

argued that the Government having given the authority to call in Vaidyaraj on condition that I absolved them from responsibility for any untoward result of the *vaidic* treatment they could not contemplate any restriction on the duration of the physician's stay at the camp so long as it was thought necessary in the interest of the patient. In view of your rejection of my request, I had to trouble the Vaidyaraj to rest in his car in front of the gate so that in case of need he might be called in. He very humanely consented. He had to be called in and he was able to bring the desired relief. The crisis has not passed as yet. I therefore repeat my request and ask for immediate relief. I would like, if I can, to avoid the last night's experience. I do wish that the vexations caused by the delay in granting my requests about the patient's treatment came to an end. Both Dr. Mehta and the Vaidyaraj were permitted to come in after protracted delay. Precious time was lost making recovery more uncertain than it was. I hope you will be able to secure the necessary authority for the Vaid's stay in the camp during night, if the patient's condition required it. The patient needs constant and continuous attention.

Yours etc.,  
M. K. GANDHI

The Inspector General of Prisons,  
Poona

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Detention Camp, February 16th, 1944

Sir,

This is in continuation of my letter of the 14th inst.

When I asked for a Vaidyaraj and took upon myself the responsibility of changing Shri Kasturbai's treatment and absolved the Government physician of all responsibility, I naturally took for granted that the Vaidyaraj would be allowed such facilities as would in his opinion be necessary

for carrying out his treatment. The patient's nights are much worse than her days and it is essentially at night that constant attendance is necessary. The Vaidyaraj considers himself handicapped in his treatment of the case under the present arrangements.

In order to be within immediate call, he has been good enough to sleep in his car outside the gate of this camp for the last three nights and every night he has had to be called up at least once. This is an unnatural state of things and though he seems to have infinite capacity for suffering inconvenience for the sake of the patient, I may not take undue advantage of his generous nature. Besides it means disturbing the Superintendent and his staff (in fact the whole camp) once or more often during the night. For instance last night she suddenly developed fever with rigour. The Vaidyaraj who had left the premises at 10-30 p. m., had to be called in at 12 midnight. I had to request him to leave her soon afterwards, although he would have liked to have stayed with her longer, because so long as he stayed in it would have meant keeping the Superintendent and his staff awake which might have been even for the whole night. I would not do this even for saving my lifelong partner, especially when I know that a humane way is open.

As I have said already the Vaidyaraj considers it necessary to be in constant attendance on the patient. He varies the drugs from moment to moment as the patient's condition requires. Drs. Gilder's and Nayyar's assistance is at my disposal all the time—they are more than friends and would do everything in their power for the patient. But as I have said in my last letter, they cannot help while treatment of a wholly different nature from theirs is going on. Besides being in its very nature impracticable, such a course would be unjust to the patient, to the Vaidyaraj and to themselves.

I therefore submit below the following three alternative proposals:

(1) Vaidyaraj should be permitted to remain in the camp day and night so long as he considers it necessary in the interests of the patient.

(2) If the Government cannot agree to this, they may release the patient on parole to enable her to receive the full benefit of the physician's treatment.

(3) If neither of these two proposals are acceptable to the Government I request that I be relieved of the responsibility of looking after the patient. If I as her husband cannot procure for her the help that she wants or that I think necessary, I ask for my removal to any other place of detention that the Government may choose. I must not be made a helpless witness of the agonies the patient is passing through.

The Government have kindly permitted Dr. Mehta to visit the patient at her repeated requests. His help is valuable, but he does not prescribe drugs. She needs the physical therapy given by him which soothes her greatly but she cannot do without drug treatment either. Drugs can only be prescribed by the doctors or the Vaidyaraj. The doctor's treatment has already been suspended. In the absence of a satisfactory reply to this letter by this evening I shall be constrained to suspend Vaidyaraj's treatment also. If she cannot have the drug treatment which she should in full, I would rather that she did without it altogether.

I am writing this by the patient's bedside at 2 a. m. She is oscillating between life and death. Needless to say she knows nothing of this letter. She is now hardly able to judge for herself.

I am, etc.,  
M. K. GANDHI

The Inspector General of Prisons,  
Poona

Detention Camp, February 18th, '44

SIR,

Vaidyaraj Shri Shiv Sharma regrettably informs me that having put forth all the resources at his disposal he has been unable to produce a condition in Shri Kasturba so as to give him hope of final recovery. As his was simply a trial to see whether Ayurvedic treatment could yield better result, I have now asked Drs. Gilder and Nayyar to resume the suspended treatment. Dr. Mehta's assistance was never suspended and will be continued till recovery or the end.

I want to say that the Vaidyaraj has been most assiduous and attentive in the handling of this most difficult case, and I would have willingly allowed him to continue his treatment if he had wished to do so. But he would not do it, when his last prescription failed to bring about the result he had expected. Drs. Gilder and Nayyar tell me that they would like to receive the benefit of the Vaidyaraj's assistance in the matter of sedatives, purgatives and the like. These have proved effective both from the doctors' and the patient's point of view. I hope that the Government will have no objection to the Vaidyaraj continuing to come in for the purpose. Needless to say, under the altered circumstances, he will not be required for night duty. I cannot refrain from regrettably saying that had there not been the wholly avoidable delay in granting my request for allowing the services of the Vaidyaraj and Dr. Mehta, the patient's condition might not have been so near the danger point as it is today. I am well aware that nothing happens outside the Divine Will, but man has no other means of interpreting that will apart from the results he can see.

I am, etc.,

The Inspector General of Prisons,  
Poona

M. K. GANDHI

# Re : SHRI KASTURBA'S FUNERAL RITES

(Gandhiji's reply taken down by the Inspector General of Prisons in writing from dictation at 8-7 p. m. on 22-2-'44 in answer to his inquiry on behalf of the Government as to what Gandhiji's wishes in the matter were.)

(1) "Body should be handed over to my sons and relatives which would mean a public funeral without interference from Government.

(2) "If that is not possible, funeral should take place as in the case of Mahadev Desai and if the Government will allow relatives only to be present at the funeral, I shall not be able to accept the privilege unless all friends who are as good as relatives to me are also allowed to be present.

(3) "If this also is not acceptable to the Government, then those who have been allowed to visit her will be sent away by me and only those who are in the camp (detenus) will attend the funeral.

"It has been, as you will be able to bear witness, my great anxiety not to make any political capital out of this most trying illness of my life companion. But I have always wanted whatever the Government did to be done with good grace, which I am afraid, has been hitherto lacking. It is not too much to expect that now that the patient is no more whatever the Government decide about the funeral will be done with good grace."

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Detention Camp, 4-3-44

SIR,

It is not without regret and hesitation that I write about my dead wife. But truth demands this letter.

According to the newspapers Mr. Butler is reported to have said in the House of Commons on 2nd March, 1944,

" . . . She was receiving all possible medical care and attention, not only from her regular attendants but from those desired by her family . . . " Whilst I gratefully acknowledge that the regular attendants did all they could, the help that was asked for by the deceased or by me on her behalf when at all given was given after a long wait and the Ayurvedic physician was permitted to attend only after I had to tell the prison authorities that if I could not procure for the patient the help that she wanted or I thought necessary I should be separated from her, I ought not to be made a helpless witness of the agonies she was passing through. And even then I could make full use of the Vaidyaraj's services only after I wrote a letter to the Inspector General of Prisons of which a copy is hereto attached. My application for Dr. Dinshah was made in writing on 27th January, 1944. The deceased herself had repeatedly asked the Inspector General of Prisons for Dr. Dinshah Mehta's help during practically a month previous to that. He was allowed to come only from 5-2-'44. Again, the regular physicians Drs. Nayyar and Gilder made a written application for consultation with Dr. B. C. Roy of Calcutta on 31st January, 1944. The Government simply ignored their written request and subsequent oral reminders.

Mr. Butler is further reported to have said, "No request for her release was received and the Government of India believe it would be no act of kindness to her or her family to remove her from the Aga Khan's palace." Whilst it is true that no request for her release was made by her or by me (as Satyagrahi prisoners it would have been unbecoming) would it not have been in the fitness of things if the Government had at least offered to her, me and her sons to release her? The mere offer of release would have produced a favourable psychological effect on her mind. But unfortunately no such offer was ever made.

As to the funeral rites, Mr. Butler is reported to have said, "I have information that the funeral rites took place at the request of Mr. Gandhi in the grounds of the Aga Khan's palace at Poona and friends and relatives were present." The following however was my actual request which the Inspector General of Prisons took down in writing from dictation at 8-7 p. m. on 22-2-'44.

"(I) Body should be handed over to my sons and relatives which would mean a public funeral without interference from Government.

(II) If that is not possible, funeral should take place as in the case of Mahadev Desai and if the Government will allow relatives only to be present at the funeral, I shall not be able to accept the privilege unless all friends who are as good as relatives to me are also allowed to be present.

(III) If this also is not acceptable to the Government, then those who have been allowed to visit her will be sent away by me and only those who are in the camp (detenus) will attend the funeral.

"It has been, as you will perhaps be able to bear witness, my great anxiety not to make any political capital out of this most trying illness of my life companion. But I have always wanted whatever the Government did to be done with good grace, which I am afraid, has been hitherto lacking. It is not too much to expect that now that the patient is no more whatever the Government decide about the funeral will be done with good grace."

Government will perhaps admit that I have scrupulously avoided making any political capital out of my wife's protracted illness and the difficulties I experienced from the Government. Nor do I want to make any now. But in justice to her memory, to me and for the sake of truth I ask the Government to make such amends as they can. If the newspaper report is inaccurate in essential particulars or the Government have a different interpretation of the whole episode, I should be supplied with the correct version and the Government interpretation of the whole episode. If my complaint is held to be just, I trust that the amazing statement said to have been made in America by the Agent

of the Government of India in U. S. A. will be duly corrected.

I am, etc.,  
M. K. GANDHI

The Additional Secretary to the  
Government of India,  
( Home Department ), New Delhi

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No. III/43-M. S.  
Government of India, H. D.  
New Delhi,  
21st March, 1944

From

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

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire

SIR,

In reply to your letter of 4th March regarding Mr. Butler's reply to a question in the House of Commons on the 2nd March, 1944, I am directed to say that the Government of India regret that you should feel that they were unreasonable or obstructive about the calling in of special medical attendants. The Government of India were always ready to allow any extra medical aid or consultation which the Government doctors considered necessary, and they do not think that there was any delay in summoning outside aid when the Government doctors decided that it was needed. It was on January 28th that they were first informed that Mrs. Gandhi had asked for the services of Dr. Dinshah Mehta; and it was not until January 31st that they were told that Dr. Gilder had asked for consultation with certain

other doctors. On February 1st the Bombay Government were explicitly informed that any extra medical aid or consultation might be allowed which the Government doctors considered necessary or useful. If Dr. Dinshah Mehta was not called in earlier, it was due to the view originally expressed by both Col. Bhandari and Dr. Gilder that his services could not be of any use, but he was summoned as soon as the Government doctors revised that opinion. Your letter of January 27th, which did not reach the Government of India until February 1st, made some reference to your wife's wish to see an Ayurvedic physician, but no name was mentioned and it was not until February 9th that a definite request for the services of Vaidyaraj Sharma was received. The request was then granted within 24 hours and as soon as the Government of India were made aware of the difficulties resulting from his not being accommodated inside the Palace, the necessary permission was given for him to reside there. In the circumstances the Government of India feel that they did everything possible to ensure that your wife received all the treatment that you wished during her illness.

2. As to the question of release, the Government of India still feel that the course they adopted was the best and kindest. It was reported to them on January 25th that your son, Devadas Gandhi, had asked his mother whether she would like to be released on parole and she had replied that she would not like to leave the Palace without her husband. Government have made no use of this report, since it was the record of a private conversation; but it confirmed them in the view expressed above. The misunderstanding about the statement in America quite wrongly attributed to Sir Girjashanker Bajpai has been cleared up by answers to questions in the Legislative Assembly which you have doubtless seen.

3. The arrangements for the funeral were understood here to be in accordance with your wishes. The Government made enquiries on the point and were informed that you had not special preference between the first two alternatives mentioned in your letter.

4. In these circumstances, the Government of India do not think that Mr. Butler's reply to the parliamentary question was incorrect in substance.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
R. TOTTENHAM

Additional Secretary to the Government of India  
Received on 27-3-'44

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Detention Camp,  
April 1st 1944

SIR,

I beg to acknowledge your letter of 21st March handed to me on the 27th.

As to extra medical aid I wish to state that the first request for the services of Dr. Dinshah Mehta was made by the deceased verbally to Col. Advani sometime in December last. When repeated verbal requests met with little or no response I had to make a written request addressed to the Government of India dated 27-1-'44. On the 31st of January I sent a reminder to the Government of Bombay (App. A.), and so did Drs. Nayyar and Gilder in a letter addressed to the Inspector General of Prison (App. B). I wrote again on the 3rd of February to the Government of Bombay (App. C), who sent a reply (App. D) which resulted in Dr. Dinshah being brought in on the 5th of February last, i. e. after an interval of over six weeks

from the date of the first request. And even when permission was granted, restrictions were placed upon the number of his visits and the time he was to take in administering treatment. It was not without difficulty that these restrictions were later relaxed and then removed.

As to the reference in the letter under reply to Dr. Gilder, I showed it to him. The result was the attached letter addressed by him to the Government which he has asked me to forward (App. E). While it shows that Dr. Gilder never expressed the opinion attributed to him, it does not alter the tragic fact that Dr. Dinshah's services were held up for over six weeks.

The question of calling in a non-allopath was definitely and formally raised before the Inspector General of Prisons by my son after his visit to this Camp early in December last. On Col. Bhandari mentioning to me my son's request to him I told him that if my son thought that non-allopathic treatment should be tried, the Government should permit it. While the consideration of my son's request was on the anvil, the patient's condition began to worsen and she herself pressed for the services of an Ayurvedic physician. She spoke to both the Inspector General of Prisons and Col. Shah several times, again with no result. In despair I wrote to the Government of India on 27-1-'44. On the 31st of January the Superintendent of this camp enquired on behalf of the Government, among other things, whether the deceased had any particular Ayurvedic physician in mind to which I replied in writing, it being my silence day ( App. F ). As no relief was forthcoming as a result, and the patient's condition admitted of no delay, I sent an urgent letter to the Government of Bombay on the 3rd of February ( App. G ). It was on the 11th of February that a local Vaidya was sent and on the 12th that Vaidyaraj Sharma was brought in. Thus there was an interval of more than eight weeks

between the first request for non-allopathic aid and actual bringing in of that aid.

Before Vaidyaraj Sharma came I had been asked to give written undertaking ( which I gladly did ) that I absolved the Government of all responsibility about the result of his treatment (App. H). The Vaidyaraj was thus in sole charge of the case for the time being. One would have thought that a physician in sole charge of a patient would have all such facilities of visiting and watching the patient as be considered necessary. And yet there was no end to the difficulties in getting these facilities for him. These have been alluded to in the enclosure to my letter of 4-3-'44 and in App. G.

All this time the patient was passing through great suffering, and her condition was deteriorating so rapidly that every delay weighed against chances of her recovery.

Whether the delays and difficulties experienced by the patient and me were caused by one department of the Government or another, or even by the Government doctors, the responsibility surely rests with the Central Government.

I note that the Government have maintained complete silence over the written request (which was reinforced by subsequent verbal reminders) of Drs. Nayyar and Gilder to call Dr. B. C. Roy in consultation, and have not even condescended to give their reasons for not granting the request.

Similarly the letter under reply is silent about the discrepancy, pointed out by me in my letter dated 20-3-'44, in the Hon. the Home Member's statement in the Assembly that trained nurses were in attendance. The fact is that they never were. Let me add here that nurses of the deceased's choice who were permitted were brought after considerable delay, especially Shri Kanu Gandhi.

I hope, after a calm perusal of this bare recital of facts and of the relevant copies of correspondence attached hereto, it will be conceded that the claim of the Government of India that "they did everything possible" to ensure that the deceased received all the treatment that *I wished* during her illness is not justified. Much less can Mr. Butler's claim be justified. For, he went further when he said, "She was receiving all possible medical care and attention, not only from her regular attendants, but from those *desired by her family*." Does not the statement of the Government of Bombay (App. D), "Government have decided that no outside doctors should be allowed unless the *Government medical officer* considers that it is absolutely necessary for medical reasons" contradict the above claims?

On the question of release, and the report received by the Government of India of a "private conversation" my son had with his mother in this connection, a prisoner can have no "private" conversation with anybody from outside. Therefore, so far as I am concerned the Government are free to make use of the conversation after verification (usual and obligatory in such cases) by my son. In any case the Government would have been absolved from all blame if they had made an offer of release and laid on me the burden of deciding what was "best and kindest" for her.

As to the arrangements for the funeral my letter to the Government dated 4-3-'44 embodying my actual request, which the Inspector General of Prisons took down in writing from dictation, speaks for itself. It therefore astonishes me that on "enquiries" made by the Government they were "informed" that I had "no special preference between the first two alternatives" mentioned in my letter. The information given to the Government is wholly wrong. It is inconceivable that given the freedom of choice I could ever be reconciled to the cremation of a dear one being performed in a jail

compound (which this Camp is today) instead of the consecrated cremation ground.

It is not pleasant or easy for me to write about such personal matters to the Government. But I do so in this case for the sake of the memory of one who was my faithful partner for over sixty two years. I leave it to the Government to consider what could be the fate of other prisoners not so circumstanced as Shri Kasturba was.

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

The Additional Secretary to the Government  
of India (Home Department), New Delhi  
(Enclosures A to H)

- A. Letter No. 87, p. 279
- B. Letter No. 90, p. 280
- C. Letter No. 91, p. 281
- D. Letter No. 92, p. 282

E

Detention Camp,  
March 31st, 1944

SIR,

Your letter of the 21st March to Mahatma Gandhi contains the statement :

"It was on January 28th that they were first informed that Mrs. Gandhi had asked for the services of Dr. Dinshah Mehta. . . If Dr. Dinshah was not called in earlier, it was due to the view originally expressed by both Col. Bhandari and Dr. Gilder that his services would not be of any use, but he was summoned as soon as the Government doctors revised that opinion."

Surely, coupling of my name with that of Col. Bhandari is a mistake ! The Government doctors in attendance were Col. Bhandari and Col. Shah. As far as I am concerned, sometime in December last, at one of Col. Advani's evening

visits (when he was officiating for Col. Bhandari) Smt. Kasturba Gandhi asked him to allow Dr. Dinshah Mehta to come in and Col. Advani was good enough to ask my opinion on the advisability of Dr. Dinshah's coming. As I had not talked over the matter with my colleague Dr. Sushila Nayyar nor with the patient or her husband, I told Col. Advani, I would give him a reply later. At his visit the next morning, I told him my considered opinion that Dr. Dinshah's presence would be a great help.

When the whole of January had passed and permission for Dr. Dinshah had not come, Dr. Nayyar and myself sent a gentle reminder in our letter of 31st January. A copy is hereto appended.

I might state that though in that letter we had asked for a consultation with Dr. B. C. Roy, no notice seems to have been taken of it or of verbal reminders.

You will permit me to draw your attention to another inaccuracy, viz. about the employment of trained nurses. No trained nurse ever came inside the Camp. Before the arrival of Smt. Jaiprakash Narayan and Shri Kanu Gandhi when nursing was becoming difficult we were given the services of a woman who had acted as a *badli ayah* at the mental hospital. She struck work inside of a week and asked the Superintendent for her discharge.

I have etc.,  
M. D. D. GILDER

The Additional Secretary to the  
Government of India  
(Home Department)  
New Delhi

F. Letter No. 88, p. 280  
G. Letter No. 94, p. 283  
H. Letter No. 93, p. 283

Detention Camp, April 2, 1944

DEAR COL. BHANDARI,

In the Government of India's letter to me dated March 31st 1944 there occur these two passages :—

"It was on January 28th that they were first informed that Mrs. Gandhi had asked for the services of Dr. Dinshah Mehta. . . If Dr. Dinshah Mehta was not called in earlier, it was due to the view originally expressed by both Col. Bhandari and Dr. Gilder that his services would not be of any use, but he was summoned as soon as the Government doctors revised that opinion."

"The arrangements for the funeral were understood here to be in accordance with your wishes. The Government made enquiries on the point and were informed that you had no special preference between the first two alternatives mentioned in your letter."

Dr. Gilder has no recollection of his having given the opinion attributed to him. I have never expressed indifference as to whether the deceased was cremated in the consecrated public cremation ground or in the jail compound which this Camp is. Can you please throw light on the discrepancies?

Yours etc.,  
M. K. GANDHI

Detention Camp, April 2nd, 1944

SIR,

This is in continuation of my letter of yesterday's date to the Government of India. For, after handing the letter to the Superintendent of the Camp on looking at the papers, I came upon the following startling statement in the *Hindustan Times* of 30-3-'44 :

"New Delhi, Wednesday,—Today in the Council of State, Lala Ramsarandas asked whether and when Mahatma Gandhi had asked Government to permit the eminent Ayurvedic physician Pandit Shiv Sharma to take up the treatment of Mrs. Gandhi.

"The Home Secretary, Mr. Conran Smith, replying said the first definite request for Pandit Sharma's services was made to the Government of India on February 9 and was granted on February 10. He understood that Pandit Sharma paid his first visit a day or two later. A. P. I."

The fact is that Vaidyaraj Shiv Sharma's name was first submitted to the Government on 31st January, 1944 and not on the 9th February. But my letter of yesterday will show further that the first request for a non-allopathic physician was made early in December 1943. May I look for correction of the statement referred to ?

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

The Additional Secretary to  
the Government of India,  
New Delhi

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Detention Camp,  
March 20th, 1944

SIR,

I have read with painful interest the answer given on behalf of the Government in the Central Assembly about the facilities, medical and otherwise, given to my deceased wife. I had hoped for a better response to my letter of 4th March 1944, assuming that it was in Government's hands when the answer was given. Beyond the admission that the deceased was never offered release the statement makes no amends for the misrepresentations pointed out in that letter. On the contrary it adds one more by stating that "trained nurses were made available. . . ." No trained nurse was asked for or supplied. An *aya*, however, was sent in the place of Shri. Prabhavati Devi and Shri Kanu Gandhi for whom my wife had asked. The *aya* left in less than a week because she found herself ill-fitted for the work entrusted to her. Only then, and after some further delay, and repeated requests

about Shri Kanu Gandhi were the two allowed to come. The facilities have been recited as if they had been granted promptly and willingly. The fact is that most of them when not refused were granted as if grudgingly and when it was almost too late.

My object in writing this letter is not to make the complaint ( though quite legitimate ) that the facilities came too late. My complaint is that in spite of my representation of 4th inst. the Government instead of giving the naked truth have seen fit to give a varnished version.

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

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

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No. III/7/43-M. S.  
Government of India, H. D.  
New Delhi  
30th March, 1944

From

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

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire  
SIR,

In reply to your letter of March 20th, I am directed to say that the Government of India were informed on December 22nd that a request has been made for the services of Kanu Gandhi and the wife of Mr. Jaiprakash Narain. A telegram was sent the same day to the Government of Bihar in whose custody the latter was, asking whether arrangements could be made for her transfer to Poona. The Bombay

Government were, meanwhile, informed on December 23rd that, if extra nursing was necessary, the correct course would be to provide professional nurses for that purpose. On December 24th the Government of India heard from the Government of Bihar that they had no objection to the transfer of Mrs. Jaiprakash Narain and the Bombay Government were informed on the same day that they might take up the matter with the Government of Bihar if satisfactory arrangements could not be made to supply professional nurses as previously suggested. On January 3rd the Government of India were informed that professional nurses employed for Mrs. Gandhi had left and that arrangements were being made for the transfer of Mrs. Jaiprakash Narain. Thereafter, it was learnt that Kanu Gandhi had been paying visits to the Aga Khan's Palace and on January 27th the Government of India received a renewed request that he might be allowed to stay in the Palace to help in nursing your wife. This permission was granted on January 29th though it appears that even before the receipt of this letter, the Bombay Government had agreed to his staying in the Palace.

In these circumstances, the Government of India consider that the reply given in the Legislative Assembly, to which you refer, was substantially correct. They have now been informed by the Bombay Government of the fact, of which they had no previous knowledge either from the Government's letter or from yours, that it was your wife who said that she preferred an *aya* to a trained nurse and that her wishes in this respect were complied with. They consider it hardly necessary to publish this fact.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
R. TOTTENHAM

Addl. Secretary to the Government of India

Detention Camp,  
April 13th, 1944

SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 30th March received by me on the 6th of April. It is good proof to show how ill-informed the Central Government were about the whole situation.

As to "trained nurses," I draw attention to the statement made on behalf of the Government that they "were made available for a short period." That my wife preferred an *ayah* to a trained nurse is hardly relevant to the consideration whether trained nurses were in fact supplied. Therefore that statement seems to me clearly to demand public adjustment.

I hope to have satisfactory reply regarding other matters contained in my letter of April 1st, 1944.

I am etc.,  
M. K. GANDHI

Addl. Secy. to the Govt. of India,  
New Delhi

Home Department,  
New Delhi,  
29th April, 1944

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

Detention Camp,

Poona

SIR,

The Government of India have read with regret your letters of April 1st, 2nd and 13th. They believe that no impartial judgement would support the complaints you have made against them. At the same time, they feel that it is impossible to expect from you in your bereavement a fair recognition of their endeavours to do all that was reasonably possible to meet the requests that reached them, and that no useful purpose would be served by continuing the correspondence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R. TOTTENHAM

Addl. Secretary to the Government of India

[ See also in this connection letter No. 114, paras 1 and 2 (pp. 317 and 318) and letter No. 116, para 1 (p. 328). ]

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

107

Detention Camp,  
Aga Khan's Palace, Poona,  
Christmas Eve, 1942

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

My only excuse for writing you this letter is the deep pain I feel, as one born of English parents, over the falsehoods regarding Gandhiji and the Indian National Congress, which seem to have appeared in certain English papers without being officially contradicted.

Within the limits of the newspapers that reach me here I have been watching the evergrowing volume of anti-Congress propaganda in the British press. Of the various untruths that are being circulated, I want, in this letter, to deal with only one, namely the assertion that Gandhiji and the Congress are pro-Japanese. For samples of such propaganda that has come to my notice, I would refer you to the *Bombay Chronicle Weekly*, of Nov. 29th, 1942, page 22, and to the *Hindu*, (Dak Ed.) of Dec. 19th, 1942, page 4, column 3.

Amongst the quotations and facsimiles given in the *Bombay Chronicle Weekly* is a photograph of the first page of the *London Daily Sketch* of Aug. 5th, 1942, showing a full page headline "*Gandhi's India — Jap Peace Plan Exposed*", and lower down, on the same page, a photograph of myself with the sub-heading, "*English Woman Gandhi's Jap Peace Envoy*". The "*Punch*" cartoons of which facsimiles are also given, are, if possible, even more disgraceful. In the *Hindu* there is a protest by Shri K. M. Munshi from which it would

appear that this libellous propaganda has spread even to the *London Daily Herald*.

Now the reason for my bringing this matter before you is that I have in my possession correspondence that passed between Gandhiji and myself while I was in Orissa, *after* the April meeting of the A. I. C. C. at Allahabad, which proves beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Gandhiji is cent per cent anti-Japanese.

The correspondence, of which I enclose copies, consists of a confidential report, with questionnaire regarding the then anticipated Japanese invasion, which I sent to Gandhiji by special messenger from Orissa, where he had deputed me for helping the Congress workers generally, especially as a Japanese attack on the East Coast was hourly expected.

The Report which I have with me is the original draft, written in my own hand. It is not dated or signed, as these things I affixed to the typewritten copy which was sent; but it must be just about 3 to 4 days previous to Gandhiji's reply dated 31-5-'42, which he dictated to the late Shri Mahadev Desai, and forwarded to me at once by the returning special messenger. Of this I have the original in Shri Mahadev Desai's own handwriting, and signed "Bapu" by Gandhiji. The interview referred to in the first paragraph of the letter, was one I had on 25-5-'42 with Mr. Wood, then Chief Secretary to the Government of Orissa, at which Mr. Mansfield was also present.

Seeing that no God-fearing ruler could, with any peace of mind, allow the above mentioned slanderous propaganda on the part of his own people, against those whom he had rendered unable to reply, to continue unchecked once he had unchallengeable proof of its falsehood, I put trust in the belief that you will publish the enclosed correspondence together with this covering letter, and refute the assertions of these British journals.

I may add that since I am personally acquainted with the members of the Working Committee and have freely discussed these matters with them, I can say with confidence that their feelings have been unequivocally anti-Japanese and anti-Fascist, throughout.

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
MIRABEN

Encls: (Items No. 108, 109)

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### QUESTION OF INVASION AND OCCUPATION BY THE JAPANESE

We may take it that the Japanese will land somewhere along the Orissa coast. Probably there will be no bombing or firing at the time of landing, as there are no defence measures on the coast. From the coast they will advance rapidly across the flat dry rice fields, where the only obstructions are rivers and ditches, now mostly dry and nowhere unfordable. As far as we are able to make out there will be no serious attempt to hold the Japanese advance until the hilly and wooded regions of the Orissa States are reached. The army of defence, whatever it is, is reported to be hidden in the jungle of these parts. It is likely to make a desperate attempt to defend the Jamshedpur road, but the chances of its being successful must be very small. That means we may expect a battle to be fought in the north west of Orissa, after which the Japanese army will pass on into Bihar. At that time the Japanese are not likely to be broadly distributed over the country, but concentrated on their lines of communication between the sea and their advancing army. The British administration will have previously disappeared from the scene.

The problem before us is, in the event of these things happening, how are we to act ?

The Japanese armies will rush over the fields and through the villages, not as avowed enemies of the population, but as chasers and destroyers of the British and American war effort. The population in its turn, is vague in its feelings. The strongest feeling is fear and distrust of the British, which is growing day by day on account of the treatment they are receiving. Anything that is not British is therefore something welcome. Here is a funny example. The villagers in some parts say—“ Oh, the aeroplanes that

make a great noise are British, but there are silent planes also, and they are Mahatma's planes." I think the only thing possible for these simple innocent people to learn is the attitude of neutrality, for it is, in reality, the only position that can be made logical to them. The British not only leave them to their fate without even instructing them in self-protection from bombing etc., but they issue such orders as will, if obeyed, kill them before the day of battle comes. How then can they be ready enthusiastically to obstruct the Japanese who are chasing this detested Raj, especially when the Japanese are saying, "It is not you we have come to fight." But I have found the villagers ready to take up the position of neutrality. That is to say, they would leave the Japanese to pass over their fields and villages, and try as far as possible not to come in contact with them. They would hide their food-stuffs and money, and decline to serve the Japanese. But even that much resistance would be difficult to obtain in some parts, the dislike of the British Raj being so great, that anything anti-British will be welcomed with open arms. I feel we have got to try and gauge the maximum resistance which the average inhabitants may be expected to put up, and maintain and make that our definite stand. A steady, long sustained stand, though not cent per cent resistance, will be more effective in the long run than a stiff stand, which quickly breaks.

This maximum sustainable stand which we may expect from the average people is probably:—

1. To resist firmly, and mostly non-violently, the commandeering by the Japanese of any land, houses, or movable property.
2. To render no forced labour to the Japanese.
3. Not to take up any sort of administrative service under the Japanese.  
(This may be hard to control in connection with some types of city people, Government opportunists and Indians brought in from other parts.)
4. To buy nothing from the Japanese.
5. To refuse their currency and any effort on their part at setting up a Raj.

(Lack of workers and lack of time make it very hard, but we have to strive to stem the tide.)

Now as to certain difficulties and questions which arise:

1. The Japanese may offer to pay for labour, food and materials in British currency notes. Should the people refuse to sell for good prices or work for a good wage? For long sustained resistance over many months it may be difficult to prevent this. So long as they refuse to buy or take "service", the exploitation danger is kept off.

2. What should be done about the rebuilding of bridges, canals etc. which the British will have blown up? We shall also need the bridges

and canals. Should we therefore set our hands to their rebuilding, even if it means working side by side with the Japanese, or should we retire on the approach of Japanese bridge builders ?

3. If Indian soldiers, who were taken prisoners in Singapore and Burma, land with the Japanese invading army, what should be our attitude towards them ? Should we treat them with the same aloofness as we are to show the Japanese or should we not try to win them over to our way of thinking ?

4. After the exodus (before the approaching Japanese) of the British Raj, what shall we do about currency ?

5. After battles have been fought and the Japanese armies will have advanced, the battlefield will be left strewn with dead and wounded. *I think we must unhesitatingly work side by side with the Japanese in burning and burying the dead and picking up and serving the wounded ?* The Japanese are likely to attend to the lightly wounded of their own men and take prisoner the lightly wounded of their enemy, but the rest would probably be left, and it will be our sacred duty to attend to them. For this we are from now planning the training of volunteers under the guidance of local doctors. Their services can also be used in case of internal disturbances, epidemics etc.

6. Besides dead and wounded on the battle-field, a certain amount of rifles, revolvers and other small arms are likely to be left lying about unpicked up by the Japanese. If we do not make a point of collecting these things they are likely to fall into the hands of robbers, thieves and other bad characters, who always come down like hawks to loot a battle-field. In an unarmed country like India this would lead to much trouble. In the event of our collecting such arms and ammunition, what should we do with them ? My instinct is to take them out to sea and drop them in the ocean. Please tell us what you advise.

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Sevagram  
Via Wardha.  
C. P.  
31-5-'42

वि. मीरा, (Mira whom God may bless)

I have your very complete and illuminating letter. The report of the interview is perfect, your answers were straight, unequivocal and courageous. I have no criticism to make. I can only say 'Go on as you are doing.' I can quite clearly see that you have gone to the right place at the right

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time. I therefore need do nothing more than come straight to your questions which are all good and relevant.

Q. 1. I think we must tell the people what they should do. They will act according to their capacity. If we begin to judge their capacity and give directions accordingly our directions will be halting and even compromising which we should never do. You will therefore read my instructions in that light. Remember that our attitude is that of complete non-cooperation with Japanese army, therefore we may not help them in any way, nor may we profit by any dealings with them. Therefore we cannot sell anything to them. If people are not able to face the Japanese army, they will do as armed soldiers do, i. e. retire when they are overwhelmed. And if they do so, the question of having any dealings with Japanese does not and should not arise. If, however, the people have not the courage to resist Japanese unto death and not the courage and capacity to evacuate the portion invaded by the Japanese, they will do the best they can in the light of instructions. One thing they should never do — to yield willing submission to the Japanese. That will be a cowardly act, and unworthy of a freedom loving people. They must not escape from one fire only to fall into another and probably more terrible. Their attitude therefore must always be of resistance to the Japanese. No question, therefore, arises of accepting British currency notes or Japanese coins. They will handle nothing from Japanese hands. So far as dealings with our own people are concerned they will either resort to barter or make use of such British currency that they have, in the hope that the National Government that may take the place of British Government will take up from the people all the British currency in accordance with its capacity.

(2) Question about cooperation in bridge building is covered by the above. There can be no question of this cooperation.

(3) If Indian soldiers come in contact with our people, we must fraternize with them if they are well disposed, and invite them, if they can, to join the nation. Probably they have been brought under promise that they will deliver the country from foreign yoke. There will be no foreign yoke and they will be expected to befriend people and obey National Government that might have been set up in place of British Government. If the British have retired in an orderly manner leaving things in Indian hands the whole thing can work splendidly and it might even be made difficult for Japanese to settle down in India or any part of it in peace, because they will have to deal with a population which will be sullen and resistant. It is difficult to say what can happen. It is enough if people are trained to cultivate the power of resistance, no matter which power is operating — the Japanese or the British.

(4) Covered by (1) above.

(5) The occasion may not come, but if it does, cooperation will be permissible and even necessary.

(6) Your answer about the arms found on the wayside is most tempting and perfectly logical. It may be followed but I would not rule out the idea of worthy people finding them and storing them in a safe place if they can. If it is impossible to store them and keep them from mischievous people yours is an ideal plan.

Love,  
BAPU

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Detention Camp, 26th February, 1944

SIR,

I have read the speech of the Honourable the Home Member in the Assembly on the debate arising out of the ban on Shrimati Sarojini Devi. The speech has reference among other things to the correspondence between Shrimati Mirabai and myself, and the Government refusal to publish that correspondence. The following is the relevant portion of that speech :

"She (Shrimati Sarojini Devi) refers, and the point has been raised in this debate, to a letter said to have been written by Miss Slade to Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Gandhi's reply and I have been asked why no publicity has been given to that letter. That letter was written and answered long before the Congress leaders were placed in detention. If Mr. Gandhi wished to give publicity to that letter he was perfectly free to do it himself. But it was a confidential communication addressed to him and I do not see any reason why Government should disclose a communication of that nature. I might say that it would not help the Congress case if it were disclosed.

"Then it has been said that Mrs. Naidu wished to defend the Congress from the implication of being pro-Japanese. Government have never at any time, either here or at home, charged the Congress with being pro-Japanese. Well, the allusion to that in the booklet called 'Congress-Responsibility' refers to a statement quoted from Pandit Nehru himself. I have not the time to quote it at length, but if Honourable Members will refer to the quotation given in the 'Congress Responsibility' pamphlet they will easily find the passage in question."

Assuming that the report is correct, it makes strange reading.

Firstly, as to the non-publication by me of this correspondence between Shrimati Mirabai and myself, surely the publication was unnecessary until the charge of being pro-Japanese was spread abroad.

Secondly, why do the Government feel squeamish about publishing "confidential correspondence" when, both the correspondents have invited publication?

Thirdly, I do not understand the reluctance of the Government to publish the correspondence when, according to the Honourable the Home Member, the correspondence will not serve the Congress case.

Fourthly, the Government seem intentionally or unintentionally to have suppressed the very relevant fact that Shrimati Mirabai wrote to Lord Linlithgow drawing attention to the libellous propaganda in the London press at that time containing allegations that I was pro-Japanese, which allegations she invited him to repudiate. Her letter to Lord Linlithgow enclosed copies of correspondence referred to, and asked for its publication. It was written on December 24th, 1942, long before the Government publication entitled "Congress Responsibility", which bears the date February 13th, 1943, appeared.

Fifthly, as to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's alleged statement before the Working Committee, I have already made it clear in my reply to the Government pamphlet that it was wholly wrong on their part to make use of the unauthorized notes of the discussions at the Allahabad meeting of the Working Committee, after Pandit Nehru's emphatic repudiation published in the daily press.

It is difficult for me to understand the Honourable the Home Member's speech and the Government persistence in making charges and innuendoes against Congress people whom they have put in custody and thus effectively prevented from answering those charges. I hope, therefore,

that the Government will at the very least see their way to publish the correspondence referred to, namely Shrimati Mirabai's letter to Lord Linlithgow of the 24th December, 1942, together with the enclosures.

Enclosures. (Items No. 107, 108 and 109)

Secretary to the Government  
of India, New Delhi

I am etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

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From

The Additional Secretary  
to the Government of India

No. II/4/44-M. S.

Government of India, H. D.

New Delhi

11th March, 1944

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire

SIR,

In reply to your letter dated February 26th, I am directed to say the Government do not think that any useful purpose would be served by publishing the correspondence in question. So far as Government are concerned, there is the statement in the Home Member's speech—"Government have never at any time, either here or at home, charged the Congress with being pro-Japanese". They do not see how this can be regarded as "Government persistence in making charges and innuendoes against Congress people". So far as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is concerned, I am again to refer you to para. 2 of my letter of October 14th, 1943, in which it was made clear that he did not, in his public statement, repudiate the words in the 'Congress Responsibility' pamphlet to which you take exception in paragraph 18 of your letter of July 15th, 1943. There can, therefore, be no question of Government's having made use of that passage after his repudiation of it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R. TOTTENHAM

Additional Secretary to the Govt. of India

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

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Detention Camp,  
February 17, 1944

DEAR FRIEND,

Although I have had not the pleasure of meeting you, I address you on purpose as 'dear friend'. I am looked upon by the representatives of the British Government as a great, if not the greatest enemy of the British. Since I regard myself as a friend and servant of humanity including the British, in token of my good will I call you, the foremost representative of the British in India, my 'friend'.

I have received, in common with some others, a notice informing me for the first time, why I am detained, and conferring on me the right of representation against my detention. I have duly sent my reply, but I have as yet heard nothing from the Government. A reminder too has gone after a wait of thirteen days.

I have said some only have received notices, because, out of six of us in this Camp, only three have received them. I presume that all will receive them in due course. But my mind is filled with the suspicion that the notices have been sent as a matter of form only, and not with any intention to do justice. I do not wish to burden this letter with argument. I repeat, what I said in the correspondence with your predecessor, that the Congress and I are wholly innocent of the charges brought against us. Nothing but an

impartial tribunal to investigate the Government case, and the Congress case against the Government will bring out the truth.

The speeches recently made on behalf of the Government in the Assembly on the release motion, and the gagging order on Shri. Sarojini Devi, I consider to be playing with fire. I distinguish between defeat of Japanese arms and Allied victory. The latter must carry with it the deliverance of India from the foreign yoke. The spirit of India demands complete freedom from all foreign dominance and would therefore resist Japanese yoke equally with British or any other. The Congress represents that spirit in full measure. It has grown to be an institution whose roots have gone deep down into the Indian soil. I was therefore staggered to read that the Government were satisfied with things as they were going. Had they not got from among the Indian people the men and money they wanted? Was not the Government machinery running smooth? This self-satisfaction bodes ill for Britain, India and the world, if it does not quickly give place to a searching of hearts in British high places.

Promises for the future are valueless in the face of the world struggle in which the fortune of all nations and therefore of the whole of humanity is involved. Present performance is the peremptory need of the moment if the war is to end in world peace and not be a preparation for another war bloodier than the present, if, indeed, there can be a bloodier. Therefore real war effort must mean satisfaction of India's demand. "Quit India" only gives vivid expression to that demand, and has not the sinister and poisonous meaning attributed to it without warrant by the Government of India. The expression is charged with the friendliest feeling for Britain in terms of the whole of humanity.

I have done. I thought that, if I claim to be a friend of the British, as I do, nothing should deter me from sharing my deepest thoughts with you. It is no pleasure for me to be in this Camp, where all my creature comforts are supplied without any effort on my part, when I know that millions outside are starving for want of food. But I should feel utterly helpless if I went out and missed *the* food by which alone living becomes worth while.

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

His Excellency the Viceroy,  
Viceroy's Camp

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Viceroy's Camp, India (Nagpur)  
25th February, 1944

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I thank you for your letter of February 17th.

You will by now have received the reply to your representation. I am sorry to hear that three of those in the Aga Khan's Palace have not received notices. This will be looked into at once.

I expect you have seen in the papers reports of the speech I made to the Legislature on the same day on which you wrote that letter. This states my point of view and I need not repeat what I said then. I enclose a copy for your convenience if you wish to read it.

I take this opportunity to express to you deep sympathy from my wife and myself at the death of Mrs. Gandhi. We understand what this loss must mean to you after so many years of companionship.

Yours sincerely,  
WAVELL

M. K. Gandhi Esq.

Detention Camp, 9th March, 1944

DEAR FRIEND,

I must thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of 17th February. At the outset I send you and Lady Wavell my thanks for your kind condolences on the death of my wife. Though for her sake I have welcomed her death as bringing freedom from living agony, I feel the loss more than I had thought I should. We were a couple outside the ordinary. It was in 1906 that, by mutual consent and after unconscious trials, we definitely adopted self-restraint as a rule of life. To my great joy this knit us together as never before. We ceased to be two different entities. Without my wishing it, she chose to lose herself in me. The result was she became truly my *better* half. She was a woman always of very strong will which, in our early days I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become, quite unwittingly, my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-cooperation. The practice began with my own family. When I introduced it in 1906 in the political field it came to be known by the more comprehensive and specially coined name of Satyagraha. When the course of Indian imprisonments commenced in South Africa Shri Kasturba was among civil resisters. She went through greater physical trials than I. Although she had gone through several imprisonments, she did not take kindly to the present incarceration during which all creature comforts were at her disposal. My arrest simultaneously with that of many others, and her own immediately following, gave her a great shock and embittered her. She was wholly unprepared for my arrest. I had assured her that the Government trusted my non-violence, and would not arrest me unless I courted arrest myself. Indeed, the nervous shock was so great that after her arrest she developed violent diarrhoea and, but

for the attention that Dr. Sushila Nayyar, who was arrested at the same time as the deceased, was able to give her, she might have died before joining me in this detention Camp, where my presence soothed her and the diarrhoea stopped without any further medicament. Not so the bitterness. It led to fretfulness ending in painfully slow dissolution of the body.

2. In the light of the foregoing you will perhaps understand the pain I felt when I read in the papers the statement made on behalf of the Government which I hold was an unfortunate departure from truth regarding her who was precious to me beyond measure. I ask you please to send for and read the complaint in the matter which I have forwarded to the Additional Secretary to the Government of India (Home Department). Truth is said to be the first and the heaviest casualty in war. How I wish in this war it could be otherwise in the case of the Allied powers!

3. I now come to your address which you delivered before the Legislature and of which you have kindly sent me a copy. When the newspapers containing the address were received, I was by the bedside of the deceased. Shri. Mirabai read to me the Associated Press report. But my mind was elsewhere. Therefore the receipt of your speech in a handy form was most welcome. I have now read it with all the attention it deserves. Having gone through it, I feel drawn to offer a few remarks, all the more so as you have observed that the views expressed by you "need not be regarded as final". May this letter lead to a reshaping of some of them!

4. In the middle of page two you speak of the welfare of the "Indian peoples". I have seen in some Viceregal pronouncements the inhabitants of India being referred to as the people of India. Are the two expressions synonymous?

5. At page thirteen referring to the attainment of self-government by India you say, "I am absolutely convinced

not only that the above represents the genuine desire of the British people, but that they wish to see an early realization of it. It is qualified only at present by an absolute determination to let nothing stand in the way of the earliest possible defeat of Germany and Japan; and by a resolve to see that in the solution of the constitutional problem full account is taken of the interests of those who have loyally supported us in this war and at all other times — the soldiers who have served the common cause; the people who have worked with us; the Rulers and populations of the States to whom we are pledged; minorities who have trusted us to see that they get a fair deal . . . . . but until the two main Indian parties at least can come to terms, I do not see any immediate hope of progress." Without reasoning it out, I venture to give my paraphrase of your pronouncement. "We, the British shall stand by the Indian soldier whom we have brought into being and trained for consolidating our rule and position in India, and who, by experience, we have found can effectively help us in our wars against other nations. We shall also stand by the Rulers of the Indian States, many of whom are our creation and all of whom owe their present position to us, even when these Rulers curb or actually crush the spirit of the people whom they rule. Similarly shall we stand by the minorities whom too we have encouraged and used against the vast majority when the latter have at all attempted to resist our rule. It makes no difference that they (the majority) seek to replace it by a rule of the will of the people of India taken as a whole. And in no case will we transfer power unless Hindus and Muslims come to us with an agreement among themselves." The position taken up in the paragraph quoted and interpreted by me is no new thing. I regard the situation thus envisaged as hopeless, and I claim in this to represent the thought of the man in the street. Out of the contemplation of this

hopelessness was born the anguished cry of 'Quit India'. What I see happening in this country day after day provides a complete vindication of the 'Quit India' formula as defined by me in my considered writings.

6. I note as I read your speech that you do not regard the sponsors of the formula of 'Quit India' as outcasts to be shunned by society. You believe them to be high-minded persons. Then, treat them as such and trust their interpretation of their own formula and you cannot go wrong.

7. After developing the Cripps offer you have said at page sixteen in the middle of the paragraph, "... the demand for release of these leaders who are in detention is an utterly barren one until there is some sign on their part of willingness to cooperate. It needs no consultation with any one or anything but his own conscience for any one of those under detention to decide whether he will withdraw from the 'Quit India' resolution and the policy which had tragic consequences, and will cooperate in the great tasks ahead." Then again, reverting to the same subject you say on pages nineteen and twenty, "There is an important element which stands aloof; I recognize how much ability and high-mindedness it contains; but I deplore its present policy and methods as barren and impractical. I should like to have the co-operation of this element in solving the present and the future problems of India. If its leaders feel that they cannot consent to take part in the present Government of India, they may still be able to assist in considering future problems. But I see no reason to release those responsible for the declaration of August 8th, 1942, until I am convinced that the policy of non-cooperation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sackcloth and ashes, that helps no one—but in recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy."

8. I am surprised that you, an eminent soldier and man of affairs, should hold such an opinion. How can the withdrawal of a resolution, arrived at jointly by hundreds of men and women after much debating and careful consideration, be a matter of individual conscience? A resolution jointly undertaken can be honourably, conscientiously and properly withdrawn only after joint discussion and deliberation. Individual conscience may come into play after this necessary step, not before. Is a prisoner ever free to exercise his conscience? Is it just and proper to expect him to do so?

9. Again, you recognize "much ability and high-mindedness" in those who represent the Congress organization and then deplore their present policy and methods as "barren and unpractical". Does not the second statement cancel the first? Able and highminded men may come to erroneous decisions, but I have not before heard such people's policy and methods being described as "barren and unpractical". Is it not up to you to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of their policy with them before pronouncing judgement especially when they are also admittedly representatives of millions of their people? Does it become an all-powerful Government to be afraid of the consequences of releasing unarmed men and women with a backing only of men and women equally unarmed and even pledged to non-violence? Moreover, why should you hesitate to put me in touch with the Working Committee members so as to enable me to know their minds and reactions?

10. Then you have talked of the "tragic consequences" of the 'Quit India' resolution. I have said enough in my reply to the Government pamphlet "Congress Responsibility etc." combating the charge that the Congress was responsible for those consequences. I commend the pamphlet and my reply to your attention, if you have not already seen

them. Here I would just like to emphasize what I have already said. Had Government stayed action till they had studied my speeches and those of the members of the Working Committee history would have been written differently.

11. You have made much of the fact that your Executive Council is predominantly Indian. Surely, their being Indians no more makes them representatives of India than non-Indians. Conversely it is quite conceivable that a non-Indian may be a true representative of India, if he is elected by the vote of the Indian people. It would give no satisfaction even if the head of the Indian Government was a distinguished Indian *not* chosen by the free vote of the people. .

12. Even you, I am sorry, have fallen into the common error of describing the Indian forces as having been recruited by "voluntary enlistment". A person who takes to soldiering as a profession will enlist himself wherever he gets his market wage. Voluntary enlistment has come to bear by association a meaning much higher than that which attaches to an enlistment like that of the Indian soldier. Were those who carried out the orders at the Jallianwalla massacre volunteers? The very Indian soldiers who have been taken out of India and are showing unexampled bravery will be ready to point their rifles unerringly at their own countrymen at the orders of the British Government, their employers. Will they deserve the honourable name of volunteers?

13. You are flying all over India. You have not hesitated to go among the skeletons of Bengal. May I suggest an interruption in your scheduled flights and a descent upon Ahmednagar and the Aga Khan's Palace in order to probe the hearts of your captives? We are all friends of the British, however much we may criticize the British government and system in India. If you can but trust, you will find us to be the greatest helpers in the fight against Nazism, Fascism, Japanism and the like.

14. Now I revert to your letter of the 25th February. Shri. Mirabai and I have received replies to our representations. The remaining inmates have received their notices. The reply received by me I regard as a mockery; the one received by Shri. Mirabai as an insult. According to the report of the Home Member's answer to a question in the Central Assembly, the replies received by us seem to be no replies. He is reported to have said that the stage "for the review of the cases had not yet arrived. Government at present were only receiving representations from prisoners". If their presentations in reply to the Government notices are to be considered merely by the executive that imprisoned them without trial, it will amount to a farce and an eye-wash, meant perhaps for foreign consumption, but not as any indication of a desire to do justice. My views are known to the Government. I may be considered an impossible man—though altogether wrongly I would protest. But what about Shri. Mirabai? As you know she is the daughter of an Admiral and former Commander-in-Chief of these waters. But she left the life of ease and chose instead to throw in her lot with me. Her parents, recognizing her urge to come to me, gave her their full blessings. She spends her time in the service of the masses. She went to Orissa at my request to understand the plight of the people of that benighted land. That Government was hourly expecting Japanese invasion. Papers were to be removed or burnt, and withdrawal of the civil authority from the coast was being contemplated. Shri. Mirabai made Chaudwar (Cuttack) airfield her headquarters, and the local military commander was glad of the help she could give him. Later she went to New Delhi and saw General Sir Allen Hartley and General Molesworth, who both appreciated her work and greeted her as one of their own class and caste. It therefore baffles me to understand her incarceration. The only reason for burying her alive, so far as I can

see, is that she has committed the crime of associating herself with me. I suggest your immediately releasing her, or your seeing her and then deciding. I may add that she is not yet free from the pain for the alleviation of which the Government sent Capt. Simcox at my request. It would be a tragedy if she became permanently disabled in detention. I have mentioned Shri. Mirabai's case because it is typically unjust.

15. I apologize to you for a letter which has gone beyond length I had prescribed for myself. It has also become very personal and very unconventional. That, however, is the way my loyalty to friends works. I have written without reservation. Your letter and your speech have given me the opening. For the sake of India, England and humanity I hope you will treat this as an honest and friendly, if candid, response to your speech.

16. Years ago while teaching the boys and girls of Tolstoy Farm in South Africa I happened to read to them Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior". It recurs to me as I am writing to you. It will delight my heart to realize that warrior in you. There will be little difference between the manners and methods of the Axis powers and the Allies, if the war is to resolve itself into a mere trial of brute strength.

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

His Excellency the Viceroy,  
Viceroy's Camp

The Viceroy's House,  
New Delhi,  
28th March, 1944

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I have your letter of March 9th. You will receive a separate reply from the Home Secretary on your complaint about Mr. Butler's answer to a question in the House of Commons. I can only say that I deeply regret if you are left with the impression that the Government of India have been unsympathetic in the matter of Mrs. Gandhi's illness. Miss Slade's case will be examined in the light of what you say about her.

I do not think it profitable that we should enter into lengthy argument, and do not propose to answer in detail the points you raise in your letter. But I think it best to give you a clear statement of my views on the future development of India and the reasons for your present detention.

The draft declaration of H. M. G. which Sir Stafford Cripps brought to India stated in unmistakable terms the intention of H. M. G. to give India self-government under a constitution of her own devising, arrived at by agreement between the principal elements. I need hardly say that I am in entire accord with that aim, and only seek the best means to implement it without delivering India to confusion and turmoil. Much wisdom and spirit of goodwill and compromise will be required to arrive at the right solution, but with good leadership I am sure a solution can be found.

Meanwhile there is much work to be done, particularly in the economic field, in preparing India to take her proper place in the modern world. She must be ready to welcome change and progress in many hitherto unfamiliar directions and to raise the standard of living of her population. Such work is primarily non-political: it may well hasten a political

settlement, but cannot await it. It will give rise to many new and absorbing problems demanding the best abilities that India can bring to bear on them. India cannot be expected to tackle these problems in isolation from the rest of the world, or without the aid that Britain can give and the services of an experienced administration. But it is work in which leaders of all parties can cooperate with the certainty that they are helping the country towards the goal of freedom.

I regret that I must view the present policy of the Congress party as hindering and not forwarding Indian progress to self-government and development. During a war in which the success of the United Nations against the Axis powers is vital both to India and to the world, as you yourself have recognized, the Working Committee of Congress declined to cooperate, ordered Congress ministries to resign, and decided to take no part in the administration of the country or in the war effort which India was making to assist the United Nations. At the greatest crisis of all for India, at a time when Japanese invasion was possible, the Congress party decided to pass a resolution calling on the British to leave India, which could not fail to have the most serious effect on our ability to defend the frontiers of India against the Japanese. I am quite clear that India's problems cannot be solved by an immediate and complete withdrawal of the British.

I do not accuse you or the Congress party of any wish deliberately to aid the Japanese. But you are too intelligent a man, Mr. Gandhi, not to have realized that the effect of your resolution must be to hamper the prosecution of the war; and it is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India, and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage. I do not see how those responsible for the safety of India could have acted otherwise than they did and could

have failed to arrest those who sponsored the resolution. As to general Congress responsibility for the disturbances which followed, I was, as you know, Commander-in-Chief at the time; my vital lines of communication to the Burma frontier were cut by Congress supporters, in the name of the Congress, often using the Congress flag. I cannot therefore hold Congress guiltless of what occurred; and I cannot believe that you, with all your acumen and experience, can have been unaware of what was likely to follow from your policy. I do not believe that the Congress party's action in this matter represented the real feeling of India, nor that the Congress attitude of non-cooperation represents the opinion of anything like a majority of India.

To sum up, I believe that with general cooperation we can in the immediate future do much to solve India's economic problems, and can make steady and substantial progress towards Indian self-government.

I believe that the greatest contribution that the Congress party can make towards India's welfare is to abandon the policy of non-cooperation and to join wholeheartedly with the other Indian parties and with the British in helping India forward in economic and political progress — not by any dramatic or spectacular stroke, but by hard steady work towards the end ahead. I think that the greatest service you could do to India would be to advise unequivocally such cooperation.

In the meantime I regard it as my task in the interests of India, of which I am a sincere friend, to concentrate all my efforts on bringing this war to a victorious conclusion, and to prepare for India's advancement after the war. In this task I feel I can count on very considerable cooperation from the majority of Indians.

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Yours sincerely,  
WAVELL

Detention Camp, April 9th, 194

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 28th March received by me on the 3rd instant. Please accept my thanks for it.

I take up the general matter first.

You have sent me a frank reply. I propose to reciprocate your courtesy by being perfectly frank. Friendship to be true demands frankness even though it may some time appear unpleasant. If anything I say offends you, please accept my apology in advance.

It is a pity that you have refused to deal with important points raised in my letter.

Your letter is a plea for cooperation by the Congress in the present administration and failing that in planning for the future. In my opinion, this requires equality between the parties and mutual trust. But equality is absent and Government distrust of the Congress can be seen at every turn. The result is that suspicion of Government is universal. Add to this the fact that Congressmen have no faith in the competence of the Government to ensure India's future good. This want of faith is based upon bitter experience of the past and present conduct of the British administration of India. Is it not high time that you cooperated with the people of India, through their elected representatives instead of expecting cooperation from them?

All this was implied in the August resolution. The sanction behind the demand in the resolution was, not violence, but self-suffering. Anyone, be he Congressman or other, who acted against this rule of conduct had no authority to use the Congress name for his action. But I see that this resolution repels you as it did Lord Linlithgow. You know that I have joined issue on the point. I have seen nothing since to alter my view. You have been good enough to credit me

with "intelligence", "experience" and "acumen". Let me say that all these three gifts have failed to make me realize that the effect of the Congress resolution "must be to hamper the prosecution of the war". The responsibility for what followed the hasty arrests of Congressmen must rest solely on the Government. For, they invited the crisis, not the authors of the resolution.

You remind me that you were Commander-in-Chief at the time. How much better it would have been for all concerned if confidence in the immeasurable strength of arms had ruled your action instead of fear of a rebellion! Had the Government stayed their hand at the time, surely, all the bloodshed of those months would have been avoided. And it is highly likely that the Japanese menace would have become a thing of the past. Unfortunately it was not to be. And so the menace is still with us, and what is more, the Government are pursuing a policy of suppression of liberty and truth. I have studied the latest ordinance about the detenus, and I recall the Rowlatt Act of 1919. It was popularly called the Black Act. As you know it gave rise to an unprecedented agitation. That Act pales into insignificance before the series of ordinances that are being showered from the Viceregal throne. Martial law in effect governs not one province, as in 1919, but the whole of India. Things are moving from bad to worse.

You say, "It is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage." I must deny both the charges. I venture to suggest that you should follow the golden rule, and withdraw your statement and suspend judgement till you have submitted the evidence in your possession to an impartial tribunal and obtained its verdict. I confess that I do not make the request with much confidence. For, in dealing with Congressmen

and others Government have combined the prosecutor, judge and jailor in the same person and thus made proper defence impossible on the part of the accused. Judgements of courts are being rendered nugatory by fresh ordinances. No man's freedom can be said to be safe in this extraordinary situation. You will probably retort that it is an exigency of the war. I wonder !

As I visualize India today, it is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls. You are its sole custodian. The government prisons are prisons within this prison. I agree with you that whilst you hold the views expressed in your letter under reply, the proper place for one like me is a government prison. And unless there is a change of heart, view and policy on the part of the Government, I am quite content to remain your prisoner. Only, I hope, you will listen to the request made by me through the proper channels to remove me and my fellow prisoners to some other prison where the cost of our detention need not be even one tenth of what it is today.

As to my complaint about Mr. Butler's statement and later the Home Secretary's, I have received two letters from the Home Department in reply. I am sorry to say, they have appeared to me highly unsatisfactory. They ignore patent facts and betray an obstinate refusal to face truth even on a wholly non-political issue. My correspondence with the Home Department continues. I invite your attention to it, if you can spare the time and are interested in the subject.

I am glad and thankful that Shri. Mirabai's (Miss Slade's) case is being considered in the light of what I said about her in my letter.

His Excellency the Viceroy,  
Viceroy's Camp

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

IX  
MISCELLANEOUS  
A  
REGARDING AMENDMENT OF SALT CLAUSE  
117

Detention Camp,  
February 16th, '44

EXPRESS WIRE

Honourable Finance Member, New Delhi,

Having read your statement about salt clause in Gandhi-Irwin Agreement I beg to draw your attention to notice that was issued by Sir George Schuster explaining implications of that clause. Any amendment should be in terms of that notice.

GANDHI

118

No. S. D. VI/-3847

Home Department

Bombay, 25th February, 1944

From

The Secretary to the  
Government of Bombay,  
Home Department

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire

SIR. ●

On the 16th February, 1944, you requested that the following telegraphic message be transmitted to the Finance Member of the Government of India:

"Having read your statement about salt clause in Gandhi-Irwin Agreement I beg to draw your attention to notice that was issued by Sir George Schuster explaining implications of that clause. Any amendment should be in terms of that notice."

This message was communicated by the Inspector General of Prisons the same day to this Government who passed it on immediately to the Government of India. The Finance Member has now requested that the following reply should be communicated to you :

"After discussion in House it was felt best course to leave matters to be regulated as hitherto by notification issued in 1931 terms of which have been scrupulously observed by Government. No amendment was therefore made."

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

H. IYANGAR

Secretary to the Government of Bombay, H. D.

B

ABOUT TRANSFER

119

Detention Camp, March 4, '44

SIR,

In reply to a question in the Assembly, the Honourable the Home Member is reported to have said, "The provision for the expenses of Mr. Gandhi and those detained with him in the Aga Khan's Palace amounted to about Rs. 550/- a month.

In my letter to you dated 26th October last I remarked as follows : "The huge place in which I am being detained with a big guard around me, I hold to be waste of public funds. I should be quite content to pass my days in any prison." The Honourable the Home Member's reply quoted above is a sharp reminder to me that I should have followed up the remark just referred to by me. But it is never too late to mend. I therefore take up the question now.

The expenses on behalf of my companions and me are not merely Rs. 550/-per month. The rent of this huge place (of which only a portion is open to us) and the expense of maintaining the big outer guard and an inner staff consisting of Superintendent, Jamadar and sepoys have got to be added. And to this a large squad of convicts from Yeravda to serve the inmates and to look after the garden. Virtually the whole of this expense is, from my point of view, wholly unnecessary; and when people are dying of starvation, it is almost a crime against Indian humanity. I ask that my companions and I be removed to any regular prison Government may choose. In conclusion, I cannot conceal from myself the sad thought that the whole of this expense comes from taxes collected from the dumb millions of India.

I am, etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

To

The Additional Secretary to the  
Government of India (H. D.),  
New Delhi.

120

Detention Camp, April 21st, 1944

SIR,

I wrote to you on the 4th March requesting the Government to transfer the party of detenus in this Camp to a prison where the expense entailed in our detention here may be materially reduced. I request an early decision in the matter.

I am, etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

To

The Additional Secretary to the  
Government of India (H. D.),  
New Delhi

## C

## INTERVIEWS DURING ILLNESS

121

Detention Camp, May 3rd, 1944

SIR,

Shri Jamnadas came in yesterday. When I was asked whether I would see him I had consented so as to cause as little disappointment as possible for the future. My position is that whilst I would be glad to see any relatives who might secure government permission, I must not break the rule, I have made for myself, that I would deny myself the pleasure, so long as the Government restrict the permission only to relatives and exclude the members of the Ashram, or those who stand in the same category. I regard them as equal with my relatives. The Government were good enough to grant such permission during my fast last year without any untoward result so far as I know. Can they do likewise during my convalescence which bids fair to be protracted?

I am, etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

To

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

## D

## ABOUT ACQUISITION OF THE SITE OF SAMADHI

122

Detention Camp,

6th May, 1944, 7-45 A. M.

SIR,

I have been told by the Inspector General of Prisons that the party of detenus in this Camp is to be discharged at 8 a. m., today. I wish to put on record the fact that by reason of the cremation of the corpses of Shri Mahadev Desai and then my wife the place of cremation which has

been fenced off becomes consecrated ground. The party has daily visited the ground twice and offered floral tributes to the departed spirits and said prayers. I trust that the plot will be acquired by the Government with the right of way to it through H. H. the Aga Khan's grounds, so as to enable those relatives and friends, who wish, to visit the cremation ground whenever they like. Subject to the permission of the Government, I would like to arrange for the upkeep of the sacred spot and daily prayers. I hope that the necessary steps will be taken by the Government in terms of my prayer. My address will be Sevagram, via, Wardha (C. P.).

I am, etc.,  
M. K. GANDHI

To  
The Secretary to the  
Government of Bombay,  
Home Department, Bombay

123

No. S. D. VI/-75  
Home Department (Political)  
Poona, 7th July, 1944

From  
The Secretary to the  
Government of Bombay, H. D.

To  
M. K. Gandhi, Esquire  
SIR,

I am directed to refer to your letter dated the 6th May, 1944, in which you request that Government should acquire the plot on which the bodies of Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Mahadev Desai were cremated, together with the right of way to it through His Highness the Aga Khan's grounds so as to enable relatives and friends to visit the cremation ground whenever they liked. In reply I am to inform you that it is legally impossible for Government to acquire the

site compulsorily under the Land Acquisition Act. Government considers that the matter is one for private negotiations between you and His Highness the Aga Khan. I am to add, however, that your request has been communicated to His Highness the Aga Khan and is now understood to be under his consideration. Government understands that he has no objection, in the meanwhile, to the relatives of Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Mahadev Desai and any other persons suggested by you going through the palace grounds to the place of cremation on the understanding that this is by his leave and licence.

Your obedient servant.

H. IYANGAR

Secretary to the Government of Bombay, H. D.

124

"Dilkhusha" Panchgani, July 9th, 1944

SIR,

I have received your letter of 7th instant in connection with the ground in H. H. the Aga Khan's Palace where Shri Mahadev Desai's and Smt. Kasturba Gandhi's bodies were cremated. My purpose is served by the present arrangement for which I thank the Government.

Yours etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

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

125

"MORARJI CASTLE",  
Mahabaleshwar,  
27th May, 1945

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,  
Home Department, Bombay.

DEAR SIR,

I refer you to my letter of 6th May 1944 written from the Detention Camp.

Uptil recently there has been no hitch about friends and relatives going to the *samadhis* of the two departed ones, my wife and Shri Mahadev Desai. But a hitch occurred recently. Tactful handling made devotion fairly possible during fixed hours. Now comes the rumour that H. H. the Aga Khan's Palace is about to be occupied by the Military and in that event, devotion may not be permitted at all. I can only hope that the fear is wholly unjustified.

In my letter of 6th May 1944 to the Government I reduced my contention to writing to the effect that "by reason of the cremation of the corpses of Shri Mahadev Desai and then my wife the place of cremation which has been fenced off becomes consecrated ground. The party has daily visited the ground twice and offered floral tributes to the departed spirits and said prayers. I trust that the plot will be acquired by the Government with the right of way to it through H. H. the Aga Khan's grounds, so as to enable those relatives and friends, who wish, to visit the cremation ground whenever they like." To this the following reply was received:

"I am to inform you that it is legally impossible for Government to acquire the site compulsorily under the Land Acquisition Act. Government considers that the matter is one for private negotiations between you and His Highness the Aga Khan. I am to add, however, that your request has been communicated to His Highness the Aga Khan and is now understood to be under his consideration. Government understands that he has no objection, in the meanwhile, to the relatives of Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Mahadev Desai and any other persons suggested by you going through the palace grounds to the place of cremation on the understanding that this is by his leave and licence."

I do hope that, no matter who occupies or owns the Palace, the consecrated ground on which the two *samadhis* stand will be protected and reserved for devotion by the friends and relatives of the families.

I am, etc.,  
M. K. GANDHI

No. S. D. III/-75.  
Home Department (Political),  
Council Hall, Poona, 23rd July 1945

From

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,  
Home Department

To

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter dated the 27th May 1945, regarding the protection and reservation for devotion of the cremation ground in His Highness the Aga Khan's Palace on which the *samadhis* of the late Mr. Mahadev Desai and Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi stand, and to state that the military authorities have agreed to continue the arrangement which, it is understood, has been in force for many months before their occupation of the Palace, whereby the cremation ground can be visited every Sunday.

If anybody wishes to visit the cremation ground on any day other than Sunday, application should be made to General Festing, Commander, 36 Division, who resides in the Aga Khan's Palace.

Your obedient servant,

G. G. DREW

Secretary to the Government of Bombay,  
Home Department

## ADDENDA

### I

#### THE A. I. C. C. RESOLUTION

The following is the resolution adopted by the A. I. C. C. in its meeting of the 8th of August in Bombay:—

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to the subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom.

This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathize with victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which has led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the people of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the

glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A. I. C. C. therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional government will be formed and Free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional government can only be formed by the cooperation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with the allied powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the governance of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the allied nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their cooperation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies,

Iran and . Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power.

While the A. I. C. C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navy and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An Independent India would gladly join such a world federation and cooperate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

Such a federation would be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments

of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and criticism made in many foreign quarters has shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A. I. C. C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government, which dominates over and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-

violent lines on widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twentytwo years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A. I. C. C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India the A. I. C. C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

*(Harijan, 9-8-1942)*

## II WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTIONS

Resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha on July 14, 1942 :

### 1

Events happening from day to day, and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, militarism and other forms of Imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the world war, the Congress has studiously pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its Satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realization of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's strangle-hold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Govern-

ment's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power.)

The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain into good-will and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign Power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of the foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality, and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British Power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization will

come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British Rule in India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a Provisional Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, which will later evolve a scheme whereby a Constituent Assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of Free India, and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

✓ In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British Rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increased pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China. ✓

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place with

goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional Government in India and cooperation between this Government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

The Congress realizes that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom and, more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British Power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refer them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A. I. C. C. will meet in Bombay on the seventh of August, 1942.

**RE : EVACUATION AND OTHER ORDERS**

Whereas complaints have been received from various places regarding Government orders for evacuation of villages, lands and buildings without due notice and proper compensation, seizure and destruction of country-boats, even where life is impossible without them, requisition of cycles, motor vehicles and carts without proper compensation and without regard for the needs of the civil population;

The Working Committee deem it necessary to issue the following instructions for the guidance of the people concerned and hope that the Government will take immediate and necessary steps to remove the grievances and that the people will carry out their instructions as circumstances demand, provided that in all cases before the final decision to disobey an order or resist any measure is taken, all possible avenues of negotiation and relief through negotiation shall be thoroughly explored :

With regard to evacuation and other orders involving loss, either temporary or permanent, of landed property of any kind, full compensation should be demanded. In fixing the compensation the factors to be taken into consideration are the value of the land and the crops, the inconvenience and expense likely to be caused to the holder of the land by having to move to another place, and the difficulty and delay likely to be involved in obtaining other land where the dispossessed landholder could settle.

Wherever possible, arrangement should be made for providing other land to agriculturists where their agricultural land is acquired. Where this is impossible compensation in money should be paid.

Value of trees, water-channels, and wells, etc., taken over or destroyed should be included in the compensation.

In case of temporary acquisition of agricultural land the full value of the crop plus 15% should be paid for each crop lost and when the occupation by Government terminates compensation should be paid for restoring the land to its previous conditions for agricultural purposes.

Where the bulk of the land of an agriculturist is acquired and the balance left over is so small that it may not be worth cultivating, the balance too should be acquired.

Houses where acquired should be fully paid for. Where the whole or bulk of the agricultural land of an agriculturist is acquired and only his house is left over, the house should also be acquired by paying full compensation if the agriculturist so desires.

Where a house is to be occupied temporarily for Government purposes, fair rent should be paid and the owner compensated for the inconvenience and discomfort caused.

No one should be required to vacate his house without arrangement being made elsewhere for his residence, and full compensation should be paid for transport of the evacuee's belongings and for his maintenance for a reasonable period to enable him to find suitable occupation in his new surroundings.

Compensation should in all cases be paid promptly and on the spot by a responsible officer and not at the headquarters of a District. In case no agreement is reached between the authorities and the evacuee regarding the amount of compensation and the matter has to be referred to a tribunal for decision, the amount of compensation proposed by the authorities should be paid forthwith and should not be withheld pending the adjudication of the claim.

There should be no interference with the use or disposal of private property except with the consent of the owner or on payment of adequate compensation.

In case of requisition of boats full compensation should be demanded and no boats should be surrendered till the question of compensation is settled. In areas surrounded by water where boats are indispensable for normal everyday life they should not be surrendered at all.

Fishermen who depend upon their boats for earning their livelihood should be compensated for loss of their employment in addition to the price of their boat.

In case of requisition of cycles, motor vehicles, carts etc., full settlement should be demanded and until the question of compensation is settled they should not be parted with.

In view of scarcity of salt and apprehended famine of it due to war conditions, facilities should be provided for collection, preparation and transport of salt on the sea-coast and in inland areas, free of duty, by individuals. People may manufacture salt for their own consumption and that of their cattle.

With regard to restrictions on organizations for self-protection, the Committee is of opinion that it is the inherent right of all to protect their own life and property and those of their neighbours and therefore all restrictions on them should be disregarded.

(*Harijan*, 19-7-1942)

### III

#### DRAFT RESOLUTION

The following is an English translation of Gandhiji's draft resolution in Hindustani for the Allahabad Working Committee meeting dated Allahabad April 27, 1942 :—

Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A. I. C. C. has come to the following conclusions :

The A. I. C. C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The A. I. C. C. is, therefore, of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly

enable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-cooperation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of non-violent non-cooperation :

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.

2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.

3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.

4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. At present our non-cooperation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete non-cooperation when they are actually fighting, it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept.

It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water supply, etc., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Whilst non-cooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor.

Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcize the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence.

#### FOREIGN SOLDIERS

The A. I. C. C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It therefore appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth stop further introduction. It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible manpower and is a proof of the immorality that British Imperialism is.

## IV DRAFT INSTRUCTIONS

The following is the literal translation of draft instructions for the guidance of civil resisters. The draft was in Hindustani and copies were prepared in both Devnagari and Persian scripts. It was prepared on 7th August 1942 and was placed before the Working Committee and discussed on the 8th of August. The Working Committee was again to have met on the morning of the 9th August. But that was not to be.

I was to put before the Working Committee my view of the negotiations which I was to carry on with the Government. They were to cover a period of at least three weeks. The instructions were to see the light of day only on failure of the contemplated negotiations.

The object of publishing the draft at present is twofold. It shows how my mind was running at the time. The draft is an additional answer to the adverse suggestions made in the Government indictment about my non-violence. The second and more relevant object is to let Congress workers know how I would have acted at the time.

I have come to know that my name was freely used to justify acts of sabotage and the like. I would like every Congressman and for that matter every Indian to feel that on him and her lies the responsibility of freeing India from the incubus of foreign rule. Non-violent suffering is the only way. Freedom of India means everything for us but it means also much for the world. For, freedom won through non-violence will mean the inauguration of a new order in the world.

There is no hope for mankind in any other way.

Panchgani,

24-7-'44

M. K. GANDHI

### CONFIDENTIAL

#### For Working Committee Members only :

##### HARTAL AND TWENTY-FOUR HOURS' FAST

"On the day of the hartal no processions should be taken out, nor meetings held in the cities. All the people should observe a twenty-four hours' fast and offer prayers."

the owners of shops approve of our Satyagraha struggle, they will all close their shops, but no one should be made to lose his shop under coercion. In the villages, however, there is no fear of violence or disturbance, meetings are held and processions taken out and responsible Congressmen who believe in mass Civil Disobedience should explain the meaning of the contemplated Satyagraha struggle to the people. The object of our Satyagraha is to secure the withdrawal of British rule and the attainment of independence for the whole of India. After the withdrawal of British rule, the constitution of the future Government of the country will be settled by the joint deliberation of the whole nation, including all parties. That Government will belong not to the Congress nor to any particular group or party, but to the entire 35 crores of the people of India. All Congressmen should make it clear that it will not be the rule of the Hindus or of any particular community. It should also be well explained that this Satyagraha is not directed against Englishmen but against British rule only, for we regard no one as our enemy. This should be brought home to villagers.

“Local Congress workers should send all reports about the Hartal and other activities to their Provincial Congress Committee and the latter to the Central Congress Office. In case, the leader in a particular place is arrested by the government, another should be chosen in his place. Every province should make necessary arrangements suited to its particular circumstances. In the last resort, every Congressman is his own leader and a servant of the whole nation. A final word: No one should think that those whose names are on the Congress register are the only Congressmen. Let every Indian, who desires the freedom for the whole of India and fully believes in the weapon of truth and non-violence for the purpose of this struggle, regard himself as

a Congressman and act as such. If anybody has the spirit of communalism or harbours hatred or ill-will in his heart against any Indian or Englishman, he will best help the struggle by keeping aloof. Such an individual will hinder the cause by joining the struggle.

"Every Satyagrahi should understand before joining the struggle that he is to ceaselessly carry on the struggle till independence is achieved. He should vow that he will be free or die. Those employed in Government offices, Government factories, railways, post offices, etc., may not participate in the hartal, because our object is to make it clear that we will never tolerate Japanese, Nazi or Fascist invasion, nor British rule. Therefore we shall not for the present interfere in the above mentioned Government departments. But an occasion may certainly arise when we shall ask all those people who are employed in Government offices to give up their positions and join the Satyagraha struggle. But all Congress members in the Central and Provincial Assemblies ought to vacate their seats and come out forthwith. In case, an attempt is made to fill their places with enemies of the country's freedom, or henchmen of British Government, local Congressmen should be put up to oppose their election. The same applies to the Congress members of the Municipalities and other public bodies. As conditions in different provinces are not the same, every Provincial Congress Committee shall make arrangements suited to its special circumstances.

"If any government servant is called upon to perpetrate excesses or injustice it will be his clear duty to resign at once, giving the real reasons. Free Indian Government will be under no obligation to continue in its service all those Government functionaries who are at present serving the Empire on huge salaries; nor will it be under an obligation

to continue the large pensions which are being drawn at present.

"All students reading in institutions conducted or controlled by the Government should come out of these institutions. Those who are above sixteen years of age should join the Satyagraha. Those who so leave these institutions should do so with a clear understanding that they are not to return to them until independence is achieved. There should be no coercion whatsoever in this matter. Only those who of their own free will wish to do so, should come out. No good can come out of coercion.

"If excesses are committed in any place by the Government, people should offer resistance and endure the penalty. For instance, if villagers, labourers or householders are ordered to vacate their farms or homes they should flatly refuse to obey such orders. If an adequate compensation is offered or if they are suitably provided for by grant of land etc., elsewhere, they may vacate their farms or homes. Here there is no question of Civil Disobedience, but of simply refusing to submit to coercion or injustice. We do not want to hinder military activities, but neither shall we submit to arbitrary high-handedness.

"The salt tax causes great hardship to the poor. Therefore, wherever salt can be made, the poor people may certainly manufacture it for themselves and risk the penalty.

"Land tax is due only to a government which we recognize as our own. It is long since we have mentally ceased to recognize the existing government as such, but until now we have not gone to the length of refusing the payment of land tax because we felt that the country was not prepared to go so far. But the time has now come when those, who have the courage, and are prepared to risk their all, should refuse to pay it. The Congress holds that the land belongs to those who work on it and to

no one else. If they part with a share of the produce to anyone, it is for the furtherance of their own interests. There are various systems of collecting land revenue. Where the Zamindari system prevails the Zamindars pay the tax to the Government and the ryot to the Zamindar. In such cases, if the Zamindar makes common cause with the ryot, his portion of the revenue, which may be settled by mutual agreement, should be given to him. But if a Zamindar wants to side with the Government, no tax should be paid to him. This will, in the immediate present, spell ruin to the ryot. Therefore, only those who are prepared to face utter ruin should refuse payment of land revenue.

"Besides these, there are several other items which could be taken up. Directions in regard to these will be issued when the occasion arises."

P. S.

Sevagram

28-6-'45

These would have been issued, if they had been passed by the Working Committee. Now they are a part of historical record only.

M. K. G.

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