

New Delhi,
18th June 1945.

M. K. Gandhi,
Panchgani.

Thank you for your two telegrams of yesterday. I think Maulana Abul Kalam Azad should have my invitation as soon as possible and have accordingly telegraphed it to him at Calcutta.

2. Mr. Amery's statement in Parliament and my broadcast constitute terms of reference to conference which I still hope will assemble at Simla on 25th. I clearly cannot change my broadcast and I have already told you I do not think it desirable to discuss its details before the conference. None of the persons or parties concerned is expected or required to accept or reject the proposals. Now the only immediate question is whether the proposals are worth discussing at the conference and it is to that question that an answer will be most helpful.

3. I still think the conference should assemble on 25th. It may last some time and delay before it begins will not improve prospects of success.

4. I am releasing your letter of 16th June my telegrams of 17th June your two telegrams of 17th June and this telegram to Press.

Viceroy

Panchgani,
18th June 1945.

H. E. Viceroy,
New Delhi.

Grateful for your prompt frank and full reply also for directly inviting Maulana Saheb. Members being free at conference to accept or reject proposals clears ground for invitees to attend conference. This leaves them free discuss pros and cons at conference. My objection to inevitability

of parity between Muslims and Caste Hindus stands. If that view incapable of being altered by British Government my advice Congress will be not to participate in formation Executive Council. Congress has never identified itself with caste or non-caste Hindus and never can even to gain independence which will be onesided untrue and suicidal. Congress to justify its existence for winning independence of India must remain for ever free to choose best men and women from all classes and I hope always will. That it has for sake of conciliating minorities chosen men to represent them though they have been less than best redounds to its credit but that can never be pleaded to justify or perpetuate distinction based on caste or creed. Hindu Mahasabha is the body claiming to represent solely Hindu interests. Subject to Working Committee's wishes I shall hope present myself Simla on 24th instant, but owing to my strong views you can cancel the engagement without least offence. I expect this wire and reply if any will be published. Leaving for Poona Tuesday 2 p. m.

Gandhi

34

IMMEDIATE

New Delhi,
19th June 1945.

Mr. Gandhi,
Poona.

Thank you for your telegram of 18th June. I am glad you think ground is clear for invitees to attend conference. I shall expect to hear further immediately after the meeting on 21st June.¹ I am sure you appreciate that success of conference depends on a spirit of goodwill and cooperation among all concerned. As you suggest I am releasing those telegrams to the Press.

Viceroy

¹ The Working Committee was to meet on the 21st June, 1945.

Bombay,
22nd June 1945.

H. E. Viceroy,
Viceroy's Camp, India.

In reply your wire of 19th you must have seen from papers Working Committee is still sitting. Am leaving today by Frontier Mail for Simla. Train permitting hope wait on Your Excellency appointed time. Thanking you for reserving accommodation for me. I propose to stay with Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

Gandhi

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
24th June 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I have thought over what you told me about your plans when we had our talk this afternoon, and I shall be grateful if you will remain in Simla during the Conference.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

"Manor Ville",
Simla,
25th June 1945.

Dear Friend,

I was too tired to acknowledge your note there and then. Nor was there any hurry. I shall remain in Simla during the conference.

Yours very sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy.

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
30th June 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Your friends have no doubt told you that the Conference adjourned yesterday until 14th July to enable the parties to send me lists of names, so that I may see whether I can, on paper, form an Executive Council acceptable to all concerned.

I do not know what your plans are, but I hope you may be able to stay in Simla until the Conference ends. If you decide to go away I shall be grateful if you will let me know, as I should like to see you again before you leave.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

"Manor Ville",
Simla West,
30th June 1945.

Dear Friend,

Many thanks for your two letters—one of yesterday's date about the condemned prisoners¹ and the other of today about my presence in Simla till the Conference finally disperses.

About the first letter I need say nothing beyond thanking you for your prompt and hopeful reply.

As to the second, I will not leave Simla without knowing that you no longer want me. Whenever you need me, you have only to send me a message.

I hope you have noticed that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is reaching Simla tomorrow and that you will invite him to meet you and Lady Wavell.

Yours very sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy,
Simla.

1. See letter No. 51

“Manor Ville”,
Simla West,
8th July 1945.

Dear Friend,

The Congress list for the proposed Executive was sent to you yesterday by the President¹.

1. In spite of my earnest protest the parity was preserved. I was sorry. This does not mean any change on my part. I am more than ever convinced that the non-Schedule Hindu members should have been less than the Muslims.

2. You will observe in the list the nomination of the President of the Hindu Mahasabha. I think this was necessary and graceful. If you accept the Congress list, may I suggest your inviting Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukerji before the meeting of the 14th instant?

3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad tells me that the hanging of Shri Mahendra Chowdhury is about to take place on or any day after 12th instant. He is an inmate of Bhagalpur Central Jail, Bihar. I take it that you will order commutation of sentence or stay till the proposed Executive is able to deal with it.²

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy,
Simla.

41

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
8th July 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 8th July. I duly received the Congress list for the proposed Executive Council and am considering it.

1. See Appendix V.

2. See letters No. 43, 55, 56 and 57.

I will make enquiries about the case you mention in the last paragraph of your letter.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

42

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
the 14th July, 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I write to thank you for coming to Simla, and for staying here at my request until the Conference ended. I am very sorry that the Conference has failed, but I hope that this effort to bring the parties together may not, in the end have been entirely wasted.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

43

"Manor Ville",
Simla West,
15th July 1945.

Dear Friend,

I thank you for your note of the 14th instant. It gladdens me to think that you have appreciated my effort to advance the common cause. As you perhaps know, I have arranged to leave here tomorrow. A special from Kalka will carry me to Wardha by the kind courtesy of the authorities concerned.

It grieves me to think that the Conference which began so happily and so hopefully should have ended in apparent failure—due exactly, as it would seem, to the same cause as before. This time you have taken the blame on your own shoulders. But the world will think otherwise. India certainly does.

29

I must not hide from you the suspicion that the deeper cause is perhaps the reluctance of the official world to part with power, which the passing of the virtual control into the hands of their erstwhile prisoners would have meant.

Be that as it may, what a pity that the moral height which the British, if not even the Allied Powers, would have occupied by the success of the Conference cannot be theirs, at any rate, for the time being.

I must not close this without a reminder about the Bihar case.¹ Your passing remark that it was one of ordinary dacoity, calling for the heavy hand of law, disturbed me. This was no such dacoity. The young man who is under sentence of death is no professional dacoit. He is a misled Congressman under twenty-five years (I think) with a young wife of twenty years. I do hope that all such death sentences will be commuted to life sentences. It seems to be the least demand of humanity, if not also of high politics.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy,
Simla.

1. See letters No. 55, 56, and 57.

IV
MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE WITH
LORD WAVELL : 1944-46

(A) ABOUT CORRESPONDENCE WITH AGATHA HARRISON

44

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.
June 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I enclose herewith a letter addressed to you from Miss Agatha Harrison received through the Viceroy's air-mail bag.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi Esq.,
Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road,
Poona.

[ENCLOSURE TO THE ABOVE]

45

2 Cranbourne Court,
Albert Bridge Road,
London S. W. 11,
14th June 1944.

Dear Gandhiji,

You will know what the news of your unconditional release meant to your friends here — tinged though it was with great anxiety over your health. My first inclination was to write to you at once. I cabled instead, feeling that the least friends could do would be to leave you in peace to recover strength.

But now we see from the papers that you are getting better and able to have short interviews. I can visualise your

setting in Juhu. A constant stream of people; overwhelming correspondence and cables; you, far from well, missing Ba and Mahadev sorely; sharing in the agony the world is going through; carrying on your heart and mind the present situation in India.

So often I have wished that either Horace Alexander or I were on the spot. Perhaps you already know that I might have been, for the All India Women's Conference invited four women from here to attend their Bombay session and I stood ready to come. The notice was too short to get there in time; the difficulties of securing an air passage insurmountable. Had I been in India I should have come straight to Juhu, even as I did to Rajkot in 1939.

Letters are poor substitutes for talking face to face. I tried, in my letters to you of December 2nd and March 10th, to share with you what is on my mind. I got your reply to the first and answered it. Probably you never saw the March letter for you were so ill and it may well be snowed under your mass of accumulated correspondence. When you feel well enough to send direct word — I know you will do so.

I am writing now because I want to tell you about a note I found in C. F. Andrews' papers last week — a rough note, with the substance of a cable he sent to you over ten years ago. I recall vividly the sending of this. A crisis was in being at the time and we were troubled and anxious at this end. After talking together, we went straight to a post office and C. F. A. cabled you: WHEN TWO MEN MEET WITHOUT CONDITIONS A WAY OF PEACE MAY BE FOUND.

I have studied carefully the text of your letter to Mr. Jinnah written last year. Before this letter reaches you — your meeting may have taken place. Uppermost in my mind is another meeting between the Viceroy and you; the result of which might well be a "way of peace".

This letter is being written at the end of the first week of the invasion of France. So often during these days my thoughts have turned to you who for fifty years have pioneered in finding a way of settling disputes other than by force. Persistently there comes to my mind a supreme contribution that could be made by you to this sorely tried world. It is this. That in the midst of total war, without bloodshed, an

honourable way of peace could be found between our two countries. What a disarming thing it would be, a tangible, living proof of the power of Non-violence.

I have a presentiment that any day we shall open the morning papers and see this had become a fact. A presentiment born out of knowing the goodness and intention of the "best Indians and the best Englishmen" — to whom you referred in your article about C. F. A. at the time of his death.

Your friends bear you in their prayers and thoughts.

Yours,

Agatha Harrison

P. S. Will you please tell Pyarelal that I am writing to him by airgraph in regard to statements that may be issued from time to time.

46

"Dilkusha",

Panchgani,

13th July 1944.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I had your undated letter enclosing Miss Agatha Harrison's letter to me for which I thank you.

Could I have the courtesy extended to me of sending the enclosed reply through the Viceroy's air mail bag?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell Esq.,
The Viceroy's Camp,
India.

[ENCLOSURE TO THE ABOVE]

47

"Dilkusha",

Panchgani,

13th July 1944.

My dear Agatha,

I have your letter of 14th June. Every thing I do turns to dust. It must be so, so long as I am 'untrustworthy'. If I could plead guilty, I would at once mend my way. On the

33

C. G.-3

contrary I know I have done nothing to forfeit the confidence I used at one time to enjoy among the official circles.

You know the attempt I made to see the members of the Working Committee and, failing that permission, to see the Viceroy. Perhaps the chief difficulty is the opinion reported to have been held by Mr. Churchill about me. You know the oft-quoted passages attributed to him. He is said to want to "crush" me "the naked fakir". The body can be crushed, never the spirit. But if the report is true — and it has never been denied — it gives the clue to all my so-called failures.

I can give you this assurance that nothing dismays or disappoints me. If I represent the truth and if I do as God bids me, I know that the wall of distortion and suspicion will topple. Only be patient with me. I feel for you and friends like you.

Recently I had, sent to me, a letter written by Henry [Polak] to the Press whilst he was in America.¹ Tell him if you see him that it distressed me deeply. I never could have thought that he could believe lies about me without verification from me.

Ere this reaches you, you will have known from the Press about the attempt I made to solve the communal tangle in collaboration with Rajaji who has been with me these few days.

My love to all the friends. I sent a letter to Muriel.

Yours,
Bapu

Miss Agatha Harrison,
2 Cranbourne Court,
Albert Bridge Road, London S. W. 11.

1. In the letter in question Henry Polak had made certain remarks about Gandhiji's attitude in regard to the war and his role in "Quit India" struggle at a time when Britain was in distress which Gandhiji considered to be highly damaging.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
16th July 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am dealing with your letter of 13th July to Mr. Abell who is in Simla. I am sending your letter to Miss Agatha Harrison through the bag as you wish.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
"Dilkusha",
Panchgani.

As at Sevagram (C. P.),
Camp : Panchgani,
29th July 1944.

Dear Sir Edward,

I thank you for your letter of 16th July. I am thankful for the enclosure of the letter to Miss Agatha Harrison.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Edward Jenkins,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

(B) ABOUT CHIMUR AND ASHTI PRISONERS

"Manor Ville",
Simla West,
28th June 1945.

Dear Friend,

Some hangings — an aftermath of the disturbances of 1942 — are impending. I have some cases given to me by Dr. Rajendra Prasad of the Working Committee. The Chimur cases you perhaps know. I do not quite know how the last stages of the conference are shaping. Be that as it may, I

suggest that all such hangings be commuted to life sentences without further public appeal or agitation and whether judicial proceedings are going on or not. If you think that this is beyond you, may I suggest that these be postponed so as to be dealt with by the national government that is coming into being?

Yours very sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy,
Simla.

51

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
June 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 28th about the death sentences now pending execution in the Chimur and Ashti and certain other cases. I have already given instructions to the Provincial Governments not to execute the sentences in any of these cases until the Privy Council has passed orders on the petition for special leave to appeal which, I understand, the prisoners in the Chimur and Ashti cases have preferred. I will bear your letter in mind when I consider the whole question after the decision of the Privy Council is known.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

52

Sevagram,
3rd August 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I have to acknowledge with thanks your letter of 29th July¹ acknowledging my letter to His Excellency of the 25th July and I shall await your further letter in the matter.

Mrs. Anasuyabai Kale of the C. P. Assembly has been to me to tell me the Privy Council has dismissed the petition

¹ See letter No. 59.

of the Ashti and Chimur prisoners to be heard in appeal against the judgment of the Nagpur High Court. Unless, therefore, His Excellency uses his prerogative of mercy the prisoners will be sent to the gallows. His Excellency was good enough to tell me that he would consider these cases and the like when the time came. Now is the time. May I hope that the death sentences will be commuted?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir E. M. Jenkins,
P. S. to H. E. the Viceroy,
Viceroy's Camp.

53

EXPRESS

Sevagram,
9th August 1945.

P.S.V.
Viceroy's Camp.

Posted letter about Chimur prisoners on 4th receipt was due yesterday anxious know whether it was duly received.
Gandhi

54

EXPRESS

New Delhi,
10th August 1945.

M. K. Gandhi,
Wardha.

Your telegram of 9th. Your letter of 3rd August has been received. Placed before His Excellency.¹

P. S. V.

1. The death sentence on Ashti and Chimur prisoners was commuted to one of transportation for life by the Viceroy on the 16th August 1945.

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
9th July 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

In paragraph 3 of your letter of yesterday¹ you referred to the case of Mahendra Chowdhury. I understand that a mercy petition on his behalf has just been received in my Public Secretariat and is now under consideration. The execution has been postponed in accordance with the usual procedure so that the petition may be submitted for my orders.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
18th July 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I have now considered the case of Mahendra Chowdhury to which you last referred in your letter to me of 15th July.²

The case is a serious one of dacoity with murder in which Mahendra Chowdhury was found guilty by the Additional Sessions Judge of Monghyr on evidence which appears to me conclusive. The sentence of death imposed by Additional Sessions Judge was confirmed by the High Court in a detailed order, and the Privy Council has rejected an application for special leave to appeal. I cannot find anything in the record of the judicial proceedings to suggest that Mahendra Chowdhury is a political offender or that there are extenuating circumstances of any kind. He is about 25 years old, and is

1. See letter No. 40.

2. See letter No. 43.

not an irresponsible boy. Dacoity with murder is a very serious matter and I have decided that the law must take its course.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

57

Sevagram,
23rd July 1945.

Dear Friend,

I have your letter of 18th instant about Mahendra Chowdhury for which I thank you.

Apart from the merits about which I should have much to say if there was room for argument, I question the prudence of one person, however eminent, deciding to take the life of a person even proved guilty, without having an impartial tribunal to advise him. Moreover, this case had, rightly or wrongly, assumed a political character. How I wish you had been wisely guided!¹

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

(D) ABOUT INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

58

Sevagram,
25th July 1945.

Dear Friend,

I have just heard from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that several thousand Indian soldiers who had joined Subhas Babu in Burma or elsewhere and who were captured during the recent anti-Japanese operations have been locked up in the Delhi Fort and the ringleaders (so called) have been shot

1. A telegram that Gandhiji sent on the same day to Dr. Rajendra Prasad read: "Sorry, Mahendra to die."

under the decree of a court martial. I am inclined to think that this is a bazar rumour. Nevertheless, I suggest that the public may be taken into confidence as to the true situation and that, if there is any truth about the lock-up and trial, legal assistance of their choice may be given to those who may be tried.

This is being posted after post office hours. Hence a copy under a certificate of posting will follow when the post office opens tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

59

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
29th July 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

His Excellency asks me to thank you for your letter of 25th July and to say that it is receiving his consideration.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

60

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
29th October 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

This I write in fear and trembling, lest I may be overstepping my limit.

I am watching the progress of the trial of the members of the corps raised by or under Shri Subhas Babu. Though I can have nothing in common with any defence by force of arms, I am never blind to the valour and patriotism often displayed by persons in arms, as seems to be the case here. And can the Government afford to ignore the almost if not

the wholly unanimous opinion of Indians of all shades of opinion? India adores these men who are on their trial. No doubt the Government have overwhelming might on their side. But it will be a misuse of that power if it is used in the teeth of universal Indian opposition. It is not for me to say what should be done except that what is being done is not the way. Let His Excellency decide what is best in the circumstances.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

61

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
6th November 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

His Excellency has seen your letter to Sir Evan Jenkins of 29th October about the trial of certain members of the I. N. A. He asks me to say that he notes your views, and presumes that they are based on articles appearing in the newspapers, in which the facts are not always correctly stated. His Excellency naturally cannot express an opinion on the merits of cases which are *sub judice*.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

62

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
12th November 1945.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I have to acknowledge with thanks your letter of 6th instant in reply to mine about certain I. N. A. prisoners. My

41

business was to bring to His Excellency's notice the feeling of the country in the matter, not merely as I read in the public Press.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.
Dy. Private Secretary to the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

63

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
2nd November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I wonder whether you have seen the enclosed which I saw yesterday.¹ His Excellency should know that this garbled version of my letter in question is not of my doing. I believe that the few workers in my office are too faithful to give out anything without my permission, which could not be given for the simple reason that whatever influence I exercise is purely moral, whether with the people or with the Government. And that influence loses in effect by premature publication. I know that there is nothing confidential in what I have written to His Excellency. But it is not meant for the public until the several results contemplated by the correspondence take place or His Excellency desires otherwise.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Encl: 2

Sir Evan M. Jenkins.

1. The reference is to a garbled version of Gandhiji's correspondence with the Viceroy in connection with INA prisoners awaiting trial before a court martial in Red Fort, Delhi, that had appeared in the Press.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
6th November 1945.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

As Sir Evan Jenkins is away H. E. has asked me to acknowledge with thanks your letter of the 2nd November with which you enclosed press cuttings to the effect that you had intervened with H. E. about the INA trial. H. E. is grateful for your letter and gladly accepts your assurance that there was no communication to the Press from your office.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Deputy Private Secretary to the Viceroy

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
12th November 1945.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I have to thank you for your letter of 6th instant in reply to mine of 2nd instant regarding certain press cuttings to which I had drawn His Excellency's attention.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Dy. Private Secretary to the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur (near Calcutta),
8th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I enclose herewith a cutting for you to read.¹ Can the information therein be true? Probably you could let me know without troubling His Excellency.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Encl: 1

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
15th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 8th January enclosing a cutting from the *Hindusthan Standard* of 6th January about the I. N. A. men in Bahadurgarh Camp. I am making enquiries and will write to you again in due course.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

1. A news item had appeared in the Press that 25 INA prisoners were bayonated to death for singing the INA national anthem in Bahadurgarh Camp, and many were punished for shouting the slogan "Jai Hind".

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
19th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

With further reference to your letter of the 8th January, I enclose a copy of a Press Note just issued on the subject of Bahadurgarh Camp.¹

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Harijan Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
25th April 1946.

My dear Mr. Abell,

I am writing on Gandhiji's behalf.

He was under the impression that all I.N.A. prisoners were going to be released in batches. Meanwhile he gets from Shri Raghunandan Saran a paper with reference to three trials. A copy thereof is enclosed.²

Before Gandhiji offers any further remarks he would like to know, if you do not mind, why these impending trials and consequent irritation, seeing that independence is imminent?

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

1. The Government Press Note was to the effect that "42 men, as a result of their resistance, had received bruises on the buttocks from the tip of the bayonet. No one was killed, there was no bayonet charge." It further stated that no one "was punished for using the slogan 'Jai Hind'."

2. The three INA men to be tried by Court Martial were Col. Kasliwal, Col. Inayat Hassan and Rasul Bux on a charge of "cruelty" to Maj. Durrani, "also of the INA", to extract a confession from him in an investigation instituted by the INA High Command.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
26/27th April 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of yesterday which has been delivered to me today by Mr. Sudhir Ghosh.

2. The I. N. A. policy is, as you know, to bring to trial only those against whom there is evidence of brutality. The new trials are, I understand, in this category.

3. I am, however, sending a copy of your letter with a copy of its enclosure, to War Department, and if there is any other point that ought to be made, they will write to you direct.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
Harijan Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi.

(E) ABOUT HARIDAS MITRA & JYOTISH BOSE

71

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
14th September 1945.

Dear Friend,

I am sorry that I have to worry you almost immediately on your return from London. My only excuse is that my mission is purely humanitarian.

Shri Haridas Mitra, an M.A. of the Calcutta University and the husband of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's young niece aged 22 years, is under sentence of death over what appears to be an untenable ground. I have perused the petition for mercy by the uncle of the condemned as also of Advocate Carden Noad. I suggest that they furnish cogent grounds for the exercise of mercy. In any event the case for mercy

becomes irresistible in that the war with Japan is over. It will be a political error of the first magnitude if this sentence of death is carried into effect.

I rejoiced to learn that you had ordered postponement of execution till after consideration of the case by you on your return.

My attention was drawn to the case by the prisoner's wife as she has often sung at my prayer meetings when I had the honour of being a guest of Advocate Sarat Chandra Bose who I am happy to learn the Government of India has ordered to be released.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. The Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

72

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
18th September 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

His Excellency asks me to thank you for your letter of 14th September. The case of Haridas Mitra has not yet been submitted to him, and he understands that it is still being considered by H. E. The Governor of Bengal. It will probably be submitted to His Excellency shortly.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

73

Birla House,
Mount Pleasant Road, Bombay,
24th September 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I have to thank you for your letter of 18th instant in reply to my letter about the prisoner Shri Haridas Mitra. I shall await further reply about the case.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins, K.C.S.I.,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

74

Poona,
9th October 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

May I remind H. E. that the decision in the matter of Shri Haridas Mitra is now overdue. I may mention that I have prevented all public appeals and demonstrations in favour of the prisoner in the hope that the death sentence will be commuted. His young wife was with me the other day and was anxious that a move should be made publicly here and also in Great Britain. But she listened to me and has waited.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. The Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

48

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
12th October 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 9th October. I have ascertained that the case of Shri Haridas Mitra will be submitted for His Excellency's orders within a few days.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Poona.

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
19th October 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

Shri Jyotish Bose is a condemned prisoner with Shri Haridas Mitra and others. The condemned prisoner's father came to me two days ago and showed me his petition for mercy. If Shri Haridas Mitra's sentence is commuted, as I hope it will, this one deserves commutation *ipso facto*. Shri Jyotish Bose is the son of an uninfluential poor father. But I am sure that poverty will be considered no bar to commutation.

I see from the legal papers that there are others of the batch awaiting execution. The times when the sentences were pronounced were those of war when calmness was at a discount. Now they are changed. The war is over. The condemned men have, no matter what the cause of delay was, survived the war. Will it be too much if I suggest a reconsideration of all such cases in the shape of commutation of death sentences? In my opinion, justice to be real justice requires extension of mercy to temper it.

May I ask you please to put this letter before His Excellency for consideration?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. The Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

77

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd October 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I thank you for your letter of 19th October about the case of Shri Jyotish Bose. I have placed it before His Excellency.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona.

78

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
1st November 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

You will remember our correspondence about the mercy petitions of two men named Haridas Mitra and Jyotish Chandra Bose. His Excellency has considered these petitions, together with petitions from two others who were sentenced to death at the same trial, and has commuted all four death sentences to transportation for life.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
7th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I have to thank you for your letter of 1st instant regarding the mercy petitions of Shri Haridas Mitra and three others. Will you please convey my thanks to His Excellency for the commutation of the death sentences?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. The Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

Gandhiji's Camp,
New Delhi,
17th April 1946.

My dear Mr. Abell,

I am writing to you on behalf of Shri Haridas Mitra. You may remember that H. E. stayed the sentence of death on this young man a few months ago.

I enclose a copy of a communique which appeared recently in the newspapers.¹ In view of this it would appear that Haridas Mitra should be eligible for pardon and release. I enclose a short note on Shri Haridas Mitra's case which his young wife has sent me.

I do hope he may come under the category indicated in the communique.

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

1. The communique said that the British Government had decided "as an act of clemency not to institute further criminal proceedings against persons alleged to be guilty of collaborating with the enemy in the British territories of South East Asia where no atrocity or brutality is involved".

81

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
17th April 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of today about Shri Haridas Mitra. Enquiries will be made.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

82

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd April 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Enquiries have now been made about the case of Haridas Mitra which you raised in your letter of the 17th April. The policy referred to in the communique, of which you enclosed a copy with your letter, relates to cases which occurred in territories actually under Japanese occupation. It does not cover the case of Haridas Mitra who was convicted for assisting the enemy in India.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

83

Reading Road, New Delhi,
21st June 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

You will remember the case of Shri Haridas Mitra of Calcutta. His death sentence was commuted by H. E. and notified to me in Sir Evan Jenkins' letter of 1st November 1945.

52

Many things have happened since. As would appear from Mr. Carden Noad's petition dated 4th June 1946, his incarceration has now become an anachronism.

Shri H. Mitra's wife, a niece of the late Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, writes to me about his incarceration. I wonder if his continued imprisonment can be justified when other similar imprisonments have been cancelled.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

84

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd/23rd June 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

I promised today to send you a copy of my last letter about the case of Shri Haridas Mitra. Here it is.¹ I am sending for the memorial by Mr. Carden Noad.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

85

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
25th June 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

I meant to talk to you about this at lunch today but I am afraid that I forgot. There is no trace of Mr. Carden Noad's petition dated 4th June 1946 on behalf of Haridas Mitra; it has not been received in this office nor in any of the Departments concerned. If you could find out to whom it was addressed I might be able to trace it; alternatively you might get Mr. Carden Noad to send me another copy.

Yours sincerely,
C. W. B. Rankin

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

¹. See letter No. 82.

Bhangi Colony,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
26th June 1946.

Dear Major Rankin,

I got your letter last evening and am sending you a copy of the memorial in the case of Haridas Mitra.

Mr. Carden Noad in his letter to Gandhiji of the 7th instant says :—

“I enclose a signed copy of the new memorial. A signed copy has been sent to the Viceroy.”

It must have been lost in the post. He has been wired today to send a copy direct to H. E. also. In the meantime please put the one I send you before the Viceroy.

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

C. W. B. Rankin, Esq.,

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
28th June 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of the 26th June to Major Rankin about the case of Mr. Haridas Mitra. The memorial submitted by Mr. Carden Noad is under consideration.

Would you be good enough also to thank Mr. Gandhi for his letter of the 21st June addressed to me on the same subject ?¹

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

¹. See letter No. 83.

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
12/13th July 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Will you please refer to the correspondence about Haridas Mitra's petition about which you last wrote on the 26th of June. Mr. Carden Noad's petition on behalf of Haridas Mitra has now been examined but it is not at present proposed to release him.

Yours sincerely,
C. W. B. Rankin

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

Camp: Panchgani,
22nd July 1946.

Dear Friend,

Your letter to Rajkumari of 13-7-'46 was received on the 18th instant. Having slept over it for four nights, I feel it to be my duty to say that it seems His Excellency is wrong to delay the release of Shri Haridas Mitra. It is inconsistent with the declared policy of the Government.¹

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Major C. W. B. Rankin.

(F) ABOUT BASUDA SINGH

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
6th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

A copy of the petition sent to His Excellency on behalf of Shri Basuda Singh of Fyzabad District has been sent to me

1. Haridas Mitra was released soon after.

for seeking Government sympathy. From the petition, I gather that it is a case of political hue, belonging to the 1942 disturbances period. It easily falls under the principle that guided His Excellency's decision in the Ashti-Chimur cases. May I therefore ask for the usual commutation of the death sentence?

May I also ask for an early consideration of the case by reason of the fact that the period for execution has been fixed for 19th instant?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
New Delhi.

91

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
9th November 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 6th November. A petition from Basuda Singh has been received by the Government of the United Provinces and is now under consideration by His Excellency the Governor. In the meanwhile execution has been stayed.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

92

Sevagram,
25th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

Under pressure of work and preparations for shifting from Poona to Sevagram I had overlooked acknowledging your letter of 9th instant regarding Shri Basuda Singh. Meanwhile, I saw in the papers and from private telegrams received from Bihar that His Excellency had commuted the

death sentence. Will you please therefore convey my thanks to His Excellency for the commutation?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to the Viceroy,
Delhi.

(G) ABOUT THREATENED ARREST OF PANDIT NEHRU

93

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
13th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I have just seen Reuter's message from London about the threatened arrest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

I admit that Pandit Nehru's speeches are hot, if the British rulers do not want to part with power and hand over to the people what is theirs. They are not, if the British professions are real. It will be wrong to attribute hatred or malice to him. He undoubtedly speaks strongly against the I. C. S. men. But there he speaks the people's mind. And he is right. The fine doctrine propounded by His Excellency of "Forget and Forgive" can only apply to the excesses of a soldiery in action but surely not to inexcusable butchery, inhumanity, bribery, corruption and the like. If his statements are wrong, they should be tested through an open and impartial tribunal. If the Government's hands are clean they have nothing to fear from publicity.

I will not waste His Excellency's time by arguing about the obvious.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. The Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
16th November 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I have received your letter of 13th November and shown it to His Excellency.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Sevagram,
25th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I thank you for your letter of 16th instant acknowledging mine of 13th instant regarding Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

(H) ABOUT SHEEL BHADRA YAJEE

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
10th October 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I enclose herewith an account of a case which the correspondent has described with some wealth of detail.¹ Can

1. It complained of torture and extremely bad treatment in prison. Yajee, a prominent member of the Forward Bloc, founded by Netaji Bose, was arrested in connection with the "Quit India" struggle.

it be true? If it is, I wonder if His Excellency proposes to take any action by way of mending matters? I am told that this is not a solitary case but is typical.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. The Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

97

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
13th October 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 10th October enclosing a copy of a statement received from Shri Sheel Bhadra Yajee. I am sending your letter and its enclosure on to His Excellency who is away on tour.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

98

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
1st November 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

On his return from Kashmir His Excellency had enquiries made into the statement by Shri Sheel Bhadra Yajee enclosed with your letter to me of 10th October. He asks me to let you know that he is satisfied that the statement contains gross misrepresentations and exaggerations, but that he is having certain points in it examined further.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

59

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
7th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I have to thank you for your letter of 1st instant regarding Shri Sheel Bhadra Yajee. I anxiously await the result of further examination ordered by His Excellency of certain points arising out of the statement.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
26th November 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Sir Evan Jenkins, in his letter of the 1st November, sent you an intermediate reply to your letter of the 10th October about the case of Mr. Yajee.

2. His Excellency has received a report which he believes to be reliable as regards the conditions under which Mr. Yajee was confined, and the Home Member himself has paid a surprise visit to the Fort and inspected the accommodation occupied by him.

3. The reports show that Mr. Yajee's allegations as to the physical conditions are definitely exaggerated. The cell is larger and better ventilated than he stated, and although it is true that it is not light, on the other hand the thickness of the walls and the absence of direct sunlight make it cool in the hot weather. There is no substance in the allegation that the cell is infested with vermin; the ceiling is boarded and it seems impossible for snakes to be found in the

cells. The place for exercise is spacious and contains shade-giving trees, and prisoners were allowed one hour's exercise a day. The food was the same as that supplied to Indian troops and the allegation that Mr. Yajee was given salt water to drink is quite unfounded. He was not reduced to a condition, as he said, in which he could not move or stand; for some time he attended at the Fort hospital as an out-patient, walking there and back unaided, and later he was sent for a short while to the Indian Medical Hospital for treatment.

4. At this distance of time it is impossible to obtain the actual facts relating to many of his allegations, such as those of harsh treatment by individual guards. Since his allegations as regards the facts which can still be checked by ocular demonstration are much exaggerated, I think it is reasonable to assume that the same is true of the other parts of his statement.

5. His Excellency asks me to assure you that he has taken much personal interest in this matter, and has done all he can to convince himself that prisoners under interrogation are not treated with undue harshness.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

101

Camp: Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur (near Calcutta),
8th December 1945.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I have your letter of 26th November about Shri Yajee. I am thankful for the considered reply. I am now trying to put myself in touch with the gentleman and see what he has to say.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to the Viceroy.

Sevagram,
25th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I write this in continuation of my letter of 10th October.¹ Since then I have seen other such accounts in the papers and now I have with me a young man (Shri Prabhudayal Vidyarthi) who came to me while he was yet in his teens, without being recommended by anybody and as a poor youngster. This was in the year 1935. Ever since then he has never been out of my observation. He was arrested in connection with the 1942 disturbances, and has lately been discharged. He came to Wardha in a dilapidated condition. I was then at Poona. He reported his arrival and I telegraphed to him to come there so that I could look after him better and, if necessary, get Dr. Mehta's assistance at his sanatorium where I was staying. He narrates tales of terrible torture, into the details of which I do not wish to go at this stage.

On top of this I have received a communication from Dr. Lohia's friends and they tell me that Dr. Lohia has gone through torture himself. He is an able, cultured man who sacrificed a position of ease and luxury for the sake of the cause of India's independence. I know him well and, through him, also his father.

It is difficult to disbelieve all the accounts that have appeared in the Press and the two incidents mentioned above. I suggest that His Excellency goes deeper into the matter and not reject the statements as an exaggeration undeserving of any attention. I take comfort from the fact that in your letter of 1st November in reply to mine of 10th October, you tell me that though His Excellency believes the story to be exaggerated, he is making further investigations. I plead for investigation into all other such statements and, if he proposes to do so, I am prepared to send you such details

1. See letter No. 96.

as I possess about the two cases mentioned here and others about which I may be able to speak with some confidence.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

103

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
1st December 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am desired to reply to your letter of 25th November addressed to Sir Evan Jenkins.

2. His Excellency would be glad if you would send direct to the Home Member the details about Mr. Vidyarthi and Dr. Lohia. They will then be thoroughly examined. The Home Member would be glad if Mr. Vidyarthi would come to New Delhi and see him. All expenses would be paid. The Home Member will be on tour till the 11th December and after the 19th December, but a visit between these dates would suit him.

3. Since you wrote your letter, you have no doubt received my letter of the 26th November about Mr. Yajee.¹

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

104 .

Camp: Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur (near Calcutta),
8th December 1945.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I thank you for yours of 1st instant. I shall send you in due course fuller details about Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

1. See letter No. 100.

and have written to Shri Prabhudayal Vidyarthi to proceed to New Delhi and report himself.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to the Viceroy.

105

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
20th February 1946.

Dear Friend,

I refer to the letter I wrote on 25-11-'45 when Sir Evan Jenkins was P. S. V. He asked me to send Shri Prabhudayal Vidyarthi to New Delhi which I did. Since then my son has been in correspondence with me as he was seen by Sir John Thorne in this connection. But I have had no official intimation of the result of the examination or what is proposed to be done.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

106

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
12th March 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am sorry for the delay over answering your letter of 20th February about Mr. Vidyarthi's case.

2. The Home Member has discussed the whole matter with your son Mr. Devadas Gandhi: he has also promised

to let him know the result of certain investigations which are still proceeding at Nagpur.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

107

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
17th March 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I thank you for your letter of 12th instant.

My son tells me that the Home Member has come to the conclusion that Shri Vidyarthi's case is all false regarding Delhi. Is my son's interpretation of the Home Member's finding correct? You will please answer my question when you tell me of his finding after the investigations in Nagpur are complete.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

108

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
28th March 1946.
30

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Please refer to your letter of 17th March about the case of Prabhudayal Vidyarthi. It is a fact that the Home Member, after a very thorough examination, has been forced to the conclusion that the whole story of Prabhudayal Vidyarthi, that he was brought in police custody from Nagpur to Delhi, handed over to military custody at the Red

Fort, incarcerated in the Red Fort about a week, and subjected to torture there, is completely false. The Home Member, when he met Mr. Devadas Gandhi on March 2nd, understood that Mr. Devadas Gandhi also had come to the same conclusion. Mr. Devadas Gandhi suggested that Prabhudayal Vidyarthi may have been maltreated by the Central Provinces police at Nagpur, and then have invented the story of a visit to Delhi and torture there. The Central Provinces Government have made enquiries into his allegations of maltreatment at Nagpur and state that he has totally failed to substantiate them. On this the Home Member can offer no remark, beyond saying that if Prabhudayal Vidyarthi was capable of inventing the Red Fort story, he was clearly capable of inventing the story of ill-treatment at Nagpur also.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

(J) ABOUT RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

109

Camp: Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur (near Calcutta),
18th December 1945.

Dear Mr. Abell,

In continuation of the correspondence about the alleged ill-treatment of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia,¹ I am now able to send as requested a copy of the statement made by Dr. Lohia to his legal adviser.²

Encl: 1

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq., I. C. S.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

1. See letter No. 102.

2. See Appendix VI.

Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
20th December 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 18th December about Dr. Lohia. H. E. has directed me to send his statement to the Home Member who will look into the matter.¹

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi. Esq.

(K) ABOUT LICENCE FOR KHADI SHOPS

111

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
10th October 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I am the chairman of the All India Spinners' Association, a wholly philanthropic body of about 25 years' standing, run solely in the interest of the millions of the poorest unemployed or partly unemployed women of India. In order further to popularize hand spinning a rule was recently introduced at my instance to demand from the buyers of Khadi a certain quantity of yarn in lieu of money. Since the inception of the Association some time known as Khadi Board over four crores have been distributed among spinners all over India. These include all communities from among the poor village women. Now, I understand, licensing rules are being issued by Provincial Administrations requiring Khadi shops to take out licences as if they were dealers in mill made cloth. Objection has also been taken to the price being partly demanded in handspun yarn. I am sure the Government do not intend to penalize Khadi and thus

1. Dr. Lohia was released together with Jayaprakash Narayan on the 12th April, 1946, after the arrival of the Cabinet Mission in India.

the poor people. As this is an all India matter, I venture to approach His Excellency in the hope of the impending wrong being redressed. I may add that the matter has been taken up by the Hon. Secretary of the Association with the Provincial Administrations concerned.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

112

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
13th October 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 10th October 1945, about the licensing of Khadi shops. I am sending it on to His Excellency who is away on tour, and am in the meantime asking the Department concerned here what the position is.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

113

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
19th October 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

In my letter of 13th October I informed you that I was making enquiries about the provincial control over Khadi shops, to which you referred in your letter to me of, 10th October. I have now heard from the Industries & Civil Supplies Department that they have not undertaken or suggested control over the price or distribution of Khadi, and are not aware of the nature of the control established by

the Provincial Governments. They are now asking the Provincial Governments to look into the matter and see what can be done to meet your criticisms.

His Excellency has seen the papers.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

114

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
29th October 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

In continuation of my letter of 10-10-'45 about Khadi being licensed, may I add that the Privy Council had to consider the question of exempting the A.I.S.A. from the income tax. The case is reported in A.I.R. 1944 Privy Council at p. 88. His Excellency's predecessor had at my request ordered that the collection of the tax be suspended, pending decision of the Privy Council. It reversed the decision of the Bombay High Court and expressed the opinion that the primary object of the Association is the relief of the poor, that its objects include the advancement of other purposes of general public utility and that the making of a commercial or private profit is not the purpose of the Association. On these grounds they came to the conclusion that the Association is a charitable and philanthropic body and entitled to exemption from tax. Can Khadi manufactured and sold on behalf of the manufacturers—the profits, if any, going to the hand spinners and handloom weavers—be classed with mill cloth under the Anti-Profitteering and Hoarding Regulations? In my humble opinion, it should be wholly exempt from such control, if the meagre earnings of the poor concerned are not to be taxed.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
1st November 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I have shown His Excellency your letter of 29th October about the exemption of Khadi shops from the provincial controls against hoarding and profiteering. The letter is being passed on to the Industries and Civil Supplies Department, who will inform the Provincial Authorities of your views.

Yours sincerely,
E. M. Jenkins

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
5th November 1945.

Dear Sir Evan,

I thank you for your letter of 1st instant informing me of the action taken on my letter of 29th ultimo on Khadi.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Evan M. Jenkins,
Private Secretary to the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

(L) ABOUT GUR INDUSTRY

Camp: Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur, (near Calcutta),
15th December 1945.

Dear Friend,

A correspondent writes from the United Provinces to the effect that manufacture of *gur*¹ is prohibited there. *Gur*-making is a village industry. It is manufactured on their fields by cane growers from juice extracted by means of village *kolhus*² and boiled in village pans. I, therefore, thought that my

1. Jaggery.

2. Cane crushers

correspondent must be mistaken and asked him to send me a copy of the order on which his observations were made. He has sent me a copy of the enclosed startling order.¹ Cane growers have since passed resolutions protesting against the order and threatened to disobey it if it was not withdrawn. As a result the authorities relaxed the order. A copy of the relaxation order is also herewith enclosed. I doubt not that you realise what this means to the poor people. The original order could not have been issued for the protection of sugar mills but must have been meant to secure judicious use and distribution of sugar as *gur* or refined. If so, it defeats the purpose. The modified order, though less bad than the first, does not really serve the purpose, considered in the light of the villagers. There should be no licence for *gur* made in villages.

As this is not a mere provincial matter but applies to all India wherever cane is grown, I venture to approach H. E. the Viceroy for relief.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq., I. C. S.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

118

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
19th December 1945.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 15th December about *gur*-making in the United Provinces, which I have shown to His Excellency. His Excellency has directed that the matter be examined by the Food Department.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

1. The notification was to the effect that in certain specified areas no person should "manufacture *gur*, introduce or set up any *kolhus* for crushing cane" or "move sugar cane...to any place outside such areas except to the sugar cane factories listed."

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
4th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I sent you on the 19th December an intermediate reply to your letter of the 15th December about the manufacture of *gur*. I can now tell you the result of the enquiries that His Excellency has had made.

2. The position is not quite as you have been led to believe. *Gur*-making is not prohibited except in a small area of the United Provinces. The order to which you refer applies in the United Provinces to approximately 15 per cent of the total cane area, and cane growers in 85 per cent of the area are free to make *gur*. There is no such order in Bihar, and there is now no such order in Bengal, although in the latter Province there were some restrictions up to the 15th December which were designed to prevent immature cane being cut at the beginning of the season. There is no such order in any other Province in India.

3. The justification for the localised order in a part of the United Provinces is that there are inadequate supplies in India of sugar and that the demand both for sugar and for *gur* is increasing, but particularly the demand for sugar. Production and distribution must in the opinion of the U. P. Government, be planned; and no planning is possible unless the cane areas ear-marked for sugar and *gur* are segregated, since the relative prices of these commodities react on each other closely. Moreover, long haulage of cane from producing areas to the sugar factories is uneconomic and wasteful of coal, petrol, tyres and wagons; and worse still, it is wasteful of sugar, because of the loss of glucose content from cane in transit. These are the reasons, His Excellency understands, which led the U. P. Government to issue their order.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur, (near Calcutta),
8th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

His Excellency knows Dr. B. C. Roy. He is one of the foremost physicians of India. He is responsible for the efficient management of several hospitals in Calcutta. His services have been enlisted by the Government of India. He was on the Bhoze Committee¹ too. The Congress has organised a mission of relief for the people of Burma and Malaya. I see from the papers which Dr. Roy has handed to me that the Government of India are hesitating about giving facilities to the mission, the reason being that the Government are doing all they can. But in a service of this kind all that even a powerful Government can do is not enough. Lest for want of offered help people in distress might suffer, I want to dismiss from my mind the suggestion that because it is a Congress mission there is hesitation about its acceptance. I only hope that the very able assistance offered by Dr. B. C. Roy will not be rejected.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to H. E. The Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

1. A committee appointed by the Government of India to assess the medical facilities available in India and the health needs of the people and to recommend a course of action to be taken to meet them.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
14th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 8th January about the proposed Congress Medical Missions to Burma and Malaya. This reached me when I was with His Excellency on tour in Bombay Presidency. I will send you a reply shortly.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
30th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am sorry there has been some delay in replying to your letter of the 8th January about the proposal to send a medical mission to Burma and Malaya. You will, I am sure, understand that matters of this sort, in which other administrations have to be consulted, take a little time.

2. The Government of Burma are grateful for the offer but regret that it must be declined. They consider that the time is inopportune because their resources in the way of transport and accommodation are strained to breaking point and facilities for a mission from outside could only be given at the expense of their own efforts to provide medical relief which are directed towards Indians no less than others.

3. The British Military Administration of Malaya have however accepted the offer, and official intimation will be received by the promoters from the Commonwealth Relations Department.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Sevagram,
7th February 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I thank you for yours of 30th ultimo received by me in Madras on the 4th instant about the proposed Medical Mission to Burma and Malaya.

The attitude of the Government of Burma is somewhat strange. I had the pleasure of meeting H. E. the Governor of Burma last June in Simla. I should have thought that they would welcome any medical assistance, especially when it is under the very able guidance of one of the most celebrated physicians of India, who is well known not only for his exceptional medical talent but for his equally great organising ability.

I am glad that the part of the offer that relates to Malaya has been accepted, for which I am thankful to His Excellency.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

(N) ABOUT S. C. GOHO

124

Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur, (near Calcutta)
7th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

Shrimati Saroj Basini Goho, the wife of Shri S. C. Goho, 'until a few days ago' said to be the Agent of the Government of India in Malaya, has just seen me and asked me to approach His Excellency about her husband, who is reported to have been arrested in Singapore. She has given me a copy of her memorial submitted to His Excellency. I have taken the liberty of telling her that if what is set forth in the papers shown to me and which are in the possession of the Govern-

ment are true her husband is quite safe. Could you please enlighten me in the matter?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

125

Viceroy's Camp,
India,
11th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 7th January about Mr. S. C. Goho, which I have placed before His Excellency. Under his instructions I am making enquiries, and I will write to you again in due course.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur (near Calcutta).

126

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
18th January 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

This is with reference to your letter of the 7th January about Mr. Goho, of which I sent you an intermediate acknowledgement on the 11th January.

2. His Excellency has mentioned the matter to the Supreme Allied Commander, but it is not possible to say at present what the outcome is likely to be. Commonwealth Relations Department are keeping in touch with General Lane, the S. A. C's representative in Delhi.

76

3. Though Mr. Goho was appointed Agent of the Government of India just before the Japanese occupation, he never actually functioned as such, though this does not of course affect the present case.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

127

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
26th February 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of the 14th February.¹ I am enquiring about the possibility of assistance to Raja Mahendra Pratap to return to India, but I fear it is not likely to be easy. I will let you know more about this later.

2. As regards Mr. Goho, the position is as follows. The British Military Administration, Malaya, have been asked to hold up prosecutions in the case of Indians accused of collaboration pending orders from London. According to the ordinary policy adopted they are liable to be tried, but the Government of India have asked that the policy adopted in India, by which there will be no trials for collaboration only, should also be adopted in Malaya. Pending a decision on this point, proceedings are stayed and I believe Mr. Goho has been let out on bail. The Government of India have, as you know, done what they can to arrange for the defence of Indians who are accused in these cases in Malaya.²

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

1. Not to be found among Gandhiji's office records.

2. Shri Goho was released in March, 1946.

As from Khadi Pratisthan,
Sodepur,
Camp: Gauhati,
12th January 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I am writing to you on behalf of Gandhiji. A couple of days ago he received a letter from Raja Mahendra Pratap dated October 19th, 1945, from Yokohama Prison. The letter came through the American Red Cross. He has also received a letter from a friend of Raja Mahendra Pratap to say that rumour has it that he is now in prison somewhere in India. Is this true? If so, could you let Gandhiji have any particulars about him?

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
17th January 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th January. I will enquire about Raja Mahendra Pratap and let you know as soon as possible.

With good wishes from us both: and we hope we may have an opportunity of seeing you,

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
27th January 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,

I have made enquiries about Raja Mahendra Pratap and I find that the rumour about his presence in India is incorrect. As far as we know he is still in Tokyo and there is no intention of sending him here. As you probably know he no longer possesses British Indian nationality.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
George Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
1st March 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

I wrote to you on the 26th about the return to India of Raja Mahendra Pratap.¹ I find now that he has not applied for a visa for entry into India; if he does your request will be remembered.

Yours sincerely,
George Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

(P) ABOUT INCREASE OF QUOTA OF NEWSPRINT FOR
"HARIJAN"

Nature Cure Clinic,
6, Todiwala Road, Poona,
5th March 1946.

My dear Mr. Abell,

I have been commissioned by Gandhiji to write and ask you whether it is possible to increase the quota of newsprint for *Harijan*. A good deal of matter is left over every week in spite of the fact that the paper contains no advertisements and nothing but substantial reading matter. The

1. See letter No. 127.

demand from the public is immense. If you feel that *Harijan* is a need of the State as much as of the public, will you see if it can get the extra quota of paper, whether for extra reading matter or for a larger number of copies to cope with the demand.

The Manager has made the usual application but you know the way of red tape.

The present *Harijan* contains 16 columns only. The old often used to be double. Then an Urdu number at the Navajivan Press is on the anvil. This, of course, is besides the application in the different provinces for publication in the provincial languages.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

133

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
18th March 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Will you please refer to your letter of the 5th March about newsprint for the *Harijan*?

2. Since you wrote the amount of newsprint has been increased to allow circulation of 100,000 copies per week, which meant an increase in consumption from 5 to 7½ tons per month.

3. Though this increase does not meet the full request that was put in on behalf of the paper, His Excellency hopes it will go a considerable way towards meeting your difficulties.

4. His Excellency has appreciated the sound advice on the food situation given by Mr. Gandhi through the medium of the *Harijan*.¹

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
At Irwin College,
Delhi.

1. See Appendix XI.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd March 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Newsprint for the "Harijan"

I understand that a decision has now been reached to release 10 tons, which will be good news to you and to Mr. Gandhi.

2. My wife came down to the Lady Irwin College yesterday and looked out for you, but there were a lot of people there and she missed you. She was sorry as she had Mrs. Scott with her, but I believe Mrs. Scott is going again. I am sorry I have not been able to attend any of the celebrations myself. Susan, I gather, was much impressed!

Sorry to get this on to your Newsprint file!

Yours sincerely,
George Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
24 Akbar Road,
New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd/23rd March 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter.¹ I have asked Industries & Supplies Department to inform the Manager of the *Harijan* by telegram if they have not already done so.

2. As regards the case of Captain Irshad Ali Sahibzada, I have written to War Department and asked them to look into it.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
24 Akbar Road, New Delhi.

1. Not to be found among Gandhiji's office records.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
16th April 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of 14th April,¹ which has reached me today. With your letter you enclosed an application from a widow, the mother of Havildar N. M. Mukherjee, who seeks to find out whether or not her son has been executed.

2. It seems quite clear from War Department's memorandum No. 47627/36/ A. G. 8. (b) of the 11th January 1944, a copy of which is included in the papers, that the Havildar was in fact executed on the 27th September 1943. I am, however, making urgent enquiries and will let you know the result.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

Gandhiji's Camp,
New Delhi,
17th April 1946.

My dear Mr. Abell,

Thank you for yours of the 16th instant. To me it seemed clear that the Havildar had been executed but the poor widowed mother refuses to believe it. Hence my troubling you.

I now enclose a telegram received last evening from Sialkot.² This is the only intimation Gandhiji has and he

1. Not to be found among Gandhiji's office records.

2. The telegram was from one Deshraj, a condemned prisoner in Sialkot Jail, entreating Gandhiji to ask Lord Wavell to stay his execution so as to give him a chance to prove his innocence.

knows nothing about the man sentenced to death. In case, however, a precious life should go which should have been reprieved, I send you the wire for immediate kind enquiry.

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

138

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
17th April 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of today about the case of Deshraj.

2. Deshraj was convicted by the Sessions Court for taking part in a series of five murders. The sentence was confirmed by the High Court, and a petition submitted to His Excellency was considered and rejected in February. I am afraid there is nothing further that can be done about it.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

139

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
19th April 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

This is in continuation of my letter of the 16th of April. I have made enquiries and I confirm that Havildar N. M. Mukherjee was in fact executed on the 27th September 1943. War Department say that Mukherjee's mother was informed.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
23rd March 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Reference your letter about Captain Irshad Ali Sahibzada.¹ I now learn that this officer was released a few days ago.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
Lady Irwin College,
New Delhi.

(R) ABOUT HERBERT FISCHER

141

Birla House,
Mussoorie,
4th June 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

Mr. Herbert Fischer, a German of Friends' Settlement, Itarsi, is known to me. He was for some time in the Village Industries Association in Wardha. His wife is a lady of Jamaica but in India, also of Friends' Settlement. I understand that Mr. Fischer and his wife are due to be sent to Germany in virtue of some plan. Mr. Fischer is now in a concentration camp in Satara. I wonder if it is possible for him to meet me before being sent to Germany.

I wonder, too, if this matter falls within the Viceroy's department or whether I should write to some other?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

1. Not to be found among Gandhiji's office records.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
6th June 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th June about Mr. Herbert Fischer. I am making enquiries about this and will let Mr. Horace Alexander know the results as requested by him over the telephone.¹

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

(S) ABOUT DR. SURESH CHANDRA

Birla House,
Mussoorie,
6th June 1946.

My dear Mr. Abell,

The enclosed has been sent to Gandhiji by the father of the interned writer.

Gandhiji wishes me to ask you if from your exact knowledge of the working of the administration you can say whether anything can be done to enable the young man to fulfil what appears to be his laudable wishes?

With kind regards, .

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

1. Mr. & Mrs. Fischer were allowed to meet Gandhiji before leaving for Germany. Mr. Fischer is at present attached to the Trade Representation of the German Democratic Republic in India at New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
8th June 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of 6th June from Mussoorie which reached me today. I am making enquiries about Dr. Suresh Chandra.

Yours sincerely,
George Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
18th June 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Mr. Abell has asked me to write to you in continuation of his letter of the 8th of June to say that the India Office have been asked to make enquiries about Dr. Suresh Chandra through the British Military Government in Germany and to see whether there is anything they can do to assist him.

Yours sincerely,
C. W. B. Rankin

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
27th July 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Will you please refer to my letter of 18th June about Dr. Suresh Chandra? I have now heard through the Indian Military Mission in Berlin that Dr. Suresh Chandra was released from the Internment Camp at Paderborn about the middle of May and is now residing at the following address:

Burgermeisterei,
Langen,
(23) Wesermunde.

He has been asked whether he wishes to be repatriated to India and a reply from him is awaited. I will let you know if he decides to return.

Yours sincerely,
C. W. B. Rankin

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

(T) ABOUT POLISH EVACUEES IN INDIA

147

As from Nature Cure Clinic,
Poona.
Camp: Bombay,
9th July 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I quote below from a letter of a Polish lady whom I have known for years:

“There are now about 5000 Polish evacuees in India. They have been supported first by the Polish and then by the British Government. Now it is reported that they will be taken over by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. About 3600 of them will soon be joining their families, also soldiers in Britain. About 1400 have been evacuated, we do not yet know where. There is a tendency on the part of the Indian Government to evacuate all the Europeans from India in a hurry. Even those of the Poles who are working in different parts of India and require no charity and who are quite useful to the country in their present jobs will be compelled to leave India, much against their will. Among other reasons, Government representatives give the unwillingness of Indians to have foreigners in their midst. Out of the 5000 Poles here, only 77 are reported to be ready to return to Poland in her present position of utter slavery and terrorist regime.”

You will oblige me if you could kindly inform me whether there is any truth in the statement of my correspondent.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
11th July 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of the 9th July about Polish evacuees in India. I am making enquiries and will write again.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Nature Cure Clinic,
Poona.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd July 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I have looked into the question of the Polish refugees in India which you mentioned in your letter of the 9th July. Your correspondent is correct in saying that there are about five thousand Polish evacuees in India and that about four thousand of these will soon be joining their families in Britain. It is not correct, however, that fourteen hundred have already been evacuated; no large numbers have yet been moved from India; and none are being compelled to return to Poland if they do not wish to do so.

2. The present repatriation scheme refers only to those who came to India as refugees under arrangements made by His Majesty's Government and are maintained here at H. M. G.'s expense; it does not cover Poles who came to India on their own initiative and have found employment here.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Poona,
1st August 1946.

My dear Mr. Abell,

I am writing on behalf of Gandhiji to thank you much for yours of the 22nd July.

I am sending a copy of it to the Polish friend at whose instance Gandhiji wrote to you.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

(U) ABOUT OPERATION OF ECONOMIC SANCTION
AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

151

New Delhi,
10th June 1946.

My dear Mr. Abell,

I am desired by Gandhiji to send you the enclosed copy of a cable just received from South Africa.¹

Gandhiji hopes that the information is wholly unfounded.

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

Encl: 1

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.

1. The Government of India had, as an answer to the policy of racial discrimination against the Indian community in South Africa decided to apply economic sanctions against South Africa. In pursuance of it, they had given notice terminating the trade agreement with South Africa after June 26, 1946. It was however reported to Gandhiji by a correspondent from South Africa that in anticipation of the termination of the trade agreement South Africa was trying to obtain from India hessian and gunny bags in excess of the quota sanctioned under the trade agreement and that a special steamer was being chartered for this purpose.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
11th June 1946.

My dear Rajkumari Sahiba,

Thank you for your letter of 10th June enclosing a copy of a telegram from Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee. A similar telegram was sent to H. E. and he asked Commonwealth Relations Department to take it up. I have requested Mr. Banerjee, the Secretary of the Department, to let you know the result.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
Camp, Reading Road,
New Delhi.

Department of Commonwealth Relations,
D. O. No. 459-46 /PA.,
New Delhi,
18th June 1946.

Dear Madame,

I have received from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy a copy of the telegram, sent by Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee (Leader of the South African Indian Congress Delegation) about a special steamer being chartered for carrying hessian and gunny bags to South Africa. Mr. Rustomjee sent a copy of this telegram direct to our Department also.

2. In reply I am desired to inform you that the matter has been investigated. The stocks of hessian and gunny bags, referred to in the telegram, are not in excess of the quota which can be exported to South Africa up to date. The stocks may contain some arrears of previous quotas, but do not contain any quantity in excess of such quotas.

Yours sincerely,

R. N. Banerjee

Secretary to the Government of India,
Commonwealth Relations Department.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
Bhangi Colony,
New Delhi.

New Delhi,
21st June 1946.

Dear Shri Banerjee,

Thank you for your D. O. No. 459-46/PA. of the 18th June which I read out to Gandhiji. I shall be grateful if you will be kind enough to let me know what the monthly quota of hessian and gunny bags exported to South Africa is and when it is to be stopped. In spite of the economic sanctions adopted by the Indian Government do arrears have to be made good?

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

Shri R. N. Banerjee.

Commonwealth Relations Department,
D. O. No. 524-46/PA.,
New Delhi,
11th July 1946.

Dear Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,

I regret I could not reply to your letter of the 21st June earlier owing to urgent preoccupations.

2. Yearly, and not monthly, quotas of jute and jute products have been allotted to South Africa so far. The quota for the year ending June 1946 was 31,000 tons. There is no obligation on South Africa to take the annual quota in twelve equal monthly instalments. According to the availability of shipping accommodation and other limiting circumstances monthly exports are naturally unequal; the exports in some months being more than those in other months.

3. Exports could not be stopped before the expiry of the period of notice for the termination of the trade agreement. This period expired on the 26th June last. Economic sanctions thus became really effective after that date and all exports have been stopped since then. The actual exports up to the 25th of June fell short of the annual quota of 31,000 tons by about 1,500 tons.

As already stated, all exports must now stop.

Yours sincerely,
R. N. Banerjee

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
C/O, M. K. Gandhi, Esquire,
Birla House, Bombay.

156

Sevagram,
10th August, 1946.

Dear Shri Banerjee,

I write to acknowledge with thanks your letter of the 11th July only received on the 7th instant.

It is most unfortunate that practically the entire quota of jute and jute products allotted to South Africa for this year should have been remitted there within six months. If economic sanctions were to mean anything surely the export should have been stopped the moment the figure for the half year had been reached.

Yours sincerely,
Amrit Kaur

Shri R. N. Banerjee.

157

Department of Commonwealth Relations,
D. O. No. 694-46/PA.,
New Delhi,
3rd September 1946.

Dear Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,

I must apologise for not being able to reply earlier to your letter of the 10th August.

2. My previous letter perhaps did not make the position very clear. The jute year of 1945-46, for which a quota of 31,000 tons had been allotted, came to a close on the 25th June 1946 (the jute year is not the calendar year). The quantity actually exported before the 25th June 1946 fell a little short of the quota allotted. As the period of three months of the termination of the agreement expired only on the 25th June and formal prohibition of exports

could be enforced only after that date the Government of India could not very well prevent the export of any part of the quota before the 25th June. Not a single ton of jute has been loaded for South Africa from Indian ports after the 26th June; nor has any quota been allotted to South Africa for the current year. A rigorous watch is also being kept on South Africa's neighbours with a view to ensuring that Indian jute goods are not smuggled into South Africa through other territories.

I hope this clarifies the position.

Yours sincerely,
R. N. Banerjee

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
C/O, Mahatma Gandhi,
Bhangi Colony,
Reading Road, New Delhi.

(V) ABOUT ANTI-ASIATIC ACT IN SOUTH AFRICA

[In June, 1946, Gandhiji opened correspondence with the Viceroy in connection with the anti-Asiatic policy of the South African Government. The correspondence was preceded by the following exchange of telegrams between Gandhiji and Field-Marshal Smuts, the South African Prime Minister.]

158

TELEGRAM

Poona,
18th March 1946.

Field-Marshal Smuts,
Capetown,
Union of South Africa.

Your Asiatic policy requires overhauling. It ill becomes you. Least you should do is to withdraw threatened land and franchise measure and call advisory round table conference at least of Union British and Indian Governments and if possible of all associate powers to consider Asiatic African and general colour policy arising from Asiatic bill. This is not for publication unless you so wish.

Your and South Africa's sincere friend Gandhi.