this afternoon.

Bapu is very well indeed.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

PS. Would Bajrangji try to get for me from some bookshop in Calcutta Brunton's *Secret Path*? By the by, Hume's 12 Upanishads I found in Laxminivas's room (the room in which Rajendrababu was staying) and the two great plays of Maeterlinek I spoke to you about in Delhi—*Mary Magdalene* and *Mona Vanna*—are both in your big library in the Central Hall.

M. D.

## 127

CALCUTTA,  
August 14, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I note that you do not like the Viceroy repeating the old formula but I have discovered that the Viceroy always to do more than what he promises and I guess that in the release of Jamnalalji, he must have had to fight against some difficulties. I am not prepared to believe that the Maharajah gets any credit because I know the Maharajah and he is not a man of any courage.

Please remind Bapu about his promise to go to Pilani, and so if he goes to see the Viceroy in October, he must set apart a week's time. He can go to Pilani any time at his convenience either in October or in November. December perhaps will be too cold for him. But let Bapu decide something provisionally just now.

The *Statesman* has been writing some very good article about the Subhas episode. I have sent you the cuttings. I hope you will find them very interesting. I admire the *Englishman* because it always takes trouble to study the things, whereas the *Hindustan Standard* is full of irrelevant criticism without advancing a bit of logic.

Bidhan reached here this morning and he was disappointed if he had expected that he would meet at the station a procession of black flags. On the contrary, about 2,000 men from

Burrabazar went to receive him. It could be said that on the whole Bengal has taken the things rather tamely.

I have spoken to Bajrang about the books.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamas

SIRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

128

BIRLA PARK,  
August 24, 1939

PYARELAL  
CARE MAHATMA GANDHIJI  
SEGAON WARDHA

COULD YOU SEND ME BAPU'S DRAIT RESOLUTION ON WAR FOR  
WORKING COMMITTEE NOT PASSED?

GHANSHYAMAS

129

CALCUTTA,  
August 29, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I am enclosing herewith a manifesto which may be issued under the signature of various representative businessmen in case warbreaks out. I should like to know immediately, if necessary by wire, if Bapu has got any comments to make on the same. The contents of the manifesto express our own independent views and our own feeling is that it is not incompatible with the

attitude taken up by the Congress. However, we would not like to do anything in case Bapu thinks otherwise and therefore please let me have Bapu's reaction on the same as soon as possible.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

### **Draft Prepared for Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce**

We are faced with an extremely critical international situation in which a great part of humanity might at any moment be involved in a gigantic war involving death and suffering to innumerable men and women of different nations. Although, we in India are not geographically or directly concerned in this European conflict, it is obvious that we cannot remain unaffected. The consequence of a war in which Britain along the whole Commonwealth is involved would make a vital difference to us in more than one way. We have undoubtedly to judge this question primarily in the interests of India, but the vital and more fundamental interest of India cannot in this issue be divorced from the struggle between Britain and France on the one hand and the totalitarian states on the other. Indian public opinion has clearly perceived in recent year that the powers who are the enemies of the Britain are also enemies of those ideals of democracy and national freedom for whose realisation Indians are striving, and that these Powers are also impelled by a crude and fanatical racialism which in every way is abhorrent to the tolerant people of India. India has felt grieved and indignant at the failure of Britain and France to make a stand on behalf of the smaller and weaker peoples of the world like those of Abyssinia, Czecho-Slovakia and China who lost their freedom owing to the aggressive greed of the totalitarian

powers and who have been sacrificed at the altar of appeasement by those who were their friends. It is reassuring, however, that even at this late stage Britain and France have recognised that their own self-interest is intimately bound up with an international order based on law and have decided to help the weaker nations to defend themselves against force.

In this struggle, India with its national freedom still unachieved and its national aspirations unrealised, cannot remain uninterested because the consequences of a victory of the totalitarian powers must have serious repercussions on India's future. To contend that England should fight in defence of weaker nations or in the cause of democracy and to argue at the same time that India should not support England in her task is not only illogical but is also impossible. But to impose a war on India which is quite feasible under the present Constitution and to obtain Indian's willing co-operation are entirely different propositions. Unless the democratic principles for whose vindication British claims that she is to fight are effectively translated into practice in India through a satisfactory solution of the internal constitutional problem India's willing co-operation would not be possible. It is not a question of England's difficulty being regarded as India's opportunity. If this spirit of bargaining is morally wrong, equally wrong it would be on the part of Britain to appeal to India in the name of a noble cause and take advantage either of her dominant position or of the finer instincts of the Indian people and yet refuse to practice the democratic principles which she professes. If the freedom of Poland or Rumania or Turkey can involve England into a war, it would be reasonably expected of her to have still greater regard for the freedom of India which is within the Commonwealth. Even the Dominions are not prepared to help Britain unconditionally in the event of a war. Before they do so, they have insisted upon their being consulted regarding the foreign policy of British and the precise motives of such a war. India is also entitled to demand the rights and powers of an autonomous unit of the British Commonwealth when its burdens and responsibilities have to be undertaken by its population. As the British Prime Minister referring to the differences between Germany and Poland observed, there is nothing in these questions which "could not and should not be solved without the

use of force if only a situation of confidence could be restored." Although there is no question of use of any force so far as the existing differences between India and England are concerned, we believe that those differences particularly after the successful function of provincial autonomy during the last two years and a half are capable of satisfactory solution and amicable settlement through friendly negotiations provided there is a sincere approach and mutual trust and goodwill. We cannot help stating that it is a feeling of distrust which has vitiated this relationship and if even now a proper atmosphere is created, it is not difficult to evolve immediately a scheme of national defence as an integral part of the defence of the British Commonwealth. Without introducing any spirit of bargaining, we therefore appeal to Britain that the policy of appeasement which was perhaps wrongly tried with dictatorships, is far more essential in the British Commonwealth itself and should be applied to India. No one can dispute that India's march to full freedom can any longer be postponed. It is high time that the question of complete and full responsible government at the Centre, including control of foreign policy and defence, be taken up without delay. Britain should understand enough psychology to realise that when it asks for help from India, it should at least create adequate enthusiasm in India, to offer such aid. That assistance can be extended if Britain is prepared to consider India's rights and demands. If India is to make voluntary sacrifices in this war, let her at least feel that in her home, she is enjoying the very liberty which she desires every other country should enjoy and in defence of which she is herself asked to fight.

The issues are too grave and imminent to suffer any delay. We suggest that His Excellency the Viceroy must immediately establish personal contact with the accredited leaders of India and take them into his fullest confidence in order to India arrive at a permanent and satisfactory settlement of the outstanding Indian political question. We have no doubt that responsible Indian public opinion would respond to an appeal to sink internal differences and suspend the domestic conflict provided Britain gave proof of her earnest desire to co-operate with India as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth.

130

WARDHAGANJ  
August 28, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS  
CARE  
LUCKY  
CALCUTTA

CONGRESS APART BAPU DISLIKES. STATEMENT REQUIRES VITAL  
CHANGES. NO IMMEDIATE NECESSITY FOR IT.

MAHADIV

131

BIRLA BROS., LTD.,  
CALCUTTA,  
August 30, 1939

MAHADIVBHAI DRSAI  
MAGANWADI  
WARDHA (C.P.)

PLEASE POST IMMEDIATELY BAPU'S ADVICE FOR US FROM COMMERCIAL  
COMMUNITY'S POINT OF VIEW. IF I GO WARDHA I WILL HAVE  
TO LEAVE BEHIND SOMETHING FOR GUIDANCE.

GHANSHYAMDAS

132

SEVAGRAM,  
WARDHA,  
August 30, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I had to waste *hours* to get you on the phone, but it was a  
delight to hear your voice on the phone. I think a telephone  
in Maganwadi is a desperate need; and also a small Austin car

for me. But who can persuade Bapu? You have to tackle him some day. I stayed the night at Maganwadi and rang you up in the morning again—successfully.

I told Bapu that you wanted to me to prepare a tentative draft of the manifesto. He said 'no', it would be best for you to come. There is no hurry for the manifesto. And the war does not seem to be coming. I think if it does not come, it would be best for us. Otherwise we would stand thoroughly exposed!

Rajenbabu is so ill that he cannot move about. Why then should we have the W.C. meeting at Ranchi? We should really not bother him and have the W.C. without him. But we are really not war-minded! Even when we meet after the war, we will talk as though nothing has happened!

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

### 133

CALCUTTA,  
August 31, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

The international situation is still tense. Intuition tells me that there should be no war, but reason sees no justification for such optimism. If there is a war, I will immediately leave for Wardha or Delhi wherever I can catch Bapu. If there is no war, even then after some days I wish to meet Bapu. But we shall settle the programme in course of time.

The general desire, and this also is my own, is that England should win. It is felt that England is on the side of right. Secondly, the defeat of England may have wider consequences of India which no one desires. Has Bapu by sending his blessings to Poland made any spiritual commitment?

But if the sympathy is on the side of England, people also desire to see the political problem settled at once. Even Moore has written two very good articles and he suggests that immediately a responsible cabinet at the centre should be formed with the portfolios of defence and external affairs in the hands



of responsible Indian ministers. He tells me that the Viceroy's reaction has been favourable which means that if the crisis came, there should not be much difficulty about the settlement. So the position is that while we want England to win, we also want that our political differences should be settled without delay. I am not actuated by any bargaining spirit. I think our demand of settlement is not incompatible with our sympathy for Gt. Britain.

Describing my own position, while Bapu's attitude is too spiritual and noble for me to practice, I am not much enamoured of the resolution of the Working Committee. Perhaps it would have been more honest to say that our sympathies were with England but we would not fight unless there was a settlement. In any case, the Indian Mercantile community here will have to issue a manifesto immediately war breaks out. I may be perhaps in Wardha at that time and therefore some rough guidance for the people here is necessary. I have therefore sent you a wire yesterday to send us Bapu's guidance which I would leave here behind me in case I have to go to Wardha.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBHAI DSAI  
WARDHA

134

WARDHAGANJ,  
August 31, 1939

GHANSHYAMDAS  
LUCKY  
CALCUTTA

MY FIRM ADVICE IS COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY SHOULD REMAIN  
SILENT TILL ACTUAL RESULT IS KNOWN.

BAPU

135

BIRLA BROS. LTD.,  
CALCUTTA,  
September 1, 1939

MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
MAGANWADI  
WARDHA (C. P.)

TRIFD YOU ON PHONF. PLEASE TALK TOMORROW PHONE SEVTN  
O'CLOCK PK1196. WHFRF SHOULD I MILT BAPU DILHI OR WARDHA?  
GHANSHYAMDAS

136

GOMOH,  
10.5 a. m., September 8, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASII,

So here we are with Rajenbabu. Mine was a difficult mission, but it proved so easy, thanks to Rajenbabu. The friends around him would have made it impossible, but we had a quite chat all to ourselves and the rest came after the decision to go was made. He is very much better and will stand the journey well. He said the road to Chakradharpur was a dagerous one in the night, and it was no use taking the risk. In fact he had agreed even to go to Chakradharpur, but the rest of them raised a hue and cry about it, and having had experience that evening of the Bihari chauffeur I did not press Chakradharpur. So we are taking the Bombay Mail here at 0.29 and having a few minutes free I am just trying to improve shining hour!

The Biharis cheated me of a good simple lunch on the morning train. Having, I thought, heaps of time I had ordered lunch at 12 o'clock at Gaya. In fact I had suggested 11 o'clock but the waiter said either 10 or 12. I plumped for 12 and behold as the lunch was coming in there were the Gaya friends waiting to detrain me there. 'Rajenbabu had telephoned to us

that we should arrange for you food and car here and you must get out here.' I said, "Let me finish my lunch at any rate. And are you sure no car will come at Kodarma?" They assured me that the Kodarma arrangement had been cancelled and I must not think of finishing the lunch at the station but must have the meal that was waiting at home !!! So I had to yield.

I questioned and cross questioned them and proved to them that they were going to save no time but on the contrary wasting my first-class ticket and wasting a gallon of petrol in the bargain. But they insisted that nearly an hour would be saved. The chauffeur, however, proved my case to the hilt. He did not know the way and he was inquiring everywhere where to turn ! I knew I was in for it and began to be afraid that I may not even get to Ramgarh before night. Actually we did 150 miles instead of 110 and would have perhaps done more had not a Hazaribagh car with a Bihari kisan prisoner (whom I knew years ago) overtaken us. The inspector in charge came out of the car and said: "Hoozur ! You did wrong in getting out at Gaya; I knew you had a ticket for Kodarma. We were on the same train and we detrained at Hazaribagh Road !" I said: "Now show us the way."

But I must finish this. Otherwise it would not be posted here and the Bombay Mail has arrived.

I found when the train had left Moghulsarai that your bedding had been left behind! Did you get my telegram from Gaya? I do hope they will deliver it to you.

Please don't be angry with Mani, at any rate don't sack him. Having been rebuked for leaving so many things at home I think he was too nervous to remember things with the result that he left the bedding also !

Love.

*Yours,*  
Mahadev

*Private*

SEGAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
September 10, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I could not tell you much on that telephone in Jamnalalji's office surrounded by all kinds of people. Bapu suggested yesterday a practical proposition to the W.C. assuming that the members are not pacifists nor the ministers. He said there should be no obstruction nor non-co-operation, and that ministers should carry on to the extent it was possible and offer co-operation in all respects in which they could do so conscientiously. The country, he explained, was not ready for any kind of resistance, that the repression would be of the fiercest type, that though, as Jayaprakash said, we may find a hundred Jayaprakashes ready to be shot down, that sacrifice was hardly worth making; that no foreigner would be better to deal with than the British, that Imperialism would destroy itself in the war not to rear its head again, and that all things considered the best policy would be to help and not to hinder. This he said in reply to Subhas and Jayaprakash. Subhas said he felt that the masses were ready everywhere for a non-violent resistance and Jayaprakash said that he would far rather die an inglorious death than offer any kind of help to the British. The battle is still raging, and I cannot quite predict the upshot. But of course it is going to lead to an open rupture with the Leftists. The W. C. too have not yet made up their minds. I myself do not quite see how the ministers can offer the discriminate co-operation that Bapu suggests. It would not be accepted I am afraid.

I mentioned to Vallabhbai your suggestion about making Bapu the sole pleni-potentiary. V. Said there would be no difficulty but everything would depend on Jawahar who is expected here this afternoon. His friends here are not prepared to believe that Jawahar made any statement of the kind attributed to him! However, we shall see. Bapu is still imploring the W.C. to forget him and to do what it likes.

I left your bedding with Shri Mathuraprasad, Advocate, Chairman of the Municipality, Gaya, asking him to deliver it to you the next day, or to send it on to you by Ry. parcel. I have

given him your address Did you get my letter from Gomoh Station

Any chance of your coming this side?

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

### 138

CALCUTTA,  
September 11, 1939

MY DEAR MAHATMAJI,

A car was sent to Kodarma by my manager, but since you did not get down there it had to return empty

I do not know with whom you have left the bedding, but perhaps the friend will send it to me in course of time

I tried to get on phone this morning but you were not available I hope the Working Committee will give full powers to Bapu and pass a resolution to that effect

*Yours sincerely,*  
Chanshyamdas

SHRI MAHATMAJI DLSAI  
WARDHA

### 139

#### Working Committee's Resolution Regarding War

The National Congress has since 1920 deliberately adopted the policy of non-violence for the attainment of India's deliverance from foreign domination In spite of ups and downs in the pursuit of the policy, the Congress is able to show that it

has never made such progress towards its goal as it has under the policy of non-violence. Nor has the Congress experienced such phenomenal mass awakening as during the non-violent regime. It has nevertheless to be admitted that the spirit of non-violence has not permeated the masses as well as it should have done. It is also to be regretted that the Congress ministers have been obliged in order to preserve peace to resort to police and military assistance and even to lathi charges and firing. It is in such circumstances that the Working Committee is called upon to interpret the Congress resolutions and the Congress mind over the situation created by the threatening war clouds. The Congress can only wish a reign of peace throughout the world. If unfortunately a world war breaks out, it can bring no good to India or any country in the world. The end of it will be no victory even for the so-called victors. It will mean almost if not utter extinction of what is known as civilization. The Congress therefore can take no sides. As a matter of fact too so long as India remains under foreign domination it can have no effective voice in the counsels of the warring nations. The Congress is itself at war though entirely peaceful, with British Imperialism. All things considered, therefore, the Congress must dissociate itself from all war preparations going on in the country. It cannot view with unconcern the dispatch of Indian troops to Singapore, Egypt or other countries as part of war preparations. The Working Committee asks Congress ministers not to associate themselves with or directly or indirectly support any war measures that may be adopted by the British Government. The Working Committee also calls upon the public not to be disturbed by war rumours and advises them in no way to support war measures by feeling the confidence that India which has no desire to participate in the threatened war can be least harmed by Congress non-participation.

The Working Committee commends the method of non-violence to the nations of the earth and appeals to them by concerted action to avoid war and adjust their differences by the peaceful method of arbitration. It is unthinkable that enough upright men are not to be found in the world who would apply their minds with impartiality to the adjudication of disputes between nations.

140

CALCUTTA,  
September 15, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I am rather disappointed about the statement issued by the Working Committee. There are so many repetitions that it reads a rambling document. What is said in it could have been said in a shorter document. It is clear that Bapu had very little to do with it. The language sounds more like that of Jawaharlal. But is that all? Or any further step is going to be taken? I don't think the British Government will reply to this statement. But if any assurance is needed, Bapu is the best person to get such an assurance. I hope Bapu will again see the Viceroy and the Working Committee will not talk through statements. Personal touch is necessary for both sides. And after the Viceroy has announced the burial of Federation, which again is due to an agreement between the Viceroy and Bapu, I should think that the next step would be comparatively easier. Bapu alone can handle the situation.

I tried my best to get you on phone almost every day during the last four days without any result. What is happening of the telephone that has been put at Maganwadi?

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DLSAI  
WARDHA

141

SEGAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
September 15, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Two days I came in response to your telephone call, but the call had been cancelled. It is no use depending on someone

here to send me a car in time, for by the time I got here the call is cancelled. You should have alternatively asked for Vallabhbhai.

You now know what has happened. It was inevitable. Bapu's proposition did not find favour with the W. C. Vallabhbhai and others did not, I fear, have the courage to go to the country with Bapu's proposition. Then Bapu said they should listen to Jawahar's proposition. He came in with a statement covering fourteen sheets which he placed for the acceptance of the W.C. The W. C. debated upon it for three days and, with a few modifications, adopted the statement. Maulana and Vallabhbhai pressed Bapu hard to retain the same position as he had occupied up to now. In other words they said the negotiations, if any, should be initiated with Bapu, or rather Bapu should be the sole authority to conduct the negotiations. Bapu said he could not agree to do this, because with the background of the statement he could not go to government to negotiate any terms. His way of negotiation was different from Jawahar's and it was for him to shoulder the whole burden. He also has a fundamental difference regarding what was to be done in the event of absence of response from government. In spite of this Maulana and Vallabhbhai and others continued to press Bapu. Then Bapu said to Jawahar: Give me your detached view. He had no hesitation in declaring that Bapu was always a bad negotiator, that his opponents always took an undue advantage of his generosity, and he would not trust him to negotiate with the Government. Bapu said that was quite right, though he was sure that his generosity had never done any harm to the nation. But Bapu was adamant that Jawahar whose resolution the W. C. willy nilly had adopted should be asked to assume command and to shoulder the burden both of negotiation, if any should take place, or of a fight if any should have to be offered. How the fight is to take place no one knows and Jawahar himself has no clear notion about it. But we have taken a decision of a most momentous character—more momentous than the decision taken at Lahore in 1929. For in 1930 the burden of carrying on satyagraha fell on Bapu, now the burden on Jawahar and Bapu does not know how to help in case the country should decide to fight—for he is convinced that there is no atmosphere for a fight. It is a dreadful situation



but there was no other alternative. For the W. C. had not the gumption to take the line suggested by Bapu, and Jawahar had the courage of his conviction. The future is dark and gloomy and we may have to wander in wilderness now for three or more years. But we deserve it. We have neither assimilated Bapu's non-violence nor have we evolved our own policy.

This is a most superficial account of all that has happened. To give a full and accurate account I should have to fill a book. The days have been full of trial and travail for Bapu. But he could not think of a better course than advising the W. C. to entrust the reigns to Jawahar.

What Government's reaction will be, I do not dare to predict. Perhaps there may be no response, or an unsatisfactory response (which is most likely). Then we have to decide. What to do. Let us hope and pray that even at that grim hour Bapu's advice may prevail.

Yours affectionately,  
Mahadev

## 142

CALCUTTA,  
September 16, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

Bapu's statement today has acted like the माल्लनाथ-भाष्य of the Working Committee's statement and in fact the commentary is far better than the original itself. But as I said yesterday, what is needed is personal contact. Talking through statements would hardly be helpful. I hope therefore that Bapu is already taking action in this behalf.

I was talking to Sardar last night. He told me that you had finally settled down at Segaon. What about the phone? Sardar was rather in a bellicose mood which reminded me of the Rajkot days. Bapu's statement on the other hand is very soothing. The situation requires most delicate handling and I have no doubt that Bapu is doing the needful.

I will be going to Delhi shortly. I am wondering when should I go to Wardha. Or is Bapu going to Delhi in the first week of October?

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADLVBHAI DESAI  
SEGAON

143

ON WAY TO WARDHA,  
September 18, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have told you the circumstances in which the W. C. resolution came to be passed. Since then Bapu's statement has appeared in the Press and I think it saves the situation admirably well. There could not be a more luminous exposition of the W. C.'s resolution, and if you have not already sent this statement to our three friends in London you should now do so. The *Statesman's* article is astonishingly good. You should send a copy of that article too. I think Russia's entry in the war makes our way easier—and also Britain's way easier to make a whole hearted response to the Congress gesture. Otherwise they would be done for. And if Japan joins Russia, we might be called upon to bear a fair amount of the brunt of the war. Heaven alone knows what is in store for us. But the principle of non-violence by which we have been swearing these 20 years seems to be under a heavy eclipse. My heart sinks within me as I think of the implications of the principle which are quite clear to me, but which it seems so impossible for us to live up to. Bapu himself is going through a terrible mental struggle—if not anguish, and I think he even prays that God may take him away without putting an unbearable strain on him.

I am going to Madras on one year's Ambassadorial mis-

sions, to acquaint C. R. with the whole situation and to tell him how much he can do at this juncture. I know you will be able to put two and two together.

Yours,  
Mahadev

144

SIGAON,  
October 4, 1939

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

My brother (Pyarelal) has asked me to write a few lines to you about Bapu's health, as he himself is too busy and may not find any time to write to you today.

Mahadevbhai must have explained to you what the swelling on Bapu's feet was an indication of. At Bardoli he was working under a tremendous pressure throughout his stay there. That kept his b.p. up and naturally the heart had to work under a strain. This coupled with deficient sleep proved too much for the heart. So the response of the heart muscle to the demands on it became difficult. Swelling on the feet which is the first sign of a failing heart appeared. He was made to take complete rest after that and I must say he is trying to make it as complete as possible. Mental work has been reduced to a minimum though yesterday he again had a strenuous day writing out that statement in answer to the Viceroy's communique and then addressing those 70 delegates who have come to stay the Wardha scheme of education. He is not taking any walks and sleeps as much as he can. The day before yesterday he slept for 10 hours during the night and for 1 hr. during *malish* and for 1 hr. during the afternoon. That made the total of sleep during 24 hrs., 12 hours. Yesterday he slept for 9 hrs. Sleep is sound. The swelling on the feet is subsiding. But even when the swelling has completely gone he will need to take prolonged rest. The swelling is only an indication that the horse has been overwhipped beyond its capacity. His b.p. yesterday was 186/106 throughout the day. Today after the mid-day sleep it is

172/100. With proper care the swelling will subside within less than a week. His urine is free from albumen and although the heart sounds show a tired heart muscle, there is no dilatation of the heart. All this indicates a good prognosis provided Bapu and the rest are careful.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Sushila

145

SI GAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
October 15, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Will you kindly let me know, as soon as possible, if there is any passport needed for going to Burma? I do not think there is any need, but I should like to make sure as Prithwisingh wants to go to Burma to see his brother. Perhaps Gaganvihari Mehta may be able to give you precise information.

What do you make of Laithwaite's talk with Devdas. The outlook is gloomy, but it is quite likely that he may have discussed the details of the formula with Rajaji.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

146

SEGAON ASHRAM,  
Via WARDHA,  
October 15, 1939

MY DIAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I must acquaint you with the latest developments. Rajaji who was here for the A.I.C.C. was invited by the Viceroy, or

rather was asked by his Governor to see the Viceroy in Delhi. He was rather hesitant, as he feared that people might begin to make all kinds of speculations and he also had a suspicion that Jawaharlal and others might not like it but Bapu was absolutely clear that he should go and so the rest also agreed with him. I now hear that he has had two interviews with the Viceroy and it could not be all for nothing. At all events we should be able to know something as soon as he returns here this evening. In the mean while I pass on to you the following conversation between Devdas and Laithwaite when he saw him on the eleventh to hand him my letter. This letter I had written to him, at Bapu's instance, giving him an account of the A.I.C.C. and the part that Jawaharlal had played in it. On reading the letter L. said, "Yes, I was glad myself to see that Nehru had spoken as he had. It is so difficult to say unpopular thing."

DEVSDAS: The great thing about him is his honesty. He shuns duplicity and that is why he spoke as he did.

LOTHIAN: I will of course show this to H.E. In fact I show him all that Mahadev sends me.

DEVSDAS: In fact my father wanted to write to H.E. himself but this is as good as his letter. He had no time and he was so tired. Well, we are hoping that something good is coming out of all this.

LOTHIAN: Well, you know that there are difficulties and it is an understatement to say that there are difficulties. You cannot get away from the fact that the minorities are upset and suspicious. The Congress says we have been going too slow and we have not gone far enough, but the minorities say, we have gone too far and too fast. I don't attach much value to these various sects but the Muslims and the Congress are vital. Also you can't just brush aside the Hindu Mahasabha or Ambedkar.

DEVSDAS: It is impossible to deny that there is discontent among certain classes. But what is felt is that something probably could be done without sacrificing or making any commitment affecting the interests of the minorities. That is essential and there is really no bargaining because in a sense you have already got the Congress support and help incoming in various ways.

LOTHIAN: That is true and I know something can be done in a general way and the whole issue shelved in a cloud of words. But that would not be honest. It would only be hoodwinking' the whole world.

DEVIDAS: There can be no question of anyone wanting the Government to do anything that is not absolutely honest. But what we feel is that the minority question is not the only issue. After making due allowance for the minority problems and its importance there is a big residue which concerns Englishmen themselves. There is something about which they have to make up their minds. They must face that issue some day. That issue can be faced today and it need not be anything of which they might repent when the war is over and as is expected the democracies have won.

LOTHIAN: Yes, but let me now take you back to my first point. The Mussalmans and the others—they don't agree with the Congress.

DEVIDAS: I think it is fairly plain that the Congress in this matter has no ulterior motive against the Mussalmans. If anything the Congress is anxious to do everything to satisfy them. If H.E. is convinced of this his way should be clear. The Congress has no hostile designs against anybody.

LOTHIAN: You may be sure that so far as H.E. is concerned he has no suspicions of any kind. He understands the position very well. But the fact that Congressmen's intentions are honest does not take us any further as regards the actual fact of the minorities' suspicion but H.E. has the whole position before him now and he has received the greatest possible assistance from Mr. Gandhi. The understanding between them is perfect.

DEVIDAS: I know my father has felt absolutely at home with the Viceroy and I am sure it is H.E. who has got to solve the question. I don't think London can do anything of its own accord.

LOTHIAN: Yes, that is another matter. London has to be taken into account but whatever happens nothing can

alter the great mutual understanding between H.E. and your father.

*Yours sincerely*  
Mahadev

P.S. I dictated this letter to Bawla and started typing directly. Babu wants me to go to Calcutta on a Fool's Errand. In case I have to go, I shall send you a wire.

M.E

147

CALCUTTA,  
October 17, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADI BHAI,

I did not write to you about my own conversation with Sir Maurice Gwyer. I had tea with him at his house and we talked for a hour and a half. I realised that the Hindu-Muslim question and other petty questions were likely to cause difficulties. And yet I got an impression that something was possible to be done and perhaps might be done. But the whole question is whether that 'something' will be able to satisfy Jawaharlalji. I am very hopeful that if Babu knows the whole formula and the position of the Government, then he would be able to make changes as may make the offer acceptable to the Rightists in the Congress. And eventually perhaps this is what is going to happen.

Rajaji was very pessimistic. But if he is 100% pessimistic, you have to make allowance and assess its value for not more than 75%. I think by nature he is pessimistic. And yet there is no doubt there are difficulties.

This morning Mr. H.M. Bose phoned and asked me if you were coming. I said I did not know, if you were coming and I did not see why you were coming. But it looks now from your letter that you may come, although it may be on fool's errand or wise men's errand, whichever term might suit you!

"I am staying here for a week but am ready to leave for Delhi any time if Bapu goes there.

I had a letter from Laithwaite which Birla House got after I left Delhi. He said perhaps he would fix some time for me with the Vicerey during the next week (that is this week). I wrote back from Benares saying that I was on my way to Calcutta and as His Excellency was having so many interviews, I loathed to add to these interviews but that if he thought I could be of some use, he might send me a wire. But I don't think I will be needed.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADEVBIHAI DESAI  
SRGAON

148

CALCUTTA,  
October 18, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBIHAI,

At last the statement has come out and it is rather disappointing. But I feel we deserved it. We are a house divided against ourselves and in such a mess the Viceroys could not have given us any other reply than what he has given.

It is possible to interpret the statement as a dishonest as well as an honest document. Devdas who talked to me on phone remarked that somehow or other he did not dislike it. But it all depends on how a man reads it. If we look at our own disunity, then, one cannot help feeling that we could not have got anything better. If, on the other hand, we bank only on the generosity of the Britisher and ignore our own shortcomings, then we come to a different conclusion. But I am still wondering whether it is not possible for Bapu to build something constructive on the foundation of this very statement. Bapu is evidently to be invited again and let us hope for the



best. I suppose the Congress Governments will now resign.

I have just received your letter of the 15th. No passport is needed for going to Burma.

Yours sincerely,  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
SLGAON

149

SLGAON,  
Via WARDHA,  
October 21, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your letter of the 18th. The visit on fool's errand is quashed—thank God. Bapu wanted me to see the Metropolitan in order to let him to approach the European to bring pressure on the Viceroy. On second thoughts he decided that it might be of no use.

You must have read Bapu's strongly worded statement with a certain amount of surprise—if I am to judge from your own reaction to it. But there was nothing for it but for Bapu to speak his mind out. He feels that the Viceroy did nothing at all to convert the diehard at Home, and he also feels that all his labours in explaining his viewpoint to him were wasted. Yesterday the *Times of India* man came with proofs of 'An Appeal to Mr. Gandhi' that was going to appear in the paper as an editorial. It was written, said Gopal Swami, in consultation with the Governor of Bombay. Bapu has given him a long interview which I dare say will be wired everywhere by the NPI and which you will have seen before this is in your hands. It is up to the Government to respond to the suggestion made therein. It is one of the most constructive efforts of Bapu and might have the importance that the Teethal interview had. But Munshi who phoned yesterday from 2078 Delhi said to me

that to Jagdish's suggestion that the V. should see Bapu again the latter said: "It is no use. Why should I drag him here, when I know that I can give him nothing more?"

That is all I can say today.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Mahadev

150

CALCUTTA,  
October 23, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

In my opinion the resolution of the Working Committee was extremely dignified. I do not know what the Viceroy is going to do but I cannot conceive that all that has been done during the last two years will now be undone suddenly. It will all depend on how we tackle the question, but so far I think we have played our cards well and I hope eventually we will succeed. But that is only a hope. On the surface of it the things look very gloomy.

I hope Bapu is keeping quite well.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
SI GAON

151

November 29, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

This enclosed cutting referring to the speech of Jawaharlalji has caused some irritation here. His reference to the Viceroy's

offer of giving some big posts and getting ready for the crisis is, in my opinion, not very helpful.

I had a long talk today with Laithwaite and he will convey the whole thing to the Viceroy. After that perhaps I will see His excellency if he so desires. If there is anything important, I will write to you again.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SYT. MAHADGVBHAI DRSAT  
WARDHA

152

November 30, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADGVBHAI,

I have not yet met any big boss but from the atmosphere here I gather that the position is something like this

1. The Viceroy is extremely anxious to resolve the differences and get the Congress back in office but he would not be allowed to make any declaration which would in any way offend the Muslims. It is impossible for them to do so at this stage. After we have resigned, the Punjab and Bengal ministers have been taking a very defiant attitude. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, the Commerce Member, who recently went to Calcutta, was waited upon by a deputation consisting of European jute mill-owners. They very bitterly complained against the ministers saying that on account of constant speculation by the ministers the business had become very unstable in Calcutta. The Commerce Member, of course, could not give them any consolation. The Punjab and Bengal ministries are reported to have told the Government of India that under the instructions of the Muslim League they were carrying their resignations in their pockets. And since the Congress ministries have resigned, people here dare not offend them.

2. The Home Cabinet seems to feel that the Viceroy has already offended the princes and they would not like him to take any risk as far as the Muslims are concerned unless they could be sure of placating the Congress in reasonable way. And even they will not take any big risk with the Muslims. They cannot forget that in the near East all the powers are Muslim Powers and just now they are involved in war.

3. The Muslims will not settle with us under any circumstances unless we are prepared to give them vetoing power in constitutional matters. Jinnah and others are bitterly complaining that Jawaharlal never tried to negotiate with them and now they have taken up the attitude that when Jawaharlal sees Jinnah next time, Jinnah will tell him that they could both talk as individuals but that if we really wanted to negotiate, the Congress must write officially to the Muslim League recognising the latter as the representative of the Muslim community of India. And 50-50 will be the basis.

There is thus no chance of a settlement. Men like Jagdish and Ramaswamy Mudaliar and some other feel that had we been in office the Muslims would have been in a better mood to settle with us. Now there will be no settlement so far as they are concerned. They are all still hoping that Gandhiji will do something to resolve the differences and get the Congress ministries back in the provinces. Every high placed Hindu here seems to feel that unless we are in power the Muslims will never settle. Sir Jagdish, of course, feels that if by any chance we get in the Executive Council of the Viceroy, eight provinces and the Centre will become more or less Congress governments. I think there is much in what they say. I am just letting you know how the wind blows.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
WARDHA

December 8, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADFVBHAI,

There is a feeling here, and although the Viceroy does not associate himself with it, I feel his mind also is prejudiced, that the Rightists and the Leftists are jointly playing a game. The Rightist comes and asks for a certain gesture and when something is conceded, it is not accepted. It is not realised that the fault is of H. M. G. themselves who made declarations after declarations without finding out whether their declaration would be accepted by the Congress or not. Yet the fact remains that the Viceroy's stocks with H. M. G. have gone down. He has had a defeat twice and now he is somewhat chary of making any declaration. Bapu's article about the definition of Dominion Status also was misunderstood here although they should not have done so. And Jawaharlalji's attack on the U.P. civilians too has caused a lot of irritation among the civilians. The Viceroy therefore in a way has resigned to the defeat and perhaps the reactionary element is getting more powerful.

The Viceroy complained about Bapu's article and he said his hands were being weakened. He was rather gloomy and felt as if nothing more could be done since anything that he said would be rejected by the Congress. The defeat, according to him, was accepted not because he did not want to do anything but because it was impossible to placate the Congress. And the difficulty about the Mussalmans, of course, is a real difficulty. I therefore again saw Laithwaite today and had a long talk with him. The result of this talk has been that he has begun to see the thing in a different light. I told him that he was seeing things which did not exist and he is prepared to accept my assurance. The net result of the talk is that in consultation with Rajaji, if Rajaji helps me, I will put forward a formula to Laithwaite on behalf of myself and he has promised to help me by giving me constructive criticism and also help me in revising the draft, but only on behalf of himself. If we both can find a common ground, then the next step would be that I will have to show it to Bapu. In case it is necessary, you may have to come to Calcutta because coming and going to and from Wardha would waste a lot of time, at any rate in the preliminary stage.

I have spoken to you all these things on phone. Luckily, Rajaji comes tomorrow and it will be a great help.

*Your. sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DESAI  
SEGAON  
( Via WARDHA

## 154

ON WAY BACK TO WARDHA,  
December 25, 1939

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have been practically on the move for the last two weeks and quite out of touch with things at home. Everyone that I met in Madras said that the Viceroy would see Bapu in Bombay. I do not know how far this is true, but if there is some truth in this, you must know. Is Devdas still there?

Jamnadas Gandhi who was working in Bachharaj Co. and was getting Rs. 400 has applied for the post of Asst. Sales Manager advertised by the Sugar Syndicate. He is Maganlal Gandhi's brother, quite competent and incorruptible. If you have any voice in the selection, I would ask you to consider his application favourably. Devdas might tell you more about him.

*Yours,*  
Mahadev

*PS.* Any chance of our meeting now?

## 155

December 28, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I forgot to tell you on phone that Mr. Southby met me at the

Viceroy's House here and asked me to remember him to you. You seem to have struck very fast friendship with him. He expressed a desire that next time when you are in Delhi, I should make arrangement for him to have a quite meeting with you. I told him that I was hoping that Bapu would go to Delhi and so you would be there about the middle of January.

*Yours affectionately,*  
Ghanshyamdas

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DISAI  
SINGAON  
WARDHA

156

December 28, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

With reference to Jamnadas Gandhi, I will speak to Brajmohan who has got some voice in the matter. But I understand, if I am not mistaken, that a Mohammedan gentleman has already been recommended very strongly by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad for the post. And I am not sure whether Brajmohan has not already taken action.

You ask me if there is any chance of our meeting in the near future. I am hoping that we will meet in Delhi, but how far this hope will materialise, time alone will show. I not only met Southby but I have been keeping in touch with the other family members of the Viceroy. The Viceroy, I am told from every quarter, is depressed because he is disappointed. Lady Linlithgow told me that the Viceroy was dreaming that during his term of office a new India will be born and the hope had not materialised so far. This time, if Bapu is invited, he should sit down in Delhi and not leave the things incomplete. Either there should be a complete settlement or a final 'No'. I am sure in my own mind that with the desire to settle on both sides, which I think is already there, there is no reason why a settlement should not be arrived at.

Would it be correct to say that so far we have simply talked and not come to brass tacks?

Dr. Profulla Ghosh met me the other day and told me that Bapu said that he would ask me to relieve him of his promise to visit Pilani because he wanted to have leisure to "cook up" the things. I told him that I would never think of drawing on his time, when he was busy with such an important task.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

*PS.* Since writing the above, I have talked to Brajmohan about Jamnadas Gandhi and he tells me that there is at present no desire to fill up the vacancy. All the same, he promised to recommend the name of Jamnadas Gandhi.

G. D.

SHRI MAHADEVBHAI DLSAI  
SEGAON

157

December 29, 1939

MY DEAR MAHADEVBHAI,

I have been meeting a number of people just now, as Calcutta is humming with all the big guns. I am not writing to you in detail what talk I had with whom. But I have formed a definite impression on the following points:

1. Dominion Status of the Westminster Statute type is assured and could be achieved immediately after the termination of War.

2. During the War period maximum application of this Status could be arranged through the Consultative Committee and by enlargement of the Viceroys Cabinet and eventually by establishment of Federation with such modi-



fications as we demand.

3. The Communal tension is the greatest stumbling block in our way, but it could be solved on the basis of Coalition Government in U.P., Bihar, the Punjab, Bengal and Assam. The basis of Coalition would be agreement on the election manifesto of the majority party and then inclusion of communal representatives in the cabinet duly elected by their co-religionists. Where the minority is below 10%, coalition would not be necessary. Since we can get coalition on substantially our own programme in the Punjab and Bengal, I don't see why we should fear to reciprocate in Bihar and U. P. There is no danger, if such coalition is arrived at after thorough discussion about the principles.

4. The question of Defence and princes will have to be settled during the War period. But once we are in the Viceroy's cabinet, the question could be easily settled since the atmosphere would become quite different once we come back. And if these two things are settled between ourselves and H.M.G., then even before the termination of War, we will have freedom in practice.

Don't you think that in the picture that I have drawn we get all that we need and that we can digest? And don't you think that independence is more or less assured of realisation through this process? And if that be so, then why should we create an atmosphere of light?

Bapu perhaps would be invited to Delhi after some time and I should think that on these lines it would be possible to arrive at a settlement. There seems to be a desire to create coalition even in Bengal before it is done elsewhere by way of gesture so that we may have to reciprocate in other provinces. But since it is known that the Congress is not out to accept office, there is hesitation in making such an offer. It serves the purpose of everyone here by beginning coalition in Bengal first of all because the present Government is such as is disliked by all except the Muslim League.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Ghanshyamdas

## Letters without Date

158

MAGANWADI,  
WARDHA (C. P.),

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I hope you are getting regular news about Bapu's health. I had your wire, to which Bapu sent a reply to the effect that Dr. Gilder and Dr. Jivraj Mehta had already examined him, but Bidhan had the right to come whenever he liked. I hope, you had that wire. Since then Dr. Clement C. Chesterman, M. D., M.R.C.P., has examined him yesterday. He could tell the condition to be more satisfactory than the Bombay doctors report indicated. Today's bulletin is enclosed herewith. But the fact is that temporary alleviation of symptoms is little consolation. Because, if the symptoms continue to disappear and reappear off and on, it would mean that the trouble has only for the time being gone underground, but continues to brew all the same. Bapu himself regards it as the beginning of a new phase which necessitates a corresponding change in his mode of life. He must curtail his "pravritti" and depend more and more upon "sankalp" and the power of silence. Whether he will be able to do so and extend the span of his life to the desired limit as he put it, will depend on the co-operation of all concerned. Mention this to you so that you might be able to apply your organising mind to it and help to give it a concrete shape,

I shall send you a copy of the letter you have asked for as soon as the Rajkumari can supply me with one.

The letter from the V. to which Laithwaite referred in the course of your talk with you was received the other day. Bapu has replied to it saying that if his (B's) ignorance could be dispelled through personal contact, he would be willing to run up to Delhi even at the risk of a collapse.

Bapu is getting more and more convinced that there can be no surrender on a moral issue such as the Rajkot involved.

The Thakore is there by virtue of the British Government. His plighted word is therefore binding upon the government. If we cannot check goondatism within the Indian states, or a palpable and manifest breach of faith by an Indian prince, under compulsion from above, we shall have to be ready to witness helplessly the scrapping of the Government of India Act in toto in the near future.

Yesterday I had gone to meet the President at the Railway station. On our return, we just dropped at Jamnalalji's bungalow. Just at that time there was a trunk call from Rajkot, Ba and Maniben speaking. The Thakore had sent them word that as Bapu was reported to be seriously ill, Ba could be sent to Wardha. They must have insisted on ascertaining the facts for themselves first. So they had been brought to Rajkot for that purpose. I gave them the exact details of Bapu's condition and warned them against being taken in by any such ruse. They seemed happy and cheerful. Ba did not want anybody to worry about her.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Pyarelal

## 159

### **Bulletin on Bapu's Health**

From yesterday the swelling on Bapu's feet has again increased a little. The b. p. is also tending to go up. For the last three days he has given up observing silence and has been busy with visitors. Physical rest and low diet is being continued. His b. p. last evening was 190/110. A day after mid-day sleep is 176/104.

Sushila Nayar

160

Bulletin on Babu's Health

SEGAON,  
WARDHA,

Babu is steadily improving. There is hardly any swelling on the feet today. His weight today was 107 lbs, i.e., a loss of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs from last Sunday.

Diet consists of 8 oz milk, 6-7 oranges, 40 oz glucose, 60 oz green vegetables.

Physical rest will be continued for about a week more and if all goes well he will be able to begin taking walks from next week.

The heart sounds are much better. B. P. today at 5 a.m. was 180/104.

Sushila Nayar

161

SEGAON,  
WARDHA,

FIRST MEMBER  
RAJKOT

THANKS WIFE. YOU ARE SILENT ABOUT HUNGRI STRIKI. HAVE AGAIN LONG WIRE ABOUT ATROCITIES. DIFFICULT DISBELIVE. EVERY DAY URGE GROWING THAT I SHOULD MYSELF LUNGE. AGONY OF RULER'S BREACH OF FAITH COUPLLS WITH GROWING TALS OF TERRORISM BECOMING UNBIARABLE. HAVE NO DESIRE EMBARRASS THAKORE SAHEB OR COUNCIL WOULD LIKE YOU LISTEN TO VOICE OF OLD MEN CLAIMING TO BE RAJKOT'S FRIENDS.

GANDHI

162

**Unpublished Notes of an Interview with Gandhiji of  
Mr. Steel, Correspondent of "The New York Times"**

QUESTION: What is your idea of independence?

ANSWER: By independence I mean complete withdrawal of British power from India. It may be partnership at will between two nations enjoying independent status to be terminated by either at will. It need not be different from Dominion Status. It won't be perhaps a happy term for India which is ethnologically and politically so different. But perhaps this term is as elastic as the English Constitution, and if it could be found to cover a case like India, and if India can come to an honourable agreement with England, I would not quarrel about words. If British statesmen feel it convenient to use the word 'Dominion Status' about India rather than any other in order to describe that honourable agreement, I will not quarrel.

QUESTION: There are elements in the Congress like Mr. Bose and his party, who want Absolute Independence outside the Empire?

ANSWER: It is only question of terminology. We may speak different language but we mean the same thing. 'If partnership is feasible,' I say to Subhas Babu, 'How would you call it?' He would say that the British will not yield so easily as I would imagine. He would prefer to cultivate the idea that India can exist as an independent entity. I would say it would suit my temperament better to use the language that I use, and it would show that I believed in the essential identity of human nature.

QUESTION: Are there any negotiations going on at present between you and the authorities about the Federation?

ANSWER: None whatsoever. The present Viceroy is not built that way.

QUESTION: How do you mean?

ANSWER: He does not believe in doing things privately or secretly. He would lay all his cards on the table. At any rate that is my opinion. I think he does believe that no

cause will be damaged by open negotiation.

But the Federation will not come because it is acceptable neither to the Congress nor to the Mussalmans and princes. I am inclined to think that the British statesmen will not impose the Federation upon India. They will try to placate all parties. That at any rate is my hope. It would be a first class tragedy if it is imposed on India. The federal structure cannot be brought into being in the opposition and sullenness. If it is not wanted by any of the parties, it would be the height of imprudence to force it.

QUESTION: What is the alternative?

ANSWER: It may be to offer something acceptable to all or either of the three parties.

QUESTION: But you do not believe with Mr. Bose that it would be useful to issue an ultimatum?

ANSWER: That is the fundamental difference between Mr. Bose and me. Not that the ultimatum is in itself wrong, but it has to be backed by an effective sanction and there is no non-violent sanction today. If all parties could come to an honourable understanding a non-violent sanction can be easily forged.

QUESTION: Is the situation with regard to the Hindu-Muslim question worse?

ANSWER: It is apparently getting worse. But I have a hope that ultimately we are bound to come together. The interests that bind us are so tremendous that leaders of both sections must come to terms. That we appear to be farthest apart today is a natural outcome of the awakening that has taken place. It has emphasised points of difference, prejudices, jealousies and new demands are going into being every day making confusion worse confounded. But I hope out of chaos order is going to rise.

QUESTION: Can the differences between the Muslim League and the Congress be bridged?

ANSWER: The differences are insubstantial.

QUESTION: You think the time is not yet ripe for an ultimatum? What then do you think should be the next move?

ANSWER: The next move is to put our house in order. Immediately we have done it, and brought together various elements we should be ready.

QUESTION: How do you expect the U.S. to help you?

ANSWER: I expect much from the U.S. by way of enlightened friendly criticism, if it must be criticism, what I find today is excessive praise of Indian effort or hopelessly unenlightened criticism. The Press has taken very little trouble to enlighten American opinion along the right lines.

QUESTION: Does your renunciation of the Gwyer Award imply an abandonment of effort?

ANSWER: On the contrary. Having eased myself of this burden of error, I feel as light as a bird and freer to continue my effort to improve conditions in the Indian states.

## 163

SIGAON,  
WARDHA,

MY DIAR AGATHA,

At last I have a copy of your personal letter. It is exhaustive. Of course you will come when you are ready. I am writing to G. about your passage. You must not be angry with your friends about their writing to me. But I am at ease, now that I have your assurance that you will always let me know your wants no matter whether I can supply them or not.

You are having an anxious time there. Nothing but good can come out of these contacts. I look forward to your account of the happenings.

Here the Federation discussion does not worry me. The question of the release of political prisoners does. I have not yet made an impression upon the powers that be that their release cannot but make for peace. Their declaration of non-violence needs to be taken at its value. I can certainly work upon it and

hold the declarants to their promise. But the authorities are timid. However, I am patiently working at it and have not lost hope that they will be released before it is too late. I am well, considering the strain I am going through.

Love.

*Yours,*  
Bapu





So much is good that our future depends on our strength, truthfulness, courage, determination, diligence and discipline.

*July 18, 1937*

Being an ardent believer in the efficacy of non-violence, I do not have any faith in any such punitive system—it is one and the same thing, whether the punishment entails violence on a single individual or violence committed for purpose of general welfare of the society.

\* \* \*

India will rise or fall by the quality of the sum-total of the acts of her many millions. Individuals however high they may be are of no account except in so far as they represent the many millions.

*April 2, 1939*

**M.K. Gandhi**