

So far as the statement proposed to be issued by the Government is concerned, and of which you have favoured me with a copy, I can have no opinion. But if I might have I must say that it does me an injustice. The proper course would be to publish the full correspondence and let the public judge for themselves.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

35

CONFIDENTIAL

Home Department,
Government of India,
New Delhi, 9th February, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am instructed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 8th February 1943 which has been laid before the Governor-General in Council. The Government of India note your decision with great regret. Their position remains the same, that is to say, they are ready to set you at liberty for the purpose and duration of your fast. But if you are not prepared to take advantage of that fact and if you fast while in detention, you will do so solely on your own responsibility and at your own risk. In that event you will be at liberty to have your own medical attendants, and also to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during its period. Suitable drafting alterations will be made in the statement which the Government of India would, in that event, issue to the press.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM

To

M. K. GANDHI, Esq.

(Received by telephone — 9-2-'43

IRWIN

Secretary to the Government of Bombay)

Received on 10-2-'43
at 6-5 P. M.

The following is the full text of the Government of India communique :

Mr. Gandhi has informed His Excellency the Viceroy that he proposes to undertake a fast of three week's duration from the 10th February. It is to be a fast according to capacity, and during it Mr. Gandhi proposes to add juices of citrus fruit 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 fasting to achieve political ends. There can, in their judgement, 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 its regret that Mr. Gandhi should think it necessary to employ such a weapon on this occasion, and should seek a justification for it in anything which Government may have said or done in connection with the 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 their policy. Nor will they be responsible for its consequences on Mr. Gandhi's health. They cannot prevent Mr. Gandhi from fasting. It was their wish, however, that if he decided to do so, he should do so as a free man and under his own arrangements, so as to bring out clearly that the responsibility for any fast and its consequences rested exclusively with him. They accordingly informed Mr. Gandhi that he would be released for the purpose and for the duration of the fast of which he had notified them, and with him any members of the party living with him who may wish to accompany him. Mr. Gandhi in reply has expressed his readiness to abandon his intended fast if released, failing which he will fast in detention. In other words, it is now

clear that only his unconditional release would prevent him from fasting. This the Government of India are not prepared to concede. Their position remains the same: that is to say, they are ready to set Mr. Gandhi at liberty for the purpose and duration of his fast. But if Mr. Gandhi is not prepared to take advantage of that fact and if he fasts while in detention, he does so solely on his own responsibility and at his own risk. He would be at liberty in that event to have his own medical attendants, and also to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during its period.

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 measures which Government has been compelled to adopt to deal with it. But they think this 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 "a 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 of 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; it was an open rebellion which was to be as short and as 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 — an attack which would, if realized, have most seriously imperilled the whole cause of the United Nations — against Government 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 Congress 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 directions 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 attacks 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 wires 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 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 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 that it is persons who are outside the Congress fold who have registered their resentment at the arrest of the leaders of a movement which they did not profess to follow. A more direct answer to the argument is to be had in the fact that known Congressmen have been repeatedly found engaged in incitements 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 the Congress Party. As early as the 20th of August last, the Working Committee of the League expressed the view, reiterated many times since, that by the slogan "Quit India" what was 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 persist in their contention 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 last 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 task of repelling the enemy and of striking a blow for the freedom of India, the Commonwealth and the world.

37

Detention Camp,
27-9-1943

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

On the eve of your departure from India I would like to send you a word.

Of all the high functionaries I have had the honour of knowing none has been the cause of such deep sorrow to me as you have been. It has cut me to the quick to have to think of you as having countenanced untruth, and that regarding one whom you at one time considered as your friend. I hope and pray that God will some day put it into your heart to realize that you, a representative of a great nation, had been led into a grievous error.

With good wishes,

I still remain,
Your friend,
M. K. GANDHI

38

PERSONAL

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla), 7th October, 1943

DEAR Mr. GANDHI,

I have received your letter of 27th September. I am indeed sorry that your feelings about any deeds or words of mine should be as you describe. But I must be allowed, as gently as I may, to make plain to you that I am quite unable to accept your interpretation of the events in question.

As for the corrective virtues of time and reflection evidently they are ubiquitous in their operation, and wisely to be rejected by no man.

M. K. GANDHI, Esq.
Received on 15-10-1943

I am sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

55

III
CORRESPONDENCE DURING THE FAST

39

Detention Camp,
12 February, 1943

DEAR COL. BHANDARI,

You have told me that the Government have instructed you to convey to them urgently any wish I might have to express. You have also given me a copy of the instructions of the Government about the regulating of friends' visits. This is my submission about the visits :

1. It is not fair to leave the initiative to me. In the present state of my mind I have no initiative about such visits. If therefore the Government wish that I should receive visitors they should inform the public that, if any member of the public specially desires to see me, they will give him the permission. Their names need not be referred to me. For, I will not thwart the wish of any friend to see me. It is highly probable that my children and other relatives as also inmates of the Ashram and other friends who are intimately connected with me through one or more of my many activities may want to see me. If Rajaji, for instance, who had already applied to the Government for permission to see me in connection with the communal problem wants to see me about that matter or any other, I should be glad to see him. But even regarding him I would not take the initiative of submitting his name to the Government.

2. If the visitors are permitted to see me without any restrictions as to the matters they might discuss with me, the object of discussions would be largely frustrated if the discussions cannot be published. I would of course, always and in every circumstance, myself rule out, without needing any external pressure, any discussion that can, by any stretch of imagination, be helpful to the Fascist powers, including Japan. If visits contemplating discussions are to be allowed the declaration I have suggested to be made by the Government should obviously be made forthwith so that such visits may take place in the early stages of the fast.

3. It is possible that those who have been serving or nursing me in the Ashram or those who were attending on me during my previous fasts may want to stay with me to take part in the nursing. If they should so wish they should be permitted. I see difficulty in the way of making public announcement on this point. If my proposal commends itself to the Government, I suggest their addressing Shrimati Janaki Devi, the widow of the late Seth Jamnalal Bajaj telling her that if anyone desires during my fast to take part in serving me, he would be permitted to do so on her submitting their names to the Government. She knows all those who have served me before.

Then there are two other matters. I have been most anxious all these months to know all about the state of health of Shri Mathooradas Tricumjee, ex-Mayor of Bombay, a grand-son of one of my sisters long since dead. The Government may either let me have the information or they may permit Shri Mathooradas Tricumjee himself to write to me, or if he is physically unable to do so, anybody may be allowed on his behalf to give me the fullest information. When I was arrested his life was almost despaired of. I read in the papers however that he had undergone a successful operation.

The other thing is in connection with the news that appears in the *Bombay Chronicle* received here today, that Professor Bhansali has embarked on another fast, this time out of sympathy with me. I would like, in order to save time, the Government to convey the following message to him by express wire or through telephone, whichever may be the quickest way :

" I have just read about your sympathetic fast. You have just ended your very long fast over Chimur. You have made that your special task. You should therefore quickly rebuild your body and fulfil the self-allotted task. Leave God to do with me as He likes. I would not have interfered if you had not just risen from a fast that might have proved fatal and if you had not imposed on yourself a special duty "

If the Government would comply with my request on this point I would like them to send the message without any alteration and further to let me correspond with him if my message does not produce the desired result.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

40

POSITION REGARDING INTERVIEWS

1. In respect to procedure, the initiative is left entirely to Mr. Gandhi.
2. The absence of any restrictions on the subjects discussed.
3. The fact that an official will be present during interviews.
4. Restrictions on the publication of discussions.

(The foregoing was communicated by Col Bhandari personally to Gandhiji at 1-10 P. M. on 12th February, 1943).

Conveyed by Col. Bhandari on 16th Feb., 1943 from the Government's letter dated 14th Feb., 1943.

Paragraph 1. — If Mr. Gandhi has no initiative about visits it is equally true that Government have no wishes in the matter. They therefore regret that they cannot see their way to making any public announcement beyond that which is already contained in their communique of February 10th which made it clear that he would be at liberty to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during the period of his fast. They adhere to their original decision, which is that they will communicate to him for his information the names of those who ask for interview as his friends, provided they see no objection to any particular individual, and it will be left to him and/or his advisers to take such action as they think fit.

Paragraph 2.—Government are glad to note the assurances given in the paragraph but regret they must adhere to their original decision that no account of any interview that may take place shall be published without their specific approval.

Paragraph 3.—If the Inspector General of Prisons considers that one or two extra nurses are required, the matter will certainly be considered sympathetically.

Paragraph 5 & 6.—The Government of India regret that the reference to Chimur in Mr. Gandhi's draft message to Professor Bhansali and to implication that the latter is to continue his agitation on that subject makes it impossible for the Government of India to communicate the message as it stands. They would, however, be prepared to inform Professor Bhansali that Mr. Gandhi wishes him to give up his fast in view of the fact that he is only just recovering from his first one, or they would be prepared to consider an alternative message in Mr. Gandhi's own words.

As regards the health of Mr. Mathooradas Tricumjee, referred to in paragraph 4, the Government of Bombay is making inquiries and will communicate to Mr. Gandhi as soon as possible any information that is obtained. In the meanwhile, Mr. Mathooradas is being informed that he may himself write letters to Mr. Gandhi on personal and domestic matters.

42

Detention Camp,
February 24, 1943

DEAR COL. BHANDARI,

There seems to be, between Khan Bahadur Kateli and me, a conflict in the understanding of Government instructions about interviews. From the correspondence and instructions you were good enough to read to me I had gathered that those who were permitted to visit me were not restricted as to the nature of discussion or its duration, a Government representative if necessary being present. Where I am physically unable to carry on discussion I leave it to Shri Pyarelal to finish it. Naturally also the visitors who are intimately connected with me are seen and talked to by my wife. I personally can do very little talking. Doctors, for one thing, have to limit it to the fewest possible minutes. The Khan Bahadur's instructions are that the talk must be confined only as between them and me. If such is the position it is hopeless. Thus, Seth R. D. Birla came and so did Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj. They know all about the trusts that I used to regulate. Naturally, I took the opportunity of their visits and instructed Shri Pyarelal accordingly and he has been talking to them regarding them. The Khan Bahadur had a very delicate duty to perform. He did it firmly but as gracefully as was possible under the circumstances. The Khan Bahadur also says he has strict instructions not to allow visitors to take any notes or papers. During the remaining

days of the fast and convalescence, I would like, if possible, to be undisturbed by such things. I would therefore like clear instructions which Khan Bahadur and I can mutually understand. I have no desire to go behind them.

Shri Devadas Gandhi, my son, has permission to stop at the Palace as long as he likes. During the permission period he talks during odd minutes when he thinks he can. Naturally, the Khan Bahadur cannot be present at those times. I have asked Shri Pyarelal to show him all the correspondence that has passed between the Government of India and the Government of Bombay and myself. I had also the intention of supplying him with copies of such correspondence. But since the Khan Bahadur's prohibition, pending Government instructions, I have asked my son not to take any copies.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

43

Order dated 26th February, 1943, in reply to Gandhiji's letter of 24th February, '43, communicated by Col. Bhandari.

2. It has throughout been the intention of Government that an official should be present during all interviews..... Government has not so far insisted on this in respect of interviews with Devadas and Ramdas Gandhi in view of the condition of their father, but now that he is improving the Government desires that they should be allowed interviews only two or three times a day and this should be subject to the same conditions as other interviews.

3. The object of the arrangement sanctioned by the Government was to enable Mr. Gandhi to interview friends. Government has no objection, if other detainees happen to be present during an interview, to their joining in the conversation, but when Mr. Gandhi himself terminates an interview or is unable to continue it, it should be regarded as closed and no further conversation allowed with other detainees.

4. Government does not think that copies of its correspondence with Mr. Gandhi should be allowed to go out of the detention camp.

44

Detention Camp,
2nd March, 1943 .

DEAR COL. BHANDARI,

You were good enough yesterday, my day of silence, to tell me that the Government had restricted to my two sons the admission of outsiders at the breaking of the fast tomorrow. Whilst I am thankful for the concession I am unable to avail myself of it. For, as the Government know, I make no distinction between sons born to me and numerous others who are as dear to me even as they are. I told you three or four days ago that, if the Government allowed any outsiders to be present at the breaking of the fast, they should allow all — nearly fifty — who are at present in Poona, and who have been allowed to visit me during the fast. I see that that was not to be.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

45

Detention Camp,
12-3-'43

DEAR COL. BHANDARI,

With reference to the talk this morning, we would like to bring the following facts to your notice.

As regards Mrs. Gandhi, she has been suffering from chronic bronchitis with dialatation of the bronchi. She has also complained latterly of pain of an anginal character and has had attacks of tachycardia with heart rate of 180 per minute. As you must have noticed, she often gets puffiness of the face and eyelids especially in the mornings. Her physical

disabilities are telling upon her mental condition, though Gandhiji's company mitigates that to a large extent. In view of all this we are of the opinion that she should have a whole time nurse companion with her. A person who can speak her language and is known to her personally is likely to succeed better.

As regards Gandhiji we are of the opinion that he will require careful nursing and looking after for another month or so. If Kanu Gandhi can be left for that period it will be the best, as he is attached to Gandhiji and has been trained to anticipate his wants. If the Government have no objection he is ready and willing to stay as long as he is required.

Yours sincerely,
M. D. D. GILDER
S. NAYYAR

46

Detention Camp,
13-3-'43

DEAR COL, BHANDARI,

With reference to this morning's conversation about Kanu Gandhi's presence with me during the convalescence period, not extending beyond a month according to the doctors' opinion, I beg to say that, if the Government will not permit him to stay with me during that period, I am afraid, I must go without his services however valuable they are. I must confess that I do not like this kind of treatment which seems to me to be one of the sharp reminders, even during my helpless period, for which I am quite aware I am solely responsible, that I am a prisoner. But even a prisoner may give himself the privilege of denying himself conveniences whose acceptance may humiliate him, as the offer to give a substitute for Kanu Gandhi seems to do.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

63

Detention Camp,
dated 13-3-'43

DEAR COL. BHANDARI,

You will remember that we asked for the services of Mr. Mehta sometime after Gandhiji had started his fast and when it became evident to us that his help in the management of the case was necessary. He had rendered useful service in Gandhiji's previous fast, and Gandhiji has full confidence in him.

Towards the end of the fast we had requested you to secure his service till Gandhiji had well advanced in convalescence. We were therefore surprised this morning when you informed us that his services would terminate on the 17th instant. Nevertheless we record our opinion that the convalescence period is by no means over. You have yourself observed with us that Gandhiji is still bedridden and unable to move about by himself. We are, therefore, of opinion that Mr. Mehta's service should be continued at least up to the end of this month. We would like you please to bring our opinion at once to the notice of the Government.

Yours sincerely,
M. D. D. GILDER
S. NAYYAR

Detention Camp,
20-3-'43

DEAR COL. BHANDARI,

In the course of your conversation with Gandhiji this morning regarding Shri Dinshaw Mehta's attendance you remarked that you presumed his visits could now be dispensed with as I could more or less replace him. Your premise, I am afraid, is not correct. Whilst it is true that I have been attending on Gandhiji for some years and have also given

him massage under normal conditions, I have never applied myself to specialized massage. I have neither got Shri Mehta's knowledge nor his experience to enable me to give Gandhiji the treatment which his system may demand from day to day during his convalescence. As you probably know Shri Mehta has had experience of Gandhiji's twentyone days fast of 1932 when he attended upon him, whilst I was a prisoner in the Nasik Central Prison. The treatment of massage etc. at that time had to be kept up for three months. I am writing this as I feel it necessary to draw the attention of the authorities to these facts as also to my own limitations at the present stage of Gandhiji's convalescence.

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

IV
CORRESPONDENCE AFTER FAST

A
PYARELAL'S LETTER ON GOVT. COMMUNIQUE

49

Detention Camp,
18th February, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM,

I have not had the privilege of coming in contact with you. For the last twenty years I have been co-secretary with the late Shri Mahadev Desai to Gandhiji. The occasion for writing this letter is the Press Communique dated 10th February, 1943, that has been issued by the Government of India in connection with Gandhiji's fast. You knew Shri Mahadev Desai personally. If he had been alive today he would have, from his precise and tenacious memory, sent a categorical refutation of the various allegations and insinuations contained in that document against Gandhiji, which might have compelled conviction. In his absence that duty has devolved upon me. I am a very poor substitute for the late Shri Mahadev Desai, but I feel that I should be failing in my duty if I did not put on record my personal testimony, for what it may be worth, in refutation of those charges.

I take the following from the Press Communique :

"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 a 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 of July last after the Working Committee resolution was passed, Mr. Gandhi stated that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiations, there was no question of one more chance; after all, it was an open rebellion which was to be as short and as swift as possible. His last message was 'do or die.' "

The obvious inference that the Government want the public to draw from this is that Gandhiji had actually bidden good-bye to his creed of non-violence in connection with the contemplated Civil Disobedience struggle, that he had sanctioned the use of violence in its prosecution, and was prepared to condone the same. In the above extract Gandhiji's utterances have been torn from their non-violent context and presented in a violent setting. Take his last message 'do or die'. This expression — the exact contrary of 'do or kill' — was used by Gandhiji in his closing Hindustani speech in the A. I. C. C. which was in fact a continuation of the Hindustani speech on the previous day. The whole of the earlier portion of this speech was an impassioned reaffirmation of his faith in non-violence and an exhortation to the people to observe the same. He summed up his speech in two words which meant "do your duty and die if you must in the course of discharging it." I do not know whether a full report of this speech was allowed to be published in the press. I give below from memory a few cullings from it, to illustrate its unmistakable non-violent setting:

"I am the same Gandhi that I was in 1920. I attach the same importance to non-violence that I did then. If, therefore, anybody has no faith in non-violence, let him not vote for this resolution."

"The present struggle has its roots in Ahimsa. God would not have forgiven me if, in the present crisis when the world is being scorched in the flames of Himsa and

pinning for deliverance, I failed to make use of the special talent which he has vouchsafed to me."

"In this resolution there is no hatred for the British. If people ran amock and used violence against Englishmen, they would not find me alive in their midst to witness it. And the responsibility for it would be upon those who perpetrated those outrages."

Both Shri Mahadev Desai and myself recorded these utterances as they dropped from Gandhiji's lips. The notes of these speeches are not with me here, but they are in existence. I have, however, before me a gist of these speeches in Shri Mahadev Desai's own hand. He had prepared it for Gandhiji's use on arrival here and it was found after his death among his papers.

To reinforce my point let me here mention Gandhiji's last instructions which he gave me just as he went out to present himself for arrest on the morning of 9th August last at Birla House. His words were, "Let every non-violent soldier of freedom write out the slogan 'do or die' on a piece of paper or cloth and stick it on his clothes, so that in case he died in the course of offering Satyagraha, he might be distinguished by that sign from other elements who do not subscribe to non-violence." Scores of representative Congress workers came in several lorry loads to Birla House on that morning to meet Gandhiji who was to have explained to them his wishes in connection with the A. I. C. C. resolution of the previous evening. In Gandhiji's absence I gave them his parting message. I explained to them what I knew from him to be his attitude, namely, that while in the event of civil disobedience being launched everybody would be free to go the full length under Ahimsa, there were two things to which he would not be a living witness in their midst. These were a cowardly giving up of the struggle or running mad and indulging in violence on their part.

As regards Gandhiji's "offer" to meet the Viceroy, it was made by him in his closing speech before the A. I. C. C. The Government's communique seeks to discredit it by saying that, at a press interview on 14th of July after the Wardha Working Committee's resolution was passed, Gandhiji stated that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation. This has to be read with the following interviews he gave to press correspondents followed by his impassioned declaration before the A. I. C. C. that he was going to seek an interview with the Viceroy and was not going to commence civil disobedience before the result of the interview was known. As I have not the corrected text of these interviews by me I have to satisfy myself by giving the *Statesman's* version which suffers from some obvious printer's devils.

The *Statesman* 7-8-'42

MR. GANDHI ANSWERS QUESTIONS."

Bombay, August 6

"In an exclusive interview to the Associated Press today, Mr. Gandhi answered a number of questions on the new resolution of the Congress Working Committee.

"Q. — Does the resolution mean peace or war? There is an interpretation particularly among the foreign journalists, that it means declaration of war and that the last three paragraphs of the resolution are the really operative part. Is the emphasis on the first part or the last part of the resolution?

"A. — The emphasis in any non-violent struggle, projected or in operation, is always on peace. War, when it becomes an absolute necessity.

"Q. — Do you contemplate the immediate establishment of a provisional government and, if so, how do you expect it to come into being? Do you think that there would be a period of interregnum between the endorsement of the resolution by the A. I. C. C. and the starting of the mass struggle?

"A. — If independence is ushered in with perfect British good will, then I expect an almost simultaneous establishment of a provisional government which being just now based, as it must be of necessity, on non-violence, will, to command universal confidence, represent the free and voluntary association of all parties.

"Q.—Do you contemplate any negotiation between the Congress and the British Government before launching a mass struggle?

"A.—I have definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress resolution and the starting of the struggle. I do not know that what I contemplate doing according to my wont can be in any way described as being in the nature of negotiation, but a letter will certainly go to the Viceroy, not as an ultimatum but as an earnest pleading for avoidance of a conflict. If there is a favourable response, then my letter can be the basis for negotiation.

"Q.—What is the maximum time you are prepared to wait to see if there is any response from the British Government and the United Nations to the "last minute appeal" of the A. I. C. C.?

"A.—The object with which the demand for immediate withdrawal is made does not allow of a long interval for the simple reason that the war will not be suspended while, in expectation of some thing turning up, the interval is contemplated. The Working Committee itself, which is sincerely eager to mobilize the whole of free Indian opinion in favour of the war effort, is impatient to do so, and in view of the terrible suspense created throughout India it is altogether wrong both for the Congress and British Power to prolong the suspense for a day longer than is warranted by force of circumstances beyond control."

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The Statesman 9-7-1942

MR. GANDHI'S REPLY TO "NEWS CHRONICLE"

Bombay, August 8

"Replying to the *News Chronicle* editorial Mr. Gandhi in an interview today said :

'If the resolution goes through this evening, I shall be the chief actor in the tragedy; it is therefore dreadful if any responsible Englishman considers me to be guilty of hatred of the British and an admitted partiality for appeasement. In recent times I have not heard any other Englishman accusing me of the hatred of the British. Anyway, I emphatically plead not guilty. My love of the British is equal to that of my own people. I claim no merit for it, for I have equal love for all mankind without exception. It demands no reciprocity. I own no enemy on earth. That is my creed.

'The resolution has provided for the difficulty that the framers could anticipate. They have accounted for every valid criticism and I can say on behalf of the Congress that it would any time be prepared to consider and make allowance for my (any?) valid difficulty. No one responsible has even taken the trouble of discussing with the Working Committee of the

Congress the difficulty there is about immediate recognition of India's independence. The Congress' consent to the military operations of the Allied arms during the pendency of the war surely is sufficient answer to my (any?) difficulty we could conceive.

'The British or the Allies run no risk in recognizing independence. The risk is all on the side of India but the Congress is prepared to take it. Not only the British run no risk so far as the conduct of the war is concerned, but they gain, by this one act of justice, an ally counting 400 millions and accession of strength that is derived from a consciousness of having done that justice.' "

Now, take "open rebellion which was to be as short and as swift as possible." It is common knowledge that Gandhiji has set the fashion in using military terms in connection with Satyagraha. Therefore he described the struggle often as "a non-violent rebellion". He has repeatedly referred to himself as a "rebel" and the Congress frankly and openly as a "rebel body". As for the meaning of "as swift and as short as possible", I would refer you to the following excerpts from the clippings referred to already:

"Q.—How quickly do you think you can win, and is not a complete general strike necessary for such speed?

"A.—Whether people believe it or not, I must confess that in non-violent action God is the decisive factor. Whatever strength I possess is not my own. Every ounce of it comes from the God of Truth who does not dwell in the clouds up above but who dwells in every fibre of my being. Therefore it is very difficult for me to speak with the precision say of General Wavell who thinks as he must that his dispositions and calculations must be such and can be made such that they cannot be overridden by any such unknown and intangible power called God, or Truth, or whatever other name human fancy chooses to give to that Power.

"You are however right when you say that for a swift ending a general strike is necessary. It is not outside my contemplation, but seeing that I shall take every step in terms of my oft repeated declaration that a mass struggle is not conceived in any inimical spirit but in the friendliest spirit, I shall move with the utmost caution. If a general strike becomes a dire necessity I shall not flinch."

⁴ (Statesman, August 7, '42. Mr. Gandhi answers Questions.)

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"... We here feel that Britain cannot be extricated from its critical position unless India's hearty co-operation is secured. That co-operation is impossible without the people realizing that they are independent today. And they have to act swiftly, if they are to retain the independence regained after insufferable period of foreign domination. No one can change the nature of a whole mass of mankind by promises when the reality is the indispensable requisite for energizing them." (*Statesman*, August 9, '42)

In the light of the foregoing the expression "a fight to the finish in the course of which he would not hesitate to run any risk however great", loses the sinister meaning ascribed to it in the communique.

Gandhiji's reference to "all Congressmen being authorized to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement" has been wholly misunderstood. From past experience which had shown that all sort of men set themselves up as leaders and misled the people he took the precaution of leaving each one to himself to act as he or she thought best, of course, in terms of non-violence.

Yours truly
PYARELAL

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

50

Home Department,
New Delhi, 24th Feb., 1943

DEAR MR. PYARELAL,

I am desired to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated February 18th addressed to Sir Richard Tottenham.

Yours truly
S. J. L. OLVER

Pyarelal Esq.
Detention Camp,
Poona

B
CORRESPONDENCE ON SIR REGINALD
MAXWELL'S SPEECH

51

Detention Camp,
21st May, 1943

DEAR SIR REGINALD MAXWELL,

It was only on the 10th instant, that I read your speech delivered in the Legislative Assembly on the 15th February last on the adjournment motion about my fast. I saw at once that it demanded a reply. I wish I had read it earlier.

I observe that you are angry, or at least were at the time you delivered your speech. I cannot in any other way account for your palpable inaccuracies. This letter is an endeavour to show them. It is written to you, not as an official, but as man to man. The first thought that came to me was that your speech was a deliberate distortion of facts. But I quickly revised it. So long as there was a favourable construction possible to put upon your language, the unfavourable had to be rejected. I must assume therefore that what appeared to me to be distortions were not deliberate.

You have said that "the correspondence that led to the fast is there for anyone to interpret as he chooses"; yet you have straightway told your audience that "it can perhaps be read in the light of the following facts." Did you leave them the choice?

I now take your "facts" *seriatim* :—

1 "When the Congress Party passed their resolution of August 8th, a Japanese attack on this country was thought to be likely."

You seem to have conveyed the meaning that the thought was that of the Congress and that it was gratuitous. The fact is that the Government gave currency to the thought and emphasized it by action which even seemed ludicrous.

2. "By demanding the withdrawal of British power from India and by placing the Congress in open opposition to it the Congress party might be thought to have hoped for some advantage to themselves if the Japanese attack succeeded."

Now this is not a fact but your opinion wholly contrary to facts. Congressmen never hoped for, nor desired, any advantage from Japanese success: on the contrary, they dreaded it and that dread inspired the desire for the immediate end of British rule. All this is crystal clear from the resolution of the All India Congress Committee (8th August, 1942) and my writings.

3 "Today, six months after, the Japanese danger has, at any rate for the time being, receded and there is little immediate hope from that quarter."

This again is your opinion; mine is that the Japanese danger has not receded. It still stares India in the face. Your fling that "there is little immediate hope from that quarter," should be withdrawn unless you think and prove that the resolution and my writings adverted to in the previous paragraph did not mean what they said.

4. "The movement initiated by the Congress has been decisively defeated."

I must combat this statement. Satyagraha knows no defeat. It flourishes on blows the hardest imaginable. But I need not go to that bower for comfort. I learnt in schools established by the British Government in India that "Freedom's battle once begun is bequeathed from bleeding sire to son." It is of little moment when the goal is reached so long as effort is not relaxed. The dawn came with the establishment of the Congress sixty years ago. Sixth of April, 1919, on which* All India Satyagraha began, saw a spontaneous awakening from one end of India to the other. You can certainly derive comfort, if you like, from the fact that the immediate objective of the movement was not gained as some Congressmen had expected. But that is no

criterion of 'decisive' or any 'defeat'. It ill-becomes one belonging to a race which owns no defeat to deduce defeat of a popular movement from the suppression of popular exuberance, may be not always wise, by a frightful exhibition of power.

5, "Now therefore it is the object of the Congress Party to rehabilitate themselves and regain if they can the credit they have lost"

Surely, your own experience should correct this opinion. You know, as well as I do, that every attempt at suppression of the Congress has given it greater prestige and popularity. This the latest attempt at suppression is not likely to lead to a contrary result. Hence the questions of 'lost credit' and 'rehabilitation' simply do not arise.

6. "Thus they are now concerned to disclaim responsibility for the consequences that followed their decision. The point is taken up by Mr Gandhi in his correspondence with the Viceroy. The awkward facts are now disowned as unproved"

'They' here can only mean 'me'. For throughout your speech I was the target. 'Now' means at the time of my fast. I remind you that I disclaimed responsibility on 14th August last when I wrote to H. E. the Viceroy. In that same letter I laid it on the Government who by their wholesale arrests of 9th August provoked the people to the point of madness. "The awkward facts" are not awkward for me when the responsibility rests on the Government and what you put forward as 'facts' are only one-sided allegations awaiting proof.

7. "Mr Gandhi takes up his stand; 'Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence'

To whom are they to justify themselves?

Sardar Sant Singh: Before an impartial enquiry committee."

Was not Sardar Sant Singh's answer a proper answer? How nice it would have been if you had not put in the interjection. For, have not the Government of India been

obliged before now to justify their acts by appointing inquiry committees, as for instance, after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre ?

But you proceed,

8. "Elsewhere in his letters Mr Gandhi makes this clear. He says, 'Convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends.' In the alternative he asks, 'If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Working Committee members' So far as can be seen, these were the demands, when he conceived his fast. There is no other solid demand made "

Here there is a double wrong done to me. You have ignored the fact that my letters were written to one whom I considered to be a friend. You have further ignored the fact that the Viceroy in his letter had asked me to make clear proposals. If you had borne these two facts in mind, you would not have wronged me as you have done. But let me come to the ninth count of your indictment and it will be clear to you what I mean.

9 "But now, fresh light emerges Government without granting any of his demands informed Mr Gandhi that they would release him for the purpose and for the duration of the fast in order to make it clear they disclaimed responsibility for the consequences On that Mr. Gandhi replied that if he was released, he would at once abandon the fast and that he had conceived the fast only as a prisoner Thus, if he were released, the objects for which he declared his fast, although still unfulfilled, would recede into the background As a free man, he would neither demand these objects nor fast. Interpreted in this way, his fast would seem to amount to little more than a demand for release."

Together with the letter containing the offer of release, a copy of the draft communique that was to be issued by the Government was delivered to me. It did not say that the offer was made in order "to make it clear that the Government disclaimed responsibility for the consequences." If I had seen that offending sentence I would have sent a simple refusal. In my innocence, I put a fair meaning on the offer and in my reply I argued why I could not accept

it. And, according to my wont, in order that the Government may not be misled in any shape or form, I told them how the fast was conceived and why it could not be taken by me as a free man. I went out of my way even to postpone, for the convenience of the Government, the commencement of the fast by a day. Mr. Irwin who had brought the offer and the draft communique appreciated the courtesy. Why was this reply of mine withheld from the public at the time the revised communique was issued, and why was an unwarranted interpretation given instead? Was not my letter a material document?

Now for the second wrong. You say that if I were released my objects for which I had declared the fast would recede into the background, and even gratuitously suggest that as a free man I would neither demand these objects nor fast. As a free man I could and would have carried on an agitation for an impartial public inquiry into the charges brought against Congressmen and me, I would also have asked for permission to see the imprisoned Congressmen. Assume that my agitation had failed to make any impression on the Government, I might then have fasted. All this, if you were not labouring under intense irritation, you could have plainly seen from my letter, supported, as you would have been, by my past record. Instead, you have deduced a meaning which, according to the simple rules of construction, you had no right to deduce. Again, as a free man I would have had the opportunity of examining the tales of destruction said to have been wrought by Congressmen and even by non-Congressmen. And if I had found that they had committed wanton acts of murder, then also I might have fasted as I have done before now. You should thus see that the demands made in my letter to H. E. the Viceroy would not have receded into the background if I had been released, for they could have been pressed otherwise than

by the fast, and that the fast had not the remotest connection with and desire for release. Moreover, imprisonment is never irksome to a Satyagrahi. For him a prison is a gateway of Liberty.

10. "I could quote several resolutions of the Congress Working Committee against him. . . Mr. Gandhi himself took up the subject in the *Harijan* dated 19th August 1939 There he says, 'Hunger-strike has positively become a plague.'"

My views quoted by you have not undergone the slightest change. If you had read the quotations without passion, it would have prevented you from putting upon my letter the construction you have.

11. "On the ethics of hunger-striking, Mr. Gandhi had something to say in the *Harijan* of 20th May, 1939, after his Rajkot fast. 'I now see that it was tainted by *himsa*!' Further on he remarks, 'this was not the way of *ahimsa* or conversion.'"

I am sorry to have to say that you have wholly misread my article. Fortunately I happen to have A. Hingorani's collection of my writings "*To the Princes and Their Peoples*". I quote from the *Harijan* article referred to by you: "At the end of my fast I had permitted myself to say that it had succeeded as no previous fast had done. I now see that it was tainted with *himsa*. In taking the fast I sought immediate intervention of the Paramount Power so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Saheb. This was not the way of *ahimsa* or conversion; it was the way of *himsa* or coercion. My fast to be pure should have been addressed only to the Thakore Saheb, and I should have been content to die, if I could not have melted his heart" I hope you realize that you misapplied the stray sentences taken from their setting. I described my fast as 'tainted' not because it was bad *ab initio* but because I sought the intervention of the Paramount Power. I have given you the credit of being unaware of the article. I wish you could read it. In any case, may I expect you to

correct the error? For me the Rajkot episode is one of the happiest chapters of my life, in that God gave me the courage to own my mistake and purge it by renouncing the fruits of the award. I became stronger for the purging.

12. "I must confess that speaking for myself it is certainly repugnant to Western ideas of decency to exploit against an opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry or mercy or to trifle with such a sacred trust as one's own life in order to play on the feelings of the public for the sake of some purely mundane object"

I must tread with extreme caution upon the ground with which you are infinitely more familiar than I can be. Let me however remind you of the historic fast of the late Mac Swiney. I know that the British Government let him die in imprisonment. But he has been acclaimed by the Irish people as a hero and a martyr. Edward Thompson in his "You have lived through all this" says that the late Mr. Asquith called the British Government's action a "political blunder of the first magnitude". The author adds: "He was allowed to die by inches, while the world watched with a passion of admiration and sympathy and innumerable British men and women begged their Government not to be such a damned fool." And is it repugnant to Western ideas of decency to exploit (if that expression must be retained) against the opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry or mercy? Which is better, to take the opponent's life secretly or openly, or to credit him with finer feelings and evoke them by fasting and the like? Again, which is better, to trifle with one's own life by fasting or some other way of self-immolation, or to trifle with it by engaging in an attempt to compass the destruction of the opponent and his dependants?

13 "What he says in effect is this. You say, Government is right and the Congress is wrong. I say the Congress is right and the Government is wrong, I chose to put the burden of proof on you. I am the only person to be convinced. You must either admit you are wrong or submit your reasons to me and make me the sole arbiter in the matter. . . . It

seems to me that Mr. Gandhi's demand is rather like asking the United Nations to appoint Hitler to adjudge the responsibility for the present war. It is not usual in this country to put the accused person on the bench to judge his own case."

This is an unbecoming caricature of my letters to the Viceroy. What I said in effect was this: "You have allowed me to consider myself as your friend. I do not want to stand on my rights and demand a trial. You accuse me of being in the wrong. I contend that your Government is in the wrong. Since you would not admit your Government's error you owe it to me to let me know wherein I have erred. For, I am in the dark as to how I have erred. If you convince me of my guilt, I will make ample amends." My simple request you have turned against me and compared me to an imaginary Hitler appointed to adjudge his own case. If you do not accept my interpretation of my own letters, can I not say, let an impartial judge examine the rival interpretations? Will it be an offensive comparison if I recall the fable of the wolf who was always in the right and the lamb who was always in the wrong?

14. "Mr. Gandhi is the leader of an open rebellion. . . . He forfeits that right (the right of being heard) so long as he remains an open rebel. He cannot claim to function except through the success of his own method. He cannot take part in public life under the protection of the law that he denies. He cannot be a citizen and yet not a subject "

You are right in describing me as the leader of an open rebellion except for a fundamental omission namely, strictly non-violent. This omission is on a par with the omission of 'nots' from the Commandments and quoting them in support of killing, stealing, etc. . . . You may dismiss the phrase or explain it away in any manner you like. But when you quote a person you may not omit anything from his language, especially an omission which changes the whole aspect of things. I have declared myself an open rebel on many occasions, even during my visit to London on the occasion of

the second Round Table Conference. But the anathema that you have pronounced against me has not been pronounced before. You will perhaps recall the time when the late Lord Reading was willing to hold a Round Table Conference in which I was to be present, although I was leading a mass civil disobedience movement. It was not called because I had insisted that the Ali Brothers, who were then in prison, should be released. British history which I was taught as a lad had it that Wat Tyler and John Hampden who had rebelled were heroes. In very recent times the British Government treated with Irish rebels whilst their hands were still red with blood. Why should I become an outcast although my rebellion is innocent and I have had nothing to do with violence?

In spite of the validity of my claim that you have enunciated a novel doctrine, I admit that you made a perfect statement when you said, "He cannot claim to function except through the success of his own method." My method, being based on truth and non-violence, ever succeeds to the extent it is applied. Therefore I function always and only through the success of my method and to the extent that I correctly represent, in my own person, its fundamentals.

The moment I became a Satyagrahi from that moment I ceased to be a subject, but never ceased to be a citizen. A citizen obeys laws voluntarily and never under compulsion or for fear of the punishment prescribed for their breach. He breaks them when he considers it necessary and welcomes the punishment. That robs it of its edge or of the disgrace which it is supposed to imply.

15. "In some of the published correspondence, Mr. Gandhi has made much of his intention to seek an interview with the Viceroy. But the Congress resolution still stood, together with Mr. Gandhi's own words 'do or die.' The Government communique, on the subject of his fast, has already reminded the public of Mr. Gandhi's statement made on 14th

July that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation..... I may again quote Mr. Gandhi's own words.....; 'Every one of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism.' Now listen to this: 'You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries or the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom.' 'We shall do or die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt.' 'This is open rebellion.'"

Let me first of all make a vital correction of the quotation you have taken from my press statement made on the 14th July and reported in the *Harijan* of 19th July. You have quoted me as saying that "there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation." The real quotation is "there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal." You will admit that the difference is material. The faulty quotation apart, you have omitted from my statement, which occupies nearly three columns of the *Harijan*, all the things which amplify my meaning and show the caution with which I was working. I take a few sentences from that statement. "It is possible that the British may negotiate a withdrawal. If they do it will be a feather in their cap. Then it will cease to be a case for withdrawal. If the British see, however late, the wisdom of recognizing the freedom of India without reference to the various parties, all things are possible. But the point I want to stress is this." Here follows the sentence misquoted by you. The paragraph then proceeds: "Either they recognize independence or they don't. After recognition many things can follow, for by that single act, the British representatives will have altered the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number. Therefore, whenever that great act is performed on behalf of the British people, it will be a red letter day in the history of India and the world. And,

as I have said, it can materially affect the fortunes of the war." From this fuller quotation, you will see how everything that was being done was done in order to ensure victory and ward off Japanese aggression. You may not appreciate my wisdom, but you may not impugn my good faith.

Though I have no verbatim report of my speeches before the All India Congress Committee, I have fairly full notes. I accept the correctness of your quotations. If you bear in mind that all things were said with non-violence always as the background, the statements become free from any objection. "Do or die" clearly means do your duty by carrying out instructions and die in the attempt if necessary.

As to my exhortation to the people to consider themselves free, I take the following from my notes. "The actual struggle does not commence this very moment. You have merely placed certain powers in my hands. My first act will be to wait upon H. E. the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. This may take two or three weeks. What are you to do in the meanwhile? I will tell you. There is the spinning wheel. I had to struggle with the Maulana Saheb before it dawned upon him that in a non-violent struggle it had an abiding place. The fourteen-fold constructive programme is all there for you to carry out. But there is something more you have to do and it will give life to that programme. Every one of you should, from this very moment, consider yourself a free man or woman and even act as if you are free and no longer under the heel of this Imperialism. This is no make-believe. You have to cultivate the spirit of freedom before it comes physically. The chains of a slave are broken the moment he considers himself a free man. He will then tell his master: 'I have been your slave all these days but I am no longer that now. You may kill me, but if you do not and if you

release me from the bondage, I will ask for nothing more from you. For henceforth instead of depending upon you I shall depend upon God for food and clothing. God has given me the urge for freedom and therefore I deem myself to be a free man.'" Apart from your resentment of the 'Quit India' cry, ask yourself whether the quotation as found in its own setting is in any way offensive? Should not a man, longing to be free, first of all cultivate the spirit of freedom and act accordingly irrespective of consequences?

16. "It is not the method of peaceful persuasion to go to the person whom you wish to convince armed with a resolution declaring mass rebellion. The essence of negotiation is that both parties should be uncommitted and that neither should exert the pressure of force on the other. That is true in any circumstances. But as between a subject and the State which rules him the position is still more emphatic. It is not for the subject to deal with the State on equal terms, still less to approach it with an open threat"

At the outset let me make one correction. The resolution did not "declare" mass rebellion. It merely sanctioned the "starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle." I was to "guide the nation in the steps to be taken." The paragraph sanctioning the mass struggle also "appeals to Britain and the United Nations in the interest of freedom."

The essence of negotiation should undoubtedly be that the parties are uncommitted and that neither "exerts the pressure of force on the other." In the case under consideration the actual position is that one party has overwhelming force at its disposal and the other has none. About non-committal too the Congress has no commitments except the immediate attainment of freedom. Subject to that there is the widest latitude for negotiation.

Your proposition about the subject and the State is I know a reply to the cry of "Quit India". Only the cry is intrinsically just and the subject and the State formula is too antediluvian to have any real meaning. It is because the Congress has felt the subjection of India as an insufferable reproach that it has risen against it. A well ordered State is subject to the people. It does not descend upon the people from above but the people make and unmake it.

The resolution of 8th August did not contain any threat open or veiled. 'It prescribed the limitations under which the negotiations could be carried on and its sanction was free of all "force", i. e., violence. It consisted of self-suffering. Instead of appreciating the fact that the Congress laid all its cards on the table, you have given a sinister meaning to the whole movement by drawing unwarranted inferences. In so far as there was any violence after the 8th of August last on the part of any Congressman, it was wholly unauthorized as is quite clear from the resolution itself. The Government in their wisdom left me no time whatsoever for issuing instructions. The All India Congress Committee finished after midnight on the 8th August. Well before sunrise on the 9th I was carried away by the Police Commissioner without being told what crime I had committed. And so were the members of the Working Committee and the principal Congressmen who happened to be in Bombay. Is it too much when I say that the Government invited violence and did not want the movement to proceed on peaceful lines?

Now let me remind you of an occasion of an open rebellion when you played an important part. I refer to the famous Bardoli Satyagraha under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He was conducting a campaign of civil disobedience. It had evidently reached a stage when the then Governor of Bombay felt that there should be a peaceful end to the

struggle. You will remember that the result of an interview between H. E. the then Governor and the Sardar was the appointment of a committee of which you were a distinguished member. And the committee's findings were for the most part in favour of the civil resisters. Of course you may say, if you wish, that the Governor made a mistake in negotiating with the rebel, and so did you in accepting the appointment. Consider the reverse position, what would have happened, if instead of appointing a committee the Governor had attempted heavy repression. Would not the Government have been held responsible for an outbreak of violence if the people had lost self-control?

17. "Government does hold Mr. Gandhi responsible for the recent happenings that have so disturbed the peace of India, caused so much loss of life and property of innocent persons and brought the country to the brink of a terrible danger I do not say he had any personal complicity in acts of violence. . . but it was he that put the match to the train carefully laid beforehand by himself and his colleagues That he was forced to do so prematurely was not his fault but our fortune This was the method by which they hoped to gain their ends They may seek to repudiate it, now that it has proved unsuccessful, but the responsibility is theirs none-the-less . . . If Mr Gandhi wished to dissociate himself from them, he could have spoken for himself without consulting the members of the Working Committee Can he then, without cancelling the Congress rebellion, without reparation, without even assurances for the future, claim at any moment to step back as though nothing had happened into the public life of the country and be received by Government and society as a good citizen?"

I can accept no responsibility for the unfortunate happenings described by you. I have no doubt whatsoever that history will record that the responsibility for the happenings was wholly that of the Government. In the nature of things I could not put a match to a train which for one thing was never laid. And if the train was never laid, the question of prematureness does not arise. The deprivation of the people of their leaders you may consider "our fortune".

I consider it a misfortune of the first magnitude for all concerned. I wish to repudiate nothing of what I have done or intended. I have no sense of repentance, for I have no sense of having done any wrong to any person. I have stated times without number that I detest violence in any shape or form. But I can give no opinion about things of which I have no first-hand knowledge. I never asked for permission to consult the Congress Working Committee to enable me to dissociate myself from violence. I asked for permission to see them, if I was expected to make any proposals on behalf of the Committee. I cannot cancel the Congress rebellion which is of a purely non-violent character. I am proud of it. I have no reparation to make, for I have no consciousness of guilt. And there can be no question of assurances for the future, when I hold myself guiltless. The question of re-entering the public life of the country or being received by Government and society as a good citizen does not arise. I am quite content to remain a prisoner. I have never thrust myself on the public life of the country or on the Government. I am but a humble servant of India. The only certificate I need is a certificate from the inner voice. I hope you realize that you gave your audience not facts but your opinions framed in anger.

To conclude, why have I written this letter? Not to answer your anger with anger. I have written it in the hope that you may read the sincerity behind my own words. I never despair of converting any person even an official of the hardest type. General Smuts was converted or say reconciled as he declared in his speech introducing the bill giving relief in terms of the settlement arrived at between him and me in 1914. That he has not fulfilled my hope or that of the Indian settlers which the settlement had inspired is a sad story, but it is irrelevant to the present purpose. I can multiply such recollections. I claim no credit for these

conversions or reconciliations. They were wholly due to the working of truth and non-violence expressing themselves through me. I subscribe to the belief or the philosophy that all life in its essence is one, and that the humans are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of that identity. This belief requires a living faith in a living God who is the ultimate arbiter of our fate. Without Him not a blade of grass moves. My belief requires me not to despair even of converting you though your speech warrants no such hope. If God has willed it He may put power in some word of mine which will touch your heart. Mine is but to make the effort. The result is in God's hands.

M. K. GANDHI

The Hon'ble Sir Reginald Maxwell,
Home Member,
Government of India, New Delhi

52

PERSONAL

New Delhi, the 17th June, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I have your letter of the 21st May and have read with interest your comments on my Assembly speech of the 15th February. I see you still maintain the position which you took up in your letters to His Excellency the Viceroy regarding the Congress resolution of the 8th August and responsibility for the disturbances that followed it. As you know, Government have never accepted the construction which you sought to put upon those events. So long as this fundamental difference exists, I must regretfully conclude that there is not sufficient common ground for profitable discussion of the other points raised in your letter.

M. K. GANDHI

Yours sincerely,
R. MAXWELL

Detention Camp,
23rd June, 1943

DEAR SIR REGINALD MAXWELL,

I thank you for your reply of 17th instant received on 21st instant to my letter of 21st May last.

I had not hoped that my reply would remove the fundamental difference between us, but I had hoped and would still like to hope that the difference would be no bar to an admission and correction of discovered errors. I had thought, as I still think, that my letter did point out some errors in your Assembly speech of 15th February last.

I am,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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LETTER TO QUAID-I-AZAM AND
CORRESPONDENCE ON IT

Detention Camp,
4th May, 1943

DEAR QUAID-I-AZAM,

When some time after my incarceration, the Government asked me for a list of newspapers I would like to have, I included the "*Dawn*" in my list. I have been receiving it with more or less regularity. Whenever it comes to me, I read it carefully. I have followed the proceedings of the League as reported in the "*Dawn*" columns. I noted your invitation to me to write to you. Hence this letter.

I welcome your invitation. I suggest our meeting face to face rather than talking through correspondence. But I am in your hands.

I hope that this letter will be sent to you and if you agree to my proposal, that the Government will let you visit me.

One thing I had better mention. There seems to be an 'if' about your invitation. Do you say I should write only if I have changed my heart? God alone knows men's hearts. I would like you to take me as I am.

Why should not you and I approach the great question of communal unity as men determined on finding a common solution and work together to make our solution acceptable to all who are concerned with it or are interested in it?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

55

Detention Camp,
4th May, 1943

Secretary, Government of India,
Home Department,
New Delhi

SIR,

Will you please forward the enclosed to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah?

I am,
Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

56

Home Department,
New Delhi, the 24th May, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

In reply to your letter of the 4th May in which you have requested the Government of India to forward a letter of the same date addressed by you to Mr. Jinnah, I am to inform you that the Government of India have decided

that your letter cannot be forwarded. This decision is in accordance with the restrictions which, as you are aware, have been placed on your correspondence and interviews while you are under detention. Government propose shortly to issue a communique, of which I enclose an advance copy, stating the fact that the letter has been withheld and the reasons therefor.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM

Received on 26-5-'43 at 6-30 p. m.

57

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

The Government of India have received a request from Mr. Gandhi to forward a short letter from himself to Mr. Jinnah expressing a wish to meet him.

In accordance with their known policy in regard to correspondence or interviews with Mr. Gandhi the Government of India have decided that this letter cannot be forwarded and have so informed Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah. They are not prepared to give facilities for political correspondence or contact to a person detained for promoting an illegal mass movement which he has not disavowed and thus gravely embarrassing India's war effort at a critical time. It rests with Mr. Gandhi to satisfy the Government of India that he can safely be allowed once more to participate in the public affairs of the country, and until he does so the disabilities from which he suffers are of his own choice.

Detention Camp,
27th May, 1943

DEAR SIR Richard Tottenham,

I received last evening your letter of the 24th instant refusing my request to forward my letter addressed to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah. I wrote only yesterday to the Superintendent of this camp asking him kindly to inquire whether my letter to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, and later, the one dated the 15th instant, to Right Hon'ble Lord Samuel had been forwarded to the respective addresses.

I am sorry for the Government's decision. For my letter to the Quaid-i-Azam was sent in reply to his public invitation to me to write to him, and I was especially encouraged to do so because his language had led me to think that if I wrote to him, my letter would be forwarded to him. The public too are anxious that the Quaid-i-Azam and I should meet or at least establish contact. I have always been anxious to meet the Quaid-i-Azam if perchance we could devise some solution of the communal tangle which might be generally acceptable. Therefore the disability in the present instance is much more that of the public than mine. As a Satyagrahi I may not regard as disabilities the restrictions which the Government have imposed upon me. As the Government are aware, I have denied myself the pleasure of writing to my relatives as I am not allowed to perform the service of writing to my co-workers who are in a sense more to me than my relatives.

The advance copy of the contemplated communique with which you have considerably favoured me requires amendment in more places than one. For, as it stands, it does not square with facts.

As to the disavowal referred to in the proposed communique, the Government are aware that I regard the non-violent

mass movement, for the launching of which the Congress gave me authority on the 8th August last, as perfectly legitimate and in the interest of the Government and the public. As it is, the Government left me no time to start the movement. Therefore how could a movement, which was never started, embarrass "India's" war effort? If then, there was any embarrassment by reason of the popular resentment of the Government's action in resorting to the wholesale arrests of principal Congressmen, the responsibility was solely that of the Government. The mass movement, as the resolution sanctioning it said in so many words, was sanctioned in order to promote India-wide effort on behalf of the Allied cause, including the cause of Russia and China, whose danger was very great in August last and from which, in my opinion, they are by no means free even now. I hope the Government will not feel offended when I say that all the war effort that is being put forth in India is not India's but the alien Government's. I submit that if the Government had complied with the request of the Congress as embodied in its August resolution, there would have been a mass effort without parallel for winning the battle of human freedom and ridding the world of the menace that Fascism, Nazism, Japanism and Imperialism are. I may be wholly wrong; any way this is my deliberate and honest opinion.

In order to make the communique accord with facts, I suggest the following alteration in the first paragraph: After Mr. Jinnah add "in response to his public invitation to Mr. Gandhi to write to him stating that he (Mr. Gandhi) would be willing to correspond with or meet him according as he wished."

I hope that the remaining portion of the communique too will be suitably amended in the light of my submission.

I am,
Yours sincerely
M. K. GANDHI

Detention Camp,
28th May, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM,

I handed my reply to your letter of the 24th instant, at about one o'clock yesterday, to the Superintendent. I hurried the writing and the dispatch in the hope of my letter reaching you before the publication of the communique. I was therefore astonished and grieved to find the communique in the papers received in the afternoon, and Reuter's report of the reactions upon it in London. Evidently there was no meaning in an advance copy of communique being sent to me. I regard the communique not only to be inconsistent with facts, but unfair to me. The only way partial redress can be given to me is the publication of the correspondence between us. I therefore request that it may be published.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

60

Home Department,
New Delhi, 4th June, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am directed to acknowledge your letter to Sir Richard Tottenham dated 27th May, 1943, and to say that the Government of India have considered it but see no reason to modify their communique already published.

Yours sincerely,
CONRAN SMITH

Home Department,
New Delhi, the 7th June, '43

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

In reply to your letter to Sir Richard Tottenham dated 28th May, 1943, I am directed to say that the advance copy of the communique stating Government's reasons for not forwarding your letter to Mr. Jinnah was furnished to you for your personal information and that Government regret that they see no reason to publish the correspondence.

Yours sincerely,
CONRAN SMITH

Received on 11-6-'43

D

LETTER TO LORD SAMUEL AND CORRESPONDENCE ON IT

62

Detention Camp,
15th May, 1943

DEAR LORD SAMUEL,

I enclose herewith a cutting from the *Hindu* dated the 8th April last containing Reuter's summary of your speech in the House of Lords, during the recent debate. Assuming the correctness of the summary I feel impelled to write this letter.

The report distressed me. I was wholly unprepared for your unqualified association with the one-sided and unjustified statement of the Government of India against the Congress and me.

You are a philosopher and a liberal. A philosophic mind has always meant for me a detached mind, and liberalism a sympathetic understanding of men and things.

As it seems to me there is nothing in what the Government has said to warrant the conclusions to which you are reported to have come.

From the summary I select a few of the items which in my opinion, are inconsistent with facts.

1. "The Congress Party has to a great extent thrown over democratic philosophy."

The Congress Party has never "thrown over democratic philosophy." Its career has been one progressive march towards democracy. Every one who subscribes to the attainment of the goal of independence through peaceful and legitimate means and pays four annas per year can become its member.

2. "It shows signs of turning towards totalitarianism."

You have based your charge on the fact that the Working Committee of the Congress had control over the late Congress ministries. Does not the successful party in the House of Commons do likewise? I am afraid even when democracy has come to full maturity, the parties will be running elections and their managing committees will be controlling the actions and policies of their members. Individual Congressmen did not run elections independently of the party machinery. Candidates were officially chosen and they were helped by All India leaders. "Totalitarian" according to the Oxford Pocket Dictionary means "designating a party that permits no rival loyalties or parties." "Totalitarian State" means "with only one governing party." It must have violence for its sanction for keeping control. A Congress member, on the contrary, enjoys the same freedom as the Congress President, or any member of the Working Committee. There are parties within the Congress itself. Above all the Congress eschews violence. Members render voluntary obedience. The All India Congress Committee can

at any moment unseat the members of the Working Committee and elect others.

3. "They (Congress Ministers) resigned (not?) because they had not the support of their Assemblies. They resigned because *de jure* they were responsible to their electorates, *de facto* they were responsible to the Working Committee of the Congress and the High Command. That is not democracy. That is totalitarianism."

You would not have said this, if you had known the full facts. The *de jure* responsibility of the ministers to the electorate was not diminished in any way by their *de facto* responsibility to the Congress Working Committee, for the very simple and valid reason that the Working Committee derives its power and prestige from the very electorate to whom the ministers were responsible. The prestige that the Congress enjoys is due solely to its service of the people. As a matter of fact the ministers conferred with the members of their parties in their respective assemblies and they tendered their resignations with their approval. But totalitarianism is fully represented by the Government of India which is responsible to no one in India. It is a tragic irony that a government which is steeped in totalitarianism brings that very charge against the most democratic body in India.

4. "India is unhappy in that the line of party division is the worst any country can have . . . it is division according to religious communities."

Political parties in India are not divided according to religious communities. From its very commencement the Congress has deliberately remained a purely political organization. It has had Britishers and Indians, including Christians, Parsis, Muslims and Hindus as presidents. The Liberal Party of India is another political organization, not to mention others that are wholly non-sectarian. That there are also communal organizations based on religion and they take part in politics, is undoubtedly true. But that fact

cannot sustain the categorical statement made by you. I do not wish in any way to minimize the importance of these organizations or the considerable part they play in the politics of the country. But I do assert that they do not represent the political mind of India. It can be shown that historically the politico-religious organizations are the result of the deliberate application by the Government of the "divide and rule policy". When the British imperial influence is totally withdrawn, India will probably be represented solely by political parties drawn from all classes and creeds.

5. "The Congress can claim at best barely more than half the population of India. Yet in their totalitarian spirit they claim to speak for the whole."

If you measure the representative character of the Congress by the number of members on the official roll, then it does not represent even half the population. The official membership is infinitesimal compared to India's vast population of nearly four hundred millions. The enrolled membership began only in 1920. Before that the Congress was represented by its All India Congress Committee whose members were mainly elected by various political associations. Nevertheless the Congress has, so far as I know, always claimed to speak the mind of India, not even excluding the Princes. A country under alien subjection can only have one political goal, namely, its freedom from that subjection. And considering that the Congress has always and predominantly exhibited that spirit of freedom, its claim to represent the whole of India can hardly be denied. That some parties repudiate the Congress does not derogate from the claim in the sense in which it has been advanced.

6. "When Mr. Gandhi called upon the British Government to quit India, he said it would be for the Congress to take delivery."

I never said that when the British quitted India, 'the Congress would take delivery'. This is what I said in my

letter to H. E. the Viceroy dated 29th February last. "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 Quaid-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."

7. "If this country or Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa or the United States had abstained from action as the Congress in India abstained . . . then perhaps the cause of freedom everywhere would have gone under . . . It is a pity that the leaders of the Congress do not realize that glory is not to be won in India by abandoning the cause of mankind "

How can you compare India with Canada and other dominions which are virtually independent entities, let alone Great Britain or the United States wholly independent countries? Has India a spark of the freedom of the type enjoyed by the countries named by you? India has yet to attain her freedom. Supposing the Allied powers were to lose, and supposing further that the Allied forces were to withdraw from India under military necessity, which I do not expect, the countries you name may lose their independence. But unhappy India will be obliged to change masters, if she is even then in her defenceless state. The Congress does not abstain out of cussedness. Neither the Congress, nor any other organization can possibly kindle mass enthusiasm for the Allied cause without the present possession of independence, to use your own expression either *de jure* or *de facto*. Mere promise of future independence cannot work that

miracle. The cry of "Quit India" has arisen from a realization of the fact that if India is to shoulder the burden of representing, or fighting for the cause of mankind, she must have the glow of freedom now. Has a freezing man ever been warmed by the promise of the warmth of sunshine coming at some future date ?

The great pity is that the ruling power distrusts every thing that the Congress does or says under my influence which it has suddenly discovered is wholly evil. It is necessary for a clear understanding that you should know my connection with the Congress and Congressmen. It was in 1935 that I was successful in my attempt to sever all formal connection with the Congress. There was no coolness between the Congress Working Committee members and myself. But I realized that I was cramped and so were the members, whilst I was officially connected with the Congress. The growing restraints which my conception of non-violence required from time to time were proving too hard to bear. I felt therefore that my influence should be strictly moral. I had no political ambition. My politics were subservient to the demands of truth and non-violence, as I had defined and practised for practically the whole of my life. And so I was permitted by the fellow members to sever the official connection even to the extent of giving up the four anna membership. It was understood between us that I should attend the meetings of the Working Committee only when the members required my presence for consultation in matters involving the application of non-violence or affecting communal unity. Since that time I have been wholly unconnected with the routine work of the Congress. Many meetings of the Working Committee have therefore taken place without me. Their proceedings I have seen only when they have been published in the newspapers. The members of the Working Committee are independent minded men. They

engage me often in prolonged discussions before they accept my advice on the interpretation of non-violence as applied to problems arising from new situations. It will be therefore unjust to them and to me to say that I exercise any influence over them beyond what reason commands. The public know how even until quite recently the majority of the members of the Working Committee have on several occasions rejected my advice.

8. "They have not merely abstained from action, but the Congress has deliberately proclaimed the formula that it is wrong to help the British war effort by men or money and the only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance. In the name of non-violence they have led a movement which was characterized in many places by the utmost violence and the White Paper gives clear proof of the complicity of the Indian Congress leaders in the disorders."

This charge shows to what extent the British public has been misled by imaginary stories, as in the Government of India publication statements have been torn from their context and put together as if they were made at one time or in the same context. The Congress is committed to non-violence so far as the attainment of freedom is concerned. And to that end the Congress has been struggling all these twenty years, however imperfectly it may be, to express non-violence in action, and I think it has succeeded to a great extent. But it has never made any pretence of war resistance through non-violence. Could it have made that claim and lived up to it, the face of India would have been changed and the world would have witnessed the miracle of organized violence being successfully met by organized non-violence. But human nature has nowhere risen to the full height which full non-violence demands. The disturbances that took place after the 8th of August were not due to any action on the part of the Congress. They were due entirely to the inflammatory action of the Government in arresting Congress leaders throughout India and that at a time which was

psychologically wholly wrong. The utmost that can be said is that Congressmen or others had not risen high enough in non-violence to be proof against all provocation.

It surprises me that although you have admitted that "this White Paper may be good journalism but it is not so good as a state document," you have based your sweeping judgement on the strength of that paper. If you would read the very speeches to which the paper makes reference, you will find there ample material to show that the Government of India had not the slightest justification in making those unfortunate arrests on August 9th last and after, or in making the charges they have brought against the arrested leaders after their incarceration — charges which have never been sifted in any court of law.

9. "Mr. Gandhi faced us with an utterly illegitimate method of political controversy, levying blackmail on the best of human emotions, pity and sympathy, by his fast. The only creditable thing to Mr. Gandhi about the fast was his ending it."

You have used a strong word to characterize my fast. H. E. the Viceroy has also allowed himself to use the same word. You have perhaps the excuse of ignorance. He had no such excuse for he had my letters before him. All I can tell you is that fasting is an integral part of Satyagraha. It is a Satyagrahi's ultimate weapon. Why should it be blackmail when a man under a sense of wrong crucifies his flesh? You may not know that Satyagrahi prisoners fasted in South Africa for the removal of their wrongs; so they have done in India. One fast of mine you know, as I think you were then a Cabinet minister. I refer to the fast which resulted in the alteration of the decision of His Majesty's Government. If the decision had stood, it would have perpetuated the curse of untouchability. The alteration prevented the disaster.

The Government of India communique announcing my recent fast, issued after it had commenced, accused me of

having undertaken the fast to secure my release. It was a wholly false accusation. It was based on a distortion of the letter I had written in answer to that of the Government. That letter dated the 8th February was suppressed at the time when the communique was issued. If you will study the question, I refer you to the following which were published in the newspapers : —

My letter to H.E. the Viceroy dated, New Year's Eve, 1942.

H. E.'s reply dated, January 13, 1943.

My letter dated, January 19, 1943.

H. E.'s reply dated, January 25, 1943.

My letter dated, January 29, 1943.

H. E.'s reply dated, February 5, 1943.

My letter dated, February 8, 1943.

Sir R. Tottenham's letter dated, February 7, 1943.

My reply dated, February 8, 1943.

And I do not know from where you got the impression that I ended the fast, for which supposed act you give me the credit. If you mean by it that I ended the fast before its time, I would call such an ending a discredit to me. As it was, the fast ended on its due date for which I can claim no credit.

10. "He (Lord Samuel) considered that the negotiations broke down on points on which they would not have broken down, had there been any real desire on the part of the Congress to come to a settlement."

The statement made by the President of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and Pandit Nehru, who carried on the prolonged negotiations, I venture to think, make it quite clear that no true man could have shown more real or greater desire for a settlement. In this connection it is well to remember that Pandit Nehru was, and I have no doubt still remains, an intimate friend of Sir Stafford Cripps at whose invitation he had come from Allahabad. He could therefore leave no stone unturned to bring the negotiations to a successful issue. The history of the failure has yet to be

written; when it is, it will be found that the cause lay elsewhere than with the Congress.

I hope my letter has not wearied you. Truth has been overlaid with much untruth. If not justice to a great organization, the cause of Truth, which is humanity, demands an impartial investigation of the present distemper.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Rt. Hon'ble Lord Samuel,
House of Lords, London
Enclo : 1.

63

Home Department,
New Delhi, the 26th May, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am desired to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 15th enclosing a letter for the Right Hon'ble Lord Samuel. I am to say that, for the reasons which have been explained to you in another connection, the Government of India have decided that your letter cannot be forwarded.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM

64

Detention Camp,
1st June, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM,

I have your note of the 26th ultimo conveying the Government's decision about my letter to the Rt. Hon'ble Lord Samuel. I would just like to say that the letter is not political correspondence but it is a complaint to a member of the House of Lords pointing out misrepresentations into which he has been betrayed and which do me an injustice.

The Government's decision amounts to a ban on the ordinary right belonging even to a convict of correcting damaging misrepresentations made about him. Moreover, I suggest that the decision about my letter to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah is wholly inapplicable to this letter to the Rt. Hon'ble Lord Samuel. Therefore I request reconsideration of the decision.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

65

Home Department, New Delhi,
7th June, 1943

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am directed to acknowledge your letter to Sir Richard Tottenham dated first June, 1943, on the subject of Government's decision regarding your letter to Lord Samuel and to say that Government regret that they do not see their way to alter that decision.

Yours sincerely,
CONRAN SMITH

66

Received on 8-2-'45

AIRGRAPH

Sender : The Rt. Hon. Viscount Samuel, G. C. B., & C. ,

32, Porchester Terrace, London W. 2. (England)

25th July, 1944

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I duly received, by airgraph and by air-mail, the letter you wrote to me on May 15th, 1943, which had been withheld by the Indian Government during your detention, and which you have now sent to me.

105

I am grateful for the careful attention you had given to the points raised in my speech in the House of Lords in April 1943. I note that the report of that speech and your letter have now been published by the Government in the recent White Book, *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi*.

After this lapse of time, and in view of the changed circumstances, you will probably agree that it would not be profitable for me to reply to the several points in your letter, and will acquit me of discourtesy if I do not do so. I would only refer to the sixth paragraph, in which you controverted my statement that "When Mr. Gandhi called upon the British Government to quit India, he said it would be for the Congress to take delivery." That statement was based upon the following quotations from your writings given in Prof. Coupland's *Report on the Constitutional Problem in India. Part II* :—"The British Government would not ask for a common agreement, if they recognized any one party to be strong enough to take delivery. The Congress, it must be admitted, has not that strength today. It has come to its present position in the face of opposition. If it does not weaken and has enough patience it will develop sufficient strength to take delivery. It is an illusion created by ourselves that we must come to an agreement with all parties before we can make any progress."-(Article by Mr. Gandhi in *Harijan*, June 15th, 1940—Coupland, II. 242). "He (Mr. Gandhi) gave a warning that the Congress might be compelled to abandon its policy of non-interference (in the States) and he advised the Princes to 'cultivate friendly relations with an organization which bids fair in the future, not very distant, to replace the Paramount Power—let me hope by friendly arrangement.'" (*Harijan*, Dec. 3rd, 1938—Coupland, II. 173).

Let me add how much I regret that the policy adopted hitherto by yourself and by the Congress Party during the

present war has compelled me, with almost all the friends of the Indian National Movement in this country, to take up an attitude of opposition, and how much I should rejoice if the case should be altered.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,
Samuel

Mr. M. K. Gandhi,
Palm Bun,
Juhu, Bombay.

67

As at Sevagram, via Wardha,
(India)

Camp : Panchgani,
8th June, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your letter of 25th July 1944. Perhaps you are right that after this lapse of time it would not be very profitable to enter into a detailed discussion of the various points raised by your speech in the House of Lords.*

There is one point in your letter however which challenges a reply. You have adduced two passages from my writings in support of your remarks in the House of Lords* that " when Mr. Gandhi called upon the British Government to quit India, he said it would be for the Congress to take delivery". This, you have argued, connotes totalitarian spirit in the Congress.

I have seen the full text of the " Harijan " articles referred to in your letter. Copies of these are enclosed for easy reference.

The passages cited by you are from the " Harijan " of June 15, 1940, and December 3, 1938 respectively. You will

* ' House of Commons ' occurring here in the original text is obviously a slip. P.

not fail to observe that they have no relevancy to the point at issue. The Congress decision in connection with its "Quit India" demand in August 1942 is embodied in the official declaration of its president Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to which I have referred in my last letter to you. To that decision the Congress still stands committed and one fails to see what bearing my writings in "Harijan" have upon it.

The fact however is that the quotations given by you are incapable of bearing the totalitarian interpretation you have put upon them. The British Government have often declared that they would gladly part with power if there was a body in India ready and fit to take charge. What is wrong in the Congress trying to qualify itself for that onerous duty? That it does not want power for itself but for the whole people of India is made absolutely clear by me in the course of the same article from which you have quoted. Here is the relevant extract. "Its non-violence forbids the Congress from standing aloof and riding the high horse as the opponents say. On the contrary it has to woo all parties, disarm suspicion and create trust in its *bona fides*." Is not the normal goal of every party in a democratic state to aspire to convert the whole country to its view and to become its mouthpiece? Does not the party in power in the House of Commons take delivery of the machinery of administration from the outgoing party—its predecessor? And is not the formation of coalition cabinets under the party system of government an exception rather than the rule? Then how can the refusal of the Congress to sacrifice or water down its ideal for the sake of securing unanimity with other parties be called totalitarian?

With regard to the second passage from the article on the Princes it is only necessary to point out that it was the British Government itself that called upon the Congress to

secure an agreement with the States, at the Second Round Table Conference. There could therefore be nothing wrong in its inviting the Princes to treat with it.

The essential fact to remember in this connection is that the Congress has no other sanction except that of persuasion and self-suffering, any other being precluded by its creed. On the other hand is not violence, euphemistically called physical force, the basis and back-bone of the totalitarian spirit? If it is, and if you believe in my *bona fides* about non-violence and also of the Congress, you cannot accuse either of the totalitarian spirit.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Encls : 2.

Rt. Hon. Viscount Samuel, G. C. B., &c.,
32, Porchester Terrace,
London W. 2. (England)

Encls: "Two Parties" (Harijan June 15, 1940)

"States and the People" (Harijan December 3, 1938)

by M. K. GANDHI

68*

32, Porchester Terrace, W. 2
Paddington 0040,
2nd July, 1945

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am very grateful for the trouble you have taken to write to me so fully in reply to a point in one of my previous speeches on India. But I am bound to say that I am still not convinced.

Your plea was that the British should quit India there and then. Powers of Government must be transferred to *someone*; *otherwise order could not be maintained and the*

* No reply was sent to this letter as it did not introduce any new argument. P.

social system would collapse. Congress, you said, would "take delivery"; and you urge that that is to be regarded as justifiable because Congress sincerely wishes to embrace all parties and is trying to do so. Yes; but while the taking of delivery is to be immediate and certain, the other is still in the future and, it cannot be denied, is problematical.

The fact that Britain and other countries carry on their affairs through majority Governments is not on a par, I suggest, with the starting of what would be in effect a new State. You must have some measure of common agreement among the principal sections of the community. That has already been evolved in Britain and other long established States in the course of their histories. I remember your saying some years ago, "There cannot be Swaraj without an understanding with the Muslims." Most earnestly do I hope that the beginning of such an understanding may emerge from the Conference at Simla, the outcome of which, at the time I am writing, is still in the balance.

With best remembrances and all good wishes,
Yours very sincerely,
Samuel

Mr. M. K. Gandhi

E

CONTRADICTION OF FALSE RUMOURS

69

Detention Camp,
16th July, 1943

The Additional Secretary,
Home Department, Government of India,
New Delhi

SIR,

I observe from the daily papers that there is a persistent rumour going round that I have written to H. E. the

Viceroy withdrawing the A. I. C. C. resolution of 8th August last. I observe too that much speculation is being built upon the rumour. I suggest that the Government should issue a contradiction of the rumour. For I have neither the authority nor the wish to withdraw the resolution. My personal opinion is that the resolution was the only one the A. I. C. C. could have passed if the Congress was to make any effective contribution to the cause of human freedom which is involved in the immediate independence of India.

I am, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

70

Received on 2-8-'43

Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi
29th July, 1943

From

Sir Richard Tottenham, C S. I., C I. E., I. C. S.,
Addl. Secretary to the Government of India

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire, Aga Khan's Palace, Poona

SIR,

In reply to your letter of the 16th July, I am directed to inform you that the Government of India do not think it necessary to issue a contradiction of the rumour to which you refer.

I have the honour to be, Sir, etc.
R. TOTTENHAM,
Addl. Secy. to Govt. of India

V

CORRESPONDENCE ON GOVERNMENT'S
INDICTMENT OF THE CONGRESS

71

Detention Camp,
March 5, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM,

Gandhiji wishes me to inquire whether he is to be favoured with a copy of the pamphlet issued by the Home Department containing a portion of the evidence in support of the charges against the Congress and himself.

Sir Richard Tottenham,
Addl. Secy. to the Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

72

Detention Camp,
March 23, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM,

With reference to my letter to you of the 5th inst. may I remind you that I have not yet received any reply as to whether Gandhiji is to be favoured with a copy of the pamphlet issued by the Home Department containing a portion of the evidence in support of the charges against the Congress and himself?

Sir Richard Tottenham,
Addl. Secy. to the Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, HOME DEPARTMENT

New Delhi, 19th March, '43

DEAR SIR,

We understand from your letter of March 5th, which reached me a few days ago, that Mr. Gandhi wishes to have a copy of the Government of India publication entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43". If so, I am desirous to say that we should be glad to supply it.

Yours truly,
R. TOTTENHAM

Pyarelal, Esqr.,
Detention Camp, Poona

74

Detention Camp,
26th March, 1943

DEAR SIR,

With reference to your letter of 19th inst. I have to say that your interpretation of my letter of March 5th is correct and Gandhiji will be thankful if a copy of the pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43" is supplied to him.

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

Sir Richard Tottenham,
Government of India, H. D.,
New Delhi

V
CORRESPONDENCE ON GOVERNMENT'S
INDICTMENT OF THE CONGRESS

71

Detention Camp,
March 5, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM,

Gandhiji wishes me to inquire whether he is to be favoured with a copy of the pamphlet issued by the Home Department containing a portion of the evidence in support of the charges against the Congress and himself.

Sir Richard Tottenham,
Addl. Secy. to the Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

72

Detention Camp,
March 23, 1943

DEAR SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM,

With reference to my letter to you of the 5th inst. may I remind you that I have not yet received any reply as to whether Gandhiji is to be favoured with a copy of the pamphlet issued by the Home Department containing a portion of the evidence in support of the charges against the Congress and himself?

Sir Richard Tottenham,
Addl. Secy. to the Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, HOME DEPARTMENT

New Delhi, 19th March, '43

DEAR SIR,

We understand from your letter of March 5th, which reached me a few days ago, that Mr. Gandhi wishes to have a copy of the Government of India publication entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43". If so, I am desirous to say that we should be glad to supply it.

Yours truly,
R. TOTTENHAM

Pyarelal, Esqr.,
Detention Camp, Poona

74

Detention Camp,
26th March, 1943

DEAR SIR,

With reference to your letter of 19th inst. I have to say that your interpretation of my letter of March 5th is correct and Gandhiji will be thankful if a copy of the pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43" is supplied to him.

Yours truly,
PYARELAL

Sir Richard Tottenham,
Government of India, H. D.,
New Delhi

D. O. No. 19-9-43 Poll. (1)
Government of India,
Home Department,
New Delhi, 5th April, 1943

DEAR SIR,

With reference to your letter of March the 26th, I am desired to enclose herewith a copy of the pamphlet " Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43 " as requested by Mr. Gandhi.

Yours truly,
R. TOTTENHAM

Pyarelal, Esq.,
Detention Camp, Poona

M. K. GANDHI'S REPLY WITH APPENDICES
TO
" CONGRESS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE
DISTURBANCES, 1942-43 "

It is requested that the Appendices should be regarded
as an integral part of the reply.

M. K. G.

Detention Camp,
15th July, 1943

To

The Additional Secretary,
Government of India, H. D., New Delhi

DEAR SIR,

In reply to my request dated 5th March last for a copy of Government of India publication entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43," I received a copy on 13th April. It contains several corrections marked in red ink. Some of them are striking.

2. I take it that the Government have based the charges made in the publication against the Congress and myself on the material printed therein and not on the evidence which, as stated in the preface, is withheld from the public.

3. The preface is brief and is signed by Sir R. Tottenham, Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department. It is dated 13th February last, i. e., three days after the commencement of my recent fast. The date is ominous. Why was the period of my fast chosen for publishing a document in which I am the target?

4. The preface commences thus :

"In response to demands which have reached Government from several sources, Government have now prepared a review which brings together a number of facts . . . bearing on the responsibility of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress High Command for the disturbances which followed the sanctioning of a mass movement by the A. I. C. C., on August 8th, 1942."

There is an obvious mis-statement here. The disturbances followed not the "sanctioning of the mass movement by the A. I. C. C." but the arrests made by the Government. As for the "demands", so far as I am aware, they began soon after the wholesale arrests of principal Congressmen all over India. As the Government are aware, in my letters to H. E. the Viceroy, the last being dated 7th February, 1943, I had asked for proof in support of my alleged guilt. The evidence now produced might have been given to me when I raised the question. Had my request been complied with, one advantage would certainly have accrued. I would have been heard in answer to the charges brought against me. That very process would have delayed the fast, and who knows, if Government had been patient with me, it might have even prevented it.

5. The preface contains the following sentence : "Almost all the facts presented in this review are, or should be, already within the knowledge of the public." Therefore, so far as the public are concerned, there was no such hurry as to require publication of the document during the fast. This train of reasoning has led me to the inference that it was published in expectation of my death which medical opinion must have considered almost a certainty. It was feared even during my previous long fasts. I hope my inference is wholly wrong and the Government had a just and valid reason for choosing the time that they did, for the publication of what is after all an indictment of the Congress and me. I hope to be pardoned for putting on paper an inference, which if true, must discredit the Government. I feel that I am being just to them by unburdening myself of a suspicion instead of harbouring it and allowing it to cloud my judgement about their dealings with me.

6. I now come to the indictment itself. It reads like a presentation of his case by a prosecutor. In the present case the prosecutor happens to be also the policeman and jailor. He first arrests and gags his victims, and then opens his case behind their backs.

7. I have read it again. I have gone through the numbers of *Harijan* which my companions happened to have with them, and I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in my writings and doings that could have warranted the inferences and the innuendoes of which the indictment is full. In spite of my desire to see myself in my writings as the author has seen me I have completely failed.

8. The indictment opens with a misrepresentation. I am said to have deplored "the introduction of foreign soldiers into India to aid in India's defence". In the *Harijan* article on which the charge is based, I have refused to believe that India was to be defended through the introduction of foreign soldiers. If it is India's defence that is aimed at, why should trained Indian soldiers be sent away from India and foreign soldiers brought in instead? Why should the Congress—an organization which was born and lives for the very sake of India's freedom—be suppressed? I am clearer to-day in my mind than I was when I penned that article on 16th April, that India is not being defended, and that if things continue to shape themselves as they are, India will sink at the end of the war deeper than she is today, so that she might forget the very word freedom. Let me quote the relevant passages from the *Harijan* article referred to by the author :

"I must confess that I do not look upon this event with equanimity. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British.

It is a tremendous price to pay for the possible success of Allied arms. I see no Indian freedom peeping through all this preparation for the so-called defence of India. It is a preparation pure and simple for the defence of the British Empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. (*Harijan*, April 26, 1942. p. 128.) (Vide Appendix 1 (T))

9. The second paragraph of the indictment opens with this pregnant sentence :

"It will be suggested that during the period of Mr. Gandhi's first advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay on August 7th, the Congress High Command and in the later stages the Congress organization as a whole were deliberately setting the stage for a mass movement designed to free India finally from British rule."

Let me underline the phrase "it will be suggested". Why should anything be left to suggestion about a movement which is open and above board? Much ado has been made about the simplest things which nobody has cared to deny and of which Congressmen are even proud. The Congress organization as a whole 'deliberately set the stage designed to free India finally from British rule', as early as the year 1920 and not since my 'first advocacy of British withdrawal from India' as suggested in the indictment. Ever since that year the effort for a movement has never relaxed. This can be proved from numerous speeches of Congress leaders and from Congress resolutions. Young and impatient Congressmen and even elder men have not hesitated at times to press me to hasten the mass movement. But I, who knew better, always restrained their ardour, and I must gratefully admit that they gladly submitted to the restraint. The contraction of this long period to the interval between my advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay on August 7th, is wholly wrong and misleading. I know of no special staging since 26th April, 1942.

10. The same paragraph then says that "an essential preliminary" to an examination of the type of movement

"is a clear understanding of the real motives underlying the move." Why should motives be searched when everything is there in black and white? I can say without any hesitation that my motives are always plain. Why I asked for the immediate withdrawal of the British power from India has been discussed by me almost threadbare in public.

11. At page 2 of the indictment, a phrase has been taken from my article entitled "One Thing Needful" dated 10th May, 1942, and I am represented as saying that I would devote the whole of my energy "to this supreme act." By simply detaching the phrase from its context, mystery has been made to surround it. The phrase "supreme act" occurs in an argument addressed to an English friend and, if it is read in its setting, it ceases to be mysterious or objectionable, unless the very idea of withdrawal is held objectionable. Here are the relevant parts from the argument :

"I am convinced, therefore, that the time has come during the war, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world. I see with the naked eye that the estrangement is growing. Every act of the British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest and for its own safety. There is no such thing as joint common interest.....Racial superiority is treated not as a vice but a virtue. This is true not only in India; but it is equally true in Africa, it is true in Burma and Ceylon. These countries could not be held otherwise than by assertion of race superiority.

This is a drastic disease requiring a drastic remedy. I have pointed out the remedy—complete and immediate orderly withdrawal of the British from India at least, in reality and properly from all non-European possessions. It will be the bravest and the cleanest act of the British people. It will at once put the Allied cause on a completely moral basis and may even lead to a most honourable peace between the warring nations. And the clean end of Imperialism is likely to be the end of Fascism and Nazism. The suggested action will certainly blunt the edge of Fascism and Nazism which are an offshoot of Imperialism.

British distress cannot be relieved by nationalist India's aid in the manner suggested by the writer. It is ill equipped for the purpose, even if it can be made enthusiastic about it. And what is there to enthuse nationalistic India? Just as a person cannot feel the glow of the sun's heat in its absence, even so India cannot feel the glow of freedom without the actual experience of it. Many of us simply cannot contemplate an utterly free India with calmness and equanimity. The first experience is likely to be a shock before the glow comes. That shock is a necessity. India is a mighty nation. No one can tell how she will act and with what effect when the shock is delivered.

I feel, therefore, that I must devote the whole of my energy to the realization of the supreme act. The writer of the letter admits the wrong done to India by the British. I suggest to the writer that the first condition of British success is the present undoing of the wrong. It should precede, not follow, victory. The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait. Assume, however, that it does not; free India will be better able to cope with the invasion. Unadulterated non-cooperation will then have full sway."

(*Harijan*, May 10, 1942. p. 148)

In this long extract, the phrase "supreme act" takes its legitimate place. It does not refer simply to the British withdrawal. But it sums up all that must precede and succeed it. It is an act worthy of the energy not of one person but of hundreds. This is how I began my answer to the English friend's letter:

"I can but repeat what I felt and said in my letter to Lord Linlithgow recording my impressions of the first interview with him after the declaration of war. I have nothing to withdraw, nothing to repent of. I remain the same friend today of the British that I was then. I have not a trace of hatred in me towards them. But I have never been blind to their limitations as I have not been to their great virtues."

(*Harijan*, May 10, 1942, p. 148)

To read and fully understand my writings, it is necessary to understand always this background. The whole of the movement has been conceived for the mutual benefit of India and England. Unfortunately, the author, ignoring this background, has approached my writings with coloured spectacles, has torn sentences and phrases from their context.

and dressed them up to suit his preconception. Thus he has put out of joint "their withdrawal removes the bait", and omitted the sentence that immediately follows and which I have restored in the foregoing extract. As is clear from the above article, unadulterated non-cooperation here refers exclusively to the Japanese.

12. The last paragraph at page 2 begins thus :

"In its earlier stages Mr. Gandhi's "Quit India" move was meant and was widely interpreted as a proposal for the physical withdrawal from India of the *British* (italics mine), and of all Allied and British troops."

I have searched, and so have the friends with me, in vain, for some expression in my writings which would warrant the opinion that 'Quit India' move was *meant* as a proposal for the physical withdrawal of the British from India. It is true that colour was lent to such an interpretation by a superficial reading of a sentence in the article of *Harijan* of April 26th, already quoted. As soon as my attention was drawn to it by an English friend, I wrote in the *Harijan* of 24th May as follows :

"There is evidently confusion in some minds about my invitation to the British to withdraw. For a Britisher writes to say that he likes India and her people and would not like willingly to leave India. He likes too my method of non-violence. Evidently the writer has confused the individual as such with the individual as the holder of power. India has no quarrel with the British people. I have hundreds of British friends. Andrews' friendship was enough to tie me to the British people."

With this clear enunciation of my views before him at the time of penning the indictment, how could he say that I had "*meant*" physical withdrawal of the British as distinguished from the British power? And I am not aware that my writing was "widely interpreted as such". He has quoted nothing in support of this statement.

13. The author proceeds in the same paragraph :

"As late as June 14th, he makes, for the purpose of his scheme, the assumption 'that the Commander-in-Chief of the united American and British armies has decided that India is no good as a base'."

"For the purpose of his scheme" is a gratuitous interpolation here. The extract is taken from an interview with several journalists. I was answering a series of questions. At one stage I had put a counter question thus, "supposing England retires from India for strategic purposes, and apart from my proposal,—as they had to do in Burma—what would happen? What would India do?" They replied: "That is exactly what we have come to learn from you. We would certainly like to know that." I rejoined: "Well, therein comes my non-violence. For we have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the united American and British armies has decided that India is no good as a base, and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the Allied forces there. We can't help it. We have then to depend on what strength we have. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either, worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing we can fall back upon." It is clear from this quotation that I was not expounding any scheme. I was merely arguing about possibilities based on assumptions agreed between the interviewers and myself.

14. The author proceeds:

"Added strength is given to the belief that this is a correct interpretation of Mr. Gandhi's original intentions by the prominence, to which attention has already been drawn, of the theme that the British withdrawal would remove any Japanese motive for invading India; for with the British and Allied armies still in India, how is the bait removed?"

I have just now shown that the physical withdrawal of the British was never contemplated by me, of the Allied and the British troops was certainly contemplated in the first instance. Therefore it is not a question of "interpretation", because it is one of fact. But the sentence has been impressed in order to make what is straight, look crooked.

15. Then, proceeds the author:

" At the same time, he made it clear that on the British departure the Indian army would be disbanded."

I made clear no such thing. What I did was to discuss with interviewers the possibilities in the event of British withdrawal. Indian army being a creation of the British Government, I assumed, would be automatically disbanded when that power withdrew, unless it was taken over, by a treaty, by the replacing government. If the withdrawal took place by agreement and with goodwill on both sides these matters should present no difficulty. I give in the Appendix the relevant passages from the interview on the subject. [vide Appendix I (S).]

16. From the same paragraph I take the following :

" Bowing to the gathering force of this opposition, and also, as will be shown later, with a possible view to reconciling disagreement among members of the Working Committee, Mr Gandhi discovered the 'gap' in his original proposals. In *Harjan* of June 14th, he paved the way,—by the slightly cryptic assertion that, if he had his way, the Indian National Government when formed would tolerate the presence of the United Nations on Indian soil under certain well defined conditions but would permit no further assistance,—for the more definite statement made to an American journalist in the following week's *Harjan*, when in reply to a question whether he envisaged free India's allowing Allied troops to operate from India, he said: 'I do. It will be only then that you will see real cooperation'. He continued that he did not contemplate the complete shifting of Allied troops from India and that, provided India became entirely free, he could not insist on their withdrawal."

This is for me the key thought opening the author's mind. It is built on finding motives other than those that are apparent from my language. Had I been guided by the force of the opposition whether from the foreign or the Indian Press or from Congressmen, I should not have hesitated to say so. It is well known that I am as capable of resisting opposition that makes no appeal to my head or my heart, as I am of readily yielding when it does. But the literal fact is that when I gave the country the withdrawal

formula, I was possessed by one idea and, one only, that if India was to be saved and also the Allied cause, and if India was to play not merely an effective but, maybe, a decisive part in the war, India must be absolutely free now. The 'gap' was this: although the British Government might be willing to declare India's independence, they might still wish, for their own and for China's defence, to retain their troops in India. What would be my position in that case? It is now well known that the difficulty was presented to me by Mr. Louis Fischer. He had come to Sevagram and stayed with me for nearly a week. As a result of the discussions between us, he drew up certain questions for me to answer. My reply to his second question, the author describes as a "slightly cryptic assertion" paving the way for a "more definite statement in the following week's *Haryan*". I give below the whole of the article embodying the questions and answers. It was written on 7th June, 1942, and appeared in the *Haryan* dated 14th June, p. 188:

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

A friend was discussing with me the implications of the new proposal. As the discussion was naturally desultory, I asked him to frame his questions which I would answer through *Haryan*. He agreed and gave me the following

1. Q. You ask the British Government to withdraw immediately from India. Would Indians thereupon form a national government, and what groups or parties would participate in such an Indian government?

A. My proposal is onesided, i.e., for the British Government to act upon, wholly irrespective of what Indians would do or would not do. I have even assumed temporary chaos on their withdrawal. But if the withdrawal takes place in an orderly manner, it is likely that on their withdrawal a provisional government will be set up by and from among the present leaders. But another thing may also happen. All those who have no thought of the nation but only of themselves may make a bid for power and get together the turbulent forces with which they would seek to gain control somewhere and somehow. I should hope that with the complete, final and honest withdrawal of the British power, the wise

leaders will realize their responsibility, forget their differences for the moment and set up a provisional government out of the material left by the British power. As there would be no power regulating the admission or rejection of parties or persons to or from the Council board, restraint alone will be the guide. If that happens probably the Congress, the League and the States representatives will be allowed to function and they will come to a loose understanding on the formation of provisional national government. All this is necessarily guesswork and nothing more.

2. Q. Would that Indian national government permit the United Nations to use Indian territory as a base of military operations against Japan and other Axis powers ?

A. Assuming that the national government is formed and if it answers my expectations, its first act would be to enter into a treaty with the United Nations for defensive operations against aggressive powers, it being common cause that India will have nothing to do with any of the Fascist powers and India would be morally bound to help the United Nations.

3. Q. What further assistance would this Indian national government be ready to render the United Nations in the course of the present war against the Fascist aggressors ?

A. If I have any hand in guiding the imagined national government, there would be no further assistance save the toleration of the United Nations on the Indian soil under well-defined conditions. Naturally there will be no prohibition against any Indian giving his own personal help by way of being a recruit or/and of giving financial aid. It should be understood that the Indian army has been disbanded with the withdrawal of British power. Again if I have any say in the councils of the national government, all its power, prestige and resources would be used towards bringing about world peace. But, of course, after the formation of the national government my voice may be a voice in the wilderness and nationalist India may go war-mad.

4. Q. Do you believe this collaboration between India and the Allied powers might or should be formulated in a treaty of alliance or an agreement for mutual aid ?

A. I think the question is altogether premature, and in any case it will not much matter whether the relations are regulated by treaty or agreement. I do not even see any difference.

Let me sum up my attitude. One thing and only one thing for me is solid and certain. This unnatural prostration of a great nation—it is

neither 'nations' nor 'peoples'—must cease if the victory of the Allies is to be ensured. They lack the moral basis. I see no difference between the Fascist or Nazi powers and the Allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count as dust before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic. They and they alone have the power to undo the wrong. They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution. That necessary wash will be their surest insurance of success, for they will have the good wishes—unexpressed but no less certain—of millions of dumb Asiatics and Africans. Then, but not till then, will they be fighting for a new order. This is the reality. All else is speculation. I have allowed myself, however, to indulge in it as a test of my *bona fides* and for the sake of explaining in a concrete manner what I mean by my proposal.

What is described as the 'more definite statement' is nothing but an impromptu reply given to an American journalist, Mr. Grover, representative of the Associated Press of America. If that interview had not chanced to come about, there might have been no statement 'more definite' than what appeared in my reply to Mr. Louis Fischer. Hence the writer's suggestion that I "paved the way" for "the more definite statement" . . . in the following week's *Harijan* is altogether unwarranted, if I may not call it even mischievous. I do not regard my answers to Mr. Louis Fischer as a "slightly cryptic statement". They are deliberate answers given to deliberate questions framed after a full discussion lasting a week. My answers show very clearly that I had no scheme beyond the 'Quit India' formula, that all else was guess, and that immediately the Allied Nations' difficulty was made clear to me, I capitulated. I saw the "gap" and filled it in, in the best manner I know. The 'definite statement', fortunately for me, in my opinion, leaves little room if any for conjectures and insinuations in which the writer has indulged. Let it speak for itself. Here are the relevant portions :