

**GANDHIJÍ'S CORRESPONDENCE
· WITH THE GOVERNMENT**

1942-44

24550

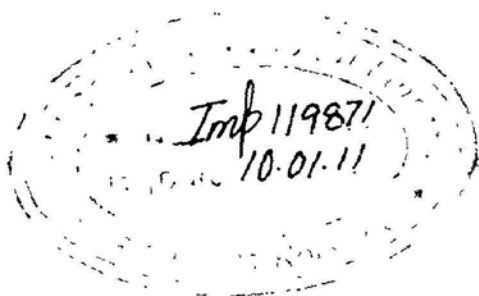
5 3.46



**NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD**

First Edition, April 1945 : Copies 1600
Second Edition, September 1945 : Copies 3400

Out of Print



Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai,
Navajivan Mudranalaya, Kalupur, Ahmedabad

PUBLISHERS' NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of "Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1942-44" was published in April last and was sold out in a few weeks. The publishers regret that, owing to paper control and other handicaps, it was not possible for them to bring out a larger number of copies in the first instance, or to publish another edition earlier in spite of the growing popular demand. The only consolation that they can offer to the reader is that the delay has enabled them to incorporate some fresh matter in the present edition, and to eradicate some errors and defects that had crept into the first. Of particular importance is the document of draft instructions for the Working Committee to which Gandhiji referred in a press statement some time back and which is now being released for the first time as item IV (p. 356) in the Addenda (pp 349-360) in this volume. Some further correspondence that took place with Lord Samuel and the Government of Bombay since the printing of the first edition will be found in parts IV D (pp. 105-110) and IX Miscellaneous (pp 336-338) respectively of this publication.

15-9-'45

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----------------|------------|------|
| Publishers Note | | iii |
| Foreword | M K Gandhi | xiii |
| Introduction | Pyarelal | xv |
| Covering Letter | M K Gandhi | xxxi |

I CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

A

ROUGH-HANDLING OF SHRI G G MEHTA AND SOME OTHER MATTERS

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | 10-8-42 M K Gandhi to Sir Roger Lumley | 1 |
| 2. | 14-8-42 Secretary to the Govt of Bombay to M K Gandhi | 3 |

B

REGARDING CORRESPONDENCE

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 3. | 26-8-42 Rules about correspondence by Security Prisoners | 3 |
| 4. | 27-8-42 Gandhiji to Secretary to the Govt of Bombay | 4. |
| 5 | 22-9-42 Secretary to the Govt of Bombay to M K Gandhi | 5 |
| 6 | 25-9-42 M. K Gandhi to Secretary to the Govt of Bombay | 6 |

C

ON WIRE ABOUT MAHADEVBHAI'S DEATH

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 7 | 15-8-42 M. K Gandhi to Shri Chimanlal | 6 |
| 8. | 19-9-42 M K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Govt of Bombay | 7 |
| 9. | 24-9-42 Secretary to the Govt of Bombay to M K Gandhi | 8 |

D

CONFISCATION OF NAVAJIVAN PRESS PROPERTY and BURNING OF 'HARIJAN'

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 10. | 26-10-42 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Govt of Bombay | 9 |
| 11. | Enclosure to No. 10 | 9 |
| 12 | 5-11-42 Secretary to the Govt of Bombay to M K. Gandhi | 11 |

E

PROF. BHANSALI'S FAST

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 13. | 24-11-42 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Govt. of Bombay | 12 |
| 14. | 25-11-42 M. K Gandhi to Inspector General of Prisons | 12 |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----|
| 15. | 30-11-42 Additional Secretary, Govt. of Bombay (H. D.) to M. K. Gandhi | 13 |
| 16 | 4-12-42 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary, Government of Bombay | 13 |
| (see also No. 41) | | |

II CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD LINLITHGOW AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

A

EARLIER CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT AUGUST DISTURBANCES

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 17. | 14-8-42 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow | 15 |
| 18. | 22-8-42 Lord Linlithgow to M. K. Gandhi | 21 |
| 19 | 23-9-42 M. K. Gandhi to the Secretary to the Govt. of India (H D) | 21 |
| 20. | 13-2-43 Pyarelal to Sir Richard Tottenham | 22 |
| 21 | 3-4-43 Reply to No 20, communicated by the Superintendent to M. K. Gandhi | 23 |

B

CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD LINLITHGOW LEADING TO THE FAST AND AFTER

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 22 | New Year's Eve, '42 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow | 23 |
| 23. | 13-1-43 Lord Linlithgow to M. K. Gandhi | 25 |
| 24. | 19-1-43 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow | 27 |
| 25. | 25-1-43 Lord Linlithgow to M. K. Gandhi | 29 |
| 26. | 29-1-43 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow | 31 |
| 27. | 5-2-43 Lord Linlithgow to M. K. Gandhi | 33 |
| 28. | 5-2-43 Sir G. Lathwaite to M. K. Gandhi | 37 |
| 29. | 7-2-43 M. K. Gandhi to Sir G. Lathwaite | 38 |
| 30. | 7-2-43 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow | 38 |
| 31. | 29-1-43 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow (Enclosure to No. 30) | 42 |
| 32. | 7-2-43 Sir R. Tottenham to M. K. Gandhi | 44 |
| 33. | 7-2-43 Advance copy of the proposed Govt. Communique on Gandhiji's Fast | 45 |
| 34. | 8-2-43 M. K. Gandhi to Sir Richard Tottenham | 49 |
| 35. | 9-2-43 Sir Richard Tottenham to M. K. Gandhi | 50 |
| 36. | 9-2-43 Government Communique on the fast | 51 |
| 37. | 27-9-43 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow | 55 |
| 38. | 7-10-43 Lord Linlithgow to M. K. Gandhi | 55 |

III. CORRESPONDENCE DURING THE FAST

| | |
|--|----|
| 39. 12-2-43 M. K. Gandhi to Col. Bhandari | 56 |
| 40. 12-2-43 Government order regarding interviews communicated by the Superintendent of the Detention Camp | 58 |
| 41. 16-2-43 Government order on points raised in letter No. 39 (Communicated by the Superintendent, Detention Camp) | 59 |
| 42. 24-2-43 M. K. Gandhi to Col. Bhandari | 60 |
| 43. 26-2-43 Government order in reply to letter No. 42. (Communicated by the Superintendent, Detention Camp) | 61 |
| 44. 2-3-43 M. K. Gandhi to Col. Bhandari | 62 |
| 45. 12-3-43 Drs. Gilder and S. Nayyar to Col. Bhandari | 62 |
| 46. 13-3-43 M. K. Gandhi to Col. Bhandari | 63 |
| 47. 13-3-43 Drs. Gilder and S. Nayyar to Col. Bhandari | 64 |
| 48. 20-3-43 Pyarelal to Col. Bhandari | 64 |

IV. CORRESPONDENCE AFTER THE FAST

A

PYARELAL'S LETTER ON GOVT. COMMUNIQUE

| | |
|--|----|
| 49. 8-2-43 Pyarelal to Sir Richard Tottenham | 66 |
| 50. 24-2-43 Mr. S. J. L. Olver to Pyarelal | 72 |

B

CORRESPONDENCE ON SIR REGINALD MAXWELL'S SPEECH

| | |
|--|----|
| 51. 21-5-43 M. K. Gandhi to Sir Reginald Maxwell | 73 |
| 52. 17-6-43 Sir Reginald Maxwell to M. K. Gandhi | 88 |
| 53. 23-9-43 M. K. Gandhi to Sir Reginald Maxwell | 89 |

C

LETTER TO QUAID-I-AZAM AND CORRESPONDENCE ON IT

| | |
|--|----|
| 54. 4-5-43 M. K. Gandhi to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah | 89 |
| 55. 4-5-43 M. K. Gandhi to the Secy., Govt. of India (H. D.) | 90 |
| 56. 24-5-43 Sir Richard Tottenham to M. K. Gandhi | 90 |
| 57. Press Communique. (Encl. to No. 56) | 91 |
| 58. 27-5-43 M. K. Gandhi to Sir Richard Tottenham | 92 |
| 59. 28-5-43 M. K. Gandhi to Sir Richard Tottenham | 94 |
| 60. 4-6-43 Mr. Conran Smith to M. K. Gandhi | 94 |
| 61. 7-6-43 Mr. Conran Smith to M. K. Gandhi | 95 |

D

LETTER TO LORD SAMUEL AND CORRESPONDENCE ON IT

| | |
|---|-----|
| 62. 15-5-43 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Samuel | 95 |
| 63. 26-5-43 Sir Richard Tottenham to M. K. Gandhi | 104 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 64. 1-6-43 M. K. Gandhi to Sir Richard Tottenham | 104 |
| 65. 7-6-43 Mr. Conran Smith to M. K. Gandhi | 105 |
| *66. 25-7-44 Lord Samuel to M. K. Gandhi | 105 |
| *67. 8-6-45 M. K. Gandhi to Lord Samuel | 107 |
| *68. 2-7-45 Lord Samuel to M. K. Gandhi | 109 |

E

CONTRADICTION OF FALSE RUMOURS

| | |
|---|-----|
| 69. 16-7-43 M. K. Gandhi to the Addl. Secy. to the Govt. of India | 110 |
| 70. 29-7-43 Sir Richard Tottenham to M. K. Gandhi | 111 |

V. CORRESPONDENCE ON GOVERNMENT'S
INDICTMENT OF THE CONGRESS

| | |
|---|-----|
| 71. 5-3-43 Pyarelal to Sir Richard Tottenham | 112 |
| 72. 23-3-43 Pyarelal to Sir Richard Tottenham | 112 |
| 73. 19-3-43 Sir Richard Tottenham to Pyarelal | 113 |
| 74. 26-3-43 Pyarelal to Sir Richard Tottenham | 113 |
| 75. 5-4-43 Sir Richard Tottenham to Pyarelal | 114 |
| 76. 15-7-43 M. K. Gandhi's reply with appendices to "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43" | 117 |

INDEX TO APPENDICES

| | |
|--|---------|
| APPENDIX I.—BRITISH WITHDRAWAL | 189-221 |
| (A) Confusion (<i>Harjan</i> May 24th 1942, p. 161) | 189 |
| (B) Out of touch " " 31st " p. 175 | 189 |
| (C) Free India can help best " June 7th " p. 183/184 | 190 |
| "I am not pro-Japanese" | 191 |
| No secrecy | 192 |
| To resist slave-drivers | 192 |
| (D) Why non-violent non-cooperation? " " 14th " p. 185/187 | 195 |
| A bad job | 196 |
| The crucial test | 197 |
| (E) Implications of withdrawal " May 24th " p. 166 | 198 |
| (F) Its meaning " June 21st " p. 197 | 200 |
| (G) Only if they withdraw " " " p. 198 | 200 |
| (H) Deliberate distortion " " 28th " p. 203 | 201 |
| (K) A poser " " " p. 204/205 | 202 |
| (L) A fallacy " July 5th " p. 210 | 202 |
| (M) Oh! the troops " " " p. 212 | 204 |
| (N) Friends' Ambulance Unit in India " " " p. 215 | 205 |

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| (O) If Harijan is suppressed | <i>Harijan</i> July 19th 1942 | p. 229 | 298 |
| (P) The Wardha Interview | " " " " | p. 233/34 | 209 |
| If imprisoned | | / | 210 |
| Negotiations | | | 210 |
| Shape of things to come | | | 211 |
| Free India's contribution | | | 212 |
| (Q) American opinion may be | | | |
| antagonized | " " 26th " | p. 242/43 | 212 |
| (R) To American friends | " Aug. 9th " | p. 264 | 215 |
| (S) Justice of Congress demand (Extracts from article "A Plea | | | 216 |
| for Reason " in <i>Harijan</i> of August 2, 1942, p. 252, as | | | |
| reproduced in <i>Bombay Chronicle</i> of August 3, 1942) | | | |
| Azad's statement cited | | | 216 |
| Nothing to cavil at (Extract from " Important Interview") | | | 217 |
| (T) What about Muslims? | <i>Harijan</i> June 14th " | p. 187 | 218 |
| (U) Foreign soldiers in India | " April 26th " | p. 128 | 219 |
| APPENDIX II — NOT PRO-JAPANESE | | | 221-234 |
| (A) If they really mean? | " " " " | p. 136 | 221 |
| (B) Friendly advice | " May 31st " | p. 172 | 222 |
| (C) If they come | " June 14th " | p. 189 | 223 |
| (D) What about radio messages? | " " 21st " | p. 197 | 224 |
| (E) If Japanese come? | " July 26th " | p. 248 | 225 |
| (F) Question Box | " July 7th " | p. 177 | 226 |
| (G) Unfair to America? | " " 7th " | p. 181 | 227 |
| (H) Miraben's letter to Lord Linlithgow and enclosures | | | 228 |
| Miraben's questions | | | |
| My reply to the above | | | |
| (K) Fire raging in me | " Aug. 2nd " | p. 257-58 | 228 |
| (L) Letter to Chiang-Kai-Shek (<i>Hindustan Times</i> Aug. 15, 1942) | | | 230 |
| APPENDIX III — CONGRESS NOT FOR POWER | | | 235-238 |
| (A) Not right | (<i>Harijan</i> May 31st 1942 | p. 173) | 235 |
| (B) What about Muslims? | " June 14th " | p. 187 | 235 |
| (C) To Muslim correspondents | " July 12th " | p. 220 | 236 |
| (D) An appropriate question | " Aug. 9th " | p. 261/62 | 236 |
| (E) Unseemly if true | " " " " | p. 261 | 237 |
| APPENDIX IV — ABOUT NON-VIOLENCE | | | 239-251 |
| (A) Expedience | (<i>Harijan</i> Apr. 12th 1942 | p. 116) | 239 |
| (B) Non-violent non-co- | | | |
| operation | " May 24th " | p. 167, | 239 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|-----|
| (C) Scorched earth policy | <i>Harjan</i> May 24th 1942 | p. 167 | 241 |
| (D) What would free India do ? | June 14th | p. 187 | 242 |
| (E) A challenge | " 28th | p. 201 | 243 |
| (F) Extract from <i>Harjan</i> | July 12th | p. 217 | 244 |
| (G) Guru Govind Singh | " " | p. 219 | 244 |
| (H) The conflagration | " " | p. 228 | 245 |
| (K) In case of illness | " 19th | p. 229 | 246 |
| (L) Fasting in non-violent action | " 26th | p. 248 | 246 |
| (M) What about non-violence | June 21st | p. 197 | 248 |
| (N) Another discourse | Sept. 8th '40 | p. 274 | 249 |

APPENDIX V — EXTRACTS FROM PANDIT JAWAHARLAL'S

UTTERANCES 251-57

| | |
|---|-----|
| (A) Extracts from address to the Journalists' Association at Allahabad (<i>Bom. Chronicle</i> 1-8-42) | 251 |
| (B) From speech at Tilak day celebrations, Allahabad (<i>Bombay Chronicle</i> 3-8-42) | 253 |
| (C) From statement on the seized documents, (<i>Bombay Chronicle</i> 5-8-42) | 255 |
| (D) From speech at the A I C C meeting (<i>Bombay Chronicle</i> 8-8-42) | 257 |

APPENDIX VI — EXTRACTS FROM MAULANA A K AZAD'S

SPEECH at the A I C C. Meeting, August 7th, 1942. (*Bombay Chronicle* 8-8-42) 258-62

APPENDIX VII — EXTRACTS FROM SARDAR VALLABHBHAI

PATEL'S PUBLIC SPEECHES 262-3

| | |
|---|-----|
| (A) From speech at Chaupati Bombay, on August 2, 1942 (<i>Bombay Chronicle</i> 3-8-42) | 262 |
| (B) From speech at Surat | 263 |
| (C) From speech at the A I C C meeting, 7th August, 1942 (<i>Bombay Chronicle</i> 8-8-42) | 263 |

APPENDIX VIII — EXTRACTS FROM DR RAJENDRA PRASAD'S

SPEECH (*Bombay Chronicle* 2-8-42) 264

APPENDIX IX — LETTER TO H E THE VICEROY, OF

August 14th, 1942 264

End Appendices

| | |
|--|-----|
| 77. 10- 9-43 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 265 |
| 78. 20- 9-43 Sir Richard Tottenham to M. K. Gandhi | 265 |
| 79. 14-10-43 Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) to M. K. Gandhi | 266 |
| 80. 26-10-43 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 271 |
| 81. 3-11-43 Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) to M. K. Gandhi | 273 |
| 82. 18-11-43 Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) to M. K. Gandhi | 274 |

VI. CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT SMT. KASTURBA GANDHI

| | |
|--|-----|
| 83. 12- 3-43 Drs. Gilder and S. Nayyar to Col. Bhandari | 275 |
| 84. 18-11-43 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Government of Bombay | 276 |
| 85. 27- 1-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 277 |
| 86. 27- 1-44 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Government of Bombay (H. D.) | 279 |
| 87. 31- 1-44 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Government of Bombay (H. D.) | 279 |
| 88. 31- 1-44 Communication from the Government conveyed through the Superintendent of the Detention Camp | 280 |
| 89. 31- 1-44 M. K. Gandhi's reply to No.88 | 280 |
| 90. 31- 1-44 Drs. Gilder and S. Nayyar to Col. Bhandari | 280 |
| 91. 3- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Government of Bombay | 281 |
| 92. 3- 2-44 Secretary to the Govt. of Bombay to M. K. Gandhi | 282 |
| 93. 11- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to Government of Bombay | 283 |
| 94. 14- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to Inspector General of Prisons | 283 |
| 95. 16- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to Inspector General of Prisons | 284 |
| 96. 18- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to Inspector General of Prisons | 287 |
| 97. 22- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to Inspector General of Prisons | 288 |
| 98. 4- 3-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 288 |
| 99. 21- 3-44 Additional Secy. to the Government of India (H. D.) to M. K. Gandhi | 291 |
| 100. 1- 4-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 293 |
| (with appendices from A to H) | |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 101. 2- 4-44 M. K. Gandhi to Col. Bhandari | 299 |
| 102. 2- 4-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 299 |
| 103. 20- 3-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 300 |
| 104. 30- 3-44 Additional Secretary to the Govt. of India (H. D.) to M. K. Gandhi | 301 |
| 105. 13- 4-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Government of India (H. D.) | 303 |
| 106. 29- 4-44 Additional Secretary to the Govt. of India (H. D.) to M. K. Gandhi | 304 |

VII. CORRESPONDENCE WITH GOVERNMENT ON SHRIMATI MIRABEN'S LETTER TO GANDHIJI ABOUT ORISSA

| | |
|---|-----|
| 107. Christmas Eve '42 Miraben to Lord Linlithgow (with 2 enclosures) | 305 |
| 108. Enclosure (i) (Miraben's Report and Questions from Orissa | 307 |
| 109. Enclosure (ii) (Gandhiji's Reply to Miraben dated 31-5-42) | 309 |
| 110. 26- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi with 3 enclosures to Secretary to the Government of India | 311 |
| 111. 11- 3-44 Additional Secretary to the Government of India to M. K. Gandhi | 313 |

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. E. THE VICEROY (LORD WAVELL)

| | |
|---|-----|
| 112. 17- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to H. E. the Viceroy | 314 |
| 113. 25- 2-44 H. E. the Viceroy to M. K. Gandhi | 316 |
| 114. 9- 3-44 M. K. Gandhi to H. E. the Viceroy | 317 |
| 115. 28- 3-44 H. E. the Viceroy to M. K. Gandhi | 325 |
| 116. 9- 4-44 M. K. Gandhi to H. E. the Viceroy | 328 |

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

A

REGARDING AMENDMENT OF SALT CLAUSE

| | |
|---|-----|
| 17. 16- 2-44 M. K. Gandhi to Hon. Finance Member | 331 |
| 18. 25- 2-44 Hon. Finance Member through Bombay Government to M. K. Gandhi | 331 |

B

ABOUT TRANSFER

119. 4- 3-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Govern-
ment of India 332
120. 21- 4-44 M. K. Gandhi to Additional Secretary to the Govern-
ment of India 333

C

INTERVIEWS DURING ILLNESS

- 121 3- 5-44 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Government of Bombay 334

D

ABOUT ACQUISITION OF THE SITE OF SAMADHI

- 122 6- 5-44 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary to the Government of Bombay 334
123. 7- 7-44 Secretary, Government of Bombay to M. K. Gandhi 335
124. 9- 7-44 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary, Government of Bombay 336
- *125. 27- 5-45 M. K. Gandhi to Secretary, Government of Bombay 336
- *126. 23- 7-45 Secretary, Government of Bombay to M. K. Gandhi 338

*ADDENDA

- I. The A. I. C. C. Resolution, 8-8-42, Bombay 339
- II. Working Committee's Resolutions, 14-7-42, Wardha 345
- III. Draft Resolution, 27-4-42, Allahabad 352
- IV. Draft Instructions, 28-6-42, Sevagram 356

* Items marked with asterisks have been newly incorporated into this edition

FOREWORD

I have read the introduction as also the originals. The introduction may be good enough for the hasty reader, but the publication is not designed for the hasty reader. It is designed for the serious worker who can affect the politics of his country and even the world affairs. To such my advice is that he must read the originals. The introduction may be used as such and an aid to memory. I want the readers I have in view to take me at my word. I have written as I felt at the moment as a seeker of long standing of Truth and Non-violence. I have written without reservation and without embellishment.

After my accidentally premature discharge from detention and convalescence I studied from reliable witnesses the happenings of the two years after the incarceration of principal Congressmen and myself. I have heard nothing to modify the opinion expressed in my writings under review.

I know firsthand what has happened, since my discharge, in the various spheres of life. And I have found bitter confirmation of what I have said in the following pages. Indeed, the whole of India is a vast prison. The Viceroy is the irresponsible superintendent of the prison with numerous jailers and warders under him. The four hundred millions of India are not the only prisoners. There are others similarly situated in the other parts of the earth under other superintendents.

A jailer is as much a prisoner as his prisoner. There is no doubt a difference. From my point of view he is worse. If there is a Day of Judgment, i. e. if there is a Judge whom we do not see but who nevertheless is much more truly than we exist for a brief moment, the judgment will go hard against the jailer and in favour of the prisoners.

India is the only place on earth which knowingly has chosen Truth and Non-violence as the only means for her deliverance. But deliverance to be obtained through these means must be deliverance for the whole world including the jailers otherwise described by me as tyrants and Imperialists. I need not mention Fascists or Nazis or Japanese. They seem to be as good as gone.

The war will end this year or the next. It will bring victory to the Allies. The pity of it is that it will be only so-called if it is attained with India and the like lying prostrate at the feet of the Allies. That victory will be assuredly a prelude to a deadlier war, if anything could be more deadly.

I know that I do not need to plead for non-violent India. If India has the coin with Truth on one face and Non-violence on the other, the coin has its own inestimable value which will speak for itself. Truth and Non-violence must express humility at every step. They do not disdain real aid from any quarter, much less from those in whose name and for whom exploitation is practised. If the British and the Allies aid, so much the better. Deliverance will then come sooner. If they do not, deliverance is still certain. Only the agony of the victim will be greater, the time longer. But what are agony and time if they are spent in favour of liberty, especially when it is to be brought about through Truth and Non-violence !

M. K. GANDHI

Sevagram,
7-3-1945

INTRODUCTION

During his convalescence at Juhu after his discharge in May last year Gandhiji caused a limited number of copies of his correspondence with Government, while he was in detention, to be prepared for private circulation among friends. It was divided into two parts, his reply to the Government's pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43" constituted a separate volume (part II), the rest of the correspondence being included in part I. About 200 cyclostyled copies were in this way distributed with a prefatory covering letter which too is reproduced in this volume. Great precaution was taken and no copy was sent to the press. Enterprising news agencies however got scent of it and after a tussle with the central authority released parts of the correspondence to the press. A plucky Bombay daily published the whole of it in two instalments. Soon after the Government themselves brought out the political correspondence included in the two cyclostyled volumes as a government publication with a highly tendentious and misleading 'summary' which was handed to the press, especially the foreign press, along with it. Only a limited edition was published. Popular demand for a full edition has since continued to grow. The present volume is in answer to that demand.

I

The correspondence is divided into nine sections. The first section consisting of letters 1 to 16 is of a miscellaneous character and is illustrative of the tone and temper of the authorities in those early days of August, 1942, immediately after the mass arrests of Congressmen. The first letter in the series is addressed to the Government of Bombay on the day after Gandhiji's arrival in the Aga Khan Palace.

It refers to the incident of the manhandling of a fellow Satyagrahi prisoner on the way as the party were being brought from Bombay to Poona, and contains a request for the Sardar and his daughter being put with him, and for being supplied with newspapers. Other matters dealt with are restrictions on the nature and scope of permissible correspondence and the inordinate delay of over three weeks in the delivery of a condolence message which Gandhiji had sent to the wife and son of the late Shri Mahadev Desai on the latter's death. Government's replies which are very characteristic will be found in letters 2, 5 and 9.

Of special interest is the admission in letter No. 12 that the District Magistrate of Ahmedabad who had been charged with conducting action against the Navajivan Press, had misinterpreted orders that had been issued to him so that "all the old files of the *Harijan* since 1933" had "actually been destroyed".

In the month of November, 1942, when Prof. Bhansali was fasting in connection with Chimur happenings, Gandhiji sought Bombay Government's permission to establish direct telephonic contact with him to dissuade him from the fast if he found it to be morally unjustified. The permission was refused. (Letters Nos. 13-16)

II

This section is the correspondence with Lord Linlithgow and the Government of India about the August disturbances and in connection with Gandhiji's fast of February, 1943.

The first letter to Lord Linlithgow, dated 14th August, 1942, is a reply to the Government's communique on the August Resolution of the Congress and the subsequent action taken by the Government thereon. The special interest of this letter written by Gandhiji five days after his arrest lies in the fact that it contained a most categorical denial of the charge that the Congress had contemplated violence at any stage.

The non-violent policy of the Congress was reiterated by him with even greater emphasis in a letter which he wrote to the Government of India a few weeks later (letter No. 19). The letter to the Viceroy referred to the readiness of the Congress to identify India with the Allied cause and its offer loyally to accept any national government that might be formed by the Muslim League. It ended by pleading for a reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy. A fact to be noted in this connection is that, although the Government continued to accuse the Congress of encouraging violence and to use it to justify their repression policy, they neither published these letters till their hands were forced by Gandhiji's fast nor took any action on them.

On New Year's Eve, after an interval of over four months, Gandhiji re-opened correspondence with Lord Linlithgow by addressing him a personal letter. Gandhiji in his letters pointed out that :

1. It was not the passing of the 'Quit India' resolution but the hasty action of the Government that had precipitated the crisis. He had openly declared that he intended asking an interview with the Viceroy to explore avenues for a settlement. The Government should have waited at least till he had written to the Viceroy, especially as civil disobedience was not to be started unless the negotiations broke down.

2. The aim of the 'Quit India' resolution was to bring about conditions under which India could effectively participate in the war effort of the Allies.

3. The Congress had made no preparations 'dangerous' or other beforehand. The only person, namely Gandhiji, who had been authorized to start civil disobedience in the name of the Congress in a certain contingency, was arrested before he could do so or even issue any instructions.

4. Whilst he continued to be as confirmed a believer in non-violence as he ever was, he could not condemn alleged popular violence on the basis of heavily censored newspaper reports and one-sided government statements which had often proved to be incorrect in the past.

The Government's stand as set forth in Lord Linlithgow's letters was that :

(a) Gandhiji had "expected" his policy to lead to violence, that he was "prepared to condone it", that there was "ample evidence" to show that the violence that ensued was planned beforehand by the Congress leaders, and therefore Congress and especially Gandhiji could not disown responsibility for the consequences that followed from the adoption of 'Quit India' policy.

(b) The only basis for negotiations with Gandhiji could be :

- i. repudiation by him of, and disassociation from, the resolution of 8th of August and the policy which that resolution represented;

- ii. appropriate assurances as regards the future.

Against this Gandhiji contended that it was for the Government to prove their charges against him and the Congress by producing proofs "which should correspond to the canons of English jurisprudence".

Although he had a right to demand a judicial trial before an impartial tribunal he was prepared to waive that demand, but should at least have a personal interview with the Viceroy, or some one who knew the Government's mind and could carry conviction might be sent to him, so that, if convinced of his error, he could make ample amends. If, on the other hand, it was desired that he should act on behalf of the Congress he should be put among the members of the Congress Working Committee for consultation and necessary action.

The Government refused to consider either request and Gandhiji decided to undertake a twentyone days' fast.

On being intimated of Gandhiji's decision the Government offered to release him for "the purpose and duration" of the fast.

Gandhiji replied saying that the fast was not contemplated to be taken as a free man. He had no desire to be released under false pretences. He was quite content to fast as a prisoner or detenu. This letter was not published by the Government at the time and Gandhiji's position was distorted in their press communique to mean that Gandhiji wanted to fast in order to secure his release anyhow!

Gandhiji's last letter to Lord Linlithgow was by way of a final appeal addressed to the conscience of the retiring Viceroy to bring home to him the wrong of "having countenanced untruth with regard to one whom he once regarded as his friend". Lord Linlithgow's reply showed that the appeal had fallen absolutely flat so far as he was concerned.

III

The ten items (39-48) included in this section describe how Gandhiji was treated during the fast. Facilities like receiving visits from friends and relatives during the fast and having nurses and medical advisers of his own choice were permitted by the Government. But grace and goodwill were singularly lacking in Government's subsequent behaviour. Gandhiji had to write again and again seeking clarification of the position with regard to the operation of these facilities. Some of the orders seemed to be deliberately calculated to prevent full use being made of the facilities provided. For instance, when, because of his growing weakness during the fast, he asked for being allowed to carry on conversation with the visitors by proxy, the permission was refused (item No. 43).

IV

The first letter in this series which Gandhiji caused to be written soon after the commencement of his fast contains an answer to some of the charges brought against him in the Government's press communique. Extracts from Gandhiji's own utterances before his arrest are quoted and chapter and verse given to show that such expressions as "open rebellion", "short and swift", "fight to the finish", occurring in Gandhiji's writings and utterances of which much had been made in the Government's communique, were used in an entirely non-violent context. It is further shown that the injunction "Do or Die" which had been cited by the Government as a proof that the struggle was not meant to be non-violent was actually intended by him to serve as a badge to distinguish every soldier of non-violence from other elements. They were to win freedom for India or die in the attempt to achieve it non-violently.

The attempts to calumniate Gandhiji and the Congress continued. On the 15th of February the Home Member made a speech in the Assembly repeating the accusations mentioned already and some more. It bristled with inaccuracies and misrepresentations. Gandhiji read the speech after the fast and replied in a long letter written on the 15th of May, 1943 (item No. 51). In it he pointed out the various errors and misrepresentations in which the Home Member had indulged.

The Home Member, instead of either substantiating or retracting his charges, replied that as there was a "fundamental difference" in their outlook there was not any use in discussing the various points raised in Gandhiji's letter!

Gandhiji's contention that the "fundamental difference" between them should be no bar to an "admission and correction of discovered errors" remained unanswered.

In response to an invitation by Mr. Jinnah in a public speech to write to him, Gandhiji addressed him a letter on

4th May, 1943, suggesting a visit from him and a personal discussion with a determination to find a solution of the communal problem, or if that was not possible, to write to him on the subject. Government refused to forward this letter but sent Gandhiji a copy of the press communique which they proposed to issue and which contained a misleading gist of the letter.

Gandhiji wrote to the Government protesting against this procedure. He suggested some alterations in the press communique (letter No. 58) and requested that the correspondence between him and the Government on the subject might be released to the press. The Government declined to concede either request.

After the fast, Gandhiji read in the *Hindu* a report of Lord Samuel's speech in the House of Lords containing a number of grossly unjust strictures against himself and the Congress. Gandhiji replied in a long letter giving a categorical refutation of all the charges.

In pursuance of their policy to allow no chance to imprisoned Congressmen to answer or refute false propaganda that was being made behind their back, the Government refused to forward this letter to Lord Samuel. Gandhiji protested that Government's decision in the present case amounted to a "ban on the ordinary right belonging even to a convict of correcting damaging misrepresentations". But his protest went unheeded.

In the months of June and July all kinds of rumours appeared in the press to the effect that Gandhiji had written to the Government withdrawing the August Resolution. Gandhiji asked the Government to contradict these reports as he had neither the desire nor the authority to withdraw the resolution. This request like the previous ones was turned down.

V

After the commencement of Gandhiji's fast the Government of India published an indictment of the Congress and Gandhiji entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43". Gandhiji sent a long reply to it on the 15th of July. Extracts from his writings had been torn from their context and a sinister meaning put upon them by presenting them in a false setting. Gandhiji in his reply restored them to their proper context and elucidated the true meaning. Considerable space had to be devoted to an analysis of the technique of deliberate misquotation, distortion, innuendo, *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* employed by the writer of the pamphlet.

A flagrant case of misquotation is held up in para 34 where the "famous words" attributed to Gandhiji, "There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation. There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an *open rebellion*", are shown to be "partly a distortion and partly an interpolation" not to be found in the authentic published report of the Wardha interview. Not satisfied with giving a wrong quotation when the correct text was before him the writer had tacked on to it two more apocryphal sentences from an unauthentic Associated Press report and quoted them without asterisks between sentences that appear apart in the Associated Press report!

Confronted by this damaging disclosure, the Government instead of making *amende honorable* sought to brazen it out by disbelieving Gandhiji's version and even impugning his good faith. Unfortunately for them the *Statesman* of 16th July, 1942, (mofussil edition) has the portion of the Wardha interview in question in the following form:

Later, answering questions on the resolution at a press interview at Sevagram, Mr. Gandhi said:

"There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal for negotiations: either they recognize India's independence, or they don't."

This version which is also by the A. P. I. completely bears out Gandhiji's statement and refutes the Government's. It should further be noted that the sentences, " There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an open rebellion " are not to be found in the *Statesman's* report.

Paras 12 to 16 refute the charge that Gandhiji had asked for the physical withdrawal of the British from India. What he had asked for was the withdrawal of British power, not of individual Englishmen. He had even agreed to the use of India as a base for military operations against Japan.

Charges against the Congress and Gandhiji of being defeatists and pro-Japanese are dealt with in paras 18 to 40. Far from being " convinced that Axis would win the war ", he had proclaimed the contrary belief from the housetop. (paras 19, 21 and 25). Paras 30 and 31 contain a refutation of the statement that his opposition to the Government's scorched earth policy was actuated by a sordid or pro-Japanese solicitude for industrial prosperity. Finally, it is shown that the statement that he was " even prepared to concede to their (Japanese) demands " is wholly at variance with known facts and that, indeed, the boot is on the other leg ! (paras 22 and 32).

Paras 45 to 63 contain a detailed reply to the accusation that either he or the Congress had planned or precipitated a conflict or sanctioned or shown a readiness to condone violence. The education given by the Congress to the people had been wholly non-violent. In the past whenever outbreaks had occurred the most energetic measures had been taken by the whole of the Congress organization to deal with them. On several occasions he had himself resorted to fasting (para 52). He had even said that if Congressmen indulged in an orgy of violence they might not find him alive in their midst (para 66). The exhortation to every Congressman

to consider himself free to act for himself* under certain circumstances and the use of military terms in connection with the contemplated struggle was wholly innocent and apt when coupled with the condition of non-violence. (paras 48 and 49).

To support his calumny the author of the pamphlet had dismissed every reference to non-violence in the forecasts of the form the movement would take and in the post arrests programme and instructions as "valueless" or as mere "lip service". This was on a par with the omission of 'nots' from the Commandments and quoting them in support of

* Since much has been made of this portion of the August Resolution in the Government publication it may be mentioned here that there is nothing extraordinary about it. An identical decision was taken by the Working Committee in Feb. 1931 when Gandhi-Irwin talks threatened to break down. Subsequent events however rendered the publication of that resolution unnecessary. Here is the description of it by Pandit Nehru in his Autobiography:

"So far, the practice had been for each acting President to nominate his successor in case of arrest, and also to fill by nomination the vacancies in the Working Committee. The substitute Working Committees hardly functioned and had little authority to take the initiative in any matter. They could only go to prison. There was always a risk, however, that this continuous process of substitution might place the Congress in a false position. There were obvious dangers to it. The Working Committee in Delhi, therefore, decided that in future there should be no nominations of acting Presidents or substitute members. So long as any members (or member) of the original Committee were out of gaol they would function as the full Committee. When all of them were in prison, then there would be no Committee functioning, but, we said rather grandiloquently, the powers of the Working Committee would then vest in each man and woman in the country, and we called upon them to carry on the struggle uncompromisingly."

[Jawaharlal Nehru — An Autobiography — John Lane The Bodley Head, June 1942 edition, Chapter XXXIV — The Delhi Pact — page 256.]

stealing, murder etc. (para 46). In robbing Gandhiji of the one thing he lived by and lived for, the author of the pamphlet had robbed him of all he possessed.

The use of the expression "Do or Die" to which the Government reverted later in their correspondence (letter No. 79) had already been dealt with in letters No. 49 and 51. Similarly the anonymous 'last message' attributed to Gandhiji (Appendix X of the Indictment) was already covered by his general denial that he had issued no instructions whatever (para 46). This so-called last message, as a matter of fact, is only an assortment of pointers from Gandhiji's All-India Congress Committee speeches on the 7th and 8th of August, 1942, as recapitulated by the present writer to groups of Congress workers who came to Birla House on the morning of 9th of August, 1942, and recorded by some of them!

Gandhiji left unanswered Chapters IV and V of the Indictment which dealt with the nature of the disturbances etc. as he could not properly do so on the strength of one-sided statements and unauthenticated documents. The necessity of this caution will be apparent from the case of Shri Krishnan Nair whose case was cited in the Indictment in proof of Congress responsibility for the disturbances following upon the arrests of prominent Congressmen. He was prosecuted for complicity in violence. The following interpellations in the Central Legislative Assembly in this connection will be found illuminating.

Mr. Qaiyum in a question about Krishnan Nair, a Delhi Congress worker, asked whether in view of his acquittal by the Lahore High Court, what amends Government proposed to make to him for the statement made in the pamphlet *Congress Responsibility* that he was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment.

The Home Member said that Government did not propose to take any action in the matter: it was open to Mr. Nair to take any action to which he was entitled under the law.

Sardar Sant Singh asked if the Home Member was prepared to withdraw the statement made in the pamphlet.

The Home Member: If there is a demand for another edition, I shall make a correction (Laughter).

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: Will the Hon. Member issue a correction slip as in the case of the Income-Tax Manual? (More laughter).

(*Hindustan Times* Nov. 21, 1944)

Shri Krishnan Nair is still in detention under the Defence of India Rules thus showing that the quashing of the conviction does not help him so far as his discharge is concerned.

The question of responsibility for the disturbances is dealt with in paras 67 to 73. The argument briefly is as follows:

Government had themselves admitted in the pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43" that on the 9th there were sporadic "disturbances" in Bombay. On the 9th and 10th there were sporadic "disturbances" in some of the other big cities as well. These were confined to peaceful demonstrations and processions. It was towards the middle of August that the situation really became serious. The sequence given in the Government pamphlet thus proves Gandhiji's contention that it was the Government's initial action in the form of the leaders' arrests *en masse* and subsequent heavy repression of peaceful demonstrations that goaded the people to the point of madness. The loss of self-control did not imply Congress complicity. It implied that there were limits to human endurance. As for the Congress it had set no special stage for a mass movement in pursuance of Gandhiji's proposal for British withdrawal. The sole charge for starting it was vested in Gandhiji and he had taken no action nor issued any instructions as he contemplated negotiations with the Government. Congress activity up to the night of 8th August, 1942, was thus confined to resolutions only. The dawn of 9th saw the Congress imprisoned. What followed was therefore the direct result of the Government action. The attempt "to paralyze the administration" on non-acceptance of the Congress demand only proved the

genuineness of the demand. "It sets the seal on its genuineness by Congressmen preparing to die in the attempt to paralyze an administration that thwarts their will to fight the combine against democracy." (para 43).

The Government had frustrated the aspiration of India at every step. Out of this frustration was born the cry of 'Quit India' which gave body to the freedom movement. The Government instead of appreciating their impatience to play their part in the world crisis distrusted those who were associated with it. By putting them in prison and obstructing constructive activity they themselves became the greatest obstruction in war effort.

He asked therefore that the case against him and his colleagues should be withdrawn. He also requested the Government to publish his reply.

To this the Government replied on the 14th of October that the document had been published for the information of the public and not to convince Gandhiji! His request for publication of his reply was met with a refusal and a veiled threat held out that they reserved to themselves the freedom "to use at any time and in any manner which they might think fit" the various "admissions" contained in the communication which Gandhiji had "voluntarily addressed" to them!

His request to be allowed to see the members of the Working Committee was turned down on the plea that there was no indication that the views of the members of the Working Committee differed from his own.

Gandhiji in his rejoinder asked that the charges brought against him and the counter-charges against the Government might be referred to an impartial tribunal. If the Government considered that it was his influence which corrupted people, they could keep him in prison and discharge the rest of the Congressmen.

This letter along with Gandhiji's letters to Sir Reginald Maxwell and Lord Samuel (Nos. 51, 53 and 62) the reader must read in full.

VI

Items 83-106 included in this section cover Shrimati Kasturba's protracted illness which started soon after her arrest in 1942 and ended in her death in detention on 22nd of February, 1944. Facilities for seeing her near relatives and getting nursing and medical aid were obtained after protracted correspondence, and in almost every case the relief, when it came, came too late.

On her death the request for her body being handed over to her sons and relatives was turned down and the cremation had to take place on the premises of the Aga Khan Palace.

In March 1944 Mr. Butler made a statment in the House of Commons which gave a highly incorrect and misleading version of the events relating to Shrimati Kasturba's illness and death. Gandhiji protested against it, but Government refused to make amends. An appeal to Lord Wavell equally failed to bring any redress and the final letter from the Government of India (item No. 106) only added insult to injury.

VII

In the months of November and December a series of facsimiles of cartoons and statements of a grossly libellous character were reproduced from the British press in some Indian newspapers. They were particularly directed against Gandhiji who was shown as a pro-Japanese Quisling while Shrimati Miraben was depicted as his tool and emissary. Shrimati Miraben protested against it in a letter to Lord Linlithgow dated the Christmas Eve, 1942, enclosing copies of relevant correspondence which she had with Gandhiji while she was in Orissa in the early summer

of 1942. These showed that at a time when the Government were issuing instructions for the evacuation of civil authority from the eastern coastal area in Orissa, Gandhiji was trying to organize a total non-violent non-cooperation with, and a last ditch resistance to, the prospective Japanese invaders. She asked for publication of her letter of protest and the correspondence with Gandhiji. This letter was not even acknowledged.

In February, 1944, a reference was made to this correspondence in the Legislative Assembly. The Home Member defended the Government's position by saying that the publication of the correspondence would not help the Congress case because the Government had not charged it with being pro-Japanese! The fact that the correspondence provided documentary proof against the charge of 'defeatism' and readiness to "concede to the demands" of the Japanese that had been levelled against the Congress was conveniently forgotten.

Gandhiji contended that the publication was necessary in view of the libellous propaganda against her referred to in Shrimati Miraben's letter to Lord Linlithgow. It was irrelevant whether the publication would help the Congress case or not. But the Government refused to budge.

VIII

On the arrival of the present Viceroy Gandhiji made a fresh attempt to end the political deadlock and secure justice for himself and the Congress which he had failed to obtain at the hands of the previous Viceroy. He invited him "to make a descent" upon Ahmadnagar and the Aga Khan Palace "in order to probe the hearts" of his captives whom he would find "to be the greatest helpers in the fight against Nazism, Fascism and Japanism and the like". As for the suggestion about the withdrawal of August Resolution

xxx

he pleaded that a resolution jointly undertaken could be honourably, conscientiously and properly withdrawn only after joint discussion and deliberation.

Lord Wavell's reply gave an unmistakable indication that the political issue was intended to be kept in cold storage and that the previous Viceroy's policy was to continue.

IX

The final section is of a miscellaneous character. The matters dealt with include the proposed amendment of the salt clause in the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement, a request for being transferred to a regular prison where the expenses entailed in his detention would be less, conditions of interviews during his illness in detention, and the acquisition of the site of the *samadhi* of Shrimati Kasturba and Shri Mahadev Desai.

PYARELAL

1-3-1945

[GANDHIJI'S PREFATORY COVERING LETTER]

"Sunder Bun "

Gandhigram,

Juhu, 10th June, 1944

DEAR FRIEND,

I send you herewith in two volumes copies of correspondence between the Government of India or the Bombay Government and myself during my incarceration in the palace of H. H. the Aga Khan in Yeravada.

The second volume is a copy of my reply to the Government of India pamphlet entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43". The first contains copies of correspondence arising out of the above mentioned reply and on miscellaneous matters of public importance.

I had the copies cyclostyled with the help of kind friends. For fear of censorship difficulties, I did not try to have the copies printed at any printing press. But lest the Government of India may think that there is anything in the correspondence objectionable from military standpoint I am circulating for private use only the copies among friends who, I think, should know the nature of the correspondence that took place between the two Governments and me. You are free to show your copy to any friends you like, subject to the precaution that applies to you.

You will confer on me a favour if you will take the trouble of letting me have your reaction upon the correspondence especially upon the points arising from my reply to Government of India pamphlet. I have endeavoured to answer every item of importance in the Government indictment. I should like to know the points, if any, which require elucidation.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

I
CORRESPONDENCE
WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
A

ROUGH-HANDLING OF SHRI G. G. MEHTA AND SOME
OTHER MATTERS

1

10th August, 1942

DEAR SIR ROGER LUMLEY,

After the train that carried me and other fellow prisoners reached Chinchwad on Sunday, some of us were ordered to alight. Shrimati Sarojini Devi, Shrimati Mirabai, Shri Mahadev Desai and I were directed to get into a car. There were two lorries lined up alongside the car. I have no doubt that the reservation of the car for us was done out of delicate considerations. I must own too that the officers in charge performed their task with tact and courtesy.

Nevertheless I felt deeply humiliated when the other fellow prisoners were ordered to occupy the two lorries. I realize that all could not be carried in motor cars. I have been before now carried in prison vans. And this time too we should have been carried with our comrades. In relating this incident my object is to inform the Government that in the altered conditions and the altered state of my mind, I can no longer accept special privileges which hitherto I have accepted though reluctantly. I propose this time to accept no privileges and comforts which comrades may not receive, except for the special food so long as the Government allow it for my bodily need.

There is another matter to which I must draw your attention. I have told my people that this time our method

1

is not courting imprisonment, that we must prepare for much higher sacrifice and so those who choose may peacefully resist arrest. So a young man who was in the party offered such resistance. He was therefore hauled to the prison van. This was ugly enough. But it was a painful sight when an impatient English sergeant rough-handled him and shoved him into the lorry as if he was a log of wood. In my opinion the sergeant deserves correction. The struggle has become bitter enough without such scenes.

This temporary jail is commodious enough to take in all who were arrested with me. Among them are Sardar Patel and his daughter. She is his nurse and cook. I have great anxiety about the Sardar who never got over the intestinal collapse which he had during his last incarceration. Ever since his release I have been personally regulating his diet etc. I request that both he and his daughter be placed with me. And so should the other prisoners though not on the same imperative grounds as are applicable in the case of the Sardar and his daughter. I submit that it is not right to separate co-workers arrested for the same cause unless they are dangerous criminals.

I have been told by the Superintendent that I am not to be supplied with newspapers. Now I was given by one of my fellow prisoners on the train a copy of the Sunday edition of the *Evening News*. It contains the Government of India's resolution in justification of their policy in dealing with this crisis. It contains some grossly incorrect statements which I ought to be allowed to correct. This and similar things I cannot do, unless I know what is going on outside the jail.

May I expect an early decision on the points raised herein?

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

No. S. D. V 23
Home Department, (Political)
Bombay Castle, 14th August, 1942

From

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire,
The Aga Khan's Palace,
Yeravda

SIR,

With reference to your letter dated 10th instant addressed to His Excellency the Governor, I am directed to say that no change in the conditions of your detention is at present contemplated, and that therefore your request for the detention in His Highness the Aga Khan's Palace of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel and his daughter cannot be acceded to and that it is not at present the intention to supply you with newspapers.

Your obedient servant,

J. M. Sladen

Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

B

REGARDING CORRESPONDENCE

3

Rules about the writing and receiving of letters by security prisoners. Communicated by the Superintendent on 26-8-'42 (9-30 p.m.).

Security prisoners permitted to send and receive letters from members of their families only.

The contents of letters to be limited strictly to personal and domestic matters.

The letters should contain nothing that is likely to disclose where they are being detained and that when writing to their families they should ask the letters sent to them should be addressed "C/o the Secretary to the Government of Bombay (H. D.)".

It has been decided to permit Mr. M. K. Gandhi to select such newspapers as he would like to see, including past issues since his arrest, up to the reasonable maximum. A list of newspapers should be obtained from him and forwarded to Government immediately.

4

To

The Secretary to the Bombay Government (H. D.)

DEAR SIR,

With reference to the Government orders about the writing of letters by the security prisoners, it seems that the Government do not know that for over thirtyfive years, I have ceased to live family life and have been living, what has been called, Ashram life in association with persons who have more or less shared my views. Of these Mahadev Desai, whom I have just lost, was an associate beyond compare. His wife and only son have lived with me for years sharing the Ashram life. If I cannot write to the widow and her son or the other members of the deceased's family living in the Ashram, I can have no interest in writing to any one else. Nor can I be confined to writing about personal and domestic matters. If I am permitted to write at all, I must give instructions about many matters that I had entrusted to the deceased. These have no connection with politics which are the least part of my activities. I am directing the affairs of the A. I. S. A. and kindred associations. Sevagram Ashram itself has many activities of a social, educational and humanitarian character. I should be

4

able to receive letters about these activities and write about them. There is the Andrews Memorial Fund. There is a large sum lying at my disposal. I should be able to give instructions about its disposal. To this end I must be in correspondence with the people at Shantiniketan. Pyarelal Nayyar who was co-secretary with Mahadev Desai, and whose company as also that of my wife was offered to me at the time of my arrest, has not yet been sent. I have asked the I. G. P. about his whereabouts. I can get no information about him, nor about Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who was under my care for the control of his intestinal trouble. If I may not correspond with them about their health and welfare, again the permission granted can have no meaning for me.

I hope that even if the Government cannot extend the facilities for correspondence in terms of this letter, they will appreciate my difficulty.

Detention Camp,
27-8-'42

I am, Yours etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

5

N. S. D. V 1011
Home Department (Political)
Bombay Castle, 22nd September, '42

From

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire

SIR,

In reply to your letter dated the 27th August, 1942, I am directed to request you to furnish me with a list of the inmates of the Sevagram Ashram with whom you wish to correspond on personal and domestic matters only. In regard

to your further request that you should be allowed to write and receive letters on certain matters other than those of a purely personal and domestic nature, I am to inform you of the decision of Government that it would not be in accordance with the purposes of your confinement to allow such an extension of the scope of your correspondence.

Your obedient servant,

J. M. SLADEN

Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

6

The Secretary, Government of Bombay,
(H. D. Political), Bombay

SIR,

With reference to your letter of 22nd September I beg to say that I cannot exercise the privilege extended by the Government since I may not refer in my letters even to non-political matters mentioned in my letter of 27th August, 1942.

Detention Camp,
25-9-'42

I am, Yours etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

C

ON WIRE ABOUT MAHADEVBHAI'S DEATH

7

CHIMANLAL,

Ashram, Sevagram, Wardha

Mahadev died suddenly. Gave no indication. Slept well last night. Had breakfast. Walked with me. Sushila, jail doctors did all they could, but God had willed otherwise. Sushila and I bathed body. Body lying peacefully covered with flowers incense burning. Sushila and I reciting Gita. Mahadev has died yogi's and patriot's death. Tell Durga,

6

Babla and Sushila no sorrow allowed. Only joy over such noble death. Cremation taking place front of me. Shall keep ashes. Advise Durga remain Ashram but she may go to her people if she must. Hope Babla will be brave and prepare himself fill Mahadev's place worthily. Love.

15-8-'42

BAPU

8

The Secretary,

Home Department, Bombay Government, Bombay

SIR,

Khan Bahadur Kateley kindly handed me yesterday the letters written by late Shri Mahadev Desai's wife and son. At the time of handing me the letters, Khan Bahadur told me that he has to explain to me the delay caused in sending my 'letter'. He could however give no explanation. I missed even a formal expression of regret for the inordinate delay. There appears to have been in the Bombay Secretariat a disregard of the feelings of a bereaved wife and a bereaved son.

From these letters I gather that what was on the face of it a telegram, and was handed to the I. G. P. with the request that it should go as an express telegraphic message, was posted as a letter. I should like to be informed why the telegraphic message was posted as a letter. May I remind the Government that I am without any reply to my letter of 27-8-'42? The widow and her son are instances in point. They cannot but be comforted to receive letters from my wife and me. But under the prohibitory orders we may not write to them.

I am, Yours etc.,
M. K. GANDHI
(Security prisoner)

Detention Camp,
19th September, '42

No. S. D. V. 1084
Home Department (Political).
Bombay Castle, 24th September, 1942

From

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire

SIR,

With reference to your letter dated the 19th instant, I am directed to state that the delay in the delivery of your message to the widow of the late Mr. Mahadev Desai was due to a misunderstanding which is regretted. As has already appeared in the press, the Government of India has expressed regret to the widow for the delay.

As regards the further point mentioned in your letter concerning your correspondence, I am to invite reference to my letter No. S. D. V. 1011 dated the 22nd September, 1942.

Your obedient servant,

J. M. SLADEN

Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

D
CONFISCATION OF NAVAJIVAN PRESS PROPERTY AND
BURNING OF 'HARIJAN'

10

The Secretary, Bombay Government,
(Home Department) Bombay

SIR,

I beg to enclose herewith a cutting from the *Bombay Chronicle* dated 24th instant. I shall be obliged if I am told whether the fear expressed by the writer of the note in question is justified and if it is, to what extent.

Detention Camp,
26-10-'42

I am, Yours etc.,
M K. GANDHI

11

Enclosure to letter No. 10
"Bombay Chronicle" October 24, 1942 - Page 4
GOVT. AND THE "NAVAJIVAN" PRESS

To The Editor of the "Chronicle"

SIR,

In order to stop the publication of the *Harijan* and allied weeklies of Mahatma Gandhi, the Government raided and took possession of the "Navajivan" Press with all its publications etc., but chose to return after some time the publications etc. Piecemeal and imperfect reports of the raid, seizure and return have appeared in the press from time to time. It is necessary, therefore, to put before the public a short account of the whole series of events.

After the arrest of Gandhiji, and now the late Sjt. Mahadev Desai, on the 9th August, 1942, the *Harijan* was being published under the editorship of Sjt. Kishorelal Mashruwala.

After the publication of one issue the police raided on the 21st August, 1942, the "Navajivan" Press and seized composed forms and galleys and also some printed copies of the *Harijan* number which was to be published on the 23rd August, along with the whole press and paraphernalia. On the same night and the next day they removed essential

parts of the printing machine and carried away copies of all numbers, old and new, of the *Harijan* and its allied weeklies as well as all the bound volumes of their files beginning from 1933 up to 1942. Even the library, some manuscripts, files of common periodicals, the typewriter, the cyclostyle and kerosene tins were taken away. All the buildings of the publication department and the book-binding department as well as the godown of printing papers were sealed.

In view of Gandhiji's public statement in the *Harijan* of 19-7-'42 to the effect that he has instructed the Manager to close down all the weeklies as soon as orders for their closure were served by the Government, the Manager would have carried out the instructions fully; but the Government chose to act as they did. In the original order of seizure there was nothing to warrant seizure of all our publications, library etc., but the Government sealed all departments and put the whole precincts under police and military protection.

This went on for about a month. Suddenly on the 25th of September, 1942, the City Magistrate inquired as to the Manager and called him in his presence. He was informed verbally that everything except the press, the printing papers and *Harijan* files was to be returned. The next day, therefore, the seals were broken and the publications were handed over. At the same time all blank printing papers, types and other press furniture were stacked like grass on motor lorries and removed. They wanted to return the press machine, but they refused to return the essential parts of the machinery that they had removed. The Manager was told to accept what was being given. He was further informed that if he did not accept it as it was, the sentries would be removed and then he would be responsible for the machine. The Manager in charge said, 'The machine cannot work without its important parts. Why should I then accept it in its dismantled condition?'

The City Magistrate then removed the sentries and put upon the door of the building a notice to the effect that the building was no more in the possession of the Government. The City Magistrate thereafter sent by registered post the keys of the building to the Manager in charge of the Press, but he refused to accept them.

Thus the "Navajivan" Karyalaya has got back its publications, its office library etc., but the quite unworkable and 'dismantled press' is still lying in the building and the "Navajivan" Karyalaya is not in possession of it. Printing papers worth about Rs. 50,000, the types, some important manuscripts and kerosene tins, a typewriter, a cyclostyle, an electric fan and all the files of the *Harijan* from start to finish have also not been returned. Not only that, a local daily published in its issue dated 28-9-'42

that the files have all been destroyed Till now the Government has allowed the report to go uncontradicted

In the words of the *Bombay Chronicle* we refuse to believe that any government could be guilty of such vandalism It will be good for the authorities concerned to issue a statement on the subject

Navajivan " Karyalaya,
Ahmedabad 20th October, 1942

Yours etc ,
KARIMBHAI VORA

12

No. S. D. III 2613
, Home Department (Political)
Bombay Castle, 5th November, 1942

From

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire

SIR,

I am directed to inform you in reply to your letter to me dated October 26th that the Government instructed the District Magistrate, Ahmedabad, to destroy all objectionable literature seized from the Navajivan Mudranalaya such as old copies of the *Harijan* newspaper, books, leaflets and other miscellaneous papers and to return other articles that were not objectionable to the owners.

I have ascertained from the District Magistrate that he interpreted the orders as covering all the old files of the *Harijan* since 1933 and these old files have actually been destroyed.

Your obedient servant,
J. M. SLADEN
Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

11

E

PROF. BHANSALI'S FAST

13

EXPRESS

Secretary, Home Department,
Bombay Government

Professor Bhansali, one time fellow, Elphinstone College, left college 1920 and joined Ashram Sabarmati. He is reported by daily press to be fasting without water near Sevagram Ashram Wardha over alleged Chimur excesses. Would like establish direct telegraphic contact with him through Superintendent for ascertaining cause fasting his condition. I would like to dissuade him if I find his fast morally unjustified. I make this request for humanity's sake.

24-11-'42

GANDHI

14

The Inspector General of Prisons,
Bombay Presidency

SIR,

About 8-45 a m. yesterday I sent you the text of an express telegram to the Secretary, Bombay Government, Home Department, about Professor Bhansali who is reported to be fasting. As the Professor seems to have been fasting since 11th instant according to the report in the *Hindu* of Madras and since last Wednesday according to the *Bombay Chronicle*, I am naturally filled with anxiety. Time in such cases is the greatest factor. I shall therefore be obliged if you could convey by telephone or wire my request to the Bombay Government for an urgent reply in regard to my wire.

25-11-'42

I am etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

12

15

No. S. D. VI 2891
Home Department (Political),
Bombay Castle, 30th November, 1942

From

The Additional Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Home Department

To

M. K. GANDHI, Esquire

SIR,

I am directed to refer to your telegraphic message dated the 24th instant, regarding the fast of Professor Bhansali.

In reply I am to state that Government is unable to sanction your request to be allowed to communicate with him.

If, however, you desire to advise him, for humanitarian reasons, to abandon his fast, this Government will make arrangements to communicate your advice to him.

Your obedient servant,

Sd/-

Additional Secretary to the
Government of Bombay, Home Department

16

Detention Camp,
4th December, '42

SIR,

I beg to acknowledge your letter of 30th ultimo received by me yesterday afternoon (3rd instant). I note with deep regret that my telegraphic message with regard to a dear co-worker, whose life seems to be in jeopardy, should

13

have been answered by a letter which reached me ten days after the despatch of my message !

I am sorry for the Government rejection of my request. As I believe in the legitimacy and even necessity of fasting under given circumstances, I am unable to advise abandonment of Prof. Bhansali's fast, unless I know that he has no justifying reason for it. If the newspaper report is to be believed, there seems to be legitimate ground for his fast and I must be content to lose my friend, if I must.

I am, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

Additional Secretary to the
Government of Bombay, (H. D.)

II
CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD LINLITHGOW
and
THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

A
EARLIER CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT
AUGUST DISTURBANCES

17

The Aga Khan's Palace,
Yeravda, 14-8-'42

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution justifying the step is full of distortions and misrepresentations. That you had the approval of your Indian "colleagues" can have no significance, except this that in India you can always command such services. That cooperation is an additional justification for the demand of withdrawal irrespective of what people and parties may say.

The Government of India should have waited at least till the time that I inaugurated mass action. I had publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So would I have dealt with every deficiency if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that

the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action, might make world opinion veer round to the Congress as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of grounds for the Government rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the A. I. C. C. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand.

The resolution says, "The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope." I suppose 'wiser counsels' here mean abandonment of its demand by the Congress. Why should the abandonment of a demand legitimate at all times be hoped for by a government pledged to guarantee independence to India? Is it a challenge that could only be met by immediate repression instead of patient reasoning with the demanding party? I venture to suggest that it is a long draft upon the credulity of mankind to say that the acceptance of the demand "would plunge India into confusion". Anyway the summary rejection of the demand has plunged the nation and the Government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the allied cause.

The Government resolution says, "The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware, too, for some time past, of dangerous preparations by the Congress party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities, directed among other things to the interruption of communications and public utility services, the organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants and interference with

defence measures including recruitment." This is a gross distortion of the reality. Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action has been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner as if the Congress was preparing for violent action. Everything was openly discussed among Congress circles, for nothing was to be done secretly. And why is it tampering with your loyalty if I ask you to give up a job that is harming the British people? Instead of publishing behind the backs of principal Congressmen the misleading paragraph, the Government of India, immediately they came to know of "the preparations", should have brought to book the parties concerned with the preparations. That would have been an appropriate course. By their unsupported allegations in the resolution, they have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing.

The whole Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular movement avowedly non-violent?

The Government resolution further says, "The Congress is not India's mouthpiece. Yet in the interests of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy, its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to full nationhood." It is a gross libel thus to accuse the oldest national organization of India. This language lies ill in the mouth of a Government which has, as can be proved from public records, consistently thwarted every national effort for attaining freedom, and sought to suppress the Congress by hook or by crook.

The Government of India have not condescended to consider the Congress offer that if simultaneously with the

declaration of independence of India, they could not trust the Congress to form a stable provisional government, they should ask the Muslim League to do so and that any national government formed by the League would be loyally accepted by the Congress. Such an offer is hardly consistent with the charge of totalitarianism against the Congress.

Let me examine the Government offer. "It is that as soon as hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself, with full freedom of decision and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party, the form of government which she regards as most suited to her conditions." Has this offer any reality about it? All parties have not agreed now. Will it be any more possible after the war, if the parties have to act before independence is in their hands? Parties grow up like mushrooms, for without proving their representative character, the Government will welcome them as they have done in the past, if the parties oppose the Congress and its activities, though they may do lip homage to independence. Frustration is inherent in the Government offer. Hence the logical cry of withdrawal first. Only after the end of the British power and fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom, will the formation of a truly representative government, whether provisional or permanent, be possible. The living burial of the authors of the demand has not resolved the deadlock. It has aggravated it.

Then the resolution proceeds, "The suggestion put forward by the Congress party that the millions of India uncertain as to the future are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries, to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders, is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country." I do not know about the millions. But I can give my own evidence in support of the

Congress statement. It is open to the Government not to believe the Congress evidence. No imperial power likes to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Great Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motive. The Congress seeks to kill imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interest of its own apart from that of the whole of India and the world.

The following passage from the peroration in the resolution is interesting. "But on them (the Government) there lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her people without fear or favour." All I can say is that it is a mockery of truth after the experience in Malaya, Singapore and Burma. It is sad to find the Government of India claiming to hold the "balance" between the parties for whose creation and existence it is itself demonstrably responsible.

One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can, and may I say than even you can. In that misery he tried to forget his old quarrel with imperialism. He dreads much more than I do the success of Nazism and Fascism.

I argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally.

If notwithstanding the common cause, the Government's answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the Allied cause that weighed with the British Government, as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of imperial policy. This determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and precipitated repression.

The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But the slaughter of truth accompanying the butchery and enforced by the falsity of which the resolution is reeking adds strength to the Congress position.

It causes me deep pain to have to send you this letter. But however much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for a reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy. Do not disregard this pleading of one who claims to be sincere friend of the British people.

Heaven guide you !

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

राष्ट्रीय पुस्तकालय, कोलकाता
National Library, Kolkata



The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd August, 1942

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you very much for your letter dated the 14th August, which reached me only a day or two ago.

I have read, I need not say, what you have been good enough to say in your letter with very close attention, and I have given full weight to your views. But I fear in the result that it would not be possible for me either to accept the criticisms which you advance of the resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council, or your request that the whole policy of the Government of India should be reconsidered.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

M. K. GANDHI, Esq.

Secretary, Government of India (H. D.),
New Delhi

SIR,

In spite of the chorus of approval sung by the Indian Councillors and others, of the present government policy in dealing with the Congress, I venture to assert that had the Government but awaited at least my contemplated letter to H. E. the Viceroy and the result thereafter, no calamity would have overtaken the country. The reported deplorable destruction would have most certainly been avoided.

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent. The wholesale arrests of the Congress leaders seemed to have made the people wild with rage to the point of

losing self-control. I feel that the Government, not the Congress, are responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the Government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, to withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely the Government have ample resources to deal with any overt act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness.

Since I am permitted to receive newspapers, I feel that I owe it to the Government to give my reaction to the sad happening in the country. If the Government think that as a prisoner I have no right to address such communications, they have but to say so and I will not repeat the mistake.

23-9-'42

I am,
Yours etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

20

Detention Camp,
13th February, 1943

DEAR SIR,

Gandhiji in glancing through today's papers has noticed the following which has appeared as foot-note to annexure III of the published correspondence between H. E. the Viceroy and himself: "A formal acknowledgement was sent to this letter." He directs me to say that he never received any such acknowledgement and that he would like his repudiation of the statement in question to be published.

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

Sir Richard Tottenham,
Home Department, Government of India,
New Delhi

Communicated by the Superintendent, Camp on 3-4-'43

" Will you please inform Mr. Gandhi with reference to the letter of 13th February, written on his behalf by Mr. Pyarelal, that his letter dated 23-9-'42, to the Secretary to the Government of India, (H. D.), was acknowledged by a message through the officer I/C of the camp and Government considers that a message conveyed in this manner is as formal as a written communication."

B

CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD LINLITHGOW
LEADING TO THE FAST AND AFTER

22

PERSONAL

Detention Camp,
New Year's Eve, 1942

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

This is a very personal letter. Contrary to the Biblical injunction I have allowed many suns to set on a quarrel I have harboured against you. But I must not allow the old year to expire without disburdening myself of what is rankling in my breast against you. I have thought we were friends and should still love to think so. However what has happened since the 9th of August last makes me wonder whether you still regard me as a friend. I have perhaps not come in such close touch with any occupant of your *gadi* as with you.

Your arrest of me, the communique you issued thereafter, your reply to Rajaji and the reasons given therefor, Mr. Amery's attack on me, and much else I can catalogue go to show that at some stage or other you must have suspected my *bona fides*. Mention of other Congressmen in the same connection is by the way. I seem to be the *fons et*

origo of all the evil imputed to the Congress If I have not ceased to be your friend why did you not, before taking drastic action, send for me, tell me of your suspicions and make yourself sure of your facts?

I am quite capable of seeing myself as others see me But in this case I have failed hopelessly I find that all the statements made about me in Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth

I have so much fallen from grace that I could not establish contact with a dying friend I mean Prof Bhansali who is fasting in regard to the Chimui affair ! ! !

And I am expected to condemn the so-called violence of some people reputed to be Congressmen, although I have no data for such condemnation save the heavily censored reports of newspapers I must own that I thoroughly distrust those reports I could write much more, but I must not lengthen my tale of woe I am sure, what I have said is enough to enable you to fill in details

You know I returned to India from South Africa at the end of 1914 with a mission which came to me in 1906, namely, to spread truth and non-violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life. The law of Satyagraha knows no defeat Prison is one of the many ways of spreading the message But it has its limits. You have placed me in a palace where every reasonable creature comfort is ensured. I have freely partaken of the latter purely as a matter of duty, never as a pleasure, in the hope that some day those who have the power will realize that they have wronged innocent men I had given myself six months The period is drawing to a close. So is my patience The law of Satyagraha as I know it prescribes a remedy in such moments of trial. In a sentence it is, 'Crucify the flesh by fasting.' That same law forbids its use except as a last resort. I do not want to use it if I can avoid it.

This is a way to avoid it. Convince me of my error or errors, and I shall make ample amends. You can send for me or send someone who knows your mind and can carry conviction. There are many other ways if you have the will.

May I expect an early reply ?

May the New Year bring peace to us all !

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

23

PERSONAL

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi, 13th Jan., 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you for your personal letter of December 31st, which I have just received. I fully accept its personal character, and I welcome its frankness. And my reply will be, as you would wish it to be, as frank and as entirely personal as your letter itself.

I was glad to have your letter, for, to be as open with you as our previous relations justify, I have been profoundly depressed during recent months first by the policy that was adopted by the Congress in August, secondly, because while that policy gave rise, as it was obvious it must, throughout the country to violence and crime (I say nothing of the risks to India from outside aggression) no word of condemnation for that violence and crime should have come from you, or from the Working Committee. When you were first at Poona I knew that you were not receiving newspapers, and I accepted that as explaining your silence. When arrangements were made that you and the Working Committee should have such newspapers as you desired I felt certain that the

details those newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you as much as it has us all, and that you would be anxious to make your condemnation of it categorical and widely known. But that was not the case; and it has been a real disappointment to me, all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress Party. You may take it from me that the newspaper accounts you mention are well founded — I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one. I well know the immense weight of your great authority in the Congress movement and with the Party and those who follow its lead, and I wish I could feel, again speaking very frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you. (And unhappily, while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the consequences, whether as law breakers, with the results that that involves, or as the victims.)

But if I am right in reading your letter to mean that in the light of what has happened you wish now to retrace your steps and dissociate yourself from the policy of last summer, you have only to let me know and I will at once consider the matter further. And if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay in what respect I have done so, and tell me what positive suggestion you wish to put to me. You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned to read with the same close attention as ever any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight and approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feelings and your motives.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

PERSONAL

Detention Camp,
19-1-'43

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I received your kind letter of 13th instant yesterday at 2-30 P. M. I had almost despaired of ever hearing from you. Please excuse my impatience.

Your letter gladdens me to find that I have not lost caste with you.

My letter of 31st December was a growl against you. Yours is a counter-growl. It means that you maintain that you were right in arresting me and you were sorry for the omissions of which, in your opinion, I was guilty.

The inference you draw from my letter is, I am afraid, not correct. I have reread my letter in the light of your interpretation, but have failed to find your meaning in it. I wanted to fast and should still want to if nothing comes out of our correspondence and I have to be a helpless witness to what is going on in the country including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land.

If I do not accept your interpretation of my letter, you want me to make a positive suggestion. This, I might be able to do, only if you put me among the members of the Working Committee of the Congress.

If I could be convinced of my error or worse, of which you are evidently, I should need to consult nobody, so far as my own action is concerned, to make a full and open confession and make ample amends. But I have not any conviction of error. I wonder if you saw my letter to the Secretary to the Government of India, (H. D.) of 23rd September, 1942. I adhere to what I have said in it and in my letter to you of 14th August, 1942.

Of course I deplore the happenings that have taken place since 9th August last. But have I not laid the whole

blame for them at the door of the Government of India ? Moreover, I could not express any opinion on events which I cannot influence or control and of which I have but a one-sided account. You are bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads. But you will not expect me to do so. Such reports have, before now, often proved fallible. It was for that reason that in my letter of 31st December, I pleaded with you to convince me of the correctness of the information on which your conviction was based. You will perhaps appreciate my fundamental difficulty in making the statement you have expected me to make.

This, however, I can say from the housetop, that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been. You may not know that any violence on the part of Congress workers, I have condemned openly and unequivocally. I have even done public penance more than once. I must not weary you with examples. The point I wish to make is that on every such occasion I was a free man.

This time the retracing, as I have submitted, lies with the Government. You will forgive me for expressing an opinion challenging yours. I am certain that nothing but good would have resulted if you had stayed your hand and granted me the interview which I had announced, on the night of the 8th August, I was to seek. But that was not to be.

Here, may I remind you that the Government of India have before now owned their mistakes, as for instance, in the Punjab when the late General Dyer was condemned, in the U. P. when a corner of a mosque in Cawnpore was restored, and in Bengal when the Partition was annulled. All these things were done in spite of great and previous mob violence.

To sum up :

(1) If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends.

(2) If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members.

I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the *impasse*.

If I am obscure or have not answered your letter fully, please point out the omissions and I shall make an attempt to give you satisfaction.

I have no mental reservation

I find that my letters to you are sent through the Government of Bombay. This procedure must involve some loss of time. As time is of the essence in this matter, perhaps you will issue instructions that my letters to you may be sent directly by the Superintendent of this Camp.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

25

PERSONAL

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi, 25th Jan., 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your personal letter of the 19th January, which I have just received, and which I need not say I have read with close care and attention. But I am still, I fear, rather in the dark. I made clear to you in my last letter that, however reluctantly, the course of events, and my familiarity with what has been taking place, has left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered spokesman at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the sad campaign of violence and crime, and revolutionary activity which has done so much harm, and so much injury to India's credit, since last August. I note what you

say about non-violence. I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past. But the events of these last months, and even the events that are happening today, show that it has not met with the full support of certain at any rate of your followers, and the mere fact that they may have fallen short of an ideal which you have advocated is no answer to the relations of those who have lost their lives, and to those themselves who have lost their property or suffered severe injury as a result of violent activities on the part of Congress and its supporters. And I cannot I fear accept as an answer your suggestion that "the whole blame" has been laid by you yourself at the door of the Government of India. We are dealing with facts in this matter, and they have to be faced. And while, as I made clear in my last letter, I am very anxious to have from you anything that you may have to say or any specific proposition that you may have to make, the position remains that it is not the Government of India, but Congress and yourself that are on their justification in this matter.

If therefore you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of the 9th August and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further. It is of course very necessary to be clear on that point, and you will not, I know, take it amiss that I should make that clear in the plainest possible words.

I will ask the Governor of Bombay to arrange that any communication from you should be sent through him, which will I trust reduce delay in its transmission.

M. K. GANDHI, Esq.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

Detention Camp,
29th January, 1943

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I must thank you warmly for your prompt reply to my letter of 19th instant.

I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not wish to imply by clearness simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last breath that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of the opinion you hold, that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on the 9th August last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrests of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence? You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against Fascism in every shape or form. It renders co-operation in war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nation-wide co-operation possible.

Is all this open to reproach?

Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated civil disobedience. But that by itself cannot constitute an objection since the principle of civil disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact". Even that civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek from you an appointment.

Then, take the unproved and in my opinion unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me by so responsible a Minister as the Secretary of State for India.

Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit*.

But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of the murders as clearly, I hope, as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organized on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand for one — not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic law, i. e., of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all-powerful Government of India..

Add to this tale of woe the privations of the poor millions due to India-wide scarcity which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a *bona fide* national government responsible to a popularly elected assembly.

If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for Satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning breakfast of the 9th February, a fast for twentyone days ending on the morning of the 2nd March. Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays, my system refuses water. This time therefore I propose to add juices of citrus fruits to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. The fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

I am not marking this letter personal, as I did the two previous ones. They were in no way confidential. They were mere personal appeal.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

P. S.

The following was inadvertently omitted*:- The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress, by its August resolution, asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah to form a national government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee, except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

M. K. GANDHI

27

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
5th February, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your letter of 29th January which I have just received. I have read it, as always, with great care and with every anxiety to follow your mind and to do full justice to your argument. But I fear that my view of the responsibility of Congress and of yourself personally for the lamentable disorders of last autumn remains unchanged.

Restored to its proper place in letter No 31 page 42

In my last letter I said that my knowledge of the facts left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered leader at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the campaign of violence and crime that subsequently broke out. In reply you have reiterated your request that I should attempt to convince you that my opinion is correct. I would readily have responded earlier to that request were it not that your letters gave no indication, such as I should have been entitled to expect, that you sought the information with an open mind. In each of them you have expressed profound distrust of the published reports of the recent happenings, although in your last letter, on the basis of the same information, you have not hesitated to lay the whole blame for them on the Government of India. In the same letter you have stated that I cannot expect you to accept the accuracy of the official reports on which I rely. It is not therefore clear to me how you expect or even desire me to convince you of anything. But in fact, the Government of India have never made any secret of their reasons for holding the Congress and its leaders responsible for the deplorable acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism that have occurred since the Congress resolution of the 8th August declared a "mass struggle" in support of its demands, appointed you as its leader and authorized all Congressmen to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement. A body which passes a resolution in such terms is hardly entitled to disclaim responsibility for any events that follow it. There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy to lead to violence; and that you were prepared to condone it; and that the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan, conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders. The general nature of the case against the Congress has been publicly stated by the Home Member

in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on the 15th September last, and if you need further information I would refer you to it. I enclose a complete copy in case the press versions that you must have seen were not sufficient. I need only add that all the mass of evidence that has come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached. I have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions, circulated in the name of the A. I. C. C.; that well-known congressmen have organized and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder; and that even now an underground Congress organization exists in which, among others, the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee plays a prominent part, and which is actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country. If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known it is because the time is not yet ripe; but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world if you can. And if in the meanwhile you yourself, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgement will go against you by default.

I have read with surprise your statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi Settlement of the 5th March 1931 which you refer to as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact". I have again looked at the document. Its basis was that civil disobedience would be "effectively discontinued" and that certain "reciprocal action" would be taken by Government. It was inherent in such document that it should take notice of the existence of civil disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that civil disobedience was recognized as being in any

circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my Government.

To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorized government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements described by you yourself as open rebellion, to take place unchallenged; that they should allow preparations for violence, for the interruptions of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for the murder of police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My Government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and against the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of my Government has throughout been to give you, and to give the Congress organization, every possible opportunity to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of the 14th July, and your declaration on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation, and that after all it was an open rebellion are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to "do or die". But with a patience that was perhaps misplaced, it was decided to wait until the resolution of the All India Congress Committee made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude if Government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

Let me in conclusion say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and age, the decision that you tell me that you now have in your mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risks is clearly one that must be taken by you alone and

the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone. I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification, and understood from your own previous writings that this was also your view.

M. K. GANDHI, Esq.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

28

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
5th February, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

In your letter of 29th January to H. E. you mentioned that you were not marking that letter personal like your two earlier letters, but that those two earlier letters were in no way confidential, and were a mere personal appeal. As you would no doubt have expected H. E. had hitherto attached to the word 'personal' its normal conventional meaning, and had accordingly given the same marking to his replies. He assumes in the light of what you say that you would have no objection to his publishing these letters with his replies to them despite the fact of their personal marking. Perhaps you would be so kind as to let me know.

M. K. GANDHI, Esq.

Yours sincerely,
G. LAITHWAITE

Detention Camp,
7th February. 1943

DEAR SIR GILBERT,

I was delighted to see your signature after such a lapse of time. When I said that the two personal letters were not confidential I certainly meant what you say. But I meant also that though they were not confidential on my part, if His Excellency wanted to treat them as such, being personal, he was free to do so, and therefore equally free to regard his two replies also as such. In that case he could have the four letters withheld from publication. So far as I am concerned my request of course is that the whole correspondence beginning with my letter of 14th August last, and including my letter to the Secretary to the Government of India. Home Department, should be published.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Detention Camp,
7-2-'43

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I have to thank you for your long reply dated 5th instant to my letter of 29th January last.

I would take your last point first, namely, the contemplated fast which begins on 9th instant. Your letter, from a Satyagrahi's stand-point, is an invitation to fast. No doubt the responsibility for the step and its consequences will be solely mine. You have allowed an expression to slip from your pen for which I was unprepared. In the concluding sentence of the second paragraph you describe the step

as an attempt "to find an easy way out". That you, as a friend, can impute such a base and cowardly motive to me passes comprehension. You have also described it as "a form of political blackmail", and you quote my previous writings on the subject against me. I abide by my writings. I hold that there is nothing inconsistent in them with the contemplated step. I wonder whether you have yourself read those writings.

I do claim that I approached you with an open mind when I asked you to convince me of my error. A "profound distrust" of the published reports is in no way inconsistent with my having an open mind.

You say that there is evidence that I (I leave my friends out for the moment) "expected this policy to lead to violence", that I was "prepared to condone it", and that "the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders". I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member, of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did. I have suggested why it did. You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence. Surely there was nothing wrong in my asking you to show me the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof should correspond to the canons of English jurisprudence.

If the wife of a member of the Working Committee is actively engaged in "planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism" she should be tried before a court of law

and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of 9th August last which I have dared to describe as leonine violence.

You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal, or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable ?

I reiterate the statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the settlement of 5th March, 1931, arrived at between the then Viceroy on behalf of the Government of India and myself on behalf of the Congress. I hope you know that the principal Congressmen were discharged before that settlement was even thought of. Certain reparations were made to Congressmen under that settlement. Civil disobedience was discontinued only on conditions being fulfilled by the Government. That by itself was, in my opinion, an acknowledgement of its legitimacy, of course under given circumstances. It therefore seems somewhat strange to find you maintain that civil disobedience " cannot be recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate by your Government " You ignore the practice of the British Government which has recognized its legitimacy under the name of " passive resistance "

Lastly you read into my letters a meaning which is wholly inconsistent with my declaration, in one of them, of adherence to unadulterated non-violence. For, you say in your letter under reply, that " acceptance of my point of view would be to concede that the authorized Government of the country on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow movements

to take place that would admit preparations for violence, interruptions of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for murders of police officers and others, to proceed unchecked". I must be a strange friend of yours whom you believe to be capable of asking for recognition of such things as lawful.

I have not attempted an exhaustive reply to the views and statements attributed to me. This is not the place nor the time for such reply. I have only picked out those things which in my opinion demanded an immediate answer. You have left me no loophole for escaping the ordeal I have set before for myself. I begin it on 9th instant with the clearest possible conscience. Despite your description of it as "a form of political blackmail", it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the Highest Tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal I shall go to the Judgment Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who had tried to serve his country and humanity through it.

My last letter was written against time and therefore a material paragraph went in as post-script. I now send herewith a fair copy typed by Pyarelal who has taken Mahadev Desai's place. You will find the post-script paragraph restored to the place where it should have been.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

Encl : (1)

Detention Camp
29th January, 1943

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I must thank you warmly for your prompt reply to my letter of 19th instant.

I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not wish to imply by clearness simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last breath that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of the opinion you hold, that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on the 9th August last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrests of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence? You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against Fascism in every shape or form. It tenders co-operation in war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nation-wide co-operation possible.

The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress, by its August resolution, asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah to form a national government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such government being responsible to a duly elected assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee, except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

Is all this open to reproach?

Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated civil disobedience. But that by itself cannot constitute an objection since the principle of civil disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as the 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact'. Even that civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek from you an appointment.

Then, take the unproved and in my opinion unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me by so responsible a Minister as the Secretary of State for India.

Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit*.

But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of the murders as clearly, I hope, as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organized on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand for one — not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic law, i. e., of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all-powerful Government of India.

Add to this tale of woe the privations of the poor millions due to India-wide scarcity which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a *bona fide* national government responsible to a popularly elected assembly.

If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for Satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning breakfast of the 9th February, a fast for twentyone days ending on the morning of the 2nd March. Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays, my system refuses water. This time therefore I propose to add juices of citrus fruits to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. The fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

I am not marking this letter personal, as I did the two previous ones. They were in no way confidential. They were mere personal appeal.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

[Received by Post]

CONFIDENTIAL

Home Department,
New Delhi,
7th February, 1943

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

The Government of India have been informed by His Excellency the Viceroy of your intention as communicated to him of undertaking a fast for 21 days in certain circumstances. They have carefully considered the position, and the conclusions they have reached in the light of such consideration are set out in the statement of which a copy is enclosed, which they propose, in the event of your maintaining your present intention, to release in due course to the press.

2. The Government of India, as you will see from their statement, would be very reluctant to see you fast, and I am instructed to inform you that, as the statement makes clear, they would propose that, should you persist in your intention, you will be set at liberty for the purpose, and for the duration, of your fast as from the time of its commencement. During the period of your fast there will be no objection to your proceeding where you wish, though the Government of India trust that you will be able to arrange for your accommodation away from the Aga Khan's Palace.

3. Should you for any reason find yourself unable to take advantage of these arrangements, a decision which the Government of India would greatly regret, they will of course suitably amend the statement of which a copy is now enclosed before it issues. But they wish to repeat, with all earnestness, their anxiety and their hope that the considerations which have carried so much weight with them will

equally carry weight with you, and that you will not pursue your present tentative proposal. In that event, no occasion will of course arise for the issue of any statement of any kind.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM

P. S. February 8th

In view of the urgency of the matter the text of this letter was telegraphed to the Governor's Secretary yesterday for communication to you to-day.

33

Advance copy of the proposed Government communique

STATEMENT

Mr. Gandhi has informed His Excellency the Viceroy that he proposes to undertake a fast of three weeks' duration from the 9th February. It is to be a fast according to capacity, and during it Mr. Gandhi proposes to add juices of citrus fruits to water to make water drinkable, as his wish is not to fast to death, but to survive the ordeal. The Government of India deplore the use of the weapon of fast to achieve political ends. There can, in their judgment, be no justification for it, and Mr. Gandhi has himself admitted in the past that it contains an element of coercion. The Government of India can only express their regret that Mr. Gandhi should think it necessary to employ such a weapon on this occasion, and should seek justification for it in anything which the Government may have said or done in connection with a movement initiated by him and his co-workers in the Congress Party. The Government of India have no intention on their part of allowing the fast to deflect them from their policy, nor will they be responsible for its consequences on Mr. Gandhi's health. They cannot

prevent Mr. Gandhi from fasting. If he decides to do so, he must do so at his own risk and under his own arrangements. They have accordingly decided to release him for the purpose and duration of the fast, and any members of his party living with him who may wish to accompany him.

The Government of India propose to issue in due course a full statement on the origin and development of the movement which was initiated in August last and the measures which Government have been compelled to adopt to deal with it. But they think this is a suitable occasion for a brief review of the events of the last few months.

Mr. Gandhi, in his correspondence with the Viceroy, has repudiated all responsibility for the consequences which have flowed from the "Quit India" demand, which he and the Congress party have put forward. This contention will not bear examination.

Mr. Gandhi's own statement, before the movement was launched, envisaged anarchy as an alternative to the existing order and referred to the struggle as "fight to the finish in the course of which he would not hesitate to run any risk, however great".

As much has been made of his offer to meet the Viceroy, it is necessary to point out that at a press interview on the 14th July after the Working Committee resolution was passed, Mr. Gandhi stated that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation; there was no question of one more chance; after all it was an open rebellion which was to be as short and swift as possible. His last message was "do or die." The speeches of those most closely associated with Mr. Gandhi have been even more explicit and have given a clear indication of what the Congress High Command had in mind in launching their attack against Government as by law established and against the agencies and services by which the life of the country was being conducted, in a

period, be it noted, of exceptional stress and strain and of grave danger to India from Japanese aggression.

The instructions issued by the various organizations contained in leaflets which were found to be freely circulating in almost every part of India — and which, on the evidence, cannot all be disowned as unauthorized — gave specific instructions as to the methods which were to be employed for bringing the administration to a standstill. The circular of the 29th July emanating from the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee is an instance in point. It is noteworthy in this connection that in widely separated areas all over the country identical methods of attack on railways and other communications were employed, requiring the use of special implements and highly technical knowledge. Control rooms and block instruments in railway stations came in for special attention, and destruction of telegraph and telephone lines and equipment was carried out in a manner which denoted careful planning and close knowledge of their working. If these manifestations of rebellious activities are to be regarded as the result not of Congress teachings, but as a manifestation of the popular resentment against the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress leaders, the question may well be asked to which section of the public the tens of thousands of men engaged in these violent and subversive activities belonged. If it is claimed that it is not Congressmen who have been responsible it would be extraordinary, to say the least, if the blame were to be laid on non-Congress elements.

The country is, in effect, asked to believe that those who own allegiance to the Congress party have behaved in an exemplary non-violent manner, and it is persons who are outside the Congress fold who have registered their resentment at the arrest of the leaders of the movement which they do not profess to follow. A more direct answer to the argument is to be had in the fact that Congressmen

have been repeatedly found engaged in incitement to violence or in prosecuting Congress activities which have led to grave disorders.

That political parties and groups outside the Congress party have no delusions on the subject may be judged from the categorical way in which they have dissociated themselves from the movement, and condemned the violence to which it has given rise. In particular the Muslim League has on more than one occasion emphasized the character and intentions of the policy pursued by those of the Congress party. As early as the 20th August last, the Working Committee of the League expressed the view, reiterated many times since, that by the slogan "Quit India" what is really meant was supreme control of the government of the country by the Congress, and that the mass civil disobedience movement had resulted in lawlessness and considerable destruction of life and property. Other elements in the political life of the country have expressed themselves in a similar vein, and if the followers of the Congress Party contend that the resultant violence was no part of their policy or programme, they are doing so against the weight of overwhelming evidence.

Mr. Gandhi in his letter to the Viceroy has sought to fasten responsibility on the Government of India. The Government of India emphatically repudiate the suggestion. It is clearly preposterous to contend that it is they who are responsible for the violence of the past few months which so gravely disorganized the normal life of the country — and, incidentally, aggravated the difficulties of the food situation, at a time when the united energies of the people might have been devoted to the vital part of repelling the enemy and striking a blow for the freedom of India, the Commonwealth and the world.

Detention Camp,
8th February, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD,

I have very carefully studied your letter. I am sorry to say that there is nothing in the correspondence which has taken place between His Excellency and myself or your letter, to warrant a recalling of my intention to fast. I have mentioned in my letters to His Excellency the conditions which can induce prevention or suspension of the step.

If the temporary release is offered for my convenience, I do not need it. I should be quite content to take my fast as a detainee or prisoner. If it is for the convenience of the Government I am sorry I am unable to suit them much as I should like to do so. I can say this much that I, as a prisoner, shall avoid, as far as is humanly possible, every cause of inconvenience to the Government, save what is inherent in the fast itself. The impending fast has not been conceived to be taken as a free man. Circumstances may arise, as they have done before now, when I may have to fast as a free man. If therefore I am released, there will be no fast in terms of my correspondence above mentioned. I shall have to survey the situation *de novo* and decide what I should do. I have no desire to be released under false pretences. In spite of all that has been said against me, I have not to belie the vow of Truth and Non-violence which alone makes life liveable for me. I say this, if it is only for my own satisfaction. It does me good to reiterate openly my faith when outer darkness surrounds me, as it does just now.

I must not hustle the Government into a decision on this letter. I understand that your letter has been dictated through the telephone. In order to give the Government enough time, I shall suspend the fast, if necessary, to Wednesday next, 10th instant.